



8 years of Points to Ponder on

Parashas Bo

Learning in the Shul this week is sponsored by

Lani & Yo Wolk

In memory of Yo’s mother

Chana Baila Bas Yehoshua

**בֹּ֖א אֶל־פַּרְעֹ֑ה** **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 strengthen 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.

**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.

**עַד־מָתַי֙ יִֽהְיֶ֨ה זֶ֥ה לָ֨נוּ֙ לְמוֹקֵ֔שׁ How long will this be a tumbling 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?

**הֲטֶ֣רֶם תֵּדַ֔ע כִּ֥י אָֽבְדָ֖ה מִצְרָֽיִם** **And he turned and he left from in front of Pharaoh…and the servants of Pharaoh said to you—don’t you know that Mitzrayim is destroyed? (10:6-7) – The Sar Shalom of Belz** once asked how could it be that the servant of Pharaoh spoke with him with such Chutzpah? Where did they get such gumption? The Rebbe answered that it was Moshe’s sudden turn from the demand from Hashem that he speak to Pharaoh with respect that showed the Egyptians that Pharaoh was no longer deserving of Aimas HaMalchus and as such they spoke up. (He was responding to a particular Czarist decree against the Jews).

**מִ֥י וָמִ֖י הַהֹֽלְכִֽים Who and whom are those travelling (10:8)** – Shouldn’t the proper wording be who will go? Why the stress on the present tense? **Rav Mordechai Banet ztl.** is quoted as having connected this trip to that of the Olim to Yirushalayim wherein the Mishna (Chagigah 1:1) notes that only those who can walk are obligated to go up to Yirushalayim. Here too, Pharaoh assumed that since the trip was for a spiritual retreat, it would have the same parameters as the Aliyah L’Regel. Thus he said – only the men.

**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….

**בִּנְעָרֵ֥ינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵ֖ינוּ נֵלֵ֑ךְ 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.

**בִּנְעָרֵ֥ינוּ וּבִזְקֵנֵ֖ינוּ נֵלֵ֑ךְ בְּבָנֵ֨ינוּ וּבִבְנוֹתֵ֜נוּ  With our young and our old (10:9)** – Why were children needed in the trip to the desert? **Rav Shalom Schwadron ztl.** explained that if Moshe and Aharon had requested a vacation – Pharaoh would have relented. Vacation means a break from life. Vacations rarely create new ideologies. However, once Moshe made it clear that he wanted to take the children, it was also clear that this was not simply about vacation but also about education. Educating the people to believe in a “foreign service” would mean that the Egyptian lords would need to contend with an ideology that they could not accept. Hence Pharaoh refused. Moshe let Pharaoh know that he could refuse all he wanted but in the end it would be up to HASHEM to decide who was leaving and when.

**לֹ֣א כֵ֗ן לְכ֙וּ נָ֤א הַגְּבָרִים֙ Just have the men go (10:11)** - Where do we find that it was only the men who were to go ? The **Kometz HaMincha** explains that in Pharaoh’s mind, only the priests should be able to bring Korbanos (the Neki Kapayim so to speak) but the regular person? Why? How? But this is not the values of our Torah. Our Torah demands that each of us make strides in our Avodas Hashem young and old alike.

**וַיְגָ֣רֶשׁ אֹתָ֔ם מֵאֵ֖ת פְּנֵ֥י פַרְעֹֽה And he chased them from in front of Pharaoh (10:11)**– After all of the Makkos and the semi-mutiny, how could he flippantly chase Moshe and Aharon away? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl.** explains that when he saw the Mazal of Raah suggesting embarrassment for the Jews in the future, he thought that the Jews too were going to get it in the end. The idea that they would be embarrassed too, was enough for Pharaoh to be brazen enough to throw Moshe & Aharon out knowing that they too would experience the shame.

**רֽוּחַ־יָם֙ חָזָ֣ק מְאֹ֔ד Hashem sent a strong western wind (10:19)** – Why was there a need for a strong west wind to remove the Arbeh if there was no strong wind that brought them in the first place? The **Ohel Yitzchak** explains that Arbeh were more than happy to do the will of Hashem and take vengeance on those who didn’t want to follow the will of Hashem. When they were removed from that job, they didn’t want to leave so fast, hence the stronger wind was needed. **The Otzros 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.

