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Parshah Bo **January 23, 2021 – 10 Shevat 5781**

We have now come to the last three plagues meted out upon Egypt. They were locusts, darkness, and the slaying of the firstborn. The slaying of the firstborn is the plague given because of the Pharaoh's decree to kill all the male Jewish children born.

There were two parts to this last plague. The first part was the slaying of the firstborn. The second part of the plague would be G-d's judgments against the Egyptian idols. Wooden idols would rot and metal idols would melt. When we sing Dayeinu at the Seder we praise G-d for the multiple acts of kindness when we say, "if G-d had destroyed the Egyptian's idols but not killed their firstborn, it would have been enough for us."

When we feel that something is enough for us it is because we benefitted directly. The killing of the firstborn reduced the Egyptian's forces which was to our benefit. The destruction of the idols has no direct benefit to us, so why do our sages tell us that this is part two of the plague?

The benefit of destroying the idols is a spiritual one. The Egyptians who were taskmasters believed in idols. Their belief in idols could demoralize the Jewish people. By destroying the idols, the collective soul of the Jewish people is strengthened and the spirit of redemption is raised.

We learn from this last plague that each time we are rescued from the trauma of persecution and abuse, it is an emotional release for us to personally witness the downfall of oppressors as a way to make valid our faith in G-d Al-Mighty.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

