

Parshas Shemos

Exodus 1:8 A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph....

Antisemites believe they discovered novelty in a theory of a Jewish conspiracy, but, as old as the bible, a New king arises who did not know Joseph...

I have new insight into the definition of this. There is a simple question one may ask: how is it possible that a new king arose who didn't know Joseph if a) Joseph had been a ruler for 80 years and was pretty famous for setting up Egypt to succeed during a famine, b) if Joseph was from the ruling class, how can a new leader not know who he succeeded from, especially, since the passing of Joseph wasn't long enough for him to have been forgotten to history c) even if historians may say that a new dynasty started, he clearly (based on later verses) knew of a "Jewish Problem" and therefore would have known who their leader may have been...again it would seem odd the choice of words in the bible to exclude any previous history, as well the famine was so vast, it extended beyond the region, which means even warring or enemy kingdoms would indeed have known about Joseph's greatness.

There are explanations in the verses that say this doesn't mean literal ignorance; instead, the ruler chose "not to know," or that he was a new king, or that he made new laws in the land that ignored the previous generations. So, instead of translating this literally, a simple answer is that this new king operated differently today, paving the way for a 'new era.'

Based on the biblical narrative, that was the eventual enslavement of the Jews. Therefore, it was written this way to preempt the fact that a new epoch was abounded where life was different.

I cannot help but think how true this is today. New 'kings' (leaders) arise in positions of power (whether elected or not, but my focus is on 'Western' democracy). They are forging a 'new' path forward that doesn't seem to recognize or know the past; similarly, within the circles of social media, there arise figures who look at history, try to change the facts, and generate compelling new theories, that are lies, and just a fulfillment of their ignorance.

Take someone who decides to reimagine the Holocaust and World War 2. So clouded by hate, some people choose that the narrative must not be true because it was told to us by Jews, and in fact, the heinous acts by perpetrators of the Holocaust cannot be actual because they are so far-fetched. Or take confident leaders from democracies of the West who came out and challenged wealth accumulation from generations before, whose solution is to tax these retirees. Fundamentally, the idea seems noble, but it forgets the past and does not know it. Furthermore, it is unfounded and unreasonable to tax as a solution, as the money doesn't wind up in the hands of those who need it. Frankly, the stupidity of these leaders is that they don't learn from the past to make a better future. Everything these people are doing seems novel, but it is just a recycling of old history, which ignores past failures and sensibilities and makes it seem like they have a novel approach to solving the

crisis. Worst of all, this makes for an awful place for Jews all over the world. Because in this era, people aren't looking at Jewish history, and more annoyingly, they are choosing to ignore it.

Pharaoh also taxed and slowly burdened the people; even though there were few pesukim, the timeline covered an extended period. Through taxation and convincing the Egyptians that the Jews were bad, they devolved society to enslave the Jews. Even the Jews, who initially welcomed Moshe, got upset at him when Pharaoh turned on the people and stopped providing them with hay for their bricks. The Jews then got upset at Moshe for messing up the order of things. The Jews felt protected even because they had to labor, but Pharaoh had provided tools to accomplish their goals. One can posit that their integration into Egyptian society meant they were convinced the state sought their protection. This means the first step of Pharaoh's taxation turned labor slowly integrated into being 'normal', and the state was even good to them that to provide a certain quota, the laborers would have supplies until Moshe came along.

In addition to the subtext that can be seen here, the Torah also teaches us that when a leader comes and salvation arises, things may initially get worse before they get better. That is because the regime from which we are being saved exerts its power as a natural reaction to being threatened or requested of something reasonable.

This is apparent in our lives and in this day and age. When our salvation arises, and

we stand up for justice, it gets dark before it gets better. This means the signs all point to a better time arising, our ultimate salvation.

Furthermore, the plagues, it would seem, were also used to convince the Jews that Hashem is the ultimate. This means that when Moshe was first told at the burning bush of his mission and was given the two signs to prove to the Jews that he would be their leader, Hashem said that the Egyptians would be punished with the death of the firstborn. Then, Hashem says that the first plague of blood will be the sign to convince Pharaoh and ensure the Jews remember that they are a nation for Hashem.

The point I am trying to make is to review the pesukim of the story of Egypt from Shemos, parallel it to our generation, and learn the points that take us out of Golus. Learn what we must do to avoid integrating into Golus to such a great point that we don't even recognize the Golus around us.

We have seen that even though there is a hostage deal, it comes with great sacrifice. The Rabbanim ruled that the mitzvah of Pidyon Sheviuym trumps the holes in the agreement. But the deal is still one of Golus; it is one that empowers our enemies at the suffering of Jews. We are happy and elated at the miracle of redemption for the hostages. But the true redemption comes when the whole of us is redeemed from the Golus.

Parshas Shemos is the 13th Parsha in the Torah. 13 is the numerical value of the word Echad, which is half the value of the holy name of Hashem. In the number 13,

there is Helem, there is hidden Hashem,
that needs to become the holy name of
Hashem in a revealed way; which is the
era of Mashiach.

May we truly see the light, and may our
salvation arise so that we can be fully
redeemed from the darkness that is
Golus. Good Shabbos.