

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET
ON PARSHAS BO - 5756

B'S'D' for their due? Couldn't He have showered them with riches from the heavens as He gave them Manna?

Rav Shmuel Shtrashan of Vilna* (1819-1885) was a wealthy banker as well as a renowned Torah scholar. In addition to his commerce, he maintained a

free-loan society to provide interest-free loans to the needy. One time he granted a one-year loan of 300 rubles to Reb Zalman the tailor and carefully recorded it in his ledger. One year later, to the date, with 300 rubles in an envelope, Reb Zalman knocked on the door of Rav Shmuel's study.

The Rav was in the midst of a deep Talmudic contemplation and hardly interrupted his studies while tucking the money away in one of the volumes he had been using.

A few weeks later, while reviewing his ledgers, Rav Shmuel noticed that Reb Zalman's loan was overdue. He summoned him to his office to inquire about the payment. Of course, Reb Zalman was astonished. He had paid the loan in full on the day it was due! The Rav could not recall payment and insisted that they go together to Beis Din (Rabbinical Court).

Word in town spread rapidly, and people began to shun Reb Zalman. His business declined, and his children and wife were affronted by their peers. The only recourse the Beis Din had was to have Reb Zalman swear that he had

repaid the loan. Rav Shmuel did not want to allow a Jew to swear falsely on his account and decided to forego the procedure by annulling the loan. This latest event brought even more scorn to the tailor, and eventually he felt forced to leave Vilna and establish himself elsewhere.

A year later, Rav Shmuel was analyzing a section of the Talmud and opened a volume he had used sometime in the past. He could not believe his eyes when

he saw a thick envelope with Reb Zalman's return address, containing 300 rubles. Quickly, he ran to find the hapless tailor who had been so besmirched. After unsuccessfully searching Vilna, he found that the tailor had moved. Rabbi Shtrashan traveled to Reb Zalman to beg forgiveness. The tailor, a broken man, explained that there was no way that anyone would believe the true story. They would just say that the pious scholar had shown mercy on the unscrupulous tailor. Finally, they decided that the only way to truly atone and give back the tailor his reputation was for the scholar to take Reb Zalman's son as his son-in-law. The shocked town of Vilna rejoiced at the divine union that helped re-establish a reputation.

Hashem understood that after 210 years of hard labor there was hardly a way to give the Jews true wealth. Showering them with miraculous gifts and treasures would in no way compensate for years of degradation. Abraham would not find that reward acceptable. The only way for a slave to gain true wealth is to discard his subservient mentality, knock on his master's door, and proclaim, "I want and deserve your gold and silver!" The Egyptians complied by showering their former captives with an abundance of wealth. The

Jews walked out of Egypt with more than just gold. They left with the pride and power to demand what they deserved. They received one of the most important gifts the Jews would treasure throughout his sojourn in exile -- their pride. That gift, that we earned ourselves, even made Abraham happy.

Good Shabbos (C) 1996 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky -- Yeshiva of South Shore 516-328-2490 Fax 516-328-2553

*This version of the story was adapted from "The Magid Speaks" by Rabbi Paysach Krohn (c)1987 Mesorah Publications. Mordechai Kamenetzky Ateres@ppppmail.nyser.net

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From: "Mordechai Kamenetzky <ateres@ppppmail.nyser.net>"
To: CSHULMAN, " drasha@torah.org"
Subject: Drasha Bo -- Pride and Prejudice

PARSHAS BO PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 1/27/96 =20
by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Yeshiva of South Shore Volume 2 Issue 15

The Master of the Universe does not say "please" often. He commands. Yet this week, in issuing one of the final charges to Moshe during the final days in Egypt he does not command Moshe to do his bidding -- He beseeches

him. In Exodus 11:2 Hashem asks Moshe to, "please speak in the ears of the people (of Israel): let each man ask his fellow (Egyptian) man and each woman ask her fellow (Egyptian) woman for gold and silver utensils."

The Talmud in Tractate Brachos explains the unusual terminology -- "please." Hashem was concerned. He promised Abraham that his children would be enslaved in a foreign land and leave with great wealth. Yet so far only the first half of the promise was fulfilled. Hashem did not want the righteous

one (Abraham) to say, "Enslavement you fulfilled, but you did not fulfill the promise of wealth." Therefore, though out of character, Hashem implores Moshe "please speak in the ears of the nation that they ask the Egyptians for gold and silver."

The questions are obvious. First, Hashem must keep His commitment because of His own promise, regardless of Abraham's impending complaints. Second, why must G-d enrich his people by telling them to ask the Egyptians

Inc.
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov,
the High School Division of Yeshiva of South Shore.

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From: "Ohr Somayach <ohr@jer1.co.il>"
To: CSHULMAN, " " Highlights of the Torah weekly
port...
Subject: Torah Weekly - Bo
Summary

Hashem tells Moshe that He is hardening Pharaoh's heart so that through miraculous plagues the world will know for all time that He is the one true G-d. Pharaoh is warned about the plague of locusts and is told how severe it will be. Pharaoh agrees to release only the men, but Moshe insists that everyone must go. During the plague, Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aaron to remove the locusts, and he admits that he has sinned. Hashem ends the plague but hardens Pharaoh's heart and again Pharaoh fails to free the B'nei Yisrael. The country, except for the Jewish People, is then engulfed in a palpable darkness. Pharaoh calls for Moshe, and tells him to take all the Jews out of Egypt, and to leave their flocks behind. Moshe tells him not only will they take their own flocks, but Pharaoh must add his own too. Moshe tells Pharaoh that Hashem is going to bring one more plague, the death of the firstborn, and then the Children of Yisrael will leave Egypt. Hashem again hardens Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh warns Moshe that if he sees him again he will be put to death. Hashem tells Moshe that the month of Nissan will be the first month in the calendar year. The B'nei Yisrael are commanded to take a sheep on the tenth of the month, and guard it until the fourteenth. The sheep is then to be slaughtered as a Pesach sacrifice, its blood put on their door-posts, and its roasted meat to be eaten. The blood on the door-post will be a sign to Hashem to pass-over their homes when He strikes the firstborn of Egypt. The Jewish People are told to memorialize this day as the Exodus from Egypt by never eating chametz on Pesach. Moshe relays Hashem's commands, and the Jewish People perform them flawlessly. Hashem sends the final plague, killing the firstborn, and Pharaoh sends the Jews out of Egypt. Hashem tells Moshe and Aaron the laws concerning the Pesach sacrifice, pidyon haben (the redemption of the firstborn son), and tefillin.

Commentaries

A Multitude of Mitzvos
"...and you shall not break a bone of it (the Pesach offering)." (12:46)
In the Second World War, during the `blitz' on London, large numbers of families were evacuated to safer areas. Sometimes, the family itself was divided, with some children being evacuated to places as far away as Canada, while other children stayed with their parents in the relative safety of the English countryside.
One can well imagine the tremendous outpouring of emotion that took place when the war came to an end, and these families were re-united. But after the initial overwhelming emotion, it became clear that the bond between the parents who had stayed with their children was far closer than their relationship with those children from whom they had been separated for over four years.

We think that because we love our children, we give to them. The reverse, however, is also true - because we give to our children, we love them. Every time you get up in the middle of the night to get your child a glass of water or to change his diaper, you are giving, and that giving leads to love. What was lacking in the relationship between the parents and their evacuated children was four years of not getting up in the middle of the night to give them a glass of water.

The same is true in our relationship with Hashem: People often say `I would love to have your faith! But I just don't feel it!' The truth of the matter is that doing leads to feeling. When you give to Hashem, by doing what Hashem wants you to do, it's the spiritual equivalent of getting up in the middle of the night to give your child a glass of water. That is the reason Hashem gives us so many mitzvos to help us remember the Exodus. For surely if we just needed a memorial, wouldn't eating a little matza be enough? But Hashem gives us a multitude of mitzvos so that we will be deeply affected emotionally, and our hearts will be drawn to a powerful love for our Creator.
(Based on the Sefer HaChinuch and Rabbi E. Dessler)

Pesach Suspended!

"And you will celebrate it (Pesach) as a festival for Hashem; throughout your generations, as an eternal decree, you will celebrate it." (12:14)
If we look at the festival of the Exodus from Egypt merely as physical redemption from a corporeal enslavement, we could make the mistake of saying that during other times of physical oppression and exile we should suspend the celebration of Pesach. However, if we view the redemption from Egypt as a spiritual exodus, if we focus on the fact that Hashem rescued us from drowning in the spiritual morass of Egypt, and took us as His chosen people, then the Festival of Pesach is something eternal, to be celebrated even in the darkest exile.
Thus "if you will celebrate it (Pesach) as a festival to Hashem" - if you celebrate it as a spiritual redemption, then "as an eternal decree, you will celebrate it" - even in the darkest exiles.
(Adapted from the Meshech Chochma)

Breaking Down the Doors

"I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and I will smite every firstborn - I am Hashem." (12:12)
"I will pass through the land of Egypt this night" - I and not an angel
"...and I will smite every firstborn" - I and not a seraph "...I am Hashem" - I am He, none other. (Yalkut Shimoni 189)
Why was it necessary for Hashem himself to perform the miracle of the first-born? Why couldn't He have sent a spiritual messenger - an angel - instead? Everything exists at first in a higher form and then devolves downward through the various levels of existence until it reaches our world. All entities exist in all realms, but in different forms. For example, we know fire as something that burns, but in the higher worlds, fire derives from the passions of the wicked. Consequently, what we perceive as a miracle sometimes results from our limited perspective in this lower world. For example, when Avraham Avinu emerged unscathed from a blazing furnace, it was indeed a great miracle, but only to us. In the upper realms, given that Avraham Avinu was free of the passions from which fire is derived, the entity that corresponds to fire could not touch him, and thus his deliverance did not seem miraculous at all. This is what it means when Gavriel - the ministering angel of fire - said "I will go down and save him (Avraham)." Gavriel's descent symbolized that fire's higher nature would be revealed in this lower plane of existence.
However, the Jews in Egypt were so steeped in corruption, that they were unfit to be redeemed even by the standards of the higher realm. Thus, only

Hashem was able to 'break down the doors' - to alter the course of nature so that the Jewish People could be released from their slavery, and for that reason, no angel, but Hashem alone, could perform the miracle of the death of the firstborn and free the Jewish People from Egypt. A miracle even at the highest level.

(Adapted from the Beis Halevi)

Haftorah: Yirmiyahu 46:13-28

"As Tavor is fixed among the mountains and Carmel traveled across the sea..." (46:18) When the Almighty was about to give the Torah, two mountains, Mt. Tavor and Mt. Carmel had such a desire that the Torah should be given on them, that the angel who is appointed over mountains began moving them towards Mt Sinai. Nevertheless, Hashem chose Mt. Sinai as the site of the giving of the Torah. However, these two mountains were recompensed for their disappointment by being uprooted and replanted in Eretz Yisrael. Later, on Mt. Tavor, the Jews were miraculously saved in the time of the prophetess Devora, while on Mt. Carmel, Hashem's unity was proclaimed in the time of Eliyahu. If these two mountains were moved to Eretz Yisrael because of their intense longing for the Torah to be taught on them even for the brief moments of the giving of the Torah, then how much more will all the world's Batei Medrash (study-houses), where the Torah has been learned continuously for over 3,000 years, merit to be transported to Eretz Yisrael in the coming epoch! (Megilla 29b, Maharsh"a, Rashi, Bereishis Raba 99:1, in The Midrash Says)

Sing, My Soul!

Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table
throughout the generations.

Kol Mekadesh Sh'vii - "Whoever keeps Shabbos..."

"They dine in this day in order to say blessings on the meals three times."

On the Sabbath, explains the famed Chassidic leader Rabbi Mendel of Riminov, a Jew does not eat merely to satiate himself but rather to have the opportunity over and over again to come closer to his G-d by making blessings over the food He has provided.

It may be added that this is why many Jews say "Lekavod Shabbos" ("In honor

of the Sabbath") before each course of the Sabbath meal. The historical background for this custom can be found in the Midrash which describes the hatemongering description of the Jews, related by their arch enemy Haman to the king, as people of ravenous appetite who eat and drink and say it is all "for the enjoyment of the Sabbath, for the enjoyment of the Holiday."

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

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From: "Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ravfrand@torah.org>"
To: CSHULMAN, " ravfrand@torah.org"
Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bo

The Rebirth of the Jewish People is to be like that of the Moon

In this weeks parsha we find the mitzvah of Kiddush HaChodesh -- the sanctification of the Jewish Calendar, which is a lunar rather than a solar based method of keeping time.

In previous years, we have mentioned that the basic law that the Jewish calendar is based on the moon has deep philosophical significance. Chaza"l tell us that Klal Yisroel are compared to the moon.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch points out that the moon is the Heavenly

body which is associated with renewal. It appears in the sky at the beginning of the month and becomes bigger and bigger until the full moon. Then it begins to recede, until it disappears from sight. Then, once again, it appears. The moon has this constant ability of rejuvenation (chiddush), rebirth, and genesis.

This is very important philosophically. That is what Chaza"l mean when they say that Klal Yisroel are compared to the moon. We as a people, as a nation, or as individuals, can also sometimes drift away from the Master of the World. Some people feel that when they start drifting, it's inevitable that they can never come back, never return, that there can never be any rebirth.

When Chaza"l say we are compared to the moon, they are trying to convince us that just the opposite is the case: Just as the moon which gets its influence -- gets its light -- from the sun can sometimes go away from that sun, but it always comes back and there is a rebirth, so too, we must remember as Jews that we also have the power of rejuvenation and of return to the Source of our Light.

The terminology employed to connote the beginning of a new month is that there is a "New Moon". "New" is a very over-worked word in the English language. One cannot walk through a super-market without seeing "New". Everything has to be "New". Anything old is no good. Throw out the old and bring in the new!

Yet, when we observe the new moon, does it ever appear as a triangle... or a rectangle... or a square? It's the "New" moon, but it's always the same moon. It is Chiddush (novelty), but its chiddush is that it always remains the same. When the sages say, concerning Klal Yisroel, that they can experience "Rebirth", it does not mean that they must start all over again and throw out everything that was old and start a new religion or a new Judaism. No. We have the power of rebirth and rejuvenation, but LIKE THE MOON. It must be similar to the rebirth of the moon -- a return to the original way that G-d created us. That is the beauty and the power of the moon -- newness, but not having to discard everything and start all over again.

I will See the Blood... of Akeidas Yitzchak ... on the Doorposts

The verse says in regard to the Korban Pessach (Paschal Offering) "And I will see the blood and I will pass over" [Shmos 12:13]. The Mechilta says the blood spoken of in the verse is referring to the blood that was spilled on the altar at the time of Akeidas Yitzchak (the Sacrifice of Yitzchak). The Medrash quotes as support the verse from Va'yera [Bereshis 22:14] "And Avraham called the name of that place 'Hashem Will See'."

The question is often asked: Why was Yitzchak's preparedness to give up his life for the Sanctification of G-d's Name viewed as such a seminal event in Jewish history? Thousand of people have done the same throughout the generations and in fact did actually die for Kiddush HaShem? Why do we single out Yitzchak?

The answer is that this ability which we have manifested throughout the centuries to be moser nefesh, to give our life for Kiddush Hashem, stems from that first act of Yitzchak. When Yitzchak was willing to be allowed to be tied up and to give his life up, this planted and imbued in all following generations this capability for mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice).

This is what the Pasuk means "And I will see the blood and I will pass over you". I will see, G-d says, that the Jews are willing to take the idol of the Egyptians (the lamb) and put themselves in danger by slaughtering it and sprinkling its blood on the

doorposts. I will ask how this comes about. Where do they get this strength? In this I see, says G-d, the ongoing power of the mesiras nefesh of Yitzchak. The ability to sprinkle this blood is a result of Yitzchak's deeds.

The Altar of (Self)-Sacrifice is at the Doorway to the Jewish Home

When an animal is sacrificed, its blood is sprinkled on a mizbayach (altar). Where was the altar in Egypt? The Mechilta says that there were 3 altars in Egypt: The lintel and the two doorposts.

The Mikdash Mordechai states that we see from this Mechilta the following point: We have already mentioned that the blood of the Pessach Sacrifice represents mesiras nefesh (symbolic of Yitzchak who was moser nefesh so that his children would have the spirit of mesiras nefesh within themselves). But where must this mesiras nefesh be placed? The answer is it must be placed at the doorway of the Jewish home.

At the time of the Exodus, the children of Israel had to make a transition from the "House of Slavery" to the "House of Israel". There is a tremendous accent throughout the parsha on the idea of family and household (e.g. "a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household" [12:3]). Why is there such an emphasis on families? Because in order to create a Jewish nation, one has to start with families. In order to create a Jewish people, they have to be removed from the "House of Slaves" and be made into Jewish houses.

What the Mechilta is telling us is that the way to create a Jewish home is through the blood of self-sacrifice on the lintels and the doorposts. The altar of Egypt was the household, because that is where mesiras nefesh has to take place. Jewish households are not created gingerly and casually. They are created with devotion and dedication, with blood, sweat, and toil.

The Brisker Rav, zt"l, who spent so much of his life learning Kodshim, says an interesting halacha related to Kodshim in connection with the Korban Pessach: By other korbanos (sacrifices), whenever any part of the sacrifice ritual is completed, there is a halacha that it's "nasees mitzvoso" (its mitzvah has been done) and the Kedusha departs. Normally, once the blood of a sacrifice is sprinkled, the mitzvah has been performed, and the Kedusha status terminates.

The Brisker Rav says that in the Paschal offering of Egypt, even after the blood was sprinkled on the doorposts, the mitzvah was not yet complete. By Pessach, the mitzvah was not the action of sprinkling the blood but the status of having the blood remain on the doorpost ("and the blood shall be for a sign ..." [12:13]). Homiletically, he says, the blood had to remain on the doorposts for all future generations to see that the way to create a Jewish home is with mesiras nefesh. The blood was not only a sign for them, but it was to be a sign for us as well. Raising good Jewish children, successfully raising a Jewish family is not an easy task. It is accomplished through Mesiras Nefesh.

A "Note" Worthy Insight from the Vilna Gaon

The following true incident provides an appreciation of both the intricacies of Torah and the Gaon of Vilna's insight into Torah.

There was a wealthy Jew from Lvov in the business of "Mei D'vash" (some type of beverage). One year he concluded a big deal with a Gentile on Chol Hamoed Pessach. Both parties were very happy about the transaction. To celebrate, the Gentile offered him a beer. In

the excitement of the moment he drank, and then left.

All of a sudden it hit him. "It's Chol Hamoed Pessach and I drank a beer!". He was devastated. He went to the Rav in Lvov and asked what he could possibly do for repentance. The Rav asked him if he ever went to a (Chassidic) Rebbe, to which he answered affirmatively. The Rav told him to go ask his Rebbe, the Belzer Rebbe, what to do for a "Teshuva".

The Belzer Rebbe told him that his "Teshuva" would be to go into "Golus" -- to pack up everything, sell everything, and leave home to go settle in the Land of Israel. [See Makkos 7a regarding the Merit of the Land of Israel atoning for sins].

The "Mei Dvash" merchant came back to the Rav in Lvov and reported what the Belzer Rebbe had told him. The Rav confirmed the recommendation of the Rebbe. He said that the Medrash says on the verse "Judah was exiled in poverty" [Eicha 1:3] that the reason the Jews were exiled was because they ate chometz on Pessach. We, therefore, see from this Medrash that the atonement for eating chometz on Pessach is going into exile.

He then told him the following insight from the Gaon of Vilna: The Gaon says that the punishment mentioned in this week's portion for eating Chometz on Pessach is Kares, as it says "ki kol ochel machmetzes, V'NICHIRASA hanefesh hahi m'adas yisreel" [12:19] (for all who eat leavened, that soul shall be CUT OFF from the Congregation of Israel). The trop on the word "v'nichrasa" is a Gershayim which comes from the word "Gerush", meaning to be driven out. This, says the Gaon, is the only place in all of Torah where the word "v'nichrasa" has a Gershayim on top of it -- because the "Teshuva" for eating chometz on Pessach is Gerush -- Exile.

Personalities & Sources: -

R. Samson Raphael Hirsch -- (1808-1888); Frankfort-am-Main Mechilta -- Earliest commentary on Shmos, by the school of Rabbi Yishmael (circa 120 c.e.), often quoted in the Talmud. First printed in 1515.

Midkash Mordechai -- Rav Mordechai Ilan; 20th century Israeli Rosh Yeshiva

Brisker Rav -- R. Yitzchak Ze'ev HaLevi Soloveichik of Brisk and later Jerusalem (1886-1959)

Vilna Gaon -- R. Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman of Vilna (1720-1797)

Belzer Rebbe -- R. Shalom Rokeach of Belz, (1779-1855).

-----Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@scn.org

From: "Seth Ness <ness@acom.yu.edu>"
To: CSHULMAN, " Yeshiva University s weekly devar r..."
Date: 1/25/96 5:04pm
Subject: enayim l'torah -- bo

Enayim L'Torah - Parshat Bo
Publication of Student Organization of Yeshiva University

Jewish Months and Jewish Memory
by Rabbi David Horwitz

This week's parasha contains the mitzvah to sanctify the months, calling the month in which the Jews were to leave Egypt (Chodesh Nissan) the "first month." (The names of the months themselves (Nissan, Iyyar, etc.) were adopted by the Jews after the Babylonian exile.) The

fact that the "first month" is in the spring stands in stark contrast to the existence of the beginning of the Jewish year, "Rosh Hashana," in the fall. How can these two aspects of the Jewish calendar system be simultaneously understood? In any event, how can the beginning of the year fall on the "seventh month?"

The standard answer distinguishes between the month which begins the year (i.e. Rosh Hashana) and the first month with respect to the order of the months themselves. Although Tishrei is the month which marks the beginning of the year, it is seventh in the order of months, for Nissan marks the first month regarding monthly units themselves.

The Ramba"n, in the first section of his Derasha le-Rosh Hashana (printed in Kitvei HaRamba"n, Vol. 1, pp. 214-17), vigorously disputes this answer. One cannot, he maintains, break the strong association between the months and the years. Since Rosh Hashana begins the Jewish year, Tishrei must perform be the first Jewish month. But if Tishrei is the first month even with respect to the months themselves, in what sense is Nissan the first month?

The Ramba"n answers that Nissan is the first month of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt. In other words, we do not count the months from an "objective" perspective, but from the month in which the formative miracle of Yetziat Mitzrayim occurred. Therefore, there are no names in the Torah for the months. Just as we count "the first day of the week, the second, etc.", culminating in Shabbat, we remember our deliverance from Egypt by counting from the first month.

Remembrance plays an important role in Jewish practice. We are constantly reminded to remember Shabbat, Amalek, Miriam, etc. The Ramba"n's words should also help us bear in mind that even the units of our Jewish memory may not correspond with those of the world at large. Newspapers and magazines are now saturated with articles such as "1995-Year in Review" and "1996-Predictions and Prognostications." We, on the other hand, must remember that the Jewish time-focus stems from the Jews' covenant with Hashem, their acceptance of the mitzvot, and miracles such as Yetziat Mitzrayim, which demonstrate Hashem's love for His people. Hence, our system of counting the Jewish months, our Jewish memory, and our adherence to the precepts of our religion are all intimately part and parcel of our relationship with Hashem.
people.

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Halachic Discussion: Pidyon Haben
by Yaakov Weinstein

The Talmud in Kiddushin (29a) tells us, "A father is obligated towards his son ... to redeem him..." This redemption is done for any firstborn male of the mother, "Peter Rechem". In order to redeem his son, the father must give 5 S'laim. If the father does not redeem his son, the son must redeem himself when he comes of age. Kohanim and Leviim, as well as the son of a Kohenet or Leviah, are not obligated in this mitzvah. Since the Leviim redeemed the first-borns (when they took over the task of working in the mishkan) certainly they themselves are already "redeemed."

The Ramba"m (Bikurim 11:5) tells us that one who redeems his son must recite the blessing, "VeTzivanu Al Pidyon HaBen". However, if he is redeeming himself, he recites the blessing "VeTzivanu Al Pidyon HaBen". In both cases, he then recites "Shehecheyanu" and gives the money to the Kohen. The Ram"a (Yoreh Deah 305:9), however, disagrees. He believes that the bracha recited when redeeming oneself is "Al Pidyon HaB'chor". The Ramba"m is consistent with his overall approach to a bracha on a mitzvah. (Hilchot Brachot 11:11-15) On a mitzvah done for someone else the proper phraseology is "Al...", while on a mitzvah done for oneself, the infinitive "Le ..." is used. The Ta"Z,

however, remarks that the reason the father says "Al" is because the son must perform the mitzvah when he grows up (if it has not already been performed by the father). Many Rishonim (see Pesachim 7a and the Rishonim there) believe that "Le" is said for a mitzvah that can be performed only by the one actually obligated in the mitzvah. For example, "Lehaniach T'fillin" - no one can put on tefillin for someone else (see Rishonim for what to do about exceptions). Since the redemption is not limited to the father, "Al" must be the proper recitation.

From: ""Yeshivat Har Etzion" <yhe@jer1.co.il>
To: NDIAMENT, CSHULMAN, " " Sichot of the Roshei
Date: 1/26/96 4:17am
Subject: Sicha Parashat Bo

SICHA OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A

"They are Slaves to Me - Not Slaves to Slaves"
Summarized by Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon

In Parashat Bo, we witness for the first time the appearance of a set of practical mitzvot. In essence, most of these mitzvot are related to the Exodus. The first mitzva of this set, however, that of Kiddush Ha-Hodesh, is seemingly an exception. We may therefore ask ourselves in what way is it connected with the great event of the Exodus.

We may begin to understand this by noting a particular halakha cited by Rabbeinu Tam, according to which a laborer may decide to cease his work at any time, based on the principle that "they are slaves to Me, not slaves to slaves." On the other hand, a different law applies to the contractor, who is not able to give up his work at any time he chooses.

Hence, there is a qualitative difference between the contractor and the laborer. The laborer is a slave, while the contractor is not.

However, what really is the difference between them? It seems that the source of the difference lies in that the laborer's submission to a time-frame is dictated to him by his master. The laborer has no regulation of his work other than the constraints of time. He is enslaved to a certain framework of work hours, in which he may do nothing but the work of the owner. His obligation in this regard is so great that the Chakhamim absolved him from saying the fourth berakha of Birkat Ha-mazon - in order that he not waste the master's time.

This is not the case with regard to the contractor. The contractor takes upon himself the execution of a certain task, and he is free to plan his work timetable in whichever way he chooses. He is not forced to do his work during certain hours. He is not a slave of time, but rather its master and ruler.

This point characterizes the mitzva of Kiddush Ha-Chodesh. The determination of time was placed in the hands of Bnei Yisrael, as it is written: "This month will be for you the First of Months..." - the time is given to you, to use as you see fit. This is the essence of freedom from slavery.

This freedom from the yoke of time also finds expression

in the halakhic and social spheres, as explained above, in relation to the laborer and the contractor. But its significance is far greater.

Within the mitzva of "This month will be for you..." lies the command to number the months of the year starting from Nissan. In other words, years are no longer to be counted from the Creation, but rather from the Exodus. This is not merely a technical difference, but rather represents an important and fundamental shift. A qualitative difference exists between relating time back to the Creation and relating it to the Exodus.

Relating to the Creation lends time something of the spirit of the Creation, a kind of partnership with the natural world, a world in which a person acts in a given and bounded space which limits his freedom of action. Nature confines his steps, with time representing one of the chains which confine him.

Relating time to the Exodus, on the other hand, places man in the framework of history, and he therefore feels that he is part of an all-encompassing process. Here, he is not chained and confined, but rather an active and creative agent. With his own hands, through his own actions, he determines his progress. He is not swept through life's currents against his will; rather, he has the responsibility of directing, navigating and leading his own way. He no longer acts as an "object", but is now a "subject" - a subject with free choice, with a will of his own, with the ability to act.

When a person relates to the world from this point of view, he is freed from enslavement to nature. He is no longer a slave to the laws of nature, but rather he is able to control them, and to act as he wills. He may rise and progress without nature interfering with him. He is free to act and to navigate his path towards God, to venture towards and to arrive at his true Master. Indeed, "they are slaves to me - not slaves to slaves": we are slaves to God, not slaves to nature.

(Originally delivered on Leil Shabbat, Parashat Bo 5732.
Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

From: "Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il>"
To: CSHULMAN, " " Chumash shiur focusing on theme
Date: 1/25/96 12:57pm
Subject: PARSHAT BO

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF CHAIM ben AVRAHAM
TUJSNAIDER

Already four hundred years BEFORE the Exodus, Pesach (Passover) was celebrated in the city of Sdom! According to Rashi (Br. 19:3), Lot baked matzot, because his guests arrived on Pesach. At first glance, this statement seems rather absurd, for what possible meaning could there be in commemorating an event which had not yet taken place! In this week's shiur, while discussing the purpose and significance of the Korban Pesach, we will uncover the fundamental biblical theme of "Yom Hashem". This theme will help us understand the relationship between the destruction of Sdom and the process of Yetziat Mitzraim.

INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

In our study of Sefer Shmot thus far, we have focused on the double mission which Moshe receives at the burning bush:

- (1) The mission to Pharaoh, that he allow Bnei Yisrael to worship God in the desert.
- (2) The mission to Bnei Yisrael, that they recognize that God has come to fulfill His covenant.

Although these two missions are interrelated, each constitutes an independent Divine goal: Firstly, it is significant that Egypt, the center of ancient civilization, recognize the existence of God and Bnei Yisrael's right to worship Him. [See shiur on Parshat Shmot.] Likewise, it is crucial that Bnei Yisrael be aware not only that the God of their forefathers has come to redeem them, but also that they be willing and ready to obey Him (Shmot 6:2-9). Unfortunately, Bnei Yisrael do not heed God's call for "teshuva". Nonetheless, the miraculous redemption process (bshem Havaya) continues, for the Sake of His Name (Ezekiel 20:5-10). [See shiur on Parshat Va'eira.]

Bnei Yisrael's redemption from Egypt is merely the first step towards the fulfillment of God's covenant. However, it is not only God's responsibility to redeem them, Bnei Yisrael are expected to BECOME His Nation. [A covenant, by its very nature, requires active commitment by BOTH partners.] By following His laws and establishing a model nation in the Promised Land, Bnei Yisrael will lead all mankind toward the recognition of God - the final goal of that covenant (the theme of Sefer Breishit).

BNEI YISRAEL AND THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES

It is interesting to note that during the first nine "makkot" (plagues), Bnei Yisrael appear to be 'out of the picture'. From the time that "makkot" (plagues) are introduced to Moshe and Aharon (7:1-7) until the completion of the ninth plague (10:29), Sefer Shmot focuses exclusively on the confrontation between Moshe and Pharaoh, i.e. between God and Egypt. During that lengthy narrative, we find no mention of any instruction or commandment to Bnei Yisrael. The purpose of these makkot is stated explicitly in the introduction to this unit:

"v'yadu MITZRAIM ki Ani Hashem" - And EGYPT will recognize that I am God, when I stretch out My Hand over Egypt..." (7:5)

These chapters form a distinct unit, for they describe the fulfillment of Moshe's mission to Pharaoh (1). [Note the connection between the opening (7:1-7) and closing psukim (11:9-10) of this unit.]

In contrast, from this point in Parshat Bo and onward, Chumash changes its focus from the Egyptians to the Israelites. Moshe must now complete his mission to Bnei Yisrael (2) by encouraging them to become an active partner in the process of Yetziat Mitzraim.

"Parshat Ha'Chodesh" (12:1-20), containing the first "mitzvah" given to Bnei Yisrael, begins this new unit.

THE TENTH PLAGUE

During the first nine plagues, God finds no particular difficulty differentiating between Bnei Yisrael and the Egyptians (e.g. arov, dever, barad, choshech). Nevertheless, for the final plague - Makkat Bchorot - it seems that a special sign is necessary: Bnei Yisrael must sprinkle the blood of the "korban Pesach" on their doorposts so that God can distinguish between them and the Egyptians. Surely, God is mighty enough to recognize who was an Israelite even without a sign on their doorposts. Why then is this special sign necessary?

Based on our introduction, the answer is quite simple: God does

not need to see the blood on the doorposts to determine the ethnic identity of the household. Rather, God requests this sign in order to determine who is WORTHY of redemption. Through the korban Pesach, Bnei Yisrael show that they understand the purpose of their redemption. They prove to God that they DESERVE to be saved.

This explains why Bnei Yisrael are commanded to prepare this korban on the tenth of Nisan (12:3). The three (or four) days before their redemption need to be dedicated to spiritual preparation.

The korban Pesach is significant in itself. Its purpose was not only to provide the blood for the sign on the doorposts. Offering this korban pesach serves as thanksgiving to God for His fulfillment of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim [see Further Iyun Section]. With Bnei Yisrael free from their affliction and their oppressor punished (see Br. 15:13-14), the korban Pesach serves as proper recognition of God's fulfillment of that covenant.

PASS-OVER

To fully appreciate this idea, the special name of this korban - Pesach - requires additional explanation.

A change in lifestyle, especially that of a nation, cannot take place overnight. How much more so, the transformation of an enslaved people, immersed in Egyptian culture, into a free nation willing and ready to obey God. Had Bnei Yisrael begun this teshuva process prior to the first plague, as God had originally demanded, they could have been ready for the ideal redemption process. Possibly, Bnei Yisrael would have commenced their three day journey to Har Sinai immediately after the tenth plague. Spiritually ready to obey God, they would have received the Torah and continued to the Land of Israel only a short time later.

Had Bnei Yisrael Truly been worthy of this ideal redemption, the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts may not have been necessary. However, as we explained in last week's shiur, the people were not worthy; their hastened preparation for the Exodus was hardly sufficient to entirely erase their past. Now that God is about to reveal Himself b'shem Havaya, they deserve to be punished together with the Egyptians; but God has Mercy (Ezekiel 20:7-9). The fact that God has to PASS OVER their houses emphasizes this very point - that they actually deserve to be punished, but instead of smiting them, He saves them at the last minute. ["po'sey'ach" in Hebrew implies skipping over. One 'skips over' that which he should have stepped on.]

Therefore, the Korban Pesach serves a double purpose:

- (1) By sprinkling the blood of the korban Pesach on their doorposts, Bnei Yisrael display recognition that they do not deserve to be saved. [Blood is a fitting symbol.]
- (2) Offering the korban in thanksgiving for the fulfillment of the first stage of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim, reminds them that if they are saved, it is IN ORDER that they can fulfill the next stage of that covenant, i.e. to become His special Nation in the Promised Land.

[The special laws which govern HOW this korban is to be eaten (12:8-11), further enhances Bnei Yisrael's perception of this purpose.]

This awareness, that although they deserve punishment, God 'passes over' them, is the primary purpose for offering this korban in this situation; and hence its name - "korban Pesach".

Any "teshuva" process must begin with both (1) man's recognition of God's Mercy in allowing him a second chance, as well as (2) man's realization of his purpose in life.

[Note: Even if Bnei Yisrael had been deserving of their redemption, it may have been proper to offer this "korban l'Hashem" at this time (or three days later at Har Sinai) in thanksgiving for Brit Bein Ha'Btarim. However, the ritual of sprinkling the blood on the doorposts would have been superfluous.

One could also suggest a reason why God afforded them a second chance. Although inexcusable, their stubbornness was understandable. As we explained in last week's shiur, because of their crushed spirits and cruel bondage ("m'kotzer ruach u'm'avodah kasha"), Bnei Yisrael did not heed God's original call (6:9).

Possibly, for this reason Sefer Shmot only hints to their low spiritual level at that time, and does not record what Sefer Yechezkel mentions explicitly.]

PESACH IN SDOM

Lot's situation in Sdom is strikingly similar to Bnei Yisrael's in Egypt. Recall that Lot is originally attracted to Sdom because of its climatic similarities to Egypt (Nile & Jordan Rivers / See Br. 13:10). The people of Sdom, as a result of their natural resources, are confident in themselves. They find no need for God and thus evolve into a corrupt society (13:13 / see shiur on Parshat Va'yera). In total disgust for this society, God punishes them b'shem Havaya (18:20-21).

Before destroying Sdom, God first consults with Avraham Avinu. Antithetical to the society of Sdom, Avraham's offspring were destined to become a 'blessing to Mankind' by establishing a Nation characterized by "tzekek u'mishpat" (see 18:17-19). Can Lot, a disciple of Avraham, not save that city?

Upon hearing of the forthcoming destruction of Sdom, Avraham immediately assumes exactly what we have posited - that God would not punish the righteous together with the wicked:

"Will you sweep away the innocent together with the guilty?...

Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (18:23-25).

Although he is more righteous than his neighbors, Lot does not merit to be saved from the destruction of Sdom. [He preferred the lifestyle in Sdom over the challenges of life with Avraham (13:10-12).] In an act of Divine Mercy (19:16!), and for the sake of Avraham (19:29), God removes Lot from Sdom before He destroys the city. Lot is so undeserving that he is not even permitted to look back and watch the destruction.

It is only God's covenant with Avraham Avinu that evokes Divine Mercy. Like Bnei Yisrael during Makkat Bchorot, Lot is saved from destruction even though he is not worthy. Based on this thematic similarity, we can appreciate Rashi's concise comment regarding the time of year when the destruction of Sdom took place.

Rashi comments on the pasuk that describes the meal which Lot prepared for the two "malachim" (who came to destroy Sdom):

"And he [Lot] made for them drinks, and baked MATZOT, and they ate..." (19:3).

