

2nd Day RH Iyun - Natalie Bernstein

2022

Mi Chamocha

Hi! I'm Natalie Bernstein and I'm here to talk about the Mi Chamocha. The Mi Chamocha is a prayer appreciating God, and specifically God's help out of Egypt, by acknowledging how God is like no other. I just started my junior year of High School, and in the midst of cramming in my last-minute summer work, I got to the section in my AP World History Textbook on Judaism. My interest was piqued, so I stopped the quick skimming and chose to read a little closer. And the one thing that really caught my attention was in briefly describing Judaism's god, the textbook used the word "jealous." Because God has chosen the Jews as his people, *only* wanting the Israelites to worship Adonai, God is called a "jealous God."

When I think of "jealous" I think of possessive and exclusive. I think of rigid and restrictive high school relationships gone wrong. And so I was a little put off by the textbook.

But then, a couple weeks later, I came across the first line of the MeChamocha: "Who is like you, Adonai, among other gods?" Ohh! "Jealous!" I realized, yes, God may have a singular focus on us as God's people, but we try to do the same thing. As the MeChamocha says, "among other gods," we single out and focus on Adonai. So, maybe this isn't jealousy at all— it's about trying to be in close connection when there are so many other distractions.

Nowadays, the idea of having a close, one-on-one relationship with someone has become tied to the idea of jealousy, to the idea of being clingy and overly possessive. As the younger sister of my older brother, Isaac, I understand this feeling. He left for his freshman year of college about a month ago, and I wanted to spend as much time as I could with him before he left. And then I started feeling badly that I was burdening him, because we're told that wanting to spend a lot of time with someone is "clingy" and "annoying" behavior. But it isn't. The past month with him away on the other side of the country has taught me that we *have* to ignore whatever people say about jealousy and clinginess, because when you really love someone, it's just not worth it to obsess over these petty things

and lose out on precious time with them. It actually takes *courage* to admit, “I love you” and “I *want* to spend my time with *you*.”