

In this week's *Parashah*, the Exodus takes place. The Torah relates that when the time came for *Bnei Yisrael* to leave Egypt (*Shmot* 12:39), "They could not delay." Our Sages explain that *Bnei Yisrael* had descended in Egypt to the penultimate, 49th level of impurity; had they remained in Egypt another moment, they would have been lost forever.

But why did *Hashem* wait until the last moment? R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (1882-1951; rabbi of Yerushalayim's Sha'arei Chessed neighborhood and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav) explains: *Hashem* has made us His Chosen Nation, but not for any reason that we can discover or articulate. To the contrary, *Hashem* chose us unconditionally, with no apparent ulterior motive. Therefore, He chose us when we had no more merit than the Egyptians themselves, as the guardian angel of Egypt argued at the *Yam Suf*: "These are idolators and these are idolators." This similarity between the Egyptians and *Bnei Yisrael* is what the Torah refers to when it says (*Devarim* 4:34), "Or has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from amidst a nation . . ." *Bnei Yisrael* at the time of the Exodus were a nation amidst another nation (Egypt), with little to distinguish them.

R' Charlap continues: Being chosen by *Hashem* is what enables us to sanctify ourselves through our actions. Before the Exodus, when *Bnei Yisrael* performed the *Mitzvot* of *Brit Milah* and *Korban Pesach*, *Hashem* gave them a loan, so-to-speak, from the bank of holiness that they would accumulate later--specifically, when they would prove that they were worthy of being chosen by declaring "*Na'aseh Ve'nishmah*" / "We will do and we will hear." (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mei Marom* p.92)

Shabbat

The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 38a) teaches: Mankind was created on *Erev Shabbat*. Why? So that heretics will not say that man was *Hashem's* partner in Creation. Another answer: So that if man becomes haughty, *Hashem* can say to him, "Even the gnat was created before you." Another answer: So that he will enter a *Mitzvah*--i.e., *Shabbat*--immediately. Another answer: So that man would encounter a world ready to enjoy. To what may this be compared? To a human king who built a palace, perfected it, set up a feast, and only then allowed guests to enter. [Until here from the *Gemara* as explained by *Rashi* z"l]

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) asks: Why would anyone think that man was *Hashem's* partner in Creation? Indeed, our Sages say that angels were created on the second day of Creation, not on the first day, so no one would think that they were *Hashem's* partners. If that was enough to stop people from believing that the angels were *Hashem's* partners, why could man not be created on the second day also without raising any concerns?

Maharal answers: Mankind is the pinnacle of Creation, the only creation that combines the physical world--a body--and the spiritual world--a soul. [Because of this uniqueness, one might think that man was *Hashem's* partner.] Therefore, it was fitting that man be created last, not on the second day, just as one does not attach two parts of a garment to each other until each is complete.

Maharal continues: Regarding the answer that man was created on *Erev Shabbat* so that he will enter a *Mitzvah*--*Shabbat*--immediately, this means to say that this is the purpose for which man was created: to serve *Hashem*, as we read (*Kohelet* 12:15), "The sum of the matter, when all has been considered--fear *Elokim* and keep His commandments, for that is entirety of man."
(*Chiddushei Aggadot*)

Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-775-9623

Send e-mail to: TheTorahSpring@gmail.com

Donate online: <https://thetorahspring.org/donate>

Donations to *Hamaayan* are tax deductible.



Sponsored by
the Vogel family

in memory of *Yisrael ben Elimelech Vogel*
and the other *Kedoshim* of *Oleszyce, Poland Hy"d*

“It shall be that when your children say to you, “What is this service to you?” You shall say, “It is a *Pesach* feast-offering to *Hashem*, Who passed over the houses of *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians, but He saved our households”; and the people bowed their heads and prostrated themselves.” (12:26-27)

Rashi z”l writes: The people bowed their heads in thanksgiving for the tidings of the approaching deliverance, for the promise that they would enter the Land, and for the tidings about the children they would have. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R’ Zvi Einfeld *shlita* (Antwerp, Belgium and Yerushalayim, Israel) asks: What is the nature of *Bnei Yisrael*’s thanksgiving at the tidings regarding children? Did they otherwise think that they would not have children? Moreover, the question quoted in the verse--“What is this service to you?”-- is the one the *Pesach Haggadah* associates with the *Rasha* / wicked son. Why would *Bnei Yisrael* bow their heads in thanksgiving upon hearing that they would have sons who would be wicked?