On the word MATZOT, Rashi explains that 'it was PESACH' that evening. After all, why else would they be eating matzah?

Does Rashi need to inform us what time of year this episode took place? Do we need to know how 'frum' Lot was, that he kept all mitzvot, even matzah on Pesach?

Rashi is not coming to teach us "pshat" (the simple meaning of the text). Rather, he hints to the thematic similarity between Lot and Yetziat Mitzraim.

[Note: The following explanation illustrates the danger of understanding "drash" as "pshat". When we too quickly accept

"drash" as "pshat", not only are we liable to miss the beauty of "pshat", we might also lose the full appreciation of the "drash".]

According to "pshat", Lot did not bake matzot (19:3) because it was Pesach. He baked matzot instead of bread because his guests arrived SUDDENLY. In order to bake bread, the dough needs time to rise; matzot can be baked much more quickly.

The "drash", brought down by Rashi, that Lot baked matzah because it was Pesach, thematically links the events leading to the destruction of Sdom to the story of Yetziat Mitzraim. In both events, God reveals Himself, b'shem Havaya, in Judgement.

Thus, Rashi's commentary of this pasuk does not explain "pshat", rather, it points to a much deeper biblical theme - that of 'Yom Hashem'!

YOM HASHEM

This biblical concept of a day when God reveals Himself, causing the wicked to be punished while the righteous are saved, is known throughout Tanach as "Yom Hashem" - God's Day of Judgement.

For example, when Yeshayahu foresees the destruction of Bavel (Isaiah 13:1-22), he consistently refers to that day as 'Yom Hashem' (see 13:6,9,13). While describing that calamity, Yeshayahu even compares Bavel to Sdom:

"Bavel, glory of kingdoms, splendor of the Kassdim, shall become like Sdom and Amorah, overturned by God" (13:19)

Another important example is found in Amos. During the time period of Yeravam ben Yoash, Israel had reached prosperity and affluence. They eagerly awaited an even greater redemption, even though they were not deserving. In reaction, Amos warns the people concerning the danger involved:

"Woe, you who wish for 'Yom Hashem', why should you want 'Yom Hashem', [for you] it shall be darkness and not light" (5:18)

If the people are not spiritually prepared for God to reveal Himself, Amos warns, 'Yom Hashem' will bring upon them destruction rather than salvation.

Our final example comes from God's 'farewell' message to Mankind; the last prophesy of the last prophet - Malachi:

[also a popular song]

"Hiney anochi sho'lay'ach la'chem..." - Behold I am sending you Eliyah the prophet BEFORE the great and terrible Day of the Lord ['Yom Hashem'] comes. And he will bring about the REPENTANCE of the fathers by the sons, and the repentance of the sons by the fathers, LEST I COME and STRIKE the entire land with DESTRUCTION." [this last phrase, we don't sing!] (3:23-24)

Here again we find the necessity to perform teshuva prior to redemption, otherwise God's revelation will lead to destruction. Since the ultimate redemption of Am Yisrael is the hope of all the prophets, it is only fitting that this becomes the closing prophetic message to Am Yisrael.

KOS SHEL ELIYAHU

As we have seen, the redemption process begins without Bnei Yisrael being worthy of salvation. However, its continuation - receiving the Torah and inheriting the Promised Land - require spiritual readiness. In this week's shiur we explained how the offering of the korban Pesach was the 'first step' in the right direction, an important milestone on the road to spiritual redemption.

Every year, when we commemorate the events of Yetziat Mitzraim on 'Passover', we thank God for His fulfillment of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim (MAGID) and pray for our final redemption (HALLEL/

NIRTZAH). Before that prayer, we invite Eliyahu to our Seder table ('fathers and sons' gathered together), the same Eliyahu promised by Malachi: not only to taste our wine; and not only to encourage him to smite our enemies. Eliyahu comes to remind us that we need to do proper "teshuva" PRIOR to our redemption, and to warn us of the consequences lest we do not.

shabbat shalom

menachem

From: "Zev Itzkowitz <zev@shamash.org>"
To: CSHULMAN, " A Byte of Torah
<bytetorah@shamash.ny...
Date: 1/24/96 8:15pm
Subject: A Byte Of Torah IV,XV Bo (Repeat)

| |

Editor : Zev S. Itzkowitz

Dvar Torah of the Week

"Every first-born in Egypt will die,
from the first-born of Pharaoh sitting on his throne,
to the first-born of the slave girl behind the millstones.
And [also] every first-born animal." (Exodus 11:5)

In essence, Moses told Pharaoh, that every first-born from the highest station down to the very lowest would die. Why does Moses refer to the lowest class as the "first-born of the slave girl behind the millstones", while at the plague itself (Ex. 12:29), the Torah describes them as the "first-born of those who are captured, sitting in prison"? These two descriptions depict these first-born at different times. Moses warned Pharaoh about the plague during the daytime. During the day, these people slaved in the mills. Moses, therefore, described them to Pharaoh as such. The plague, however, struck at night. At night, these people were incarcerated in order to prevent their escape. Accordingly, when the Torah describes what happened, it depicts these people as prisoners (Rashbam). What was Hashem's purpose for punishing all the Egyptians through the slaying of their first-born? Hashem did not punish them out of malice. Rather, this slaying was meant as a stern lesson. For many years, the Egyptians as a people, from the nobility down to their slaves, had wantonly mishandled and mistreated the Children of Israel - considered by Hashem to be His own first-born. By slaying all Egyptian first-born sons, they would finally come to understand Hashem's 'feelings' at seeing the cruel and murderous persecution of His own first-born, the Children of Israel (R. Hirsch).

Mussar of the Week

"Moses said [to Pharaoh]: So says Hashem.

'At around midnight,

I will go out in the midst of Egypt.'" (Exodus 11:4)

Why had Moses told Pharaoh that Hashem would go out "at around midnight", and not exactly "at midnight"? Moses was afraid that Pharaoh's astrologers would err in calculating the exact time and call him (and, by association, Hashem) a liar. Only Hashem knows the exact moment of midnight (Rashi). People are only human, and as such, are prone to error. Unfortunately, we tend to project our humanity upon Hashem, too. Consequently, when things go awry, we are inclined to attribute our failure to a deficiency in Hashem,

rather than admit our own fallibility. No person is perfect. If we can admit to ourselves that we are not infallible, we might find that we can better deal with the faults of those around us and those we find within ourselves.

From: "Jeffrey Gross <75310.3454@compuserve.com>"
To: CSHULMAN, " "Halachic Topics Related to the
Wekl...
Date: 1/24/96 9:44am
Subject: Parshas Bo

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

But against all the Jewish people no dog shall whet its tongue... (11:7). As a reward for this, the Torah advises that Treifa meat be given to the dogs (Rashi, Pesachim 22a)

Non-Kosher Pet Food

QUESTION: Does one have to check the ingredients of dog or cat food to make sure it is kosher?

DISCUSSION: Pet food need not be kosher. It may not, however, contain Basar B'chalav (a mixture of cooked meat and milk). The reason is that the Torah forbids one to derive any benefit from Basar B'chalav. If it happened that meat and milk were inadvertently cooked together in one's kitchen, it would be prohibited to serve that mixture to the household pet.

However, the only Basar B'chalav mixture from which it is prohibited to derive benefit is a meat and milk mixture which the Torah forbids one to eat (Asur Min Hatorah). If the prohibition is of rabbinic origin (Asur Me'derabanan), it is permitted to derive benefit from the mixture(1). Therefore:

Only meat which was cooked [over a fire or in a Kli Rishon(2)] with milk is prohibited. If the meat was just soaked in milk [even if spices were added to the milk], it is permitted. If the meat was fried or deep-fried in a dairy substance, although there are some Poskim(3) who allow its usage, the majority do not(4);

The meat of fowl, when cooked together with milk [which is forbidden to eat only Mi'darabanan], may be fed to a pet(5);

All Chaya (non-domestic kosher beast) meat, e.g. deer, buffalo etc., cooked together with milk [which is forbidden to eat only Mi'darabanan], may be fed to a pet(6);

Meat of non-kosher species of animals, e.g. horse meat, that is cooked together with milk, may be fed to a pet(7);

Some Poskim hold that whey is not considered "milk" in regard to this Halacha(8);

There is a disagreement among the Poskim concerning meat from a kosher animal which was rendered non-kosher, either because it was a Treifa or because it was not slaughtered properly (Neveila). The Rambam(9) holds that benefit may be derived from this type of meat. [According to this view, the milk in which the meat was cooked would also be permitted(10).] Many other Poskim, however, hold that one may not derive benefit from this type of meat and it may not be served to a pet(11). This seems to be the majority opinion(12).

The majority of the Poskim agree that a mixture that cannot be

served to one's own pet can neither be fed to another person's pet or even to a stray animal(13).

It follows, therefore, that one has to check the ingredients of pet food to determine whether it contains a mixture of kosher animal meat cooked together with milk.

If a forbidden mixture of Basar B'chalav was inadvertently purchased or otherwise obtained, it may not be given to a non-Jew. Neither may it be disposed of in a way that another person could derive pleasure from it, nor may it be burned, since the ashes and coals of B'asar B'chalav are also prohibited, and another person may come to derive benefit from them. The mixture can only be buried, thrown into a river or flushed down the toilet(14).

Some Poskim hold that such a mixture may not remain in one's possession. He must rid himself of it as soon as he becomes aware of it(15).

>>>>>Sponsored in honor of our dear son, Avraham, N"Y.
>>>>>May we see much nachas from him and our other children.
>>>>>Rabbi Zvi and Zviya Morgenstern.<<<<<

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FOOTNOTES:

1 Rama YD 87:1.

2 R' Akiva Eiger YD 81 based on OC 318:9

3 Chavas Daas YD 87; Aruch Hashulchan 87:11

4 Pri Megadim 87:1; Chochmas Adam 40:1; R' Akiva Eiger 87;

5 YD 87:3

6 YD 87:3

7 YD 87:3

8 There is a disagreement on this issue among the Poskim, but many Poskim are lenient, see Badei Hashulchan 87:75.

9 On Mishna Krisus 3, quoted by Dogul Mirvava YD 87, who holds that one may rely on this view so as not to incur a loss.

10 Shu"t Chasam Sofer YD 92. See also Chazon Ish YD 22 who seems to oppose this.

11 Chasam Sofer, ibid; Pma"g in Psicha; Chavas Daas YD 94:4 and others.

12 Badei Hashulchan YD 87:25.

13 Mishnah Berurah OC 248:27-28. See Shaar Hatzion (75) who quotes a more lenient view. See also Sdei Chemed vol.1 p. 62.

14 Entire paragraph based on P"mag YD 87; Pischei Teshuva YD 87:2; Aruch Hashulchan 87:7

15 See Badei Hashulchan YD 87:8 who questions this requirement.

From: "Mordecai Kornfeld <74401.3314@compuserve.com>"
To: CSHULMAN, " Torah insight by Mordecai Kornfeld ..
Date: 1/21/96 7:19pm
Subject: Parashiot Vaera-Bo 5756, "Rebbi Yehudah's acronym"
The Weekly Internet
P * A * R * A * S * H * A - P * A * G * E
--- ---
by Mordecai Kornfeld
kornfeld@jer1.co.il

REBBI YEHUDAH'S ACRONYM

QUOTE: ...these are the Ten Makkot [= Plagues] which the Holy One Blessed be He brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt. They are: Blood, Frogs, Lice, Mixed Wild Animals, Pestilence, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Death of the Firstborn.

Rebbi Yehudah would make an acronym from the Hebrew words for the Ten Plagues: "D'TZ'CH, A'D'SH, B'A'CH'V".

(Passover Haggadah; Sifri Parashat Ki Tavo)

Rebbi Yehudah proposed an easily memorized acronym for the Ten Plagues: "D'TZ'CH, A'D'SH, B'A'CH'V" (usually pronounced "DeTZaCH ADaSH B'ACHaV"). This simple mnemonic provides an easy way to remember the Ten Plagues.

A very basic question may be asked concerning Rebbi Yehudah's mnemonic. A mnemonic is necessary to help us recall a matter which is not recorded somewhere readily accessible -- such as the opinion of a Sage in the Mishna or Gemara, which did not originally exist in written form. The Ten Plagues, on the other hand, are written clearly in the Torah, and every child can recite them by heart. What need did Rebbi Yehudah see to create a mnemonic to help us recall the Ten Plagues?

Commentators throughout the ages have discussed this issue (the authors of Tosafot in Da'at Zekenim and Hadar Zekenim, Shemot 7:25; Rosh, beginning of Vaera; Hagahot Maimonei, end of Chametz U'Matzah, #2;

Abudraham and KolBo, in Haggadah shel Pesach; Pardes Yosef, Shemot 7:25). Let us examine some of their suggestions.

II

(1) The most obvious suggestion is that Rebbi Yehudah was not trying to help us remember the names of the plagues. Rather, he was emphasizing to us that the plagues are to be divided into three distinct sets. The first three plagues form one set, the second three form another, and the last four form a third.

There are a number of ways in which these three groups are distinct. As we have already dealt with this subject at some length elsewhere (Parasha-Page, Parashat Bo 5754), we shall not dwell on it here. (Tosafot, Hagahot Maimonei and Abudraham.)

(2) Da'at Zekenim suggests that perhaps Rebbi Yehudah's acronym is a mnemonic after all. However, it is not meant to remind us of the plagues themselves. It is intended to record for us the correct *chronological order* of the plagues.

Two different chapters in Tehillim (78:44-51; 105:28-36) review the plagues which struck the Egyptians. These chapters, however, list them in a different order than the Torah does. Since the Sages tell us that the Torah does not always relate events in chronological order (Gemara Pesachim 6b), one may come to the mistaken conclusion that the order in Tehillim is the correct one. Rebbi Yehudah meant to assert, through his acronym, that the order in which they appear in the Torah is indeed correct.

(3) Da'at Zekenim quotes a novel explanation for Rebbi Yehudah's acronym from RYBA [= Rebbi Yitzchak ben Asher II], which is also cited in part by Hagahot Maimonei. RYBA makes two points. First, he remarks that if one writes the three sets of acronyms one on top of the other, the third letters of each grouping spell "CHoShEKH" [= darkness], backwards:

D - TZ - *KH*

A - D - *SH*

B - A - *CH* - V

RYBA derives from this that darkness accompanied all of the

other plagues. That is, during the plagues of Blood, Frogs, Lice etc., there was darkness, as well. (Of course, the darkness of the actual plague of Darkness, when its time came, was much deeper -- see Shmot 10:21 and Rashi.)

RYBA's second remark is that the plagues which occupy the third position in each set, always came together. That is to say, the plague of Lice was accompanied not only by darkness, but by boils, as well. Similarly, the plague of Boils was accompanied by lice and darkness, and the plague of Darkness, was accompanied by boils and lice. (The reason that they are listed individually in the Torah is because as the turn for each of them came, that particular plague was the dominant one. Lice was dominant when the time came for the third plague, Boils by the sixth, and Darkness by the ninth.)

RYBA contends that the inter-connectedness of these plagues is attested to through a diagram containing the three three-letter words "KiNiM" [= Lice], "SHeCHiN" [= Boils] and "CHoShEKH" [= Darkness], arranged one on top of the other. Interestingly, the names of the three plagues are spelled out in such a diagram both horizontally and vertically:

CH - SH - KH

SH - CH - N

KH - N - M

The authors of the Tosafot are themselves perplexed by RYBA's explanation. Although these are intriguing observations regarding Rebbi Yehudah's acrostic, there would seem to be no source for RYBA's assertions in Talmudic literature. To make such assumptions solely on such vaporous "proofs" would seem to be taking too much for granted.

Perhaps we may suggest a new source for RYBA's claims. It may be that RYBA was alerted to his explanation by the differences between the Torah's version of the plagues and the versions presented in Tehillim.

In Tehillim 105, nearly all of the plagues are listed in their proper order. Only the plague of darkness is out of place. It is listed first, instead of second to last. This may be what prompted RYBA to suggest that darkness actually accompanied *all* of the plagues. It is listed before the plague of blood, in Tehillim, because darkness was present right from the beginning. In fact, the entire year of the plagues may have been characterized by darkness.

Perhaps this is why Rebbi Yehudah's acrostic spelled CHoShEKH *backwards*, the way RYBA arranged it. Rebbi Yehudah was pointing out that the order in which Choshekh appears among the Makkot must be *reversed* -- as it indeed is, in Tehillim! RYBA's suggestion accounts for the order of the Makkot in Psalm 105, at the same time explaining Rebbi Yehudah's acronym.

The second half of RYBA's explanation may be connected to another verse in Tehillim. In Tehillim 78, when specifying the plagues of the Egyptians in Egypt three of the plagues are omitted altogether. The three which are left out are none other than Lice, Boils and Darkness. If we accept the RYBA's proposal that these three were not three distinct plagues, but rather they always came in conjunction, then it may be that they actually were not omitted. They are alluded to in verse 43, which tells us, "He performed *signs* in Egypt, and *wonders* in the field of Tzo'an [= the Egyptian capital]." This verse can be seen as alluding to an unspecified group of mixed signs and wonders that struck the Egyptians all at once. Since Lice, Boils and darkness are not mentioned elsewhere in the psalm, the RYBA may have concluded that they are the plagues which are intended!

III

Some of the commentaries explain the meaning of Rebbi Yehudah's

acronym using the approach of Gematria, where every letter of the Hebrew alphabet is accorded a numerical value, and any Hebrew word has the "value" of the sum of its letters.

Rav Shimshon of Ostropolier, a great Kabbalist of the 16th century, points out that the numerical Gematria value of "DeTZaCH ADaSH B'ACHaV" is 501. This is the same value as the Hebrew word "Asher" [= that]. With this in mind, we may find many hints to the Ten Plagues in verses that use the word "Asher." Rav Shimshon quotes, for example, Shmot 4:17, "[Hashem said to Moshe,] 'Take this staff with you, that ("Asher") you may perform with it the signs.' " Take the staff and perform with it the "Asher" [=501, or "DeTZaCH ADaSH B'ACHaV"] signs --

the signs hinted at by the acronym equalling 501 that was engraved upon the staff! Similarly, "You shall tell your son and grandson the way that ("Asher") I punished the Egyptians" (Shmot 10:2, beginning of Parashat Bo). Tell them that I sent the Egyptians Makkot with a numerical value totaling "Asher" [=501].

Rav Shimshon was actually preceded in this Gematria by Hagahot Maimonei, who fits it into another verse: "All the plagues that ("Asher") I have brought upon the Egyptians, I shall not bring upon you" (Shmot 15:26). All the plagues of Egypt, which total "Asher" [=501], Hashem shall not bring upon us.

Finally, the Tosafists (in Hadar Zekenim) offer a unique Gematria approach to Rabbi Yehudah's "DeTZaCH ADaSH B'ACHaV."

The portion of the Haggadah immediately following our acronym deals with a 3-way argument as to how many Makkot the Egyptians actually suffered. Although the Torah only mentions openly the ten Makkot that affected the Egyptians in Egypt proper, the Torah hints that the Egyptians suffered at the Reed Sea *five times* as many Makkot as they suffered while in Egypt. That means that they were plagued with *50* Makkot at the sea, besides the ten that took place in Egypt. Such is Rabbi Yossi HaGlili's opinion.

Rabbi Eliezer disagrees. He contends that in Egypt, each plague was actually a *four-fold* plague. That brings up the mainland total to 40 Makkot, and the sea-plague total to 5 x 40, or 200 Makkot. Rabbi Akiva goes further, asserting that there the Makkot of Egypt were *five-fold* Makkot. The mainland total is now 50 Makkot, making the sea-plague total 250 Makkot!

If we apply here the Talmudic dictum that, "These and those are both the words of Hashem" (i.e., all the opinions are correct to some measure), we can add together all the figures that were suggested. This makes a grand total of 100 Makkot in Egypt itself, and 500 more by the sea. Rabbi Yehudah's acronym was meant as a mnemonic for the total number of Makkot that were suggested by the Sages in the section following his "sign" in the recital of the Haggadah. "DeTZaCH ADaSH B'ACHaV" adds up to a Gematria of 501, reminding us that the Egyptians suffered *500* Makkot at the sea, plus another *1* hundred Makkot in Egypt proper!

Parashat Bo 5756

COMING OR GOING?

The Ten Plagues that Hashem brought upon the Egyptians can be divided into three groups of threes:

Blood, Frogs, and Lice

Wild Beasts, Pestilence, and Boils

Hail, Locusts, and Darkness.

(See Parasha-Page for Bo 5754; Va'era 5756 section II,1 for more details on

this theme. The Death of the Firstborn is, an independent, all-encompassing plague.)

The distinction between the three groups is immediately apparent from the Torah description of how Moshe warned Pharaoh before each of the plagues. By the first plague, Moshe is told to *go* ("Lech") to the Nile river at daybreak and forewarn Pharaoh of the imminent plague of Blood (Shmot 7:14). By the following plague, however, Moshe is simply told, "*Come*" ("Bo") to Pharaoh" (7:26), which the Midrash interprets as "Come to Pharaoh's *palace*" -- the place where Pharaoh would be expected to hold audiences (Pesikta Zutrat 7:26. This seems to be the consensus of the early commentaries as well -- see Ramban 8:15; Rabbenu Bachya 10:1; etc.). The third plague (Lice) came without previous warning. This pattern repeats itself in plagues #4,5,6 (Shmot 8:16, 9:1, 9:8) and #7,8,9 (Shmot 9:13, 10:1, 10:12).

Why warn Pharaoh in two different places? Rabbenu Bachya (10:1) explains that Pharaoh was particularly haughty with regards to the Nile river ("My river is mine..."- Yechezkel 29: 3), and with regards to his beautiful palace (the palace was a common expression of a king's arrogance -- see Daniel 4:1). This is why, after the plague of Blood, "Pharaoh turned and came to his palace, [whereupon he returned to being his proud self] and didn't heed the [miracle]" (Shmot 7:23). For this reason, it was specifically in these very places that Hashem chose to humble Pharaoh, and warn him of the plagues. (Malbim 7:14 and Abravanel 7:26 also address this issue and propose opposing solutions, which we shall not discuss here.)

Why is Pharaoh not warned at all before the third plague? Rabbenu Bachya (ibid.) suggests that by the third plague of each group, Pharaoh could be compared to a criminal who has twice been caught sinning. If a person sins twice, even after being warned in advance that what he is doing is illegal and punishable, then the third time he may be punished without prior warning (see Sanhedrin 81b)!

II

Why is the term "Bo" (come), used to describe Moshe's visit to Pharaoh at the palace, and "Lech" (go), to describe their meeting at Nile river?

1) Chizkuni (7:15) suggests that "Bo" implies, "Come to me!" Hashem would be waiting for Moshe at the palace. However, the Divine Presence of Hashem didn't "wait" for Moshe by the river. Why was that?

Rashi (Shmot 7:15) tells us that Pharaoh tried to convince the Egyptians that he was a deity, and did not need to tend to such humanly needs as relieving one's self. The way he accomplished this was by leaving the palace early in the morning, all by himself, and going alone to the Nile River. (Presumably, Pharaoh told his guards that he was going to "bless" the Nile River -- see Rashi Bereishit 47:10). There, with nobody watching, he would defecate. Moshe was told to go and greet Pharaoh in the morning by the Nile, where Pharaoh had gone to heed the call of nature. This embarrassing exposure of Pharaoh's mortality was all part of Pharaoh's lesson.

If so, it is obvious why Moshe was not told to "come" to the Nile. Since there was excrement nearby, it could not be said that "Hashem would be waiting for him there." The Divine Presence does not rest in a place where there is human wastes (Devarim 23:13-15)!

2) Salmah Chadashah (R. Shlomo Sobel, a "Maggid" [= public orator] in Jerusalem ~1948) proposes another solution. According to the Midrash, the palace of Pharaoh was entirely surrounded by armed guards and trained animals, to protect the king from unwanted visitors. When Moshe went to the palace, Hashem wanted to encourage Moshe Rabbenu not to be daunted by

these deterrents. Hashem Himself would be with him, telling him "Come with me", and ushering him safely into the palace.

III

3) I would like to suggest another approach. The Gaon of Vilna tells us in his commentary on Megillat Esther (7:6), that whenever speaking to a king, a Tzaddik [= righteous person] would be thinking of the Divine Presence. Undoubtedly, one of the Gaon's sources for this is a Gemara in Berachot 58a. The Gemara tells us that when Rav Shilo was brought before a non-Jewish king to be judged, he exclaimed, "To you, Hashem, is attributed all greatness... ." When the king asked him what he had just said, he replied, "I thanked Hashem for granting royalty to this world which is able to reflect the glory of His royalty in the heavens... ."

If so, this may be what Hashem meant by saying, "*Come* to Me, by Pharaoh." When Moshe stood before Pharaoh in the king's court, he felt as though he was standing before the Divine Presence. Although Pharaoh was wicked, he was a king nonetheless (as in Rashi to Shmot 11:8).

