



Bo/Go

Shemot/Exodus 10:1 – 13:16

This week we continue on with the **final plagues** against **Egypt** prior to the **deliverance** from **captivity** for the **children of Israel**. However, there is something that makes us **uncomfortable** about these **scenarios**. It concerns the **hardening of Pharaoh's heart**. Even before the first plague, יהוה had told Moshe:

Shemot 7:3 "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ "But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.."

So did **Pharaoh** have any **freedom** in the **decisions** he made? Was יהוה the One who was **responsible** for the **hardness of Pharaoh's heart**? If he **wasn't responsible**, then why should he be found **guilty**?

We are **informed** after each of the **first five plagues**, that **Pharaoh hardened his own heart**. Here is what **Torah** has to say about **Pharaoh** after the **first couple plagues**:

Shemot 7:22 Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as יהוה had said. ²³ And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this.

Shemot 8:19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of Elohim." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as יהוה had said.

From the **sixth plague on**, his **hard heartedness** is **attributed** to יהוה. Here is a list of those in our parasha this week:

(Hail) *Shemot 10:1 Now יהוה said to Moshe, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him,*

(Locusts) *Shemot 10:20 But יהוה hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.*

(Darkness) *Shemot 10:27 But יהוה hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.*

(Firstborn) *Shemot 11:10 So Moshe and Aharon did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and יהוה hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.*

There are many **explanations** given for why יהוה would have **hardened Pharaoh's heart** during these **last plagues**. **Rashi** taught that the **hardening of Pharaoh's heart** in the last **five plagues** was a **form of punishment** for the **first five** when it was **Pharaoh's own stubbornness** that led him to refuse to let the people go. On the other hand, the **Rambam** interpreted יהוה's **hardening of Pharaoh's heart** to mean that **"repentance was withheld from him, and the liberty to turn from his wickedness was not accorded to him."**

But there is another **possible understanding**. יהוה **hardened Pharaoh's heart** precisely to **RESTORE** his **free will**. I know that seems kind of odd at first, but listen to the **logic**. After the **first five plagues** which

had brought **devastation** to the **land**, **Pharaoh** was under **overwhelming pressure** to **let the people go**. Now if he had **yielded** to that **pressure**, he would **not** have been making a **decision** from **his own will**, but instead would be **giving in** to the **pressure**. Therefore, **יהוה** **toughened** and **strengthened his heart** so that he was **free** to make his **own decision**. This should be very **easy to understand** in light of the situation that has happened in **Gaza**. **HAMAS** is **not supported** by all of the **residents** in that land. There are many **Arabs** who desired for **HAMAS** to **STOP firing rockets at Israel**, so that they might **live in peace**. These **dictators impoverished** their **own people** while **building up stockpiles of weapons** to subdue **Israel**, the nation they **loathed**. They became **oblivious** to the **suffering** of their **own**. **NOTHING** would deter **HAMAS**. Did the **Almighty** **strengthen** and **toughen the hearts** of these **HAMAS** **militants** so that **His purposes** might be **fulfilled**? There have been many **positive things** to come out of the **war**. Here is a **quote** from **Boaz Dreyer**, **Israeli** living **nearby to Gaza**, as he gives an **analysis** of the **recent conflict in Gaza**:

“The **expectation** of **every Israeli** was that at the start of the ground offensive our **casualties** would **sky rocket**, as they did in the second Lebanon War, but **they did not!** I started asking myself **why** it is that our **Nation**, chosen by the **Creator** to be the **Light to the world**, and apparently not doing such a good job of our calling at all, are being **protected** in such a **Divine way**. The **answer** I found in the six words of probably one of the best known Scriptures in the world “**Shema Israel, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad.**” In English “**Hear Israel, Adonai is our Elohim, Adonai is One.**” This was the **Scripture** that **Messiah** used to **answer** when in the **Gospel of Mark** He was asked about the **greatest of all the commandments**.

There are **mobile tent synagogues** all over the **Gaza Strip**. **Three times a day** men are **praying**, calling out to their **Creator and Savior**. When a **soldier** calls out in **prayer** this **most powerful declaration**, **who** or **what** can **come against him**? **Nothing**, he has the **Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** going **before him!** We are seeing all the words of the **Psalms** and the **Prophets** coming **true** before our very eyes. Rina and I have felt for a long time that the **Father is doing a new thing**. I was never quite sure what it was but now I am. The **young** and **not so young men of Israel** are **returning in vast numbers**. We call it ‘**teshuvah**’ **repentance**. A **heart cry**, when one comes to the proportional reality of the **way things were intended to be**. I believe we are seeing the **prophecy of Joel** (read through it again, it is short and powerful) being **fulfilled** before our eyes. This is a **great day** and we should all **rejoice**. I truly believe that the ‘**tikkun**’ (**repair**) of the **Nation of Israel** has **begun.**”

Baruch HaShem!!

Okay, back to the **hardening of Pharaoh’s heart**. **Pharaoh’s intentions** had **taken hold** of him and were about to **take him and his people down**. **Evil** has **two faces**. The **first** is what it **does** to its **victim**. The **second** is **turned inward** and **traps the perpetrator** in its own mesh. At **first** the **evil impulse** is as **thin** as a **spider’s web**, but in the **end** it becomes as **thick** as a **heavy rope**. **Slowly Pharaoh** lost his **own freedom** and became a **slave** to his **own sin**. **Rav Sha’ul** (Paul) describes the **positive choice** that we have, a choice that the **Pharaoh** did **NOT** make:

Romans 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to Adonai, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of Yah is eternal life in Yeshua the Messiah, our Adonai.

Pharaoh was **born free** but became a **slave to sin**. **Moshe** was **born into a nation of slaves** and ended up **leading them out of slavery and into freedom**. **Freedom is a gift**:

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Messiah has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Messiah set us free to be able to **serve Him in righteousness**...just like **He delivered the Israelites** that they might be **free to serve Him** through the **ways of the Torah**. It was **NEVER the Torah** that was a **yoke of slavery**. The book of **Romans** correctly defines the **yoke of slavery** as **sin and unrighteousness**.

Now it is **easy** for us to be **condemning of terrorist groups** such as **HAMAS**, or leaders like **Hitler** and **Stalin**. However, the **Pharaohs of this world** do not have a **monopoly** on the “**slavery of sin**.” We must **apply the concept of “freedom in righteousness”** to **ourselves** so that we do not **do damage to others around us** because we can easily become a “**slave to sin**.”

The **final three plagues** that are in our **parasha** this week contain the **common theme of “darkness”**:

Shemot 10:14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them.¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened

Shemot 10:21 Then אלהים said to Moshe, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.”²² So Moshe stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.

Shemot 12:29 And it came to pass at midnight that אלהים struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.

What is the **significance** of the **emphasis** on the **darkness**? To the **Egyptians**, their **king** was a **living deity**. **Ra (ארה)** was a **chief god of Egypt**. He was the **sun god**, the **god of light**. Every day **Ra** rode the **sun-chariot across the sky**. **Pharaoh** considered himself to be the **son of this god**. **Ra (ארה)** is also the **Hebrew word for “evil”** and is found in our **parasha**:

Shemot 10:10 Then he said to them, “אלהים had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil (ארה) is ahead of you.

So the confrontation will be between the **light of Egypt (ארה)** and the **light of the Almighty!** **Rav Sha’ul** also warns us that “**light**” is not always **what we think**:

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

The **plague of darkness** was **abnormal** and **miraculous**. It was a “**thick darkness**” so **oppressive** that for **three days no one could move about**. In contrast, all the **Israelites** enjoyed **light** in their **dwelling**s:

Shemot 10:23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

Jewish Midrash points out that the **light**, like the **darkness**, was **abnormal and miraculous**. It does not say “**in the land of Goshen**,” but “**in their dwellings**,” to show that **wherever a Hebrew went, light also went**. The **light shone from within not from without** – **not from the sun** nor from torches. By inference,

we conclude that the **thick darkness – darkness that could be touched** – arose **not in the heavens** but in the **debased spiritual and moral condition** of the **Egyptians**.

