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**The Plagues**

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# I. Introduction

In this [study](study.html) I want to look at the plagues that [HaShem](hashem.html) sent upon the Egyptians in the [time](time.html) of Moses. I would like to look at each of them in depth, and I would also like to compare them to the [creation](bara.html) story and to the plagues in the book of Revelation.

It is important to understand that the plagues were targeted towards those who did ***not*** know HaShem and towards those who would ***not*** free the Bne Israel from their enslavement:

***Shemot (Exodus) 5:2*** *And Pharaoh said: 'Who is HaShem, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not HaShem, and moreover I will not let Israel go.'*

Bear in mind that HaShem was targeting the plagues. He did not afflict His people, the Bne Israel, with the plagues. Chazal teach, for example, that the first plague, the plague of blood, did NOT afflict the Bne Israel.

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus IX:10*** *AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES: SAY UNTO AARON.[[1]](#footnote-1) R. Tanchum said: Why did not Moses smite the waters? Because God said: ‘It is not proper that the waters which protected thee when thou wast cast into the river should now be smitten by thee. No, they shall be smitten by none but Aaron.’ AND STRETCH OUT THY HAND OVER THE WATERS OF EGYPT-all[[2]](#footnote-2) the waters in the Nile, the pools and the ponds. AND OVER ALL THEIR PONDS OF WATER THAT THEY MAY BECOME BLOOD-including what was in the pitchers. AND THERE SHALL BE BLOOD THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT. Even the spittle of the Egyptian became blood. Why did God punish them with blood? To pay them back in their own coin, for so He said to Abraham: ’And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge’.[[3]](#footnote-3) They did not allow the daughters of Israel to have ritual immersion after their menstruation, so that they should not increase; on this account were they smitten with blood. AND MOSES AND AARON DID SO, AS THE LORD COMMANDED... AND THE FISH[[4]](#footnote-4) THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED.[[5]](#footnote-5) R. Abin the Levite, the son of Rabbi, said: The Israelites became wealthy from the plague of blood.[[6]](#footnote-6) How was that? If an Egyptian and an Israelite were in one house where there was a barrel full of water, and the Egyptian went to fill a pitcher therefrom, he would discover that it contained blood, but the Israelite would drink water from the same barrel. When the Egyptian said to him: ‘Give me some water with thy own hand,’ and he gave it to him, it still became blood. Even if he said to him: ' Let us both drink from one vessel,’ the Israelite would drink water, but the Egyptian blood. It was only when he had bought it from the Israelite for money, that he was able to drink water, and this is how the Israelites became rich.[[7]](#footnote-7)*

The Torah goes on to explicitly tell us that the plagues were not going to affect the Land where the Bne Israel dwelt:

***Shemot (Exodus) 8:18*** *And I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end that thou mayest know that I am HaShem in the midst of the earth.*

With this in mind, consider the following idea:

The Corona Virus: As the Sun Comes Up, the Corona Shines First.[[8]](#footnote-8)

One of the proofs that this is the last pre-Messianic Shmita cycle is if the Plagues more and more come on Mankind for trying to divide Yerushalayim (Zecharya HaNavi) and trying to divide Eretz Yisrael in general (Yoel HaNavi).

The nine nations that unilaterally condemned and threatened Israel for building in Givat HaMatos and the E1 corridor to Maaleh Adumim at the end of February:

France, Italy, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, and Belgium as the Headquarters for the EU.

Here is the EU condemnation. Remember the EU is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium while the EU Parliament is headquartered in Strasbourg, France.

And HERE is the condemnation by the Ambassadors of the 8 other countries listed above.

The top eight countries IN THE ENTIRE WORLD which have the worst death toll PER CAPITA from COVID-19 are: France, Italy, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, and Belgium! Germany has a very high per capita case rate, but for whatever reason, its death rate is far lower. Maybe we can discuss that anomaly later.

Here is the exact total in deaths per million citizens of these top eight countries to erase all doubts from this table:

And here are the top 8 countries IN THE WORLD with the highest PER CAPITA death tolls from COVID-19, starting from late February and early March when it exploded in Europe:

1. Belgium 756 per million

2. Spain 576 per million

3. Italy 511 per million

4. U.Kingdom 482 per million

5. France 414 per million

6. Sweden 328 per million

7. Netherlands 322 per million

8. Ireland 301 per million

The USA comes in 9th or 10th at 248 per million, but 60% of the deaths in the United States are in just 4 East Coast Blue States that voted for Hillary and therefore voted for the Division of Yerushalayim (New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut). The per capita death toll in the Red States that gave Donald Trump the Presidency is minuscule. Look at those state by state numbers for yourself. The biggest issue in states like Texas and Georgia is how fast can they possibly reopen their severely damaged economies, not about how 1700 people died in New York nursing homes while Andrew Cuomo himself wrote the rules condemning those elderly to death. I tried to warn Orthodox Jews in New York, that there is a problem with remaining there to make parnassah when you live behind enemy lines. At least for your own safety, live in G-d friendlier states like Texas or Tennessee (where there are existing Torah communities). For G-d's sake leave those East Coast cesspools. Your communities are NOT protected during this final period of Gog U’Magog if you live in a majority Reshayim State, that is where the majority of voters in your state are outright Reshayim who vote to divide Eretz Yisrael. From this present state of affairs from this plague of Dever that should be plainly obvious. And make Aliyah as communities bringing the Rich, Middle class, and the Poor together. Do not leave poor people behind.

By the way, here is the latest abomination from the EU. Notice the list of Western European countries once again showing their hatred for Israel. So there will be more plagues against the same usual suspects. Their outright hatred of G-d's overarching plan for Israel and for humanity as a whole is palpable.

***Ephesians 5:15-17*** *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

The coming plagues will affect those who are not walking with HaShem, beware!

Now let’s look at the Haggada to understand the plagues.

During the [Passover](passover.html) [seder](haggada.html), we recite the plagues while removing a drop of wine from our cup. This process is what I would like to look at [first](one.html):

When saying the following words “[blood](body.html), and [fire](fire.html), and pillars of smoke,” spill [three](three.html) times from the wine in the cup. Do not remove wine by dipping a finger, but by spilling from the cup itself, and do so into a broken/chipped dish. (Have in mind that the cup symbolizes the aspect of malchut which contains an aspect of “anger and indignation.” By means of our faculty of bina (understanding) we pour out [that aspect of “anger and indignation” - by spilling from the wine in the cup into a broken dish which represents klipah, i.e., that which is called accursed [the principle of evil]).

[Blood](body.html), and [fire](fire.html), and pillars of smoke.”

Another explanation:

“**Strong** [**hand**](fourteen.html)“ indicates [two](two.html) [plagues];

“**Outstretched arm**,” another [two](two.html);

“**Great manifestation**,” another [two](two.html);

“[**Signs**](signs.html),” another [two](two.html); and

“**Wonders**,” another [two](two.html).

These are the [ten](ten.html) plagues which the Holy [One](one.html), blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians, namely as follows:

When saying the [ten](ten.html) plagues, spill from the cup itself [ten](ten.html) times, as stated above (and when spilling,

again, have in mind what was said above). The wine remaining in the cup (will have become ‘wine that causes joy,’ thus) is not to be spilled, but other wine is added to it [to refill the cup].

[**Blood**](body.html)**.**

**Frogs.**

**Lice.**

**Wild Beasts.**

**Pestilence.**

**Boils.**

**Hail.**

**Locust.**

**Darkness.**

**Slaying of the** [**First**](one.html)**-born.**

Rabbi Yehuda referred to them by acronyms:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| DeTzaCh  דצ״ך | ([blood](body.html), frogs, lice); |
| AdaSh  עד״ש | (beasts, pestilence, boils); |
| BeAChaB  באח״ב | (hail, locust, darkness, [first](one.html)-born). |

The [letters](letters.html) באח״ב עד״ש דצ״ך are the initials of the names of the [ten](ten.html) plagues in [Hebrew](hebrew.html).

# II. Rabbinic [Insights](insights.html)

Parashiot Vaera-Bo 5756, “Rebbi Yehuda’s acronym”.[[9]](#footnote-9)

REBBI YEHUDA’S ACRONYM QUOTE: ...these are the [Ten](ten.html) plagues (= Plagues) which the Holy [One](one.html) Blessed be He brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt. They are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| דם | Dam | [Blood](body.html), |
| צפרדע | Tz’fardya | Frogs, |
| כנים | Kinim | Lice, |
| ערוב | Arov | Beasts, |
| דבר | Dever | Cattle Pestilence, |
| שחין | Sh’chin | Boils, |
| ברד | Barad | Hail, |
| ארבה | Arbeh | Locusts, |
| חשך | Chosheh | Darkness, |
| בכורות מכת | Makat Bechorot | Death of the Firstborn. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ד | דם | [Blood](body.html), |
| צ | צפרדע | Frogs, |
| ך **(**כ**)** | כנים | Lice, |
|  |  |  |
| ע | ערוב | Beasts, |
| ד | דבר | Cattle Pestilence, |
| ש | שחין | Boils, |
|  |  |  |
| ב | ברד | Hail, |
| א | ארבה | Locusts, |
| ח | חשך | Darkness, |
| ב | בכורות מכת | Death of the Firstborn. |

Rebbi Yehuda would make an acronym from the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) words for the [ten](ten.html) plagues: “D’TZ’CH - דצ״ך, A’D’SH - עד״ש, B’A’CH’V - באח״ב “. ([Passover](passover.html) Haggadah; Sifri Parashat Ki Tavo) Rebbi Yehuda proposed an easily memorized acronym for the [ten](ten.html) plagues: “D’TZ’CH - דצ״ך, A’D’SH - עד״ש, B’A’CH’V - באח״ב” (usually pronounced “DeTZaCH ADaSH B’ACHaV”). This simple mnemonic provides an easy way to remember the [ten](ten.html) plagues. A very basic question may be asked concerning Rebbi Yehuda’s mnemonic. A mnemonic is necessary to help us recall a matter which is not recorded somewhere readily accessible -- such as the opinion of a Sage in the [Mishna](orallaw.html) or [Gemara](orallaw.html), which did not originally exist in written form. The [ten](ten.html) plagues, on the other [hand](fourteen.html), are written clearly in the Torah, and every child can recite them by [heart](body.html). What need did Rebbi Yehuda see to create a mnemonic to help us recall the [ten](ten.html) plagues?

Commentators throughout the ages have discussed this issue.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Let us examine some of their suggestions.

**II** (1) The most obvious suggestion is that Rebbi Yehuda was not trying to help us remember the names of the plagues. Rather, he was emphasizing to us that the plagues are to be divided into [three](three.html) distinct sets. The [first](one.html) [three](three.html) plagues form [one](one.html) set, the second [three](three.html) form another, and the last [four](four.html) form a [third](three.html). There are a [number](nchart.html) of ways in which these [three](three.html) groups are distinct.[[11]](#footnote-11) Daat Zekenim suggests that perhaps Rebbi Yehuda’s acronym is a mnemonic after all. However, it is not meant to remind us of the plagues themselves. It is intended to record for us the correct “chronological order” of the plagues.

[Two](two.html) different chapters in Tehillim 78:44-51; 105:28-36 review the plagues which struck the Egyptians. These chapters, however, list them in a different order than the Torah does. Since the Sages tell us that the Torah does not always relate [events](feasts.html) in chronological order[[12]](#footnote-12), [one](one.html) may come to the mistaken conclusion that the order in Tehillim is the correct [one](one.html). Rebbi Yehuda meant to assert, through his acronym, that the order in which they appear in the Torah is indeed correct. Da’at Zekenim quotes a novel explanation for Rebbi Yehuda’s acronym from Rebbi [Yitzchak](isaac.html) ben Asher II (RYBA), which is also cited in part by Hagahot Maimonei. RYBA makes [two](two.html) points. [First](one.html), he remarks that if [one](one.html) writes the [three](three.html) sets of acronyms [one](one.html) on top of the other, the [third](three.html) [letters](letters.html) of each grouping spell חשך “CHoSHeKH” (= darkness), backwards:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **כ (ך)** KH | צ TZ | ד D |
|  | ש SH | ד D | ע A |
| ב B | **ח** CH | א A | ב B |

“D’TZ’CH דצ״ך, A’D’SH עד״ש, B’A’CH’V באח״ב “

RYBA derives from this that darkness accompanied all of the other plagues. That is, during the plagues of [Blood](body.html), Frogs, Lice etc., there was darkness, as well. Of course, the darkness of the actual plague of Darkness, when its [time](time.html) came, was much deeper.[[13]](#footnote-13)

RYBA’s second remark is that the plagues which occupy the [third](three.html) position in each set, always came together. That is to say, the plague of Lice was accompanied not only by darkness, but by boils, as well.