However, the majesty of a king which brings to mind the majesty of Hashem could not be said to be displayed when King Pharaoh was at the Nile River. There, Pharaoh was alone without the palace environment and without his royal entourage, simply to heed the call of nature. This, then, is why Moshe was told to *go*, away from the Divine Presence, to the Nile!

From: "kollel@mcs.com"
To: CSHULMAN, "haftorah@torah.org"
Date: 1/25/96 6:05pm
Subject: bo

MESSAGE FROM THE HAFTORAH

PARSHAS BO

Yirmiyaha 46:13

This week's haftorah displays the painful reality that people do not learn their lesson and history will undoubtedly repeat itself. The stage brings us back to the destruction of the Egyptian nation by the Babylonian army. However, this time the prophet places special focus on the massacre of the Egyptians and the execution of their Pharaoh. The prophet Yirmiyahu says in the name of Hashem, "I will direct my attention to the multitudes of Alexandria and towards Pharaoh and all of Egypt...I will deliver them into the hands of their killers and into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia." The Radak explains that these passages refer to a massive massacre which will befall the Egyptians and their Pharaoh. The Egyptian nation had mistreated the Jewish people for many centuries. It began with Shishak the king of Egypt who invaded the Jewish nation after the passing of Shlomo Hamelech and cleared out the treasury of the king. Chazal explain (see

Rashi Melochim I, 14-6) that Shishak even stole the glorious throne of Shlomo and brought it to Egypt. The Egyptians continued to destroy the Jewish morale and betrayed them after receiving large sums of money in exchange for their military protection. Finally, Pharaoh Necho executed the pious King Yoshiyahu when he refused to permit Pharaoh to pass through Eretz Yisroel enroute to a war with Assyria.

The time had finally arrived for Egypt to be repaid for their cruelty. Merely exiling them from their land for forty years was insufficient. A massive massacre was in the planning stages and an appropriate execution was

awaiting their Pharaoh. Hashem reminded them of His very special relationship with His people. Hashem's earliest proclamation to Pharaoh, "My son, My first-born is Israel" was revisited. Hashem announced that

tampering with His chosen nation would be repaid in full and Egypt's cruelty and cold blooded murder certainly deserved complete reciprocation.

It is interesting to note the particular description Yirmiyahu chooses when referring to this Babylonian invasion. He says "They cut down her forest,

for the enemy could not be counted; they exceeded the locusts, without any imaginable limit." The prophet compares the Babylonians to locusts which invade the land in unimaginable proportions. This analogy seems to bring us back to the plague of locusts in this week's sedra. It suggests some corollary between the Egyptian plague in earlier times and the invasion of Egypt during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

The explanation for this may be gleaned from the insightful words of the Kli Yakar in this week's sedra. He notes the Torah's specific introduction to the plague of locusts and relates this to an unprecedented phenomenon in the land of Egypt. The Torah introduces this plague and states,

"I have hardened Pharaoh's heart and his servants in order to place My sign in his midst. And in order that you shall relate to your children and grandchildren how I played with Egypt." "Why," asks the Kli Yakar, "is this introduction given to the plague of locusts rather than any other plague?" He

responds and quotes the testimony of Rabbeinu Chananel regarding an undisputable phenomenon in the land of Egypt. Rabbeinu Chananel states that after the massive Egyptian plague of locusts there has never been a locust invasion in Egypt. Even when all the surrounding countries are infested by locusts these creatures will not cross over into Egyptian borders. Although they do remotely filter into Egypt they never destroy any of the existing crop. Rabbeinu Chananel explains that this phenomenon serves as an everlasting testimony to the plague of locusts in this week's sedra. After Moshe Rabbeinu prayed to Hashem to remove the locusts from Egypt the Torah states, "There will not remain one locust throughout the entire Egyptian border." This passage became an everlasting statement and locusts will never remain in the land of Egypt. This undisputable fact serves as living testimony for all of the ten plagues. It reminds the world of Hashem's response to Egypt for all their cruelty to His chosen people. The plague of locusts therefore deserves this special introduction because it is, in fact, the perfect vehicle through which to demonstrate Hashem's revelations in Egypt.

We can now appreciate the particular description of Yirmiyahu regarding the Babylonian invasion. Egypt's attitude towards the Jewish people

could not be condoned. They, more than anyone, should have anticipated the consequences of their actions. The absence of locusts in Egypt was a constant

reminder of their past experiences for mistreating the Jewish people. One certainly could never say that the Egyptians were not warned. However, people never learn and history must therefore repeat itself. If the earlier plague of locusts was no longer sufficient then the Babylonian "locusts" would

do the trick. Hashem therefore ordered a full scale invasion of the Babylonian Empire as a repeat of the earlier Egyptian experience. They would once again realize that the Jewish people are very dear to Hashem and tampering with the Jews is certainly not advisable because Hashem does

protect His people and respond accordingly.
by Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Rosh Kollel (Dean) Kollel Toras Chesed
3732 W. Dempster Street, Skokie IL 60076 (847)674-7959 fax (847)

From: "listserv@lubavitch.chabad.org (W-2 LIST
Chabad-Lubavitch)"
To: CSHULMAN
Date: 1/23/96 2:17am
Subject: Torah Studies - Bo

B"H
Torah Studies
Adaptation of Likutei Sichos
by

Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion
Bo

BO

Two unusual features distinguish the tenth plague - the smiting of the Egyptian firstborn - from the other nine that G-d brought against the Egyptians.

Firstly, Moses announced the specific time that it would take place ("about midnight"), and secondly, the Israelites themselves were commanded to take precautions against the plague afflicting them - they were to stay indoors, and set a sign, in blood, on their doorposts.

The Rebbe explains why these features were attached only to this plague, and how they indicate to us the path that we must follow to bring about the redemption of the future - the Messianic Age.

THE TIME AND THE PRECAUTIONS

When Moses announced to Pharaoh the coming of the final plague, the smiting of the firstborn, he mentioned the time that it would occur.

G-d had said that it would take place at midnight. Moses said that it would be at "about midnight," fearing that Pharaoh's astrologers might make a mistake in their calculations of the precise fixing of midnight and might accuse him of inaccuracy.

Nonetheless, this raises a difficulty. Why was the timing of the plague mentioned at all? The mere warning of its imminence would surely have been sufficient, as it was in the case of the other nine plagues.

We are forced to conclude that there is a special and significant connection between the plague of smiting the firstborn and the time of midnight, so that in mentioning one, Moses had to mention the other.

In two further ways, the tenth plague was unique.

Firstly, the Jews had to make a special sign "on the two doorposts and the lintel" of their houses, a sign in the blood of circumcision and of the Paschal lamb, so that the plague would not be visited on them.

Secondly, they had to remain indoors throughout the night: "And none of you shall go out from the entrance of his house until the morning," because "once the force of destruction is given permission (to unleash itself) it makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked."

But why should these provisions have been necessary?

The previous plagues had been directed solely against the Egyptians, without the Israelites needing to take any special precautions to preserve their immunity. Why was the tenth plague different in this respect? And why were two precautions (the sign of the blood, and the confinement

to their houses) needed?

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE FINAL PLAGUE

We can approach an answer by first understanding that the other nine plagues were not of the kind whereby "the force of destruction is given permission (to unleash itself)." They were limited to a specific manner and extent of damage.

The hail, for example, destroyed "the flax and the barley . . . but the wheat and the spelt were not smitten because they were not grown up." But the smiting of the firstborn was not limited to any specific manner of destruction; the force which "makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked" was set loose - and therefore the Israelites had to guard themselves against it.

At a deeper level, the smiting of the firstborn was unique in its purpose, not only in its manner.

The other plagues were not primarily to destroy, but to create in the Egyptians an awareness of G-d: "In this you shall know that I am the L-rd." And this was not a lesson that needed to be enforced amongst the Israelites, who already acknowledged G-d.

It also meant that in the first nine plagues, those who were afflicted were not killed, so that they could benefit from this revelation of G-d's power. But in the tenth plague, since the firstborn were killed, the aim could not have been (as regards the victims) to educate them. It was to punish and destroy them.

And in this case the voice of strict justice could claim: What is the difference between the Israelites in their idolatry and degeneracy, and the Egyptian firstborn? Surely both deserve punishment? Hence the Israelites' need to safeguard themselves against the force of destruction - the instrument of strict justice.

These safeguards were of two orders.

In Egypt generally, the force of destruction was "given permission" to loose itself. Since it is indiscriminate and has no limitations, no "sign" is a protection against it. Therefore the Israelites had to withdraw to their houses. Within them (since they were "passed over" by G-d) the plague was subject to a limitation - and so there was room (and necessity) for a "sign" which would single out Jew from Egyptian.

MIDNIGHT AND ESSENCE

But what is still difficult to understand is this: The voice of strict justice raised the question, "What is the difference" between a G-dless Egypt and a sinful Jewish people? How could a "sign" have answered the claim?

The answer is that the tenth plague was executed by "G-d Himself in His glory and His essence," G-d as He transcends characterization, in particular, as He is beyond the attribute of strict justice.

At this level, the accusations brought in the name of severity and justice are silent, inoperative.

This is the connection between the tenth plague and midnight. For midnight

is the moment when this all-transcending face of G-d is revealed.

Midnight binds the two halves of the night, the first half which leads from light into darkness and is therefore a symbol of severity and holding-back (gevurah), and the second which leads from darkness into light, and stands for kindness and giving-forth (chesed).

And so, momentarily harmonizing these two opposing tendencies and thereby transcending them, midnight is the time at which G-d in His Essence is revealed.

Thus at the time of the tenth plague, G-d displayed his essential love for Israel, a love which in its infinity finds no place for the accusations of the voice of justice.

When the voice claims, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" (Are they not equal?) G-d answers, "Yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau." For His love for the Jewish people is as deep and invulnerable as the love of a father for his children: "You are the children of the L-rd your G-d."

This is why Moses told Pharaoh the time of the plague ("about midnight"). In this, he was hinting that it would be brought about by G-d in His transcendence. For otherwise Pharaoh and his court would have been convinced that a plague whose purpose was to destroy and not to educate, would afflict the Israelites as well, since they too were guilty of sins.

Only a revelation of G-d's unconditional love (i.e., at midnight) would have saved them.

SIGN AND LOVE

Why, though, did the Israelites still need a sign?

The answer is that to draw down into the physical world a revelation of G-d, man must perform acts of service, the acts which are specified in the Torah.

Even G-d's unconditional love, which is always present and constant, requires an active response by the Jew if he is to internalize it and bring it into openness of revelation. But in this case, since the love is unconditional, the response, too, must be unconditional - going beyond the limits of rationality.

Both of the signs - the blood of circumcision and of the Paschal lamb - were of this character. The covenant of circumcision is performed on a Jewish child who is only eight days old, at an age when his faculty of reason is as yet undeveloped. It is a union between the Jew and G-d which goes beyond the rational. And the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb was at that time so fraught with danger as to constitute an act of self-sacrifice (mesirat nefesh).

The lamb was an Egyptian deity. And not only were the Israelites to kill it, but they also had to keep it for four days beforehand with the full knowledge of the Egyptians.

Self-sacrifice is never rational. And so the Paschal lamb was itself a sign of a Jewish response to G-d that surpassed reason.

Therefore these two signs were answered by G-d with an act of supra-rational love - the love of midnight, of G-d's Essence, of the delivery from the tenth plague.

FAITH AND REASON

Now we can resolve an apparent contradiction in the statements of the Sages as to the virtue in whose merit the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt.

In one place, we find that it was their faith: "And the people believed, and when they heard that the L-rd had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped." In other places, it is stated that it was a reward for their signs of blood: "In your blood: Live." But the two opinions are one.

The signs were of a bond between Jew and G-d surpassing reason. And their faith was one which went beyond reason.

Before the redemption, "no slave had been able to escape from Egypt because the land was closely shut in (on all sides)." How much less reasonable was it to believe that 600,000 could escape, a people broken by the rigors of oppression, and threatened with extinction through Pharaoh's decree that every male child be drowned.

The pure faith with which the Israelites believed in Moses' mission and G-d's promised deliverance went far beyond the rational. And this faith aroused the unconditional love in G-d for His people, which constituted their inseparable bond.

The signs by which it was then expressed, brought the revelation of

G-d's love down to this world.

THE FUTURE REDEMPTION

"Like the days of your exodus from the land of Egypt, I will demonstrate wonders." This means the future redemption will parallel the redemption of the past.

The deliverance from Egypt was a reward for the supra-rational faith which was so internalized by the Israelites that it affected even their most extraneous powers (signified by the blood of circumcision) and even the non-human environment (the Paschal lamb).

