

Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn. (10:1)

Rashi explains that Hashem sent Moshe to warn Pharaoh of the upcoming plague. Why warn Pharaoh if his reaction would be negative as a result of Hashem hardening his heart? A warning should serve a purpose. Apparently, this warning did not. Horav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, zl, *Rosh Yeshivas Brisk*, Yerushalayim, explains this based upon a principle quoted from *Horav Yeruchem Levovitz*, zl, *Mashgiach Yeshivas Mir*. When Sarah *Imeinu* gave birth to Yitzchak *Avinu* at the age of 90 years old, the Torah makes a big “to do” about the overt miracle that she had experienced. In contrast, when Yocheved gave birth to Moshe *Rabbeinu* at 130 years old, the Torah mentions it only in passing. One would think that Yocheved’s personal miracle was at least as worthy of note as that of Sarah.

Simply, we could say that Sarah was born without the anatomical organs necessary to produce a child. Her miracle was transformative in the sense that she now had a womb, so that she had the capability to conceive a baby and carry it to term. Indeed, the miracle was that she essentially had become a new person. Yocheved actually had two children, Miriam and Aharon, before giving birth to Moshe. If we are to record miracles, their births should precede that of Moshe.

The *Mashgiach* explains that veritably all *teva*, what we call nature, is actually *neis*, miracle. There is no such thing as “nature,” since everything occurs through the agency of Divine will. Just as Hashem delivered Heavenly *manna* to sustain the Jewish People during their forty-year trek in the wilderness, He causes wheat – that will one day become bread – to grow from the ground. We think that bread is a natural occurrence. It is as natural as Heavenly *manna*. Likewise, when a blind man undergoes a procedure that grants him eyesight, it is considered to be a miracle; when one who is gravely ill is the fortunate recipient of a transplant that grants him a new lease on life, it is deemed a miracle. In contrast, waking up every morning with all organs and limbs intact and in working condition is viewed as natural. Why? Indeed, we bless Hashem daily: *Pokeiach ivrim*, Who gives sight to the blind; *Zokeif kefufim*, straightens those who are bent over, etc. Without Hashem, we are unable to function. We would not even exist!

What distinguishes one miracle from another? Why is Sarah *Imeinu*’s miracle recorded in the Torah, while Yocheved’s is not? When a *Navi*, Prophet, informs a person of an upcoming event – either one of a positive nature or vice versa – such a miracle is worthy of inclusion in the Torah. It was foretold – we waited for it to occur – it happened. This makes it worthy of being chronicled in the Torah. A *neis* that was not foreshadowed, but “just happened” is not documented in the Torah. Sarah’s miracle was forecast by the Heavenly Angel who visited her; Yocheved’s miracle “just happened.”

According to the above principle, *Rav* Soloveitchik explains why Moshe was instructed to warn Pharaoh of the upcoming plague. This warning (despite the knowledge that the warning would be

to no avail, because Pharaoh's heart had been hardened) allows for the miracle to be recorded in the Torah, so that everyone will "know" Hashem.