



Wonderful Well

In merit of our three great leaders, the Jews were granted three special gifts in the *midbar*. In Moshe Rabbeinu's merit the Jews were given the manna, Aharon Hacoheh's merit brought the Clouds of Glory, and Miriam brought the well. What connection is there between Miriam and her gift, what is the deeper significance of the special source of water?

Rabbeinu Bechaye notes that Miriam had a singular connection to water. Because she stood on the banks of the Nile watching her brother to protect him, she is the one to bring the bounty of water to her people. Further, as a midwife facilitating life, Miriam herself is the paradigm of *chessed*, parallel to water that gives life and sustains humanity. The *Netziv* explains that the water and the manna were distributed to the people in the desert in a similar way. A person's level of righteousness determined how close the manna fell to his home. How did they receive water? The well would station itself near the Mishkan and send out a river to flow toward each tribe. Mini

tributaries would then branch off and flow to the homes of those who were *nedivei lev*, people of generosity. Yet another association between water and *chessed*.

The *Be'er Miriam* was one of the ten entities created at twilight on the very first erev Shabbos. The *Alshich Hakadosh* notes that it was no coincidence that these things were created after *Adam Harishon* sinned. Each one of them serves in some way to rectify Adam's sin and bring the world closer to its original perfection. How do we see that Miriam's Well accomplished this?

Maharal explains that a well is found deep in the ground and its water must be drawn upwards. This symbolizes the affinity of the Jew who desires closeness to Hashem; throughout *Shir Hashirim* this is characterized as the male-female relationship. Miriam, the quintessential leader of the women never gives up on redemption and closeness to Hashem. She encourages the women in Egypt to have children and is the one who inspires them to prepare musical

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instruments for the *Geulah*. She is the one who gives hope to those who didn't see the water/salvation and the belief that if they dig deep it will come. It was Miriam's inspiration that rekindled that feeling of desire to be close to Hashem, returning to the spirit of *Gan Eden* even in a state of exile.

Rav Eliyahu Ki Tov explains that we find the well of Miriam even earlier in *Tanach*. It is the same well of water that Hashem reveals to Hagar when she is parched in the desert. The well symbolizes *emunah*, the belief that Hashem is always taking care of us. This the legacy of Miriam and all righteous women through the millennia that believe in Hashem's salvation even when it is not clearly revealed. It is the lifeline that accompanies us always, we just have to believe it is there and ask Hashem to open our eyes so we can see it. ■

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