

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos → 7:00 PM

ON TIME SHABBOS: **NEW** 8:13 PM

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman 7:30 AM

Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush 8:30 AM

-Sof Zman K"Z- 9:22 א"ג < 8:46 א"ז

Pirkei Avos - 7:25 PM

Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos 8:15 PM

Maariv - 9:23 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman 7:30 AM

Shacharis 8:30 AM

Mincha / Maariv 8:20PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman 5:45 AM

Shacharis

Monday, Thursday 6:40 AM

Tues., Wed., Fri. 6:45 AM

Mincha (Mon -Thur) 1:45 PM

Mincha/Maariv 8:20 PM

Maariv (Mon-Thur) 9:45 PM

Mishnayos Chabura By Pinchas Friedman

Tuesdays & Wednesdays 9:15pm to 9:45pm

Halacha Chabura By Motti Rabinowitz

Mondays 9:00pm to 9:45pm

Rabbi Teichman's Thursday Night Shiur

Thursdays 10:00pm

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Issue#237

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Confidence: *Emunah* Under Control

Have you ever been the cause for the delay of others?

The carpool arrives to pick you up, six people wait for you the seventh passenger, so they may continue on their merry way, and you're tied up and simply can't get out of the house.

There is no more mortifying moment than this.

Miriam takes her "baby" brother Moshe to task for separating from his wife Tziporah. Miriam asserts that she too has merited prophecy, yet never used that as an excuse to isolate herself from her husband. What then, she poses, justifies Moshe denying his dear wife, his companionship?

God then suddenly appears, catching Miriam and Aharon off-guard, requiring them to quickly purify themselves as Moshe who is in a constant state of preparedness, as he has not been with his wife, awaits their return. God was thus proving convincingly with this revelation, the higher level of prophecy that Moshe had attained that necessitated his constant state of readiness, thus justifying Moshe's isolation from his wife Tziporah. As a result of her error in judgement, God afflicts Miriam with *tzaraas*, leprosy, requiring of her to be isolated outside of the encampment for seven days.

Despite this punishment, the Torah states: (במדבר יט) והעם לא נסע עד האסף מרים (and the people did not journey until Miriam (was cured and) was brought in.

Rashi, quoting the Talmud, tells us that this delay in their travels of the full complement of the Jewish nation, attested to the honor they had for Miriam, remaining in the camp until she could rejoin them.

Imagine how Miriam must have felt. Not only six passengers awaited her, but six hundred thousand plus! All as a result of her mistaken assumption.

Do you think she felt honored or perhaps embarrassed?

In formulating the appropriate penalty for this lapse of awareness, God exclaims: ואביה ירק ירק בפניה הלא תכלם שבעת ימים... (שם שם יד) *Were her father to spit in her face, would she not be humiliated for seven days?* God goes on to sentence her to be quarantined for seven days, then she may return.

A very stark and strange imagery in this simile indeed. Spitting in her face?

Is there no more refined way to describe God's disappointment with Miriam?

Her intentions although misguided were nevertheless noble. Why the harshness?

We are told that the deed that merited her to be deserving of this "honor", of the entire nation awaiting her return from "exile", was that as a young girl when Moshe, the infant, was cast in the river in a wicker basket, in a desperate attempt to save him, she stood at a distance to observe his fate.

ותצבת אחריו מרחוק לדעה מה יעשה לו (שמות ב ד) *His sister stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him.*

The Baal Haturim points out that there are seven words in this verse corresponding to the seven days they would await her return in the future. (בעל הטורים יב טז)

Was this deed so outstanding as to be noted?

Isn't this something any one of us would do in anticipation of the plight that awaited the poor baby?

The Talmud (סוטה יב, ג.) relates how when the cruel Pharaoh gave the order that all Jewish baby boys should be thrown into the river, her parents decided to separate and have no more children, for they already had a daughter and son.

The then six-year old Miriam said to her father, "Your decree is worse than Pharaoh's; for Pharaoh aimed at boys only, while you would prevent both boys and girls from being born." Being the leader of the Jewish people, Amram had set an example which other Jews were quick to follow, and they, too, divorced their wives.

