

THERE WAS WATER

by Rabbi Label Lam

HASHEM spoke to Moshe, saying, "Take the staff and gather together the assembly, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes that it shall give its waters. You shall bring forth for them water from the rock and give drink to the assembly and to their animals." (Bamidbar 20:7-8)

Why was Moshe told to speak to the rock "before the eyes of the assembly"? What impression was meant to be made upon the eyes of the people? They wanted water. Why educate the eye?

The Sefas Emes cleverly connects this incident to another situation where someone was dying from thirst. When Hagar and Yishmael were cast out they found themselves in the dessert without water and in one moment after the boy cried out the verse testifies, "And G-d opened her eyes and she saw a spring of water, and she went and filled the skin with water and gave to the youth to drink." (Breishis 21:19) About this the Midrash comments, "And G-d opened her eyes" - Was she blind? Rabbi Binyamin says, "Everyone has a status of being blind until The Holy One Blessed is He enlightens their eyes..." Quoting from his grandfather and teacher the Chidushei HaRim he writes, "In reality that which is necessary for every creature is prepared, in every place and at all times, only it is hidden from the materialistic eye, and The Holy One Blessed is He enlightens his eyes and he sees that everything is in front of him. And so it here that the desire of The Holy One Blessed is He was that the eyes of the Children of Israel should be opened and they should see that water was prepared for them in the rock."

In a book entitled The Klausenberger Rebbe, The War Years, Judah Lifschiltz records the following remarkable incident about the Klausenberger Rebbe on a Nazi death march.

The night was dark. The moon's silver light was obscured by clouds. The beaten marchers were surrounded by SS guards who had fallen asleep at their posts. A whisper quickly rustled through the prisoners surrounding the Rebbe. "He says to try... everyone should dig beneath himself. G-d's salvation comes in the blink of an eye." A glimmer of hope was kindled among the downtrodden Jews. During the three days of the march the Rebbe had pleaded with the prisoners not to drink from the dirty puddles on the side of the road...the Rebbe cautioned, begging for restraint. Now the Rebbe had given a positive command about the water, the prisoners had faith in him. Everyone began to dig-some with spoons and some with pieces of wood, others with fingers and fingernails. At first there were only a few small holes. Then the holes became larger...and then, the water began to flow in small spurts. As the water appeared, joy engulfed the camp...Fresh water... prisoners hugged and kissed each other out of joy and happiness. Half-dead Jews were returned to life in a

moment. Feverishly they dug more and more, deeper and deeper. The spurts grew stronger and stronger. ...Springs of water shot up everywhere...Thousands of prisoners gulped down the water until their thirst was quenched and their exhausted limbs were refreshed...

When asked if the amazing story was true the Rebbe answered, "If anyone doubted, chas v'shalom, the Torah's stories about Avraham Avinu's ram or Miriam's well, he saw clearly on that day that the Master of the Universe truly provides for his creations precisely what they need, and exactly when they need it.

I had heard this same incident recounted by an eye witness. When describing how the Rebbe reached into the ground, he suddenly burst into uncontrollable tears saying, "There was water! There was water!" DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).