Similarly, the plague of Boils was accompanied by lice and darkness, and the plague of Darkness, was accompanied by boils and lice. The reason that they are listed individually in the Torah is because as the turn for each of them came, that particular plague was the dominant [one](one.html). Lice was dominant when the [time](time.html) came for the [third](three.html) plague, Boils by the [sixth](six.html), and Darkness by the [ninth](nine.html). RYBA contends that the inter-connectedness of these plagues is attested to through a diagram containing the [three](three.html) [three](three.html)-[letter](letters.html) words:

כנים - “KiNiM” (= Lice),

שחין - “SHeCHiN” (= Boils) and

חשך - “CHoSHeK” (= Darkness),

arranged [one](one.html) on top of the other. Interestingly, the names of the [three](three.html) plagues are spelled out in such a diagram both horizontally and vertically:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| חCH | שSH | כ **(**ך**)** KH |
| שSH | חCH | נN |
| כ **(**ך**)** KH | נN | םM |

The authors of the Tosafot are themselves perplexed by RYBA’s explanation. Although these are intriguing observations regarding Rebbi Yehuda’s acrostic, there would seem to be no source for RYBA’s assertions in Talmudic literature. To make such assumptions solely on such vaporous “proofs” would seem to be taking too much for granted. Perhaps we may suggest a [new](new.html) source for RYBA’s claims. It may be that RYBA was alerted to his explanation by the differences between the Torah’s version of the plagues and the versions presented in Tehillim.

In Tehillim 105, nearly all of the plagues are listed in their proper order. Only the plague of darkness is out of place. It is listed [first](one.html), instead of second to last. This may be what prompted RYBA to suggest that darkness actually accompanied “all” of the plagues. It is listed before the plague of [blood](body.html), in Tehillim, because darkness was present right from the beginning. In fact, the entire year of the plagues may have been characterized by darkness. Perhaps this is why Rebbi Yehuda’s acrostic spelled חשך CHoSHeKH “backwards”, the way RYBA arranged it. Rebbi Yehuda was pointing out that the order in which Choshekh appears among the plagues must be “reversed” -- as it indeed is, in Tehillim! RYBA’s suggestion accounts for the order of the plagues in [Psalm](psalms1.html) 105, at the same [time](time.html) explaining Rebbi Yehuda’s acronym.

The second half of RYBA’s explanation may be connected to another verse in Tehillim. In Tehillim 78, when specifying the plagues of the Egyptians in Egypt [three](three.html) of the plagues are omitted altogether. The [three](three.html) which are left out are none other than Lice, Boils and Darkness. If we accept the RYBA’s proposal that these [three](three.html) were not [three](three.html) distinct plagues, but rather they always came in conjunction, then it may be that they actually were not omitted. They are alluded to in verse 43, which tells us, “He performed “[signs](signs.html)“ in Egypt, and “wonders” in the [field](field.html) of Tzo’an (= the Egyptian capital).” This verse can be seen as alluding to an unspecified group of mixed [signs](signs.html) and wonders that struck the Egyptians all at once. Since Lice, Boils and darkness are not mentioned elsewhere in the [psalm](psalms1.html), the RYBA may have concluded that they are the plagues which are intended!

**III.** Some of the commentaries explain the meaning of Rebbi Yehuda’s acronym using the approach of Gematria, where every [letter](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) alphabet is accorded a numerical value, and any [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word has the “value” of the sum of its [letters](letters.html). Rav Shimshon of Ostropolier, a great Kabbalist of the 16th century, points out that the numerical Gematria value of “D’TZ’CH - דצ״ך, A’D’SH - עד״ש, B’A’CH’V - באח״ב” is 501. This is the same value as the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word “Asher” (= that). With this in mind, we may find many hints to the [ten](ten.html) plagues in verses that use the word “Asher.” Rav Shimshon quotes, for example, Shemot 4:17, “([Hashem](hashem.html) said to Moshe,) ‘Take this [staff](staff.html) with you, that (“Asher”) you may perform with it the [signs](signs.html).’ “ Take the [staff](staff.html) and perform with it the “Asher” (=501, or “D’TZ’CH - דצ״ך, A’D’SH - עד״ש, B’A’CH’V - באח״ב”) [signs](signs.html), the [signs](signs.html) hinted at by the acronym equaling 501 that was engraved upon the [staff](staff.html)!

Similarly, “You shall tell your son and grandson the way that (“Asher”) I punished the Egyptians”[[14]](#footnote-14). Tell them that I sent the Egyptians plagues with a numerical value totaling “Asher” (=501). Rav Shimshon was actually preceded in this Gematria by Hagahot Maimonei, who fits it into another verse: “All the plagues that (“Asher”) I have brought upon the Egyptians, I shall not bring upon you” (Shemot 15:26). All the plagues of Egypt, which total “Asher” (=501), [HaShem](hashem.html) shall not bring upon us. Finally, the Tosafists (in Hadar Zekenim) offer a unique Gematria approach to Rebbi Yehuda’s “D’TZ’CH - דצ״ך, A’D’SH - עד״ש, B’A’CH’V - באח״ב”

The portion of the [Haggada](haggada.html) immediately following our acronym deals with a [three](three.html)-way argument as to how many plagues the Egyptians actually suffered. Although the Torah only mentions openly the [ten](ten.html) plagues that affected the Egyptians in Egypt proper, the Torah hints that the Egyptians suffered at the Reed Sea “[five](five.html) times” as many plagues as they suffered while in Egypt. That means that they were plagued with “50” plagues at the sea, besides the [ten](ten.html) that took place in Egypt. Such is Rebbi Yossi HaGlili’s opinion.

Rebbi Eliezer disagrees. He contends that in Egypt, each plague was actually a “[four](four.html)-fold” plague. That brings up the mainland total to [forty](forty.html) plagues, and the sea-plague total to 5 x 40, or 200 plagues. Rebbi Akiva goes further, asserting that there the plagues of Egypt were “[five](five.html)- fold” plagues. The mainland total is now fifty plagues, making the sea-plague total of [two](two.html) hundred and fifty plagues! If we apply here the Talmudic dictum that, “These and those are both the words of [HaShem](hashem.html)“ (i.e., all the opinions are correct to some measure), we can add together all the figures that were suggested. This makes a grand total of a hundred plagues in Egypt itself, and [five](five.html) hundred more by the sea.

Rebbi Yehuda’s acronym was meant as a mnemonic for the total [number](nchart.html) of plagues that were suggested by the Sages in the section following his “[sign](signs.html)“ in the recital of the [Haggada](haggada.html). “D’TZ’CH - דצ״ך, A’D’SH - עד״ש, B’A’CH’V - באח״ב” adds up to a Gematria of 501, reminding us that the Egyptians suffered “500” plagues at the sea, plus another “1” hundred plagues in Egypt proper!

**Parshat Vaera 5759**

**Paro’s** [**Heart**](body.html)

# Rabbi Ari Kahn

[One](one.html) of the most intriguing elements of the [Exodus](exodus.html) story is the interplay between [HaShem](hashem.html) and Paro. Though they never actually [speak](mashal.html) directly, it is clear that they are the major players in the story. Moshe for his part finds himself running back and forth between [HaShem](hashem.html) and Paro, relaying messages and prophecies. [HaShem](hashem.html) has the upper [hand](fourteen.html), and if not for Paro’s arrogance and delusions of grandeur, [one](one.html) could almost feel bad for him. Of course, the reader, observing from the outside, appreciates the absurdity of Paro’s position: He doesn’t even [know](daat.html) what he is up against, yet we see clearly from our vantage point that his [hands](fourteen.html) are far too short to spar with [HaShem](hashem.html).

The cards are completely stacked against Paro, for not only can [HaShem](hashem.html) turn his beloved Nile into [blood](body.html), but [HaShem](hashem.html) can play havoc with all of nature and the rules thereof. Paro does not have a chance. The ultimate manipulation is where [HaShem](hashem.html) controls Paro’s “[heart](body.html)“. At this juncture we understand how futile a battle with the Almighty really is. Paro is strung along like a marionette on a string, performing as dictated by [HaShem](hashem.html).

A simple, often-asked question presents itself:[[15]](#footnote-15) How does [HaShem](hashem.html) punish Paro, if he was not even acting on his own volition? Furthermore, why did the Divine Plan need to include this violation of natural [law](law.html) - the suspension of Paro’s [freedom](freedom.html) of choice? As far as the second question goes, we appreciate that this can be posed regarding all of the plagues. There is a certain similarity between the plagues on the [one](one.html) [hand](fourteen.html) and the limitation of Paro’s [freedom](freedom.html) of choice on the other. [One](one.html) is a violation of nature, the other a violation of the nature of man.

This question presupposes the centrality of [freedom](freedom.html) of choice in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) philosophy. This assumption, that we indeed possess such [freedom](freedom.html), is the cornerstone of normative [Jewish](gen-jew.html) thought. According to Rambam, life without such [freedom](freedom.html) would be meaningless, a veritable theological nightmare. If man were simply programmed to perform various actions, he would have no responsibility for those actions, and life itself would be futile at best, inane at worst.

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) articulates this question, noting that it opens the door for heretical thoughts:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot 13:3*** *FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS* [*HEART*](body.html) *(X, 1). Another explanation: R. Yochanan said: Does this not provide heretics with ground for arguing that he had no means of repenting, since it says: FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS* [*HEART*](body.html)*?*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) does provide an answer:

*To which R. Shimon b. Lakish replied: Let the* [*mouths*](body.html) *of the heretics be stopped up. If it concerns the scorners, He scorns them:[[16]](#footnote-16) when* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *warns a man once, twice, and even a* [*third*](three.html)[*time*](time.html)*, and he still does not repent, then does* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *close his* [*heart*](body.html) *against repentance so that He should exact vengeance from him for his* [*sins*](sin.html)*. Thus it was with the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *Paro. Since* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sent* [*five*](five.html) *times to him and he took no notice,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *then said: ‘You have stiffened your* [*neck*](body.html) *and hardened your* [*heart*](body.html)*; well, I will add to your uncleanness’; hence FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS* [*HEART*](body.html)*.[[17]](#footnote-17)*

According to this response, the hardening of the [heart](body.html) was itself the punishment, and not, as we assumed, merely the impetus for Paro’s actions for which brought he was ultimately punished. The punishment Paro actually receives is quite exact, measure for measure: Just as Paro had closed his [heart](body.html) and ignored [HaShem](hashem.html), now Paro was punished by losing the sensitivity of his [heart](body.html) – which he had hardened himself.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) speaks of [five](five.html) occasions when Paro did not heed [HaShem](hashem.html). An analysis of the biblical text shows that [HaShem](hashem.html) did not harden the [heart](body.html) of Paro after the [first](one.html) [five](five.html) plagues. Quite the opposite: it is Paro who hardens his own [heart](body.html) and ignores the unrivaled might of [HaShem](hashem.html):

[Blood](body.html) And the magicians of Egypt did likewise with their enchantments; and Paro’s [heart](body.html) was hardened, nor did he listen to them; as the Lord had said. And Paro turned and went to his house, nor did he set his [heart](body.html) to this. (7:22,23)

Frogs But when Paro saw that there was respite, he hardened his [heart](body.html), and listened not to them; as the Lord had said. (8:11)

Lice - Then the magicians said to Paro, This is the finger of God; and Paro’s [heart](body.html) was hardened, and he listened not to them; as the Lord had said. (8:15)

Swarms of flies And Paro hardened his [heart](body.html) at this [time](time.html) also, neither would he let the people go. (8:28)

Cattle And Paro sent, and, behold, there was not [one](one.html) of the cattle of the people of Israel dead. And the [heart](body.html) of Paro was hardened, and he did not let the people go. (9:7)

After the [first](one.html) [five](five.html) plagues we note a subtle yet essential shift in language.

