

Tell a story

Parsha Bo 2023-01-28

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Comments

The Parsha starts out with the last three plagues that G-d sends to the Egyptians and Pharaoh. These were locusts, darkness, and the death of the firstborn. The Parsha spends some time covering the logistics of what happened with these three plagues, but I have a different aspect I want to focus on in this week's Parsha. I will briefly explain what these plagues did to the Egyptians, the locusts stopped their crops from growing and they had no food. There was complete darkness where the Egyptians lived, that darkness however did not touch the Jews. The last plague, the death of the firstborn caused a great deal of harm to the Egyptians, only this time Pharaoh too suffered. His firstborn son died and that was the last straw for Pharaoh, he finally told the Jews to leave.

This week's Parsha never seems to fall on the holiday of Passover, when so many Jews for generations have sat around asking each other the number one question. Why was it so important, why did the Children of Israel feel the need to be in such a rush to run away from Egypt when Pharaoh finally gave the OKAY? It's an important question because the Jews back then didn't wait for the dough to rise and left right away. So to this day, Jews don't eat unleavened bread during the week of Passover. I found an interesting answer to this that I never thought of before. There is a suggestion from a CHABAD website that says, G-d wanted the Jews to leave right away before they would change their mind. G-d knew that some time would pass and the Children of Israel (those who did leave Egypt) would want to come back to Egypt. Meaning they would want to go through the same turmoil they had undergone for so many years.

To leave Egypt was really hard on the Jews back then, because the next part of their lives would be led into the unknown. There would be a lot of unanswered questions for a long time. There is an old Yiddish proverb, "Better the devil". It meant that the Jewish people back then had a great leap of faith to have left Egypt in the first place and wander through the wilderness. They went from being slaves in Egypt, they left the infrastructure of a country they had grown quite used to. Leaving Egypt they didn't know what to expect, they were going to have new experiences and they were not ready for that. Before leaving Egypt, they remembered having a roof over their heads and being in the wilderness they did not believe there would be shelter, food, or water.

A lot of the Jewish people back then had grown pretty complacent in Egypt, they were used to their surroundings and they were scared of giving up everything they had once known. The Jewish people feared going into the unknown, this new world would give them challenges and new opportunities. The Parsha gives us another Yiddish proverb that expresses the idea, may we never get used to what we can get used to. This means as time goes by, human beings get weary and worn down, and everything that had once been intolerable will become acceptable to us. This is teaching Jews now we have all experienced missed opportunities in our lives, like a house we didn't buy when we had the chance to and etc.

The Parsha uses one last proverb, a person who hesitates is surely lost, what we learn is we need to take advantage of many opportunities that are available to us now! Maybe these opportunities were not available in the past, but by studying Torah, we are offering so much. Studying Torah will help make up for the many lost opportunities from before.