Kindly take a moment to study <u>MISHNAS CHAYIM</u> in the merit of Chanah Bluma *bas* Yoel *a*"*h* a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of her *neshamah*

The Demise of Egypt and the Eternal Reward PARSHAS BO 5776

In the end, many bad things happened to the Egyptians.

Their trials begin primarily with the advent of the ten ferocious plagues, which lasted over a year-long period, equal to that of the judgment in Gehinnom (Purgatory). As the Mishnah states (*Eduyos 2:10*):

ָמִשְׁפַּט הַמִּצְרִיִים, שְׁנֵים עֲשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ... מִשְׁפַּט רְשָׁעִים בְּגֵיהִנָּם, שְׁנֵים עֲשָׁר חֹדֶשׁ.

"The (duration) of the judgment against the Mitzrim (Egyptians) was twelve months... The judgment against the wicked in Gehinnom is twelve months."

Big Things...

The severity of these plagues is underscored by the well-known passage in the Haggadah (beginning: "R' Yosi Hagelili omeir"), in which the Tannaim contend that the plagues really tallied up to be much more than ten. They draw from the passuk in Tehillim (78:49), which magnifies the plagues' magnitude: איל מלאָכי רָעִים וְצָרָה מִשְׁלֹחַת מַלְאָכִי - "He sent against them His burning wrath – anger, fury, tribulations, and a dispatch of menacing angels." Thus, they explain that each of the plagues actually consisted of four or five, as they were all comprised of these various components of retribution. This raises the tally to forty or fifty plagues with which Mitzrayim was smitten.

By the time B'nei Yisrael departed the land, Mitzrayim – formerly a proud and great world power – was indeed a ravished entity. The imagery depicting the Jews' departure is quite stark: בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְאשׁוֹן בַּחֲמְשָׁה עָשָׁר יוֹם לַחֹדָשׁ... יָצָאוּ בְנִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָד רָמָה לְעֵינֵי כָּל־מְצְרָיִם, וּמְצְרַיִם מְקַבְּרִים בּחֹדֶשׁ הָרָאשׁוֹן בַּחֲמְשָׁה עָשָׁר יוֹם לַחֹדָשׁ... יָצָאוּ בְנִי־יִשְׁרָאֵל בְּיָד רָמָה לְעֵינֵי כָּל־מְצְרָיִם, וּמָצְרַיִם מְקַבְּרים "In the first month, on the fifteenth day of the month... B'nei Yisrael went out, with an upraised arm, in front of the eyes of all Mitzrayim. And Mitzrayim was engaged in burying (their dead), as Hashem had smote all the firstborn among them and executed judgment against their deities" (*Bamidbar 33:3,4*).

And, of course, their ordeal was not yet over. Mitzrayim had lost their land, wealth, and much of their populace. They still, however, had an army. But not for long. They pursued Yisrael into the Yam Suf, where they once again encountered furious retribution. The same Haggadic passage cited above continues to outline the numerous plagues that struck the Mitzrim by the

sea; these equaled ten times the number they had suffered in the land itself. By the time it was all over, the verse had been fulfilled: אֲשֶׁר רְאִיהֶם אֶת־מִצְרִיִם הֵיוֹם לֹא תֹסְפּוּ לְרְאֹתָם עוֹד עַד־עוֹלָם - "As you have seen Mitzrayim today, you shall never again see them – for eternity" (Shemos 14:13).

...in Small Packages

R' Sa'adiah Gaon calls attention to one of the most remarkable aspects of this entire affair. He makes a most poignant observation, citing the original prophecy delivered to Avraham. Hashem related to the patriarch that his progeny would undergo the trial of servitude, but would eventually be redeemed and their tormentors punished: אָלֶר יַעָּלְדוּ דָּוֹ אָלֶר יַעָלָדוּ דָּוֹ אָלֶר יַעָלָדוּ דָּוֹ אָלֶר יַעָלדוּ דָּוֹ אָלֶר יַעָלדוּ דָּוֹ אָלֶר יַעָלדוּ דָּוֹ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ דָּוֹ אָלֶר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ דָוֹ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ הַוֹוֹם שַּרָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר אָלָר יַעָלדוּ דָוֹ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ אָלָר יַעָלדוּ הוation that they shall serve, I shall judge." Notice, he states, that only two short words on the subject were uttered: "Dan Anochi – I shall judge." And yet, the entire litany of the Mitzrim's tribulations – the surface of which was barely even scratched above – is contained within them. The entire gamut of the most fearsome and far-reaching retributive forces all flow from this brief utterance of the Almighty.

