



Parashat Bo - #314

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On the Parashah...

The Ten Plagues

[Ha-Rav's Commentary on the Haggadah]

Question: Couldn't Hashem have redeemed the Nation of Israel with one plague?

Answer: Of course! Our Sages already asked: Why was the world created with ten utterances? Couldn't Hashem have created it with one (Avot 5:1)? Our world is not an expression of the divine ability to act in a single moment, but to act in stages. The Ramchal – Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato - wrote that each day the world gets closer to its perfection. All the worlds that were created previously were made piecemeal, but they all could be exalted. Our world was not created with the full power of the Master of the Universe. Hashem limited His power and revealed Himself in the way in which humans work: little by little, according to a divine plan which continues to be actualized over time. It is not true that the Master of the Universe needed to bring plague after plague because of the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart. On the contrary, the Blessed One caused the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart in order to bring the plagues upon him. "For I have made his heart and the heart of his servants heavy so that I can put My signs in his midst, and so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your grandsons" (Shemot 10:1-2). In our days as well, do not despair for the Redemption which is progressing slowly, slowly. This is not divine weakness – G-d forbid, but the greatest strength for the sake of increasing the sanctification of Hashem's Name.

Rav Aviner on...

What's Going to Be with Our Camp?

[Be-Ahava U-Be-Emunah – Vaera 5774 – translated by R. Blumberg]

What's going to be with our camp? That's a good question.

But another question precedes it. "How do you define 'our camp'?"

And still another question precedes that one: Who says it is permissible in the first place for "our camp" to exist as separate from other camps?

Search the whole Torah – Oral and Written – and you will not find that the Master-of-the-Universe ever divided up the world into groups and streams, parties and sectors, sects and constituencies. Rather, the Jewish People are one.

Certainly there are differences between different individuals. Some are more strict regarding some Mitzvot. Others are stricter regarding others. Some fulfill all the Mitzvot. Others are weak in all the Mitzvot. Certainly we can distinguish between different individuals. Yet we have never seen that this justifies dividing people into separate communities.

Unfortunately, this occurred during the Second Temple Period, resulting in the Temple's destruction, as Ha-Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, the Netziv, writes in the introduction to his Torah commentary, Ha-amek Davar.

Therefore, dividing ourselves into different camps is forbidden as a form of groundless hatred. There is hatred that is not groundless, as when someone insults or harms his fellow man, causing him to hate him. I shall not get into whether such hatred is permissible or not, and whether it might be avoidable, but all the same it is not groundless.

Groundless hatred means hating someone who is not similar to me and does not belong to my group. It means saying, "My group has all the truth and all the justice and all the integrity, whereas the other group has all the evil and all the corruption." As the philosopher Kant said, "It is dangerous to say 'We', for that leads us to say as well 'They'."

Indeed, not only is groundless hatred forbidden, it is dangerous. Whoever draws dividing lines within the Nation ignores a grave danger. We cannot allow ourselves this luxury in our day. When all is said and done, we have 300 million enemies from without and several more million from within, plus another billion Christians and a billion Muslims offering them assistance. At a time like this, we must be united.

For us to be divided is foolish and suicidal. As Benjamin Franklin said during the American War of Independence against the British, "We must all hang together, or we will certainly all hang next to each another..."

Not only is it dangerous, it's not even true. This division between groups does not exist in reality. It is imaginary. For example, one of the groups is called "National Religious", but Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook never used that term, nor did his son, Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah. Quite the contrary, Rav Kook the father, in his work Orot, at the end of Orot HaTehiya, states that the division between the religious and the nationalists is imaginary.

If so, in light of all this, who is "our camp"? Our camp is the Jewish People! The British or the French are not our camp. Our camp is the Jewish People.

We have got to get used to this. The Jewish People are eclectic, but they are the Jewish People.

"Who is like Your people, O Israel, one Nation in the Land" (Shmuel 2 7:23).

Truth or Superstition?

Talit – Segulah for a Match

Q: Is it true that if a single woman buys a Talit (for her future 'intended') it is a Segulah for finding a match?

A: This has absolutely no source (And so too Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi in Shut Doresh Tzion: It is not a Segulah or even a hint of a Segulah).

Sleeping without Socks

Q: I heard that it is forbidden to sleep wears socks. But I am cold!

A: There is no such law. On the contrary, it is more modest (The Mishnah Berurah 2:1 writes that one should wear socks even under the blanket. But he is discussing countries where people wear socks. In the State of Israel, many go without socks, even well-respected people. A person may therefore sleep without socks. It all depends on location and time. The Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim #91, writes that one is **obligated** to pray barefoot, since in Arab countries one enters to visit the king barefoot, as a sign of subservience. And see Mishnah Berurah ibid. #13. And the Aruch Ha-Shulchan ibid. #1 writes that we are not particular regarding covering feet).

Segulah for Shalom Bayit

Q: Is there a good Segulah for Shalom Bayit?

A: Help your wife wash dishes (Satmar Chasidim end Shabbat very late due to a long Seudat Shelishit and the Rebbe's talk. Once, on a Saturday night, the Satmar Rebbe saw that one of his Chasidim was the last one in the Beit Midrash and was folding his Talit with great precision. The Rebbe asked him what he was doing. The Chasid said that he saw in various books that care in folding one's Talit is a Segulah for Shalom Bayit. The Rebbe responded: A better Segulah is to go home and help your wife wash dishes. And others say this incident in the name of Ha-Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, Rosh Yeshivat Mir. The book "U-Piryo Matok - Bereshit" of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, p. 140).

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