Miller’s Musings **בֹּא** **פרשת**

The elation and jubilance generated by the Jewish people’s redemption from slavery, can often onscure the tragedy of all those who perished in the plague of darkness.  Rashi tells us that the reason this particular affliction was chosen, was to hide from the Egyptians the shame of those Jews that were slain at that time due to their being unworthy of being released from their servitude.  In truth though we know that the Jewish people were at a very low level in general. The Angels on High in fact came before Hashem and questioned what distinction there was between the Egyptians and the Jews, both being equally guilty of idol worship.  So what was the distinguishing factor that meant some survived the plague of darkness, whilst others never merited to witness the exodus?

One way to understand this, given by R’ Yaakov Kamenetsky zt’l, was that the disparity lay not in their actions, but solely in their beliefs.  Whereas one faction of the nation believed wholeheartedly in Moshe’s foretelling of imminent salvation, the other questioned its veracity due to a calculation indicating they were not yet due to be released from exile. This is interesting for a number of reasons, but R’ Yaakov highlights an amazing facet of this episode, the fact that from the point of view of those experiencing this decimation of their brethren, there appeared to be no outward difference whatsoever between those who lived and those who died.

Life is full of unanswerable questions.  This is the very nature of this world, where truth is clouded by ignorance, and the infinite is ungraspable to our finite minds.  This is not a question against the truth of our belief, but a necessary part of believing in a divine and unlimited G-d who can create ex-nihilo, transform the laws of nature on a whim and Who possesses boundless power to do whatever He wills.  How could a creation as limited as we are hope to comprehend such Power or indeed His workings?  But just as there was absolute purpose in Hashem’s dispensation of life to those Jews deemed worthy in Egypt (even if we cannot truly fathom even this) so too everything that happens is with a clear and entirely essential objective.  We will never understand everything that happens, but the sooner we recognise that this is how things must be, the sooner we can live with all that is.

May Shabbos grant us clarity.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם