

'ALL ARE CONSIDERED BLIND...'



WHICH is the worst of the *Makkos*?

Obviously, *Makkos Bechoros* is the worst, and is the *Makkah* that finally got Pharaoh to release Israel from its bondage.

One would expect that the *Makkos* had some ascending order of difficulty, with Hashem ratcheting up the difficulty, but it is hard to see a pattern of difficulty as such. The *sefarim* (see *Gvuros Hashem*) explain that the Ten *Makkos* were parallel to the ten *ma'amaros* of creation. They are in reverse order: i.e. *Makkos Bechoros*, the last *Makkah*, is parallel to the creation of Heaven and Earth, while the *Makkah* of Darkness is parallel to "Let there be light..." and so on (see the Maharal at length).

If we understand that the Plague of Darkness is parallel to "Let there be light," it would imply that the Plague of Darkness is something that is a singularly difficult *Makkah*, yet it does not seem to be anywhere near as painful or life-threatening as the other *Makkos*. True, many of the wicked perished at that time, but that was under the cloak of darkness, not

“

If we are to look for a point to work on, it ought to start with our smugness, our sense that we know and we understand and we are masters of our own destinies.

through the darkness itself, so why is darkness at the very apex of the pyramid?

We have difficulty understanding this because we assumed that the *Makkos* are meant to be in ascending order of difficulty or pain. In truth, the point of the *Makkos* was to establish the truth of G-d's mastery of the world and over mankind. By following the order of the ten *ma'amaros*, it was in effect uncovering another layer of masking and yet another layer of masking.

Let us then go back to the creation of light and the Plague of Darkness.

The purpose of Hashem's Creation was that an independent, free-willed human being should perceive the great truth of Hashem. This means that people would have minds capable of comprehension, and Hashem

would feed that comprehension with revelations of truth and wisdom. Thus the very first creation was light – the medium that connects Hashem’s revelations to our understanding, as we use the term “to become enlightened.”

Thus the “light” is the greatest gift to man, to be used for his core mission, and it allows him to think that wisdom is his. We introduce our faith in Hashem’s “all-ness” every morning with the *brachah* that describes Hashem as opening the windows of the world and shining a light onto the world. The first *brachah* deals with the light of the physical world, and the second *brachah* deals with Torah, the light of the moral and spiritual world. The clear understanding that both these lights are from Hashem is an absolute prerequisite to the genuine declaration that Hashem is all.

But the potential for misuse is the greatest at this very attribute. We begin to feel that both our understanding and our mastery of the world is innate to us. It is a deification of self at the core of one’s being.

And this was the final revelation of G-d to Pharaoh. Not only is Hashem stronger than Pharaoh, but Pharaoh sees naught and understands nothing unless and until Hashem shines a light into the world.

The recent (or perhaps still current) catastrophe has many aspects and many repercussions. We, a proud all-knowing generation, know nothing. How the tiniest wisp of a barely living protein becomes the slayer of nations is perplexing. How it comes about, how it spreads, who gets very ill, why. We are quite clueless.

But it is not only “them,” the scientists and doctors, who are at a loss. It is each and every person who has invested in this, that or the other. The carefully strategized enterprises that we are “totally in control of.” The weddings planned in excruciating detail, the plans for Pesach, the business plans, etc.

We have been hit by something stronger than disease. We have been hit by darkness. A sense of profound ignorance and utter helplessness. If we are to look for a point to work on, it ought to start with our smugness, our sense that we know and we understand and we are masters of our own destinies.

Perhaps when the dust has settled, and we once again are granted a measure of vision, clarity and mastery over ourselves, we will make the *brachos* of “the One who opens the eyes of the blind,” and “the Creator of the luminaries,” with a lot more emotional resonance.

Reb Binyomin said, “All are considered blind until Hashem enlightens them” (*Midrash Rabbah* on *Bereishis* 53:14). ■

STARTING פרוק כיצד מברכין APRIL 6TH

DAILY AMUD PROGRAM

75
CHABUROS
28
CITIES
2500
PARTICIPANTS
WORLDWIDE

Sunday-Thursday

How it Works:

- Learn 1 new amud daily Sunday-Thursday
- Review yesterday’s amud every day
- Review 2.5 blatt every Friday & Shabbos
- Complete 10 blatt 3 times each month
- Receive daily audio or video shiurim & resources

“The pace of an amud a day gives me such a geshmak in my learning.”
Moshe Fried

הרה"ג ר' נח אייזיק אהלבים שליט"א
מרא דאתרא קהל נחלת ציחק
נשיא מפעל עמוד וחזרה
בהמלצת גדולי ישראל רבנים
וראשי ישיבה שליט"א



ללמוד
לחזור
לקנות

מפעל
עמוד
וחזרה

ORAYSA

The Amud 6 Chazarah Initiative

Join or set up a shiur or chaburah in your neighborhood!
Call today or visit our website for more information.

P. 855.4-OR.AYSA E. INFO@ORAYSA.ORG W. WWW.ORAYSA.ORG