

HASTE MAKES WASTE

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

FRIDAY NIGHT:

Egypt imposed itself strongly upon the people to hasten to send them out of the land, for they said, "We are all dying." (Shemos 12:33)

I am always astounded how we can take things for granted and accept them as fact in spite of blatant contradictions to the contrary right before of our very eyes, like this posuk from this week's parshah.

We join the action after the Ninth Plague. Four-fifths of the Jewish people have died in the plague of darkness, and the remaining one-fifth is sitting down to the first Pesach Seder of Jewish history while still in Egypt. In the meantime, once bold and stubborn Egypt has been decimated and is now begging Pharaoh to not only let the Jewish people leave as they have requested but to hasten their departure, lest their continued presence bring down more Divine wrath and destroy what is left of what previously was the mightiest and proudest empire on the face of the earth.

So, I ask you, who is up and who is down? If the Jewish people, or what was left of them, represented the side of holiness and the Egyptian people the side of impurity, which had the upper hand at this time in history? Who went looking for whom in his pajamas in the middle of the night after losing his firstborn son to the tenth and final plague?

On whose account did we rush out of Egypt?

It is obvious to the posuk: the Egyptians. By the time we sat down to eat our Passover Offerings, we were in good spiritual shape. Indeed, we could have taken our time at that point: the enemy was beaten, the one without and the one within. Clearly, kedushah was calling the shots at that time.

Yet, if you ask most Jews why we had to leave Egypt so quickly, they will, undoubtedly, answer: Because the Jewish people had sunken to the forty-ninth level of spiritual impurity and had we stayed even a moment longer, we would have fallen to the fiftieth gate of spiritual impurity, the point of no return. We would have become spiritually irredeemable.

The problem is that the Torah does not say that, so who did? According to some, it came from the Brisker Rav who is said to have been quoting the great Kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the Arizal. The problem is that no one has quite been able to find such an idea anywhere in the recorded teachings of the Arizal!

It's not that the point is untrue. According to the everyone the Jewish people had been hovering around the forty-ninth level of spiritual impurity and therefore teetering on the brink of spiritual oblivion. However, that was only true up until the beginning of the First Plague, one year before the Jewish people actually left Egypt. Had G-d not interceded in history at THAT time, sending Moshe down to Egypt to get the redemption process going THEN the Jewish people would have lost it completely.

For, as the Pri Tzaddik explains, while each plague further destroyed Egypt it was also a bigger revelation of the hand of G-d, and therefore a spiritual rectification of the Jewish people at the same time. With each passing plague the Jewish people moved a few more rungs up the spiritual ladder in the direction of holiness, so that by the time the Tenth Plague came around they had been completely out of the levels of spiritual impurity, basically free of the yetzer hara - and that is why we had to leave Egypt so quickly, as the Leshem will now explain.

SHABBOS DAY:

They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not be leavened, for they were driven from Egypt for they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves. (Shemos 12:39)

The Leshem wrote:

And this is the reason why only four exiles were listed: Babylonian, Median, Greek, and Roman (Bereishis Rabbah 16:44; Vayikra Rabbah 13:15). The Egyptian exile is not mentioned, otherwise there would be five. For, Egypt was the root of them all, as the Rav (Arizal) has written (Likutei Torah, Seitzei), and it corresponded to the point of the Yud, the Keser of the K'lipos. See there and Sefer HaGilgulim (Ch. 1).

[The four letters of G-d's Ineffable Name correspond to the Ten Sefiros. The final Heh corresponds to Malchus, the Vav corresponds to the six sefiros of Chesed through Yesod, and the first Heh corresponds to Binah. The Yud itself corresponds to Chochmah, and the point of the Yud corresponds to Keser. And, just as there are ten sefiros on the side of Kedushah, there are also ten on the side of impurity - the K'lipos - represented by the varying levels of spiritual impurity.]

This is what it says in the Midrash: All the kingdoms are called Mitzrayim (Bereishis Rabbah 16:4), because she was the root of all of them and the root of all the K'lipos. Therefore, when death occurred to the firstborn, The Holy One, Blessed is He, came down Himself to show Israel that only He was redeeming them and not an angel; there is no intermediary between Him and Israel.

