

HASHEM LOVES YOU!

Finally! After years of terrible suffering, *Klal Yisrael* is free of the Egyptian slavery, having left Egypt with their heads held high, and no turning back. Their celebration, though, was short lived, as Pharaoh realized the Jewish people had no plans of returning to Egypt. He mobilized what was left of his army, and gave chase to his former slaves.

When *Klal Yisrael* realized what was happening, the Torah states how they *davened* to Hashem to save them. Yet, the very next *passuk* describes how they accused Moshe of taking them out to the desert where they will surely die.¹ The Ramban² (R' Moshe ben Nachman, 1194–1279) points out the inconsistency of the nation — how could they cry out and ask Hashem to save them, while at the same time complaining that Hashem's salvation is flawed?

The Ramban suggests that *Klal Yisrael* certainly trusted that Hashem could save them. As for their journey into the desert, they suspected that this was Moshe's scheme, as he intended to install himself as their ruler. However, asks the Ramban, if this were true, how could Moshe have created the *makkos* — wasn't that a clear indication that he was the emissary of Hashem?

To that, the Ramban explains, the Jewish nation was under the impression that Hashem brought the *makkos* only to destroy the Egyptians as recompense for their wickedness, but not as salvation for the *Bnei Yisrael*. In fact, they surmised, if Hashem truly wanted to save them, He never would have allowed the Egyptians to chase them once they left. Therefore, they concluded, this must have been Moshe's idea, and they were doomed to die in the desert.

This explanation from the Ramban provides a deep insight into human nature. We simply don't realize how much Hashem loves us, to the point where *Klal Yisrael* felt it made more sense to assume that Moshe was not acting under the direction of Hashem, than to say that Hashem was planning something unbelievable by luring the Egyptians to the *Yam Suf*.

Hashem loves us! It is so easy to lose sight of that, especially when things are not going our way. But our perspective can warp our perception of reality, to the point where we are willing to believe the unbelievable instead of accepting Hashem's love. A deep breath and a step back can help us remind us how beloved we are.

¹ Shemos 14:10-11

² *ibid.* s.v. ויצעקו בני

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sight of that...**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

The feeling one has when they know they are loved by Hashem can be indescribable, but the challenge, of course, is how to reach that level of recognition of Hashem's love?

We all have had good things happen to us, perhaps expected, or perhaps otherwise. The gratitude that comes from these fortuitous events is a good foundation for recognizing Hashem's love, but there is more.

After focusing on Hashem's wonderful goodness to us, the next step is focus on Hashem Himself. Try to fathom the power, the majesty, the sheer awesomeness of His might.

The third step is to link the two — this great Being, the Master of all, focused on me, in my little transient state, and my little problem, and came through for me.¹

The more we understand that Hashem owes us nothing, yet does everything for us, the greater we will feel Hashem's constant love for us.

¹ *Sefer HaMiddos*, Sha'ar Ha'Ahavah, Chap. 7

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In the beginning of my career, I never had to encourage my students to study Mussar. For the difference between one who studied Mussar and one who didn't was self evident. The results of Mussar spoke for themselves.
- R' Shlomo Wolbe zt"l, Sefer "D'yukna" (Heb.), pg. 96

YOU SIMPLY DON'T BELONG HERE

"And therefore," Rabbi Mann concluded, "I just don't think this is the right yeshiva for you."

Thirteen-year-old Simcha quietly sat there, his inner turmoil buried behind the veneer of his expressionless face. This was his, and his father's, first choice for yeshiva. In fact, this was their only choice, they simply did not have backup.

Simcha was a good kid and a great student. He was generally at the top of his class, both in secular and Judaic studies. However, something must have happened in his eighth-grade year — perhaps growing pains, perhaps the burnout of a senior year, who knows? Whatever the cause, Simcha simply did not do well on his entry exam, and was being told he would have to find another place for high school.

Now what? It was already late in the year, and there weren't many options left. Simcha's older brother had gone to a yeshiva that catered to average or even mediocre students, and they were happy to give Simcha a chance. The plan, in Simcha's mind, was to go to this yeshiva until he was able to go elsewhere.

Though Simcha really liked his new *rebbe*, he had a hard time coping with his new classmates. He was not very happy in ninth-grade, and was looking forward to the day he would leave. Yet, with almost unnatural precision, something always came up, and he simply could not meet with any new principal or *rebbe*. It looked like he would be staying in his new school for another year.

One year turned to two, two to four, and Simcha acclimated to his new environment. Not only did he adapt, but he thrived, delving into his studies like never before.

Simcha stayed in yeshiva for many years, eventually getting *semicha* and a position in an out-of-town community. Looking back, Simcha attests that his failure on his high school *bechina* was the best thing that happened for him. The yeshiva that he didn't go to was very intense, and he most likely would have burned out within a couple of years. The slower pace of the yeshiva he ended up going to, coupled with the relationships he developed with his *rebbeim*, allowed for long-term growth.

In Simcha's words, "I was so upset when I couldn't get into my yeshiva of choice, but there's no doubt that Someone knew all along how this was the best thing for me."

**Based on a true story, name has been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Much like a child cannot sever their relationship to their parents, *Klal Yisrael*, no matter what they do, will always be considered Hashem's children.¹
- Hashem brought the *Mitzriyim* to the *Yam Suf* so that *Klal Yisrael* would see their destruction.²
- *Klal Yisrael's* wandering before the *Yam Suf* served two purposes. To act as 'bait' for Pharaoh, and for *Klal Yisrael* to realize they were 'bait' and know that Pharaoh's chase was according to plan. Nevertheless, they were afraid when Pharaoh gave chase.³

1 *Tiferes Yisroel* on *Avos* 3:14 s.v. שנקראו בנים

2 *Ohr HaChaim* on *Shemos* 14:2, s.v. דבר

3 *ibid.*

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