In quoting R' Sa'adiah's observation, R' Chatzkel Levenstein (*Ohr Yechezkel, Elul, p. 98*) takes the matter one step farther. We see the awesome power that lay within just these two simple words: how a short Divine statement results in such astronomical (and, in this case, devastating) ramifications.

Imagine, then, what weight is carried in a more *expanded* Divine statement. If a brief utterance has such consequences – consider how much more potency a long one would contain!

As such, he continues, we can use the example of the Mitzrim's demise to shore up our *emunah* (faith) and anticipation in another area – namely, belief in the promised reward awaiting the righteous when the Final Redemption arrives. For in describing this period, the descriptions are indeed quite expansive; numerous prophecies of considerable length punctuate the volumes of the Nevi'im (Prophets), such as Yeshayah, Yirmiyahu, and others.

Just to get even a minimal sense of the magnitude of the era of the Redemption, we quote here from Yirmiyahu – with the understanding that this represents one small example out of many. The *passuk* states: יָשָׁרָאָר מָאָרָץ מָצָרִים, כִּי הְּנָה־יָמִים בָּאִים נְאָמַ־ד' וְלֹא־יַאָמֶר עוֹד חַי־ד' אֲשֶׁר הֶעָּלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאַל מֵאֶרָץ מְצָרִים, כִּי אָם־חַי־ד' אֲשֶׁר הֶעָּלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאַל מֵאֶרָץ מְצָרִים, כִּי אָם־חַי־ד' אֲשֶׁר הֶעָלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאַל מֵאֶרָץ אָפוֹן וּמִכּל הָאָרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדּיחָם שָׁמָה וְהָשׁבֹתִים עַל־אַדְמָתָם אֲשֶׁר אָם־חַי־ד' אֲשֶׁר הָעָלָה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאַל מַאֶרָץ צָפּוֹן וּמִכּל הָאָרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדּיחָם שָׁמָה וְהָשׁבֹתִים עַל־אַדְמָתָם אֲשֶׁר אַם־חַי־ד' אַשֶּׁר הָעָלָה אָת־בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאַל מַאֶרָץ צָפּוֹן וּמִכּל הָאָרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדּיחָם שָׁמָה וְהָשׁבֹתִים עַל־אַדְמָתָם אֲשֶׁר הים הַידיד' אַשָּׁר הָעָלָה אָת־בְּנֵי ישְׁרָאַל מַאֶרֶץ צָפּוֹן וּמִכּל הָאָרָצוֹת אָשָׁר הִדּיחָם שָׁמָה וָהָשׁבֹתִים עַל־אַרְמָתָם אָשָׁר ווון הוווידיד' אָשֶׁר הָעָלָה אָת־בְּנֵי ישְׁרָאַל מַאֶרָץ צָפּוֹן וּמִכּל הָאָרָצוֹת אָשָׁר הִדּיחָם שׁמָה ווּהָשׁבֹתִים עַל־אַרָמָתָם אָשׁר וווויזיד' אַשָּשׁר הָעָרָאָ שָׁר הַצָּיָה אָבוּחָם העָהי לאַבוּרָת היין אַבּאָרים הַאָּיָר הָיָים הָבּיין הַים אָאָר הּדָיחָם שָׁמָה וווּאָמָר הַדָּיחָם שָׁמָּר הַדָּיקָה אָרָיבָני ווּהָירא אָר הַאָרָים הַיּין אָרָין הַיּיָר הָאָרָים הַיָּיָה אָרָרָנוּים דָרָאָר מָאָרָץ בּיוּקר אָרָידָין אָרָים הַיָּיר הָיָים הָיים אָרָים הַיָּרָא מָרָין אָרָים אָרָים אָרָים אָרָעוּים אָיין הַיּקּים אָיָאָר הָדָים הַים אָרָים אָרָה אַיין היין אָרָים אָשָּר הַיָּעָר הָיָרָנוּים אָרָאָר מַאָרָר אָעָרין אָרים אָרָים אָרָים אָרָים אָרָיחָם אָיים אָר וווּשׁר הַיין אָרָאָר אָרין אָר אָריין אָר אָריין געריין אָר אָרָיין אָיין אָריין אָריים אָרָיין אָייָרָין אָריים אָיין אָר הַיָּים אָים אָרין אָיר אָין אָעָריין אָר אָריין אָירין אָעָרין אָריין אָייין אָיין אָיין אָריין אָעריין אָיין אָיין אָריין אָיין אָיין אָריין אָייין אָייין אָיין אָיין אָיין אָיין אָייין אָייין אָייין אָייין אָייין אָייין אַייין אָיין אָייין אָיין אָ

More than two words. And there are plenty more *nevu'os* outlining the sheer beauty and wonder of the eternal reward – may we merit to behold it!