This is what it says:

When a person is in trouble they should not call out to Michael or Gavriel, but only to Me and I will answer. (Shochar Tov 4)

Therefore, The Holy One, Blessed is He, revealed Himself to show them that only He saves them in times of trouble, and for another reason as well: to sanctify them to Him in order to make them a holy nation. He, May His Name Be Blessed, personally uprooted the yetzer hara from them and sanctified them to Him, as it says:

Israel left the domain of the other and it was uprooted from them. They became unified through the matzah with a holy binding, which is the Malchus of Atzilus, as Rav Chaim Vital wrote in his emendation; see there.

[When Chochmah is viewed in terms of its own set of ten sefiros it is called Atzilus, and the Malchus would be its own tenth sefirah. That was the level to which they rose Seder Night when they ate the matzah as commanded by G-d.]

In Parashas Bo it says:

Israel did not leave Egypt until they broke all the ministers of that kingdom and they left its control for that of The Holy One, Blessed is He, and became bound to Him. (Zohar, Bo 40a)

[Thus, that night as they conducted the Pesach Seder in Egypt, they had already risen completely above the levels of impurity and already had become, instead, extremely holy.]

All of this happened through The Holy One, Blessed is He, Himself because of how dear Israel is to Him, as mentioned previously.

In any case, Egypt was the head of spiritual impurity and completely included the Sitra Achra. As a result, through His revelation, May His Name Be Blessed, at the time of the redemption, the Sitra Achra stood to be completely annihilated.

[Since at that time in history Egypt and the Sitra Achra were, for all intents and purposes, the same entity, spiritually-speaking, destroying the former meant destroying the latter.]

Therefore, it (evil) had to be given new strength . . .

[That is, G-d strengthened Pharaoh's heart.]

. . . so that free-will should remain, and to renew the basis of the reason for Creation.

[The world was made for free-will, and as long as free-will is necessary in Creation so too will evil need to exist in order to make choice a real possibility.]

This is really what the posuk means when it says:

. . . For they could not delay, nor had they made provisions for themselves. (Shemos 12:39)

This would seem to present a great difficulty. They seemed to be afraid of the Egyptians to the extent that they didn't even want to prepare anything for the way, and thus the commentators explain that they had to leave quickly in order to avoid descending to the fiftieth level of the Fifty

Gates of Impurity.

However, this does not seem to be correct. Just the opposite! The strength of impurity had been eliminated as a result of the revelation of the Divine Presence, as it says, "For the Children of Israel even a dog will not growl" (Shemos 11:7); He judged their gods and killed their firstborn. If so, how can it be said that impurity have any control, G-d forbid?

It is not relevant to say any of this except with respect to the end of the oppression and the beginning of the redemption. That is, had the redemption not begun at all and they had remained enslaved to Egypt, then there would not have been a rectification, G-d forbid, since they had entered the forty-ninth level of impurity, as we see in the Zohar Chadash, at the beginning of Parashas Yisro.

However, after the redemption had already commenced, from the time the plagues had begun twelve months prior . . .

(See Shemos Rabbah 4:19, and the Rashash 14; see what the GR"A says on Seder Olam, Ch. 3; see the Ramban at the end of Parashas Shemos, and the Yafes Toar on Shemos Rabbah at the end of Chapter 9.)

. . . as it says in Ediyos at the end of the second chapter: The judgment of Egypt lasted twelve months. It says the same thing in Seder Olam, Chapter Three.

[Therefore, it is conclusive: the Jewish people did not need to leave Egypt quickly after the Tenth Plague in order to avoid descending into spiritual oblivion. That danger had long ago left them.]

SEUDOS SHLISHIS:

Thus, the Leshem continues:

At that time the S"A (Sitra Achra) began to lose power and he continued to do so from that point onward, particularly from the time the actual oppression ended by Rosh Hashanah, as it says in Rosh Hashanah (11a).

[The oppression did not end even after the first few plagues had already occurred.]

In the month of Nissan, and especially on the first night of Pesach, the S"A was completely beaten and conquered to the point of extinction. If so, how can one say there was concern about the power of the fiftieth gate?

Regarding the entire matter of a fiftieth fate of impurity, it is mentioned by the Ramak in Sefer HaPardes, Sha'ar HaSha'arim (Ch. 1). However, the GR"A on Mishlei on the posuk, "All that G-d does He does so for His own sake," says that there are only forty-nine gates of impurity, not fifty. When the forty-ninth is completed then the person is destroyed from the world; see there.