Boils And the Lord hardened the [heart](body.html) of Paro, and he listened not to them; as the Lord had spoken to Moshe. (9:12)

Hail And Paro sent, and called for Moshe and Aharon, and said to them, I have sinned this [time](time.html); the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are [wicked](wicked.html)… And when Paro saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders had ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his [heart](body.html),[[19]](#footnote-19) he and his servants. And the [heart](body.html) of Paro was hardened, nor would he let the people of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moshe. (9:27,34,35)

And the Lord said to Moshe, Go to Paro; for I have hardened his [heart](body.html), and the [heart](body.html) of his servants, that I might show these my [signs](signs.html) before him; (10:1)

Locusts But the Lord hardened Paro’s [heart](body.html), so that he would not let the People of Israel go. (10:20)

Darkness But the Lord hardened Paro’s [heart](body.html), and he would not let them go. (10:27)

Death of Firstborn And I will harden Paro’s [heart](body.html), that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored over Paro, and over all his army, that the Egyptians may [know](daat.html) that I am the Lord. And they did so. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled; and the [heart](body.html) of Paro and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, ‘Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?’ (14:4,5)

Now it is [HaShem](hashem.html) who is hardening the [heart](body.html) of Paro. This observation of the shift in language was made by Resh Lakish. The [first](one.html) [five](five.html) times Moshe approached him, Paro ignored the display of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s power. At that point, Paro lost the ability to repent. This is part and parcel of the punishment, this loss of the ability to rectify his ways. The punishments he receives are for his earlier deeds, not for the later rebellion. The “final solution” which was plotted by Paro at the outset of Shemot was sufficient reason for the punishment. This, coupled with the harsh, bitter slavery to which the [Jews](gen-jew.html) were subject, provides ample [justification](justification.html) for the torturous treatment of Paro and his henchmen.

This idea is expressed more succinctly in a different [Midrash](orallaw.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) V:7*** *BUT I WILL HARDEN HIS* [*HEART*](body.html) *(IV, 21)-to exact retribution from them.*

Again, Paro and the Egyptians are not punished for their deeds subsequent to the hardening of their hearts. Rather, [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s intervention here is designed to bring about the punishment for their earlier cruelty. There is, however, a subtle difference between these [two](two.html) approaches.[[20]](#footnote-20)

In the explanation of Resh Lakish, the hardening of the [heart](body.html) is the punishment, measure for measure. Thus, the question of the lack of free will is avoided: Men may only be punished for actions done of their own free choice, and here Paro is indeed punished for crimes committed against the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People by choice. The punishment: [HaShem](hashem.html) revokes Paro’s free choice. In this second [Midrash](orallaw.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) hardens Paro’s [heart](body.html) not as punishment, but in order to punish. Had Paro suffered through the various indignities of the plagues without [HaShem](hashem.html) having manipulated his emotions and judgement, it is difficult for us to imagine Paro not capitulating at some point to the [awesome](awesome.html) power of the Almighty. In fact, we can answer our previous question by turning the issue around: Surely it was the plagues which took away, or at least limited the free choice of Paro. Surely a beaten, abused Paro does not have the [freedom](freedom.html) to make a rational, dispassionate decision regarding belief in [HaShem](hashem.html). In order to allow Paro the [freedom](freedom.html) of choice to either accept or reject [HaShem](hashem.html), his [heart](body.html) had to be hardened, effectively restoring the equilibrium to Paro’s impaired, plague-ridden decision making process.[[21]](#footnote-21)

This idea may help us understand at least [one](one.html) specific [event](feasts.html), as well as a general concept that held sway throughout the biblical period. The [Jews](gen-jew.html) who stood on Mount [Sinai](stages.html) were also certainly extremely impressed by the theophany. It is difficult for us to imagine that any person who witnessed the Divine Revelation was not forever transformed by it. Hearing [HaShem](hashem.html) declare “I am the Lord” and commanding “not to make graven images” must have had a lasting impact. Yet, a mere [forty](forty.html) days later, we find the [Jews](gen-jew.html) worshiping a Golden Calf. This nearly impossible juxtaposition becomes more understandable when viewed through the prism of the free-will dilemma we witness in the case of Paro: After witnessing the Revelation, the [Jews](gen-jew.html) lost a certain element of free choice. They were no longer at liberty to accept or reject [HaShem](hashem.html) in their lives: [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s involvement in their lives was clear, immediate, palpable. This being so, their subsequent belief and performance of [commandments](cmds613.html) would have been tainted, of lesser value, victims of Divine leverage. The very same Revelation that brings man toward [HaShem](hashem.html) at the same [time](time.html) limits individual free will, making the actions of the individual, post-Revelation, meaningless. [HaShem](hashem.html) reestablished the equilibrium in His relationship with man by imbedding in his nature the [desire](needs.html) to rebel against the word of [HaShem](hashem.html). This is the key to the Golden Calf debacle.

In general, throughout the era of prophecy, the same dilemma existed: When man enjoys direct communication with [HaShem](hashem.html), his [freedom](freedom.html) is effectively curtailed. A [generation](toldot.html) which has a prophet in its midst will necessarily be effected. Therefore, throughout the age of prophecy there existed a powerful urge to worship idols. Only in the Second [Temple](temple.html) period, when prophecy became a thing of the past, does the urge for [idolatry](idolatry.html) disappear[[22]](#footnote-22). By then it was no longer needed; the relationship between man and [HaShem](hashem.html) had changed and the need for individuals to choose belief and rejection of [HaShem](hashem.html) was restored.

So many of us hope for revelation, craving the simple, non-intermediate relationship with [HaShem](hashem.html) that such revelation would ensure. We forget that any revelation of this sort carries a heavy price tag, rendering subsequent belief almost-meaningless unless accompanied by a counterbalancing temptation. Man believes that [freedom](freedom.html) of choice is an unalienable right. We forget that, at times, this right may be forfeited, as part of a punishment or as part of a larger scheme. The Torah reminds us of this with the lesson of Paro.[[23]](#footnote-23)

# III. Plague Relationships

A [Midrash](orallaw.html) points out that the plagues corresponded to the strategy of a general laying siege to a [city](city.html). Thus, the plague of [blood](body.html) corresponded to the poisoning of the drinking water; the frogs, to the trumpeters that would sow [fear](fear.html) among the inhabitants; the lice, to the arrows shot into the [city](city.html); the wild animals to the mercenaries that would be sent; and so on.[[24]](#footnote-24)

*‎*[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***PESIQTA deRAB KAHANA Pisqa*** [***Seven***](seven.html) ***VII:XI*** *R. Levi bar Zechariah in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Berekhiah: "It was with the arts of royal siege-warfare that God came against them.* [*First*](one.html) *of all, [a besieging army] shuts up their water supply, then he brings against them thunders of war, then he shoots arrows, then he brings troops, ‎then he storms them, then he pours burning oil, then he throws great stones against them, then he brings against them scaling troops, then he captures ‎them, then he takes out their greatest figure and kills him. ‎[So too is the order of God's siege of Egypt:]* [*first*](one.html) *he shut up their water supply: He turned their rivers into* [*blood*](body.html) *(Ps, 78:44). ‎Then he brought against them thunders of war: This refers to the frogs.” (Said R. Yose bar Hanina, "The croaking was worse for them than the frogs themselves." "Then he shot arrows: This refers to the lice. Then he brought troops: This refers to the swarms of wild beasts. Then he starved them out: A very heavy murrain (Ex. 9:3). ‎Then he poured burning oil: This refers to the boils. Then he threw great stones against them: This refers to the hail. Then he brought against them scaling troops: This refers to the locusts. Then he captured them: this refers to the darkness. Then he took out their greatest figure and killed him: This refers to the killing of the firstborn." ‎*

Now let’s examine some of the relationships which exist within the plagues themselves.

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XII:4*** *AND MOSES STRETCHED FORTH HIS* [*ROD*](staff.html) *TOWARD* [*HEAVEN*](heaven.html) *(IX, 23).* [*Three*](three.html) *of the plagues came through the agency of Aaron,* [*three*](three.html) *through Moses,* [*three*](three.html) *through God, and* [*one*](one.html) *through the united efforts of all* [*three*](three.html)*.* [*Blood*](body.html)*, frogs, and gnats, being on the earth, were through Aaron; hail, locusts, and darkness, through Moses, because they were in the air and Moses had power over earth and* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*; the swarms, the murrain, and the plague of the firstborn through God, and the boils-- through all of them.*

Abarbanel was the [first](one.html) to divide the plagues into groups. The plagues can be divided into the following groups:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The purpose of the [first](one.html) group:  [**HaShem**](hashem.html)**‘s existence.**  These were initiated by Aaron, with the [staff](staff.html) of Moses, and they involved water and land.[[25]](#footnote-25)  **DeTzaCh** - דצ״ך | The purpose of the second group:  **Divine providence.**  These were initiated by [HaShem](hashem.html), without the [staff](staff.html) of Moses, and they involved those [dwelling](dwelling.html) on the land:[[26]](#footnote-26) **AdaSh -** עד״ש | The purpose of the [third](three.html) group:  **A universal G-d.**  These were initiated by Moses, with his [staff](staff.html), and they revealed [HaShem](hashem.html)’s power to strike from the air:[[27]](#footnote-27) **BeAChaB -** באח״ב |
|  |  |  |
| 1. [**Blood**](body.html) - דם  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 7:14-25 | **4.** **Beasts** - ערוב  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:20-32 | **7.** **Hail/**[**Fire**](fire.html) **-** ברד  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:13-35 |
| Preceded by a warning | Preceded by a warning | Preceded by a warning |
| “…in the morning…” Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 7:15 | “… in the morning…” Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:16 | “…in the morning…” Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:13 |
| “…you shalt [know](daat.html) that I am [HaShem](hashem.html) Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 7:17 | “…you will [know](daat.html) that I, [HaShem](hashem.html), am in this land.” Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:22 | “… so you may [know](daat.html) that there is no [one](one.html) like me in all the earth. |
| Paro hardened his [heart](body.html). - Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 7:22-23 | Paro hardened his [heart](body.html). – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:28 | [HaShem](hashem.html) hardened the [heart](body.html) of Paro. – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:27,34,35, 10:1 |
| Reduced the Egyptians in their own land to the insecure existence of strangers.[[28]](#footnote-28) | Reduced the Egyptians in their own land to the insecure existence of strangers. | Reduced the Egyptians in their own land to the insecure existence of strangers. |
| 2. **Frogs** - צפרדע  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:1-15 | **5.** **Plague** - דבר  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:1-7 | **8.** **Locusts** - ארבה  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:1-20 |
| Preceded by a warning | Preceded by a warning | Preceded by a warning |
| “Go in to Pharaoh…”  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 7:26 | “Go in to Pharaoh…”  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:1 | “…Go in to Pharaoh…”  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:1 |
| Paro hardened his [heart](body.html). – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:11 | Paro hardened his [heart](body.html). – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:7 | [HaShem](hashem.html) hardened the [heart](body.html) of Paro. – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:20 |
| Robbed the Egyptians of their pride, their possessions, and their sense of superiority, reducing them to lowly submission. | Robbed the Egyptians of their pride, their possessions, and their sense of superiority, reducing them to lowly submission. | Robbed the Egyptians of their pride, their possessions, and their sense of superiority, reducing them to lowly submission. |
| 3. **Lice** - כנים  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:16-19 | **6.** **Boils** - שחין  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:8-12 | **9.** **Darkness** - חשך  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:21-29 |
| No warning!  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:16 | No warning!  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:8 | No warning!  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:21 |
| Paro hardened his [heart](body.html)  Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:15 | [HASHEM](hashem.html) hardened the [heart](body.html) of Paro. – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:12 | [HASHEM](hashem.html) hardened the [heart](body.html) of Paro. – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:27 |
| Imposed upon the Egyptians actual [physical](physical.html) suffering. | Imposed upon the Egyptians actual [physical](physical.html) suffering. | Imposed upon the Egyptians actual [physical](physical.html) suffering. |
| **10.** **Death** - בכורות מכת **-** **This was brought on by** [**HaShem**](hashem.html)**:** - Shemot 12:29-33, [Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabbah - [Exodus](exodus.html) XII:4 | | |
| [HaShem](hashem.html) hardened the [heart](body.html) of Paro – Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 14:4-5 | | |
| In order that you may know that God is differentiating between the Egyptians and Israel. | | |

Plagues **1**, **4**, and **7** are all introduced by a meeting between Moses and Pharaoh “in the morning”. These plagues also specifically state that the purpose of the plague is to [know](daat.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) . These plagues reduced the Egyptians in their own land to the insecure existence of strangers.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Plagues **2**, **5**, and **8** all take place in Pharaoh’s palace. These plagues robbed the Egyptians of their pride, their possession’s, and their sense of superiority, reducing them to lowly submission.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Plagues **3**, **6**, and **9** all take place without any warning being given to Pharaoh. These plagues imposed on the Egyptians actual [physical](physical.html) suffering.[[31]](#footnote-31)

But what is the purpose of this structure? The Maharal[[32]](#footnote-32) believes that this shows the gradual ascendancy of Moshe in his domination over Pharaoh. In the [first](one.html) encounter, Moshe meets Pharaoh but cannot come into Pharaoh’s home. To smite him, Moshe [first](one.html) warns Pharaoh. In the second encounter, Moshe can enter Pharaoh’s home, but still must warn him. Finally, the [third](three.html) Plague in each set shows complete domination over Pharaoh, as Moshe does not have to inform Pharaoh prior to the Plague, and immediately executes the action without an encounter. This explanation of the Maharal makes sense on the [one](one.html) [hand](fourteen.html), but also begs the question: if after the [first](one.html) set of Plagues ([Blood](body.html), Frogs, Lice), Moshe ALREADY demonstrates complete domination over Pharaoh, why is it necessary to return to the [first](one.html) stage once again in Plague #4 (Wild Animals) and begin again? Similarly, after once again showing complete domination in Plague #6 (Boils), why is it necessary for Moshe to begin again in Plague #7 (Hail)? Why the same pattern [three](three.html) separate times? However, if we examine the Plagues carefully, we will see that the PURPOSE of each set of Plagues is completely different, and, therefore, in each set, Moshe has to show his domination.

# IV. Purpose of the Plagues

Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) chapter 5 opens with Moses and Aaron visiting Pharaoh and demanding the release of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s people. Pharaoh then says[[33]](#footnote-33):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 5:2*** *Pharaoh said, “Who is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not* [*know*](daat.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and I will not let Israel go.”*

Pharaoh’s statement then sets the stage for the [ten](ten.html) plagues. There are [three](three.html) goals that [HaShem](hashem.html) [wants](needs.html) to accomplish with the plagues. The [first](one.html), and most obvious, is to get His people [out of Egypt](thebirth.html). The second is to get Pharaoh and the Egyptians to [know](daat.html) “Who is [HaShem](hashem.html)“. The [third](three.html) is the most profound: [HaShem](hashem.html) is [ONE](one.html), which means that He is going to demonstrate how even the worst contamination can be turned upside-down and shown to be a part of His [oneness](oneness.html). But now we understand: The plagues liberated us. They didn’t just [clean](purity.html) up the stage so we could make our exit. They transformed the [world](worlds.html) into a place in which [freedom](freedom.html) was possible, and Torah could now enter.

It is important to note these goals, in order to get some [insights](insights.html) later on.

The plagues are a crash course in getting to “[know](daat.html)“ [HaShem](hashem.html) and His [oneness](oneness.html).

[HaShem](hashem.html) [wants](needs.html) us to declare His [name](name.html) in all the Earth. [Exodus](exodus.html) 3:15 introduces [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [name](name.html), [HaShem](hashem.html), for the [first](one.html) [time](time.html):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 3:15***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the G-d of your* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*--the G-d of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, the G-d of* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *and the G-d of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*--has sent me to you.’ This is my* [*name*](name.html) *forever, the* [*name*](name.html) *by which I am to be remembered from* [*generation*](toldot.html) *to* [*generation*](toldot.html)*.*

In the introduction to the [first](one.html) plague, [HaShem](hashem.html) states His goal with the plague of [blood](body.html):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 7:17*** *“Thus said the Lord, In this YOU SHALL* [*KNOW*](daat.html) *THAT I AM* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; behold, I will strike with the* [*rod*](staff.html) *that is in my* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to* [*blood*](body.html)*.”*

If we think about it, Pharaoh did something much cleverer than what appears simply on the surface. He takes his advisors and shows that not only do they have the same powers as [HaShem](hashem.html), as demonstrated by Moses, but also have powers that Pharaoh himself does not have. Does this make Pharaoh beholden to his advisors? No. They are still under Pharaoh’s control. Thus, Pharaoh is saying that your [HaShem](hashem.html) has powers just like my advisors who have powers. Therefore,

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 5:2*** *“Who is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?”*

Just as I am not obligated to listen to my advisors despite their powers, I am not obligated to listen to [HaShem](hashem.html), despite His powers. The purpose of the [first](one.html) set of Plagues is to give an answer to his question:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 5:2*** *“Who is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?”*

# V. Timing of the Plagues

There is a Mishna which states, “The judgment of the Egyptians endured for 12 months”.[[34]](#footnote-34)

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus IX:12*** *AND SEVEN DAYS WERE FULFILLED, AFTER THAT THE LORD HAD SMITTEN THE RIVER.[[35]](#footnote-35) R. Judah and R. Nehemiah discussed this. One of them said that God warned them for twenty-four days prior to bringing the plague upon them, the actual plague lasting seven days; while the other said that for seven days did He warn them, the actual plague lasting twenty-four days. According to the one who maintains that for twenty-four days He warned them, the words AND SEVEN DAYS WERE FULFILLED refer to the actual plague; and*

Rashi to Exodus 7:25 - **Seven full days passed:**Heb. וַיְּמָּלֵא, literally, seven days were filled. Since the word וַיְּמָּלֵא is singular, Rashi explains: The number of seven days that the Nile did not return to its original state [was filled], for the plague would be in effect for a quarter of a month, and for three quarters [of the month], he [Moses] would exhort and warn them.[[36]](#footnote-36)

The Midrash[[37]](#footnote-37) says that after Moses first approached Pharaoh and he made the slavery even harsher, Moses had to flee back to Midian for either 3 or 6 months.

***Rabbenu Bachya, Shemot 10:5*** *If we accept his words we would have to say that the last three of the ten plagues all occurred during the first half of the month of Nissan whereas the previous seven plagues were scattered over a period of eleven months. It would follow then that each of the previous plagues lasted for more than the seven days attributed by the Torah to the first plague, i.e. the river turning into blood. The interval between the plagues then would have been 30 days. [I believe this is a misprint and should read “21 days” as the author stated in his commentary on 7,25. Ed.] On the other hand, from the words: “seven days were completed” (7,15), we learned that the interval between the plagues was seven days. This would have applied to all the plagues so that we could divide the time equally between periods during which there was relief and periods when one of the plagues was in effect. If we were to assume that Moses began his career as a prophet on the 15th of Nissan and that G’d spent seven days persuading him to accept His mission, then these seven days corresponded to the seven days which the Jewish people would celebrate as the Passover holiday after the redemption. [The author had already alluded to these theories in connection in his commentary on 4,10 and 4,18]. Subsequent to the 21st of Nissan, Moses first returned to Midian. He should have proceeded to Egypt immediately, but he had to return to Midian to get permission to be released from his oath to Yitro that he would not leave the country without his permission. This is the reason the Torah had to write (4,18 that Moses returned to Midian and his father-in-law, and having done so that God told him in 4,19 to proceed to Egypt.) God spoke to him “in Midian,” i.e. He told him “since you swore an oath in Midian you have to be released from that oath in Midian.”*

*Moses then proceeded to Egypt where both he and Aaron arranged an audience with Pharaoh when the King told them that he did not know Hashem, etc. All the subsequent developments, including the new decree for the Israelites to provide their own straw could have occurred within eight days until the end of the month of Nissan. According to one Midrash, Moses then went into a retreat for 3 months and was not seen by anyone. This brings us to the end of the month of Tammuz. The plague of blood would have covered the first seven days in Av. They were followed by relief until the end of the month. The plague of frogs and subsequent relief occupied the month of Elul. This pattern continued until the month of Adar when the plague of locusts was decreed. The plague of darkness occurred during the first seven days of Nissan followed by only seven days of respite. The plague of the dying of the firstborn occurred on the night of the 14-15th of Nissan so that the period from Moses’ experiencing the revelation at the bush until the Exodus was exactly 12 months. The wording in the Mishnah in Ediot that the judgments against the Egyptians extended over a period of 12 months must not be taken at face value then, but the Mishnah meant that from the time when God had decreed for these judgments to occur 12 months elapsed until the redemption.*

# VI. Meaning of the Plagues

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) stresses that each of the plagues represented punishment for a particular wrong that the Egyptians did to the [Jews](gen-jew.html): ‘They made them drawers of water--and so their river was turned to [blood](body.html); they made them load their freight -- and the frogs destroyed it; they had the [Jews](gen-jew.html) sweep the streets--and the [dust](rock.html) turned into lice; they made the [Jews](gen-jew.html) watch their children--and God flooded the country with wild animals that devoured the children ...’. The Egyptians made them cattle-herders, whereupon the pestilence killed the herds. They used them to prepare their baths--and then they developed boils which made it impossible for them to wash. The [Jews](gen-jew.html) were made stone-cutters -- and [HaShem](hashem.html) sent hailstones against the Egyptians. They were forced to tend the vineyards and fields--and the locusts consumed all that grew. The Egyptians sought to keep the [Jews](gen-jew.html) as prisoners--and were themselves shackled by the thick darkness that fell upon Egypt; their murderous designs upon the [Jews](gen-jew.html) brought the killing of the firstborn-- and their drowning of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) children was repaid by their death in the Sea of Reeds.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Various other Midrashim also stress that the plagues struck measure for measure, as divine retribution for the suffering of the [Jews](gen-jew.html). The plague of [blood](body.html) can be seen as a response to the shedding of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [blood](body.html) and the drowning of the children in the Nile; in addition the Egyptians were deprived of water by this plague because they had forced the [Jews](gen-jew.html) to labor without even a chance to wash off perspiration and dirt. As a result, the [Jews](gen-jew.html) also suffered from vermin, and this led to the plague of lice. The frogs and wild animals were sent against Egypt because the [Jews](gen-jew.html) had been sent afield to [gather](gather.html) all kinds of animals -- for the pleasure of the Egyptians and in order to disrupt the family life of the [Jews](gen-jew.html). When the Egyptians held their sumptuous banquets, [Jews](gen-jew.html) had to stand at attention, with torches on their heads, to light up the scene; hence the plague of darkness came to repay the Egyptians for the inhuman treatment of their slaves.

The [ten](ten.html) plagues certainly follow a pattern of increasing effect. [Blood](body.html), the [first](one.html) plague, struck the water, while frogs moved from the water to the land. Lice emerged from the [dust](rock.html) of the earth, and the [fourth](four.html) plague, *arov*, is understood by some classic commentators as swarms of insects. The [fifth](five.html) plague [attacks](attacks.html) the cattle and livestock of the Egyptians, and boils begin to [attack](attacks.html) the people’s own [bodies](body.html). The next [three](three.html) plagues - hail, locusts, and darkness - come from or affect the [heavens](heaven.html). After [nine](nine.html) plagues, all the domains of nature had been shown to be controlled by the God of the [Hebrews](bereans.html). When all the firstborn throughout Egypt are smitten on [one](one.html) night, then it is clear that [HaShem](hashem.html) is the master of life itself. There was nowhere else to turn; no part of [creation](bara.html) could be regarded beyond the power of [Hashem](hashem.html). Pharaoh’s somewhat bizarre request on that fateful night of [liberation](freedom.html) - “and may you bring a blessing upon me also” (ibid. 12:32) - reveals that Pharaoh had acknowledged [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s mastery over the entire natural order (see also 7:17, 9:14-17).[[39]](#footnote-39)

## Snake from a [staff](staff.html)

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***IX:8*** *GET THEE UNTO PHARAOH IN THE MORNING; LO, HE GOETH OUT UNTO THE WATER (ib.). Only in the morning did he go out to the water, because this* [*wicked*](wicked.html)[*one*](one.html) *used to boast that he was a god and did not require to ease himself; therefore he used to go early in the morning to the water. God, therefore, told Moses to catch him just at the critical moment. AND THE* [*ROD*](staff.html) *WHICH WAS TURNED TO A SERPENT SHALT THOU TAKE IN THY* [*HAND*](fourteen.html)*-So that he shall be afraid of it.*

From this [midrash](orallaw.html) we learn that Pharaoh was proven to require relieving himself because of the snake. Additionally, he was also discovered during the plague of [blood](body.html) when he was unable to enter the Nile because of the [blood](body.html).

