Points to Ponder

Bo 5779

**אֵ֣ת אֲשֶׁ֤ר הִתְעַלַּ֨לְתִּי֙ בְּמִצְרַ֔יִם  How I was playing with Mitzrayim (10:2)** - Why is it so important that we tell our children about how Hashem played with the Egyptians. Was his intent a game of cat & mouse? **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum ztl.** explains that man is granted a great power called choice. Even if Hashem wants something different from him, man ultimately needs to be able to choose his own path. However left unchecked then the intents of a Haman and a Hitler could wreak havoc all over the world. Thus, Hashem will check man’s activities if he tries to go too far. He plays it through for the person so that the person’s actions ultimately come into line with Hashem’s. His patience with us is a “play” to get us to understand His will in the world.

**מִ֥י וָמִ֖י הַהֹֽלְכִֽים:  Who exactly is going (10:8-9)** - The **Baal Haturim** infers a side conversation between Moshe and Pharaoh here. Pharaoh asked him why are you trying so hard if only 2 -- Yehoshua and Kalev-- will enter the land (the Gematria of Me V’Me HaHolchim equals Kalev and Ben Nun). Moshe responded that our children and our Zekanim were not included in the punishment of the Miraglim thus, we will take everyone. What was Pharaoh’s argument -- simply because the entire nation would not enter the land they should remain slaves? There is a WIDE gap between the 2 positions? **Rav Elya Svei ztl.** explains that Laleches means to see a goal through to its completion. Pharaoh argued that if you cannot see something through in matters of Avodas Hashem, then why do you try it? Moshe does not argue this point. Rather, he maintains that one should strive to be in the small group that future Yeshuos will be done for (see Sanhedrin 111a). After all, for Yehoshua and Kalev, look how far Hashem went….

**וְיָמֵ֖שׁ חֽשֶׁךְ:  Let there be an intense darkness over Egypt (10:22) - Rashi** explains that the darkness allowed Hashem to wipe out the Jews not deserving of Geulah during the three days. **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** pointed out that during the Makah of Chosheich our people must have asked many unanswerable questions. Still, this plague was part of the preparation for the Geulah. As with the Jews then, when we go through tragedy we too can ask -- and we can be confused -- but we need to know and believe that despite everything Hashem is bringing us toward the geulah.

**כַּֽחֲצֹ֣ת הַלַּ֔יְלָה Around midnight (11:4) Rashi** notes that while Hashem said at midnight Moshe said around so that the Egyptians with clock errors should not claim Moshe is a liar. Really? All ten Makkos happen and for one moment the Egyptians will call Moshe a liar?! Seems a bit odd! **Rav Chaim Dov Altusky ztl.** answers that the issue would not be about the truth of Hashem, it would be about the opportunity to say that it was “a freak of nature.” Moshe wanted to make this clear -- it was Yad Hashem period.

**וְגַם־עֵ֥רֶב רַ֖ב עָלָ֣ה אִתָּ֑ם  An additional group went up with them (12:38)** - The midrash comments that the idea of taking the Eirev Rav was Moshe’s. He did not consult Hashem. This helps explain why at the time of the Eigel, Hashem tells him to descend the mountain because YOUR nation has sinned. **Rav Schachter Shlita** would remind us that Moshe assumed that based on the concept of B’Rov Am, Moshe thought that the experience of the miracles would be best experienced in the greatest of company -- including the Eirev Rav. But, here he erred. Rav Schachter explained that we need to be careful to consult with leaders (and Hakadosh Baruch Hu himself) to know when to sacrifice the intensity and quality of an intimate experience with the beauty and majesty of a large one. It is clear that the 2 cannot co-exist if not bounded. Rav Schachter added that many in our generation make the same mistake that Moshe *Rabbeinu* made and think that it is important to have large numbers of Jews, and therefore try to be lenient and water down the *mitzvos* a bit so observance should be more appealing to the masses. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was told by Hashem after the *chet ha'eigel* that this attitude is improper.

**כִּי־גֹֽרְשׁ֣וּ מִמִּצְרַ֗יִם וְלֹ֤א יָֽכְלוּ֙ לְהִתְמַהְמֵ֔הַּ For they were hastened out of Mitzrayim(12:39)** - Why such a stress on the speed of the exodus? **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl.** maintains that when Hashem grabs the reigns of history then that causes everything and everyone in that moment to move quickly. That is why the people could not bake bread -- the bread did not have the ability to loaf and rise naturally because once Hashem was ready to move everything moved too -- with no time to rest.

**עַל־כֵּן֩ אֲנִ֨י זֹבֵ֜חַ Therefore I am bringing a Korban to Hashem (13:15)** - But the Jew is not bringing the Korban to Hashem. The Jew gives it to the Kohein who takes care of that. Why does he say that he is doing it? The **Steipler ztl.** explained that if the Jew’s obligation was simply to give it to the Kohein then it would be no more than Terumah and the Kohein could eat it whenever and wherever. However, because the Yisroel has an obligation -- it transforms his gift into a Korban and therefore his statement that he is bringing the animal as a Korban is indeed true -- it is because of HIM that the animal is now a Korban.

**Haftara: וְשָׁ֧ב יַעֲק֛וֹב וְשָׁקַ֥ט And Yaakov shall return (Yirmiyahu 46:27)** - Why is the word Yaakov written with a vav here? **Rashi** (Vayikra 26:42) notes that there are 5 times that Yaakov’s name is written full and 5 that Eliyahu’s is not. This is purposeful for it is as if Yaakov took a collateral to guarantee that Eliyahu will come and herald the Geulah. **Rav Eitan Sandropi Shlita** asked why 5 separate collaterals were needed. Why 5 times? He quoted Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi who explains that the separate times refers to a Shevuah taken on the 5 books of the Torah. Perhaps we can add that even if the Besorah may need to come from disparate points of the world and Jewish destiny, Eliyahu is still told that he must come and fulfill his promise to Yaakov.