Thus, when it says that had they remained slaves to Pharaoh there would have been no chance for

rectification, G-d forbid, it means that they would have been destroyed since they had entered the forty-ninth level and remained there, like was mentioned from the Zohar Chadash (Yisro). Had they completed that gate, they would have been lost, G-d forbid.

[In other words, regarding the spiritual danger the Jewish people faced, there is not much of a difference. The difference is more philosophical.]

In any case, this would mean that the Sitra Achra does not have a fiftieth level, only forty-nine complete ones, after which a person could not survive. And though it is not worth resolving this, in truth it was important to mention that according to the GR"A there isn't a fiftieth level. For, this was also made correspondingly . . .

[In other words, for everything G-d created on the side of purity He also created a counterpart on the side of impurity, but, as we shall now see, to a limit.]

. . . but only until [level] forty-nine, which are the Forty-Nine Faces of Purity and the Forty-Nine Faces of Impurity, as written about in Midrash Tehillim (12:4), and many places.

However, the fiftieth level is that of Ain Sof, as it is written in Tikunim (Tikun 22), close to the end; see there. And, there is no level of the Sitra Achra that corresponds to this, G-d forbid, as the Rav writes in Sha'ar HaK'lipos (Ch. 3).

[This is the level above Keser; Keser is the last level that impurity has that matches the side of purity. This was a side point; the Leshem now returns to the main discussion.]

MELAVE MALKAH:

On that very day that all the legions of G-d left the land of Egypt. (Shemos 12:41)

Returning to the matter, even according to the commentators who speak of a fiftieth level it is impossible to say that the reason why they could not remain in Egypt was because they would fall to the fiftieth level, G-d forbid, since on the first night of Pesach impurity had no power at all. It means just the opposite, for The Holy One, Blessed is He, emanated His holy light onto the Jewish people, as the author of the Haggadah has written, "The King of Kings was revealed to them."

Therefore, they could not remain in Egypt a moment longer lest the S"A become completely eradicated and free-will become eliminated, the purpose of Creation.

[In other words, had the Jewish people stayed longer in Egypt then evil would have been destroyed, not the Jewish people. This, in turn, would have prematurely eliminated free-will, so therefore the Jewish people were pushed out of Egypt in order to preserve free-will.]

For, Egypt was the chief of all the K'lipos and if she been destroyed then so would the S"A and yetzer hara have been destroyed completely. Free-will would no longer have existed, and for this reason they could not delay.

Thus, the posuk says, Egypt imposed itself strongly upon the people to hasten to send them out of the land, for they said, "We are all dying." (Shemos 12:33): they had to leave quickly in order that evil could still exist, so that free-will could still function and justify Creation.

[But wait a second! Isn't the point of free-will to use it until we eliminate the yetzer hara and evil from all of Creation? Why did Heaven stop the very process it waits to see mankind fulfill? The Leshem answers that question as well:]

Had the main part of the redemption been in their own merit, then the great lights would not have been removed from them, but rather they would have continued to ascend from level to level without limit.

[In other words, the only reason why G-d stepped into history and stopped the plunge towards spiritual annihilation was because of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, to whom was made the promise that a remnant of their children would always survive. Left to our own merits, we would have disappeared soon enough.]

As a result, free-will would have ended, and that would have been the will of G-d, May His Name Be Blessed, since the actions of the Jewish people themselves would have caused the eradication of the yetzer hara from the world and the sanctification of Creation in His Name, May His Name Be Blessed, as will be the case in the Yemos HaMoshiach. Then merit and demerit will no longer apply, and this is the ultimate purpose of Creation.

However, because it had not been in their merit at all, this forced the removal of the lights and the muchin . . .

[Literally, brains, but it is also the Kabbalistic term to refer to the additional light - Chochmah, Binah, and Da'as - that is drawn down into lower partzufim to complete them and bring redemption.]

. . . leaving behind only an impression . . .

[That is, some barely perceptible level of the same light.]

. . . so that they would continue in the merit of their own actions and free-will choices from that point onward. (Drushei Olam HaTohu, 2:5:2:5)

And THAT is why we left Egypt quickly.

Have a great Shabbos,
PW

Text

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