Still we are reminded in our parasha that **darkness** can also be the **place of hope**, the place where **redemption is born**. The **Israelites** were **conceived** in the **darkness of bondage** and **delivered** in the **middle of יהוה's dark night**. If we wish to grow from our **experiences**, then we must learn to **embrace the liberating power of darkness**. In **Psalm 18:11**, we are told that יהוה made **darkness** (choshek - חֹשֶׁק), which is the same word used for “**darkness**” in the **plague of Shemot**, to be **His “secret place”**:

Psalm 18:11 He made darkness (choshek - חֹשֶׁק) His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters And thick clouds of the skies.

Just a few months after the **exodus**, the **Israelites** would arrive at **Mount Sinai** where again they would encounter the **thick darkness** and **discover** that this is **precisely where יהוה** was to be **found**:

Devarim 4:11 "Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness (choshek - חֹשֶׁק), cloud, and thick darkness.

Another **encounter** with the **Almighty** occurred in the **darkness of night** when a **man seeking the Messiah** asked **questions** concerning **signs** and **redemption**:

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Yeshua by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from Adonai; for no one can do these signs that You do unless Adonai is with him."

And of course it was for the very reason of **bringing light** that **Yeshua** came into this world:

John 12:46 "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

As former residents of the “**darkness**,” we are called to walk in the “**light**”:

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in Adonai. Walk as children of light

Moving on...the **very first commandment** given to the **nation of Israel** is the **command** concerning the **setting apart of a calendar based upon the New Moon**:

*Shemot 12:2 "This month (chodesh - חֹדֶשׁ) shall be your **beginning** (roshe - רֵאשִׁית) of months; it shall be the **first month of the year** to you.*

Why is this commandment first? Why in the midst of the redemption of Israel, are we given a commandment concerning a new calendar? Egypt was a land where the calendar followed the sun. By switching the way time was figured, it was like telling the Israelites to have nothing more to do with the sun god, Ra. This new way of keeping the calendar according to the lunar cycles was emphasizing a new way of life that would stand in sharp contrast to life in Egypt. This first month of the year would symbolize freedom from bondage to the worldly ways. It was the month of redemption and every year it would point to יהוה's exodus.

Roshe Chodesh (רֹשֶׁת חֹדֶשׁ) means “new moon.” Each Biblical month begins with the crescent shaped new moon. The root of the word chodesh is “chadash” (חָדַשׁ) which means to “repair” or “renew.” After a night or two of complete darkness each month, the darkness will suddenly be illuminated by the moon’s light. This is a time for like-minded believers to come together and “sound the shofar”:

Psalm 81:3 Blow the shofar at the time of the New Moon, At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.

The appearance of the moon is constantly changing. It is forever going through its phases, getting smaller and smaller, and then bigger and bigger. When it seems to have disappeared completely, there’s a sudden turnaround and rebirth. The sages have found similarities between the Israelites and the moon. The moon ranges from being completely invisible to being fully visible. The Israelites have also had periods when their strength has been visible to all and periods when their presence has been eclipsed. Whereas the Holocaust represents the period of an invisible moon, with the creation of the State of Israel the moon became visible again. Periods of tragedy have always been followed by periods of glory.

The first day of the first month heads יְהוָה’s lunar calendar and sets all of His feast days. It is interesting to note that many of the holidays – Pesach (Passover), Sukkot (Tabernacles), and Purim fall in the middle of the month when the moon is shining the brightest. If you are following the solar calendar (January through December) then you would miss יְהוָה’s prophetic movement on this earth, as all of his festivals are rehearsals for the bride to meet her Bridegroom.

The prophet Isaiah spells out the mission of the Israelites:

Isaiah 42:5 Thus says El יהוה, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: ⁶ "I, יהוה, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, ⁷ To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

The Israelites were to be “a light to the Gentiles.” The moon is compared to the children of Israel, and we know that the moon does not shine its own light, but instead reflects the light of the sun. If we are to be a light to the world, what is this light we are reflecting?

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp, And the Torah a light...

1 John 1:5 ... Adonai is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

John 8:12 Then Yeshua spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

The light is Yeshua, who is the living Torah, and He brings light to the world. We are to reflect His light in a dark world, just like the moon reflects the sun...and in doing so, we become that light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6):

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world..."

So we can see that all these concepts are embodied in the commandment for Roshe Chodesh. It is a special time to stop and reflect about our calling. Commit yourself to shining forth your light! The on-going importance of the New Moon is seen in these verses in Isaiah:

Isaiah 66:22 " For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says יהוה, "So shall your descendants and your name remain."²³ And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says יהוה.

