

2019.01.10 THURSDAY PARSHA: BO

“You must eat it with your waist belted, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand...” Shemot 12:11

Lesson Summary

1. Egypt is cognate with “limitation.” (*meitzarim* = boundaries) Exodus is freedom and also akin to birth:
 - a. The Ten Plagues are likened to contractions, bloody show, breaking waters, nursing the infant
 - b. To actually leave our limitations, we must shatter false beliefs
 - i. The offering of a lamb entailed just such a push-back against dominant Egyptian ideology
 - c. This requires becoming aware rather than living a reactive life
2. Parameters that constrain us exist at both the physical and spiritual level (Learn more about this in the 2 Open Shut modules of The Method. You can find [Open Shut 1: Beyond Nurture here](#) and [Open Shut 2: Beyond Nature here](#))
 - a. Body, culture, nuclear home
 - b. Will, emotional and intellectual personality markers
3. The Seder is a template for redemption:
 - a. “Pesach Seder” is an oxymoron – Passing Over (breaking order) and Order (use coupon code parshaj19 to take \$8 off your order of [The Haggadah Companion](#). Valid for 2 weeks)
 - b. INSTRUCTION: Shemot 12:11, “You must eat it with your waist belted, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand, and you must eat it in haste. It is the Passover offering to G-d.”
 - i. “Waist belted: is literally translated as “hips girded”
4. Hips:
 - a. The hips are the physical base for the body (torso and head.) They are metaphoric of faith which supports one’s intellect.
 - b. Hips alone though cannot support the body. They need muscles. Metaphorically this is the Oral Torah, particularly *Halacha*, Law.
 - c. The Commandments are not “rituals.” They are real and align us with the will of G-d. Simply learning them is grounding
 - d. Therefore we need the “belt.” Ezekiel says we were “naked and bare.” Our faith redeemed us. One of the Method Isms is “Believe that G-d believes in you.” We need a sense of context if we are going to become big enough to fail. “Girding the loins” refers to “summoning up one’s inner resources in preparation for action” according to the dictionary.
 - e. Discover what your day should look like by opening a book on Jewish Law, Talmud, Rambam, Ein Yaakov
5. Shoes

- a. Establish a relationship between our higher and lower selves
 - b. There is an emphasis on *wearing* the shoes. They can’t just be in your closet.
 - c. Two preliminary concepts: In Jewish law, clothing loses its independence once worn. AND Shoes are generally made of leather and require a caustic/sharp chemical to soften that leather.
 - d. 2 selves: base and lofty, shadow and light, self-gratification and selflessness
 - e. Cannot reject the lower self. “Love G-d with all your heart” is best translated as “with *both* your hearts.”
 - f. To do this we must become spiritual tanners. “Ohr” is both light and skin albeit spelled differently. Bring the Ayin, the mind’s eye, to one’s skin (ohr) to convert it to light (ohr with an Alef)
 - g. “A person should always agitate the good inclination over the evil one.” We need to have an honest and critical assessment of ourselves.
 - h. Broader context is joy: The “bitterness” is subordinate to serving G-d.
 - i. Softening of the Animal, wear it (incorporate), preparatory bitterness
6. Staff:
- a. The staff is associated with the Talmudic teaching that, “One trains a dog with a stick.”
 - b. A dog is different from all other animals in that even the money from its sale cannot be redeemed to purchase a kosher animal that is fit for an offering on the alter. A dog is too willful and must be trained with a stick.
 - c. The same applies to the animal soul. It has no connection to intellect (or the intellect serves the animal.) But there are aspects of this soul that are open to influence and guidance.
 - d. The “dog” aspect of the animal soul is not receptive to normative influence. “Dog” is *kelev* which can be re-vocalized as *kulo lev*, “all heart.” This aspect of our being is full of *chutzpa* or defiance. Requires that we “hit it with a stick.”
 - e. STICK refers to speech. Moses “hit” the Egyptian whom he saw beating a Jew to death. Rashi tells us he struck him by enunciating G-d’s name. (I think this is the root of the expression, “Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me” (albeit that the phrase is wrong. Words can and *do* hurt. Think of cyber-bullying or how you have remembered things that were said to you that are still painful. Words have enormous power.)
 - f. The inner work of “hitting a dog with a stick” entails breaking the “dog’s” delusions. Name your illness (it is half the healing.) Ask it, “How long will you conceal the light of G-d from me?” Then remind it that the first words were spoken by G-d as were the Ten Commandments. We want to come to a consciousness that recognizes “that the mouth of G-d has spoken.” Remember *Havaye* and G-d as He is transcendent *your* G-d – personal and intimate. Disempower that part of yourself by cultivating a conscious awareness of G-d just as Moses did with the Egyptian.

Further reading:

1. [Discovering Order in the Seder](#) (Use coupon code parshaj19 to take \$8 off your order. Valid for 2 weeks.)
2. [Method Isms](#)
3. [Blog post article of today's class](#)
4. [Blog post on Eishet Chayil and "girding one's hips"](#)
5. [Open Shut 1: Beyond Nurture, on breaking out of limitations](#)
6. [Open Shut 2 on breaking out of limitations](#)
7. [Radiant Skin Meditation](#)

Takeaways

1. **Belt/Hips:** Discover what your day should look like by opening a book on Jewish Law, Talmud, Rambam, and Ein Yaakov.
2. **Shoes:** Refine the Animal Soul. Decide on something you will abstain from – for even one day. The ultimate goal is softening and elevating that part of us. A necessary prelude is an acerbic honest self-assessment.
3. **Stick:** Name the illness, identify what requires work. Then begin an inner dialogue with your base, emotionally wild part. And study something that generates your sense of G-d's presence, an understanding that G-d is the Container in which you exist.

Sources

נעליכם ברגליכם: תורת מנחם חי"ד ע' 35 ואילך, אחש"פ [לה"ק] תשי"ז סמ"ז, אחש"פ תשכ"א סכ"ב, חש"פ תשכ"ד [סיום חלוקת כוס של ברכה], קלכם בידכם: אחרון של פסח [לה"ק] תשי"ז סמ"ח



Blessings,
Shimona

In honor of Michla bat Moshe, Sura Raizel bat Ethel Chana, Shlomo Yitzchak ben Moshe and Yitzchak ben Shimona