

Parshas Bo

This week, the third Parsha of Chumash Shemos (and the numerical value of the name of the Parsha) contains the final three plagues Hashem rained down on Egypt ahead of the Jews' redemption.

At the beginning of the Parsha, the posuk records a mutiny from the people against Pharoah (10:7); Pharoah puts his people in danger due to his selfish actions. He put his people in harm's way, even though he had ample warning about what needed to happen; the Jews needed to be set free.

Then, in the negotiations between Pharoah, Moshe and Aaron, the Jewish people as a currency are put into the equation. Pharoah asks who is leaving the land; Moshe answers all the people, their cattle, and children. Pharoah says, in 10:10, there is an evil (omen according to Rashi, which was called Raa) that will harm the children, so they shouldn't go for your protection. In today's environment, we see Jewish students being silenced "to protect them" instead of dealing with the enemy.

The clincher is that Pharoah wanted to hold the children back as hostages while the men went to serve Hashem. Does this sound familiar??? This happens again after the subsequent two plagues; in 10:24, Pharoah still tries to hold the animals back in his negotiations.

To that response, Moshe and Aaron removed themselves from Pharoah's presence; according to Rashi, who drove who out is unclear. After Pharoah opposes Moshe and Aaron's resolve that

all people and livestock (not a hoof remain), Pharoah remains resistant. The Posuk then tells us in 11:3 that Moshe was respected in the land of Egypt simply because they were likely supporting Moshe and Aaron's cause to stave off further destruction as a result of Pharoah's selfishness.

In posuk 4, Moshe tells Pharoah that the next plague (the 10th) was said while he was still in Pharoah's presence from the darkness because, after that, Moshe said he was leaving and never coming back.

There are a few ideas that are manifest in our modern era. There was a group in the wrong (Egypt) with a selfish leader who, because of his stubbornness, had his people punished. Then, whenever he was punished, he asked for forgiveness and tried to negotiate, even though that wasn't up for discussion. Ten chances he (Pharoah) got. Israel has time, and time again, tried to negotiate and work through deals with their adversaries, and time and time again, those negotiations were breached.

Moreover, the entire world is blaming Israel for its problems- and believing it, too. Yet, Israel, but more importantly, all Jews have one thing in their mind: we are Jewish, and this is our land, and we want peace. And if we fight back for this one vision, we are told we are too violent and indiscriminate killers. Yet our children are being held hostage, for which we must say no, this cannot stand.

The metaphorical darkness of our times is like the literal darkness that befell Egypt. Rashi explains that during that plague, Jews were punished in the dark, in order so the Egyptians wouldn't say that they were also being smitten, and this resulted

in a loss of credibility for Moshe and Hashem's demand for the release of the Jews. The punishments enacted were to clear the people of naysayers and people who would resist the departure and more.

In some ways, in our times, because of our darkness, the opposite is taking place; Jews are having a reckoning and becoming closer to Hashem and their roots because as we usher in the era of Mashiach, all Jews will be saved. There will be no Makas Choshech to punish anyone; the "darkness," so to speak, is causing more Jews to find their way and become closer to Hashem.

My point here again, like the past few Parsheos, is to show that in the Parsha, the script for our history is written in the Torah. We are ushering in the era of the exodus from this exile. This further connects to the 10 of Shevat, the day that our Rebbe was coronated as our leader. He spent every waking moment ensuring that all Jews would return to their faith and become closer to Hashem. This is happening now, in our lifetime, in a way previously unparalleled, which can only indicate one crucial thing. Mashiach is on his way, or here already, and we must be ready or open our eyes to see Him.

The time is now, our time is now. Good Shabbos