

אזכור את השבת הקודש.

ששת ימים תעבוד ועשית כל-מלאכתך,
ויום השביעי שבת לה'

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בס"ד



This week's edition of Shabbat Lashem is sponsored in memory of Sheila Epstein (Tzvia Heschel Bat Yekutiel and Clara), Mother of Felicia Epstein and grandmother of Gavriella and Yishai Epstein-Lightman.



THE 10 PLAGUES REVISITED AYAL DOCTORS SHEVET MORASHA

The 10 plagues brought tremendous destruction to the land and people of Egypt: All bodies of water turned to blood, dust turned to swarms of lice, an inflammation of boils on man and animal, and total darkness. It is commonly thought that the plagues were carried out by G-d in order to achieve Israel's freedom. If this is the case, does G-d really need to produce such collapse, damage and disorder? Why does He not make one catastrophic plague, a decisive blow? Additionally, why does G-d psychologically control Paroh by hardening his heart if His true desire is to free Bnei Yisrael?

The text of the Torah implies that the ten plagues had an educational purpose. The passuk states that it is so we can recount the power of G-d to future generations. Through observing the miraculous occurrences in Egypt, Bnei Yisrael understand that G-d can employ both natural and supernatural forces. Ramban develops this idea further, revealing that someone who experiences a miracle transforms philosophical truths into living belief. This person would be highly convinced of G-d's existence, G-d's involvement in human activities and His power to reward and punish. It is important to realise that Bnei Yisrael are at a turning point in their advancement as a nation. Therefore, G-d wants them to be born in an atmosphere of faith with the existence of G-d in the forefront of their minds. If one miracle has the ability to provoke belief in G-d, then ten miracles of the magnitude of the plagues would have a tenfold effect on a person's faith. Therefore we attempt to preserve and perpetuate the feeling and memory of "Yetziat Mitzrayim" because they affirm the existence and providence of our G-d.

We read in the Haggada how Rabbi Yehuda would divide the plagues into three groupings (DeTZaCH ADaSH BeACHaV), classifying each of the plagues by initials. How and why did Rabbi Yehuda make this division? When closely examining the text of the Torah, we can discern a striking arrangement. It is a structure of three waves with a recurring pattern. In each wave, the first two plagues are foreshadowed by a divine warning while the third plague transpires suddenly, without a prior notice. One can also identify the cyclical rhythm in the language of the commands given to Moshe. There are noticeably some distinguishing features of this structure from within the descriptions of the plagues.

In the first group of three, each plague mentions the magicians, the religious authorities of Egypt. Initially, they are able to produce the plagues, however, in the third plague they fail to replicate the plague. They half-heartedly conclude that the plagues symbolise the "finger of God". In the second wave, there is a further element that is emphasised repeatedly: that the plague will strike only Egyptians and not Israelis. Here G-d is creating a clear divide between two nations. In the third and final wave, each plague is unique and demonstrates unprecedented power. G-d rains down a very heavy hail that has never occurred in Egypt before, there is a swarm of locusts of a large magnitude, and darkness that you cannot move in.

For each of these three waves, there is a distinct aim which relates to its unifying theme. This objective is expressed in the introductory warning to each plague grouping, which concern theological understandings about G-d's nature and power, that Paroh has to acquire in the process. The first wave of plagues is designed to illustrate G-d's existence – "I am the L-rd". The magicians themselves acknowledge the existence of G-d in the third plague, as it is a phenomenon they cannot replicate. Consequently, Paroh's denial of G-d's existence must stem from only stubbornness – G-d has been given recognition. The second group demonstrates G-d's providence, His involvement in human activities and His ability to manipulate events "in the midst of the land". He can time his actions precisely and work within a limited time frame – since He informs Moshe that each of these plagues will be enacted "tomorrow". The third wave validates G-d's omnipotence.

These three lessons are necessary to Paroh's education. When Moshe first approaches Paroh, Paroh discards Moshe's request with a denial of G-d's existence, a dismissal of the plea for the freedom of Bnei Yisrael and certainly rejects G-d's ability to control him. Paroh strongly believes that the gods of Egypt are much more powerful than the G-d of Israel. The Israelite slavery proves his point because if Egypt can enslave Israel then the Egyptian god must overpower the Israelite G-d. However, the plagues prove Paroh wrong.

Earlier, we discussed the possibility of G-d generating a single plague that would guarantee the freedom of Bnei Yisrael. We understand now that G-d's reason behind plagues were educational more than punitive. However, it seems like the plague of the firstborn does not fit into this educational model, but rather it acts as the final blow and the last step towards freedom.

AYAL WAS A PARTICIPANT ON TORANI 5780 AT YESHIVAT ERETZ HATZVI.

