



# MENUCHAV'SIMCHA

Candle Lighting 4:33 PM

Vol. 18 Issue 12

By Rabbi Levi Berg

IN THIS  
TOGETHER

Parshas Bo

In this week's parshah, we have the final three plagues with which Hashem punished the Egyptians. The plague of locusts, darkness and death of the Firstborn. We are told that when Hashem punished the Egyptians, his punishments were from lighter to stronger. This is because he gave them a chance to do teshuvah so that there would be no need to send the stronger ones. In fact, this is true for all of us. Imagine there is someone walking and not paying attention to his surroundings. You realize that this man is heading for the edge of a cliff. First, you try to tap him to awaken him from his daze. If that doesn't work, you may tap him harder or even hit him to help him come back to his senses. If that also doesn't work, you have to tackle him to save his life. So too, Hashem tries to wake us up out of our slumber. He first sends a small mishap, hoping we will reawaken ourselves. If we don't get the hint, He may send a more tragic event and even eventually a holocaust to help us from "falling off the cliff." If we would inspire ourselves by the small mishap, there would be no need for the stricter punishment. The same is true with how Hashem dealt with the Egyptians.

Based on this we can ask ourselves about the plague of darkness, which seems out of order. Yes, it was probably very uncomfortable not to be able to see or move, but it seems to pale in comparison to a lion and tiger attacking you, or a hailstorm the size of tennis balls. So why was the plague of darkness considered the second to worst, when it seems a pretty light plague? The answer I heard is a tremendous lesson for us. The plague of darkness had in it an aspect that no other plague had. This was that everyone suffered alone! Since each person could not see or move, they suffered alone. We all know the feeling of getting in trouble, but if there is someone else who got into trouble as well the pain is so much less. Misery indeed loves company.

The Sefer Hachinuch tries to give a reason behind the mitzvos we do, to give us a way to connect to them. He gives a reason for the mitzvah for blowing the shofar on the Yovel (Jubilee) year. The Halacha is that every 50th year is the year of

Yovel and all servants go free and all pieces of land go back to their original owner. The Torah gives us a special mitzvah to blow the shofar at the start of this Yovel year. Explains the Chinuch imagine how hard this year of Yovel was for an owner of servants or land. He spent 50 years working really hard to obtain all these possessions and he now sees all his hard work disappear before his very eyes. Hashem wanted to make it easier to fulfill this mitzvah, so he gave a mitzvah to blow shofar. This shofar blast reminded a person that he wasn't doing this alone. Every person in the Jewish nation had the same commandment. Knowing they too would be letting go of their possessions made it easier for him. He then says a powerful line; צרות רבים חצי נחמה - A public tragedy is half the comfort!

This applies to every single one of us because we unfortunately know people going through hardships. We all have in our power to give him tremendous comfort. Through being there for him, suffering together with him, we are not letting him suffer alone. Just like we find by the plagues, a really difficult one together with others doesn't compare to a light one suffered alone! We must ask ourselves how can I be there for him? How can I show him that I care about him, that he isn't going through this alone? Yes, this may be against our nature. Our tendency is to distance ourselves from pain. However, we must push ourselves to go above this and think and feel each other's pain.



Continue on the other side

## SAGE ADVICE

### WORDS OF WISDOM FROM OUR SAGES

BY RABBI AVRAHAM PENDRAK

## AT ALL COSTS

“וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה וְלֵאמֹר  
לֵילָה וַיֹּאמֶר קוּמוּ צְאוּ  
מִתּוֹךְ עַמִּי...”

“AND HE [PHARAOH] CALLED  
TO MOSHE AND AHARON AT  
NIGHT AND SAID, “RISE UP, GO  
OUT FROM AMONG MY  
PEOPLE...””

(BO 12:31)

Pharaoh had said several times previously, when under the stress of a plague, that he would let the Jewish people leave Egypt, only to go back on his word as he was granted a reprieve. In light of this, why didn't Moshe and Aharon heed Pharaoh's command and leave Egypt immediately (during the night), before Pharaoh was able to rescind his permission? Moshe and Aharon were fulfilling what the Jewish people had been commanded (Bo 12:22) that nobody should leave their house until the morning. We see here that even for the purpose of saving the entire nation, they would not override a negative commandment. This is an example for all future Jewish leadership.

[R' Yaakov Kamenetsky]

# MENUCHAV'SIMCHA

In the year 1895, there was a raging fire in the city of Brisk. Many people lost their homes and possessions. Rav Chaim Soloveitchick devoted all his energy, day and night, to help those people. In that time when the people still didn't have homes, Rav Chaim didn't sleep in his house. Rather he would sleep in a side room of the Shul, on the floor. His family and friends wondered why he did this. His house was intact and the fire didn't harm his home. So what was his reason? Rav Chaim answered: "I am not able to sleep in a bed when so many people don't have a roof over their heads."

Rav Pam had the custom of meeting with people after Shacharis to discuss whatever they wanted to discuss. His wife would say over after hearing all the hardships his holy brothers were going through, he couldn't eat breakfast for the first hour he came home. He was so pained, he couldn't eat.

Rabbi Frand says the story that a group of not yet affiliated wealthy Jews came to visit Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel (the late Rosh Yeshivah of the Mir in Yerushalayim). He told them he wouldn't keep them long and asked them a question. Who can tell me the lesson of the Holocaust? One man responded, "We will never forget." Another

responded, "We will never, ever again be victims or bystanders." Then Rav Nosson Tzvi gave his own answer. He explained that during the Holocaust, thousands of Jews were crammed into cattle cars in the freezing cold, with no lights and no bathrooms. When they reached the camp, mothers were separated from daughters, and fathers from sons. As they went to the place where they would sleep, only one out of six was given a blanket. When the one person went to bed, he had to make a decision whether he was going to pull the blanket to himself, or push it to the other five people. Rav Nosson Tzvi continued, "It was during this defining moment that we learned the power of human spirit, because they pushed the blanket to the five other people." Rav Nosson Tzvi then stood up and said, "Take your blanket, take it back to America and push it to five other people!" May we all be blessed to feel for others and be there for them in their suffering and make our Father in Heaven truly proud! Good Shabbos!

The Philadelphia Community Kollel would like to express a deep appreciation to Evan Aidman for editing the **Menucha Vesimcha** each week

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## PARSHAS

**BO**

### SHABBOS ZEMANIM

#### Friday, January 7

4:33 pm - Candle Lighting

4:36 pm - Mincha/Maariv

4:51 pm - Shkiya/Sunset

#### Shabbos, January 8

8:15 am - Shacharis

9:09/9:45 am - Latest Krias Shema

4:12 pm - Mincha

4:52 pm - Shkiya/Sunset

5:47 pm - Maariv

6:04 pm - 72 minutes

**6:30 pm - Masmid Program**

7:30 pm - Rabbi Reisman