



The Community

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Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

Clouds of Glory

Our Parsha tells us (-Numbers 20:1-2), "And Miriam (-[Link](#)) Died," and, "The congregation had no water." In the same chapter, we are also told (-20:25), "And Aharon (-[Link](#)) Died," followed by the next chapter (-21:1), "The Canaanite King Arad... waged war against Israel." Hence, our sages say (-Taanis 9a): "Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, says: Three good sustainers rose up for the Jewish people (and) they are: Moses, Aharon and Miriam. And three good gifts were given through their agency, and these are they: (The) well (of water (-[Link](#)), the) cloud (-[Link](#)), and (the) manna (-[Link](#)). (He elaborates: The) well (was given) in the merit of Miriam; (the) pillar of cloud (was) in the merit of Aharon; (and the) manna in the merit of Moses. (When) Miriam died (the) well disappeared, as it is stated: 'And Miriam died there,' and it says thereafter, 'And there was no water for the congregation.' ... (When) Aharon died (the) clouds of glory disappeared, as it is stated: 'And the Canaanite, the king of Arad heard.' What report did he hear? He heard that Aharon had died and the clouds of glory had disappeared, and he thought that he had been given permission to go to war against the Jewish people. And this (disappearance of the clouds is the meaning of that) which is written: 'And all the congregation saw that Aharon was dead.' ... Both (the well and the clouds of glory) returned in the merit of Moses. (However, when) Moses died all of them (well, cloud and manna) disappeared."

Now, Rashi (-[Link](#)), who only comments, "in accordance with the simple meaning of the verse," does he agree that this Talmudic teaching can also be the simple meaning of the verses. Seemingly, Rashi does, as Rashi comments, "The congregation had no water: From here [we learn that] all forty years they had the well in Miriam's merit." And so too, Rashi comments: "The Canaanite... heard: He heard that Aharon had died and that the clouds of glory had departed." And lastly, Rashi also comments, "From the heights to the valley in the field of Moab: For there Moses died and the well ceased." Therefore, it is logical to say that Rashi also embraces that the clouds of glory as well returned in the merit of Moses. However, from the simple meaning of the verse, after the death of Miriam and the disappearance of the well, the verse tells us how the Israelites complained to Moses and Aharon, and how G-d told Moses to speak to the rock, etc. However, we see nothing in the verse that after the passing of Aharon, how the Israelites reacted in any fright to the disappearance of the clouds, nor of G-d commanding Moses in how to bring them back?! Seemingly, the clouds did not return after Aharon's passing.

In order to understand how Rashi sees this through the lense of the simple meaning of the verse, we find that the clouds served four purposes for the Israelites in the desert: (i) To protect them from the desert heat of the sun, (ii) it cleansed and pressed their clothing, (iii) to show them directions, and (iv) to straighten out the mountains and valleys, killing the snakes and scorpions. Now, we clearly find in Rashi commentaries, that the clouds continue to serve all these purposes, minus the cleansing and pressing of their clothing. Hence, there were the clouds even after Aharon's passing!

The answer is that there were two different clouds that were accompanying the Israelites in the desert, (i) Clouds that served to provide Israelites with their needs, and (ii) Clouds of Glory, which were not for any needs, but for the glory of the Israelites. Hence, we find in the comments of Rashi (and so too, in the teachings of the sages) sometimes the term clouds, and sometimes the term clouds of glory. And this will explain as well the laws of the Sukkah, in which we do not commemorate the Seven Clouds that served a purpose in the desert, but a commemoration for the Clouds of Glory. Moses, as a Faithful Shepherd was keeping the needs of his people met. Hence, simply speaking, Moses was not dealing with, "in his merit," bringing the well, clouds, or manna to the Israelites. The concept of, "in their merit," was concerning Miriam and Aharon. Hence, the Clouds of Glory didn't return with Moses --(which is why the King of Arad thought that he was given permission to attack, even though the non-glory clouds were still there surrounding the Israelites)--, while Moses kept the (non-glory) clouds, the well, and the manna functioning until the Israelites no more needed them. Simply, because this is the way the Shepherds of the Jewish people function, that the needs they provided during their lifetime are given in a fashion that they don't depend upon the presence of their merit, but upon the needs of their people. Hence, before Moses passed away, the Jewish people were at the border of civilizations, past the heat of the desert summer, and enough manna fell on the last day to provide the Israelites until they would be able to produce or purchase food. Moses, as with every Rebbe, provides as long as the people's need exists.

This Week...

FRIDAY, JULY 8, 2022 ★ תמוז תשפ"ב ט'

Shabbat Candle Lighting: North Miami: 7:58 PM · Mincha: 7:45 PM

SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2022 ★ תמוז תשפ"ב י'

TORAH READING: [Chukat](#) (Numbers 19:1-22:1) · HAFTORAH: [Judges](#) 11:1-33

Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 8:54 PM

MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022 ★ תמוז תשפ"ב יב'

Birthday: [Rabbi Yoseph Y. Schneerson](#); Previous Rebbe, 5640 (1880). [Redemption](#): The Previous Rebbe was granted release from Soviet prison, where he was arrested for his religious activities, (1927)