

# KIRUV: THE MESSAGE AND THE MEDIUM

## Background

**M**oshe Rabbeinu is now being charged with the ultimate mission: to take the Jewish Nation out of Egypt. Yet he hesitates. In this *posuk*, we are clearly shown that his reason is that he feels he would make a poor emissary. “I have blocked lips,” he says, meaning, “I have a speech impediment.” Rashi explains why Moshe was certain this would be a problem. If the Jewish people, for whom his message is good news and who have a strong vested interest in accepting his word, didn’t accept it because of his inability to speak eloquently, surely Pharaoh, to whom this message spells disaster, would not accept the word of a man who cannot speak well.

### ספר שמות פרק ו

(ב) וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה לְפָנֵי יְדֹד  
לְאֹמֶר הֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא  
שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאִיךָ יִשְׁמְעֵנִי  
פְּרַעֲהַ וְאֲנִי עֶרְל שְׁפָתַיִם

*And Moshe spoke before HASHEM saying, “The Jewish Nation didn’t listen to me. How will Pharaoh listen to me when I have blocked lips?”*

### רש"י על שמות פרק ו פסוק יב

(ב) וַאִיךָ יִשְׁמְעֵנִי פְּרַעֲהַ  
- זֶה אֶחָד מֵעֲשָׂרָה ק"ו  
שְׁבִתוֹרָה (ב"ר פ' ל"ב)  
עֶרְל שְׁפָתַיִם - אֵטוֹם  
שְׁפָתַיִם

**How will Pharaoh listen to me:** - *This is one of the ten kal va'chomers (logically based arguments) in the Torah.*

**Blocked lips** - *the words עֶרְל שְׁפָתַיִם here mean “sealed” or “blocked.”*

## Questions

**W**hether or not Pharaoh should let the Jewish Nation go should be based on the logic presented. The only relevant issue is whether or not Moshe is the representative of G-d. Does G-d have the power to destroy the entire Egyptian nation or doesn't he? How well-spoken Moshe is has nothing to do with it. He isn't being chosen as an orator. The only question is whether the message he is delivering is true. Why would Moshe Rabbeinu assume that because he wasn't an internationally noted speaker, Pharaoh would not accept his words?