

# YITZIYAS MITZRAYIM: A WAR OF IDEOLOGY

## Background

The Aruch Ha Shulchan is explaining to us that Pharaoh had been submissive; he recognized that HASHEM was the Creator. Yet now that Nissan was approaching, he again grew bold, relying on his *mazal*, the *mazal* of the *teleh*, the sheep, which is prominent during Nissan.

## Questions

Pharaoh and his nation were the most advanced and sophisticated society of the time. The Egyptians were intelligent, thinking people. Yet they believed such preposterous things that it is difficult for us to even make sense out of them. Even if we are to assume that a person can “believe what he wants to believe,” we know there has to be some plausible explanation, at least some rationalization he can use to convince himself. How could intelligent people believe that the sun and moon have powers and that the constellations control events?

### ספר שמות פרק יב

(ב) הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רֵאשׁוֹן חֳדָשִׁים רֵאשׁוֹן הוּא לְכֶם לְחֹדֶשׁי הַשָּׁנָה

*The month of Nissan was chosen by HASHEM to be counted as the first month because the Egyptians worshipped the lamb, which is the head of the constellations. Therefore, Pharaoh relied on its strength. This explains why during the plague of hail, Pharaoh said, “I and my nation are sinners, and HASHEM is righteous,” yet by the plague of darkness, he threw Moshe and Aharon out of his palace withchutzpah. The month of Nissan was approaching [then], and he was relying on the strength of his mazal.*

### ספר שמות פרק ט

(כו) וְרַק בְּאַרְצָךְ גִּשְׁן אֲשֶׁר שָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא הָיָה בָרֶד

(כז) וַיִּשְׁלַח פְּרַעֲהוּ וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם חֲטָאתִי הַפְּעַם יְדוֹד הַצְּדִיק וְאֲנִי וְעַמִּי הַרְשָׁעִים

### ספר שמות פרק י

(כח) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ פְּרַעֲהוּ לֵךְ מֵעַלִּי הַשָּׁמֶר לֵךְ אֶל תַּסֹּף רְאוֹת פְּנֵי כִּי בַיּוֹם רֵאשִׁית פְּנֵי תַמּוֹת

### ספר בראשית פרק א

(טז) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמָּאֲרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת הַמָּאֲוֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשַׁלֵּת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמָּאֲוֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשַׁלֵּת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים

### רש"י על בראשית פרק א פסוק טז

(טז) **המאורות הגדולים** - שוים נבראו ונתמעטה הלבנה על שקטרגה ואמרה א"א לשני מלכים שישתמשו בכתר אחד  
**ואת הכוכבים** - ע"י שמיעט את הלבנה (ב"ר מ"ו) הרבה צבאיה להפיס דעתה