From Mount Carmel to the Pesach Seder: The Mysterious Tales of Eliyahu

Sponsored by:

- Rachel & Akiva Romanoff, in memory of Akiva's father, Avraham David Natan ben HaRav Gershon Refael, A David Romanoff, z"l
- Rona & Jeff Rubin, this week in memory of Jeff's mother, Leah Rachel bat Yitzchak, z"l

Shiur #3: The Rainy Showdown

The Har Hacarmel Spectacle

Rabbi Alex Israel, 246

Why does Elijah choose this location? There are two possible explanations. First, Elijah wants to challenge Baal on its own turf. The Carmel is perennially green. Even during a protracted drought, when vast tracts of countryside turns to parched hues of yellow and brown, the Carmel mountain range retains its freshness. For the Baal worshippers, then, this is a region in which Baal-the rain god - exercises particular control. A victory over Baal in this location is indisputable. Second, the Carmel lies between two cultures. From its peak, one can look northward to the coastline and the trading areas under Phoeni- cian administration and influence. Looking southwest, one sees the hills of Samaria, the ancestral portion of Ephraim - the Israelite heartland." If Israel is "wavering between two opinions," two cultural systems, two religious orientations, the Carmel is positioned at the fulcrum between them. The venue of this test reflects, once again, the choice that the people must make: Israel or Phoenicia?

(כו) וַּיִּקְחוּ אֶת־הַפָּּר אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָהֶםׁ וַיַּצְשׁוּׁ וַיִּקְרְאָוּ בְשֵׁם־הַבַּעַל מֵהַבּּקֶר וְעַד־הַצָּהָרִיִם לֵאמֹר הַבַּעַל עֵנֵנוּ וְאֵין קּוֹל וְאֵין עֹנֶה וַיְּפַ**ּסְחוּ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ** אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: (כא) וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלְיָּהוּ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָׁם וַיּּאמֶר עַד־מְתַּׁי אַתֶּם פ**ּסְחִים עַל־שְׁתִּי הַסְּעִפִּים** אִם־יִקֹּוֶק הָאֱלֹהִים ׁלְכָוּ אַחֲלָיו וְאִם־הַבָּעַל לְכָוּ אַחֲלֶיו וְלְא־עָנָוּ הָעָם אֹתָוֹ דָּבֵר:

The People's Involvement

(כא) וַיִּגַּשׁ **אֵלְיָּהוּ אֶל־כָּל־הָטָׁם** וַיֹּאמֶר עַד־מָתַׁי אַתֶּם פֹּסְחִיםٌ עַל־שְׁתַּי הַסְּעִפִּים אִם־יְקֹוֶק הָאֶלֹהִים ֹלְכְוּ אַחֲלָיו וְאִם־הַבַּעַל לְכָוּ אַחֲרֵיו **וְלָא־עָנִוּ הָעָם אֹתִוֹ דָּבַר**:

(כד) וּקְרָאתֶּם בְּשֵׁם אֱלְהֵיכֶּם וַאֲנִי אֶקְרָא בְשֵׁם־יְקֹּוָק וְהָיֶה הָאֱלֹהָים אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲנֶה בָאֵשׁ הְוּא הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּעֲן כּל־העם וַיֹּאמָרָוּ טָוֹב הַדּבַר: (לג) וַיַּעֲרָרְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיְנַתַּחֹ אֶת־הַפָּׁר וַיַּשֶׂם עַל־הָעֵצִים:

ַלד) וַיּאמֶר מִלְאוּ אַרְבָּעָה כַדִּים ֹמַיִם וְיִצְקּוּ עַל־הָעֶלֶה וְעַל־הָעֵצֵים וַיְּ<mark>אמֶר שְׁנוּ וַיִּשְׁבֹּוּ וַיִּאמֶר שַׁלֵּשׁוּ</mark> וישׁלּשׁוּ:

ָלט) וַיַּרְא**ֹ כָּל־הָעָׂם** וַיִּפְּלָוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּאמְרֹוּ יְקֹוָקֹ הָוּא הָאֱלֹהִים יְקֹוֶק הָוּא הָאֱלֹהִים:

(מ) וַיֹּאמֶר ۚ אֵלְיָּהוּ לָהֶּם תִּפְשְוּוּ אֶת־נְבִיאֵי הַבַּעַל אִישׁ אַל־יִמָּלֵט מֵהֶם וַיִּתְפְּשֵׁוּם וַיּוֹרְדֵם אֵלְיָּהוּ אֶל־נַחַל קישֿון וַיִּשְׁחָטֵם שֵׁם

| | Eliyahu's Transition |
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| (לו) וַיְהָיו בַּעֲלָוֹת הַמִּנְחָׁה וַיִּצֵּשׁ אֵלְיֶהוּ הַנְּבִיאׁ וַיֹּאמֵרּ יְקֹּוֶק אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵׁל הַיָּוֹם יִוָּדַע כִּי־אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵים בִּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַאֲנִי עַבְדֶּךְ ובדבריך וּבִדְבָרְךְ עָשִּׁיתִי אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרָים הָאֵלֶּה: (לז) עַנֵנִי יְקֹוֶלְ עֲנֵׁנִי וַיִּדְעוֹּ הָעָם הַיֶּיָה כִּי־אַתָּה יִקֹוָק הָאֱלֹקִים | (א) וַיֹּאמֶר ゚אֵלָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי מִתּשָׁבֵי גִּלְעָדٌ אֶל־אַחְאָב๊ חַי־יִקוָּק אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתִּי לְפָּנָיו אִם־יִהְיֵה הַשָּׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה טַל וּמָטֶר כִּי אִם־לְפִי דְבָרְי |

Rabbi Chaim Jachter, From David to Destruction

Divine Orchestration

Hashem specifically commands Eliyahu HaNavi to orchestrate the events at Har HaCarmel. Indeed, at Har HaCarmel, Eliyahu HaNavi proclaims to Hashem that "UBiDevarecha Asiti Eit Kol HaDevarim Ha'Eileh," "it is by Your word that I have done all these things" (Melachim I 18:36).

However, Radak (Melachim I 18:21) is not sure if Hashem specifically orders Eliyahu HaNavi to organize this spectacular event. It is possible, Radak explains, that Hashem gives Eliyahu HaNavi a mandate to bring rain in any way he sees fit. Thus, "it is by Your word that I have done all these things" refers not to a specific instruction, but to a broad mandate.

Where's the Rain?

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף קיג עמוד א

ויהי אחר הדברים האלה חלה בן האשה בעלת הבית. בעא רחמי למיתן ליה אקלידא דתחיית המתים, אמרי ליה: שלש מפתחות לא נמסרו לשליח: של חיה, ושל גשמים, ושל תחיית המתים. יאמרו: שתים ביד תלמיד ואחת ביד הרב! אייתי הא ושקיל האי, דכתיב לך הראה אל אחאב...

Eliyahu prayed that God give him the key of the resurrection of the dead, but he was told from Heaven: Three keys were never entrusted to a messenger but remained with God, namely: the key of childbirth, the key of rain, and the key of the resurrection of the dead. You already have the key of rain, and you [also] want the key of the resurrection of the dead? It will be said that two keys are held by the disciple and one by the Master! Give back the key of rain, and take the key of the resurrection of the dead. Accordingly, after Eliyahu revived the widow's son, the biblical text states (*Melakhim* I 18:1): "Go, appear before Achav; then I will send rain," because he had to return the key of rain and stop the drought

- Rav Bazak point..