Of course the **greatest** and the **most awesome message** of our parasha is the story of the **Passover Lamb**. It was the **blood of the lamb** that stood between the **bondage** and the **salvation** of the **Israelites**. The **instructions** that יהוה gives them will **prepare the Israelites** for their **journey from slavery to freedom**. Only those who **actively committed** to putting their **trust in Him** were **spared the horrible tenth plague**, the **slaying of the firstborn**. Let's take a look at the **specific directions given to each household** who **partook** of the **sacrifice**:

Shemot 12:3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.'⁴ 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.'⁵ 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.⁶ 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.'⁷ 'And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.'⁸ 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.'⁹ 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire -- its head with its legs and its entrails.'¹⁰ 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.'¹¹ 'And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is יהוה's Passover.'¹² 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am יהוה.'¹³ 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.'¹⁴ 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to יהוה throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Former Israelite **individuals** have now **gathered together** in **close-knit and cohesive groups** to partake of a **specific meal in anticipation of their liberation**. They are **dressed reflective** of their **readiness in leaving** at a moment's notice. The **Torah** itself does not give an **explanation** for the **unusual placement** of the **lamb's blood** on the **doorposts** and the **lintel of the individual houses**. The **question** also has been asked by the sages...**why** is it that **only the first Passover in Egypt incorporated this ceremony**? There are other **instructions** that relate to the **preparation and consumption** of the **Passover Sacrifice** which are understood to be **eternal commands of the Torah**, to be **done** whenever the **Passover ritual is observed**. However, the **special instructions** concerning the **blood of the lamb** that **first Passover night** were given for a **one-time event**.

The **Israelites gathered** in these **small intimate groups**, **safe and secure**, while the **world** around them was in **chaos and confusion**:

Shemot 12:30 So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

In this **night of terror**, a **nation** was **knitted together**, and the next day they **emerged as one**. As the **Hebrews crossed the threshold**, consisting of **doorposts and lintel stained with blood**, it was a **defining moment** that has been compared to the **process of birth**. This **metaphor** also **explains why the placement of the lamb's blood** was a **one-time event**. While the **Passover meal** was to be celebrated as an **eternal commemoration** of יהוה's **saving intervention**, a **nation** could only be **BORN** once. Once they had **crossed the threshold of delivery**, they could not **reenter the birth canal**.

Some **eight hundred years** after the events of the **exile**, the prophet **Ezekiel** addressed the **exiled Judeans** by the **rivers of Babylon** using this very **theme of birth**. He **recalls the miserable state** of their **oppressed ancestors in Egypt** and **describes** in rather **coarse terms** the **messiness of the birth of the Israelites** amidst the **compassionate involvement** of the **Almighty**:

*Ezekiel 16:1 Again the word of יהוה came to me, saying, ² "Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, ³ "and say, "Thus says Adonai יהוה to Jerusalem: "**Your birth** and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ "As for your nativity, **on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.** ⁵ "No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; **but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.** ⁶ " **And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!'***

Ezekiel was sending a **sharp rebuke** to his **fellow Judeans** who had **forgotten** their **humble origins** and their **heavenly Father** who had **sustained them** from the **beginning**. The prophet alludes to the **experience of the exodus** as the **time** in which the **nation of Israel** was **born**. They were indeed like a **newborn child**, **dependent** on the **care and attention** of a **gracious Father**.

Now the **conclusion** to this is that **if leaving servitude and embarking on the path of freedom** is akin to **being born**; then **experiencing יהוה's ongoing guidance** through the **wilderness, standing at Mt. Sinai** and **hearing His words, journeying to the Promised Land** and **settling it**, are all part of the **process leading up to national maturation**. These are the **experiences that separate the newborn infant from the mature and responsible adult...choices and consequences** that mark the often tortuous route **from self absorption to selfless spiritual enlightenment**. And the **maturity process of individuals** will **mirror** what happens with the **nation** as it moves toward **freedom**.