**וְיָמֵ֖שׁ חֽשֶׁךְ A heavy darkness (10:21)** – **Rashi** notes that this Makka affected the Jewish population as well. For during this time 4/5 of the population died—those who didn’t want to leave**. Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky ztl.** estimates the loss of life at above 2 million. This certainly must have impacted the Jews as well. Still, while we become troubled by Hashem’s challenges in the dark times, they can be a clear indication that we are quickly coming close to Geulah. The same can hopefully be said today…

**וְיָמֵ֖שׁ חֽשֶׁךְ:  A heavy darkness (10:21) - 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.

ו**ּלְכָל־בְּנֵ֧י יִשְׂרָאֵ֛ל הָ֥יָה א֖וֹר בְּמֽוֹשְׁבֹתָֽם But to the Jews there was light in their abodes (10:23)** – **Rav Wolbe ztl.** explains that we learn a valuable lesson from this experience – that two people can be in the same place and experience the experience through each of their unique world views. He calls this part of man’s obligation to state B’Shvili Nivra HaOlam. He questions how this was possible to have one person experience darkness and the other one next to him be a beacon of light – unless one only sees darkness while the other allows himself to BE a beacon of light.

**גַּם־טַפְּכֶ֖ם יֵלֵ֥ךְ עִמָּכֶֽם Pharaoh called to Moshe and said go and serve Hashem just leave your cattle – even your kids can go (10:24)-** Why does Pharaoh switch from Makkas Arbeh where he wants the children to remain while Makkas Chosheich Pharaoh only requests the animals remain. Why the flip-flop? **Rav Michel Zilber Shlita** explained that when it came to the beginning of the Parasha, Pharaoh thought that Moshe was seeking a rendezvous with Hashem which was to take place via Korbanos. Thus, he did not think the children would be needed so he did not want them to go. Later, it occurred to him that maybe the trip was more of a religious convention but if that were to be the case, then Korbanos would not be needed. Hence we was willing to let the kids go but not the animals. Moshe told Pharaoh that we do not know what Hashem wants from wants from us until we get there so we will need to take everything.  When Jews serve Hashem we do so with our whole hearts, minds and being.

**בְּי֛וֹם רְאֹֽתְךָ֥ פָנַ֖י תָּמֽוּת For on the day you see me you shall die (10:28)** – What does Pharaoh gain by using the word “on the day”? Why not simply state , “When you see me you shall die”? The **Tiferes Yisrael** suggests that the declaration of Pharaoh was not that he would kill Moshe but rather that he would give permission to Dasan and Aviram to kill Moshe – not in the palace but on the same day. **Rav Aizik Ausband ztl** points out that one sees the incredible power of Biizayon – of embarrassment here. Years had passed since Moshe called them Reshaim for fighting one another. In the interim, Moshe had risen to the level of leader of the Jewish people, conveyor of the word of Hashem and His Makkos. The slavery had partially ended and the Jews were no longer working. If Dasan and Aviram would attempt to rise up to Moshe, they would be killed. Still, Pharaoh knew that all he needed to do was give permission and they would rise to the challenge – so great is the memory of Bizyonos.

**דַּבֶּר־נָ֖א בְּאָזְנֵ֣י הָעָ֑ם Speak please (11:2)** – Why does Moshe need to ask the people politely to seek gold and silver for themselves? Moreover, the Gemara (Berachos 9) notes that this was being done so that Hashem’s promise to Avraham would be kept – that was the only reason? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl** compared the issue to the issue of reparations from Germany after WWII. The people were divided as to whether to give the evil Germans a chance to offer to pay blood money for their actions. He explains that in these situations Moshe too, would explain to the naysayers that he needed them to collect so that Hashem could keep his promise to Avraham.

**דַּבֶּר־נָ֖א בְּאָזְנֵ֣י הָעָ֑ם Please speak to the people to request that each man should ask from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor to receive silver, gold and clothing (11:2)** – Why was the idea of material wealth so crucial? **Rav C.Y. Goldvicht ztl**. notes that part of the job of a Galus is that it is supposed to teach us how to take from the experience and turn it toward Hashem. The same Keilim that were used by the Egyptians for inappropriate purposes should now be refashioned into appropriate things. Thus, at the end of the Galus, part of the Geulah is the taking of the Nitzozos and dedicating them for Hashem.

**דַּבֶּר־נָ֖א בְּאָזְנֵ֣י הָעָ֑ם וְיִשְׁאֲל֞וּ אִ֣ישׁ | מֵאֵ֣ת רֵעֵ֗הוּ וְאִשָּׁה֙ מֵאֵ֣ת רְעוּתָ֔הּ Please speak to the nation and ask them to ask their neighbors (11:2)** - Why does the Torah use the word “please” here more than everywhere else in the Korban Pesach initiative? **The Vilna Gaon** explained that in order to find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, the Egyptians would need to see that they spoke “Na” nicely to one another. The **Chofetz Chaim** added that this is the meaning of the Possuk *Nacheesa B’Chasdecha Am Zu* -- that the people were concerned with the needs of their friends and this is what brought the Geula. **Rav Benjamin Yudin Shlita** added that this is the intent of the Beracha of Borai Nefashos Rabos V’CHASRONAM -- that the world has room for us to perform Chessed acts.

**גַּ֣ם | הָאִ֣ישׁ משֶׁ֗ה 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.

**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.

**לְמַ֨עַן֙ תֵּֽדְע֔וּן אֲשֶׁר֙ יַפְלֶ֣ה** **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.

**הַחֹ֧דֶשׁ הַזֶּ֛ה לָכֶ֖ם רֹ֣אשׁ חֳדָשִׁ֑ים This month is for you the first of the months (12:2) – Rashi** notes that the secret of Rosh Chodesh is that it is ours to declare even if we are wrong or declare it incorrectly on purpose. How can Hashem allow us to make overt errors and still be the one who directs the world? **Rav Aharon Lopiansky Shlita** explains that this is the secret known as Sod HaIbbur. We have the ability to have full Bechira but at the same time, we have the recognition that Hashem has the ability to override and direct our destiny. Perhaps this is why the Rosh Chodesh is that which determines the Moadim. Moadim come from the word Moed or meeting. When we have a Moed it is the meeting between Hashem the Omnipotent and Bnei Yisrael the free-willed.

**הַחֹ֧דֶשׁ הַזֶּ֛ה לָכֶ֖ם רֹ֣אשׁ חֳדָשִׁ֑ים This month is for YOU the first of the Months (12:1) – Rav Schachter** **Shlita**would often quote the **Netziv**who notes that the reason why the nations of the world count Rosh HaShana from Tishrei is because all of the rules of nature, indeed, all of the sciences and political events of the rest of the world are destined based on the 6 days of creation. They are predictable based on the rules that were apparent on Rosh Chodesh Tishrei at the end of creation. Rav Schachter Shlita would add that herein lies the difference as it relates to us, the Jewish nation: we are a nation that lives above the rules of nature. As a result, we exist miraculously. The month of miracles is the month of Nissan and it seems only logical to count the Rosh HaShana for our nation based on the Rosh Chodesh Shel Nissim v’HaGeula.

**הַחֹ֧דֶשׁ הַזֶּ֛ה לָכֶ֖ם רֹ֣אשׁ חֳדָשִׁ֑ים 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.

**הַחֹ֧דֶשׁ הַזֶּ֛ה לָכֶ֖ם רֹ֣אשׁ חֳדָשִׁ֑ים 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 Kidddush Levana ששים ושמחים לעשות רצון קונם, 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.

**הַחֹ֧דֶשׁ הַזֶּ֛ה לָכֶ֖ם רֹ֣אשׁ חֳדָשִׁ֑ים This month is the first of the months for you(12:2)** - Why is Kiddush Hachodesh the first Mitzva given to the Jewish nation? My dear friend **Rav Chaim Marcus Shlita** quoted **Sforno** who explains that until this point the Jews were enslaved and now they discovered that they were the masters of their own time. He added in the name of **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** That the difference between a free man and an Eved is that the free man is incharge of his own fate as a result of being in charge of his time. Hence, added Rav Marcus, the Rosh Chodesh is YOURS -- to choose how to spend it.

**בֶּֽעָשׂ֖ר לַחֹ֣דֶשׁ הַזֶּ֑ה On the tenth of the month (12:3)** - Why did they need to take the sheep into the house 4 days in advance? The **Maharal** (Gur Aryeh) explains that the point was to give them a chance to examine the animal to see if it would have any blemishes. The **Lubavitcher Rebbe ztl.** added that it was done to give them time for the idea of freedom and of the Korban to settle in on them so that they could do it properly.

**שֶׂ֥ה לְבֵֽית־אָבֹ֖ת שֶׂ֥ה לַבָּֽיִת A Sheep for each family a Sheep for the home (12:3)** – Why is there a stress on the familial and neighborly aspects of the Korban Pesach? **Rav Elyashiv ztl**. explained that when one is enslaved, often there is a competitive element that makes one forget his communal or neighborly ties. Before true Geulah is achieved, one needs to fix the family bond and strengthen neighborly ties if the redemption will be complete.

**וְאָֽכְל֥וּ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂ֖ר בַּלַּ֣יְלָה הַזֶּ֑ה 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.

**וַֽאֲכַלְתֶּ֤ם אֹתוֹ֙ בְּחִפָּז֔וֹן And you should eat it in haste (12:11**) – why is the speed so significant to Pesach? After all, the Matza, the recall of the miracle and the Korban Pesach all have the recall of the speed of the Geula mentioned as essential  to understanding the Mitzva. Why**? Rav Chaim Sabato Shlita** answers that the Jews were on the lowest rung and Hashem had to take them out immediate so that they should not be lost forever. However in the process, He did not want a moment of their freedom to be influenced by the ideas of Egypt as the nation shed its self-image of the past. Hence, Hashem took them out speedily so as to totally distance the freedom of Bnei Yisrael from the former enslaved Egyptian influenced people. The haste reminds us of the turning of the page.

**תֹּֽאכְל֖וּ מַצֹּ֑ת You shall eat Matzos (12:18)** – When we were slaves in Egypt we were given Matzos to eat (hence we refer to the Matza as the bread of the poor**). Avudraham** notes that **Ibn Ezra** was fed Matza when in captivity in India since Matza is hard to digest and therefore filling. At the same time, it is recognized as the bread of freedom. How does this make sense? **Rav Schachter Shlita** would remind us that we believe that Hashem is the director of both Galus and Geulah. He declared the Avdus and he declared the Cheirus. We use the Matza to express the notion that we are NOT a self made nation. Everything in our lives is Min HaShomayim. Matza therefore, is the symbol of Hashem’s control over our history and our destiny.

**וַיִּקֹּ֥ד הָעָ֖ם וַיִּשְׁתַּֽחֲוֽוּ** **And when your children will ask…And the nation bowed (12:26-27) – Rashi** notes the bowing was out of excitement and thanks for the news of children. But this is the question of the Rasha! Why bow for children who oppose the religion? **Rav Shlomo Heiman ztl**. explained that as long as the Torah remains inspiring and living, it is crucial that everyone continue to ask questions – even the heretical ones. That guarantees that the children will continue to delve into Torah and will still find places that one gets to ask important questions to.

**וַתֶּֽחֱזַ֤ק מִצְרַ֨יִם֙ עַל־הָעָ֔ם** **And the Egyptians strong-armed the nation to get them out quickly arguing that they were all dying (12:33)** – Why would they freak out thinking that they were all dying? They knew the death was limited to the first born male children? Besides, it was after Chatzos – why fear death now? **Rav Eliezer Turk Shlita, Rav of Perushim/Brachfeld** explained that the Egyptians were learning that there were many more covert Bechorim than they realized and that many were left over suffering a slow death. It was this discovery that they were rushing to get the Jews out of.

**וּבְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֥ל עָשׂ֖וּ כִּדְבַ֣ר משֶׁ֑ה** **And the Jewish People did as Moshe said (12:35)** – In regard to making the Korban Pesach it is noted that the Jews did as Hashem commanded Moshe. Why is there a difference between the command of Korban Pesach and that of Bizas Mitzrayim? **Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev** notes that the Mitzva in the Torah is that which is for the future. Korban Pesach was applicable in the future. Bizas Mitzrayim was Horaas Novi**. Rav Schachter Shlita** added that every time we find the word Kaasher Tziva we need to find out what the ruling for future generations is…it isn’t always obvious but it has Mitzva significance even for you and me.

**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.

**כִּי־גֹֽרְשׁ֣וּ מִמִּצְרַ֗יִם וְלֹ֤א יָֽכְלוּ֙ לְהִתְמַהְמֵ֔הַּ וְגַם־צֵדָ֖ה לֹֽא־עָשׂ֥וּ לָהֶֽם For they were chased  out of Mitzrayim and they could not wait  (12:39)** - Why didn’t Hashem give them a chance to bake their bread? The **Alter of Kelm** explained that there was a lesson here -- in order to grow in Avodas Hashem, we need to learn not to be enslaved to the desires of the body.

**יָֽצְא֛וּ כָּל־צִבְא֥וֹת ה מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם: The legions of Hashem left Egypt (12:41)** - Why are we referred to as legions? **Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus ztl.** explained that every Jew is a soldier in the army of Hashem since each of our actions and choices reflect on the general who is Hashem.

**בְּבַ֤יִת אֶחָד֙ יֵֽאָכֵ֔ל** **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.

**וְעֶ֖צֶם לֹ֥א תִשְׁבְּרוּ־בֽוֹ Don’t break a bone in it (12:46)** - The main reason for this mitzva according to **Sefer HaChinuch** is that it is not princely to eat by breaking bones. **Rav Dessler** explains that we find that when the world lives comfortably, lustful desires increase, since it is easy for people to acheive them, as it says regarding the arayot (incentuous relations), "it is chesed." Arayot are an outgrowth of the trait of chesed, which becomes perverted towards the side of tumah. Therefore, we find in the Gemara (Berachot 7a)  that G-d becomes angry every day. "How long is his anger? -- A single moment." This is in order to "balance" people's traits, so that the great chesed of "the One whom renews in his goodness every day the act of creation," should not tilt them towards wrong. **Rav Ephraim Rubinstein Shlita** adds that the reason for the mitzvah, "You shall not break a bone in it." (Shemot 12:46) This was a night of great acts of kindness, in which G-d jumped over the houses of Bnei Yisrael. In addition, "He will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses to smite." (Shemot 12:24) The GR"A explains, that even a Jew whose time had come to die naturally that night -- permission was not granted to the destroyer (the angel of death) to smite him. Thus, is this state that the attribute of chesed is completely dominant, there was concern for an increase of lust, and in its wake, spiritual failure. Therefore, the Torah commanded, "You shall not break a bone in it," to curb the lust and not to eat everything. Although it is a mitzvah to eat all the sacrificial meat and not to allow it to stay overnight, yet, the bones, which there is no mitzvah to eat, should serve -- through the prohibition that the Torah placed on breaking them -- as a barrier in the face of intensifying desire.

**לָֽאֶזְרָ֑ח וְלַגֵּ֖ר הַגָּ֥ר בְּתֽוֹכְכֶֽם: There will be one rule for the convert and native (12:49)** – Why the stress on our comparison to Geirim in such detail here? **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl**. explained that lest one come up with the idea that s/he can oppress the Ger BECAUSE we too, were Geirim and we toughed it out and became stronger for it. The Torah tells us that although one might have benefitted, it is not acceptable to oppress the Ger.

**בְּחֹ֖דֶשׁ הָֽאָבִֽיב** **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 Shavuos 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 Sukkos. Highlighting Pesach in Aviv is also inspiring for the people in this early stage. (Could this be the basis of needing order for Baal Tiacher).

