



Parshas Vaera

January 4, 2019

A Taste of Torah

Miraculously Natural

by Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

During these weeks, the Torah relates the amazing miracles of the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Sea. Many people often think that if only they would have the opportunity to witness such miracles, it would be quite simple to put their faith in Hashem. While that may well be the case, the reality is that we do not witness open miracles of that magnitude, which leaves us with the question: How, indeed, are we to build a proper faith in Hashem? Hashem tells Moshe to inform the Bnai Yisrael that they will be taken out of Egypt and will be brought to Eretz Yisrael. Hashem concludes this command by saying (Va'era 6:9), "Ani Hashem," "I am G-d". The Chasam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer; 1762-1839) wonders about this strange ending - what is its meaning and its connection to the message that the Jewish Nation will be brought to the Land of Israel?

The Chasam Sofer explains that when the Bnai Yisrael went into the desert, they witnessed many miracles. One of the amazing miracles they experienced was that when they were unable to get food, Hashem sent them manna from heaven. This was an open miracle; G-d provided food from heaven supernaturally. However, the generation that was born in the desert grew up with this reality that food comes down from the sky; though they were familiar with the concept of growing food from the earth, it certainly was not a fact of life to which they were accustomed. Upon arriving in Eretz Yisrael, they suddenly shifted to a world where food is produced through plowing, planting, and harvesting, and the many specifics this process entails. The "natural" way that food is produced by the earth is incredibly complex and wondrous. To the average person, it is not astounding, as it is part and parcel of life, and one is accustomed to food growing from the ground. To the generation that grew up

in the desert, however, the myriad details of the natural world that are necessary for a loaf of bread to be produced were something they had not had a great deal of experience with, and they thus were able to realize the incredible intricacy of Hashem's Creation.

This is the explanation of "Ani Hashem." When the Bnai Yisrael come from the desert to Eretz Yisrael, they will first then come to the realization of "Ani Hashem," an entirely new understanding of Hashem's greatness upon seeing the intricate beauty of Hashem's laws of nature.

We tend to perceive nature all around us as simply matter of fact. The miracles of the desert, such as the manna, cause us to stop and be in awe of G-d. However, for the generation of the desert that lived with this reality, it was the transition to living in and beholding the natural world that brought them to recognize "Ani Hashem."

In the Pesach Haggadah, the author of the Haggadah expounds upon the words "Ani Hashem" and comments, "Ani Hu vilo acher," "I am He and there is no other." Rabbi Gedalia Schorr (1910-1979) explains that the term of *Hu*, He, connotes G-d in a state of hiddenness. Sometimes we don't see G-d's Hand clearly. Sometimes we don't understand G-d's ways. Additionally, the world itself with its laws of nature tends to hide G-d's presence. However, the term of *Ani*, I, connotes G-d when He is perceived clearly within the confines of this world. "Ani Hu," "I am He," can thus be understood that although Hashem may seem to be hidden - *Hu* - and it is difficult at first glance to detect His Divine oversight of Creation, nonetheless, the very same - *vilo acher*, and no other - G-d can be revealed through the natural world, if one takes the time to be amazed by what He has created.

With this we can better understand the

Stories for the Soul

A Cry from the Depths

Rabbi Yeshayah Bardaki (1790-1862) was on a ship from Europe, headed to Eretz Yisrael, when the ship went down near Yafo (Jaffa). He held on to his son and daughter and started swimming toward shore. As he swam, his strength waned, and he realized he would be unable to continue holding both children; if he kept going, all three would drown. He turned to his daughter and told her tearfully that he didn't have strength to take both of them ashore. As he let go of her, she began screaming, "Father! You're my only father! Please save me!" Her heartbreaking calls ripped Reb Yeshaya's heart and gave him a surge of strength. He grabbed hold of his daughter and made it to land with both children.

