



Bo: Make a Choice
Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Pharaoh continued his stiff-necked response to the plagues and refused to emancipate the Jewish people. His advisors told him it was a lost cause and Egypt would perish, but Pharaoh refused to heed their warnings. This week's Parsha opens with the following verse:

The Lord said to Moses: "Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, in order that I may place these signs of Mine in his midst (Exodus 10:1)

Rashi explains: "**The Lord said to Moses: Come to Pharaoh: and warn him.**" But what is the point in warning Pharaoh if God had hardened his heart? If Pharaoh had lost his free-will, what impact would the warning have? Is this not an exercise in futility?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, 1902-1994) provides an incredible insight:

"It is brought down in Tanya that even those for whom teshuva (repentance) is impossible, if such a person pushes forward and does in fact repent, his teshuva is accepted. So too here, although God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, he still had the opportunity to strengthen himself to repent and return. This is why Moshe was sent to "warn" Pharaoh. This warning reinforced the idea that Pharaoh still had the ability to change and turn things around. A warning is only significant if the individual has the capacity to change. Had Pharaoh done teshuva, it would have been accepted by God." (Likutei Sichos)

At first glance the Rebbe's words seem incomprehensible and even contradictory, but upon further reflection, we learn that man never completely loses his free will. There may be times when free will is compromised and other times when aspects of free will might even be taken away, but it is never totally gone. Even Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened by God Himself, had the ability to change. There is always a choice. Hashem sends Moshe to warn Pharaoh to teach him that he can change these circumstances if he would so choose.

There are times in life when we feel we lack choices. We feel like the walls are closing in, and we have no options or possibilities. Some experience these feelings in difficult and strained relationships which have been tenuous for so long that we don't see a way to repair them. Some of us experience this in our careers when after doing something for a prolonged period of time, we feel limited in our ability to find additional meaning or to transition to something else. And then, some of us experience this in how we view ourselves. I've been a certain way for so long that I don't think I have the ability or capacity to change. Pharaoh comes along and teaches us that we always have a choice. You may not be able to choose many of your life circumstances, but even in those situations which have been foisted upon you, there is always a choice to be made. As Victor Frankl wrote, "*The last of human freedoms - the ability to choose one's attitude in a given set of circumstances.*" We are never without choices. At times I can choose my situation and path in life. Other times the path has been set for me, but I still get to choose what I do with this path.

There are many layers of tragedy in the slavery narrative. There is the tragedy of an oppressed people, there is the tragedy of murder and bloodshed, and there is a tragedy of a Pharaoh who could have prevented so much pain had he realized that he still had a choice. There is always a choice to be made; may we find the courage to make it.

	27/28 FRI/SHABBOS	29 SUNDAY	30 MONDAY	31 TUESDAY	1 WEDNESDAY	2 THURSDAY	3 FRIDAY
WEEK AT A GLANCE 1/27-2/3	SHABBOS NIGHT 4:45p Toameha 5:03p Candle Lighting 5:05p Mincha followed by Kabbolas Shabbos	7:15a Shacharis 7:55a Daf Yomi 9:00a Shacharis 5:15p Mincha/ Maariv	5:45a Mesillas Yesharim 5:55a Daf Yomi 6:45a Shacharis 9:00a Shacharis 5:15p Mincha/ Maariv 8:20p High School Boys Learning 9:00p Maariv	5:45a Mesillas Yesharim 5:55a Daf Yomi 6:45a Shacharis 9:00a Shacharis 5:15p Mincha/ Maariv 8:30p 5th & 6th Grade Boys Learning 9:00p Maariv	5:45a Mesillas Yesharim 5:55a Daf Yomi 6:45a Shacharis 9:00a Shacharis 5:15p Mincha/ Maariv 8:30p 7th & 8th Grade Boys Learning 9:00p Maariv	5:45a Mesillas Yesharim 5:55a Daf Yomi 6:45a Shacharis 9:00a Shacharis 5:15p Mincha/ Maariv 8:00p Chassidus Chabura 9:00p Maariv	5:45a Mesillas Yesharim 5:55a Daf Yomi 6:45a Shacharis 9:00a Shacharis 4:55p Toameha 5:11p Candle Lighting 5:15p Mincha followed by Kabbolas Shabbos
	SHABBOS DAY 7:00a Hashkama 8:45a Shacharis (KS - 9:49a) 9:15a Teen Minyan 4:10p Daf Yomi 5:00p Mincha 6:06p Maariv/Havdalah						

BIRTHDAYS

Tara Cornberg, Judah Fishbein, Daniella Fogel, Atara S. Friedman, Zach Gardyn, David Green, Dina Greenbaum, Micah Hammond, Jonathan Hammond, Liora Knizhnik, Batsheva Messing, Alexandra Polirer, Jeremiah Pollack, Anna Ponczak, Avigayil Reidy, Ben Shefter, Pinchas Sonneneberg, Yehuda Turniansky, Eitel M. Weinberg, Moshe Wildman

UPCOMING YAHRZEITS

Margo Allswang, Elizabeth Benn, Joyce Rubin Blockman, Bernard Creeger, Abraham H. Diamond, Charles H. Fall, Bruce R. Gold, Miriam Grossblatt, Mordechai Konowitz, Frank J. Levi, Selma Michaels, Elliott Miller, Floyd Moss, Andrew Posner, Jacob Rutkin, Israel Udoff, Ilona Weiss

SPONSORSHIPS & DONATIONS

TALMUD TORAH

Bracha Strimber in memory of Avraham ben Kalman Eliezer HaLevi z'l.

Ayal & Sara Steinberg in the zechus of a refuah sheleimah for Shulamis bas Susha.

DAY OF LEARNING

Yehuda & Bracha Buchwalter l'zecher nishmas Yehuda's father, Asher Zelig ben Yaakov Yehudah HaLevi z'l.

DAF YOMI

Jonathan Ehrenfeld in memory of his zaidy, Moshe Avrohom ben Dovid z'l.

David & Malke Kramer in honor of the Daf HaYomi Shiur Chevrah, Rabbi Silber, and the other magidei shiur on our completion of maseches Nedarim and the beginning of maseches Nazir.

Yehuda & Bracha Buchwalter l'zecher nishmas Yehuda's father, Asher Zelig ben Yaakov Yehudah HaLevi z'l.

CHASSIDUS CHABURA

Tzvi Friedman

Steve Silbiger in commemoration of the yahrzeit of his mother, Ethel bas Yitzchok HaCohain z'l, י"ח שבט.

Chad Kaplan in memory of his grandfather, Yechiel Gershon ben Avraham Yitzchak z'l, א' שבט, and his great uncle, Tzvi Duvid ben Tzion z'l, א' שבט.

KIDDUSH

Barbara & Kenneth Lasson in honor of their children, Tamar & Ira Weissman, Noah & Risa Lasson, and Jeremy & Rachel Lasson, and the engagement of their granddaughter, Bat-Chen in Israel.

SHALOSH SEUDOS

Yitzy & Melissa Shnidman l'zecher nishmas Yitzy's father, Rav Reuven ben Yehuda Leib z'l.

DONATIONS

Ken & Eileen Creeger in commemoration of the 8th yahrzeit of Bernard Creeger z'l, January 30, 2023.

Elliot & Esther Kosoffsky donation to The Torah Fund, for a complete refuah sheleimah for Esther's mother, Leah Chana bas Sarah, Lillian Waxstein.

Anonymous in the zechus of a refuah for Shimon Yehuda ben Tzivil.

SOTC SHABBOS GROUPS

Please note, there will be no youth groups or Junior Congregation this Shabbos, January 28.

MOTZEI SHABBOS LEARNING

Please note, there will be no Motzei Shabbos learning this week, January 28.

BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of the Suburban Orthodox Book Club will be on Tuesday, February 28, 2 p.m., at Shul. Selection: "The Diamond Eye," by Kate Quinn. Upcoming Dates & Book Selections (2 p.m.): Tuesday, April 18, The Rose Code, by Kate Quinn, Tuesday, May 30, Search, by Michelle Huneven, and Tuesday, July 11, Demon Copperhead,** by Barbara Kingsolving. **Reserve this book as soon as possible, as it is in high demand at the Baltimore County Public Library.

A SINGLE IMPACT

A Single Impact invites from single, divorced, and widowed women and men of ALL AGES to Parsha & Pizza on Wednesdays from 8:00-9:00 pm! Upcoming speakers: 2/1-Mr. Yossi Weinstein, 2/8-Dr. Leslie Klein, 2/15-Rabbi Mendel Wax. \$5.00 per person. Location sent upon RSVP & payment. Sponsorships available. For info on future dates and to RSVP: asingleimpact.com/pizza.

SOTC MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS EVENT!

game NIGHT

**SUNDAY EVENING
FEBRUARY 5TH**

**WHO: 6, 7, 8TH GRADE GIRLS
WHERE: SUBURBAN
WHEN: 7:30 - 8:45 PM**

**GEAR UP FOR A NIGHT OF YOUR FAVORITE INTERACTIVE GAMES!
ENJOY WAFFLES, ICE CREAM & HOT COCOA**

**\$12 PER PERSON
REGISTER HERE:**

<https://www.suburbanorthodox.org/event/ms/girls/game/night>

**SOTC TEEN BOYS
SNOW TUBING**

Avalanche Xpress!

Sunday, February 5

Leaving Suburban 1:45pm, Returning 7pm

\$40 per child- please bring dinner/ snacks

Transportation will not be provided, please check the WhatsApp to find your son a ride.
Looking for volunteers who can drive and stay, please be in contact with Rabbi Gavi Sragow

Rabbi Marc Messing Teen Programming Initiative | לע"ג הרב מרדכי הערשל בן שמואל דוד ז"ל