

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 6 Shevat 5783, corresponding to January 28, 2023.

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

1. This Sidrah finishes the Ten Plagues and culminates with the actual Exodus from Egypt. On the way we are instructed with the events and observance of Pesach, some other Halachot. The first Halachah given to the nation of Israel is the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh. What does Rosh Chodesh have to do with the Exodus? Rav Soloveitchik explained it this way: A slave has no control over time. His life is linked entirely to his master. It makes no difference to the slave whether it is Sunday or Wednesday. When Hashem gave the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh to Am Yisrael, He is giving them ownership of their own time. This is the very important aspect of freedom from slavery. Later in Jewish history, when the Greek-Syrians ruled Israel and began persecution of the Jews, they prohibited three Mitzvot: Shabbat, circumcision, and Rosh Chodesh. Why Rosh Chodesh? They desired to take away the control of our time. They wished to assume control of our lives and take over the sense of time. (RED)

2. During the Last Plague, the Death of the Firstborn, the Jews were instructed not to leave their homes. Rashi wanted to link this commandment to the dispatching of a Destroyer who would not differentiate between the evil and righteous individuals. But it was Hashem Himself who was killing the firstborn! My interpretation would be that Hashem did not want the Jews to see the destruction of the Egyptian firstborn. They were not worthy, or entitled to see the demise of their enemy. Similar to the command to Lot and his family being told not to look back at the destruction of Sodom. They were not innocent of the sins that plagued Sodom. They were not entitled to see their enemies' death. This is also similar to the opinion that there was a gem that illuminated the inside of Noach's Ark. It was not a window. Noach's family were not entitled to see the death of that sinful generation. (RED)

3. "You shall safeguard the Matzot..." (12:17). This verse is taken out of context by our Sages. Just as we shall guard the Matzot and not allow the baking process to extend beyond the 18 minutes and produce Chametz, so too, we shall guard and protect every Mitzvah from being delayed and become ruined by our delay or laziness. Ours is a time oriented religion. There are Mitzvot of joy and there are Mitzvot of sadness. Each has its place and time. We should not take the Mitzvah out of its context or over indulge ourselves in the observance of any Mitzvah. When Avraham was commanded to do a Mitzvah, he wakened early in the morning to do it, teaching that zealots do the Mitzvah at the earliest possible time. Yet when he was told to circumcise himself, he waited until midday to publicize the Mitzvah to the world. Each Mitzvah has to be analyzed for the best possible way to perform it.

4. "And Hashem will pass over the doorway (of the Jewish homes)... (12:23) This is the normal way that we translate the word Pesach, Passover, that Hashem passed over the Jewish homes. But Rashi offers a different interpretation before "passed over." Rashi quotes Targum Onkeles in translating the word Pesach as He had mercy upon them. When reviewing the events and Mitzvot of this holiday, we have no Mitzvah commemorating the Passing Over the Jewish homes. We do not sprinkle our doorposts with blood. That was only in Egypt; not for future Pesach holidays. But for Hashem to have compassion and mercy upon us, that can be a plea of every Pesach in our history. When we observe Pesach this year, it would make sense to plead with Hashem to have mercy upon us and free us from our Exile and lead us back to the Promised Land. [RED's note: When the Jews were locked into our residence in the Communist Soviet Union, we had a fourth Matzah, a Matzah of Hope, praying to Hashem to free the Soviet Jews and allow them to return to Eretz Yisrael.]

5. A non-Jew was permitted to offer a sacrifice in the Holy Temple, but the only sacrifice permitted to him was an Olah, a whole burnt offering. The Torah specifically mention the non-Jew as being not permitted to eat of the Pesach sacrifice. This was because after experiencing all of the Plagues up until now, there were Egyptian non-Jews who wished to eat of this offering, for they wished to identify themselves with the Israelite nation. Even though they had worshipped the lamb, they had had it with the Plagues and wanted to join the Jewish people. This was not the first time and it would not be the last time. Here, at this time, there were the Eirev Rav, a multitude of non-Jews who wished in. Later when the Israelites were conquering Eretz Yisrael, non-Jews wanted to join. And at the end of the Megillat Esther, there were Persian pagans who wished to convert to Judaism. All through history, people did gravitate to the winning team. (RED)

6. At the time of the Exodus, Hashem gave the Jewish people the Mitzvah of Tephillin. The obvious connection was the writing of the parchment that is inside the Tephillin boxes. The first two paragraphs of the Shema are in the Tephillin, proclaiming our belief in the One God. These should be constant reminders of our belief in Hashem. The second two paragraphs mention the Exodus from Egypt, a very important event proving to us the existence of a Hashem and His regard for us. Initially Jewish men wore Tephillin all day long; these reminders should be with us all the waking moments of our life. It is because we cannot guarantee the holiness of our bodies all the time that we limited the wearing of Tephillin to the Shacharit morning service. I find it interesting the the Mishnah and Gemara never bother to identify and detail the definition of Tephillin. That must be because everyone knew what Tephillin were. (RED)

