

The Torah Sparks

SHABBOS COMPANION

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Egypt gets "plagued" with the final 3 (out of 10) Makkos - locusts, darkness, and the death of the firstborn. The Jewish people are given their very first Mitzvah as a nation, the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh. Also, many Pesach-related Mitzvos are given to the Jewish people as well. We are commanded to always remember the departure from Egypt; Yetzias Mitzrayim serves as one of the central themes of Judaism.

QUICK VORT

On the words *ושמרתם את המצות* - *and you shall guard the Matzos* (12:17), Rashi brings the Mechilta which teaches us that the word Matzos (unleavened bread) can also refer to Mitzvos (commandments)!

Just like Matzah must not be allowed to ferment, so too our Mitzvos should be performed right away, and not be allowed to ferment!

This level of זריזות (alacrity) to perform Mitzvos right away stems from being happy and excited with one's *yiddishkeit*.

Accordingly, it's quite possible that the word שמר (guard) from the phrase *ושמרתם את המצות* can be understood as "excitement and anticipation" - just like by Yaakov Avinu where the Torah said: *ואביו שמר את הדבר* - *and Yosef's father anticipated the matter*.

By answering the call of the Mitzvos right away - on the first ring! - we are showing our excitement for our *yiddishkeit*.

"JEWISH TEXTS AND TIMES ARE NOT COLOUR-CODED BUT MUSIC-CODED. THE MAP OF HOLY WORDS IS WRITTEN IN MELODIES AND SONGS."
(RABBI J. SACKS ZT'L)

PARSHAH STATS

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 106 | 1655 | 6149 | 20 |
| Pesukim | Words | Letters | Mitzvos |

GEMATRIA

Check out Chapter 12, Verse 17 in this week's Parshah.

In the Dibur Hamaschil of *ושמרתם* Rashi says: *אלא אם באה לידך עשה אותה מיד - but if it (a commandment) comes to your hand, perform it immediately.*

The gematria of this phrase is 986, which so happens to be the exact same gematria of the word *ושמרתם*!!!!

You can do with this gematria what you like, it is just fascinating to show how there are no coincidences and everything Rashi wrote was specific and exact.

CHASSIDUS

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains *בא אל פרעה*:

The idea of "coming to Pharaoh" represents the importance in our Divine Service to approach and "come" to the root of the Yetzer Hara within us and eradicate the bad.

We must crush the Yetzer Hara at its roots so it doesn't grow back!

In life, if we really want to fix something, we must go to the root!

DID YOU KNOW?

The Sanhedrin - which would decide on the Rosh Chodesh, based on the witnesses seeing the new moon - sat in a *חצי עגול* - a semi circle, the same shape as the moon!

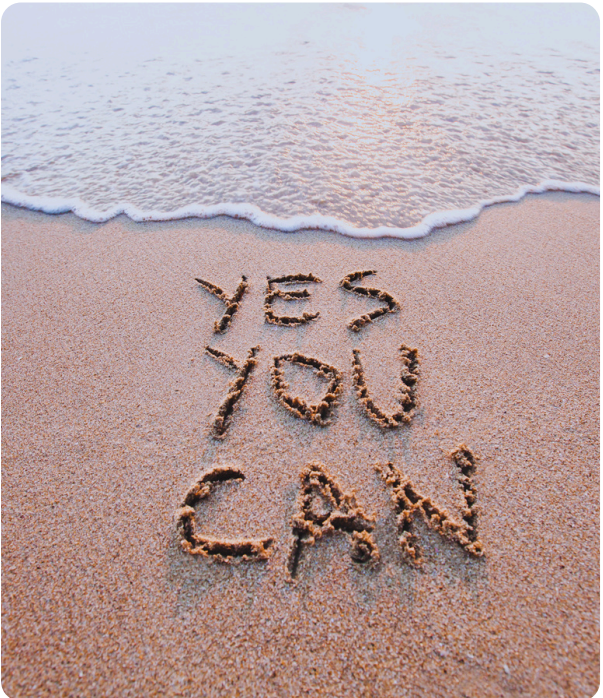
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The darkness was so dark that the Egyptians could not move.