Okay....now, I believe we are ready to take a look at **Yeshua's words to Nicodemus**. **Nicodemus** was a **Pharisee** and a **teacher of the Torah**. The **exodus** and the **words of Ezekiel** were **familiar** words to him. These **birth connections** should not have escaped him, and as **Yeshua** turned **Nicodemus' question** into a **midrash** he should have **connected** the thoughts:

*John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Yeshua by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from Adonai; for no one can do these signs that You do unless Adonai is with him." ³ Yeshua answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Yah.**" ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Yeshua answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of Adonai.** ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ "The wind*

*blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"¹⁰ *Yeshua answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?*

The concept of being “**born again**” parallels the **redemption** of the **children of Israel** from the **bondage of slavery**. In all cases, it is the **Lamb’s blood** that is **required** for all to **pass from bondage to freedom, from death to life**. The **price paid** for their **redemption** as a **newborn nation** was the **ongoing sacrifice of Passover lambs**. It is no different for us. The **blood of the Messiah, the Passover Lamb** has been **shed** for all that we also might be **grafted in to this nation**. Our **eternal life begins** at this point of “**crossing over**.” Yet, we **do not stand still** in our **faith**. We must move **from revelation to revelation, from glory to glory**, in the **Spirit of Yeshua**. Our **individual, spiritual reconciliation** must eventually **lead up** to the **reconciliation** of the **nation of Israel**. That is our **future**.

There is just one more thought I’d like to cover. The word “**sign**” (ote - אֹת), is found in two verses in chapter 13:

Shemot 13:9 "It (Passover) shall be as a sign (ote - אֹת) to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that יְיָ's Torah may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand יְיָ has brought you out of Egypt.

Shemot 13:16 "It (Passover) shall be as a sign (ote - אֹת) on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand יְיָ brought us out of Egypt."

Next, compare the **similarities** in these verses from **Devarim** (Deuteronomy). Whatever is placed on the **hands** and **between the eyes**, is also placed on the **doorposts**:

Devarim 6:8 "You shall bind them (commandments) as a sign (ote - אֹת) on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."⁹ "You shall write them on the doorposts (mezuzah - מְזוּזָה) of your house and on your gates.

Devarim 11:18 " Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign (ote - אֹת) on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Devarim 11:20 "And you shall write them (commandments) on the doorposts (mezuzah - מְזוּזָה) of your house and on your gates,

In both **Shemot** and **Devarim** we find references to something being placed as **signs** (ote - אֹת) on the **hands** and **between the eyes**. **Shemot** references **Passover**, but **Devarim** says it is the **commandments** which are placed there. The **connection** is found in **Devarim 6:9** where it refers to the **doorposts** (mezuzah - מְזוּזָה). The **doorpost** is where the **mezuzah** is hung that contains the **commandments** of יְהוָה, but of course it was also the location where the **blood of the Passover Lamb**, a reminder of the **born-again experience**, framed the **doorway**.

Doors are pretty **important** in Scripture. A little later in **Shemot**, we see that this is the **place** where the **servant** makes a **permanent commitment** to his **master**:

Shemot 21:5 "But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'⁶ then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost (mezuzah - מַזְזֻזָּה), and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

Yeshua specifically refers to **Himself** as the “**door**”:

John 10:7 Then Yeshua said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

It is the **door** to our **hearts** where He attempts to **reach us**:

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Now remember the connections between the “**sign**” of the **Passover**, and the **mezuzah**. **Revelation 9:4** refers to those who **do not have the seal of the Almighty on their foreheads**:

Revelation 9:4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of Adonai on their foreheads.

We can also connect these people with the **firstborn** (interchangeable with **firstfruits**) of **Shemot**:

Revelation 14:4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to Adonai and to the Lamb.

All this is in **contrast** to the “**mark of the Beast**.”

Revelation 13:16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Yeshua and for the word of Adonai, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Messiah for a thousand years.

The keeping of **Passover** becomes a **memorial between our eyes**, and a **seal upon our foreheads**. The **keeping** of the **commandments** is also a **sign** that we are **His covenant people**. Like the **exodus** and the **travels through the wilderness**, it is the **journey** that **defines us**. When we take a **trip**, we usually **read a map**. **Torah** is that **map**. We must use it to **discover our route**. And when the **night** comes, we'll be amazed to see that the **map radiates the light** that we need to **continue on**.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle