



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 16 | Vaeira | Sichah 2

Equal — United As One

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1.

AHARON BEFORE MOSHE

On the verse,¹ “This is Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said, “Take the children of Israel out of Egypt according to their legions,” Rashi comments regarding Aharon’s name being mentioned before Moshe’s: “There are places where Scripture mentions Aharon before Moshe, and there are places where Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon, to teach that they are equal, ששקולין כאחד.”²

This issue is addressed in the *Tosefta*³ and in the *Midrash*,⁴ albeit with different wording: “**In all places**, Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon; **in one place**, Scripture says, ‘These are the same Aharon and Moshe,’ to teach that they are equal to each other, ששקולין זה כזה.”

The reason why Rashi must say, “**There are places** where Scripture mentions Aharon before Moshe, and **there are places** where Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon — unlike the *Tosefta* and *Midrash* which say, “**In all places**, Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon; **in one place...**” — is readily understand: According to the *pshat*,⁵ It is unreasonable to suggest that a change in the wording “in **one place**” from the wording used in “**all places**” teaches an important novelty to be applied in all places (“they are equal”).

[In light of this, we can resolve why Rashi does not mention that “they are equal ” in the other instances which are quoted by the above-mentioned *Tosefta* and *Midrash*,⁶ where we see that “in **one place**” where the verse reverses the order of two items, it is to teach us that they are equal {because

¹ *Shemos* 6:26.

² {Literally, “equal, as one.”}

³ End of tractate *Krisus*.

⁴ *Bereishis Rabbah*, end of ch. 1.

⁵ {The simple understanding of the verse. Rashi’s primary focus is to explain the verses according to their simple meaning.}

⁶ In most of the cases mentioned there, the usual order {of those two subjects, as they appear in most verses} is also understood logically, for the first is loftier, or precedes, the second (e.g., heaven and earth; Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; Moshe and Aharon; father and mother).

in those places, the change in order is only in one place, and according to *pshat*, this is not significant enough to teach us something globally}].

Rather, according to *pshat*, we must say that the change {of order} in {only} **one** place is for a reason that is germane only in this one place. **Similar to Rashi's** explanation on the verse, “A man shall revere his mother and father”⁷ [which is one of the instances quoted by the above-mentioned *Midrash*, “In all places, Scripture mentions the obligation to honor one’s father before the obligation to honor one’s mother; and in one place, Scripture says, “a man shall revere his mother and father,” to teach us that they are both equal”]:

Here {regarding the reverence for parents}, Scripture mentions “mother” ahead of “father” because it is revealed before Him that a child reveres his father more than his mother. But with regard to honoring {parents}, Scripture mentions “father” ahead of “mother” because it is revealed before Him that a child honors his mother more than his father, because she wins him over with {pleasant} words.⁸

Therefore, Rashi points out in our case that “there are places... and there are places...” — in the plural — because only when the order is changed in several places is it significant enough to teach us that “they are equal.”

2.

RASHI'S CHOICE OF VERSES

We must clarify: It is self-understood from Rashi's diction, “there are places” — indicating that Scripture mentions Aharon before Moshe more than once — does not mean that Rashi has a factual disagreement with the *Midrash* which says, “in one place.” (Whether the Torah places Aharon first once or many times, this number is indisputable.) Rather, they differ

⁷ *Vayikra* 19:3; see Rashi.

⁸ {Unlike the *Midrash*, which understands the change in the order to be teaching us a global lesson. Rashi, in line with *pshat*, understands this change as relevant (only) to the teaching of this verse itself.}

regarding whether the other instances in which Scripture mentions Aharon before Moshe (aside for the verse, “This is Aharon and Moshe, etc.”) are meant to demonstrate that “they are equal,” or if in those instances, they **must** be placed in this order {for another reason}.

The other instances in the Torah where Scripture mentions Aharon’s name before Moshe’s are:

- a. In **this parshah**, a few verses earlier: “Amram took his father’s sister, Yocheved, for a wife, and she bore him Aharon and Moshe.”⁹
- b. In *parshas Bamidbar*: “these are the descendants of Aharon and Moshe.”¹⁰
- c. In *parshas Pinchas*: “She {Yocheved} bore to Amram, Aharon and Moshe.”¹¹

We can understand simply why the *Tosefta* and *Midrash* do not infer that “they are equal to each other” from these verses. These verses address the **birth** of Aharon and Moshe (or their descendants); therefore, they must mention Aharon before Moshe — for he was born first.

However, we must clarify: What is Rashi’s rationale for using **these** verses to demonstrate that “they are equal,” especially considering that Rashi’s approach is to explain the *pshat*?¹²

⁹ *Shemos* 6:20.

¹⁰ *Bamidbar* 3:1.

¹¹ *Bamidbar* 26:59.

¹² {And according to *pshat*, it is understood that these verses must put Aharon before Moshe, for this follows the order of their birth.}

3.

AN ATTEMPTED EXPLANATION

Seemingly, we can posit that Rashi does not intend to deduce {that Moshe and Aharon are equal} from the verses, “she bore him, Aharon and Moshe,” in *parshas Vaeira* and, “She {Yocheved} bore to Amram, Aharon and Moshe.” Rather, Rashi intends to deduce this from the verse, “these are the descendants of Aharon and Moshe,” which discusses their descendants and not their birth. Furthermore, in this instance, Moshe’s descendants are entirely omitted! (Consequently, Rashi says,¹³ “**This teaches us** that whoever teaches his friend’s son Torah, Scripture views it as if he had fathered him; therefore, Aharon’s children are considered as “Moshe’s children, because he taught them Torah.”)

Accordingly, Scripture should have used the regular order used in **all** places (Moshe before Aharon). All the more so: Here, Moshe must be mentioned first, more prominently than all other places, because he “taught them Torah” (including Aharon). This is what the verse addresses.

Since Scripture also mentions Aharon before Moshe here — ({justifying the wording} “there are places” in plural together with the verse, “This is Aharon and Moshe”) — it teaches us that they are equal.

However, it is difficult to conclude that this is Rashi’s intent because if Rashi meant to **only** deduce from the verse in the book of **Bamidbar**, **excluding** the {earlier} verse in **our parshah** {“and she bore him Aharon and Moshe”}, he should have clearly said so. The vague wording, “there are places,” implies that these are instances that we are already aware of (or, at the very least, instances in the context of **these parshiyos**) {and thus, seems to include the earlier verse in our *parshah* as well}.

¹³ {Rashi on *Bamidbar* 3:1.}

4.

A DIFFICULTY IN RASHI'S OWN WORDS

According to the beginning of Rashi's comments, a further difficulty arises in **this** explanation. Rashi comments¹⁴ {on the clause, "This is Aharon and Moshe...}: "Those who were mentioned earlier, who Yocheved **bore** to Amram."¹⁵ This means that this verse {"This is Aharon and Moshe"} is a thematic continuation of the discussion about the **birth** of Aharon and Moshe mentioned earlier ("Yocheved bore to Amram"). Thus, simply understood, this verse **must** mention Aharon before Moshe. How, then, can the word order in this verse demonstrate that "they are equal"?

You may suggest that the continuation of this passage — "(This is Aharon and Moshe) to whom Hashem said, "Take the children of Israel out of Egypt according to their legions" — indicates that here, their birth (order) is irrelevant. Rather {this verse addresses} their purpose to fulfill Hashem's command regarding the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt. We must still clarify:

Rashi should have explained this verse in the same way that he explained {the verse}, "A man shall revere his mother and father": The rationale for Scripture to reverse the order {of "your mother and father"} is to emphasize one of the details.¹⁶ Similarly, in our discussion: The rationale for Scripture here to say, "This is Aharon and Moshe" (mentioning Aharon first) is to emphasize and forestall the following: This verse addresses their mission to redeem the Jewish people from Egypt. The simple understanding of the passage implies that Moshe was of primary importance; he was the person whom Hashem chose and entrusted with

¹⁴ {Rashi on *Shemos* 6:26.}

¹⁵ {*Shemos* 6:20.}

¹⁶ {In other words, the change in order does not have to be interpreted as conveying a general lesson (that Aharon was equal to Moshe overall), but that Scripture is emphasizing something regarding one specific aspect or detail (as the *sichah* explains in section 1). Here, too, Rashi could have said that the change of order was related specifically to this particular verse, i.e., regarding the mission of Moshe and Aharon to take the Jews out of Egypt. In this respect, Aharon was as important as Moshe, but *not* that in their overall stature, they were essentially equal.}

this mission. Therefore, Scripture reverses the order and prefaces, “This is Aharon (first) and Moshe,” underscoring that Aharon’s role was not entirely secondary to Moshe’s in **this** mission.

5.

MORE QUESTIONS ON RASHI’S COMMENTARY

We will resolve these difficulties by explaining other nuances in Rashi’s commentary:

Rashi quotes the clause, “This is Aharon and Moshe” and explains, “{the same as} those who were mentioned earlier, who Yocheved bore to Amram.” (According to many printed editions of Rashi, he continues) “*these were the {same} Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said* — there are places where Scripture mentions Aharon....” Seemingly:

- a. What thematic connection is there between the sentence, “There are places where Scripture puts Aharon.... to teach that they are equal,” and the beginning of Rashi’s comments, “Those who were mentioned earlier, who Yocheved bore to Amram”?
- b. If Rashi intends to forestall a question about the reversal (of the order of their names) in other places, it would have been appropriate (ideally) to remark on the difference encountered immediately after the next verse, in the same discussion and with the same words — “This is Moshe and Aharon”!¹⁷

We must also clarify:

- c. What does Rashi accomplish by adding at the beginning of his explanation, “(those who were mentioned earlier) **who Yocheved bore to Amram**. Could we have mistakenly assumed that they were not “those who were mentioned earlier”?

¹⁷ *Shemos* 6:27.

- d. Why does Rashi say, “they are equal,” unlike the wording of the *Tosefta* and *Midrash*, “they are equal to each other”?
- e. Most importantly:** How can we suggest that Moshe and Aharon are “equal,” when even a novice student of Torah knows that no one was comparable to Moshe *Rabbeinu*?¹⁸ Especially since from Rashi’s earlier comments,¹⁹ we know that “when he {Moshe} was born, the entire house was suffused with light,” and that Moshe was the redeemer of the Jewish people,²⁰ **etc.**²¹ — Rashi does not address any of these issues!

6.

ANOTHER SEGMENT OF RASHI

In the following verse, Rashi quotes the clause,²² “They are the ones who spoke...” and explains, “They are the ones who were commanded {to speak to Pharaoh}, and they are the ones who fulfilled it.” Simply understood, Rashi intends to forestall (as the commentators²³ explain) the following question: Why must the verse say, “**they** are the ones who spoke?” We already know this! Therefore, Rashi explains: “They are the ones who were commanded, and they are the ones who fulfilled it.” However, this still needs clarification — what does the verse intend to teach? Is this news that Moshe and Aharon carried out Hashem’s command?!

Next, Rashi quotes the clause, “this is Moshe and Aharon,” and explains: “they {remained steadfast} in their mission and in their righteousness from beginning to end.” We must clarify:

¹⁸ {Our teacher.}

¹⁹ Rashi on *Shemos* 2:2.

²⁰ Rashi on *Shemos* 1:22.

²¹ And the entire narrative of *Shemos* 3:1 ff., in which Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe {at the Burning Bush}, and Moshe was Hashem’s emissary, etc.

²² {*Shemos* 6:27.}

²³ See *Devek Tov* on this Rashi; see {also} *Mizrachi*; *Gur Aryeh*; and *Be'er Yitzchak* on this Rashi.

- a. Why is their virtue that “they {remained steadfast} in their mission and in their righteousness from beginning to end” relevant to **this** discussion?
- b. What is the meaning of the two details — “their mission” and “their righteousness?” If Rashi is referring to their mission and righteousness in general, as the *Gemara* does,²⁴ he should have only said (as in the *Gemara*), “they {remained steadfast} in their righteousness from beginning to end”; why does Rashi add, “in their mission?” Or, if Rashi’s remarks are meant as a continuation to his explanation of the beginning of the verse, i.e., “They are the ones who were commanded, and they are the ones who fulfilled it,” the (primary) focus should be that they remained steadfast “**in their mission** from beginning to end” (and make no mention of their righteousness)!
- c. Why does Rashi preface his explanation with “they” rather than immediately beginning (as a continuation of the wording of the verse, “this is Moshe and Aharon”) — “in their mission and their righteousness from beginning to end?”

7.

THE EXPLANATION

The explanation of all of the above:

The question that Rashi anticipates: Seemingly, these two verses are redundant. Earlier, the Torah said, “Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them...”²⁵ However, as Rashi explained earlier,²⁶ the Torah paused this discussion to recount “how Moshe and Aharon were born

²⁴ *Megillah* 11a.