## [BLOOD](body.html)

The [first](one.html) plague, [blood](body.html), struck at the Nile itself. Moreover, it demonstrated [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s supreme power because it did not merely represent [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s use of natural forces but an actual change in nature.[[40]](#footnote-40)

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) IX:9*** *Why were the ‘waters’* [*first*](one.html) *smitten, and with* [*blood*](body.html)*? Because Pharaoh and the Egyptians worshipped the Nile, and God said: ‘I will smite their god* [*first*](one.html) *and then his people,’ just as the common saying goes: ‘I will smite the gods and their* [*priests*](priests.html) *will tremble.’ For so it says: The Lord will punish the host of the high* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *on high; and after that, and the kings of the earth upon the earth (Isa. XXIV, 21).[[41]](#footnote-41) And the fish that are in the river shall die (VII, 18).[[42]](#footnote-42)*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) IX:10*** *AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SAID UNTO MOSES: SAY UNTO AARON (VII, 19). R. Tanhum said: Why did not Moses smite the waters? Because God said: ‘It is not proper that the waters which protected thee when thou wast cast into the river should now be smitten by thee. No, they shall be smitten by none but Aaron.’ AND STRETCH OUT THY* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *OVER THE WATERS OF EGYPT-all[[43]](#footnote-43) the waters in the Nile, the pools and the ponds. AND OVER ALL THEIR PONDS OF WATER THAT THEY MAY BECOME* [*BLOOD*](body.html)*-including what was in the pitchers. AND THERE SHALL BE* [*BLOOD*](body.html) *THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT. Even the spittle of the Egyptian became* [*blood*](body.html)*. Why did God punish them with* [*blood*](body.html)*? To pay them back in their own coin, for so He said to* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*: ‘And also that* [*nation*](nations.html)*, whom they shall serve, will I judge’ (Gen. XV, 14). They did not allow the daughters of Israel to have ritual immersion after their menstruation, so that they should not increase; on this account were they smitten with* [*blood*](body.html)*. AND MOSES AND AARON DID SO, AS* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *COMMANDED... AND THE FISH[[44]](#footnote-44) THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED (VII, 20-21). R. Abin the Levite, the son of Rabbi, said: The Israelites became wealthy from the plague of* [*blood*](body.html)*.[[45]](#footnote-45) How was that? If an Egyptian and an Israelite were in* [*one*](one.html) *house where there was a barrel full of water, and the Egyptian went to fill a pitcher therefrom, he would discover that it contained* [*blood*](body.html)*, but the Israelite would drink water from the same barrel. When the Egyptian said to him: ‘Give me some water with thy own* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*,’ and he gave it to him, it still became* [*blood*](body.html)*. Even if he said to him: ‘ Let us both drink from* [*one*](one.html) *vessel,’ the Israelite would drink water, but the Egyptian* [*blood*](body.html)*. It was only when he had bought it from the Israelite for money, that he was able to drink water, and this is how the Israelites became rich.*

It is interesting to note that not only did the Egyptians have to buy their water from the [Jews](gen-jew.html), as we saw above in the [Midrash](orallaw.html), but they each paid a unique price. According to the torment that he inflicted on the [Jew](gen-jew.html), that was his price. If an Egyptian did a lot of tormenting, then he paid more than the [one](one.html) who did minimal tormenting.

## FROGS

The frogs represented an invasion, by [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s messengers, of all aspects of Egyptian life, down to bed chamber and oven. Incidentally, the frog’s readiness to die on their mission demonstrated the importance of carrying out [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s will, even at the price of [one](one.html)‘s own life.[[46]](#footnote-46)

The frogs rise and cover the land. Pharaoh has less power here. He does not acknowledge a G-d that HE will [pray](prayer.html) to, but asks Moses and Aaron to [pray](prayer.html) to your G-d, as it says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:4*** *“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people”*

They do [pray](prayer.html) and the frogs are gone. Moses even asks Pharaoh at what [time](time.html) does Pharaoh “want” the frogs to leave, in Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:5, to demonstrate [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s domination over [time](time.html). Nevertheless, this does not force Pharaoh to acknowledge that [HaShem](hashem.html) obligates him to do anything.

***[Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XV:27*** *God brought the* [*ten*](ten.html) *plagues upon them in accordance with the regular plan of campaign; and of these, the frogs were the most grievous, as it says: And frogs, which destroyed them (Ps. LX,VIII, 45). They destroyed their* [*bodies*](body.html) *and emasculated them, for it says: And into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed (Ex. VII, 28). The frogs said to them: ‘The coinage of your gods is abolished, and shall your own coinage remain valid? ‘Hence ‘which destroyed them’, as it says: That he destroyed on the ground (Gen. XXXVIII, 9). Whence do we* [*know*](daat.html) *that they* [*spoke*](mashal.html)*? Because it says: Concerning the frogs, which He had brought upon Pharaoh (Ex. VIII, 8)*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) X:4*** *AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SAID UNTO MOSES: SAY UNTO AARON: STRETCH FORTH THY* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *(VIII, 1). R. Tanchum said: God said to Moses: The water which protected thee when thou wert cast into the Nile shall not be smitten by thee; hence AND AARON STRETCHED OUT HIS* [*HAND*](fourteen.html)*. Why did He visit them with frogs? Because the Egyptians, when subjecting Israel to slavery, ordered them to bring reptiles and creeping things; in retaliation did He bring frogs upon them. Whenever they used to fill a cup, it was found to be full of frogs. AND THE FROGS CAME UP, AND COVERED THE LAND OF EGYPT. R. Akiba said: It was only* [*one*](one.html) *frog, but this bred so rapidly that it filled the land of Egypt. R. Eleazar h. ‘Azariah said to him: ‘Akiba! What business have you with* [*Haggada*](haggada.html)*? Leave homiletical interpretations and turn to Neg’aim and Ahiloth. True there was* [*one*](one.html) *frog at* [*first*](one.html)*, but this croaked for the others to come.’ ‘And the magicians did in like manner with their* [*secret*](sod.html) *arts’-under the impression that it was only the work of witchcraft.*

## LICE

In the [third](three.html) Plague, there is something [new](new.html). In Lice, Pharaoh again calls his advisors to duplicate the plague (as they did in the [first](one.html) [two](two.html) Plagues), but, for the [first](one.html) [time](time.html), they cannot, Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:14. Another interesting pattern is that in each [one](one.html) of the [third](three.html) plagues in each of the [three](three.html) groups of Plagues, Pharaoh uses his advisors and call them in, but they cannot duplicate what [HaShem](hashem.html) has done. After they try, the advisors say:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:15*** *This is the finger of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)

They acknowledge [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s power, but, once again, this does not obligate them to believe. Nevertheless, they must agree in actuality and philosophically that [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s power indeed exists.

The lice represented the defeat of the all-powerful Egyptian [priests](priests.html) and magicians; they could not duplicate this plague, acknowledged [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s power, and are not mentioned again. Moreover, this plague struck at the earth which had heretofore provided man with the clay and bricks needed for his misguided adventures, such as the Tower of [Babylon](bavel.html)[[47]](#footnote-47) and, later, Pharaoh’s store-cities. This would explain why, according to some Midrashic opinions, the [Jews](gen-jew.html) at this point were no longer forced to continue their slave labor.

The Ramban[[48]](#footnote-48) gives a reason why the advisors could not duplicate the Plague of Lice. He says that in the Plagues of [Blood](body.html) and Frogs, [one](one.html) kind of matter is transformed into a different kind of matter. Regarding the lice, [HaShem](hashem.html) says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:12*** *“that it may become (VE-HAYA) lice throughout all the land of Egypt.”*

The word “VE-HAYA” is similar to the word “VAYEHI” which always suggests a [new](new.html) [creation](bara.html) from nothing, as it says:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3*** *“And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, Let there (YEHI) be light”*

and

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:6*** *“And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, Let there (YEHI) be a firmament”*

Similarly, by the Lice, the verse says

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:14*** *“And the advisors did likewise with their enchantments to bring forth (LEHOTZI) lice, but they could not”*

The word “LEHOTZI” is similar to the act of [creation](bara.html) in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:24*** *“And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, Let the earth bring forth (TOTZAI) all kinds of living creatures”*

The “Finger of [HaShem](hashem.html)“ uttered by the advisors signifies that they understand [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s power not only as the ability to transfer matter but also to be able to create Ex Nihilo, YESH MAI-AYIN, something from nothing. Thus, these [three](three.html) Plagues are a strong response to Pharaoh’s question of “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?”. This does not turn Pharaoh into a Righteous [Gentile](gen-jew.html) nor obligates him to listen to [HaShem](hashem.html), but it is a philosophical response that Pharaoh cannot refute. At this point, the advisors say only that it is a “Finger” of [HaShem](hashem.html) and not yet the entire “Strong [Hand](fourteen.html)“ of [HaShem](hashem.html). These Plagues do not “move” Pharaoh, but are merely a [first](one.html) step in the process of his belief, the philosophical [knowledge](knowledge.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) exists. But that does not affect the person’s actions or obligations. A person can acknowledge [HaShem](hashem.html) but harden his [heart](body.html) and cause no change.

It is belief in [HaShem](hashem.html) that is necessary, not mere intellectual understanding. If we only ask “Who is [HaShem](hashem.html)?” we could not possibly receive and adequate or satisfying response. The purpose of the second group of Plagues is to “[know](daat.html)“ [HaShem](hashem.html), and not to merely understand that He exists. Pharaoh must be shown that he has a relationship to this [Jewish](gen-jew.html) G-d.

What happens from here onward, regarding the Plagues? It seems, on the surface, very similar, both in purpose and form. But there is [one](one.html) small change in [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s work which signifies a great change. In the [fourth](four.html) Plague, Wild Animals, according to the established pattern, Moshe greets Pharaoh outdoors and gives him a warning. But then [HaShem](hashem.html) says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:17-18*** *“And I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people* [*dwell*](dwelling.html)*, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end that you may* [*know*](daat.html) *that I am the Lord IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH.”*

That there is a G-d, philosophically, in the sky, you, Pharaoh, have understood for [three](three.html) Plagues already. Now Pharaoh must learn that [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s existence is here, in this [world](worlds.html). How? [HaShem](hashem.html) is not merely showing His power, but His power is specific and directed. When Pharaoh opens his window, he will see a difference between the land of Goshen and the rest of Egypt. Pharaoh will then see that there is a direct [connection](connection.html) between the [sin](sin.html) and the punishment. Eventually, Pharaoh will admit this when he says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:27*** *And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, I have sinned this* [*time*](time.html)*; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*.*

Pharaoh will clearly see that there is good and evil, reward and punishment, and a pattern to [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s power. Before now, he knows that [HaShem](hashem.html) exists, but now Pharaoh will [know](daat.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) is “in the midst of the earth.”

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) X:7*** *AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SAID UNTO MOSES: SAY UNTO AARON: STRETCH OUT THY* [*ROD*](staff.html)*, AND SMITE THE* [*DUST*](rock.html) *OF THE EARTH (VIII, 12). R. Tanhum said: God said to Moses: ‘It is not proper that thou shouldst smite the earth which protected thee when thou didst kill the Egyptian.’ On this account did Aaron perform* [*three*](three.html) *plagues.[[49]](#footnote-49) AND AARON STRETCHED OUT HIS* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *WITH HIS* [*ROD*](staff.html) *(VIII, 13). Why did He bring gnats upon them? Because they made Israel the scavengers of their streets; on this account did their* [*dust*](rock.html) *become gnats, so that when they dug, cubit by cubit, there was no earth there, as it says: ALL THE* [*DUST*](rock.html) *OF THE EARTH BECAME GNATS. AND THE MAGICIANS DID SO WITH THEIR* [*SECRET*](sod.html) *ARTS TO BRING FORTH GNATS, BUT THEY COULD NOT (VIII, 14). From here you can learn, said R. Eleazar, that a* [*demon*](demons.html) *cannot create anything less than the size of a barley-corn; but the Sages say, They cannot create even the size of a camel,* [*save*](salvation.html) *that these [the larger creatures] they can assemble [by magic] whereas the others they cannot assemble.[[50]](#footnote-50) THEN THE MAGICIANS SAID UNTO PHARAOH: THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD (VIII, 15)As soon as the magicians realized that they were not able to produce gnats, they recognized that the deeds were those of a God and not witchcraft. They no longer claimed to compare themselves with Moses in producing the plagues.[[51]](#footnote-51)*

## WILD BEASTS

The wild beasts robbed the Egyptians of the use of their lands; greed and deceit were dominant forces in Egyptian society, but now the fruits of their immoral practices would no longer be enjoyed by the Egyptians. At the same [time](time.html), this plague reminded them that, as a result of their conduct, they could not expect the animals to [fear](fear.html) them as they were supposed to.

