

BS"D Parashat Bo 5783

Who Was Responsible for the Jewish Exodus from Egypt?

Why was Moshe's name omitted from the Pesach Hagada when he was the most influential personality in the Exodus episode?

I submit:

Because it was not Moshe who in the end brought the Jews out of Egypt, but other messengers who were empowered by HaShem to carry out the end of Jewish servitude in Egypt.

Explanation:

During the final days of our 210-year sojourn in Egypt, including the last 80 years of intense servitude, the newly freed slaves were busy quibbling, bickering and pondering the possibilities that lay before them. To disregard Moshe's leadership and remain in Egypt where they would establish the first Jewish Commonwealth upon the massive wealth of the defeated Egyptian people, or to follow Moshe into the forsaken desert with little or no preparations or even rational hope of surviving. Eighty percent opted to remain and died during the plague of darkness. The remaining 20% were unsure and procrastinated ("dragged their heels") with baking bread and packing the minimum essentials, not really enthusiastic with the idea of entering the desert with only a few dry matzot and some water.

Moshe's calls of persuasion and encouragement did not permeate the membrane of fear that enveloped their slave mentality.

They were on the “high diving board” unable to take the final jump into the unknown void.

At this point in the drama, when every Egyptian home was suffering the tenth plague, the Torah informs us (Shemot 12,29-33):

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²⁹ At midnight HaShem struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock.

³⁰ Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud cry in Egypt for there was not a house without someone dead.

³¹ Then he (Paro) summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said. Rise up. go away from my people. both you and the

Israelites! Go, serve the Lord, as you said.

³² *Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone. And ask a blessing for me, too!*

³³ *The Egyptians forcefully impelled the people to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, "We shall all be dead".*

Neither the words of Moshe or Aharon in the name of HaShem, nor the impressive miracles that they performed were powerful enough to release the mental paralysis that gripped the Jews at the moment of truth – where shall we go? It was the Egyptian masses who forcefully brought the Jews to the border and propelled them out of the land into the wilderness!

Indeed, the parasha after Bo begins:

וְיֹאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יִשְׂרָאֵל בֹּא אֶל-בָּנָי וְיִשְׁלַׁחֲנָא וְיַעֲשֵׂה
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"And it came about when Paro sent the people out";

Not Moshe and Aharon, but the anti-Semitic king of Egypt and his subjects were HaShem's vehicle to expel the Jews, as a message for future generations that behind the pretty fence waits a fierce Pitbull. (Visualize the American government and the good people of California and Texas bringing millions of illegal immigrants to the Mexican border and forcing them to cross over.)

My Messages

More than twenty years have passed since I took it upon myself to write these weekly messages. One thousand weeks, 1000

commentaries, minus the several times I failed for reasons beyond my control. Each message was a variation on a single theme: that the time is long overdue for the Jews to leave the spiritual and physical cemeteries of the galut and return home. To return in order to continue our religious and national mission as mandated by the Creator Himself to our fathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov from the point that He exiled us from His land 2000 years ago.

As I look back, I grade myself according to two criteria: earnestness and success. For earnestness I give myself a passing mark, but success?! A dismal failure.

Not that I ever deceived myself into believing that I could influence masses of Jews to leave the comforts of their birthplaces to begin new lives in our small, imperiled land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, bordered to the west by water and to the east by Arabs. But at least it would be one more shrill voice vibrating into the consciences of authentic Jews.

I pray to HaShem to permit me another 20 years of writing, but the time has come that I realize that others can do "the job" better than I. So, although I will continue to write, I am aware that there are more active and more numerous forces capable of succeeding in a shorter time and with wider influence than I in bringing our people home.

Who or what will be the catalyst for the next exodus?

Who are these more capable and certainly more experienced activists who will count their success not in tens or hundreds but in millions of Jews they will bring home?

They are the termite-like anti-Semites throughout the US, who

are now “coming out of the woodwork”. Their numbers and influence grow like viruses on the campuses, among entertainers, politicians, local priests and ministers. But unlike some viruses for which one can find protection with vaccines, these viruses come with immunity that has been passed on from Paro of Egypt to Nevuchadnezzar of Babylon, to Haman of Persia, to Antiochus of Greece, to the Caesars of Rome, to the Popes of Europe, to the Ukrainians, Russians and Poles, to Hitler, to Stalin, and to the Arafats ad nauseam.

They are immune to the lessons of history, that anti-Semites always lose and for all their efforts they earn a place near the eastern wall of Gehennom. They are immune to the Jews’ calls for virtue, integrity, morality, ethics, and decency.

A group that much be carefully monitored is the one calling themselves the *Black Hebrew Israelites*. They claim that they are the real Jews. They are motivated by their hate of all whites with their particular hate towards Jews. *Black Hebrew Israelite* followers have sought out and attacked Jews in the United States on more than one occasion. Between 2019 and 2022, individuals motivated by *Black Hebrew Israelitism* committed five religiously motivated murders. *Black Hebrew Israelites* believe that we are “imposters”, who have “stolen” Black Americans’ true racial and religious identity. *Black Hebrew Israelites* promote the antisemitic Khazar conspiracy theory about Jewish origins. In 2019, 4% of African Americans self-identified as being *Black Hebrew Israelites*!

The exodus from Egypt has taught us that words, such as those spoken by Moshe and Aaron, as important and impressive as they may be, are not enough to move masses of Jews from the galut to return home.

In closing permit me a short story. Several years ago, as a favor for a certain religious institution, I wrote a weekly column for their Torah publication. At the end of one of my columns I related the following incident:

An Arab entered a bank in Yerushalayim just as the automatic mechanism closed the safe until the following morning. In reply to the Arab's vocal demand for cash, the teller told him that the safe could not be opened until the following morning. The Arab became belligerent, threatening the life of the teller. At this point, the bank manager approached the Arab, picked him up and threw him out.

While the Arab was nursing his wounds, the bank teller approached him saying: "Didn't I tell you that the safe is closed until tomorrow morning?" The Arab turned to the teller and said: "Yes. You told me. But he explained it!"

This serious joke was offensive to a certain individual who wrote letters that could have harmed the institution, and I was very nicely requested to discontinue writing for them. Nevertheless, we remain very good friends to this day.

I want to close with the lesson we should learn from the above story. The Arab could not understand the situation when told; he needed an explanation.

We Jews are smarter. Let's not wait for explanations.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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