**שִׁבְעַ֥ת יָמִ֖ים תֹּאכַ֣ל מַצֹּ֑ת**  **For seven days you will eat Matzos (13:6) - Rav Yehoshua Maman ztl.**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.

**מִיָּמִ֖ים יָמִֽימָה** **And you will guard this Chok in its time from days onward (13:10)** – 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.

**וְכָל־פֶּ֤טֶר חֲמֹר֙ תִּפְדֶּ֣ה בְשֶׂ֔ה** **And every firstborn donkey you shall redeem with a lamb (13:13) –** Why is the donkey singled out? **Rav Dovid A. Gross Shlita** comments that the donkey is responsible for bringing the Jews TO Mitzrayim. Citing the Meshech Chochma, he argues that the role of the Peter Chamor Mitzva is that it provides us a commemoration that Hashem orchestrated the entire process – from exile to redemption – with an extreme reminder that Hashem did not CHANGE his mind but rather planned on redeeming the people AT THE RIGHT TIME. This is why we commemorate not only the end of the process but the beginning of it as well.

**בְּחֹ֣זֶק יָ֗ד הֽוֹצִיאָ֧נוּ** **When your child asks tomorrow  “What is this?”  You will tell him that it was with a strength of the hand that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim (13:14)** – Why is this the Possuk that we use to answer the simple son? Why the stress on the strength of the hand? **Rav Ovadiah Yosef ztl.** notes that the Tam son is often swayed by the miraculous stories to come to belief in Hashem. However, we remind him that it was the strength of the Hand – the hand that performs Mitzvos and demonstrates Emunah actively through punctilious Mitzva observance that is the way and the reason for Yetzias Mitzrayim (Lo HaMidrash Hu HaIkkar Ela HaMaaseh.)

**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.

**וְהָיָ֤ה לְאוֹת֙ עַל־יָ֣דְכָ֔ה וּלְטֽוֹטָפֹ֖ת בֵּ֣ין עֵינֶ֑יךָ** **Tefillin (13:16) – Rav Gedaliah Schorr ztl.**notes that the Halachic requirement that Tefillin need a clean body is not that this is a separate Halacha. Rather part of the mitzvah of Tefillin is putting it on a Kosher, clean body. This is why one who does not wear Tefillin is of the Poshei Yisroel B’Gufo. It is also why one wearing Tefillin is not exempt from other mitzvos. The logic is simple – Tefillin isn’t what we do, it is an aspect of who we are.

**וּלְטֽוֹטָפֹ֖ת בֵּ֣ין עֵינֶ֑יךָ And a Totafos between your eyes (13:16) – 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.

**The 4 Mitzvos commanded in Mitzrayim – Bnei Yisrael received 4 Mitzvos in the land of Mitzrayim –** Kiddush HaChodesh, Korban Pesach, Arifas Peter Chamor and Tefillin. **Rav Moshe Tzuriel Shlita** asks why these 4 needed to be highlighted in Mitzrayim if, the Rambam notes, the command to observe Mitzvos in the future does not begin until Maamad Har Sinai? Rav Tzuriel answers that each one of these Mitzvos highlights a different aspect of the Geulah of the Jewish people and their new status as a distinct nation: The Mitzva of Kiddush HaChodesh highlights the fact that it is only the Jewish nation that creates a special rendezvous with Hashem each month – and it is effected only by the Beit Din on behalf of the Jew (not Hashem). No other nation has that ability. Similarly, the Korban Pesach is a uniting force – as the Maharal notes --  the korban unites the people (it is eaten b’Chaburah), day and night (it is shechted Bein HaArbayim), of a whole animal (inside and outside), by a whole person (not an Arel). The Arifas Peter Chamor is a symbol of the differentiation from the Egyptian who is compared to a Chamor. We are known as Adam. Tefillin are the uniform of the Jewish nation – there is nothing better for a Jew to don, then Tefillin.

**Haftara –**

**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 incharge 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.

**מַדּ֖וּעַ נִסְחַ֣ף אַבִּירֶ֑יךָ Why have the mighty ones been washed away…because Hashem repelled him  (Yirmiyahu 46:15)** – **Rav Aviner Shlita** explains that Egypt was accustomed to its supremacy and was confident of a miraculous victory.  They were certain that they would be successful in battle and they were not at all concerned before the young, brazen king Nevuchadnetzer. Here is where they erred: No nation on Earth, and no empire – no matter how strong – lasts forever.  Nations appear on the stage of history, fulfill their historical role and disappear.  This is what Yaakov Avinu understood when he saw the angels ascending and descending the ladder.  The meaning of the dream is that each nation is represented by an angel and it can reach great heights, but in the end it will go down into the annals of history.  Yaakov Avinu began to fear that this would also be our fate, and he asked Hashem, who calmed him: No, you are different from the others.  You are an eternal Nation.  It may be that you have a difficult history, but you will overcome the trials!  You are incapable of being destroyed! "For I am with you" , Hashem promises us.  This promise, like the others, is fulfilled each day.  Just as He dismantled and caused each and every one of our worst enemies to fall, He also returned the Children of Yaakov to their Land in order to enjoy eternal peace and security.

**מִפְּנֵ֖י חֶ֥רֶב הַיּוֹנָֽה: Arise, and let us return to our own people, And to the land of our birth, From the oppressing sword (Yirmiyahu 46:16**) – What is the “Cherev HaYona” referred to here? **Professor Yehuda Eisenberg** explained that this concept, which appears but 4 times in Tanach speaks to destruction of a person that takes place totally against the will of the person and leaves a terrible destruction in its path. Throughout the exile, we have seen this term in Kinnos of history that could have sent us over the edge into the abyss but as the Novi promises here, there is Geulah that comes even from this.

**כִּי כְּתָב֣וֹר בֶּֽהָרִ֔ים וּכְכַרְמֶ֖ל בַּיָּ֥ם יָבֽוֹא 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.

**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.

**וְנַקֵּ֖ה לֹ֥א אֲנַקֶּֽךָּ**: **And you I shall not wipe out” (Yirmiyahu 46:28) – Maran HaRav Schachter Shlita** notes that this is one of the unique Berachos for the Jewish people. Not only will the individual Jews not be wiped out, there will always be a Kahal (translated as minyan of Jews) in Eretz Yisroel to keep us connected to Hashem. Unlike the nations of the world whose stars (and Malachim) rise and eventually fall, our star just keeps on rising.

**אַ֠תָּה אַל־תִּירָ֞א עַבְדִּ֚י יַֽעֲקֹב֙ My servant Yaakov (Yirmiyahu 46:28) - Rav Schachter Shlita** reminded us many times that not only will Am Yisrael never disappear. A single SHEVET can never disappear (see Bava Basra 116b). He added that the Rambam  (*Sefer Hamitzvos aseh* #153) explains that the idea of a Klal in Yisrael would always survive meaning that there would always be at least a minyan of Jews in Eretz Yisrael. Based on this the Rambam (*Mishnayos Bechoros* 29) adds that *Semicha* can only be conferred in *Eretz Yisroel*, because this is not a private matter. One who himself has *semicha* can confer it upon others only as a representative of *Klal Yisroel*. The *semicha* is really conferred by *Klal Yisroel*; since only those who live in *Eretz Yisroel* constitute *Klal Yisroel*, therefore the act of conferring *semicha* must take place only in *Eretz Yisroel*. When determining whether the majority of Klal Yisroel had sinned (with respect to bringing the special communal *korban*, *par he'elem davar shel tzibbur*) the Talmud (*Huriyos* 3a) derives from *Tanach* that the *tzibbur* only includes those who live in *Eretz Yisroel*. Similarly, Rambam writes, this is the reason that the *beth din* authorized to establish *Rosh Chodesh* must convene in *Eretz Yisroel*. This *beth din* doesn't really act as on its own, but rather as a representative of *Klal Yisroel*. *Klal Yisroel* was empowered to establish the *Roshei Chodoshim*, and the concept of *Klal Yisroel* only relates to those who live in *Eretz Yisroel*.