7. The computation of the 400 or 430 years of servitude divinely promised to the descendants of Avraham is discussed at great length by commentators. No matter how we compute it, it will not amount to the number of years of slavery for the Jews in Egypt. If Yocheved is born upon the

arrival of Yaakov and family into Egypt, and she miraculously gave birth to Moshe at the age of 130, and Moshe arrived to redeem the Jews at the age of 80, that means that the presence of the Jews in Egypt was a maximum of 200 years. And about half of those years were not spent as slaves. That means that the number of 400 years promised by Hashem to Avraham would include years of exile, persecution, and slavery. This means that the number of 430 began with the Covenant between the Pieces. The 499 years began with birth of Yitzchak. The years of actual slavery will be limited to a maximum of a little over 100 years. Still a sizable chunk of time to be reckoned with. A new count began with Exodus. (RED)

8. MIDRASH. MECHILTA. 12:35. Rashi tells us that the Plague of Darkness provided two extra important elements to the Exodus story. One is the opportunity for Hashem to kill all the Jews who did not want to leave Egypt, without the Egyptians knowing about it. Second is that the Darkness gave the Jews the opportunity to enter Egyptian homes and discover the hiding places for the gold and wealth. The MECHILTA added: When the Egyptians realized that the Jews had been in their homes and had the opportunity to loot at will, but had not done so, Israel earned esteem in the eyes of the Egyptians.

#### QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT BO 5783

##### I. From the Text

1. What did Pharaoh's servants tell him to do after the news of the Plague of Locusts? (10:7)
2. What would be going on in the Jewish homes during the last Plague, the Death of the Firstborn?
3. What is the first Mitzvah given to Bnei Yisrael as a nation? (22:1-)
4. How and when was the Pesach sacrifice cooked and eaten? (12:8)
5. Who is not allowed to eat of the Pesach sacrifice? (12:43-50)

##### II. From Rashi

6. For what two reasons was the Plague of Darkness so intense? (10:22)
7. Why were the Egyptian foreign prisoners smitten with the last Plague? (11:5)
8. Why do we eat Marror at the Seder? (12:8)
9. How many Pesach holidays did Bnei Yisrael observe in the desert? (12:25)
10. After being told of the Mitzvot of Pesach, the people bowed to Hashem. Why did they bow? (12:27)

##### III. From the Rabbis

11. How could the Locusts devour the trees, when the Hail already destroyed the trees? (Ramban)
12. Why was Hashem Himself to carry out the Tenth Plague, and not an angel? (Or HaChaim)

13. What connection does the Mitzvah of Tephillin have with Pesach? (Ramban)

##### IV. Midrash

14. How was the Plague of Darkness a punishment that was "measure for measure"?

##### V. Haftorah. Jeremiah

15. Who will conquer Egypt in the Haftorah?

##### VI. Relationships

16. a) Yissachar - Yov
- b) Kehat - Misha'el
- c) Elisheva - Aminadav
- d) Yitro - Aharon
- e) Esav - Adah

#### ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT BO 5783

1. To send the Jewish men out to worship their God.
2. Quiet and tranquility
3. Rosh Chodesh
4. It was roasted over fire, and served with Matzah and Marror, and eaten at the end of the Seder on the 15th of Nissan.
5. A non-Jew and an uncircumcised Jew are not allowed to eat of the Pesach sacrifice.
6. a) so that the evil Jews who did not want to leave Egypt could be killed by Hashem, and Egypt would not know about it. b) So that Jews could enter Egyptian homes and see where their gold and wealth were kept.
7. Lest they would claim that their gods brought the Plague upon the Egyptians.
8. In remembrance of the slavery: "they (the Egyptians) embittered their lives (of Bnei Yisrael)"
9. Once: in the second year of their journey in the desert.
10. Over the news of their liberation, and Receiving the Land, and Having future Children.
11. The Hail only broke limbs. It did not destroy the entire tree.
12. a) because He loved Israel. b) Hashem would know who was a firstborn.
13. Tephillin have parchment in them with the passages of the Exodus. This means that every day we will remember the Exodus.
14. The Egyptians forced the Jewish slaves to grow crops; the Locusts devoured the crops.
15. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia.
16. a) Father Yissachar
- b) Grandfather Kehat
- c) Father Aminadav
- d) Mechutanim
- e) Husband -Wife