

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM 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*):

משפט המצרים, שנים עשר חדש... משפט רשעים בגיהנום, שנים עשר חדש.

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

### Big Things...

These plagues took a toll on every aspect of Mitzrayim (Egypt) – their land, their livelihood, their possessions, and their lives. Note, for example, what the Torah states in this week’s *parshah* regarding the aftermath of the plague of locusts: וַיֹּאכַל אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ וְאֵת כָּל-פְּרֵי הָעֵץ – “And it consumed all the vegetation of the land and all the fruit of the tree, which had endured past the hail; and there no longer remained any greenery amongst the trees and vegetation of the field, in the entire land of Mitzrayim” (*Shemos 10:15*). Even Pharaoh’s servants at one point recognized the utter devastation of the land, crying out to their stubborn monarch: הֲטָרָם תִּדְעַ כִּי אֲבָדָה מִצְרָיִם – “Have you not yet realized that Mitzrayim is lost?” (*ibid.* v. 7).

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: וַיִּשְׁלַח בָּם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ עֲבָרָה וְזַעַם וַצָּרָה מִשְׁלַחַת מְלֹאכֵי רָעִים – “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 הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּחַמֶּשֶׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ... יֵצְאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיַד רָמָה לְעֵינֵי כָל-מִצְרָיִם, וּמִצְרָיִם מְקַבְּרִים – “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