²⁵ *Shemos* 6:13.

²⁶ Rashi on *Shemos* 6:13.

and to whom they traced their ancestry.” After concluding to address their lineage, Scripture repeats, “Hashem spoke...,”²⁷ in order to demonstrate (as Rashi says), “This is the very same statement made earlier.” This only provides a rationale for Scripture to reiterate, “Hashem spoke...” However, we must clarify the reason for the Torah’s wordiness in both verses, “These are the same Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said...,” since their content is already known from the previous passages.

Rashi anticipates this issue with his explanation, “Those who were mentioned earlier, who **Yocheved bore to Amram.**” This also justifies the need for the Torah to interrupt in the middle of a {different} discussion with the ancestry of Moshe and Aharon, as will be explained below.

8.

THE MERIT OF AHARON AND MOSHE

The explanation: Earlier {in the Torah} we learned that Yocheved,²⁸ the mother of Moshe and Aharon, refused to obey Pharaoh’s decree, “if it is a son, you are to kill him.”²⁹ However, “The midwives feared Hashem and they did not do as the king of Egypt spoke to them, and they kept the boys alive.”³⁰ Not only did they refuse to obey the order, “you are to kill him,” but furthermore, “they kept the boys alive” — “They supplied them with water and food.”³¹ Yocheved tried to do all that she could to counteract Pharaoh’s decree, doing the **opposite** of what Pharaoh had decreed. We see similar conduct by their father, Amram — regardless of Pharaoh’s decree,³² “He took his wife back and remarried her.”³³

²⁷ *Shemos* 6:29.

²⁸ See *Shemos* 15:1, et passim; and Rashi, ad loc.

²⁹ *Shemos* 1:16.

³⁰ *Shemos* 1:17.

³¹ Rashi on *Shemos* 1:17.

³² {Amram had separated from Yocheved because of Pharaoh’s decree to kill all newborn boys (Rashi on *Shemos* 2:1).}

³³ Rashi on *Shemos* 2:1.

This is what the Torah wanted to emphasize: The reason that “Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon, and commanded them regarding the children of Israel and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt” — Hashem chose Moshe and Aharon to take the Jewish people out of Egypt — was because “These are the same Aharon and Moshe who **Yocheved bore to Amram.**” In this merit and due to this virtue of their parents — they sustained and kept the Jewish people alive in Egypt (“they kept them {the boys} alive”) — Moshe and Aharon were appointed to be the ones to whom “Hashem said, ‘Take the children of Israel out of Egypt.’”

9.

EQUAL AS ONE IN THEIR MISSION

In light of this, another difficulty arises: Amram “took his wife back and remarried her” only for the sake of the birth of **Moshe** — Aharon was born **before** this second marriage! Similarly, Yocheved’s refusal to obey Pharaoh’s decree took place **after** Aharon was born. Only for (the birth of) Moshe the verse says, “she hid him...”³⁴ Similarly, Moshe was the primary actor in preparing for and bringing about the redemption. Based on all the above, the verse should have mentioned Moshe first, before Aharon!

The same applies not only in **this** verse, (“This is Aharon and Moshe”) but also earlier, when Scripture addresses their ancestry. The whole purpose of these verses are, as discussed, was (not just to recount their ancestry, but rather) to rationalize why Moshe and Aharon merited to be the agents to bring about the **redemption**. In this verse, too, it should have said, “She {Yocheved} bore for him {Amram} Moshe and Aharon” (since the purpose of the anecdote regarding their birth is primarily for Moshe)!

Therefore, Rashi immediately continues, “There are places where Scripture mentions Aharon before Moshe...” With the words, “there are

³⁴ *Shemos* 2:2.

places,” Rashi refers to the earlier verse, “She bore for him Aharon and Moshe” (in addition to the verse ,“This is Aharon and Moshe”) — “to teach that they are equal.”

The wording here is precise, “to teach that they are equal [as one].”³⁵ This does not mean that Moshe and Aharon were equivalent, i.e., they both shared the same level of greatness, or the like. Rather, in their mission to redeem the Jewish people from Egypt, they were both **as one**. (This singularity is such that) they both were a part of **one** and the same mission.

Accordingly, “There are places where Scripture mentions Aharon before Moshe, and there are other places where Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon” because they were both parts of **one** mission.

10.

