

Kriyat HaTorah Companion

Every Week. Every Aliya. A Question (or two)

Parshat Bo

February 2017 | Shevat 5777
Shabbat Shalom

created by

Rabbi Yechiel Shaffer

Assistant Rabbi, Ohab Zedek, NY
please let us know if you enjoyed the KT
Companion, or to receive it in your inbox
each week: KTCompanion@ozny.org

Twitter: @yechields or #KTC

Aliya 1 | 10:1-11

Verse **10:5-6** describe the upcoming plague of Locust. In a plague that is not too difficult to imagine, and somewhat of a natural occurrence, Moshe describes how this plague will differ from your standard swarm of locusts. **Why does verse 5 seem to include, within context of the plague, that the entire land will be covered? It will be so intense that you will not see the color of the earth (see Rashi)?**

The **Kli Yakar** suggests that when one cannot see what one is eating, it is much more difficult to become satiated.

This plague was particularly fierce in that the locusts will never become satiated. It is for this reason that verse **6** states that once the locust have consumed all that is found outside, they will turn to the content of the Egyptian's homes. It is for this reason that Paroah 'hurries' to intervene before they do attack homes (See verse **10:16**). It is worth noting that the Locusts were going to destroy anything that had grown after the plague of Hail (see **Chizkuni, Rashbam**).

Aliya 2 | 10:12-23

Examine verse **10:19** in which G-d concludes the plague of locust. In an unusual description of events, the Torah tells us that a strong wind blew all the Locusts to the Sea of Reeds and not a single one was left in Egypt.

Why does the Torah offer us this detailed description of the conclusion of this plague?

The Torah goes to great lengths to explain a couple of realities about the plague of Locust. Firstly, according to the **Rashbam** the reason the verse states that the 'winds shifted', was because just as the wind brought the locust in, it reversed its course and took the locust out. **Rabbeinu Bahya** points out that this illustrates the power of the prayers of Moshe. Examine verse **10:18** in which Moshe prays from the removal of the locusts. Had the locusts not been taken far away, they would have returned on their own volition to Egypt. In order that Moshe's prayer be fulfilled, and not a single Locust be found in Egypt, they were taken far away.

Aliya 3 | 10:24-11:3

At the beginning of this Aliya, we are told that Paroah calls out to Moshe (see verse **10:24**). **Why does he only call to Moshe when in the past he called out to both Moshe & Aharon?** The **Kli Yakar** reminds us of the time when Moshe was born & his mother saw that he was 'good' (see verse **2:2**). **Rashi** quoting the **Talmud Sotah 12a** states that that same language of goodness was used to describe the creation of light, and thus one can conclude that when Moshe was born the room was filled with light. It is appropriate that Paroah called to Moshe to get rid of the plague of darkness, since his very presence lit up a room. This perhaps explains Paroah's later reaction to Moshe's refusal of his offer. The **Ohr Hachaim** points out that this conversation took place after the darkness dissipated, and thus was not in the midst of a plague. This is perhaps why Paroah was less desperate for Moshe's positive response.

Aliya 4 | 11:4-12:20

See verses **11:10**. While this verse is an appropriate conclusion to the plagues, it feel repetitive. **Why was this verse included in the Torah and what new does it offer to the story of the Exodus?**

Rashi comments that this final verse of **chapter 11** cannot be understood without studying the first verse in **chapter 12**. **Rashi's** concern is that Aharon was also mentioned as receiver of the new law in **12:1**. **Rashi** states that the final verse of **chapter 11** teaches us that Aharon was worthy of great honor for standing by Moshe during the tough times in the palace of Paroah. It is for this reason Aharon is included in receiving instructions for the first Mitzvah given to the new Jewish nation. The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that verse **11:10** teaches us that up until the last moments Paroah had no interest in freeing his slaves. The Jewish people would go free in spite of Paroah hard heart. The **Ramban** points out that this verse delineates between the first 9 plagues in which Moshe & Aharon played a role and the 10th in which they played no role.

Aliya 5 | 12:21-28

In verse **12:27** we are instructed regarding the reason behind the sacrificing of the Paschal lamb. It is the Paschal sacrifice because G-d passed over the homes of the Jewish people and spared them from the final plague. The **Sforno** is confused by the timing of this sacrifice. **Wouldn't it have made more sense for the sacrifice be brought after G-d had 'passed over' their homes?** It seems like the Jewish people were commemorating an act that was yet to take place! The **Chizkuni** points out that the concluding prostrations of the Jewish people, after they received these instructions indicated an acceptance of the yolk of Heaven. It is through their act of prostration the Jewish people expressed their acceptance of being '*Avdei HaShem*'. In combining the **Sforno's** question with the **Chizkuni's** comment, it is worth noting that while the events had not occurred yet, the Jewish people were willing to commemorate what will occur in the future b/c of their belief in G-d.

Aliya 6 | 12:29-51

The Torah prominently features the fact that upon their emancipation all the Jewish people had to eat was unleavened bread.

Why is the speed with which they left (recorded in 12:39) and thus their inability to let the dough rise such a critical component that it be recorded explicitly in the Torah?

R' Samson Raphael Hirsch makes the case that the entire Exodus hinges upon the speed with which they had to leave. Since we were just informed that the Jewish people consisted of 600,000 able bodied men (see **12:37**) had they left at their own pace, the world and their descendants would have said that they were in charge of their own destiny, the Jewish people had rebelled against their oppressors and they forced their own freedom.

Even in the midst of their emancipation they were receiving instructions from their oppressors to flee quickly, with no time to pack sandwiches, thus illustrating that this was Divine intervention. Only G-d could make the Egyptian oppressors into emancipators.

Aliya 7 | 13:1-16

In verse **13:4** the Torah delineates in which month we were released from bondage in Egypt.

Why does the Torah now record this detail?

Rashi suggests that Moshe was informing the Jewish people that G-d we kind in releasing them during pleasant weather, a perfect time to become wanderers seeking out a new homeland. The **Ibn Ezra** suggests that the month of Nissan is the first of the months in the calendar year and therefore shares a lot in common with the subject matter of the surrounding verses, the redemption of the first born. This leads us to believe that perhaps just as the month of Nissan was redeemed through the great act of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* so to we are instructed to redeem our first born. The **Sforno** echoes this idea, that the month of Nissan is a time of rejuvenation.

Receive KTC in your inbox: KTCompanion@ozny.org

For more Divrei Torah visit www.lev-avos.com or www.thoughts4.com