

The Torah utilizes many methods to teach us life's lessons. The first lesson is hinted to in Moshe *Rabenu's* statement to Pharaoh. He said our cattle will also go with us. The *Malbim* points out that Moshe told Pharaoh that the cattle will go willingly to be sacrificed to Hashem, just as the bullock of Eliyahu *Hanavi* went willingly to *Har*

*Hacarmel* to be slaughtered for the glory of Hashem. 'כי מִמֶּנּוּ נִקַּח לְעִבְדֵי אֶת־ה'. So Moshe was hinting, “We can derive a lesson from this how to serve Hashem by being ready to sacrifice ourselves to fulfill the will of Hashem.”

Another lesson: Why did Hashem command the Israelites to borrow items from the Egyptians? Couldn't he have given them the treasures in a manner which would not leave them in any way beholden to the Egyptians?

R' Moshe Mishlow z"l explained in a humorous vein that human nature is such that a person who owes something to someone else is careful to avoid his creditor. Therefore, to ensure that the Jews would never return to Egypt, he instructed them to borrow the valuable items from them.

A neat trick to help avoid going to somewhere you don't belong.

Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## *Hashem Wanted to Do it Himself*

*Parashat Bo* contains the last three of the Ten Plagues. Finally, Pharaoh says “Enough!” and he lets the Jews go. The commentaries ask a very simple question.: Why did it take Ten Plagues for Pharaoh to say “enough!”? Hashem certainly had the power to give one strong plague at the outset that would have immediately brought Pharaoh to his knees and forced him to order the Jewish people immediately out of the country. And yet, there were the Ten Plagues. Why were they all necessary?

More to the point, we learn about the Exodus from Egypt in these *parshiyot* at the beginning of *Sefer Shemot*, but there was also another exodus in the history of the Jewish people called the Babylonian exodus. *Klal Yisrael* were exiled from their Land and dwelled in Babel for seventy years. After seventy years, that exile also ended. How did that happen? The Navi says that this happened because King Koresh [Cyrus] of Persia was inspired by the Almighty to suddenly grant the Jewish people permission to go back to *Eress Yisrael* and rebuild the *Bet HaMikdash*. He felt that the Almighty had given him a mission to release the Jews, and have them rebuild the *Bet HaMikdash* (for which he in fact paid a large percentage of the expenses).

This could have happened in Egypt as well. Without any plagues, Pharaoh could have woken up one morning and said, “You know what? This is not right. I want to emancipate the slaves.” He could have emancipated the Jewish slaves, and instead of having a Lincoln Memorial, as there exists in Washington, D.C., we could have had a Pharaoh Memorial in Jerusalem. Why didn't the *Ribono shel Olam* do it that way?

Rav Shlomo Kluger, in his *sefer* on *Humash*, explains that the Almighty wanted it to occur the way it did. He wanted *Klal Yisrael* to realize that “I am Hashem your G-d who took you out from the Land of Egypt.” Hashem wanted it to be clear that it was not anybody else's doing. Had Pharaoh given up after one plague, or had he been inspired, like Koresh, to let the people go, then we would not have this same relationship with the *Ribono shel Olam*, because we could say, “Listen, Pharaoh turned a new leaf.”

We say at our Seder, “And if the Holy One Blessed be He would not have taken us out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would be enslaved (*me'shubadim*) to Pharaoh in Egypt.” Everyone asks the obvious question: “What does it mean we would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt? The Pharaohs are all dead. They no longer rule in Egypt! Empires come and go. It would be a historic anomaly of great proportions to think that after three thousand years, we would still be slaves to Pharaoh. The answer is that the word “*me'shubadim*” does not mean we would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. It means we would be indebted to Pharaoh.

The commentaries say that *Geulat Mitzrayim* is the paradigm for the future *Geulah*. If we want to know what it is going to look like, what it is going to feel like, what is going to happen “in the End of Days,” the exodus from Egypt is our paradigm.

Rav Pam writes, “Why is it that the Nations of the World hate us so much? Why is *Sinat Yisrael* so apparent?” He explains that we are now replicating the paradigm of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. When the future redemption will arrive, it will not be because the nations of the world will be good to us. Just as back then, the nations of the world hated us and wanted to see us destroyed, we see the same exact thing today among almost all of the present nations of the world.

Hashem wants us to clearly understand that our redemption will not come from the righteous amongst the nations. The subliminal message we should be hearing from Hashem is, “I am going to take you out of this *Galut*, and nobody else is going to help.”

Rav Pam asked, “What is the purpose of the United Nations?” Other than being a forum to bash Israel, what has it accomplished?” He cites the *Talmud* in *Abodah Zarah* [2b]: In the future time when the *Mashiah* is going to come, the nations will come and say, “We were so good to the Jews. Many bridges did we build; many roads did we pave; we built many cities. We did all this for Israel. We did this for the Jews so that they could occupy themselves with Torah. Now we are here to claim our reward.”

The Almighty will “give it to them.” He will call them out on all their lies and falsehoods. Rav Pam says that this is the purpose of the United Nations. Every debate and every vote against Israel and the Jews is recorded. In the future, when the nations will come and claim, “All we have done is for the welfare of Israel,” Hashem will take out the United Nations roll call votes, and prove to them that they are liars and fakers when they make such claims. “Liars! You did not act on behalf of My People. You hated My People!” Now is payback time. This is what will happen in the future world – just like it happened in Egypt. Not through a *Malach* and not through a *Saraf* – but only through the Holy One Blessed be He, in all His Glory. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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## *A Night of Protection*

”וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמַּשְׁחִית לָבָא אֶל־בֵּיתְכֶם לָנוּף”

"And [Hashem] will not let the Angel of Destruction enter your house to strike." (*Shemot* 12:23)

The Jews were assured by Hashem that if they put the blood from the *Pesah* sacrifice on their doorposts, the Angel of Death would stay away from their homes during the plague of the slaying of the firstborns. The mention of the angel is confusing, because we know that Hashem himself went through Egypt killing the firstborns of the Egyptians.

Statistically, in a nation of 600,000 men, plus women and children, about 20 people die each day. Hashem made an additional miracle on this night, that even those Jews who would have died of natural causes that night did not die. The Angel of Death was kept away from the Jews, in order that the Egyptians should not be able to claim that those Jews died because of the plague. (*Hazon Obadiah Haggadah*)

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## *Mind-Body Balance*

Powerful desires were instilled in the human being in order to perpetuate the species. Hunger drives a person to eat, and food provides the nutrients needed to fuel the body. The strong attraction to the opposite gender promotes behavior that yields offspring. Even the desire to accumulate wealth – greed – was created so that people would compete and create products and services to improve the human condition.

Heavenly wisdom also provided brakes to limit the speed of the human engine – in the form of intellect. Human intellect can rule over desire and emotion. Common sense, or sometimes deep analysis, can cause a person to pause and think: “Is this really