



A Taste of Torah

A Publication of **Metivta Tiferet Torah** Queen's Premiere Yeshiva for Sephardic Boys

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פרשת בא תשפ"ב

ויהי חשך אפילה בכל ארץ מצרים שלשת ימים

And there was gloomy darkness in the entire land of מצרים for 3 days

שמות פרק י"א, כ"ב

רש"י quotes a famous explanation that tells us that the reason why ה' brought the plague of חשך was because there were Jews who did not want to leave מצרים. They died during חשך when the מצריים could not see the multitudes perishing. According to רש"י in פרשת בשלח, 80 percent of the Jewish men (approximately 2.4 million people) died.

The Jews were then able to bury their dead under the cover of the darkness. Had the Egyptians seen the Jews die, they would have said that the Jews are dying just like we did. Although these Jews deserved this punishment, it would have been willfully misinterpreted by the Egyptians, causing a tremendous חלול ה'.

The רש"י, an early commentary on the תורה, asks a very penetrating

question. How is it that so many Jews died, and yet דתן and אבירם, two Jews who were known for how evil they were, did not. דתן and אבירם had already exhibited their wickedness. They had been the ones in פרשת שמות who told פרעה that מצרי had killed the משה, which led פרעה to attempt to kill Moshe.

So how did they escape a seemingly deserving death that so many millions of others succumbed to? The רש"י answers something amazing. He says even though they in fact were terrible, awful Reshaim, they did have one זכות. They never gave up on the belief that ה' would redeem the Jews from מצרים. They always believed that the day would come when ה' would fulfill His promise to redeem the Jews. This merit was so great, that even though they were such רשעים, they still merited redemption with the rest of Klal Yisroel.

I believe we see an amazing lesson from here. We often see people in very simple terms. A person is a big

רשע or a big צדיק. We don't realize how many זכותים even the biggest רשע might have. Here you have 2 of the biggest רשעים of the entire Jewish nation, and yet they had a זכות that allowed them to leave מצרים when 80 percent of the Jews could not. We really do not know what זכותים each Jew has and how big their reward could be. When it comes to our children this is an especially important lesson. Children tend to see things in black and white. Either they are good if they do everything correctly, or they aren't if they don't. While they need to understand that every Mitzvah is precious, holy, and must be adhered to with all the seriousness that the Halacha requires, they also must know that mistakes that will inevitably be made, do not diminish the value of each Mitzvah they do, and most definitely does not change the relationship and deep love the Hashem has for each one of us.