



Parshas Bo 2022, past in the past

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the birth of a son, Aviv & Nofar, by the proud grandparents Yoram and Yael Cohen. May G-d bless them with much health, happiness, and nachas!

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Shaul Ben Berta.

Our Parsha begins with Moshe and Aaron warning Pharaoh about the upcoming plague of locusts. After they left, Pharaoh's ministers begged him to set the Jewish nation free; they argued that the Egyptian people were suffering and it was time to let them go.

After thinking for a while, Pharaoh called Moshe and Aaron back and told them he would allow them to serve G-d in the desert. But there was one condition, they must leave their children behind as collateral to come back. Moshe and Aaron obviously rejected his offer, and Pharaoh refused to allow the Jewish people to go with no prior conditions.

When the plagues of locusts and darkness concluded, Pharaoh called Moshe back and offered to let the Jewish nation leave without their animals. When Moshe refused, Pharaoh sent him away and warned him never to appear in his presence again (10:28) *"You shall no longer see my face, for the day you see my face, you shall die!"*

The last plague, the passing of all firstborns, began at midnight and wreaked havoc on Egyptian people. As the death toll rose, Pharaoh, a firstborn, ran to Moshe and told him to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt immediately.

The Jewish nation gathered their belongings and the Egyptian's valuables and left Egypt midday on the fifteenth of Nissan.

G-d then gave the Jewish people several Mitzvahs, including eating Matzah on Pesach, recounting this story by the Seder, the Mitzvah of Tefillin, and sacrificing all firstborn kosher animals.

However, a question comes to mind: At the beginning of the Parsha, G-d tells Moshe that He has hardened Pharaoh's heart. (10:2) *"So you can tell your children and grandchildren how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and placed my signs amongst them, then you will know that I am the Lord."* But why did G-d tell Moshe that He was making a mockery of the Egyptians by the plague of locust?

Furthermore, each plague is a testament to G-d's power and strength worldwide. So why is this plague specifically proving that *"I am the Lord"*?!

The Ibn Ezra (*Rav Avraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra, a leading commentary from the Middle Ages*) answers this question by explaining that G-d encouraged Moshe to remain persistent with Pharaoh.

Moshe might think that he shouldn't go to Pharaoh because G-d is making him stubborn. So Moshe's warning to Pharaoh about the seventh plague will be ineffective and pointless.

Therefore, G-d reminds Moshe that plagues are to ridicule the Egyptians and prove their powerlessness. Because even though they were used to swarms of locusts, and will have three weeks to prepare. They won't be ready for the size and magnitude of these locusts; they will eat and attack everything in sight.

However, the Bekhor Shor (*Rav Yosef Ben Yitzchak, a French commentary from the mid 12nd Century*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation.

He writes that although it may seem that the plagues are G-d's revenge against the Egyptians, they are really a sign of love and affection for the Jewish nation. He explains that the intention of the plagues was not only for G-d to introduce Himself to Pharaoh but to demonstrate to the Jewish people that we are G-d's nation.

Our job is to illustrate to the world what it means to live by morals and principles that exceed common thinking. To have compassion and sympathy for those who are less fortunate and assist them back to their feet. To be united and connected during difficult circumstances and throughout our lives.

Truthfully, the most significant retaliation against the Egyptians is **telling our children about our Exodus from Egypt**. We were given the Torah at Mt. Sinai and became the nation of G-d. How our existence itself proves the reality G-d.

In our daily life, if we live with a revengeful attitude, we ultimately hold ourselves down. It demonstrates that we are being held hostage by past occurrences rather than focusing on our personal growth. Like a tree branch tied to the ground, the whole tree grows abnormally.

When we concentrate on payback, we lose sight of our personal path to success, allowing anger to drive us instead. This road is full of pitfalls and obstacles that will stop us from reaching our goals. We must leave the past where it belongs and be open to the opportunities G-d places before us.

"The more you let go, the faster you will move ahead."

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*