



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 15

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BO

13th Shevat 5776

Kohen - First Aliya: Chapter 10, verses 1 - 11

- ✚ Moshe and Aron warn Pharaoh that a plague of locusts are on their way if Hashem's people are not set free.
- ✚ Pharaoh's advisers implore with Pharaoh to say yes. Pharaoh tells Moshe, that he will release all the men only so they can honour their God.
- ✚ Moshe disagrees with the terms and insists that everyone including all their cattle and sheep must be set free too. Pharaoh refuses and throws both Moshe and Aron out of his palace.

Levi - Second Aliya: Chapter 10, verses 12 - 23

- ✚ Moshe stretches out his staff and an east wind blows over the whole of the land of Mitzraim (Egypt); bringing with it swarms of locusts destroying everything in its path.
- ✚ Pharaoh admits that he has sinned against Hashem and begs Moshe and Aron to pray on his behalf to end the plague. Once Hashem sent down a west wind to remove the locusts, Pharaoh once more went back to his original stance and refused to let the people to go.
- ✚ Moshe stretched out his hands this time towards heaven and darkness enveloped the land for three days, however wherever the Jewish people lived or went they had plenty of light to see.

Sh'lisi - Third Aliya: Chapter 10, verse 24 - Chapter 11, verse 4

- ✚ Pharaoh tells Moshe to take everyone and leave, Moshe demanded not without their cattle and sheep as they are needed for korbanos (sacrifices).
- ✚ Enraged Pharaoh refuses and decrees that the next time Moshe sees him, he will be killed.
- ✚ Moshe is informed by Hashem that one final plague is on its way but first Bnai Yisrael must go to their Egyptian neighbours demanding for all the gold and silver vessels in their possession, so they will depart as a wealthy nation.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya: Chapter 11, verse 5 - Chapter 12, verse 20

- ✚ Moshe warns Pharaoh that Hashem, at approximately midnight, will smite down every first born, man and beast leaving the whole of Mitzraim crying out in grief.
- ✚ Hashem informs Moshe that the month of Nissan will from this day forward be the first month of the Jewish calendar year.
- ✚ Hashem then commanded that Bnai Yisrael to each sacrifice a lamb on the fourteenth day and consume it along with matzah and bitter herbs that night. The blood from the lambs must then be painted on their doorposts so Hashem will pass over them at midnight sparing their firstborns from death.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya: Chapter 12, verses 21 - 28

- ✚ Moshe relayed Hashem's instructions to the elders of Israel, emphasizing that in the future when their children and descendants will ask what is the meaning of all this. You can answer This is the Pesach sacrifice when Hashem passed over your houses, saving them from having to mourn for their beloved firstborn

Shishi - Sixth Aliya: Chapter 12, verses 29 - 51

- ✚ The death of the firstborn takes place. Pharaoh seeks out Moshe, ordering him that everyone must leave now, immediately
- ✚ The exodus begins with over 600,000 men and their families along with their livestock, departing Mitzraim for good.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya: Chapter 13, verses 1 - 16

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe that this festival of Pesach is to be commemorated every year in the spring time in honour of remembering this exodus; and issues the laws relating to the Korban Pesach. Furthermore upon arrival into the land of Israel, all firstborn males of all kinds of animal must be given to Hashem but any firstborn boy will be redeemed by giving money to the Kohen.
- ✚ Finally the words of the Torah dealing with the exodus are to be enclosed into Tefillin (along with the first two chapters of the Shema) and are to be worn to serve as a constant sign and reminder of what has taken place.

Haftorah – YERMEYAH (JEREMIAH) Chapter 46 verses 13 to 28

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ This week's Haftorah continues with the same subject of last week's relating to Yechezkel's (Ezekiel) prediction of Nebuchadnezzar defeating the might of the Egyptians.
- ✚ Hashem tells Yermeyah (Jeremiah) to convey the message to the king of Bavel, (Babylon) that the time has come to attack Mitzraim and that Hashem himself will see to it that the Egyptians will be defeated and be totally at their mercy.
- ✚ Yermeyah reassures the Jewish people that Hashem has once more secured their survival and will one day soon end their golus (exile) so they can reclaim the land of Israel for themselves.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA

- ✚ The Hebrew word **בוא** BO, which means come has a numerical value of three. This hints to how many plagues are mentioned in the Parsha

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Each of the ten plagues was an event fraught with fear and peril for the Egyptians. While it can be argued that the devastation of the last plague of 'the death of the first born' produced the greatest effect in terms of sheer horror and grief, there was perhaps no plague more frightening than 'The Plague of Darkness'.

Being in the dark naturally produces a sense of insecurity and anxiety but what the Egyptians must have gone through and suffered must have been far psychologically worse; as the Torah explains, the plague of darkness lasted three days and encompassed the entire land of Egypt. This three-day darkness was nothing no one had experienced before or since. This was a thick paralyzing darkness, where people were enveloped completely, unable to move. "they did not see one another, and no-one rose from his place" (Shemot Chapter 10: verse 23).

Research has shown that there are two types of darkness, literal and metaphorical. At times of literal darkness, you cannot see a thing. Which is why the ones who composed what we read daily in the siddur decided to incorporate the theme for one of the early morning blessings thanking Hashem. "poke'ach iv'rim" ("who opens the blind eyes".) The purpose of this beracha is not just an expression of thanks towards one's physical sight. It goes deeper which brings me nicely to the second type of darkness.

'Metaphorical darkness' is when you actually do have light around you, but you do not see one another and no-one gets out of his or her place to help the other person. Alluding to a pasuk in the Torah, (Beraishis chapter 3, verse 7.) "and the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked." Rashi comments the verse is not speaking about the physical sight but rather to an intellectual one.

Proof of this comes from the end of the verse for even someone who is unfortunately blind would know if they were naked. Hence the verse must come to mean that both Adam and Chava (Eve) now understood the consequences of their actions (the sin of eating the fruit of the forbidden tree) Their eyes were truly opened. In the metaphorical sense of their mind's eye they now recognised what they had done wrong and felt ashamed.

Once again the morning beracha. "poke'ach iv'rim" becomes relevant. 'The ability to open our eyes and see things as they really are, rather than being blinded by our own selfish desires, which make us sometimes see things as we want to perceive them and not what really is.

Every Jewish Neshama (Soul) contains a spark of light. However; how you perceive and utilise this spark is dependent upon a number of factors, especially where a person lives and their surroundings. This is because our environment can change us, our light can be enveloped and hidden by the darkness around us; however, this light is always there waiting to be re-discovered so it can shine through once more.

It's not simply a matter of helping the proverbial old lady across the street, though that too has its place in the Jewish ethical agenda, but of recognising that everyone has their 'personal bag of woes' and maybe you or I might be the only person who would have the ability to help them feel better and find them that all important 'glimmering of hope'.

May Hashem help us all to come out of the Dark and lead us to the true light of redemption. Amen

