

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Naso

11 Sivan, 5781 – May 22, 2021

Compiled from the works of
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Naso**

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Rashi in His Own Words

במדבר ז', פ"ט: וּבָא מֹשֶׁה גו' לְדַבֵּר אֵתוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת הַקּוֹל מִדַּבֵּר אֵלָיו גו' וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו:

רש"י ד"ה וידבר אליו: למעט את אהרן מן הדברות:

רש"י ד"ה וישמע את הקול: יכול קול נמוך, תלמוד לומר את הקול, הוא הקול שנדבר עמו בסיני, וכשמגיע לפתח היה נפסק, ולא היה יוצא חוץ לאהל:

Bamidbar 7:89: When Moshe would come ... to speak with Him, he would hear the voice speaking to him ... and He spoke to him.

Rashi Heading: He spoke to him: (The verse specifies that Hashem spoke to Moshe to) exclude Aharon from the (Divine) statements.

Rashi Heading: he would hear the voice: I might think it was in an undertone. Therefore, the Torah says, "the voice" - the very same voice which spoke with him at Sinai. But when the voice reached the entrance, it stopped and did not go outside of the Mishkan.

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Naso, we are told how Hashem spoke to Moshe throughout the years in the wilderness. The Torah tells us¹ that "When Moshe would come ... to speak with Him, he would hear the voice speaking to him ... and He spoke to him." Commenting on the words "and He spoke to him," Rashi explains that it says "to him" to exclude Aharon. In other words, although Aharon was also present in the Mishkan, he did not hear G-d's words. Following that, Rashi comments on the words, "and he would hear the voice," and explains that "I might think it was in an undertone. Therefore, the Torah says, "the voice" - the very same voice which spoke with him at Sinai. But when the voice reached the entrance, it stopped and did not go outside of the Mishkan."

Why would I think that Hashem's voice was in an undertone? Why would I not think He spoke in a normal tone of voice? Furthermore, why does Rashi first explain "and He spoke to him," which is at the end of the verse, and then "and he would hear the voice," which is in the middle of the verse?

1. Our Parshah, Bamidbar 7:89.

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The explanation is that once we know that *only* Moshe heard the G-dly voice, we might think that Hashem spoke to him in an undertone to prevent Aharon from hearing. If that was the case, how did Moshe listen to Him? We know that Moshe was exceedingly powerful. Perhaps his senses were also keener than those of the average person. That would explain why he could hear the G-dly voice and not Aharon. However, this presents us with a different problem. Since in the middle of the verse, it says, "and he would hear the voice," we know that it could not have been in an undertone. *The* voice refers to a specific voice, the booming voice which Moshe heard at Sinai. Hence, we know that miraculously, even though it was a resounding voice, Aharon could not hear it. We also know that there was an additional miracle, and when the voice reached the entrance of the Mishkan, it stopped, which meant that Moshe had to enter the Mishkan to hear the voice.

Rashi's Explanation

This week's Torah portion, Naso, concludes by telling us how Hashem would speak to Moshe. We received the Torah on Shavuot, but G-d would continue teaching and elucidating the law throughout the years in the wilderness. He would do this by speaking to Moshe in the Mishkan. The Torah tells us that "When Moshe would come ... to speak with Him, he would hear the voice speaking to him ... and He spoke to him." Rashi comments on the words "and He spoke to him," as follows. "These words," explain Rashi, "come to exclude Aharon from the (Divine) statements." It would seem that the reason Rashi explains the words "and He spoke to him" is because the same verse already said "speaking to him." The words "and He spoke to him" are seemingly redundant. Therefore, Rashi explains that these words come to teach us that despite the proximity of Aharon, who served in the Mishkan, only Moshe heard Hashem's words.

Afterward, Rashi explains the words "he would hear the voice." He explains that "I might think that it was in an undertone. Therefore, the Torah says, 'the voice' - the very same voice which spoke with him at Sinai. But when the voice reached the entrance of the Mishkan, it stopped." Why does Rashi find it necessary to explain the words "he would hear the voice?" Seemingly because the words "*the* voice" refer to a specific voice, the voice which spoke to Moshe at Sinai. That particular voice was quite loud; several million people heard it²!

2. Particularly based on what Rashi already taught us (Parshas Yisro, Shemos 20:2) that "voices came from four directions and from the heavens and from the earth." See also Rashi (Ibid, ibid. 19:19) that "when Moshe would

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Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

The verse first says, "he would hear the voice speaking to him." At the end of the verse, it says, "and He spoke to him." Why does Rashi explain the words of the verse out of order, first explaining "and He spoke to him," and then explaining "he would hear the voice?"

