



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

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Believing in Miracles

In this week's parsha, we see that Pharaoh not only denies Moshe's request to let Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, but instead he cruelly adds to their physical labor. This is part of Pharaoh's wicked plan, as he knows that if Bnei Yisrael are preoccupied with their hard work, they will not have the time to think of their freedom and connection to Hashem.

We see this lack of connection between Bnei Yisrael and Hashem come to light in his words to Moshe: "וְאֵלֶּיךָ אֶל-אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֵל-יְהוָה וְשָׂמִי יְהוָה לֹא נוֹדַעְתִּי לָךְהָ. יִצְחָק וְאֵל-יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל-שַׁדִּי וְשָׂמִי יְהוָה לֹא נוֹדַעְתִּי לָךְהָ". Hashem says he will reveal himself to Moshe and Bnei Yisrael in a way he did not reveal himself to the Avot. This raises a question, why does Hashem say that he did not reveal himself to the Avot? As we know, Hashem did so many times throughout Sefer Bereshit? The Ramban explains that Hashem is telling Moshe that he will show Bnei Yisrael a quality he did not show the Avot. This quality is the ability to perform public miracles which he did not show the Avot, who only experienced hidden miracles.

In Sefer Kuzari, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi explains that the Avot didn't need public

miracles, for their *emuna* was strong, and so the hidden miracles Hashem performed for them were enough for them to know Hashem was there for them. Bnei Yisrael's *emuna* in Egypt was not as strong, so they needed said miracles to believe. R' Yehuda's explanation shows that although Pharaoh's plan had worked, Hashem had a counter. Bnei Yisrael did not have the time to work on their *emuna* and connection to Hashem but using public miracles, Hashem was able to help them believe strongly again.

Though we may not have the physical toll that distracted Bnei Yisrael in Egypt, we have plenty of distractions throughout the day. It's important that even when dealing with harder situations we remember to take a minute, connect to Hashem and remember that he is there for us always.



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A Deeper Space

There's a peculiar exchange found right at the beginning of this week's parashah, when Hashem tells Moshe, "I am Hashem. I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov with [the name] Sha-dai, but

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[with] My name Havayah, I did not become known to them.”

What’s the context? These words are the answer to Moshes’ question in last week’s parasha’s conclusion: “O Hashem! Why have You harmed these people? Why have You sent me?” Moshe rallied against Hashem for sending him to Pharaoh when he saw that instead of improving the Jews’ situation, Pharaoh retaliated by ordering them to work even harder “Why have you been so cruel?!” Moshe cries out. And what does Hashem answer? Something about which names He used for the Avot vs. the name He plans on using now. Huh? Moshe asked a painfully honest question. His heart bled for his brothers’ and sisters’ suffering, and he cried out from deep anguish, demanding to understand why Hashem sent him to only make matters worse. How does this lesson about name changes address anything Moshe said? What, then, is that secret?

It’s much the same with every challenge in our lives, hardships exist to bring us to a better and deeper place. So, if matters look bleak, perhaps the reason is that there’s really something deeper, better, and more meaningful in store for you. The perfect world you had until now was too superficial and insufficient for someone with your depth. Hashem decided that you’re destined for more, but in the meantime, it’s dark, confusing, and difficult. This is only because of the process of getting to a deeper place which can give space for negative consequences. But, just around the bend is a time and a space that is even deeper and greater and will make this period worthwhile. ■



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