R’ Einfeld explains: When *Hashem* first dispatches Moshe to Pharaoh, He tells Moshe to say (*Shmot* 4:22-23), “So said *Hashem*, ‘*Yisrael* is My firstborn son. So I say to you, “Send out My son that he may serve Me”.’” This teaches that, with the Exodus from Egypt, we were “born” as *Hashem*’s children. This is not merely a figure of speech, R’ Einfeld writes. Rather, it describes a relationship in which the Jewish People are eternally bound to *Hashem*, as a son is bound by his very nature to his father, whether he acts consistently with that relationship or not.

This, writes R’ Einfeld, explains why *Hashem* was ready to kill Moshe on his way to Egypt when he failed to circumcise his son (see *Shmot* 4:24). *Brit Milah* / circumcision is the physical confirmation of our unique relationship with *Hashem*; it testifies that we are His sons. Moshe’s delay in performing that *Mitzvah* called into question his fitness to be the messenger to develop *Bnei Yisrael* into *Hashem*’s children. This explains, as well, why the *Pesach Seder*, more than any other observance, revolves around the parent-child relationship.

Returning to our original questions, R’ Einfeld explains: The tidings regarding children were not about having physical children, which was never in doubt. Rather, the tidings were about the continuity of the Jewish People’s unique relationship as children of *Hashem*. As noted, that relationship is eternal, and it cannot be severed. Of course, we are expected to observe the Torah but, just like a parent-child relationship, a Jew’s relationship with *Hashem* is inborn, and it cannot be severed even by wicked deeds. (Rabbi Akiva *V’doro Shel Shmad* p.21-23)

“*Hashem* said to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months . . .” (12:1-2)

Why did *Hashem* address Aharon together with Moshe at this point? Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi *z”l* (Spain; 1320-1376) explains:

The Torah relates that Moshe initially declined to be *Hashem*’s messenger to take *Bnei Yisrael* out of Egypt, saying (*Shmot* 4:13), “Please, my Master, send through whomever You will send!” Our Sages explain that Moshe was attempting to defer to his older brother, Aharon, who had already been sent to *Bnei Yisrael* as a prophet. *Hashem* informed Moshe, however, that Aharon would not be jealous; to the contrary, says that next verse, “And he will see you, and he will rejoice in his heart.”

Our Sages say further that in the merit of this “rejoicing in his heart” Aharon merited to wear the *Urim V’tumim* over his heart. Rabbeinu Nissim explains: One might have assumed that the task of the *Kohen Gadol* is entirely unrelated to the task of a prophet. It is not so, however; just as a prophet foretells the future, so the *Kohen Gadol* foretells the future using the *Urim V’tumim*. Why did Aharon merit that he and his descendants, the High Priests, would be able to foretell the future? Because he rejoiced when his brother was appointed as the prophet par excellence of the Jewish People. This, writes Rabbeinu Nissim, illustrates the idea that *Hashem* rewards (and punishes) *Middah-K’negged-Middah* / measure-for-measure.

Rabbeinu Nissim continues: The idea that *Hashem* rewards and punishes *Middah-K’negged-Middah* is one of the foundations of the Torah. Therefore, here, when the first *Mitzvah* is being given to *Bnei Yisrael* and the Giving of the Torah is beginning, the Torah alludes to this foundational principle by mentioning Aharon. (*Derashot Ha’Ran* #3)

R’ Moshe Shapiro *z”l* (1935-2017; *Rosh Yeshiva* in several Israeli *yeshivot*; best known for his lectures on Jewish Thought) observes: The similarity between the Hebrew words “*Chodesh*” / “month” and “*Chadash*” / “new” is a reflection of the Torah’s view of time. Time is not primarily something that passes, but rather an opportunity to build a future, to progress toward a goal. Not coincidentally, the letters of the word “*Zman*” / “time” form the root of the word “*Hazmanah*,” whose meanings include “to invite,” “to prepare,” and “to set aside for a specific purpose.” The Torah teaches this lesson in connection with the Exodus because the Exodus was not meant to be an end in itself, but rather a preparation for a higher purpose, as *Hashem* told Moshe at the beginning of his mission (*Shmot* 3:12), “When you take the people out of Egypt, you (plural) will serve *Elokim* on this mountain,” *i.e.*, receive the Torah.

(*Shiurei Rabbeinu: Parashat Ha’chodesh* p.412)