

## Parshas Bo

In this week's Parsha, Bo, we see the final three plagues brought onto Egypt and the subsequent release of the Jews from Slavery.

As mentioned in previous weeks, the first three Parsheos of Shemos are a script for our ultimate redemption. In chapter 12 of Parshas Bo, we read "Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem," the first Mitzvah the Jews were given as a newly formed nation. This Mitzvah of Kiddush Hachodesh shows us that Hashem gives us humans, physical beings, the power to bless the new months and control the calendar. This power means that our physical realm can manifest and steer spirituality. The power of establishing the calendar means that the Rabbanim can establish when Mitzvos that are defined by time can take place.

For example, the dates of the holidays are fixed in the calendar, meaning you cannot establish the holiday of Pesach on an arbitrary calendar date. It must occur at a specific time. Moshe tells Pharaoh to release the Jews for a festival. That is a holiday that signifies a particular time. Subsequently, when the Jews were freed, it coincided with the holiday we call Pesach. But until Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem and the giving of the Torah, the realms of spirituality and physicality didn't blend in the way they do after the giving of the Torah, which is how we can control even the calendar, through a process that is given to us in the Torah.

If we recall the first Rashi on Bereishis, who asked why the Torah didn't begin with this week's Parsha, i.e. starting with

Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem, except to be proof to the rest of the world that Hashem created the world, and He chose us as His nation. He gave us Israel as our homeland. Now that all the "extra" stories and incidences have taken place, it must support Rashi's point that led up to this critical juncture in the Jewish People's timeline—the point where they are the servants of Hashem who can do His Mitzvos through the Torah.

The chapters before Perek 12 in this week's Parsha are a build-up of Jewish history that prepares us for our ability to accept and receive the Torah. Now, all these years later, in our time, we still keep the Torah, and we still can extract and imbue G-dliness in all we do in our physical world. Since the revelation of Chassidus, we can gain an even deeper understanding of the purpose and what it means to be a Jew, as we are now in the era before our own "Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem," where we will be ushered into the era of Mashiach.

This buildup and events of the Torah, in the past two Parsheos, especially the details of how Pharaoh acted, reflect how not much has changed in our current world. The ego-driven politician, with ulterior motives, defines the character of most leaders; only a truly selfless leader like Moshe can save us. We can learn from what not to do or how to act to learn what to do and act like Moshe. This is a hard bargain and is still learnable through Chassidus, Torah, and Avoda. However, this learned method to remove the ego takes time and requires self-reflection and a good, intense look in the mirror to develop that within ourselves.

Even if we don't do it on a personal level,  
or it takes a lifetime, along the way,  
through acts of goodness and kindness,  
as the Lubavitch Rebbe taught, can we  
collectively uplift the world and imbue it  
with G-dliness, through the Torah, and in  
this way we will witness the ultimate  
redemption.

Good Shabbos