

Points to Ponder
Bo 5777

How long will this be a stumbling block to us (10:7) – The Or HaChaim HaKadosh asked how was it that the Egyptians didn't kick the Jews out even when faced with personal annihilation? **Rav Gifter Ztl.** noted that he didn't really understand the question in that the test demonstrates that one who is Godless will often follow paths that are useless until they totally destroy themselves. The Yetzer HaRa does not use Seichel. The only issue for the Or HaChaim was why not use another method within their own contorted logic to save themselves?

And Hashem sent a strong western wind which lifted the Arbeh (10:9) – Why did Hashem need a strong west wind to carry the Arbeh away if he didn't need it to bring them? The **Ohel Yitzchak** explains that the Arbeh enjoyed the opportunity to take Hashem's vengeance to those who deserved it and so didn't need such strong prompting. However, once the Makkah was done, their removal required more effort as the motivation was no longer there. **The Oztros HaTorah** explains that we can learn how excited we should be when coming to Shul or the Beis Hamedrash and how longingly we must feel when being forced to leave it.

This month will be for you the Rosh Chodesh of all months (12:2) – What is the purpose of the Mitzva of Kiddush Hachodesh and why was it the first one designated by Hashem for the young nation? **Rav Aharon Kahn Shlita** explained that the first sign of emancipation or what we call Cheirus, is the ability to lead ourselves based on our faith in Hashem. It is also an understanding that creates a purpose in man's life as he comes to understand that the Torah needs us to carry out its laws – we are needed to make Rosh Chodesh and we understand the ultimate Cheirus – that of being able to recognize that we are under the Hashgacha of Hashem.

This month will be the first month of all months (12:2) – Rav Asher Weiss Shlita explains that Bnei Yisrael are compared to the moon because although the sun is large, it does not grow; it is static, whereas the moon is not—it wanes and waxes. What this represents is that it is not merely a question of how big a person is, but whether a person is a growing person. He added that the Maharsha writes[Sanhedrin 42a] that although G-d diminished the moon, the moon is happy and joyous to do His will. Our Sages tell us[Chullin 60b] that G-d said to the moon “go and diminish yourself.” This is a most difficult test; G-d did not diminish the moon Himself rather commanded her to diminish herself. Regarding this characteristic we say at Kiddush Levana קונם רצון לעשות רצון, they are joyous and glad to perform the will of their Creator. We learn an important lesson from the moon. At times one must diminish or negate oneself, and do so happily.

It will be eaten in one home (12:46) – Rav Sortozkin ztl. noted that the Korban Pesach had in its core, the ability to transform the discorded family of Yaakov which had brothers who sold one another out, into a Tzibbur. You see, the Korban Pesach had the responsibility of being eaten as part of a community and in order to make sure no one wimped out, took his stuff and went home, the Torah used the message of BiBayis Echad – that it needed to be eaten in one home.

And you will guard this Chok in its time from days onward () – Is the reference here to Tefillin or Korban Pesach? Do the days refer to day and not night or all the time? The Rishonim seem to learn that the message is a reference to a din D'rabbonon not to wear Tefillin at night. Others disagree. Still others say the Chok refers to Korban Pesach. What does one do if one cannot wear Tefillin during the day? **Rav Schachter Shlita quoted Rav Moshe Feinstein Ztl.** who explained that in Russia this was a problem and if

he didn't let the people put on Tefillin early with a Beracha they would be mizalzel in Tefillin so he allowed the Beracha to be recited assuming that the Peshat in the possuk was not speaking about a Mitzva Deoraisa MeYamim Yamima – that Tefillin cannot be worn while it is still nighttime.

And a zikaron between your eyes (16:13) – The Ramban says that the great, open miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim are meant to teach us about the hidden miracles that happen all the time and that whatever happens to a person is not a matter of tevah, nature, whatsoever. Many assume that Ramban is suggesting that there is no such thing as Teva – nature. This is impossible as we are aware that there is a function called Teva which Dovid HaMelech calls a Chok Nasan V'lo Yaavor. What then is Ramban's intention here? **Rav Moshe Twerski ztl. HYD**, explained that a neis means that Ha'Kadosh Baruch Hu is communicating with us directly and overtly. He compared the difference between the supernatural, great-miracles system of Yetzias Mitzrayim versus the messages Hashem sends us constantly within the context of nature, to the difference between Reuvein walking through the door versus tapping lightly on the outside of it. When Reuvein walks right through the door, you see him. There he is. Unless someone is blind, he's right there in front of you. When he's tapping lightly on the outside of the door, though, it takes a subtle, refined sensitivity to pick up on it. Many people could totally not notice the tapping at all. Others may notice it, but may not manage to identify precisely who it is that is doing it. One needs to really pay attention and listen with a very resonant ear to decipher the real implications of that tapping to know that it is Reuvein. According to Ramban, even within Tevah, it is not random, and it is not merely statistics. Even within the strict confines and boundaries of Hashem's guiding the world with natural law, Hashem is constantly sending us messages. That is schar v'onesh. And through seeing it when Hashem overtly makes us aware of his message sending system we come to awareness of Neesecha SheB'Chol Yom Imanu.

Haftorah – (Yirmiyahu 46:13-28) – Rav Gideon Weitzman Shlita finds a parallel between the Parsha and the Haftorah in that in both, Hashem sends a Message to His people through the nations of the world (in this case Egypt) that he is in charge of the world and can change nature if he needs to. Even if/when it appears that this is not the case, Hashem can decide in a moment to destroy a nation and will do so to any nation that threatens us with annihilation.