

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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עשרת ימי תשובה

THE REAL KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

When we were young we used to play the game called King of the Mountain. It wasn't a board game and one just needed a mound of earth at least three feet tall and with a slope. One boy would stand on top and defend his position against all those who tried to climb the mountain and push him off and take his place. He deserved the title king of the mountain when everyone else gave up and could not push him off.

There are some grown men who still play this activity but not with a mound of earth. Some adults feel that if they are the richest person in the world or even in their community they have acquired the title of King of the Mountain. Others who develop a technology better than a competitor and momentarily leads the market's choice, feels that he is King of the Mountain in technology. In medicine if the polls show that their product for losing weight is a better seller than their competition then it is they who claim to be called king of the Mountain. The same is with competitive sports that football is called the King of Sports. Their pride and haughtiness is that they themselves reached their position because of their outstanding talent, intelligence, and creativity. Unfortunately Hashem is not part of their equation or mind set.

The Jewish Nation on Rosh Hashanah accepts upon themselves the sovereignty of Hashem as the King of the universe, without whose presence behind every atom and molecule, would make the entire world non existent faster than the blink of an eye. On Rosh Hashana we review and rededicate our consciousness to this fundamental which keeps us in check and aligns us with the will of Hashem. This *Yom Tov* saves us from becoming arrogant with our accomplishments and from fantasizing that we are the independent King of Mountain X.

Hashem descended on Mount Sinai to give us the Torah. It was by giving us the Torah which were the blueprints through which the world was created, that He demonstrated to us that He was not just King of the Mountain Sinai but King of the Universe. It was at this Mountain that He showed His humility by lowering and revealing Himself in front of His nation, a far cry from flaunting His constant achievements like other mountaineers. Sinai was the same mountain that Hashem first appeared to Moshe in a thorn bush to tell him to descend to *Mitzrayim* and free Yisrael from their bondage. It was through the thorn bush that Hashem *כביכול* showed His vulnerability as if He is in pain together with His nation and has compassion with their suffering, of which the likes will not be found by Kings of any by other Mountains.

Har Hamoriya is the another mountain in which Hashem shows He is king by descending upon it and sharing His presence with His nation for them to see and to experience. This is the designated mountain where one brings sacrifices to Hashem, for gratitude, for atonement, and to foster a more intimate and nurturing relationship with Hashem. Being King of the Mountain is not like the game to control and push everyone away but rather to share and benefit others, to forgive, spread kindness and to show your humbleness.

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Avraham Avinu also shared the title of King of the Mountain but in a completely different sense. When Hashem sent him off with Yitzchak for the last of his Ten Tests, the *Akaidah*, he ascended *Har Hamoriya*. The Chanukas Hatorah which was written by the Rebbe of the Shach, reveals that the mountain of Moriah was not always a mountain. It was originally flat and only at the *Akaidah* it was formed into a mountain. He brings a proof from the *passuk* אשר יאמר היום בהר ה' יראה that Avraham after the *Akaidah* said I am calling the name of this mountain ה' יראה that became a mountain just today, Why did Hashem make this miracle of creating a mountain from flat land in honor of the *Akaidah*? We suggest the following answer. The Chazal say that in the Days of *Moshiach* Hashem will sheat the *Yetzar Hara* in front of the *tzaddikim* and *reshaim*. To the *tzadikim* the *yetzer* will appear as a mountain and to the wicked it will appear as a piece of hair.

כדרש רבי יהודה לעתיד לבא מביאו הקדוש ברוך הוא ליצר הרע ושוחטו בפני הצדיקים ובפני הרשעים צדיקים נדמה להם כהר גבוה ורשעים נדמה להם כחוט השערה הללו בוכין והללו בוכין ואומרים היאך יכולנו לכבוש הר גבוה כזה ורשעים בוכין ואומרים היאך לא יכולנו לכבוש את חוט השערה הזה ואף הקדוש ברוך הוא תמה עמהם שנאמר כה אמר ה' צבאות כי יפלא בעיני שארית העם הזה בימים ההם גם בעיני יפלא

The *meforshim* explain that it appears as a mountain because every seduction of the *yetzar harah* of the *tzadik* was met with opposition and refusal to be swayed. The next time the *yetzer hara* strove to falter man again he came with more enticements than before and nevertheless it was still met with the same obstinacy of the *tzadik* not listening to the *yetzer harah*. With each test of the *yetzer hara* and the *tzadik's* resistance the *yetzer hara* became larger and stronger reaching the size of a mountain. It is in this sense "More means less". That the more his *yetzer harah's* grows the less attached he becomes to it. In contrast is the *yetzer harah* of the *rasha* who was able to convince the *rasha* to do an *aveirah* on the first try and therefore his *yetzer* is compared to single piece of hair. Avraham at the final test of the *Akaidah* was fraught with his hardest challenges. The *yetzer harah* tried to persuade Avraham not to sacrifice his son from many angles. The *yetzer harah* (Satan) even made an illusion of a river by *Har Hamoriya* which was impossible to cross. Yet Avraham with all the seductions and hurdles of the *yetzar hara* serving as active impediments not to fulfill Hashem's wishes, he still refused to stop his holy mission. All during this time of battle, the *yetzer harah* inside of Avraham grew to the point that it reached the size of a mountain built from all of his refusals to the evil inclination's tactics.

The mountain of Moriya itself mirrored and reflected the rise of Avraham's mountain within himself. For the more Avraham defeated his *yetzer harah* the more holy and elevated both physically and spiritually the place of the *Akaidah* became. This was a testimony for future generations that the more the *yetzer hara* becomes a mountain within yourself because you refuse to listen, the more Hashem will dwell inside of you ושכנתי בתוכם.

Avraham Avinu also earned the crown title of being the king of the mountain. However different from all the other crowns, his mountain was referring to his *yetzer harah*. That title of King of the Mountain means a lot more than any individual who becomes King of Mountain X which involves mere physical objects, trophies and fame. Those mountains can never become alive. Not so with spirituality that can actually move mountains as *Dovid Hamelech* says in Tehillim ההרים רקדו כאלים גבעות כבני צאן

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The mountains and hills danced at *Matan Torah*. This is not a mashal but a truth just like the beginning of the *passuk* הים ראה וינוס הירדן תסב לאחור which were both true actual events.

Climbing Mount **Everest** makes you King of the Mountain, but it is not **forever** for you will eventually lose your kinship and your record will soon be broken. It also doesn't make **you** forever as well. In contrast to become King over the spiritual Mountain demands hard core resistance and constant investment of toil and discipline 24/7. Avraham was the real mountaineer who passed on his career of life to his descendants each with a personal unique mission from Hashem Himself to transform one's *yetzer Harah* into a mountain thereby declaring yourself as the King of the Mountain. This feat will last forever in a world that is forever and with Hashem who is the infinite King of Kings and sustainer of the universe.

Rav Brazil,

Gut Shabbos