Amram saw the wisdom of his young daughter, and he remarried his wife, whereupon all others also remarried their wives. The following year Moshe was born.

The Talmud describes how subsequent to Miriam's "prophecy" that Moshe would be born and upon seeing its ultimate fulfillment, Amram lovingly "kissed her upon her head", exclaiming: "Your prophecy has been fulfilled!"

However, when they were no longer able to hide the baby and were forced into risking his life by placing him in the basket in the water, Amram turns to Miriam, "hitting" her on the head as he expresses with frustration, "Where is your prophecy now!?"

It was at this juncture the Torah describes her waiting in the distance to observe the outcome.

The Midrash (מדרש משלי לא) adds a fascinating addition to this episode.

After slapping her on the head in despair, the Midrash informs us, Amram stood there and was "ימרקק בפניה", *spitting before her!*

Is this behavior becoming of the one whom the Talmud entitles the "Great Leader of the generation"? (סוטה שם)

Miriam despite her evident maturity and greatness was after all only six years old!

Miriam was obviously a very special and inspired child and Amram certainly was quite aware of her destiny as a leader of the Jewish people. But with that enthusiasm comes a grave danger.

Too often people who have proven their mettle, become overly confident and more than a tad self righteous. It is alleged in the field of motivation, that confidence is arrogance under control. That is not an authentic approach and certainly one far removed from the perspective of Torah.

True confidence is faith in God that anything is possible accompanied by a strong sense of conviction and commitment to the task at hand but tempered by extraordinary sensitivity to those around you.

Amram sensed that Miriam was susceptible, especially at such a young age, to fall into the trap of self righteousness. In her absolute faith that God would save the child she was insensitive to the fears of her parents regarding the fate of the child and downplaying their worries.

Amram with his keen insight lovingly "hits" her on the head bringing her to her senses and reality.

There are no guarantees. No one can ever assume with certainty the nature of things or how they will turn out. We can hope for the best but never may we assume, especially when it impacts on another's feelings.

What we must do is remain faithful and committed, always being sensitive never to allow our "self confidence" delude us into "self righteousness". It is true that we must operate under the notion of "our" understanding but never may we make assumptions based on that alone.

Amram "spits" in frustration and anger, so as to impact upon the young child a sensitivity towards the feelings of others, in the hope that she will learn to temper her exuberance with reality and all its consequences.

That lesson is echoed once again, when Miriam in her enthused commitment and heightened level of *Avodas HaShem*, encroaches with a taint of super confidence and self righteousness in judging her younger brother Moshe.

God conjures the image of her father's lesson years ago: "*Were her father to spit in her face*", and his effort to make her ever conscious of maintaining that healthy dose of objectivity, never allowing herself the "privilege" of self righteousness in clouding her attitude to others.

She is happy to relearn the teaching of her father, accepting her fate and embarrassment in being quarantined and afflicted with leprosy.

She is even more honored by the evident lesson that was absorbed by the nation as a whole.

Despite their being anxious to reach the promised land and not be hindered or delayed in that goal, they nevertheless put aside their own dreams and expectations with an affectionate understanding of Miriam and her plight.

When Miriam was admonished by her father for being insensitive, the Torah states that her reaction was *ותצבת מרחוק*, *to station herself from the distance.*

Perhaps this emphasizes her struggling to implement her father's teaching. She didn't run up close but maintained a "distance" of contained hope, yet still hoping for the best. The merit in that action wasn't the simple curiosity to see how the episode will play out. That is something anyone else in that circumstance would also exhibit.

It was rather the virtue of her struggling to internalize the self control her father sought, that he knew would be critical for her success as a leader.

Miriam happily takes it on the chin, encouraged by the exemplary behavior of the nation in putting aside their entitlements for the sake of the honor of Miriam.

We must live our lives by our beliefs but we may never let ourselves lapse into self righteousness by imposing our values and downplaying the attitudes and behavior of others.

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צבי טייכמן

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