



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Seudah Shlishis Parshas Behaaloscha

In our *Parshah* we learn about the events which led to Miriam becoming afflicted with *tzaraas*. The Torah then says (י"ב,ט"ו) ;

וַתִּסָּגֵר מִרְיָם מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְהָעָם לֹא נָסַע עַד הָאָסֹף מִרְיָם

And Miriam was isolated outside of the camp for seven days, and the nation did not travel until Miriam was healed.

The Gemara (סוטה ט:) explains that by not travelling, Am Yisrael expressed their gratitude for a good deed that Miriam performed in Mitzrayim.

“And so it was with her good deed. Miriam waited for Moshe for an hour, as it says, וַתִּתְצַב אַחֲתוֹ מֵרָחוֹק לְדַעַה מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ. – And his sister stood at a distance in order to know what would happen to him. Therefore, Am Yisrael delayed for seven days in the desert.”

At first glance, it is difficult to understand why Chazal present the fact that Am Yisrael didn't travel until Miriam was healed as a *chidush* that expressed the *hakaras hatov* that they felt towards Miriam. Am Yisrael travelled when the ענן - the heavenly cloud that guided them travelled, and stopped travelling when the cloud stopped. If they didn't travel for those seven days, it was because the *anan* didn't move, and not because they decided to honor Miriam by staying put.

We also need to understand why the Torah refers to those who didn't travel as העם. *Mefarshim* explain that the term עם usually refers to *peshutei ha'am* - the simplest Jews. Why didn't the Torah write that the leaders of the nation didn't travel until she was healed?



[1]

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The *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh* addresses these questions and provides us with a wonderful explanation in a few, concise words.

“והעם לא נסע” - The Torah attributed the fact that they didn’t travel to the עם - the people, instead of writing נסע העם, which would have implied that they simply remained in place because the cloud hadn’t moved. For it was the עם who decided not to travel until Miriam was healed. And even though their travels depended on the movement of the *anan*, the Torah testifies that they also wanted to remain in order to honor her.”

In other words, even though the question of when *Bnei Yisrael* would travel depended entirely on the *anan*, in this case there was another reason that prevented them from continuing their journey. The minds and hearts of each Jew, even the simplest of them, didn’t want to leave that location until Miriam was healed. They wanted to honor her for all of the benefits that they received in her merit. This includes her taking care of Moshe Rabeinu when he was a baby, the *Be’er Miriam* - the well that provided Am Yisrael with water throughout their travels, and her role as a *neviah* - a prophetess.

The Torah reveals to us that even though Am Yisrael’s desire to repay Miriam’s *chesed* didn’t change the schedule of their travels, it left such a significant spiritual impression that Hakadosh Baruch Hu included it in the words of the Torah.

This teaches us that any *ratzon tov* - a good desire or aspiration of even the lowest, simplest Jew, is kept and treasured by Hakadosh Baruch Hu even if it didn’t change the *metzius* - the reality that we live in, at all.

On many occasions, I heard the *Pnei Menachem zy”a*, repeat a precious lesson that the *chasid* Reb Eliyahu Makatovsky z”l told him in the name of the *Pnei Menachem’s* father, the *Imrei Emes zy”a*.

The *Imrei Emes* addressed the oft-quoted statement of the *Chida zt”l*,



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nothing can withstand the power of a person's will. He pointed out that many things can withstand a person's will. For example, in *Maseches Brachos* (ו.) Chazal speak about the case of a person who חשב אדם לעשות מצוה ונאנס ולא עשה - a person who wanted to perform a Mitzvah but was prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond his control. Our simple day to day experiences demonstrate that a person may want many things, but he often isn't able to achieve his goals.

Therefore, the *Imrei Emes* explained that the statement refers to something else entirely.

When a person will come to be judged in the next world, one of the first questions he will be asked is, “קבעת עתים לתורה? - Did you set times to learn Torah?” A person may answer that he was so busy earning his living and battling his *yetzer hara* that he had no time to learn. However, he will then be asked, “But did you at least WANT to learn? Did you yearn to have the time to learn or did you simply go about your life without that desire?”

This is the meaning of the *Chida's* statement, אין דבר עומד בפני הרצון. Nothing prevents a person from having *ratzon*, even though he may not have the ability to fulfill his desires. This will be the nature of his judgement in the future. He certainly can't be blamed for not doing something that he was unable to do. However, there is no excuse for not wanting to learn and understand the Torah. As we explained above, every positive desire and aspiration a person has affects him positively, even if it never becomes a reality.

We must yearn to help each and every Jew, even if we don't have the ability to help him right now. With the very power of our *ratzon*, we can defeat the *yetzer hara*, and fulfill the concept of הנהרות, elevating the light that exists in every Jewish soul.

ובזכות זו נזכה שהשי"ת יחיש את גאולתנו ופדות נפשינו בב"א



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