

Hashem is Everywhere

"The Bnei Yisrael came...to Midbar Zin...Miriam died there...there was no water...the nation quarreled with Moshe" (Bamidbar 20:1-3). For forty years, a miraculous well had traveled along with Klal Yisrael through the desert, providing all the water they needed. This well was in the *zechus* (merit) of Miriam the tsadekes, who waited by the water while her infant brother Moshe was placed in a basket and set afloat in the river. She went to the water for Moshe, and was rewarded with a well that everyone drew their water from. Now she died and there was no water. The nation fought with Moshe. "Why have you brought the Congregation of Hashem to this wilderness to die here...this evil place...and there is no water to drink!" (Bamidbar 20:4-5).

Moshe and Aharon turned to Hashem. "Take the staff...and speak to the rock...and it will bring forth water" (Bamidbar 20:8). "Moshe and Aharon gathered the congregation in front of the rock and said to them, 'Listen you rebellious ones, shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?'...And he lifted his hand and he hit the rock twice with his staff, and a great amount of water came out" (Bamidbar 20:10-11). This was the disastrous sin of "May Meriva". "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in full sight of Bnei Yisrael, therefore you will not bring them into the Land which I have given them" (Bamidbar 20:12). Rav Yerucham Levovitz, zt"l, the Mashgiach of the Mirrer Yeshiva, looks deeply into this episode. There is a lesson hidden here, which is so basic and important, that it will guide our entire lives.

"You did not believe in Me to sanctify Me." This is referred to as Kiddush Hashem. How do we perform this mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem? By demonstrating Hashem's holiness. We must first realize that Hashem is everywhere. His Presence fills the universe. In what way? The gemora (Berachos 10a) draws a parallel between Hashem's Presence in the world, and the *neschama's* (soul's) presence in the *guf* (body). Firstly, Hashem fills the whole world, just as the *neschama* fills the whole *guf*. How? Every part of the *guf* is filled with the spirit of life. Secondly, Hashem sees and is not seen, just as the *neschama* sees, feels, and senses, yet is not seen. Thirdly, Hashem empowers the whole world just the *neschama* powers the whole *guf*. It is the force that causes all of the limbs and organs to work. Fourth, Hashem is *tahor* (pure), and the *neschama* is *tahor*. Lastly, Hashem dwells in most hidden and private places. That is where you will find the *neschama*.

We most easily see Hashem's presence

at the time of a miracle. That is His reason for performing the miracle - to remind us that He exists and runs the world. Who merits to participate in Hashem's miracles? Those who have sanctified themselves, raised their *madrayga* (spiritual level), and brought themselves close to Him. Hashem commanded Moshe to speak to the rock, and it would bring forth water. Moshe became angry when he spoke to the nation. "Listen you rebellious ones" (Bamidbar 20:10). This anger lowered his *madrayga*, and he no longer merited the bigger miracle of speaking to the rock. Instead, it did not bring forth water until he hit it, a smaller miracle. This was Moshe Rabbeinu's mistake. He lowered his level and was not able to demonstrate the biggest possible Kiddush Hashem. And so, he would not lead the Jewish people into the Land of Israel.

*Kinderlach . . .
Rav Yerucham teaches us two very important lessons. Firstly, Hashem is everywhere - in the Beit HaKineset, in the classroom, even in the home. Most importantly, He is in the heart of each and every one of us. Feel His Presence and live with Him as reality. Let Him guide your life. Secondly, demonstrate His Presence by making yourselves holy, thereby making a Kiddush Hashem. Look for mitzvos to do all of the time. Do every mitzvah with simcha and a vitality that will make it plain to see that you are serving The King of Kings, The Holy One Blessed Be He. Eliminate all bad middos and aveiros that will drag you down. Hashem wants you to show the world Who He Is. Be a holy example kinderlach. Make a Kiddush Hashem.*



Think Big

"Abba, this waterfall is beautiful."
"Not only that, Chaim, it is very powerful."
"Abba, is there enough water in this waterfall for our family to drink all year?"
"Chaim, there are thousands of gallons of water falling every minute. This waterfall can do much more than provide drinking water. If a hydroelectric power plant

were built here, it could provide enough electricity to power our whole town."

"Wow! How would it work, Abba?"

"The engineers build a dam across the whole river to channel the water through a generator. It pushes the blades which turn the generators."

"This river is so big. Couldn't they build the dam across just half of the river?"

"I'm afraid that it wouldn't work, Chaim. The water would flow over the waterfall and not over the dam. It is all or nothing."

"If the river does not put its full strength into the power plant, then it cannot produce any electricity at all."

"Exactly."

"I just asked for drinking water. I had no idea that this river could do much, much more."

How many times have we heard the words, "Don't work too hard. Don't kill yourself"? They are excellent advice for earning a livelihood. The last Mishna in Mesecta Kiddushin states that a person should look for a livelihood that is easy and free of sin. However, learning Torah is the opposite. "This is the Torah - when a man dies in a tent" (Bamidbar 19:14). The Gemora (Berachos 63b) explains that words of Torah will not be ingrained in a person unless he "kills himself" to learn it. This means that he must put his full strength into it. Just like the river in our story. If you harness its full strength, it can light up the town. Any less will produce nothing.

Why don't people put their full strength into learning? Perhaps they do not realize the awesome potential of the human mind. Just like Chaim. He thought that the river was only able to provide drinking water. He did not realize the tremendous power in those gallons of water.

*Kinderlach . . .
There is only one way to succeed at learning Torah. Put your full strength into it. Half strength will not produce half results. Hashem gave you a magnificent brain that is tailor made to learn and understand Torah. There is no end to how much you can know. It just takes work. What is your ambition in life? The Noam Elimelech writes that tsaddikim who toil in Torah (for its own sake) build worlds. Think big. Why settle for a glass of water, when you can light up the world?*

Parasha Questions:

- How many non-red hairs posul a Parah Adumah? (Rashi 19:2)
- Did the Kohen Godol prepare the first Parah Adumah? Subsequent ones? (Rashi 19:3 and Sifsei Chachomim)
- If a man dies in a tent, what becomes tomei? (19:14)
- Why is the accounting of the death of Miriam written after the parasha of Parah Adumah? (Rashi 20:1)