

Submitting to a Higher Authority

In this week's Parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu tells the Jewish people that despite their witnessing and experiencing extraordinary miracles at יציאת מצרים, they remained deficient in their הכרת ה'. However, after their miraculous journey for 40 years in the desert, encountering Hashem's kindness on a daily basis, they have now become positioned to attain the ultimate recognition of Hashem. The Seforno explains that in truth, the miracles of מצרים and הר סיני had all of the ingredients necessary to achieve this goal, but was hindered by their rebelliousness. Only after the Jewish people were exposed to 40 years of kindness, and they took possession of ארץ סיחון ועוג, was the rebelliousness unable to interfere with their הכרת ה'.

In the context of the דור דעה this Seforno is difficult to understand. They were the greatest generation that ever lived, and therefore their rebellion must have been ever so slight. How could such a slight feeling of resisting authority, block out on some level the impact of הר סיני and יציאת מצרים? These were events that clearly showed Hashem in His full glory,

and should have propelled the Jewish people to the greatest height of recognizing Hashem! We can derive from here that even a small resistance to authority can wreak havoc on our אמונה, and deflect the most powerful message from penetrating our heart.

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However it seems from the Seforno that although this resistance to authority is capable of blocking out an event such as הר סיני and יציאת מצרים, reaching the heart is still possible. The Seforno offers a two-pronged solution to pierce through the resistance. One is by consistently focusing on the chesed Hashem, like the Pasuk says,

"I led you for 40 years in the desert, your clothing and shoes did not wear out..." Secondly, by being able to visualize that the goal of recognizing Hashem which was to go into ארץ ישראל and experience השראת השכינה, can be accomplished. This only happened once they took hold of ארץ סיחון ועוג and saw that getting ארץ ישראל was a reality. In order to fully allow themselves to internalize the recognition of Hashem, they needed to see the pieces all coming together. The Seforno concludes that after all this, they were capable of focusing their hearts to know Hashem. This implies that even after the resistance was gone, the full recognition of Hashem could not be achieved without focusing themselves.

We can glean from here an important lesson in battling our innate natural tendency to resist authority. By focusing on Hashem's abundant kindness, and visualizing our goals being achieved, we will allow ourselves to fully submit to Hashem and recognize him. But even after we removed the opposition, our hearts can only be penetrated by focusing through limud hamussar.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח
לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר
לרפואה שלמה רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה