

PEOPLE BELIEVE WHAT THEY WANT TO BELIEVE

Background

We are dealing with intelligent, thinking people who just lived through ten months of the most obvious and overt miracles ever shown to man. They experienced HASHEM's control over the forces of nature. And not only didn't they come to believe in HASHEM, they risked their lives to chase the Bnei Yisroel into the sea, all the while believing that it was the wind that split it.

Questions

The Ramban points out that "*the wind doesn't split the sea into channels.*" The Egyptians found themselves chasing their enemy into the desert and were stopped by pillars of cloud. They could not advance and remained in that position all night. Then they saw the remarkable phenomenon of the sea itself being split in front of their enemy, and not just being split, but being split into twelve dry channels, perfectly paved and prepared for travel. That couldn't just happen by the normal forces of nature. Yet they still didn't believe in HASHEM. They said it was the wind that did it.

The question is: how can any intelligent, thinking human being possibly believe something so ridiculous?

ספר שמות פרק יז

כא (ויט משה את ידו על הים ויולך ידוד את הים ברוח קדים עזה כל הלילה וישם את הים לחרבה ויבקעו המים

And Moshe placed his hand over the sea, and HASHEM moved the sea with a powerful eastern wind all night, and made the sea to dry land, and split the water.

רמב"ן על שמות פרק יז פסוק כא

כא (ויט משה את ידו על הים ויולך ה' את הים ברוח קדים וגו' היה הרצון לפניו יתברך לבקע הים ברוח קדים מיבשת שיראה כאלו הרוח היא המחרבת ים, בענין שכתוב (הושע יג טו) יבא קדים רוח ה' ויבוש מקורו ויחרב מעיינו, השגיא למצרים ויאבדם, כי בעבור זה חשבו אולי הרוח שם הים לחרבה, ולא יד ה' עשתה זאת בעבור ישראל, אע"פ שאין הרוח בוקעת הים לגזרים לא שמו לבם גם לזאת, ובאו אחריהם מרוב תאותם להרע להם, וזה טעם וחזקתי את לב פרעה ויבאו אחריהם, שחזק לבם לאמר ארדוף אויבי ואשיגם בים, ואין מידי מציל, ולא זכרו עתה כי ה' נלחם להם במצרים

It was the will of HASHEM to split the sea with a powerful eastern wind so that it would appear as if the wind made the sea dry. Because of this, the Egyptians thought that perhaps the wind turned the sea into dry land, and it was not done by the hand of HASHEM for the sake of Yisroel. Even though the wind doesn't split the sea into pathways, they didn't pay attention to this and went after them [Bnei Yisroel] because of their great desire to harm them.