

Dvar Torah for Parshat Bo

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January 20, 2010

Based on Likutey Moharan I, Lesson #54

“Moshe said, ‘God said, “About midnight I will make Myself known in Egypt and every firstborn in Egypt will die”...’” (Exodus 11:4–5).

“At midnight I awake to thank You...” (Psalms 119:62).

Did David know and Moshe not know [when midnight was]?! David had a harp hanging over his bed. When midnight came, the North Wind would blow, and the harp played by itself (Berakhot 3b).

At midnight, sacred music, descended from David’s harp, is triggered.

This is the music that extracts the good spirit from the bad. This is the time [of day] to strengthen oneself in service of God, to awake and immerse oneself in Divine worship, to pour out one’s heart to God...Understand well the practical application of these words.

(Lesson #54 [end])

Let’s face it. When the Redemption, the one we Jews have been waiting for for close to two thousand (count ’em–2000!) years, finally comes, the “bad guys,” people whose attitudes and behavior are antithetical to what redemption and the Redemption Era are all about, are going to get hurt. They will have to be “removed.”

This is not something that has to happen. It is quite avoidable.

People and peoples can get with the program so that they can be part of the Redemption Era. Pharaoh got hit real bad because he wouldn’t take a hint and get the message to rehabilitate himself. He had opportunities to soften his heart

and change for the better, but he waffled and refused so often that ultimately he couldn't.

When Pharaoh didn't change, neither did his people. As a result, they died—but not from loss of life. They died from too much life. When God revealed Himself, they didn't have the vessels to hold the Divine life-force. They shattered.

Rebbe Nachman teaches that God is constantly trying to get us to soften our hearts. Whatever your situation, everything in your life, even the seemingly random, is a message to “let My people go so they may serve Me” (Exodus 9:1). Admittedly, says Rebbe Nachman, the ordinary folk cannot perceive from every detail of life every hint.

But we ready ourselves to hear and accept the message through simple

activities: sleeping, tzitzit and tefillin, Torah study (including reading the Shema), prayer and business. Each, in its way, prepares a person to understand what s/he needs to understand to become a better Jew.

Rebbe Nachman suggests another way to prepare: wake at midnight. By waking in the still of night to devote time to hitbodedut, Torah study and prayer, one will remember life's true purpose. The more one's memory is sensitized to that purpose, the more one is prepared to receive the life-force of the Redemption Era, may it come swiftly and soon, in our lifetime. Amen

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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