

Come to Pharaoh because I have hardened his heart (10:1) – The idea that Moshe should go to Pharaoh's palace BECAUSE Hashem hardened his heart is odd. Why is that a reason to go? Moreover, what happened to the concept of free choice? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl.** suggested that the concept of choice is strengthened based on the idea that when a person chooses a path that is the path he goes. Once entrenched in that path, he loses the perspective on it and “almost loses the choice” as a result of being entrenched. Bechira is the selection of the path and the hardening of the heart is what happens when the choice keeps happening. Thus, says Rav Nosson Tzvi, one needs to be constantly reviewing his actions in order to ascertain if he has given up the right to choose. Pharaoh was given the chance – he didn't take it.

With our young and our old we will go (10:9) – Pharaoh tries to strike a negotiation stance with Moshe about the holiday that Moshe wanted the people to go on. Moshe would take the men and the women and children would remain behind. But, the Rambam (in his letters) notes that this is the style that Pharaoh represented – that of the Yetzer HaRa which tries to separate the generations. **Rav Volch Shlita** adds that to this attempt we will always respond that as a nation we walk strongly as we walk together tall and proud – young and old.

Also Moshe was great in the eyes of Pharaoh and his nation (11:3) – **Ramban** points out that the Chein was only given in the context of the nation. Pharaoh did not give Moshe the same Chein. Why? **Rav Simcha Zisel Broide ztl.** explains that had Pharaoh allowed himself to feel favor for Moshe, he never could have bowed to him later. This was destined to be part of the punishment of Pharaoh – that he who threatened to kill Moshe if he ever saw him again would now need to bow before him in indebtedness and servitude.

So that you will know that Hashem will distinguish between Mitzrayim and Yisrael (11:8) – There are three Mitzvos that we are told L'Maan – Tzitzis, Sukkah, & Tefillin. In each of the cases the Mitzva is followed by L'Maan. **Rav Yisroel Belsky ztl.** adds that we find the same idea here too. Why? Rav Belsky suggests that like in those other cases, the Torah is trying to demonstrate a difference between us and our gentile neighbors. For all time, we might live together but we are also apart. From the birth moment of the nation our silence was a means of contrast to the screams in Egypt. That contrast must remain strong if we are to thrive. We can.

And you will eat the meat on this evening (12:8) - **The Rambam** identifies 5 parts to Torah She'Baal Peh Halacha L'Moshe Mi'Sinai, Derashos, Pirushim HaMikubalim L'Moshe MiSinai, Dinim D'Rabbonon and Gezairos. Why spend time on the Talmud Torah D'Rabbonon? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that the Dinim d'Rabbonon are patterned on the Biblical Mitzva. The Korban Pesach gives us another example. We learn the rules of Shinui Makom that one needs to make a new Beracha when one changes his seat from the Korban Pesach where one who eats a Kazayis and changes his seat cannot partake of anymore.

Today you are leaving in the month of the spring (13:4) – **Rashi** explains that this is significant because it shows us the Chessed of Hashem who took us out in the springtime so that we wouldn't be too cold or hot. This idea though is repeated again in the context of the beginning of the barley blossoming – implying that the Aviv concept is as much about the farming cycles as it is about history. **Rav Sabato Shlita** explains that the 2 are indeed intertwined. Like a crop, when man begins to blossom, he discovers freedom first. Thereafter, when s/he has explored the freedom concept, the merging into something

greater begins and thus, one can understand the following of Pesach with Shavuot and Matan Torah. After the establishment of the boundaries, there is a chance for a person to reap that which s/he has sown and this is the purpose of Sukkot. Highlighting Pesach in Aviv is also inspiring for the people in this early stage. (Could this be the basis of needing order for Baal Tzacher).

For seven days you will eat Matzos (13:6) - Rav Yehoshua Maman ztl.¹ tried to explain why we refer to the holiday as Chag Hapesach and Hashem calls it Chag HaMatzos. He explained that when you want to consolidate a relationship and mutual commitment with someone, you must look for the good points in them. Therefore in the Torah, G-d calls Passover "The Holiday of Matza", in order to publicize our walking after Him in the desert out of great faith with only Matzas, without having prepared food for the road. But in the Oral Torah, our Sages already call this holiday Passover, to remind us of the fact that G-d passed over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt. It is as if both sides remind each other of the kindness that they did to each other.

Haftarah: As I live...like Tavor among the mountains and Carmel by the sea so he come (Yirmiyahu 46:18) - Yirmiyahu describes the inevitable fall of Egypt into the hands of Nevuchadnetzar. The Gemara (Megillah 29a) uses this possuk to tell us that in the future the Battei Medrash and shuls will come to Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Pam ztl.** bemoaned the state of decorum in our Shuls and wondered why people didn't accord these places the respect that they deserve. He thought perhaps that people don't appreciate the power of their Tefillos – not just those of the Tzaddikim.

¹ Rav Yehoshua Maman was the leader of Moroccan Jewry who passed this year at the age of 100 this year.