

**70 PERSPECTIVES  
BUT ONLY ONE TORAH**

**by Dr. Meir Tamari**

## **And the Man Moshe**

That the story of Moshe's interaction with Par'o is interrupted with details of his genealogy tells us significant aspects of the role of the savior-mashiach and of redemption. In every other religion or culture the redeemer is either some sort of super hero or poor, weak and humble personality but is never depicted as a great human being such as Moshe.

There was no miraculous birth of this redeemer and no supernatural events connected with his entry into this world. He has parents, a sister, a brother, aunts and uncles, cousins and nephews. His sons do not inherit his spiritual greatness nor his leadership. The Chidushei HaRim of Gur threw away a sefer which told of Moshe's son who became a priest to idolatry because Yitro challenged him to expose the boy to all kinds of different religions. The Admor of Kotsk said that before Matan Torah Yitro's challenge made sense but not afterwards.

Moshe is Moshe Rabbeinu, our teacher, Moshe the lawgiver, Moshe the role model for ahavat Yisrael, Moshe who pleads with Hashem for his people while never hesitating to reprimand them for their behavior. He is one of the few people who is called by Hashem, My servant, yet the Torah also tells us that he is the most humble

of all people. He is the only person who speaks to G-d face to face, he is The Prophet whose prophecies are radically different from all the others and never equaled by them. Yet he has a speech defect; Torah proclaiming once again that there is no such thing as a human being who is a god.

While attesting to his human status the genealogy also serves to teach that indeed Moshe came from a distinguished family. He came from Levi, that tribe destined to be Israel's teachers and spiritual leaders who also served as the nation's connection with Hashem in His destined sanctuary. Moshe was a king in Pharaoh's house and of such physical strength that the Torah writes of him at the end of his days as one whose strength did not weaken nor his eyes dimmed. Korach used Moshe's prosperity as one basis for his revolt. Through all these things Torah shows that spiritual leaders do not come from the ignorant, poor sick and old. Rather, as the father of all prophets, he personifies Rambam's view that prophecy comes to those who are wealthy, knowledgeable and healthy, just as the Avot were. Except for the error of the horns, Michelangelo's statute captures this image of the Jewish savior rather than El Greco's emaciated and suffering one.

Torah tells us that Moshe married a black woman; black here being another example of the Tanach's usage of black as a term for beauty. The sages have 2 opposing views of marriage based on this act. There is one midrash that this was Tzipora who was a black woman

in the Tanachic sense of spiritual and physical perfection, from whom he had separated himself but now rejoined. Aharon and Miriam rebuked him since such marital separation was an indication of spiritual arrogance. A different view is that in his later years Moshe took a new wife and they felt that such an act of sexuality, was unseemly for a great religious personality of his age.

Par'o was a genuine scoffer and apikoress. The Torah tells us that after being warned of the last plague, the death of the first borns, Par'o went to sleep. Rashi writes that he went to sleep in his bed. Egypt was crumbling before the plagues and his magicians and his people pleaded with him to release Israel. As the king of Egypt and one who himself was a firstborn he should have panicked and yielded, instead he went to sleep as usual. He thus openly mocked Hashem and showed that he was not bothered in the least about His threats. "Ach an unbeliever. But with such truth and sincerity" (Menachem Mendel of Kotsk).

Tragically, Moshe who led his people out of Egypt, guarded and shepherded them for 40 years in the desert was not allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael with them. He prayed and entreated to enter even as a simple Jew but Hashem said no. Finally he asked that at least he should enter as a corpse as did Yosef. Hashem said no. Yosef had admitted his Hebrew identity in prison and this justified his entry into the land after his death. However, Moshe denied his identity when he appeared to the

daughters of Yitro as an ish mitzri and therefore was not entitled to enter Eretz Yisrael. 🌸