[**Midrash**](orallaw.html) **Rabbah - Shemot (**[**Exodus**](exodus.html)**) XI:3** AND [HaShem](hashem.html) DID SO. AND THERE CAME GRIEVOUS SWARMS OF FLIES INTO THE HOUSE OF PHARAOH (VIII, 20). He was smitten [first](one.html) because he was the [first](one.html) to counsel the evil thing, as it says: And Pharaoh charged all his people (I, 22); after him, AND INTO HIS SERVANTS HOUSES. AND PHARAOH CALLED... AND MOSES SAID: IT IS NOT MEET SO TO DO,[[52]](#footnote-52) because the Egyptians bow down to cattle as their god. WE WILL GO [THREE](three.html) DAYS [JOURNEY](stages.html) INTO THE WILDERNESS (ib. 23)-so as to mislead them.[[53]](#footnote-53) AND PHARAOH’S AID: I WILL LET YOU GO... AND MOSES SAID: BEHOLD, I GO OUT FROM THEE (ib. 24-5). Why BEHOLD? The [prayer](prayer.html) will be uttered immediately,[[54]](#footnote-54) So that the swarms may depart from thee tomorrow; hence it says: AND THE SWARM MAY DEPART... TOMORROW. AND MOSES WENT OUT... AND [HaShem](hashem.html) DID ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF MOSES; AND HE REMOVED THE SWARM. Why did He bring swarms[[55]](#footnote-55) upon them? Because they used to say to the Israelites: ‘Go, and bring unto us bears, lions, and leopards,’ in order to vex them.[[56]](#footnote-56) He brought upon them all kinds of wild beasts-so said R. Judah. R. Ezra, however, contended that they were various kinds of hornets and gnats. R. Judah’s view seems the more likely for this reason. In the case of the frogs, it is written: ‘And the frogs died,’ because there was no benefit to be derived from their hides; but in the case of the ‘swarm’, when there was benefit to be derived from their hides, THERE REMAINED NOT [ONE](one.html). Now, had they been hornets and gnats, they would have been left to putrefy.

## PESTILENCE - DEVER

The pestilence[[57]](#footnote-57) struck yet another blow at Egyptian pride, for it showed the Egyptians that they were no longer masters even of their own rightful possessions.

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XI:4*** *AND PHARAOH HARDENED HIS* [*HEART*](body.html)*... AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SAID UNTO MOSES... FOR IF THOU REFUSE... BEHOLD, THE* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *OF* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *IS UPON THY CATTLE (VIII, 28-IX, 2). Why did He bring a murrain upon them? Because they had made the Israelites shepherds of their herds and flocks, and had scattered their cattle over hills and desert places, in order to prevent Israel from multiplying.[[58]](#footnote-58) Hence did God say: ‘I will bring them an excellent shepherd,’ as it says: BEHOLD, THE* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *OF* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *IS UPON THY CATTLE. What is the meaning of AND THERE SHALL NOTHING DIE OF ALL THAT BELONGETH TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (IX, 4)? It means that any beast on which an Israelite had the slightest claim was saved even if it was in the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of an Egyptian; by this did they* [*know*](daat.html) *the judgment of Israel.[[59]](#footnote-59) AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*APPOINTED*](settimes.html) *A SET* [*TIME*](time.html)*... AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *DID THAT THING AND PHARAOH SENT (ib. 5-7). What is the meaning of: THERE WAS NOT SO MUCH AS* [*ONE*](one.html) *OF THE CATTLE OF THE ISRAELITES DEAD? Even such an animal, half of which belonged to an Israelite and half to an Egyptian, did not die.*

A tenet of monotheism is the belief in an invisible God which cannot be seen and whose essence is in no way [physical](physical.html) or human-like. The plague of *dever* was the only plague which was completely “invisible.” During each plague, the catalyst was visible and palpable (frogs, [blood](body.html), wild animals, boils, etc.), but the microbe that infected and ravaged the Egyptian herds was not discernable to the human eye. In this respect, *dever* was a perfect lesson to the Egyptians regarding an invisible [world](worlds.html). The plague is referred to as the “[hand](fourteen.html) of God” because it educated the Egyptians that God has no discernable elements; his [hand](fourteen.html) is UNSEEN and UNKNOWABLE. Associating *dever* with the “[hand](fourteen.html) of God” illustrates a unique message encapsulated in the [heart](body.html) of this plague.

## BOILS

In the Plague of Boils, there is no prior meeting with Pharaoh and no warning, as in every [third](three.html) Plague within each group. The advisors prove to Pharaoh the concept of the second group of Plagues, as it says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:11*** *“And the advisors could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for boils were on the advisors, and on all the Egyptians.”*

Not only does [HaShem](hashem.html) separate between the [Jews](gen-jew.html) and the Egyptians (Wild Animals) and between the cattle of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) and the cattle of the Egyptians (Cattle Disease), but this [time](time.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) also separates between those whom Pharaoh once claimed were the ones with power “on his side” opposing [HaShem](hashem.html), and between Moses and Aaron. Thus, Pharaoh is convinced that there is a G-d and that this [HaShem](hashem.html) is “in the land.”

The boils demonstrated a further tightening of the noose: even the [bodies](body.html) of the Egyptians were now struck. In this way, this plague also brought retribution for the immoral ways in which they misused their [bodies](body.html).

**It is significant that after this Plague, it never again says that Pharaoh hardened his own** [**heart**](body.html). Rather it says that G-D hardened Pharaoh’s [heart](body.html) (Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:12, 9:35, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27). Why? Because Pharaoh already reached the stage of [knowledge](knowledge.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) philosophically and also of [HaShem](hashem.html) as Provident in the [world](worlds.html). This is a great achievement, a stage that Yeshayahu (Isaiah) says:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 19:21*** *“And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shall be* [*known*](daat.html) *to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall* [*know*](daat.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in that day, and shall do* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *and meal* [*offering*](korbanot)*...”*

When Egypt came (will come) to this stage of KNOWING [HaShem](hashem.html) in the fullest sense of the word, they actually [sacrifice](korbanot.html) to Him.

In the Plague of Boils, there is, once again, a meeting outside and a warning (Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:13-14). But this [time](time.html) there is something “extra.” Not only will [HaShem](hashem.html) separate between [Jew](gen-jew.html) and Egyptian, as before, but this [time](time.html) there is a suggestion: “Send therefore now, and [gather](gather.html) your cattle, and all that you have in the [field](field.html); for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the [field](field.html), and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses; And he who regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the [field](field.html).”[[60]](#footnote-60) Suddenly, we see that Divine Providence extends to the Egyptians as well. [HaShem](hashem.html) is not only a nationalistic G-d of the [Jews](gen-jew.html), who separates between the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html) and other [nations](nations.html), but [HaShem](hashem.html) is a universal G-d who separates between those Egyptians who believe and follow [HaShem](hashem.html) and those Egyptians who do not. The culmination of this idea takes place in the Plague of Darkness. In that Plague, Pharaoh is not permitted to see the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people in their pain and suffering. The Rabbis explain[[61]](#footnote-61) the tragedy that took place during that Plague. The Plague lasted [three](three.html) days in order to allow the [Jews](gen-jew.html) to bury their dead, and so that the Egyptians should not be joyous. How many [Jews](gen-jew.html) died? According to Rashi,[[62]](#footnote-62) adopting the most “lenient” view of the [Midrash](orallaw.html), “only” 80% of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) died during that Plague. This was the most severe Holocaust in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) history.

Thus, we see that there is Divine Providence even within the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. Not only can non-[Jews](gen-jew.html) who [merit](merit.html) be rewarded, but also [Jews](gen-jew.html) who are deserving are punished. There is a consequence to action, and a difference between [Jews](gen-jew.html) who [fear](fear.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) and those who do not. Divine Providence is not between [nations](nations.html), but between Egyptian and Egyptian, [Jew](gen-jew.html) and [Jew](gen-jew.html). Thus, the [third](three.html) group of Plagues addresses this question, the most difficult question of all: why should Pharaoh listen to the G-d of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) -- He is the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) G-d who prefers [Jews](gen-jew.html)? Since we will always lose, we must create the Final Solution to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Problem. The [third](three.html) group of Plagues answers that if [one](one.html) believes, he will see that [HaShem](hashem.html) is a universal G-d for all people, and those who [fear](fear.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) will be rewarded while those who do not will be punished, irrespective of their nationality. But only if the [Jews](gen-jew.html) are allowed to freely fulfill their mission in this [world](worlds.html), in their land, will the [redemption](redemption.html) come not only for the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, but also for the non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) [world](worlds.html) as well. Only then will the prophecy be fulfilled which says “And the Lord shall be [known](daat.html) to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall [know](daat.html) the Lord in that day, and shall do [sacrifice](korbanot.html) and meal [offering](korbanot)..” (Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 19:21). Until then, you, the Egyptians and the non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) [world](worlds.html), will not understand.

There is a verse that explains this idea clearly. As referred to earlier, the verse says “Only you have I [known](daat.html) of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) But the continuation of that verse is “...therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Specifically, BECAUSE [HaShem](hashem.html) has a special relationship with the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s Providence is most strongly upon them, which implies that not only will the [Jews](gen-jew.html) receive the greatest rewards, but will also receive the greatest punishments. That is the double-edged sword of being the Chosen People. And, thus, the [Jews](gen-jew.html) are also the most annoying people. Because [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s Providence is in both directions, and is most clearly revealed through the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, you, the [Jews](gen-jew.html), have a [connection](connection.html) between the philosophical idea of belief in [HaShem](hashem.html) and your actions called [mitzvot](cmds613.html).[[63]](#footnote-63) Therefore, you are both a hated and suffering people, while, at the same [time](time.html), a great and chosen people.

These [three](three.html) levels are what Pharaoh must learn from the very [first](one.html) meeting with Moshe. At the end, after the [ninth](nine.html) Plague of Darkness, Pharaoh comes and says to Moshe something that only he can say. After the Plague of boils, Pharaoh said:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:27*** *I have sinned this* [*time*](time.html)*;* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is righteous, and I and my people are* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*.*

This can be said only by a man who understands that there is Divine Providence. After the Plague of Darkness, Pharaoh says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 10:16*** *I have sinned against the Lord your G-d, and against YOU.*

He now understands what it takes the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people many years to understand. He who [sins](sin.html) against the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people [sins](sin.html) against [HaShem](hashem.html), and he who [sins](sin.html) against [HaShem](hashem.html) [sins](sin.html) against the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. Pharaoh now understands why he must now send the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people [out of Egypt](thebirth.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XI:5*** *AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SAID UNTO MOSES AND UNTO AARON: TAKE TO YOU HANDFULS OF SOOT OF THE* [*FURNACE*](furnace.html) *(IX, 8). A great miracle happened in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with the boils. Both Moses and Aaron took handfuls, but the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of Moses held not only his handful, but also that of Aaron, a proof that the lesser can contain the greater.[[64]](#footnote-64) This plague was brought about by God, Moses, and Aaron, because Moses and Aaron took handfuls of soot and threw them heavenwards, and God converted them into boils[[65]](#footnote-65) while still on high, and these descended upon them. AND IT SHALL BECOME SMALL* [*DUST*](rock.html) *OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT (ib. 9). Why did He bring boils upon them? Because they had* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *the Israelites to heat warm things for them and keep cool the things that were cold; on this account were they smitten with boils, so that they should not be able to touch their* [*bodies*](body.html)*.[[66]](#footnote-66) R. Yahoshua (Joshua) b Levi said: A great miracle happened in the case of the boils; when a man casts an arrow heavenwards, it does not* [*travel*](mashal.html) *a hundred cubits, yet Moses threw heavenwards handfuls of soot from a* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*, a thing which has no substance, and they reached right up to the Throne of Glory. Another miracle was that what Moses held in* [*one*](one.html)[*hand*](fourteen.html) *equaled* [*two*](two.html) *handfuls. Yet another miracle occurred in the case of the boils. An ordinary man who scatters* [*one*](one.html) *kab of* [*dust*](rock.html) *scatters it only over* [*four*](four.html) *cubits, but Moses took* [*one*](one.html) *handful and scattered it over the whole land of Egypt.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XI:6*** *AND THEY TOOK SOOT OF THE* [*FURNACE*](furnace.html)*... BREAKING FORTH WITH BLAINS UPON MAN AND BEAST (IX, 10). What is the meaning of BREAKING FORTH? They were smitten with leprosy along with this. This word is used in: And if the leprosy break out abroad in the skin (Lev. XIII, 12). AND THE MAGICIANS COULD NOT STAND BEFORE MOSES, etc. (IX, 11). Why were they not able to stand before Moses? Because it was they who had counselled Pharaoh to cast into the Nile every* [*male*](male+female.html) *child that was born, so that Moses should die. Moreover, it was they who had condemned him to be slain for removing the crown from the* [*head*](body.html) *of Pharaoh to his own* [*head*](body.html)*, hence THE MAGICIANS COULD NOT STAND BEFORE MOSES. AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *HARDENED THE* [*HEART*](body.html) *OF PHARAOH (ib. 12). When God perceived that he did not relent after the* [*first*](one.html)[*five*](five.html) *plagues, He decided that even if Pharaoh now wished to repent, He would harden his* [*heart*](body.html) *in order to exact the whole punishment from him. AS* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *HAD SPOKEN UNTO MOSES-for so it is written: And I will harden Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html) *(VII, 3).*

