

Moshe recites Hashem's poem.

צור יְלִדָּךְ תְּשִׁי ותְּשַׁבָּח אֶל מַחְלָלָךְ:

"Rock that born you is forsaken, and you have forgotten the Lord that formed you." (Devarim 32:18).

Why is the yud in **תְּשִׁי** small?

There are many letters in the Torah that have unique features. Some are larger than others and some are smaller. Some have dots on top of them, and there are even inverted nun letters. The yud in the word teshi / forsaken is small. The other small letters in the Torah are heh and alef. **אֱלֹהָה תֹּולְחוֹת הַשְׁמִים וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהַבְּרָאָם בַּיּוֹם עַשְׂוֹת הָאֱלֹקִים אָרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם:** "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created together on the day Hashem made matter and space." (Bereishis 2:4). There is a little heh in "they were created" to indicate what a small part they had in creation. One would think that they had some part in creation. Previously, Hashem consulted the earth when He wanted to make mankind. (Ibid 1:26). Yet, this indicates they were creations themselves and while the earth (or matter) was able to sprout vegetation and the sky housed the flying creatures, they really had nothing to do with Creation at all.

As has been discussed in Vayikra previously (5782), Sefer Vayikra begins with **וַיְקַרֵּא אֱלֹהִים** "And it called to Moshe." (Vayikra 1:1). And it called has a little alef. This indicates that it was the Cloud of Glory, being the Ministering Angel, that called to Moshe. It would descend upon his tent outside the camp and that would indicate to Moshe that Hashem was there. The little alef is there to indicate that while heavenly angels are sent from Hashem they are not nearly as important or on the same status as Hashem. (Unlike what some other religions mistakenly believe).

The small letters are also the silent letters. Alef has no sound of its own. Yud often has no sound when it holds the vowel for the letter before it, like in the word bina – knowledge. Heh often has no sound at the end of a word. The other silent letter – at least some of the time – is vav, but I have not found a small vav. There is a broken vav in the word shalom. (Bamidbar 25:12). This is because Pinchas earned the Pact of Peace through aggression. It shows that sometimes peace (shalom) comes by breaking the wholeness (shalom).

There are more large letters in the Torah. Bereishis starts with a big beis. (Bereishis 1:1). The alef of Adam is large. (Divrei HaYomim 1:1). **שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הָאֱלֹקִינוּ הָאֱלֹהִים:** "Hear, O Yisroel, Hashem is our Lord, Hashem is one." (Devarim 6:4). The ayin and dalet are both large. They form the word "witness." They also indicate that one has to listen very carefully. The ayin has a sound, albeit from the back of the throat. The listener has to listen carefully for its sound. The dalet indicates the four corners and directions of our

physical world. It also indicates a doorway (dalet is a door). It also means poor. Just as one has to let the poor through the doorway so they can get help, man has to go through the door as a beggar so he can get the aid and help of Hashem. Hashem is the only one that can help and provide. Hashem is unique in His ability to help and provide.

There are two silent letters that are also large. The vav in פָּלַח עַל־גִּחְוֹן “All who go on their bellies.” (Vayikra 11:42). Vav means a hook, which is why it is the prefix “and.” It is a straight letter. It is also a silent letter in this word. Animals that go on their bellies all have winding and zig-zag patterns of movement. Gichon means to wind. It includes animals that have no legs and also those that have legs but its belly slides across the ground. These animals also tend to be quiet predators.

The yud is also large in **עַתָּה יְגִלְּנָה כֵּן** “And now let Your strength be great.” (Bamidbar 14:17). Moshe was asking for forgiveness after the incident of the Ten Scouts and the Korach rebellion. The yud can be a silent letter. In this word, it is not. It is also the first letter of Hashem’s name. Moshe was asking for Hashem—the relationship between Him and man—to be foremost and for Him to recognize His own thirteen attributes of mercy. What makes Hashem great, Moshe was saying, was the Hashem aspect—the relationship with mankind. Also, the thirteen attributes start off with Hashem, Hashem. This is hinted at with the large yud.

The yud is small and silent in teshi for this reason, too. When Bnei Yisroel forgets Hashem and forsakes Him, the silent yud has to be little. They forget their relationship with Hashem, their silent partner who provides all the funding. Forsaking Hashem does not come all at once. It comes with sinning and then mistakenly thinking that all is lost because of that sin. That sin leads to others. One instance of forgetting leads to others. Then the mountain of repentance seems too high to climb. Or, one can forget Hashem is running the world during good times. All seems right and one can forget the source. Then that can lead to other times forgetting. Even when reminders come or even bad times, one can remain in a state of forsaking. Forgetting the yud – Hashem and the thirteen attributes – is the real forsaking of Hashem.

Succos is all about the relationship between man and Hashem. It is a time to sit in a hut and remind oneself that all the good comes from Hashem. Protection, wealth, health, nachas, all come from Hashem. It is a festival of ingathering, to count one's blessings, and to recall the source; to sit in a Mikdash m'at and be festive with Hashem. The yud is small and sometimes silent. But it is always there and it is always great.

Have a Chag Sameach.