Rashi says that "I might think that it was in an undertone," before deriving from the verse that it was the same voice spoken at Sinai. Why would one think that Hashem spoke in an undertone rather than a normal speaking voice? Furthermore, once Rashi does derive that it was the same voice which spoke at Sinai, all that he seemingly needs to tell us is that it was "the very same voice which spoke with him at Sinai." Why does Rashi need to add the words "but when the voice reached the entrance, it stopped ...?" This seems to be an extra miracle which does not concern his explanation here.

We also need to understand why Rashi includes in the heading of his explanation "*he would hear (the voice)?*" He only seems to be explaining the words "*the voice.*" We know how precise Rashi is in all of his wording. This is true regarding the terms he cites from the Torah to serve as the headings of his commentaries. He is particular only to mention those words which he is explaining. It appears that here he is only explaining the phrase "the voice." He is telling us that it is the selfsame voice that was heard at Sinai.

The Explanation

After Rashi explains that the Torah's words "and He spoke to him," i.e., that G-d spoke to Moshe, "come to exclude Aharon from the (Divine) statements," we have a question. As the "Kohen Gadol - High Priest," Aharon" spent a great deal of time in the Mishkan. If Aharon was in the Mishkan, why did he not also hear Hashem's words? This could cause us to think that G-d spoke in an undertone. If the speech was in an undertone, why could Moshe hear it and not Aharon? We already know that Moshe had highly great strength. Moshe went to Midian and saw Yisro's daughters drawing water from the well to fill the troughs and water their father's flocks. The other shepherds came and chased them away. The Torah tells us³ that "Moses arose and rescued them and watered their flocks." We might think that his senses were also above average. Hence he could hear the voice, and Aharon could not. We might think that the Torah says that "he would hear the voice" because it was too low for Aharon to hear.

speak and make the 'Ten Commandments' heard to the Jews ... the Holy One, blessed be He, would help him by giving him strength so that his voice would be strong and audible." See Also Parshas Vo'eschanan, Devorim 5:19.

3. Parshas Shemos, Shemos 2:17.

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That is the reason that only after Rashi explains to us that Aharon could not hear Hashem's voice, only Moshe could hear it, that Rashi needs to explain "*the* voice." What Moshe heard was that same, unique voice that was heard at Sinai. Therefore, only he could hear it, and not Aharon could not be due to natural reasons. The words "*the* voice" let us know that despite the fact that it was the same resonant, resounding voice that was heard at Mount Sinai, only Moshe could hear it. Aharon was also present, yet miraculously he could not hear this voice.

However, based on this, we have yet another question. If it was the voice that was heard at Sinai, and it was only a miracle that prevented others from hearing it, why did Moshe need to enter the Mishkan to hear G-d's words? He should have been able to hear Hashem's thunderous voice wherever he was. The same miracle that prevented Aharon from hearing it within the "Tent of Meeting - Mishkan" would have prevented anyone from hearing it.

This is why Rashi adds these words to his commentary; "but when the voice reached the entrance, it stopped and did not go outside of the Mishkan." In other words, following the laws of nature, the voice should have reached far beyond the Mishkan. Miraculously, it stopped once it reached the Mishkan's entrance. That is why Moshe had first to enter the Mishkan to hear the words of Torah from Hashem.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

Hashem does not perform miracles unnecessarily. He created the world following the laws of nature, and he does not change those laws unless there is a need to do so. Based on this, we need to understand why G-d caused His voice to stop once it reached the entrance of the Mishkan?

Hashem created the world in a manner that we should have free choice. If His voice would constantly and regularly extend beyond the confines of the Mishkan, we would have no free will; with the entire world filled with a Divine revelation, how could one possibly choose to transgress Hashem's word?

Additionally, the Midrash teaches us⁴ that G-d created this world to have a dwelling place⁵ *below*. "Below" means in a world which does not feel the Almighty's voice or speech in a revealed manner. Instead, *our* Divine service should draw down and reveal "His voice." This is the idea of "a dwelling place below," that despite our not feeling G-dliness in a revealed way, we should transform this entire world into a Mishkan and a Sanctuary.

4. Midrash Tanchumah, Bamidbar 16.

5. The idea of a "dwelling place" is an analogy to teach us that G-d's essence should be revealed. At *home* I am *myself*. Elsewhere, I am very careful to be well behaved.

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This provides every one of us with a life lesson. One must not say that he will devote himself to Divine service within the "Tent of Meeting," the Torah study hall. There, one can unite oneself with "the G-dly voice." Why be concerned about that which is going on around him, in the world at large?

The idea of a "dwelling place" is not to remain in the Mishkan (or the synagogue or the study hall). Instead, we must each take that which Hashem told Moshe in the Tabernacle and draw it down within the confines of this physical world. In this way, we will make the world as a whole a dwelling place for G-d Almighty. We will transform the world as a whole into a Mishkan, a Sanctuary for G-d.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Naso 5725)

I hope that you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

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