

פרשת בא  
PORTION OF BO

# How Do You Approach the Abyss of Evil?

“Come (with me) to Pharaoh” (*Sh'mos* 10:1)

On the first Shabbos in the month of Sh'vat, we almost always read how G-d says to Moshe “*Bo el Paroh*” 'let's go to Pharaoh together.' (*Sh'mos* 10:1) The Zohar Hakadosh says (Zohar *Bo* 34b) that since Moshe Rabbeinu was afraid to go to Pharaoh, G-d said to Moshe, “*Bo*,” come with me, I'm going with you. And here you really have to open your hearts.

Why is there a division between the first seven plagues which are in the portion of *Va'era*, and the last three plagues which are in *Bo*? The Ishbitzer says the first seven plagues were to fix the consciousness of *Yidden*, to get their consciousness out from Egypt. The last three plagues are deeper than consciousness, [they are] dealing with the infinite, with the sub-consciousness. It is only our consciousness that is finite, but our sub-consciousness, the inside, has no limits.

And here I want you to know the deepest depths. It's not that Moshe Rabbeinu was afraid that Pharaoh would teach him how to be bad, that is not the point. Moshe simply didn't want to ever see such utter darkness. So when G-d says, “I am going with you,” G-d is letting Moshe know, “You are about to approach bottomless evil which exists in the world,” but friends, this was only because G-d was about to reveal endless goodness which exists in the world. You cannot be confronted with absolute bottomless evil and just say a little cute torah'le to get you out. Unless you are aware that something exists in the world to counter attack this bottomless evil, it is absolute destruction, *mamesh* destruction.

What is a sign of bottomless evil? Bottomless evil is the way our worst enemies treat children. You can be sick for years when hearing stories of how the Germans treated babies. *Mamesh*, the abyss of evil. Consciously they still wanted to pretend they were human beings, but if you would x-ray their unconsciousness, you would see they were not human.

Friends, let me ask you. How old were children in Egypt when they had to work? Most probably from the age of three they had to work day and night until they *nebech* died from the whipping and the hard labor. But here comes Pharaoh with an official new statement – he loves children. Khrushchev and Stalin were always taking pictures with children. *Yimach sh'mo*, I don't want to mention his name. In Germany, whenever he was in public, he was taking pictures with children.

This is when Moshe Rabbeinu gets a taste of the bottomless evil in the world, when Pharaoh says with utmost cruelty, “You can go, but leave me the children, your babies stay here.” Do you know what that means? Pharaoh was trying to make it even more

cruel than all that was before because as bad it was in Egypt – there was still a little bit of family life. The most evil thing in the world is to separate parents from children.

Now remember, this month of Sh'vat belongs to the tribe of Asher. By Asher it says, *Baruch mibanim Asher*. Asher is the one who is closest to his children. From all twelve tribes, there was nobody who knew so much about endless goodness like Asher. When the holy tribes came back from Egypt and they had to tell Ya'akov Avinu that Yosef HaTzadik was alive, but they were afraid he was going to have a heart attack when hearing that after twenty-two years of missing his child – his child is still alive – so they decided to choose Asher's little girl Serach, she would know how to tell this to Ya'akov Avinu. She was sitting by Yaakov, singing away a little song. Ya'akov asked her "What are you singing?" Serach said, "I'm just singing to myself, making up some songs." In the middle of one of her songs she began chanting, "Oh, Yosef is alive, oh, Yosef is alive." Since Serach was the one who brought Ya'akov Avinu the news that Yosef is still alive, she gave Ya'akov Avinu back his soul (*Sefer Hayashar, Vayigash 14: Midrash Hagadol, Vayigash 45:26*). According to our tradition, she lives forever (*Kalla Rabbasi 3:23*). Serach was the daughter of Asher, who was the closest to his children. Nobody was an expert on closeness between parents and children like Asher.

