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Belief / Bitachon:
If Only G-d Showed Me a Miracle...
(Shmuz #28)
Rabbi Bentzion Shafier

A lot of people feel that if G-d only showed them one miracle they would believe. But the reality is, that this is not true. Why did G-d bring 10 plagues upon Egypt? To show Bnei Yisrael Hashem's glory. The Egyptians however, saw these miracles but still didn't believe. Bnei Yisrael were slaves to the Egyptians for 210 years. Hashem chose to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt in a very particular and exact manner. Hashem tells Moshe his plan beforehand and he tells him that the reason that he is bringing them out in this manner is so that Bnei Yisrael will see that He "played" with the Egyptians. Yetziat Mitzrayim is the basic foundation of our Emunah. Much of what Hashem did was to demonstrate his power.

Imagine this scene. Machmad is at the Nile River and his friend comes and tells him that some big Jewish guy said that the Nile will turn into blood. Obviously, he doesn't believe this. But what the Jewish guy said actually comes true at the exact moment that he predicts it will happen. Not just the Nile, but any water than an Egyptian had. And it wasn't just that the water turned red, but the whole entity and physical properties changed to blood and as a result, all the fish died. Everything turned into blood. The only way to drink water was if the Egyptian bought water from a Jew. If he stole it, it turned into blood. Obviously, this means that every action was being watched. You would think that they would all become Baalei Emunah, but that was not the case.

The Chofetz Chayim was once learning Torah and he started laughing. He said he imagined the plague of frogs (*sefardeah*) in his mind and it was funny to him. Hashem really "toyed" with the Egyptians. So it all started with one big frog, and every time this frog was hit, it split, until it turned into millions of frogs. In the real world, this doesn't happen. This was a huge miracle! The Steipler Gaon asks, don't the Egyptians get the message that after a while not to hit the frogs? They did, but the frogs were so annoying to them that they couldn't help it. Once again, Hashem was playing with them. For 7

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days, they lived in this state. The frogs even jumped into peoples stomachs and stayed alive! The moment Moshe davens to Hashem, the makkah stops, every frog dies at that exact moment.

By the plague of lice (kinim). So its bad if you have some on your head, but imagine lice all over your body for 7 days! No one dies from lice, but once again, Hashem was playing with them. We learn that the earth turned into 3 tefachim of lice. For years, the Egyptians argued with their neighbors about the border of their land, but by the makkah of lice, they clearly saw this, someone is watching from above. Each plague was truly a miracle. Imagine the makkah of boils (sh-chin), the Egyptians couldn't move because they were literally covered with boils. Until the makkah ended, and at that moment, every boil was removed!

By the wild animals (arov), they bit all the Egyptians and they didn't even touch a Jew! Imagine a huge 600 pound grizzly bear who is controlled by a Jew. Also, any animal that an Egyptian owned began attacking them. This wasn't a plague like destruction, once it was over, all the carcasses of the animals disappeared. Maybe at one point the Egyptians connected all this?

Barad in Egypt were soft ball sized ice falling down. Any animal in the field died. The majority of the Egyptians left their animals in the field. But the real miracle was that each hail contained fire inside. But how was this physically possible? Rashi says that fire and water made peace. But this is still physically impossible. The moment that Moshe davens, the hail stops in midair!

By darkness (choshech), Moshe warns Pharaoh that you wont just be able to see, you wont be able to move! The miracle was that while it was pitch black for an Egyptian, it was broad daylight for a Jew. This was the first 3 days. The rest of the days, whatever position the Mitzri was in, he stayed in. If he was sitting, he stayed sitting. If he was standing, he stayed standing. Hashem put a new entity into the air so light couldn't penetrate it. Then Hashem made it even thicker air and people were gelled into place. All they could do was think for 3 days! But they still couldn't get it. By Makkat Bechorot, the first borns came and told Pharaoh to let Bnei Yisrael go. Not only didn't he agree, but he kicked them out of the palace and the first borns tried to kill him. It says that by

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makkat bechorot, there was no house that there wasn't a dead person in. If a house didn't have a bechor alive, his bones were dug up and placed on their door step. There were houses that had many people die because the Egyptian women were promiscuous. If the woman had an affair 30 years ago, that child was a bechor and died. This showed that Hashem was watching every facet of creation and is constantly present. At this point, any person with a brain would believe.

Hashem then takes Bnei Yisrael (3 million people) to Eretz Yisraelin a round about way through the desert. Pharaoh chases them. Bnei Yisrael were led by the ananei hakavod and the Mitzrim could not penetrate these clouds! The Ramban says that krait Yam Suf was done in a particular way, a wind began blowing stronger and stronger. Little ditches were dug in the sea, getting deeper and deeper and eventually the whole sea was split. Hashem made it like this so the Egyptians would say "it was not Hashem, it was the wind".

When Bnei Yisrael goes into the Yam, the Ananei Hakavod lift up. 3 million people split into 12 different channels. The bottom of the sea was paved. The water was as clear as glass so the shevatim could see each other, but the Egyptians still charged the Jews and all of a sudden in the middle of the ocean, they look up at the very high walls of the Ocean that come crashing down right on them. The question is: What were the Egyptians thinking? All of these clear miracles still did not make them believe. If a person is set in their beliefs, even the clearest miracle will not change this. If a person believes that G-d doesn't exist, even the biggest of miracles will do nothing to change his mind, because that's how Hashem created man. Man was created with free will- he could believe what he wants to believe because if it wasn't that way, then of course it would be clear that there is a creator, its so glaringly obvious! But then, there would be no fight/ test and no purpose to this world.

Rav Elchonon Wasserman says how could the Torah command us to believe in Hashem? If we don't believe then we don't believe. The mitzvah of emunah is simply: be honest. What does my mind see and tell me? Is it possible that the world just came about on its own? We are all commanded at the age of 13 to believe in Hashem. At 23, this should be a deeper understanding and so on throughout our lives. But unfortunately, this

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isn't the case. Most people don't grow in their Emunah. The greatest work to come to Emunah is to study nature, and it will bring you to Emunah if you are honest, because that is the key.

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