London	In: 16:06 Out: 17:19	Oxford	In: 16:06 Out: 17:23	Leeds	In: 15:58 Out: 17:19
Manchester	In: 16:05 Out: 17:22	Bristol	In: 16:13 Out: 17:29	Liverpool	In: 16:05 Out: 17:25
Cambridge	In: 15:59 Out: 17:16	Birmingham	In: 16:06 Out: 17:24	Jerusalem	In: 16:22 Out: 17:38

TO CAPTURE A FEELING

RAV JOEL KENIGSBURG | RAV SHALIACH



When Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon to approach Paroh to demand the Jewish people's release, the Torah says something strange:

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן
וַיֹּצִיאוּם אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶל־

פֶּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:
"And Hashem commanded Moshe and Aharon regarding Bnei Yisrael and Paroh the King of Egypt, to release the Jewish people from the land of Egypt."
(Shemot 6:13)

It wasn't just Paroh who Moshe and Aharon had to address with the instruction to free the nation of slaves, it was also Bnei Yisrael themselves. But the question is obvious - Bnei Yisrael were the slaves who needed to be released, not release anybody else. What exactly was their command?

One approach, suggested by the Netziv, is that Bnei Yisrael too had a part to play in letting themselves out. Ultimately, four-fifths of the nation never made it out of slavery - those who didn't want to leave. It's all good and well commanding Paroh to open the gates of bondage, but so long as Bnei Yisrael wanted to remain there and wouldn't step away, they simply wouldn't leave. The first step was making them aware that where they were wasn't where they were meant to be. That even after generations of slavery in Egypt, there was another destination - a greater goal that they had to look forward to.

But the Yerushalmi says the pasuk refers to something else:
א"ר שמואל ב"ר יצחק, על מה ציוונו? על פרשת שילוח עבדים

The command Bnei Yisrael were given, according to the Yerushalmi, had nothing to do with Yetziat Mitzrayim. It was a command for the future. One day when they would be living in their own land, there would be circumstances under which Jews

would have their own slaves. But they had to remember those circumstances were necessarily limited. An "eved ivri" could only be retained for a maximum of six years. Beyond that, there was a mitzvah from the Torah for him to be released. It was this mitzvah that Bnei Yisrael were given before they left Egypt.

But why bother now? Certain mitzvot were transmitted to Bnei Yisrael before they received the Torah at Sinai, but generally they were ones that were immediately applicable - like Shabbat, or honouring parents. Freeing slaves was a mitzvah that couldn't and wouldn't be relevant for years to come. Why introduce it now to a people who until that point couldn't even fathom the concept of their own redemption, let alone that of others?

FAR FROM A FLEETING MOMENT, THIS WOULD BE A LIFE- CHANGING EVENT

The answer is that in order to be able to release a slave, one has to be able to remember what it was like to be a slave. At that moment Bnei Yisrael understood exactly what the longing to be free was all about. If questioned at the

time when they were dreaming of their personal freedom, whether they would in future withhold their own slaves from going free - the answer would be absolutely not.

But over time people forget. Somebody accustomed to a personal slave and all the duties he performs, would not easily be able to let that person go to live a life of his own. Receiving the command at that time was a way of taking the transient experience of liberation and permanently etching it into their minds for years and generations to come. A way of making sure that far from a fleeting moment, this would be a life-changing event.

The challenge for us is to do the same with the day-to-day experiences in our own lives. To capture the moments of inspiration and turn them into memories that will continue to inspire, to uplift and to change us forever.

Shabbat Shalom!

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESILIENCE

SHIRA COLLINS | SHEVET NE'EMAN



Leadership is one of the foundational pillars of our Tnuva. As a youth movement we are constantly training and learning about the importance of becoming a Madrich/a, becoming a leader, and allowing our movement to progress and grow. In fact, throughout our Tnuva we value leadership and leadership skills so much we have a whole Machane dedicated to learning all the skills, values and qualities of a leader.

A key quality of any leader is resilience, 'the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties and toughness'. There are many ups and many downs to leadership, in however large or small the role may be. Being able to power through and learn from the difficulties can only help enhance your skills to become a more effective leader.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z'l, highlights within this week's parsha how overcoming setbacks within leadership is a key and developmental part to leadership greatness. He speaks of Moshe's journey as a leader throughout the end of last week's parsha as well as the continuation this week too. Moshe on his mission at first seems to be successful. Having feared that the people would not believe in him initially however with his brother Aaron to speak on his behalf and Moshe "performed the signs before the people, and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped." - great start Moshe, the best trigger you could ask for!

Unfortunately, as we read from last week, this lucky Hadracha performance didn't hold up so well in front of Pharaoh. Not only does Pharaoh refuse to recognise Hashem, he also rejects Moshe's request to leave, resulting in making life worse in Mitzrayim. The people turn against Moses and Aaron: "May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword

in their hand to kill us." Even after the hype of the staff turning into a snake Pharaoh was still unimpressed, next they bring the first plague, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth (spoiler!), ninth and still the Israelites are still slaves. Moshe is doing everything in his power and is finding that nothing makes a difference.

Throughout these two parshiot we can sense the pressure that Moshe is under as a leader. In this week's parsha even though God has reassured him that he will eventually succeed, he replies, "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?" Rabbi Sacks emphasizes an underlining message here about leadership and greatness. That, "Leadership, even of the very highest

A PERSON'S NEEDS THE ABILITY TO APPROACH FAILURE NOT AS A FAIL BUT RATHER AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE QUALITY OF RESILIENCE.

order, is often marked by failure." Every great leader has been through a failure and many leaders are tested not by their successes rather their failures. A person's needs the ability to approach failure not as a fail but rather as

an opportunity to use the quality of resilience. The great leaders are the ones who refuse to be defeated, learn from every mistake and treat failure as a learning experience! Moshe's experience with leadership throughout Parshat Shemot and Vaera indicates that from every refusal from Pharaoh and every defeat he came out a stronger, wiser and more determined leader as ever ready for the journey ahead.

You don't need to be leading a nation away from slavery to be faced with similar challenges. It could be at Sviva or Machane, it could be planning peulot, tochniot and chugim. Certainly, in today's ever-changing times, being a leader now more than ever calls for constant adaptation changes and resilience! As Rabbi Sacks writes, "Defeats, delays and disappointments hurt. They hurt even for Moshe. So if there are times when we, too, feel discouraged and demoralised, it is important to remember that even the greatest people failed. What made them great is that they kept going. The road to success passes through many valleys of failure. There is no other way."

SHIRA IS CAMPS AND SOCIAL ACTION WORKER 5781.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Applications are open for **Summer Machane 5781!** Join us from **2nd-15th August** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! Sign up today at bauk.org/camps or email camps@bauk.org for more information.

- **Svivot are continuing!** Look out for updates and virtual events from your local sviva or **visit www.bauk.org/svivot**.

- **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Coronavirus has hit Bnei Akiva hard, costing us over £150,000. Our Mazkirut, Bogrim and Madrichim have been working tirelessly to put on a range of fantastic programming for our youth, from Machane Aviv in the Spring, to a celebration of Israel like no other on Yom Ha'atzmaut, a packed summer of programming for over 400 children, and Winter Machane. Please support our **Yad Achim Campaign**. Visit bauk.org/yad-achim for more information and to donate.

- Bnei Akiva friends of all ages around the world; on **17 January** you are invited to our **1st ever virtual Mifgash Olami**, celebrating our achievements as a movement, and planning our future. There will be live music, inspirational talks in various languages, interactive activities, exciting competitions and incredible prizes. One movement, one ideology, one family! Sign Up for the Mifgash Olami TODAY! <https://www.worldbneiakiva.org/mifgash-olami>

- Keep an eye out for **daily exciting virtual events** for all ages! **Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA**

- Each week we will be releasing a **scavenger hunt and challenges** to complete with the whole family! The winners will be announced each Friday on our social media!

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to stay informed of our online content!

- To receive weekly copies of **Shabbat Lashem**, sign up for our mailing list at bauk.org/contact.

- Visit bauk.org/feedback for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!

SHABBAT SHALOM!!!

BNEI AKIVA 

Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA

Looking for fun things to do over the next few weeks?
.....>>> **BA has got you covered!** <<<.....

Week commencing - 18/01/21

Monday Chug 8pm (Year 11+)	Tuesday Homework Club 5:6-6:30pm Bogrim Babka Bake with the Kenigsberg's 8:30pm (Bogrim)	Wednesday Productivity Hour 2:30-3:30pm Chug (All ages) 5pm
Thursday Student Bet Midrash 7pm Mishmar With Matan and Nini 8:30pm	Motzei Shabbat Virtual Sviva Shurdy After Shabbat Tachnit 8pm (Year 11+)	Sunday Open Zoom Room 11am Shevet Shmoaze 8pm Years 10 & 11

SCAVENGER HUNT

TAKE A PHOTO OF...

- 1) A sunset
- 2) You with a bird
- 3) Pose with a phone box
- 4) A flag
- 5) An Animal
- 6) exactly what a sign says
- 7) Shadow art
- 8) A road name beginning with H

Points will be given for each photo and extra points for creativity! Please send us your submissions by messaging us on Facebook or Instagram!
Winners announced each Friday!

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