



When Miracles Intrude on Nature

Avromi closed his eyes and breathed in deeply as he and Yankie passed by the matzah bakery on the way to school. "Aahh!" exclaimed Avromi. "I can't wait to eat that crispy, delicious matzah at the seder."

There's a lot more to matzah than its crunchy taste. Our sages call it the bread of belief. They tell us that in the merit of the Jewish people's belief in HaShem, we were redeemed from Egypt.

What is so special about the Jewish people's belief in HaShem? After all, many people all over the world throughout the generations have believed in one G-d. Yet our belief is different.

What makes people believe? Often, a person looks around and sees a world made up of billions of details, all existing according to many different sets of rules. "This could not have come to by all be itself," he thinks. "There must be a Creator Who makes it all happen. I wonder how big, strong, wonderful and powerful this Creator is," he asks himself. "He created nature itself," he decides. His belief ends there.

But our belief is different. We do not look at the world and decide that there must be a Creator. We know that HaShem has always been here, even before the world ever existed. It's not nature that teaches us to believe in HaShem. We know that He is more than "bigger and more powerful than nature itself." We know that he is far, far above nature. We know that everything - the natural and the supernatural - comes from HaShem. And we rely on Him and trust Him at all times.

Here's an example. We might watch a farmer planting seeds in the ground and ask him, "Why are you doing that? You are taking a perfectly good kernel, which can be eaten by animals or people, and you are burying it beneath the ground!"

The farmer would smile and explain, "This is the way nature works. When seeds are put in the ground, we can count on them to grow."

Yet the Talmud tells us that a Jew puts his trust in HaShem and plants his field. A Jew doesn't rely on nature alone; he relies on HaShem. He plants his seeds and believes that HaShem will make them grow.

What might that farmer think when the rules of nature suddenly change and supernatural things begin to happen? He may then begin to believe in a Creator who is greater than nature. But he may also try to explain that the supernatural things that happen are not really so supernatural; they may be just nature acting in unexpected ways. After all, it is hard for a person who is used to following nature to start thinking about a power higher than nature.

This is what happened when the great miracle of Kerias Yam Suf took place. Not only the Red Sea, but all the bodies of water in the world also split. When the nations saw this and asked what was happening, they were told about Kerias Yam Suf. They were amazed and became fearful of the Jewish people.

But soon, some people came up with different ideas. "Wait a minute," they said. "We heard that all over the world, waters split. This, then, is not a sign of some great Creator doing supernatural things for His chosen people. It's just a strange natural event taking place."

A Jew will not make this mistake. He believes that HaShem made the rules of nature and that He changes them as He sees fit. A Jew's trust is the same for both the natural and supernatural events.

This is the message hinted at in this week's parshah - Metzora. A person who spoke lashon hora suddenly saw tzoraas - blotches of white on the walls of his house, then on his clothes, and then on his skin. When tzoraas appeared a Jew did not call a building engineer, a clothing designer, or a doctor. He realized that this was clearly supernatural - a message from HaShem that he must mend his ways.

Just as tzoraas clearly came from HaShem, so a Jew believes that everything - the supernatural and the natural - comes from HaShem.

"And when he is cleansed ... then he shall number to himself ... before G-d for his issue." (Metzora 15:13-15)

QUESTION: What is the connection between these two pesukim and the 49 days of Sefirat HaOmer?

ANSWER: When the Jews were in Egypt, they sunk into the 49th level of impurity (Zohar Chadash, Shemot 31a). Upon leaving Egypt, they began to elevate themselves. Between Pesach and Shavuot they were cleansed of all impurity and were worthy of receiving the Torah.

In these three pesukim there are 49 words, which may be a remez (hint) to the 49 days of Sefirah, during which the Jewish people elevate and purify themselves. The Torah is teaching us that "Vechi yithar" — the way to accomplish purification and spiritual elevation — is through "vesafar" — "counting" (sefirah). The words "vesafar" or "usefartem" derive from the root word of "sapir" — brilliance and brightness. During Sefirah one is to refine each day one of the seven emotion-traits (midot), and each attribute contains elements of the other seven, a combination of 49 in total.

The 29th day of Sefirah is Pesach Sheini, and the 29th word of these pesukim is "Hashem." The reason for this is that when the Jews were impure and unable to offer the karban Pesach, they came to Moshe and asked him what they could do. Moshe's reply was: "Imdu ve'eshme'ah mah yetzaveh Hashem" — "Wait, so that I may hear what Hashem will command." Then Hashem told Moshe about Pesach Sheini (Bamidbar 9:8).

The 33rd word in these pesukim is "mo'eid," which also means "holiday," alluding to the 33rd day of Sefirah, Lag BaOmer.

(from www.sichosinenglish.org/books/vedibarta-bam)



Local Orthodox Boy Scouts troop is looking for a Scoutmaster.
If you have any suggestions please contact Yehudah Buchwalter.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Fred Lewin 11 Nissan - Monday night / Tuesday for mother Bosya bas Aryeh Lev

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday — 4/12 - 7 Nissan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Candles — 7:23 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat - 4/13 - 8 Nissan

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:48 a.m.
 Shabbos HaGadol Drasha — 6:00 p.m.
 Minchah — 7:05 p.m.
 Ma'ariv — 8:23 p.m.

Sunday - 4/14 — 9 Nissan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv — 7:30 p.m.

Monday — 4/15 — 10 Nissan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv — 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday - 4/16 — 11 Nissan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv — 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday 4/17—12 Nissan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv — 7:30 p.m.

Thursday - 4/18 — 13 Nissan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
 Mincha/Ma'ariv — 7:30 p.m.

Friday 4/19 - 14 Nissan

Fast of firstborn begins — 5:28 a.m.
 Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
 Finish eating Chametz before — 10:50 a.m.
 Finish burning Chametz before — 11:58 a.m.
 Candles — 7:30 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:35 p.m.
 Kiddush after — 8:17 p.m.