So, too, will the future redemption be a reward for faith - the faith which disregards the great concealments of G-d that our exile brings, and which still holds firm to the belief in the Righteous Moshiach; a faith which does not hover at the outer edges of our minds, but which constitutes our most inward certainty and extends to every facet of our being.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. III pp. 864-8, 872)

From: "Bircas Hatorah <bircas@jer1.co.il>"
To: CSHULMAN, " " Weekly Words of Torah from Bircas
Date: 1/25/96 1:22pm
Parshas Bo

Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

"This month is the chief (rosh - head) of months; it is the first (rishon) of the months of the year for you." (12,2)

The Chasam Sofer explains that there is a fundamental difference between "chief" and "first." Chief denotes one who has been appointed as the leader by the consensus of the population, (without regard to any special qualities), while first (or primary) indicates one who is appointed because of his superior (leadership) attributes.

And when we consider the zodiac, it has no first position and no last position since it is circular. But, since the sun reaches the constellation of the ram in the month of Nissan, when all the plants start to grow and the re-awakening of spring begins, it was customary to regard this month as the "head" of the year.

But from the viewpoint of the Israelites, who were redeemed in this month through miracles and wonders, and who were adopted from that moment on to be His chosen people, this month is intrinsically sacred and special, and deserves the title of "first."

This is the meaning of the verse: This month, which up to now was the "head" of the months, will from now on be the "first" for "you" specifically.

"And Moshe called all the elders and said to them: Draw and take for yourselves flocks ..." (12,21)

Rash"i explains that "draw" (mishchu) refers to one who already owns flocks, that he should draw from his own, while take (kechu - which has connotations of purchase) refers to one who does not own any, that he should purchase his sheep.

The Kotsker Rebbe comments that we can learn from this how to follow the advise of the sages of the generation. One who has, means one who is well versed in Torah, he should draw from his own knowledge. One who does not have (the required expertise) must acquire from others; he should observe how and what the Torah sages are doing, and follow them. Even if he has no understanding of their actions, he should nevertheless abrogate his opinions to theirs.

From: "Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il>"
To: CSHULMAN, " " Chumash shiur focusing on theme
Date: 1/25/96 12:57pm
Subject: PARSHAT BO

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. KORBAN TODAH AND KORBAN PESACH

In the above shiur we mentioned that the Korban Pesach itself could be considered as a type of "korban todah" (thanksgiving offering). The reason is quite simple. When one is required to thank God for being saved (see Tehilim 107/ nowadays, we bench ha'goymel instead), he must bring a Korban Todah, a subcategory of Korban Shlamim. This is the only type of korban which the owners are permitted to eat ("kodshim kalim" - see Vayikra 7:11-21).

The Korban Todah is special in two ways:

- 1) The time frame in which one can eat it is limited to the day when it was offered and that evening, while a regular Shlamim can be eaten the entire next day.
- 2) It must be eaten together with MATZOT:

The Korban Pesach is similar in both these aspects. It can only be eaten that evening, and it must be eaten together with matzot. However, in addition to the fact that it is a type of Korban Todah, it also specifically commemorates the fulfillment of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim, therefore, it has extra mitzvot, such as being eaten with "maror" (to remember the bondage) while retelling the story of Yetziat Mitzraim.

1. Attempt to explain all the special laws of the Korban Pesach (Shmot 12:4-14) in light of our explanation in the above shiur.
2. In what other halachot is the Korban Pesach different from the Korban Todah. [Is it considered a Korban Tzibur in any aspect?]
3. What is the halacha of a Korban Pesach which was not used?

B. KORBAN PESACH AND BRIT MILAH [a mini-shiur and some questions]

We mentioned that the one could view the Korban Pesach as a thanksgiving offering for God's fulfillment of Brit Bein Ha'Btarim. Last week's shiur claimed that Yetziat Mitzraim also contained aspects of the fulfillment of Brit Milah, therefore, one would expect that the commemoration of Yetziat Mitzraim include some reference to that covenant.

Lo and behold, this is precisely what we find. At the end of Parshat Bo, after the Torah recaps the events of Exodus (12:37-42) [note use of Bein Ha'Btarim terminology - 400 years], God commands Moshe and Aharon additional laws regarding offering the Korban Pesach, even for future generations (12:43-50/ read carefully). The primary point made in these additional laws is that one who did not perform Brit Milah cannot participate in Korban Pesach. Even if one's servant must be circumcised! This point is emphasized in 12:48 - "v'chul a'reyl lo yu'chal bo" - [no uncircumcised male can eat from it].

No other mitzvah in the Torah contains such a strange condition. For example, we do not find that one can not shake a lulav an etrog if he did not perform Brit Milah. Why should the fact that one mitzvah was not performed limit one's ability to perform other mitzvot? Based on our explanation in last week's shiur of the connection between Brit Bein Ha'Btarim and Brit Milah in the process of Yetziat Mitzraim, the answer is obvious. Because

every Jew must recognize that Yetziat Mitzraim constituted the fulfillment of both Divine covenants, there is no meaning to thanking God for the National aspect (Bein Ha'Btarim), unless he takes upon himself the responsibilities of the individual, as symbolized by Brit Milah.

1. What is the punishment of one who does not perform either Brit Milah or offer the Korban Pesach?
2. Are there any other 'mitzvot aseiy' that carry this punishment? If not, why are these two mitzvot special?
3. Read Yehoshua 5:12. Explain according to this week's shiur! Why must this take place BEFORE the battle of Yericho?

C. CHAG HA'PESACH AND CHAG HA'MATZOT

These two holidays are often confused with one another, even though each one exists independently!

1. Read 12:1-20.
Attempt to break these psukim into two distinct groups.
Give a header to each group.
2. Explain now 12:14. Does it belong in group One or Two?
3. When were these mitzvot given by God to Moshe.
When were they given by Moshe to Bnei Yisrael?
(see 12:21-28 and 13:2-10, explain based on 12:39!)
4. What does each chag commemorate, be specific.
5. How long does each chag last for? Do they overlap?
See Vayikra 23:4-8!
6. What is the thematic connection between them?

D. THE DOUBLE SHLICHUT / FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF YIRMIYAHU

Read Yirmiyahu 7:1-28, especially 7:21-24.

While censuring Am Yisrael for their hypocrisy when bringing their korbanot to the Bet ha'Mikdash, Yirmiyahu makes an amazing statement:

"For I never SPOKE to your forefathers, nor did I COMMAND them, on the DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM OUT OF EGYPT about offering 'olah

v'zevach' (sacrifices)". [Rather,] this is what I commanded them: 'OBEY ME' ("shimu b'koli"), and I WILL BE YOUR GOD AND YOU WILL BE MY PEOPLE.... but you did not listen..."

How could Yirmiyahu possibly say that when God took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt, He never told them about korbanot? The ONLY thing He did command them when the left Egypt was to bring the Korban Pesach!

1. Based on last week's shiur - Compare Yirmiyahu's statement, Yechezkel 20:5-9, and the beginning of Parshat Va'eyra 6:6-8!

Use this to explain which day Yirmiyahu refers to when he mentions - the 'day I took you out of Egypt'.

2. Note that Bnei Yisrael were told only that God had come to fulfill His covenant, i.e. Ani Hashem Elokeichem etc., but Moshe DOES NOT tell Bnei Yisrael what he did tell Pharaoh - that they need to go for a three day journey into the desert to OFFER KORBANOT.

Why didn't Moshe bother to tell Bnei Yisrael of God's plan? Relate your answer to Yirmiyahu's prophesy!

Relate also to what Bnei Yisrael may have perceived as 'tafel' (secondary) and as 'iykar' (essential).

E. PREPARATION FOR PARSHAT B'SHALACH

After the Exodus but before Matan Torah, God charges Bnei Yisrael with certain mitzvot and places them in extraordinary circumstances. (e.g. mitzvot at Marah, shabbat, "kriyat Yam Suf", thirst for water, Rfidim etc.).

Based on this week's shiur, explain the purpose of these events. [ly"h - the topic of next week's shiur]

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To: CSHULMAN, " daf-hashavua@shamash.nysernet.org"
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BO Months, Weeks and Days by Rabbi Philip Ginsbury, South London Synagogue

The first mitzvah given to the Jewish people through Moses is connected with the calendar. "this month shall be to you the first of the months" (Exodus

12:1) - including our obligation to consider the month when the people of Israel were delivered from Egypt as the first month, and to count succeeding months from it. This was to heighten the people's awareness of the great miracle of their redemption and to keep it within their conscious memory at all times.

This is the reason, remarks Nachmanides (Ramban, 1195-1270), that the monthshave no individual names in the Torah. They are simply referred to as 'the second month', 'the third month', 'the seventh month', counting always from the month when the Exodus occurred, which is thus given added importance and significance. (The term aviv which sometimes occurs refers to the season of spring, and is not a name of the month).

Nameless Days

We find a striking parallel in connection with the days of the week. The weekdays too have no specific names of their own in Hebrew, but are referred to instead as 'the first', 'the second, etc.' day of the week. The term used for 'week' here is Shabbat which has the dual connotation of both week and rest-day. We thereby pay tribute to the sanctity of Shabbat, which is the pinnacle of the Jewish week, and link every day to Shabbat, which alone among the days possesses its own name.

There is of course a close connection between the Exodus and the institution of Shabbat. We mention both themes in kiddush on Friday night, when we make reference to Shabbat as both a reminder of the creation and of the departure from Egypt. Shabbat is a tribute to the creative power of G-d, who fashioned the world in six days and rested on the seventh. At the same time, the Exodus and the subsequent parting of the Red Sea emphasise G-d's unremitting care and concern for His creatures, as well as His ability to

vary His own natural laws for the benefit of His people.

The Months Receive Names

Although the names of the months are not mentioned in the Torah, we find that when the Jewish people returned from exile in Babylon and began building the second Temple, Babylonian names were adopted which are still in use today (Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, etc.). This raises two questions. In the first place, how are we allowed to use non-Jewish names to describe our months; and secondly, does this not directly contradict the specific command in the Torah to count from the month of Exodus?

Nachmanides deals with both points. He states that the way the Torah tells us to reckon the months was indeed originally a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt. When however the Jewish people were exiled to Babylon, a second redemption was forecast by the prophet Jeremiah (16:14-15) in the following words:

"It shall no more be said: As the Lord lives, who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, but ? As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north (Babylon)..."

>From that time, the Jewish people started to use the Babylonian names of the months to remind them of their exile in Babylon and subsequent deliverance. This was not intended to displace the remembrance of the Egyptian Exodus from the minds of the people - rather to give the added dimension of another redemption which would be permanently fixed within their consciousness through he use of the new names, side by side with the exodus from Egypt.

Keli Yakar, Rabbi S. E. Lunshitz, 17th century), explains why the fixing of the calendar was the first mitzvah given to the people, and why it stands at the beginning of the chapter dealing with the Pesach sacrifice.

Spring Lamb

Pesach occurs in the spring, when the zodiacal sign of Aries (the ram) is in the ascendancy. The Egyptians worshipped sheep as sacred animals, which is why they abhorred shepherds, as is evident from the narrative concerning Joseph's brothers (Bereshit 46:31-34); it was not fitting for their objects of worship to be 'ruled' by shepherds. To correct any mistaken idea that the month of redemption had achieved its importance through the influence of the Egyptian gods, the Israelites were told to bring a lamb as a sacrifice, publicly, within the sight of the Egyptians, to show them that they and their idols were powerless. This would show the absolute power of G-d over all other deities.

Two Great Mitzvot

The effect of this mitzvah 'korban pesach' - together with that of brit milah - circumcision - would be to earn for the people their freedom. Although they are praised for certain aspects of their behaviour in Egypt - they steadfastly retained their Hebrew names and language, their high standards of morality, their pure speech, free from slander - these were all passive virtues. They needed to carry out active precepts; and both of those mentioned involved a large measure of self-sacrifice. To bring the Pesach offering was to defy their erstwhile masters - while circumcision was a major operation when performed on an adult. Accepting them both willingly,

they became worthy of deliverance, as indicated in the verse from Ezekiel which we proclaim at the Seder service (Ezekiel 16:6).

"I said to you: Through your blood you shall live Through your blood you shall live."

Poets in Spain by Mr. Clive Fierstone, Academic Registrar, Jews' College, Hendon

The Jewish communities in Spain had an organised prayer rite by the eleventh century. This process was gradually expanded by absorbing a number of liturgical poems known as 'piyuttim'. Modern day mahzorim (festival prayer books) have in the main, relegated these poems to the supplementary section. However, we have remnants of these poems recited in the main service during Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. This process commences with Joseph ibn Abitur (10th century) who wrote special poems for Yom Kippur and the Hashannot ceremony of Sukkot.

However, poetry was not restricted to the liturgy. Shmuel HaNagid (992-1055) composed poems which expressed both personal need and anxiety.

In addition, his poetry will often emphasise moralistic and philosophical aspects of life. They were based on the poetical books of the Bible, Psalms and wisdom literature.

He also composed poetry in which he expressed the failure of the Jewish people to be independent of other nations. Thus, on one occasion, he asked G-d to allow him to serve as a Levi in the Temple.

Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) in addition to his liturgical poetry which express fervent devotion, composed dialogue poetry in which the characters are animals or inanimate objects. Yet he also composed verse as an introduction for many of the weekly Torah readings. There was no superficial divide between the religious and secular fields.

Dunash Ibn Labrat (mid 10th century) was the first poet to copy the Arabic style and imagery which was developed by Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1020-1037).

He often produced secular poetry which lauded his patrons. He would ponder on the difference between himself and society and composed love and nature poetry. Yet he would produce ethical poetry which considered the transience of life. His religious poetry often had his name woven into it in order to avoid plagiarism.

Judah Halevy (1075-11412) composed over eight hundred poems, thirty five of which began with the word 'Zion'. These expressed the unique attachment of the Jewish people to the Holy Land and its eventual restoration to its people. His poetry also included eulogies and related his personal friendships

Much of this poetry was inspired by the fact that the Jews of Spain were part of a wider Arab culture. Their languages were similar and the linguistic features of one culture could easily be sublimated into the other.

Perhaps Abraham ibn Ezra's poetical introduction to Sidra Mishpatim (ShemotChapter 21) demonstrates the multi-cultural approach. If one would pay attention to plain meaning (pashatim) both in generalities and in details, then one would understand why there is written the letter 'Vav' at the beginning of Sidra Mishpatim.

One notes knowledge of rabbinic literature, grammar and the ability to pun,

all in two lines of Hebrew. Spanish medieval poetry indeed shows cross fertilisation of knowledge.

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Project Genesis LifeLine

This week, the straw finally comes that breaks Pharaoh - he releases the children of Israel from Egypt, so that they can go out to worship G-d. As we all know, this came only after 10 terrible plagues were released upon his entire country... and the 10th is described by Moshe in an unusual way.

In Shemos [Exodus] 11:4 Moshe tells Pharaoh, "So says G-d: at just about midnight, I will go though Egypt...and every firstborn will die..." At "just about" midnight - K'achatzos Halailah? We see later (12:29) that G-d actually went out B'achatzos Halailah, at precisely midnight - and isn't it obvious that G-d is more accurate than Timex? Why would He not specify the exact time?

In the Talmud (Brachos 4a), the Rabbis explain that G-d did indeed say that the plague would come at midnight, and Moshe was responsible for the change

- for fear that Pharaoh's advisors would err in their calculation. Were they to make a mistake, thought Moshe, they would conclude that he was a liar.

Now think about this for a moment - is that not hard to believe? Moshe says that ten plagues are coming (one at a time, specifying each one), and lo and behold each one comes - very _un_natural disasters - all of which indicates that Moshe knows what he's talking about. So we come to the last one, the Grand Finale, the Plague to beat all Plagues... and according to the advisors' miscalculation it comes at 12:00:30. And Moshe is a _liar_?

That is exactly what our Parsha says. When we are in the middle of an argument, we can easily reach the point that no new evidence can change our minds. It's a part of human nature that is difficult to fight, even when reality is literally staring us in the face - just like Pharaoh's advisors. Moshe felt that they were liable to overlook the obvious conclusion - that they miscalculated - in favor of the comfortable one - Moshe was lying, and G-d has no control after all.

The proof comes later in the Parsha, when the plague of the firstborn actually takes place. In 12:29-30, we read that G-d went through Egypt at midnight, "and Pharaoh arose that night..." - and Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki explains that Pharaoh "arose" from his bed. It's the same thing all over again - after 9 plagues were accurately described, Moshe announces that the 10th will involve the death of every firstborn - including Pharaoh's own son. So does Pharaoh release Israel? No - he goes to sleep!

Not only does Pharaoh refuse to accept reality... he's not even worried about it. It is our duty, often, to avoid the same trap. Perhaps if we step back and look at a situation objectively, we will realize that we are making a mistake. And we might even see this before it's too late.

RAMCHAL: Thank you to those who have already signed up again - we're

back up to several hundred subscribers. If you have not yet rejoined the class (after the disappearance of the recipients list a few weeks ago), please send mail to majordomo@torah.org with "subscribe ramchal" in the body of your message. Please do not write to genesis@j51.com with this request...

TENDONITIS AS A FUNDRAISING TOOL: As many subscribers already know, I've been suffering from tendonitis in my hands (many others have merely wondered why I don't respond to mail). It's a standard "RSI" (repetitive stress injury) from typing. My condition isn't really getting better, and

continued typing risks more serious injury.

Two days ago, I made a special appeal to our Halacha-Yomi mailing list. The

most positive solution to my troubles seems to be IBM VoiceType dictation, which is rumored to really work. With that package, not only will I need to type a great deal less, but I will also be more productive. [I did research the alternatives - other dictation systems, having a volunteer do typing, ergonomic keyboards (I already use one), but this clearly seemed the most effective solution.]

The problem was: no budget. It is a \$1,000 package, and may require a system upgrade. Project Genesis is funded by individual donors - one of our primary sources being you, our readership. So thus an appeal was needed.

The response, by all accounts, has been incredible. Within 24 hours, we received the necessary pledges to support both the VoiceType and an upgrade, should the latter be necessary. We received a \$1,000 pledge almost immediately, and have raised over \$3,300 in two days. For an organization of our size, functioning on the Internet (where everything is "free")... I was, to say the least, gratified by the generous aid that was offered.

So first and foremost, thank you to all those who pledged a donation - and don't be upset to hear that VoiceType is now "paid for". Because if an upgrade to my PC isn't absolutely necessary, then your pledges have placed \$2,000 towards an even greater enhancement to Project Genesis services: the purchase of our own server. And I would like to offer all of our readers the opportunity to join us in this campaign.

Why do we need our own machine? With a server, we will be able to give our faculty and many volunteers easy access to change individual portions of our Web site and ftp archives. Archives and class Web pages will finally be put into place. Mail will be delivered (much) faster. New technologies and services will be provided. "Things will happen." And requests will be far more likely to get where they need to go without intervention by myself, our List Manager, or another volunteer. In other words, we will be able to effectively meet your demands and those of our many new members, and more

Torah will be provided to more Jews in more places around the globe... And you can take a portion of the merits of their learning.

At under \$10,000, a Project Genesis server is a great investment in Jewish learning. And I'm excited to think that we can do this, now - the quick and generous response to my "tendonitis appeal" made me realize that this is true. Your pledge can bring this dream to reality - and of course, all (US) donations are fully tax-deductible. Thank you for your consideration...

Good Shabbos,

Rabbi Yaakov Menken

Project Genesis, the Jewish Learning Network learn@torah.org
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Bo

Shiur HaRav ZT'L on Parshas Bo

"And each woman shall ask from her neighbor and house mate silver vessels and gold vessels (V'sha'ala Isha M'shchenta Umigras Baysa)" (Shemos 3:22).

"Please speak to the people that each man should ask from his friend... (Vyishalu Ish Ma'ais Ray'ayhu)" (Shemos 11:2-3).

The Rav ZT'L explained the different terminology used in these verses, in the first verse neighbors and house mates and in the other a person should request from his friends.

The term She'ayla throughout Tanach means to request or to demand something, not (in the simple definition) to borrow. When Hashem tells Moshe that a woman should request FROM her neighbors and a man should request FROM his friend, the connotation is to demand and take something away from them. When the Torah discusses the laws of a borrower (Sho'el, Parshas Mishpatim) the term Ma'im (from with) is used. This connotes borrowing with an obligation to repay or return the item as the original owner retains his rights to the object.

Apparently the intent of Hashem was that the objects taken by Bnay Yisrael

should be given to them without reservation (Matanah Gemurah, see Rashbam, Shemos 11:2). Why was it necessary for Bnay Yisrael to demand these things? Another obvious question is why did Hashem have to bring the 10 plagues on Egypt and Paroh when He could easily have forced Paroh to let Bnay Yisrael go much more readily and quickly?

The Rav explained that Hashem was manifesting the concept of "Kophin Oso Ad Sheyomar Rotzeh Ani", we apply force to someone until the individual in question comes to the self realization that what is demanded of him is correct and he expresses his desire to comply. Hashem wanted Paroh to recognize on his own the need to send the Jews out of Egypt and to comply with the demand of Hashem. As Paroh said "Arise and leave from among my people, also you and also all of Bnay Yisrael" (Shemos 12:31). However the question remains: why did Hashem prolong the stay of Bnay Yisrael? Could Paroh not have been made to realize this in a shorter interval?

The Rav further explained that Hashem wanted Paroh not only to allow Bnay Yisrael to leave Egypt, but to come to respect them as well. As long as they were slaves, Paroh thought of them as sub-human. Chazal say on the verse of "Who is Hashem that I shall listen to him" (Shemos 5:2) that Paroh searched through his chronicles and was not able to find the name of Hashem the Gd of Israel mentioned anywhere. What Chazal intended to indicate was that Paroh did not consider Bnay Yisrael a bona fide nation, therefore he saw fit to enslave them. The 10 plagues were intended to show Paroh that Bnay Yisrael were a great nation, more so than to punish him and Egypt. Paroh was made to realize that they were not a bunch of insignificant Hebrews, rather they were a great national entity. As the Torah says "And afterwards he shall send you out" (Shemos 11:1). It does not say I will take you out, rather Paroh will realize that you are a great nation and a significant entity and he will send you out.

Property ownership is an extremely important and fundamental right and principle according to the Torah. This is best illustrated by the law that one may defend his home and property from clandestine thieves (Ba B'machteres), and to struggle to protect them even to the extent of taking the life of the thief. Property, material possessions, gives a man self esteem and self value. It also commands respect from others. On the other hand, a slave has no property of his own, for whatever he acquires belongs to his master. Hashem told Moshe that "When you shall leave, you shall not leave empty handed" (Shemos 3:21). Had Bnay Yisrael left Egypt without material possessions and wealth, they would have still been looked on as slaves. Therefore Hashem asked them to demand from the Egyptians items of value as payment for their years of service. These items were to be taken from their neighbors and house mates, for they were the ones who had taken away their property and self dignity in the first place. (The Rav noted that when the Jews were liberated from the concentration camps after the Second World War, they went to the surrounding towns to retrieve their stolen property from the local populace who so eagerly took it from them.)

"And I will give the favor of this people" etc. (ibid) The Egyptians will come to see you as a nation, a people with dignity and no longer look upon you as slaves. Some might have thought that the Egyptians chased the Jews out of Egypt because they had become lepers. The Torah tells us just the opposite: that they left with

tremendous self respect and dignity. One aspect of this self respect was their departing with great material wealth, Rechush Gadol. "V'nitzaltem Es Mitzrayim" (Shemos 3:22); Rashi explains V'nitzaltem as derived from the verb to save. That is to say that you shall save something for yourself when you leave: you shall save your dignity and earn great respect in the eyes of the Egyptians. As it says that Moshe gained great respect in the eyes of the Egyptians and the house of Paroh (Shemos 11:3).

The Rav explained the different terminology between neighbors and house mates in one verse and friends in the other. The Gemara teaches us that the term 'Ray'ayhu' applies exclusively to a Jew. Hashem wanted the Jews to share the wealth among themselves. A Jew living in a more affluent Egyptian neighborhood

would take more wealth from his neighbors than the Jew who lived in a less affluent area. Hashem wanted the Jews to distribute the wealth more equitably. This was an extreme act of Chesed, charity, that bound the people and demonstrated their sense of a common destiny. Similarly, the Rambam writes (Matnos Aniyim 10:2) that "would not a brother take pity on his brother". If Jews do not look after their own brothers and take pity on them, who will? The different terminology reflects the desire that each Jew take possessions from their Egyptian neighbors and that they in turn should redistribute the wealth among themselves so that all Bnay Yisrael would enjoy equivalent wealth.

After the Jews left Egypt, Hashem asked them to give up a part of their wealth to build a Mishkan for Hashem (V'yikchu Li Trumah) (Shemos 25:2). A freed slave, who has had nothing of his own, finds it extremely difficult to willingly give up any part of his newfound possessions. To show that they were truly free men and women, Bnay Yisrael had to demonstrate their willingness to give up some of their own wealth for a higher cause. Bnay Yisrael answered this call, particularly the women, who were most eager to part with their finest jewelry for the sake of building the Mishkan of Hashem. As it says that the women came forward with greater zeal than the men, "Vayavou ha'anashim al h'nashim" (Shemos 35:22).

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