THE EXAMPLE BY AMRAM AND YOCHED

The verse’s addition, “they are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh to take...” as a self-standing concept, demonstrates that also in this regard — speaking to Pharaoh — their prestigious ancestry, “those who were mentioned earlier, who Yocheved bore to Amram,” is relevant. We must clarify: What is the connection between their ancestry and their role as “the ones who spoke to Pharaoh?”

Therefore, Rashi explains: “They are the ones who were commanded {to speak to Pharaoh}, and they are the ones who fulfilled it.” Their mission to speak to Pharaoh was accomplished because they were — “the ones”³⁶ — “who Yocheved bore to Amram”:

Yocheved’s stand and her refusal to obey Pharaoh’s decree entailed struggle and even self-sacrifice. This is demonstrated by Pharaoh

³⁵ {See fn. 2.}

³⁶ {There is an important nuance here that is the basis of the explanation in this whole section: When Rashi says “they are the ones who were commanded,” the words “they are” refers to Rashi’s earlier comment, “Those who were mentioned earlier, who Yocheved bore to Amram.”}

summoning the midwives and demanding, “Why have you done this thing, that you have kept the boys alive?”³⁷ Therefore, Scripture emphasizes that their refusal to obey Pharaoh’s decree — “they did not do as the king of Egypt spoke to them, and they kept the boys alive” — was because “the midwives **feared** Hashem.”³⁸ For this reason, they received a special reward: “Hashem did good to the midwives... and it was because the midwives feared Hashem that He made houses for them.”³⁹

Similarly, Amram’s remarriage with Yocheved was fraught with hardship and miracles, as Rashi explains.⁴⁰

The same applies to the conduct of Aharon and Moshe in speaking to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. This was also fraught with hardship, as the Torah describes earlier: Pharaoh told them,⁴¹ “Moshe and Aharon, why are you distracting the nation...? Go to your own burdens....”

Therefore, the verse adds, “they are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh to take...”:⁴² How they spoke with Pharaoh, and how they executed their mission also made it clear that Moshe and Aharon are “those who were mentioned earlier, who Yocheved bore to Amram.” Meaning, “Hashem said to them, ‘Take the children of Israel out,’”⁴³ because Moshe and Aharon perpetuated and exemplified the noble quality of their parents, Amram and Yocheved, in their desire to fulfill Hashem’s will and command with all their strength. This is demonstrated by {Rashi’s remarks}: “They are the ones who were commanded, and they are the ones who fulfilled it.”⁴⁴

³⁷ {*Shemos* 1:18.}

³⁸ {*Shemos* 1:17.}

³⁹ *Shemos* 1:20-21.

⁴⁰ {See Rashi on *Shemos* 2:1.}

⁴¹ *Shemos* 5:2 ff.

⁴² {*Shemos* 6:27.}

⁴³ {*Shemos* 6:26.}

⁴⁴ {In other words, the fact that Moshe and Aharon fulfilled what they were commanded, reflects their inherent virtue, which is why Hashem chose them in the first place.}

11.

DIFFICULTIES ON THE SECOND VERSE

When the verse continues and adds, “This is Moshe and Aharon,” the following difficulties arrive:

- a. Why does the Torah repeat this choice of words a second time?
- b. Why does this verse reverse the order and mention Moshe before Aharon? [Rashi’s assertion that “there are places” in which Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon (which teaches us that “they are equal”) does not refer (specifically) to this verse, as mentioned above. Rather, Rashi refers to the earlier verses in which Scripture mentions Moshe before Aharon.]
- c. The verse begins in plural: “They are the ones who spoke,” and it concludes (not “**they** are Moshe and Aharon,” but rather), “this is Moshe and Aharon,” in the singular.

Consequently, Rashi explains, “**they** {remained steadfast} in their mission and their righteousness from beginning to end”: The point of “**this** is Moshe and Aharon” here, is not the same as in the verse, “This is Aharon and Moshe,” in the earlier verse. In the earlier verse, the emphasis is that “they are equal.” Here, however, this verse intends to convey that “**they** {remained steadfast} in their mission” (in the plural — both of them) each one as **individuals**.

Meaning, the statement, “they are equal” — in terms of their mission, they are considered as “one,” as discussed above — only relates to their mission as a command from Hashem, “to whom Hashem said.” The **actual** execution of their mission, however, was not “**as one**,”⁴⁵ but rather as two, each carried out differently.

⁴⁵ {See fn. 2.}

Moshe “argued” with Hashem: “Send by the hand of whomever you will send....”⁴⁶ (Moshe, in his righteousness, “did not want to assume a superior position over Aharon”).⁴⁷ In contrast, Aharon “will see you and will rejoice in his heart”;⁴⁸ “it is not as you {Moshe} think, that he will resent you because you are ascending to greatness.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, regarding the mission itself, Moshe was the “head” and he played a primary role, while Aharon was to be his “**mouthpiece** and interpreter”⁵⁰ to speak to the Jewish people and to Pharaoh. Moshe was “a master over Pharaoh”⁵¹ — “a judge and a ruler, to rule over him with plagues and by tormenting him,”⁵² while “Aharon your brother shall be your speaker”⁵³ — “he will interpret and explain it to Pharaoh.”⁵⁴

Rashi points out all of the above by offering additional explanation and emphasis: “**they** {remained steadfast} in their mission and in their righteousness.” The words “this is” {lit., “*he* is,” in the singular} in **this verse** that mentions Moshe before Aharon, refers to Moshe and Aharon as individuals. (It is as if the verse had said, “this is Moshe, and this is Aharon”). This explains the meaning of “**they** {remained steadfast} in their mission and in their righteousness”: Regarding the actual execution of the mission, they are considered “they” — a plurality — two distinct approaches “in their mission” (correlated to their distinct virtues and) also “in their righteousness.”⁵⁵

⁴⁶ *Shemos* 4:13.

⁴⁷ Rashi on *Shemos* 4:10.

⁴⁸ *Shemos* 4:14.

⁴⁹ Rashi on *Shemos* 4:14.

⁵⁰ Rashi on *Shemos* 6:13.

⁵¹ *Shemos* 7:1.

⁵² Rashi on *Shemos* 7:1.

⁵³ *Shemos* 7:1.

⁵⁴ Rashi on *Shemos* 7:2.

⁵⁵ {This answers the second question in section 6, as to what the phrase, “in their righteousness” adds. Namely, the mission each one performed was different based on his level and type of righteousness.}

12.

THE WINE OF TORAH

From the wine of Torah⁵⁶ in Rashi's commentary:

Chassidus explains⁵⁷ that Moshe and Aharon correspond to the Divine names *Havayah*⁵⁸ and *Elokim*,⁵⁹ respectively. Accordingly, {the two similarly worded clauses, with the names of Aharon and Moshe, reversed} “this is Aharon and Moshe,” and “this is Moshe and Aharon” (and not, “they are Moshe and Aharon, etc.”) imply that Moshe and Aharon constitute a single entity, symbolizing the Divine union of *Havayah* and *Elokim*, “*Havayah* is {one with} *Elokim*.”

This explains the two verses, “This is Aharon and Moshe,” and “this is Moshe and Aharon”: There are two levels⁶⁰ in the union of *Havayah* and *Elokim* alluded to by Scripture's repetition of the clause,⁶¹ “*Havayah* is *Elokim*.” We may posit that these two levels are reflected in the two verses,⁶² “You have been shown to know that *Havayah* is *Elokim*...,” and,⁶³ “You shall know this day and take to your heart that *Havayah* is *Elokim* in the heavens above and on earth below, there is none other.”

The verse, “This is Aharon and Moshe” alludes to the spiritual level of “*Havayah* is {one with} *Elokim*” as it is reflected in the verse, “You have been shown to know...,” and “this is Moshe and Aharon” hints to the spiritual level of “*Havayah* is {one with} *Elokim*” as it is reflected in the verse, “you shall know this day....”

⁵⁶ {I.e., the deeper teachings of Torah; see *Hayom Yom* for 29 Shevat.}

⁵⁷ *Or Hatorah, parshas Vaeira*, p. 145, 226, et passim.

⁵⁸ {I.e., the Tetragrammaton.}

⁵⁹ {*Havayah* represents G-dliness itself, which transcends creation. *Elokim* represents the level of G-dliness that is limited and enfolded within creation (nature). The union of the two represents the fact that in essence, even what appears to us as nature and as a concealment of G-dliness is really one with Hashem Himself.}

⁶⁰ {See section 13.}

⁶¹ 1 *Melachim* 18:39.

⁶² *Devarim* 4:35.

⁶³ *Devarim* 4:39.

13.

THE UNION OF *HAVAYAH* AND *ELOKIM*

The explanation of the above subject:⁶⁴ The union denoted by the statement, “*Havayah* is *Elokim*,” as expressed in the verse, “You have been shown to know” is a revelation from Above to below. This accords with the explanation of the verse given by the Alter Rebbe:⁶⁵

“You” — You, the blessed Essence of *Ein Sof*;⁶⁶ “have been shown” — You have shown Yourself; “to know” — that we should know You.

Consequently, the verse does not say, “in the heavens above and on earth below,” because this revelation from Above accentuates the source — “Above” (in “names”)⁶⁷ — of every entity. Therefore, heaven and earth are not viewed as independent realities.

In contrast, the union of *Havayah* and *Elokim* expressed in the verse, “**You shall know** this day and **take to your heart**” is in the manner of “below to Above.” The knowledge and recognition that *Havayah* is *Elokim* are accomplished by a person through his own effort. Therefore, “heaven” and “earth” are two distinct realities. Since this union occurs from “below to Above,” we perceive the diversity of creation, and we are challenged to bring about a revealed unity and oneness in them.

On the other hand, specifically this mode of bringing about the oneness of *Havayah* and *Elokim* from below to Above — {i.e., from the person himself, as expressed in the verse} “you shall know...” — evinces the Divine unity more than the oneness caused by the revelation from Above (“you have been shown”). Although the world seems to be an independent existence, nevertheless, the world is one with Hashem in an ultimate

⁶⁴ For elaboration of the following concepts, see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1334 ff.

⁶⁵ Quoted in the 2nd *Maamar* “*Vayedaber Elokim 5704*,” ch. 4.

⁶⁶ {Literally, “Without end”; “Infinite.”}

⁶⁷ {We perceive the existence of heaven and earth solely as their source Above, in the names of Hashem. Meaning, the existence of “heaven” is from the name *Havayah*, and the existence of earth derives from the name *Elokim*. The innovation of this teaching is that these two names (Above) are One. However at this level, to begin with, we don't perceive heaven and earth as independent entities.}

oneness. This is achieved through a revelation of Hashem Himself, who is omnipotent and reconciles opposites.⁶⁸

14.

THE ONENESS OF MOSHE AND THE ONENESS OF AHARON

These two approaches, conveyed by the clauses, “this is Aharon and Moshe” and “this is Moshe and Aharon,” is what Rashi explains and makes known:

“This is Aharon and Moshe” refers to “**those who were mentioned** earlier, who **Yocheved bore...**” This alludes to the level of unity of *Havayah* and *Elokim* that is revealed (“born”) from Above, since the verse says (as the simple understanding of the verse suggests), “to whom Hashem said” — Divine speech, from Above.

Accordingly, this revelation from Above communicates that “they are equal, {united} **as one**.”⁶⁹ From the outset, there is no room for divisibility or separation; rather, there is only a single level — unity.

The second verse says, “this is Moshe and Aharon.” The fact that the Torah repeats what the first verse said, reversing the order, indicates that this alludes to a higher spiritual level {of unity}. Rashi explains and makes known that this higher level is accomplished through the *avodah* and efforts of those “below”: “**They** {remained steadfast} in their mission and in their righteousness” is a continuation of the verse, “**they are** the ones who spoke to Pharaoh” — “they are the ones who fulfilled it” {i.e., the focus is on the *avodah* of Moshe and Aharon}. From the perspective of a person’s *avodah*, there is divisiveness and separation among created beings.

⁶⁸ {Lit., “tolerates, or bears, opposites.” Only from the perspective of Essence, can these two contradictory elements coexist, i.e., something appearing to be an independent entity, is one with Him.}

⁶⁹ {See fn. 2}

Specifically in this manner, when unity is achieved by a person's *avodah*, then there is no fluctuation "from beginning to end." For this unity is related to the oneness {of created beings with Hashem} as it is from the perspective of Hashem Himself, as discussed, which transcends the constraints of variability and divisibility, etc.

This will be revealed only in the era of Moshiach when "the world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem..."⁷⁰ Then, we will merit that "Moshe and Aharon will be with us,"⁷¹ with the coming of Moshiach.

— Based on a talk delivered on *motzei Shabbos parshas Vaeira*, 5739 (1979)

⁷⁰ *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

⁷¹ *Tosafos*, "*Pesachim* 114b," s.v., "*echad*."