

KOLLEL AGUDATH ACHIM

Rosh Kollel

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רחוב דסקין 5

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My father in law is currently recuperating at home. Please daven for Aharon ben Yita to have a complete recovery..

Moshe Teller

PARASHAT BO- 2023

פְּרָשַׁת בֹּא - 5783

In Parashat Va'eira we read about the great compassion of GD even as He administered the punishment to the Egyptian people. According to Midrash Tanchuma, before sending down the powerful plague of hail –Barad, which was lethal and it actually killed those that it struck, as opposed to the previous plagues that merely were annoying and a nuisance. So GD warned Par'oh and his people to remain indoors. Any man or beast that is found in the field the hail will fall upon them, and they will die (9:19). That is precisely what happened. Par'oh reasoned, that when an enemy attacks they try to kill as many as possible, yet the GD of these Jewish people actually warned us to prevent the death of many. This prompted Par'oh to express "I have sinned this time, GD is the righteous one and I and my people are the guilty ones"(9:27)

In our parasha, BO, we find that this compassionate feeling for human life trickled down to the very core of the Jewish people. The Netziv, (R' Naftalin Tzvi Yehdah Berlin, 1816-1893) makes a remarkable comment on pasuk 11:2. HaShem tells Moshe, let our people request vessels of silver and gold from the Egyptians and they will gladly give it to them, for the Jewish nation found favor in the eyes of Egypt. Why? The Netziv suggests that the plague of Choshech (darkness) did not affect the Jewish People living in Goshen. What did the Jews do? Empathizing with their Egyptian neighbors who were afraid to move for three days, they brought them food and drink! Indeed, the terrible servitude in Egypt had taught the Jewish People the supreme virtue of compassion, a moral value that would become a permanent feature of their ethical DNA. As a matter of fact, the Rambam rules, that a Jew who demonstrates characteristic traits of brutality and lacks compassion, should be checked into his past, to determine if he is indeed Jewish.

At the end of WW2, after the Concentration camps were liberated by United States army, this remarkable episode is recorded in the archives of Yad VeShem. The American Officer, seeing the atrocities and brutality of German Nazis against the Jewish inmates who were barely alive ordered that the Germans be handed over into the hands of the freed inmates. He imagined they would give vent to their pent up hatred and beat the Nazis with the sticks and clubs provided to them. But lo and behold, the Bluzhiver Rebbe, who was one of the survivors told the people not to engage in brutality but to behave as proud human Jews. We will testify against them but let the Americans judge and punish them. We are not killers, we are not murderers.

Those who survived will testify that their survival depended upon the help and encouragement they received and gave to one another. They learned that stepping out of yourself and embracing another makes you a bigger person. In the Torah we find that after the ninth plague, Moshe was seen as a great man in the eyes of Egypt and Israel. The Meshech Chachma explains (11:3) that this greatness was a consequence not upon his ability to perform miracles, but rather because of his extraordinary ethical attributes, his genuine righteousness that radiated from his personality. The message here is quite clear. We can all partake of this greatness, the moment we show that we really care about others, those close to us whom we should never take for granted as well as "the stranger in our midst".

Shabbat shalom, from **Yerushalayim** , Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

לבנת הספר

THE
Great News!

Rabbi Ziegler is publishing a new sefer entitled
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