Years later, as Reb Yeshaya lay on his deathbed, he reminded his daughter about the incident. "Do you remember when your life was in danger, and you called out to me and my compassion was aroused? My daughter, whenever you're in a difficult situation, call out to Hashem. 'Father! You're my only father! Please save me!' and you will be answered. I am a human being; my compassion and my strength are limited, but I couldn't refuse your cries. Certainly then, when you call out to our Father in Heaven, whose compassion and whose abilities are limitless, you will be saved."

In this week's parsha, Hashem tells Moshe that He will redeem the Jewish People because He has heard their cries. A sincere cry to Heaven is never ignored.

Kollel Happenings

SAVE THE DATE FOR WINTER GARDENS - WOMEN'S NIGHT OUT

An event you don't want to miss! The Kollel Women's Division will hold its annual Winter Gardens - Women's Night Out on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. Featuring Mrs. Leah Rubashkin, who will share her personal story of faith, endurance and resilience during 8 years of trials and tribulations.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

LEARN 2 LEARN

You have long dreamed of acquiring the tools to achieve proficiency in learning Gemara on your own. But how? The Denver Community Kollel offers a comprehensive, step-by-step, level-by-level program crafted for people just like you. All you need is the ability to read Hebrew; we will teach you the rest. For more information, contact rmh@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: What is the maximum number of blessings possible in a legitimate *Shabbos Shemone Esrei*?

A: 20! The halacha is that if one began reciting one of the middle blessings of the weekday *Shemone Esrei* (the 13 blessings of supplications) on Shabbos, he concludes that blessing before reverting back to the middle Shabbos blessing. The reason is that the weekday blessings are not incorrect for Shabbos; their omission is only due to the honor of Shabbos. One's restfulness on Shabbos may be diminished by focusing on his physical wants and needs, which comprise the basis of these middle

blessings. If one said them, the prayer is completely valid, assuming the Shabbos blessing was recited as well. Thus, a *Shabbos Shemone Esrei* comprising of the regular nineteen blessings (if one remembered only during, or after, the final middle-blessing of *Shema Koleinu*) and the additional Shabbos blessing is halachically legitimate.

Source: Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 268:2 and Mishna Berura 268:2

This week's question: What unique distinction does the Hebrew month of Shevat carry?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, Chasam Sofer Part XXVII

After about two years, Rabbi Sofer returned to Pressburg. In 1881, Rabbi Sofer was appointed chief rabbi of Erlau, also known by its German name, Eger. He founded a yeshiva there, calling it

Yeshivas Chasam Sofer. As its name suggests, its outlook was predicated upon the worldview of Rabbi Sofer's illustrious father and grandfather, the Ksav Sofer and Chasam Sofer, respectively.

A Taste of Torah

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aforementioned words of the Chasam Sofer. Until their point of entry into Eretz Yisrael, the Jewish People did not have a full appreciation of *Ani*, the revelation of Hashem, until they had the opportunity to behold the wondrous natural world and perceive Hashem within that natural world.

Although we live in a time of *hester panim*, hiddenness, when it is challenging to see the Hand of G-d, it is nevertheless possible, with just a little introspection, to realize how He is involved in our lives, and it is he who ultimately runs the world. In fact, it is our task to come to this realization. The Talmud (Shabbos 53b) relates a story of a man who was left alone to raise a newborn child. The man did not have enough money to hire a wet nurse to feed the child. A miracle occurred and he developed the ability to personally feed the child. There is a dispute regarding how to view this miracle. One opinion considers it

a great thing that such a miracle happened to this man, while another opinion maintains that this man is considered inferior, as G-d needed to change nature for him, rather than provide for him through natural means. Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1892-1953) explains that although when someone sees an open miracle, he becomes strengthened in his faith, this inspiration has come without personal effort. What G-d ultimately wants is that one should perceive and recognize Him through nature, even though His presence is not so obvious. The man whom nature was changed lost his ability to grow in his faith through his own efforts, for he had encountered a miraculous event which took away that need.

This, then, is our mission, to perceive Hashem in everyday life and close the gap between the supernatural and natural, to recognize that "*Ani Hu vilo acher.*"

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