

APRIL 15TH THE TEST OF EMUNAH

Background

For forty years, the entirety of *Klal Yisroel* drank water from the *be'er*. The *be'er* was a large rock that would follow them in the desert and spew forth millions of gallons of water a day. After Miriam died, the *be'er* hid. HASHEM told Moshe to speak to the rock and have it return to its duty. After speaking to the rock twice and not receiving a response, Moshe miscalculated and assumed that he was to hit the rock – as he had done forty years earlier. When he did, the water began flowing again.

HASHEM told Aaron and Moshe that this was a missed opportunity, and because of it, they would not merit going into Eretz Yisroel. Had Moshe spoken to the rock, *Klal Yisroel* would have made a *kal va'chomer*, “If a rock that doesn’t need sustenance listens to HASHEM, then surely we, who need *pannassah*, should listen.” This was a great lesson that they had now missed out on.

This Rashi implies that a reason to listen to HASHEM is because we need sustenance, as if to say, “If I keep the *mitzvos*, HASHEM will reward me with a livelihood.” Moshe was faulted because this lesson was now lost.

Questions

We are told that the reward for *mitzvos* is not in this world; it is in the World to Come. If so, what lesson should the Jewish people have learned? We are not rewarded in this world for listening to HASHEM.

Even if there is some element of reward in this world, that doesn’t sound like the motivating force for this generation. They were on a much higher *madreigah*. They had received the Torah on Har Sinai. If we were looking to motivate these people, their reward in the World to Come would be a far more significant factor.

What lesson was there to learn from the rock? If the Jewish nation understood that HASHEM provided their sustenance, they didn’t need the rock to teach them that. If they didn’t know it, how could the rock teach it to them?

ספר במדבר פרק כ

(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר יְדֹדָד אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן יַעַן לֹא הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִישֵׁנִי לְעֵינַי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת הַקֶּהֱל הַזֶּה אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:

And HASHEM said to Moshe and Aaron, “Since you didn’t believe in Me to make a Kiddush HASH-EM, therefore, you will not bring this people into the land that I have given to them.”

רש"י על במדבר פרק כ פסוק יב

להקדישני - שאילו דברתם אל הסלע והוציא הייתי מקודש לעיני העדה ואומרים מה סלע זה שאינו מדבר ואינו שומע ואינו צריך לפרנסה מקיים דבורו של מקום קל וחומר אנו

To make a Kiddush HASHEM – Had you spoken to the rock and let it bring forth water, I would have been made Holy in the eyes of this nation. They would have said, “If a rock that doesn’t speak, doesn’t hear, and doesn’t need sustenance can fulfill the word of HASHEM, then surely we should.”