

This is my G-d and I will glorify Him. (15:2)

The *Midrash* explains that *Klal Yisrael* were privy to remarkable spiritual revelations as they stood by the shores of the Red Sea. Indeed, *Chazal* tell us that a common maidservant was able to perceive greater revelations of the *Shechinah* than Yechezkel *Ha'navi!* This is derived from the word "zeh," "this," of the phrase "Zeh Keli V'anveihu," "*This is my G-d and I will beautify Him.*" The Jews were able to point with their finger to the awesome sights they were experiencing. Yet, as **Horav Shalom Schwadron, shlita**, notes, the maidservant remained a simple maidservant despite her exposure to such heightened spiritual vision. In contrast, the *navi* Yechezkel, despite the fact that he did not experience all there was to see, remained a *navi*. What happened? Why did so many, who saw so much, just relinquish their unparalleled experience?

Horav Schwadron recounted this *Chazal* in the presence of **Horav Meier Chadash, z"l**. He added his own inferences stating that, as life goes on, complacency takes hold of an individual- causing him to forget his extraordinary experience. *Horav Chadash* took issue with this statement. In order to impress his contention with what seemed to be the logical explanation of *Chazal*, he cited an incident that occurred in his own experience. When he was a young man in Russia, just before the first World War, he was caught by Russian soldiers without his required papers. This was a period in which the gentiles did whatever they chose, treating the Jew as some type of lowly parasite. The desire for Jewish blood was unleashed. Quickly, the soldiers determined that this young, Jewish man was guilty of treason and should be executed. They set up the firing-squad in preparation for carrying out their decision. Sensing the hopelessness of the situation, *Horav Chadash* nervously began reciting *Vidui* and *Krias Shma*.

The soldier in charge of the squad demanded that *Horav Chadash* stand erect and not fidget, since he was making it very difficult for the soldiers to aim well. Overcome with fear, the *rav* trembled, shaking back and forth. Once again, the soldier called out to him harshly to stand straight. This time, the soldier's scream awakened the Russian general who was taking his afternoon nap. He took one look outside and immediately scolded the soldiers for the terrible thing they were about to do. The soldiers quickly dispersed, and the *rav* was saved.

"One would think," continued *Horav Chadash*, "that after such an incredible experience, life would not be the same. After a little while, however, I began to notice the captivating power of complacency, and I realized that I was falling prey to this 'affliction'. It was causing me to lose sight and forget the amazing miracle that had saved me from certain death. Immediately, I made up my mind to grasp hold of the 'past' and transform it into the 'future,' forcing myself to remember the miracle. I made every effort to concretize in my mind my belief in Hashem, recognizing that if He desires that I remain alive, then nothing whatsoever will be an obstacle. I reviewed this notion constantly, never forgetting the past, seeking every opportunity to translate what had happened in the past into the present and future."

And the Bnei Yisrael ate the manna for forty years, until their arrival in an inhabited land.
(16:35)

Bnei Yisrael were privy to an unprecedented array of miracles, ranging from the ten plagues to the many miracles that occurred during the Exodus, and the splitting of the Red Sea. The Jews clearly saw that Hashem was with them during times of crises. Was this the most important lesson? Or is there another miracle which, although less profound in nature, is more significant in its message?

Horav S.R. Hirsch, z"l, observes that *Bnei Yisrael* were acutely aware that Hashem was close to them during the critical stages of their development. What about their recognition of Hashem's role in their everyday necessities? This was the lesson of the miracle of the *manna*. Hashem takes into account the needs of every human being. One can--and should-- rely on Hashem for his sustenance.

All the amazing supernatural phenomena that accompanied *Bnei Yisrael*'s exodus from Egypt, even *Krias Yam Suf*, all faded in significance when *Bnei Yisrael* confronted the stark reality of the impending hunger menacing their families. Horav Hirsch declares that this concept is reflected in *Chazal*'s dictum; "*It is as difficult to provide man's sustenance as it is to split the Red Sea.*"

Regardless of its source, the threat of hunger looms over man, undermining every principal and abrogating every resolution. Indeed, as long as the overwhelming anxiety of *parnassah*, earning a living to support one's family, envelops a person, he cannot achieve his potential in *Torah* study.

How does one free himself from the tentacles of this tension? One must acquiesce to the belief that the concern for man's material needs does not rest on man alone. In fact, it does not depend upon him at all! Man must acknowledge the fact that he can do only his own part, but ultimately he must depend upon Hashem for success in his endeavors. It is his duty to endeavor to provide sustenance for his family, but he must be convinced that every single human being is ultimately sustained by the Almighty.

The one who does not "accept" Hashem as the sole provider is bound to toil away his days, laboring to ensure himself and his dependents material support. He will do anything to achieve his goal. He will compete ruthlessly; he will cheat, if necessary; he will fall prey to any scheme, regardless of its dubious nature, just to earn sufficient money. The pursuit of money can become an obsession, a demanding, unrelenting and ruthless contrivance that has the power to destroy so many and so much.

Hashem sought to cure the young nation of this malady. He led the people into a stark, barren desert where they would be made to feel the anxiety, where the material requirements of the present would be inaccessible, and where the prospects for the future were dubious. They saw for themselves what the obsession of earning a living can do to an individual. Until now, they did not worry about tomorrow--they were slaves for whom their masters provided daily sustenance.

Now Hashem set down the rules for gathering in one's sustenance. He would provide *Bnei Yisrael*

with their daily bread, courtesy of Heaven. They should remember that whatever they needed would be provided; not more, not less. They did not have to worry about tomorrow, for Hashem would provide for them. They had only to trust Him. Only after they had exhibited unreserved confidence in Hashem, could they be assured that His *Torah* would be observed, His *mitzvos* adhered to, with no fear of unrealistic anxiety about material hardship interfering in their *avodas* Hashem. The individual whose overriding concern in life is, "What shall I have to eat tomorrow?" has no place in the panorama of Jewish belief. One's persistent concern for his material future will ultimately lead him astray from Hashem and His *Torah*. It would do us well to show more concern about our spiritual future and leave the material dimension to Hashem.