

Conflicting Feelings May Not Be In Conflict

פרשת בא

Moshe tells Pharaoh that all of the firstborn sons in Egypt will die and the entire country will erupt with crying. Then Moshe says (11:8) “And all of your servants will come to me, and bow down to me saying ‘leave.’” Rashi addresses why Moshe did not tell Pharaoh, that in fact Pharaoh himself would be the one to come to Moshe and bow down to him, begging him to leave. He says, “Moshe accorded honor to royalty,” and it would be inappropriate for Moshe to tell Pharaoh that he himself would bow down to him.

We can glean from here an important insight into the extent of a person's ability to experience conflicting feelings. On the one hand, Pharaoh was a

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wicked and cruel king who tortured, beat, and enslaved Moshe's people. It would be fair to assume that Pharaoh's behavior and character made him unworthy of respect. Yet, Rashi tells us that Moshe was able to sincerely honor Pharaoh due to his position as king, despite loathing his character.

An additional insight we can derive from here is how subtle and delicate one must be when following the guidelines of the Torah. Moshe comes to Pharaoh and tells him that all of the firstborns will die, and that his servants will bow down to him, and then leaves Pharaoh's presence in a huff. Clearly this itself was not so respectful. In addition, Moshe's message would have been more powerful and effective if he told Pharaoh that, “You yourself will come and bow down to me, begging me to leave.” Yet we see from here, that although a certain amount of disrespect was allowed, any more would have been a violation of כבוד המלכות, even though this speech would have been more impactful. Due to this subtlety, it is so important for us to gain clarity of what the Torah expects from us in all circumstances.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

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