You see what it is, we don't just need to get out of Egypt or out of Western culture. We need to get out of the absolute corruption of Western culture. It's the deepest corruption there is. The way they teach children about life, about G-d, and about themselves is absolute corruption. What needs to happen for the world to realize that our whole school system is terrible? We are in Egypt, we are completely drowning in tree of knowledge culture, it's all tree of knowledge. You might be the best person in the world, but according to our system, if you are not a good student, you are a failure. But this disgusting kid who knows that one and one is two, he might be hitting everyone, he might have disgusting language, but he is considered a success. Corruption. This is a taste of the abyss of evil. When you are ready to go and taste this darkness, G-d says "I'm coming with you."

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By the eighth plague, something new began. G-d usually told Moshe what type of plague was about come down, but here G-d didn't really tell him what to expect. Still, Moshe Rabbeinu knew it was locusts. How so? Locusts have no king. All animals have a king, all animals have a leader. Bees have a leader, wolves have a leader. But locusts have no leaders, and yet they love each other and live in harmony.

After the seventh plague, suddenly G-d says to Moshe, "Go to Pharaoh." So the Ishbitzer says, Moshe Rabbeinu knew it's locusts because they are one, they completely have G-d's oneness, and Pharaoh is completely anti-G-d's oneness. Not only anti-good, he is against G-d, against the oneness of G-d.

What happened after that? *Makas choshech*, the plague of darkness. Moshe Rabbeinu didn't go to Pharaoh to tell him there will be darkness because *gevult*, are you dark! The

plague of darkness was not something new. “*U-l'chol b'nei Yisroel haya ohr b'moshvosam*” 'And for all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings.' (Sh'mos 10:23) By us *Yidden* there was light, and they were finally able to see how dark Pharaoh is.

I want you to know something so deep. When G-d revealed to Moshe the depth of the darkness of Pharaoh, G-d also revealed to Moshe the depths of the oneness and the beauty of us *Yidden*.

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Before this seventh plague, Pharaoh was ready to let us go, as long as we leave the children in Egypt. The adults can go, but children have to stay. Just think of the cruelty. We adults could have made it out after seven plagues, but our holy sages make it very clear that the last three plagues were brought down just in order to get our children out of Egypt.

I want you to know something so deep and so far-reaching.

Why is the last plague the killing of the first born? On a very simple level, it's because Pharaoh was a first born and he was frightened for himself, but it's got to be more than that. The question is, when you bring your first-born to the world, where does it touch you? Where do your children reach in you? Does the awesome privilege of being a parent reach the absolute highest place of your being?

I want you to open your hearts. With each plague G-d's light was shining deeper; each plague was simply a revelation. The first seven plagues were reaching our consciousness, cleaning our consciousness from slavery. The last three cleansed our beyond consciousness, our super-consciousness. The deepest question by G-d is do your children reach your deepest sub-consciousness? How much are you a father or a mother in your sub-consciousness?

One of the saddest experiences I had was in the late '60s in San Francisco. One of my friends thought he was getting very spiritually high through some drugs. One morning, he came over to me and said, “While I will be spiritually high later today, I want you to ask me certain questions.” He wrote me down twelve questions that he wanted me to ask him while he was under the experience. He was a very high person, but obviously not the highest. He had seven children. I asked him, “Can you name one of your seven children?” For the life of him he couldn't remember the name of one of his children. Do you know what that means? His consciousness was so off that it never reached his unconsciousness. Inside he was empty.

Now listen to me, my beautiful friends, this is unbelievably beautiful. We have four books of Moses. In the fifth book, Moshe Rabbeinu began retelling us the whole Torah, and when does this happen? On Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat. Sh'vat is the month of children; this Shabbos is the final exodus out of Egypt, and Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat is when Moshe

Rabbeinu is beginning to explain the Torah. Now listen to the deepest depths. On what level was Moshe beginning to explain the Torah to us? "*Arbei*" (locusts) is the eighth plague. "*Arbei*" simply means 'more'. Do you know what it means to explain the Torah? Not that we didn't know it before, but on the level of "*arbei*" – on the level of 'more'. If I get a business letter, I'll read the letter once. When I get a letter from somebody I love, I'll read the letter twice. If I get a letter from someone I love the most, I can't stop reading it. Each time I read the letter, it becomes deeper. It's not 'more' on a conscious level because all it says [are] the same words, but inside it's becoming more and more deep.