

I shall make a distinction between My people and your people – tomorrow this sign will come about. (8:19)

Simply speaking, Moshe *Rabbeinu* informed Pharaoh when each plague would begin. This was meant to underscore the miraculous nature of the plague. *Horav Shalom Bentzion Felman, zl*, explains this *pasuk* homiletically: “I will make a distinction between My people and your people.” What is this distinction? In which area of belief do we see a separation between Jew and non-Jew? Tomorrow, this sign will come about. It is with regard to the concept of “tomorrow” that we differ. The Jew who believes in Hashem lives with a constant awareness of “tomorrow.” Even if today appears bleak and filled with hardship, we remind ourselves that Hashem has given us a special gift. It is called “tomorrow.” With every sunrise comes renewed opportunity, renewed strength, the possibility of change. We are never locked into our present circumstance, our present challenge, our present diagnosis. *Yeshuas Hashem k’heref ayin*, “Hashem’s salvation can come with the blink of an eye.” He can alter our (perceived) destiny in a moment.

Likewise, as in many situations, the gift of “tomorrow” has a flipside. Faith in “tomorrow” keeps us humble. Even when today seems to be going our way -- success, comfort, good health and blessing – we are reminded of the fragility of life. Just as Hashem can turn darkness into light, He can becloud the sunshine and imbue our challenges with difficulties, reminding us to forever remain dependent on Him, rather than relying on our own strength (which also emanates from Him).

The dual awareness – that tomorrow can bring redemption as easily as it can be the precursor of challenge – is at the core of our *emunah*. Our faith in Hashem prevents despair from enveloping us when life is hard, and it precludes arrogance when life is easy! The non-Jewish world has a different system. It is all about today and now. When a non-Jew achieves success, regardless of its nature, he is riding high and does not give a thought to the fact that it could all change. He thinks of no one other than himself. After all, the sun is shining for him. He has license to do whatever he wants, even at the expense of others. It is only when things do not go as planned that he becomes desperate, obsequious and depressed. In short, life for a Jew with *emunah* does not really change, while, for his non-Jewish counterpart, it changes with the moment.

A man who was experiencing a period of extreme challenge came to the *Chazon Ish* to talk. Perhaps, just speaking to him might soften the pain and anxiety that were so much a part of his present life. I used the word “talk,” because he was reconciled to the fact that the overwhelming challenge that he confronted was unsurmountable. After relating the source of his distress, he concluded with the words, “The only way out of this *tzarah* is through a miracle. Miracles, however, do not happen every day.”

When the *Chazon Ish* heard this statement, he immediately countered, “Absolutely not. Miracles happen constantly!” When we take the time to think, to open our eyes and see, we would realize that the *Hashgacha Pratis*, Divine Providence, in our lives is pure miracle.

The *Chafetz Chaim* famously said, “A Jew must live with two pockets. In one pocket, he keeps a note that says, *Bishvili nivra haolam*; ‘The world was created for me.’ In the other pocket, he keeps a note that says, *V’anochi afar va’eifer*, ‘I am but dust and ashes.’ When things seem hopeless, he should reach into the first pocket to find strength and support. When he becomes too comfortable, when everything seems to be going his way, he should reach into the other pocket and find humility. When today feels overwhelming, tomorrow presents hope, and, when today feels secure, when we are filled with self-assurance that we are in control, tomorrow reminds us not to take it for granted. It can all change overnight.

“Tomorrow” has another side about which we regrettably do not think, but which our archenemy, Amalek, the *yetzer hora*’s representative, has mastered. The Torah (*Shemos* 17:9) relates how Amalek attacked the Jews in the wilderness. Hashem instructed Moshe *Rabbeinu* to appoint Yehoshua to go to battle against Amalek. Moshe said, *Machar, anochi nitzav al rosh ha’givah u’mateh Elokim b’yadi*, “Tomorrow, I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of G-d in my hand.” *Chazal* (*Yoma* 52A) note a dual punctuation on this *pasuk* which affects the meaning and its message. Does “tomorrow” refer to the beginning of the *pasuk*, “Go out and battle Amalek tomorrow,” or, perhaps, to the latter part, “Tomorrow, I will stand on top of the hill?”

Perhaps we can say that Amalek wages war with “tomorrows,” using “tomorrow” as an excuse to put off our inspiration and motivation to serve Hashem until tomorrow. The *yetzer hora* whispers into our ear, “It is a great idea, wonderful *mitzvah*, fantastic proposal. Sleep on it and commence tomorrow.” By delaying things, he cools our passion, knowing that, by tomorrow, the fire of our inspiration may have faded or even dissipated.

Amalek’s strategy does not always come with swords and arrows, but with a single word: tomorrow. His goal is to destroy our relationship with Hashem. His approach is to limit whatever inspiration and motivation we might have. His weapon is postponement. He lures us into delay and cools our passion. The antidote: *hayom*. We must act today, because tomorrow will not be the same.