

Parshas Bo

This week's Parsha-Bo is the third Parsha of Chumash Shemos, which is numerically the value of the name. Still, more importantly, three is the number of remaining plagues due to befall Egypt in this Parsha before being released.

One of the reasons Pharaoh's heart was constantly being hardened was because Pharaoh kept being stubborn on what was required of him, to let all the Jews out, which included men, women, children, animals, and possessions. We know that the purpose of the plagues was to humble the ego of Pharaoh, as it says in posuk 3; for how long will Pharaoh refuse to be humbled?

There was no negotiation, as this would open the possibility of questioning the power of Hashem. That is even the repetition of saying that the locusts will destroy that which wasn't destroyed by the hail, is to show the calculation of everything. To ensure that we know Hashem is the driver of the events. We know the entire narratives and stories of the exodus are a model for us today. Just as "k'heref Eyin" (the blink of an eye) Hashem got the Jews out of Egypt, so will our redemption from our current golus.

There is a modern sense of redemption as well. The servants of Pharaoh turned on him during the warning of the plague of locusts. Meaning the popular vote was to let the Jews out. But Pharaoh withheld and tried to call Moshe's bluff and negotiate about what and who could leave the land. This was not in the cards. Pharaoh remained stubborn for his ego and therefore needed to have plagues until such a point that he,

of his own volition, let the Jews go. This theoretically took place only when Pharaoh's life was on the line; he was in his ivory tower and not caring about his people. He never felt the suffering and continued to make the people suffer. As soon as Pharaoh began recognizing Hashem, the plagues were removed (Vayeetar, in posuk 18, means he davened).

Hashem told Moshe to "come to Pharaoh" (as opposed to what would have seemed logical- go to Pharaoh), the first posuk of the Parsha because Hashem was there with Moshe to ensure Moshe's success. The divine providence and exactness of the purpose of the Earth must be recognized, and just as the Jews were redeemed from Egypt, we will be saved in our own time.

Ultimately the first commandment the nation received was the establishment of the calendars. The calendar is the extraordinary power we are vested in using the Torah. At this point, the Jews were established as a nation and were empowered to learn how to make days holy, which up until this point, didn't have the same meaning. Making days holy through the Torah reflects the next step in the nation's development. We are showing that even in Time and Space, which is esoteric from reality, it can be harnessed. Just as Hashem moves time and place to free the Jews, so do we harness that power and release us from the mundane, and bring G-dliness into the physical ultimately to receive our new Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem, with the revealed Torah in the time of Mashiach.

Good Shabbos