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Pharaoh's power of "bechira" (choice) was taken away from him, so he kept saying "No, I will not let them go." We see that a person can become so steeped in his non-sense that it literally overtakes his power to choose!

INSPOGRAPHIC CORNER



You Are Invited to Come



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The Difference Between Being Informed and Invited



I was thinking about this precious and important vort from the Kotzker Rebbe, and it occurred to me that maybe it is not a coincidence that when you rearrange the letters of **אב** (come) it spells **אב**, which means: father. It very well could be a reference to our Father in Heaven, Hashem!

Hashem is our Father in Heaven, but guess what, He is also our Father on Earth, an aspect of our relationship that perhaps we may often overlook.

He is not only up there. He is right here. With us. He didn't just send us down here to battle, struggle, and work alone.

He came with us and is by our side every single step of the way. Having this knowledge is key to living a life of tranquility, peace, and happiness. Let's never forget, Hashem doesn't say "Go," He invites us to "Come."

Whereas "go" connotes journeying, perhaps alone, "come" connotes an invitation. When someone asks you "Do you want to go to a wedding?" you may respond yes or no, however, if the Chasan or Kallah asks you, "Are you COMING to my wedding?" you are more likely to say, "Of course!"

If you think about it, you've probably never been "invited" to a Bris. The invite always uses a language that informs, rather than invites. Why? The Rema writes (Yoreh De'ah 265:12) that whoever does not participate in the festive meal that accompanies a Bris is viewed as if he is "excommunicated from Heaven." The Pischei Teshuvah (265:18) explains that people "inform" about a bris so that if the guest is unable to participate in the ceremony, his declining the invitation will not be interpreted as a refusal to take part in the festive meal, thereby sparing him the risk of "excommunication from Heaven."

In contrast, we don't choose to come down to this world. Hashem doesn't inform us and then we decide. No. If we are here, that means Hashem invited us which now makes us obligated to come! We have an obligation to come since we were invited. Let us view our coming to this world as a beautiful invitation and opportunity.

We need to reframe how we view our existence on this world, namely, that Hashem invites us to come with Him and make the world a better place!

*Have a holy Shabbos!
R' Ori Strum*

Many of us grew up on the Hashkafic teachings that, "Hashem sent us down to the physical world." While true, it is not the full story. You see, when we hear those words – "Hashem sent us" – it trains our minds to think that Hashem simply sent us off. Bye now. Good luck. What about the turbulent world? What about the Yetzer Hara? The challenges? The obstacles? Are we on our own?

We paint a picture of a parent sending off a child to Israel to spend the year in Yeshiva or Seminary. We construct an image of a person sending off a letter in the mail. We build a portrait of a lion sending off its cubs to fend for themselves.

But is this really what's happening? Does Hashem just send us down here to work things out on our own? Are we meant to fend for ourselves? Are we really meant to battle the Yetzer Hara alone?

The answer is, of course a resounding no.

The Kotzker Rebbe says a vort that is maybe the single-most important idea that a person can ever hear in their lifetime.

At the beginning of Parshas Bo, the Torah says: **בא אל פרעה**. Hashem, talking to Moshe Rabbeinu, says: "Come to Pharaoh." Notice, the Torah doesn't say **לך אל פרעה** – "Go to Pharaoh," rather, **"בא"** – "Come." The nuance is subtle, but the message is fundamentally life-changing.

"Go" connotes the message of being sent off, going on your own. "Come" connotes the message that the one talking – in this case, The One, Hashem – is coming along with you.

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that Hashem was telling Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh. Don't worry about a thing. I'm coming with you on this frightening journey. I'll be at your side, holding your hand the entire time."

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