

דרכים
בפרשה
שמות

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ותתצב אחתו מרחק לדעה מה יעשה לו (2:4)

*And his sister stood from afar, to know what
would happen to him. (2:4)*

It is not difficult to imagine the intense mixture of emotions that must have been taking place by the water where Bisya (*See Divrei Hayamim I, 4:18 for correct pronunciation*), the daughter of Pharaoh, was bathing.

Picture it: Miriam Ha'neviah had been shown through a prophecy that a son would be born to the family that would illuminate the entire world. This very child would become the leader and savior of Klal Yisroel. She shared this prophecy with her parents, thus causing them to remarry. Upon the baby's birth, the entire home lit up brilliantly from the great light which emanated from his face. He was perfect in every way and did not even require a *bris milah*. Yes, this was indeed the prophecy coming to fruition; this was clearly the child that she had prophesied about. Her father kissed her on the forehead the moment he witnessed her *nevuah* becoming a reality. But then came that dreaded moment: the baby was not able to be hidden any longer, forcing the family to place him in a basket, leaving him to drift down the river. The father of this baby was so distraught that he now smacked her on her forehead exclaiming: "Miriam, what happened to your prophecy?"

Miriam went down to the river to watch how the matter would unfold. Let us now think of what may have been going through Miriam's mind at that moment. Miriam shows up and sees the daughter of Pharaoh going for a swim. It was Pharaoh himself that issued the decree to throw every Jewish baby boy into the river. Without a question, this was a "worst case scenario". Surely, at that moment Miriam was offering a *tefillah* to Hashem: "Ribono Shel Olam, please do not allow the princess to see the basket. If she does, who

knows what will be. There will most definitely be no chance of the baby's survival."

We can also point out that the Baal HaTurim notes that the words "זה אהרן הכהן" and "נער בוכה" share the same numerical value, revealing that Aharon was also present at that moment, equally filled with emotions.

But, alas, Bisya reached out for the basket. Can you imagine what Miriam must have felt like at that specific moment? This clearly spelled doom for the prophecy. All hope was beginning to fade.

It is exactly at times like these that we must keep in mind that when Hakadosh Baruch Hu decides to do something, even in the most dire and bleak circumstances — the salvation can arise. In just a few short moments, the baby would end up back in his own mother's arms, being nursed by her, with this very daughter of Pharaoh paying her for her services.

Rav Mordechai Druk *zt"l* derived a great lesson from here. Many times in life we *daven* to Hashem for certain things to happen. Do we see the entire picture when we *daven*? We seem to have it all worked out. Rav Druk would give an example of someone in *shidduchim*. This youngster is asking for a certain match to work out for himself. He is certain that if he marries this girl he will have a life of happiness, and together they will build a beautiful home. He beseeches of Hashem for things to work out. But then the phone rings and the *shadchan* gives the news to the parents. The parents now need to confront the boy with his rejection notice. In some cases, the boy is devastated. "How could this be? The girl must have misunderstood a comment that I made; I am sure we can fix this." The boy begins to *daven*, pleading with Hashem to make things work out for him and this girl. Similarly, a person may exert a tremendous amount of effort in business, really giving it all he has to make things work. He *davens* endlessly to Hashem that the deals in place should work out — but again, all to no avail. He seems to be met with rejection and failure.

How does Hashem, the One that listens to all *tefillos*, respond? The response of course is NO, because Hashem has the entire picture, and has a

much better plan for this boy and for this person's livelihood. Do we really know what life will look like down the line if things always turn out the way we envision? No, we don't — but Hashem most definitely does. In fact, it is Hashem Himself that made the plan.

Miriam, Moshe's big sister, stood from afar to see the outcome. Yes, Miriam had questions. But she stood firmly, as a bedrock of faith, not losing her *emunah* for even a moment, as the word "*vatei'satzav*" implies.

The Gemara in Sotah explains this word to mean that she was confident that her brother would be saved. The question she had was only what precisely would be done, i.e. in which manner would Hashem bring about the salvation.

There are so many times in life that we expect things to happen in a certain way, exactly at a specific time. We have it all figured out. We have expectations of Hashem, and then when things don't happen the way we assumed they would, we start with the complaints. Hashem is the master accountant. All His calculations are perfect, and He has never once fallen short of a promise. Let us strengthen ourselves in our *emunah* that Hashem runs the world with extreme precision and everything will happen exactly when it is supposed to — in a better way than we could have ever imagined.

On a different note, there is another incredible *p'shat* in this *pasuk* that I recently saw from the Meor Einayim. There are times in life that people slip up and fall prey to the *yetzer hara*. After experiencing the fall, the natural inclination is to feel terribly dirty, and perhaps become somewhat unwilling to make amends and get back up again. The feeling may be that Hashem is nowhere close to me right now. During those times that one feels so terribly distant, there is an incredible opportunity available. Miriam Ha'neviah just received *petch* from her father. Things were going from bad to worse with Bisya now handling the baby. She felt very רחוק — distant. And yet, Miriam stood firmly. She said that perhaps the *nevuah* has left me — but I will not leave the *nevuah*. The new *nisayon* she was now facing was, "I may have lost my *madreigah*, but I can still be

strong and carry on and I will get it back." When one stands their ground even (and perhaps especially) while feeling low, a "Moshe Rabbeinu" can be born.

The Chidusehei HaRim comments that this was the same test that Avraham Avinu went through. וירא את המקום מרחוק — during Avrohom's three days of travel, he suddenly felt as if the *Shechinah* was not with him; he felt רחוק — distant. His test was to still see המקום — Hashem (based on the Zohar's interpretation that *makom* refers to Hashem). Esther was also tested by losing her *nevuah* a moment before entering the king's inner chamber, and her response was א-לי א-לי למה עזבתני — "Hashem, You seem to have abandoned me at this moment when I need You most — and yet, I am still calling out to You."

In the Sefer Achas Shoalti, there is an interesting question from someone that would commute to work daily on a train which had a minyan. On days that there was *krias hatorah*, it sometimes happened that in the middle of *leining*, the train arrived at his stop. The halacha is that one is not allowed to walk out during the *leining*, but in this case, if he stays on, the next stop is twenty minutes further. The answer that was given was that he should step onto the platform and wait until the train leaves. In this manner, he did not leave the *beis medrash*, but rather, the *beis medrash* left him.

מרחק ותתצב אחתו מרחק — Avrohom Avinu, Miriam Ha'neviah and Esther Ha'malka may have all felt the *Shechinah* leave them, but they remained steadfast in their places. Similarly, in our lives, perhaps things happen that could have or should have been avoided, which leave us feeling like the *beis medrash* has left us or the *Shechinah* has departed from us. In those times, by strengthening ourselves nevertheless, there is tremendous *bracha* that awaits. The *Shechinah* definitely will return to such a person.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפּעל