

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 6 Shevat 5779. We say Kiddush Levanah tonight if we are able to enjoy the light of the moon.

TORAH DIALOGUE
(p. 248 Hz) (p. 377 S) (p. 245 Hi) (p. 340 AS)
BO  Exodus 10:1

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis, Rabbi Emeritus (RED)
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1. When Hashem brings the Plagues against the Egyptians, it was primarily to punish the Egyptians for the oppressive slavery that they placed upon Bnei Yisrael. But of equal importance as incorporated in the second verse in today's Parshah: *so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your grandson that I made a mockery of Egypt and My signs that I placed among them - that you may know that I am Hashem.* It has become such an important aspect of our religion, that we relate events of our history to the next generations so that our children will know that we have a dynamic God who is constantly part of our lives. This is revealed in the Haggadah when it states "even if we are all wise and knew the Torah, it would still be a Mitzvah for us to tell the story." And the Rav adds to this thought that the Mitzvah on Pesach night must be in a question-answer format. (RED)

2. It is quite normal for Egypt to suffer a locust infestation, but the usual infestation involves ravenous locusts who consume vegetation. These locusts overran the country. They not only invaded the fields; they invaded the homes and tried to eat clothing and jewelry! This was an indication to the Egyptians that this was supernatural. Unlike the other Plagues, Pharaoh was in a hurry to end this one. Although this Plague would provide "food" for the Egyptians, Pharaoh knew that the locust would quickly lay eggs and the devastation would continue for years. So this Plague had the potential of continuing for an enormous amount of time. (Today there is technology to destroy the eggs before they hatch.) This Plague was not only a threat for the present; it possessed the power to perpetuate itself into the future.

3. Why was a very powerful west wind necessary to rid the country of the locusts? A normal wind brought the Plague. Rabbi S. D. Walkin, a rabbinic judge in Brooklyn in the mid-twentieth century, ventures an interesting aspect. Whereas most commentaries were content with saying that the invading locusts were scrawny and light, but during their stay in Egypt fattened up and gained a lot of weight. So a stronger wind was necessary to remove them. Rabbi Walkin adds that the Egyptians salted the dead locusts for food, and the dead weigh more than the living. The strong wind was needed to remove the living and the dead locusts. The Tanchuma does mention that these dead salted locusts were in pots and barrels in preparation for eating them. The strong wind smashed the barrels and pots and swept away the dead salted locusts.

4. Later in the Parshah, Hashem asked Bnei Yisrael to PLEASE go and borrow gold and silver from the Egyptians. The Oznaim LaTorah asked a good question: since when

do you need to ask Jews to go and get gold and silver? (The Oznaim LaTorah was written by Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin, who was born in Lithuania in 1881 and died in Israel in 1966. He fled World War II and made Aliyah to Palestine. He is buried in Har HaMenuchot.) His answer is quite insightful. After the Holocaust, the German government offered reparations to those who suffered losses during the war. This divided the Jewish people. Some were in favor of accepting the money. After all, Germany was responsible for tremendous loss of life and property. But others felt they should refuse to accept these reparations since it was as if they were accepting ransom for the loss of Jewish victims of the Holocaust. How can we accept money for family members whom the Nazis killed? The same was happening in Egypt. How much gold and silver can replace the children thrown into the Nile, and the Jews who died in the oppressive slavery? Hence Hashem had to ask Bnei Yisrael to please go and get the Egyptian gold and silver.

5. The Plague of Darkness was stronger than regular darkness. The Egyptians could not move from their places during this Plague. But this Plague had two other reasons for its presence. Firstly it offered the Jews the opportunity to enter the Egyptian homes and see where the Egyptians kept their gold and silver. Secondly there were many Jews who did not wish to leave Egypt. Hashem killed them during this Plague. If the Egyptians could not see anything at all, why didn't Jewish people take the opportunity to leave Egypt? This obviously was not Hashem's plan. They required the Egyptian leadership to expel the Jews. The fact that they did not leave at this time assured Pharaoh that their intention was really to return to Egypt had Pharaoh granted the Jews permission to leave Egypt for a religious retreat into the desert. (RED)

HAFTORAH
(p. 263 Hz) (p. 404 S) (p. 849 Hi) (p. 1151 AS)
JEREMIAH  46:13

The prophet Jeremiah predicts that the Egyptians will suffer greatly at the hands of the Babylonians; this punishment is divinely ordained. As Mt. Tabor stands among the mountains, as Mt. Carmel rises from the sea, so will this prophecy be true (v.18 according to Rashi). Mounts Tabor and Carmel are important landmarks for those in the area. The Midrash says that both were defiled by the idolatry that ancient inhabitants had placed atop these mountains. Had it not been for these idolatrous acts, both would have been worthy of being the site for the Revelation of God. The application of this message to Egypt is that just as these two places had become disqualified and contaminated, so had Egypt become defiled by the acts of idolatry and immorality performed there. Because Mts. Tabor and Carmel had been considered for the giving of the Torah, they were relocated in Eretz Yisrael. The Talmud (Megillah 29a) uses this thought to base its statement that so too will the Yeshivas and synagogues of Babylonia be transplanted into Israel.

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT BO 5779
by Rabbi Edward Davis

I. From the Text

1. How is it possible to witness all these Plagues and not gain perfect faith in Hashem?
2. At the end of the Plague of Darkness what did Pharaoh say to Moshe, different from any other Plague? (10:28)
3. On what date of which month did Hashem command Bnei Yisrael to designate an animal for the Pesach sacrifice? (12:3)
4. What happened to Bnei Yisrael on the first day of Pesach and on the last day of Pesach?
5. What part of the Mitzvah of the Pesach sacrifice was performed only in Egypt and not in future generations? (12:22)

II. From Rashi

6. During the Plague of Locusts, Pharaoh allows the men to leave Egypt, but not the women or children. What was his reasoning for that? (10:11)
7. What were the two reasons for the Plague of Darkness? (10:22)
8. Why did Hashem ask Bnei Yisrael to ask the Egyptians for gold and silver? (11:2)
9. Who was the only Egyptian to survive the Tenth Plague? (12:29)
10. Why is the donkey the only non-Kosher animal with a firstborn status? (13:13)

III. From the Rabbis

11. How was the Plague of Locusts "measure for measure"? (Midrash)
12. How long did it take to have all Ten Plagues? (Midrash)
13. What does the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh have to do with the Exodus from Egypt? (Rav Soloveitchik)

IV. From the Haftorah : Jeremiah

14. Eight centuries later, after the Exodus, Egypt would compete with another nation for world dominion. Which nation?

V. Relationships

- a) Yitro – Tziporah
- b) Moshe – Gershon
- c) Moshe – Gershom
- d) Miriam – Nadav
- e) Amram - Eliezer

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT BO 5779

1. Maybe it was magic. (After all, Pharaoh's magicians were able to reproduce some of the Plagues.)
2. "Don't see me again. The day you see me, you will die."
3. The tenth of Nissan. (This law was only in Egypt, not for future generations.)
4. On the first day, they left Egypt. On the last day, they experienced the Splitting of the Sea.
5. To dab the door posts of their houses with blood.
6. If Bnei Yisrael were leaving to serve Hashem with sacrifices, the (women and) children don't do sacrifices. So don't take them.
7. Hashem could kill the assimilated Jews who did not want to leave Egypt. And to allow the Jews to enter Egyptian houses to see where they kept the gold and silver.
8. To fulfill Hashem's promise to Avraham that Bnei Yisrael will leave slavery with great wealth.
9. Pharaoh.
10. The Jews used donkeys to carry their possessions out of Egypt.
11. The Egyptians forced Jews to plant crops; the Locusts ate the crops.
12. One year.
13. A slave has no control over his time. The Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh is the Jewish people having control over their time, a major step of freedom.
14. Babylonia.

Relationships

- a) Father - Daughter
- b) Uncle Gershon
- c) Father - Son
- d) Aunt Miriam
- e) Grandfather Amram