

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT CHUKAT

What Are We Made Of?

In this week's Parsha, Chukas, we read about the passing of Miriam and the well of Miriam drying up. We read how the Jewish people were thirsty, Moshe hit the rock, and water came out once again. We were so close to the Holy Land but couldn't get in; Edom wouldn't allow us passage through their land. Then, Aaron's passing, the second war against Amalek, and finally, we were forced to turn back and take the long way around the land of Edom.

Disheartened, they turned against Hashem and Moshe, "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in the desert..." Hashem sent snakes which bit them, and many died. Realizing that they were wrong, they asked for forgiveness and that Moshe pray for them, which he did immediately. Hashem told Moshe to make a copper snake and put it on a staff. Anyone bitten would look at the snake and live. This is followed by miracles and victories.

Even though life was getting more and more difficult for them, the expectation was that we remain loyal to Hashem and to Moshe.

Why is so much expected from us? Why did Moshe forgive them so quickly? What is the idea of looking at the snake that saved them?

FORGIVENESS SAVES US FROM HEARTACHE AND AGGRAVATION, AND BRINGS PEACE TO OUR LIVES.

The first lesson found here is that we are different and special. We are The Chosen People for a reason - because Hashem sees the amazing qualities we have over all other nations of the world. The world sees that we are special as well, and they expect us to keep to higher standards. This is why when a Jew does something wrong, it is a bigger deal than when a

non-Jew does the same act. When our faith is tested over and over again, through struggles, suffering, and letdowns, we have it in us to remain strong in our faith and belief. We know that Hashem is in control and that He knows what He is doing. We understand that every setback is really a stepping stone to something much better. We need to rise above in every situation, and when we don't, we let down Hashem, the world, and, worst of all, ourselves.

The second lesson is that when we realize that we are wrong, we ask for forgiveness. And when we are asked for forgiveness sincerely, we should forgive immediately.

The copper snake was placed on a staff so that you had to look up to it, and so, you were looking up to our Father in heaven. This is the key to being the special people we are, is that we are connected to Hashem, and we realize that everything is from Him. When we realize that, the miracles and victories begin.

This Parsha is the story of our lives, the struggles, the suffering, the miracles, and the victories. The main thing is to keep our focus on Hashem.

It is now over three years* since my diagnosis, and these ideas are some of the things that keep me going. First, I realize that I am not being punished. Rather, I have been placed in a unique position so I can accomplish the unique mission I have been charged with. Second, I have made it my way to ask forgiveness when I am wrong or when I do something hurtful. It is hard, but it has saved me from heartache and aggravation, and it has made life more pleasant for me and the people in my life. Third, and most important, recognizing that Hashem is in control, I don't have to obsess over what I am going through. He knows what He is doing, it is all from Him, and as long as the focus is on Hashem life is meaningful.

With all this said, it is time for Moshiach to come and for the suffering to end. May he come soon.

*Written in 2016

"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,

I learned about your story thanks to my class at the Shul in the Bal Harbour community, FL. As soon as I heard it, it went straight to my heart. It made me reflect on my own story and how often we fail to appreciate what we have, drowning in complaints.

Seeing your resilience, strength, passion, and commitment is truly humbling. It's admirable what you do and how you continue to impact and teach in the lives of others.

I am only filled with gratitude for the light you spread and your teachings.

I just hope that more and more people get to know you and reach out to you!"

- Sol C, Argentina

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
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