## HAIL and [FIRE](fire.html)

In the introduction to the [seventh](seven.html) plague, [HaShem](hashem.html) specifically states that the purpose of Pharaoh, and the [seventh](seven.html) plague is:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:16*** *But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my* [*name*](name.html) *might be proclaimed in all the earth.*

With the [seventh](seven.html) plague [HaShem](hashem.html) starts to separate those who [fear](fear.html) His [name](name.html) and those who do not:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:19-21*** *Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the* [*field*](field.html) *to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the* [*field*](field.html)*, and they will die.’” Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *left their slaves and livestock in the* [*field*](field.html)*.*

The [seventh](seven.html) plague is unique in several ways:

1. It is the only plague where [HaShem](hashem.html) indicates that it is ALL of the plagues:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:14*** *For I will at this* [*time*](time.html) *send all my plagues upon thy* [*heart*](body.html)*, and on thy servants, and on thy people; that thou mayest* [*know*](daat.html) *that there is none like Me in all the earth.*

1. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:30 contains a unique form of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [name](name.html) which is found nowhere else in the Torah:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:30*** *But I* [*know*](daat.html) *that you and your officials still do not* [*fear*](fear.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Elohim.*

This combination of names is the equivalent of having ‘justice’ and ‘mercy’ at the same [time](time.html). People are just not capable of these [two](two.html) things simultaneously.

1. This is the only plague where [HaShem](hashem.html) mixes [two](two.html) substances that ordinarily can not be mixed:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:23-24*** *And Moshe stretched out his* [*rod*](staff.html) *towards* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*: and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sent thunder and hail; and the* [*fire*](fire.html) *rained down upon the ground; and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *rained hail upon the land of Mitzrayim. So there was hail and* [*fire*](fire.html) *flaring up amidst the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Mitzrayim since it became a* [*nation*](nations.html)*.[[67]](#footnote-67)*

The [fire](fire.html) is literally inside the hail! The [fire](fire.html) would melt the ice, turning it into water. The water would quench the [fire](fire.html) leaving only steam. Such a combination could never, ordinarily, exist in nature.

1. This is the only plague where [HaShem](hashem.html) gave the Egyptians and Pharaoh the option of not being hurt by it. Imagine a plague that does not hurt anyone who heeds [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s warning!

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:18-22*** *Therefore, at this* [*time*](time.html) *tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the* [*field*](field.html) *to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the* [*field*](field.html)*, and they will die.’” Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *left their slaves and livestock in the* [*field*](field.html)*. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Stretch out your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt--on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.”*

By putting the above points together we can see that the combination of the [two](two.html) names of [HaShem](hashem.html) is like combining hail and [fire](fire.html). And even as [HaShem](hashem.html) gave the G-d fearers the “mercy” to avoid the plague; He gave those who did not [fear](fear.html) [HaShem](hashem.html): Justice. Truly this plague combined justice and mercy.

Ramban writes that unlike the [first](one.html) [seven](seven.html) plagues, which were intended to punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the last [three](three.html) were designed primarily to demonstrate [Hashem](hashem.html)‘s power to the Egyptians. Also, they enabled Bnei Yisrael to tell their children and grandchildren that [HaShem](hashem.html) can do anything that He wishes with the universe:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **os** | Dam | [Blood](body.html), |
| **gsrpm** | Tzfardya | Frogs, |
| **ohbf** | Kinim | Lice, |
| **curg** | Arov | Beasts, |
| **rcd** | Dever | Cattle Pestilence, |
| **ihja** | Shchin | Boils, |
| **src** | Barad | Hail, |
|  |  |  |
| **vcrt** | Arbeh | Locusts, |
| **laj** | Chosheh | Darkness, |
| **,fn**  **,urufc** | Makat Bechorot | Death of the Firstborn. |

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XII:2*** *BEHOLD, TO-MORROW ABOUT THIS* [*TIME*](time.html) *I WILL CAUSE IT TO RAIN A VERY GRIEVOUS HAIL (IX, 18). Zabdi b. Levi said: He scratched a mark on the wall and said: ‘When the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *reaches this mark to-morrow, the hail will descend.[[68]](#footnote-68) SUCH AS HAD NOT BEEN IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT-there had been nothing like it before either in the rest of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *or in Egypt. [Again], it does not say ‘it will not be’, as in the case of the plague of the firstborn where we are told: Nor shall be like it any more (Xl, 6), but SUCH AS HAD NOT BEEN, that is, had not been in the past, but there will be in the* [*Time*](time.html) *to Come.[[69]](#footnote-69) When? In the days of Gog and Magog, as it is written: Which I have reserved against the* [*time*](time.html) *of trouble, against the day of battle and war (Iyov (Job) XXXVIII, 23), and similarly, An overflowing shower, and great hailstone,* [*fire*](fire.html)*, and brimstone (Ezek. XXXVIII, 22).[[70]](#footnote-70) NOW THEREFORE SEND, HASTEN IN THY CATTLE (IX, 19). See the mercies of God! Even in His wrath, He had mercy on the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *and on their cattle, because He sent the plague of hail only on the produce of the land, even warning them to protect themselves and their cattle that they should not be smitten by the hail. HE THAT FEARED THE WORD OF* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *AMONG THE SERVANTS OF PHARAOH (X, 20). Our Rabbis of blessed memory said: This refers to Iyov (Job).[[71]](#footnote-71) AND HE THAT REGARDED NOT THE WORD OF* [*HASHEM*](hashem.html) *(ib. 21) refers to Pharaoh and his people.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XII:4*** *AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SENT THUNDER AND HAIL. Wherever it says ‘And the Lord’ it refers to Him and His heavenly Tribunal, just as when it says: And the Lord remembered Sarah (Gen. XXI, 1), it means, He and His counsellors.[[72]](#footnote-72) When it says, therefore, AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SENT THUNDER AND HAIL, it means that He and His counsellors did so. AND* [*FIRE*](fire.html) *RAN DOWN UNTO THE EARTH: they were punished as are the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *in Gehinnom. When* [*one*](one.html) *of them sat down, he was scorched by the hail, and when he stood up, he was scorched by the* [*fire*](fire.html)*.[[73]](#footnote-73) SO THERE WAS HAIL, AND* [*FIRE*](fire.html) *FLASHING UP AMIDST THE HAIL (IX, 24). A double miracle occurred. R. Judah and R. Nehemiah discussed this[[74]](#footnote-74):* [*One*](one.html) *said: It was like the split pomegranate whose* [*seeds*](flower.html) *are visible from without.[[75]](#footnote-75) The other said: It was like [the light in] the glass in which water and oil are mixed together, and the light burns within. Imagine* [*two*](two.html) *fierce legions who were always at war with* [*one*](one.html) *another, but when the king needed their services for his own battle, he made peace between them, so that both should carry out the orders of the king. In like manner,* [*fire*](fire.html) *and hail are hostile to each other, but when the* [*time*](time.html) *came to war with Egypt, God made peace between them and both smote the Egyptians; hence AND THERE WAS HAIL, AND* [*FIRE*](fire.html) *FLASHING UP (MITHLAKAHATH) AMIDST THE HAIL. What is the meaning of ‘mithlakahath’? It is* [*two*](two.html) *words: Meth lakahath (a corpse it took)--after the hail had smitten* [*one*](one.html) *to death, the* [*fire*](fire.html) *took him away and burnt him. AND THE HAIL SMOTE THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT (IX, 25)--the hailstones on the ground formed battlements all round their cattle so that they were not able to get out. When an Egyptian brought a knife and slew an animal, a bird would swoop down from above and devour it, as it says: He gave over their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to fiery bolts (Ps. LXXVIII, 48). What is the meaning of: ‘And their flocks to fiery bolts’? This refers to the birds, as it says: As the sparks’[[76]](#footnote-76) fly upward (Iyov (Job) V, 7). AND THE HAIL SMOTE EVERY HERB OF THE* [*FIELD*](field.html)*, AND BROKE EVERY TREE OF THE* [*FIELD*](field.html) *(ib.). He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees with frost--ba-hanamal (Ps. LXXVIII, 47). R. Judah b. Shalom said: What is the meaning of’ba-hanamal’?[[77]](#footnote-77) It came (ba), it alighted (nah), it cut off everything (mal).[[78]](#footnote-78) R. Phinehas said: The hail came down like an axe cutting the trees. ONLY IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN (IX, 26). Why was it saved? Because its Patron was guarding it,[[79]](#footnote-79) as it says: WHERE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE, THERE WAS NO HAIL (ib.).*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XII:6*** *AND THE FLAX AND THE BARLEY WERE SMITTEN; FOR THE BARLEY WAS IN THE EAR... BUT THE WHEAT AND THE SPELT WERE NOT SMITTEN; FOR THEY RIPEN LATE (IX, 31). What is the meaning of THEY RIPEN LATE (AFILOTH)? R. Phinehas and R. Judah b. Shalom explained this differently. The* [*first*](one.html) *said that God wrought miracles (pel’aim)[[80]](#footnote-80) with them; the second, that they were late in ripening.[[81]](#footnote-81) Said R. Phinehas to him: ‘Does it not say “And the hail smote every[[82]](#footnote-82) herb of the* [*field*](field.html) *“ (IX, 25)? Yet you maintain that they were not smitten because they were yet tiny? No, you must admit that God wrought miracles with them.’*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XII:7*** *AND MOSES WENT OUT OF THE* [*CITY*](city.html) *FROM PHARAOH (IX, 33). Though he was still in the* [*city*](city.html)*‘s boundary, he delayed not in* [*praying*](prayer.html) *for them,[[83]](#footnote-83) but ‘SPREAD FORTH HIS* [*HANDS*](fourteen.html) *UNTO* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *(ib.) and He accepted his* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*. AND THE THUNDERS AND HAIL CEASED, AND THE RAIN WAS NOT POURED UPON THE EARTH (ib.). God suspended them in midair; and when did they descend?[[84]](#footnote-84) In the days of Yahoshua (Joshua) they descended upon the Amorites, as it says: And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel... that the Lord cast down great stones from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *upon them (Josh. X,11). The remainder will descend in the days of Gog and Magog. AND WHEN PHARAOH SAW THAT THE RAIN AND THE HAIL AND THE THUNDERS HAD CEASED, HE SINNED YET MORE (IX, 34). So it always is with the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*; as long as they are in trouble, they humiliate themselves, but as soon as the trouble passes, back they return to their perversity.[[85]](#footnote-85) Thus Nebuchadnezzar, when he was in trouble, praised God, as it says: Now, I Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*; for all His words are truth (Dan. IV, 34), but as soon as he recovered his greatness, he began to boast: The King* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *and said: Is not this great* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*, which I have built for a royal* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html)*-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty (ib. 27). Pharaoh also did the same: for when he saw that THE RAIN AND THE HAIL AND THE THUNDERS WERE CEASED, HE SINNED YET MORE (IX, 34)*

## LOCUSTS

The plagues of hail and locusts can be seen as a punishment for the failure of the Egyptians to properly use their G-d-given faculties. They had refused to see [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [hand](fourteen.html) in the [world](worlds.html), or to hear His warnings; now they were forced to hear and see unmistakable demonstrations of His power and will: the thunder that accompanied the hailstorm, and the heavy layer of locusts that hid the entire land. The proper use of our senses is of crucial importance to man. All human failings began with Eve’s seeing and [Adam](adam.html)‘s listening to the wrong thing;[[86]](#footnote-86) now the plagues prepared the [Jews](gen-jew.html), and all of mankind, to see and hear [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s revelation on Mount [Sinai](stages.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XIII:4*** *AND THAT THOU MAYEST TELL IN THE* [*EARS*](body.html) *OF THY SON (X, 2). God revealed unto Moses the plague He would bring upon them, and Moses in his record gave a hint of it in the words, AND THAT THOU MAYEST TELL IN THE* [*EARS*](body.html) *OF THY SON, which refers to the plague of locusts, as it is said: Tell ye your children of it (Yoel (Joel) I, 3). AND MOSES AND AARON WENT IN... ELSE, IF THOU REFUSE TO LET MY PEOPLE Go, etc. (ib. 3-4). What is the meaning of BEHOLD, TOMORROW WILL I BRING LOCUSTS INTO THY BORDER (ib.)? That is, not into the border of the sons of Ham[[87]](#footnote-87); that is why it says: For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *learn righteousness (Isa. XXVI, 9); for on account of the locust plague did they* [*know*](daat.html) *the extent of Egypt’s borders.[[88]](#footnote-88) AND THEY SHALL COVER THE* [*FACE*](body.html) *OF THE EARTH... AND THY HOUSES SHALL BE FILLED... AND HE TURNED, AND WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH (ib. 5--6). Why did he do so? Because he saw them turning to* [*one*](one.html) *another, as if inclined to believe his words; he therefore went out to allow them to take counsel how to repent.*

[**Midrash**](orallaw.html) **Rabbah - Shemot (**[**Exodus**](exodus.html)**) XIII:6** AND [HaShem](hashem.html) SAID UNTO MOSES: STRETCH OUT THY [HAND](fourteen.html) (X, 12). Why did He bring the locusts upon them? Because they had made Israel sowers of wheat and barley; hence did He bring the locusts which devoured all that the Israelites had sown for them. AND MOSES STRETCHED FORTH HIS [ROD](staff.html), etc. (ib. 13). Why did God fix a [time](time.html) for the plagues--’tomorrow,’ and not bring them at once? So that they might feel remorse and do penitence.[[89]](#footnote-89) AND THE LOCUSTS WENT UP... FOR THEY COVERED THE [FACE](body.html) OF THE WHOLE EARTH.... THEN PHARAOH CALLED FOR MOSES AND AARON IN HASTE, etc. (ib. 14-16). What is the meaning of: I HAVE SINNED AGAINST [HaShem](hashem.html) YOUR GOD, AND AGAINST YOU? I HAVE SINNED AGAINST [HaShem](hashem.html) YOUR GOD by not setting Israel free, AND AGAINST YOU by driving you out from my presence. Also, because I intended to curse you when I said: ‘So be the Lord with you. Now THEREFORE [FORGIVE](forgive.html), I [PRAY](prayer.html) THEE, MY [SIN](sin.html) ONLY THIS ONCE... AND HE WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH (ib. 17-18). rejoiced and said: ‘ Let us [gather](gather.html) them and fill barrels with them.’ Then did God say: ‘Wretches! Will you rejoice with the plagues I have brought upon you?’ Immediately AND [HaShem](hashem.html) TURNED AN EXCEEDING STRONG WEST WIND-this is the westerly wind,[[90]](#footnote-90) WHICH TOOK UP THE LOCUSTS. What is the meaning of THERE REMAINED NOT [ONE](one.html) LOCUST? Even those that had been pickled in their pots and barrels took wing and fled. [Yet even so,] BUT [HaShem](hashem.html) HARDENED PHARAOH’S [HEART](body.html) (ib. 20).

## DARKNESS

The plague of darkness put an end to all constructive human activity and, in particular, isolated every individual from his fellow-beings; in this way the Egyptians were shown the effect of a total breakdown of the social order, which they had been courting by their unrestrained self-seeking and disrespect for other human beings. Whilst they were made to realize that the rule of evil is bound to bring darkness upon the [world](worlds.html), the [Jews](gen-jew.html) who looked to God for their [salvation](salvation.html) enjoyed the use of light to prepare for their [redemption](redemption.html) in accordance with [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s instructions.

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XIV:1*** *AND* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *SAID UNTO MOSES: STRETCH OUT THY* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *(X, 21). Thus it is written: He sent darkness, and it was dark; and they rebelled not against His word (PS. CV, 28). Our Rabbis said: Because they did not accept the word of God as that of a Lord and master.[[91]](#footnote-91) Another explanation: God said to the* [*angels*](angels.html)*: ‘ The Egyptians deserve to be smitten with darkness.’ Immediately they all agreed unanimously, not* [*one*](one.html) *dissenting.[[92]](#footnote-92) What is the meaning of ‘He sent darkness, and it was dark’? We may illustrate by the case of a master whose slave sinned against him, whereupon he commanded someone to give him fifty lashes. But the man went and administered a hundred lashes, adding fifty of his own. Thus did the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed and exalted[[93]](#footnote-93) be He, send darkness upon the land of Egypt; but the darkness added something of its own. This is the meaning of ‘He sent darkness, and it was dark’. EVEN DARKNESS WHICH MAY BE FELT (ib.). How thick was this darkness? Our Sages conjectured that it was as thick as a denar,for when it says EVEN DARKNESS WHICH MAY BE FELT, it means a darkness which had substance.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XIV:2*** *AND MOSES STRETCHED FORTH HIS* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *TOWARD* [*HEAVEN*](heaven.html)*; AND THERE WAS A THICK DARKNESS (X, 22). Whence did that darkness come? R. Judah said: From the darkness above, for it says: He made darkness His hiding place, His pavilion round about Him (Ps. XVIII, 12). R. Ezra said: It came from the darkness of Gehinnom, for it says: A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; a land of the shadow of death, without any order (Iyov (Job) X, 22).[[94]](#footnote-94) Woe to the house whose casements open to the darkness, as it is said: And where the light is as darkness (ib.). Their light itself[[95]](#footnote-95) came from darkness.[[96]](#footnote-96) Hence does it say: In the day when he went down to the netherworld I caused the deep to* [*mourn*](mourning.html) *(he-ebalti) and cover itself for him (Ezek. XXXI, 15). This is written hobalti.[[97]](#footnote-97) R. Judah b. Rabbi said: With what are the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *covered in Gehinnom? With darkness. Hezekiah said: With what does* [*one*](one.html) *cover a tub? With an earthenware lid of the same substance; just as the tub is of earthenware, so the lid is of earthenware, equally will it be with the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*, as it is said: And their works are in the dark (Isa. XXIX, 15). God, therefore, covered them with the deep, which is darkness, for it says: And darkness was upon the* [*face*](body.html) *of the deep (Gen. I, 2). This refers to Gehinnom--a proof that the darkness which came upon the Egyptians was from Gehinnom.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) XIV:3*** *Why did God, blessed be His* [*Name*](name.html)*,[[98]](#footnote-98) before whom there is no respecting of persons, and who searches the* [*heart*](body.html) *and tries the reins, bring darkness upon them? Because there were transgressors in Israel who had Egyptian patrons and lived in affluence and honour, and were unwilling to leave. So God said: ‘If I bring upon them publicly a plague from which they will die, the Egyptians will say: “Just as it has passed over us, so has it passed over them.”‘[[99]](#footnote-99) On this account did He bring darkness upon the Egyptians for* [*three*](three.html) *days, so that they [Israelites] should bury their dead without their enemies seeing them, and for this they should praise God. What is the meaning of THICK DARKNESS? R. Abdimi of Haifa said: The darkness was doubled and redoubled.[[100]](#footnote-100) Our Rabbis said: There were* [*seven*](seven.html) *days of darkness. During the* [*first*](one.html)[*three*](three.html) *days,* [*one*](one.html) *who was* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *and wished to stand could do so, and the* [*one*](one.html) *who stood could sit down if he wished. Concerning these days does it say: AND THERE WAS A THICK DARKNESS IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT* [*THREE*](three.html) *DAYS; AND THEY SAW NOT* [*ONE*](one.html) *ANOTHER (X, 22-3). During the last* [*three*](three.html) *days, he who sat could not stand up, he who stood could not sit down, and he who was* [*lying down*](mashal.html) *could not raise himself upright; and concerning these days it says: NEITHER ROSE ANY FROM HIS PLACE FOR* [*THREE*](three.html) *DAYS. During the* [*three*](three.html) *days of thick darkness, God gave the favour of the people in the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of the Egyptians, so that they lent them everything. An Israelite used to enter the house of an Egyptian, and if he perceived there gold and silver vessels, or raiment, and on asking for them received the reply: ‘We have nothing to lend you,’ would say: ‘Behold, they are over there.’ The Egyptians would then say to themselves: ‘Had they desired to deceive us, they could have easily taken them during the darkness period when we would not have noticed, but since they did not touch the things there without our notice, they will not retain these things’; and so they lent them the things, so as to fulfil that which is said: Afterward shall they come out with great substance (Gen. XV, 14). Hence it is written: BUT ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAD LIGHT IN THEIR DWELLINGS (ib.). It does not say: ‘ in the land of Goshen’ but IN THEIR1 DWELLINGS. to show that wherever a* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *went, light accompanied him and illumined what was within the barrels, boxes, and treasure-chests. Concerning them does it say:Thy word is a lamp unto my* [*feet*](heel.html) *(PS. CXIX, 105). These were the* [*six*](six.html) *days of the darkness, which occurred in Egypt, while the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day of darkness was a day of darkness of the sea, as it says: And there was the* [*cloud*](important.html) *and the darkness here, yet gave it light by night there (Ex. XIV, 20). So also God sent clouds and darkness and covered the Egyptians with darkness, but gave light unto Israel, as He had done unto them in Egypt; hence does it say: The Lord is my light and my* [*salvation*](salvation.html) *(Ps. XXVII, 1). In the Messianic Age also, God will bring darkness [to sinners, but light to Israel,] as it says, For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but upon thee the Lord will shine (Isa. LX, 2).[[101]](#footnote-101)*

## DEATH of the FIRSTBORN

The killing of the firstborn, finally, represented the climax of the retribution visited upon Egypt. It had been announced before all the plagues[[102]](#footnote-102): ‘So speaks [HaShem](hashem.html), Israel is my firstborn ... and you refuse to let him go; behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’ This was carried out by [HaShem](hashem.html) alone, but the [Jews](gen-jew.html) had to deserve it by dedicating themselves to [HaShem](hashem.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) XI:3*** *What is the exposition of the text, ‘Because of dread in the night’? They were unable to offer the* [*Passover*](passover.html)[*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*,[[103]](#footnote-103) for it is written, ‘ No uncircumcised person shall* [*eat*](eating.html) *thereof.’ But if the Israelites had not offered the* [*Passover*](passover.html)[*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *they would have died on the* [*Passover*](passover.html) *night as the firstborn of the Egyptians had died; for it says, And when I see the* [*blood*](body.html)*, I will pass over you, and there shall be no plague upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt (Ex. XII, 13).*

An aspect of war is alluded to in the Ritva's interpretation of the sword and is based upon an account cited by several *midrashim*.[[104]](#footnote-104) Hearing of Moshe's threat to annihilate the firstborns, the intended victims mobbed Pharaoh's palace, demanding the release of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) slaves to avert this catastrophe. Unmoved by the threat to his very own child, Pharaoh refused their pleas. Frustrated by this rejection, the firstborns rebelled, launching an insurrection which caused over 60,000 Egyptian casualties before the plague of the firstborn even began. Having slain their countrymen, the firstborns could not escape their inevitable fate.

Although this episode would appear incidental to the actual plague, it was anything but. As part of His general intervention in nature, science, and human psychology, [HaShem](hashem.html) intervened in internal Egyptian politics as well, fomenting a mutiny that exacted a heavy toll on the Egyptians ([one](one.html) may conjecture that more were killed in this civil war than in the central plague of *bechorot*). Internal Egyptian political developments must be seen as divinely ordained elements of [redemption](redemption.html). We recite in *Tehillim* 136:10, [HaShem](hashem.html) punished the Egyptians *through* their firstborns, suggesting that the firstborns were not only the victims of the plague of *bechorot* but the instruments of destruction as well. *Makat bechorot* was a dual layered plague, [first](one.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) incited a civil war spearheaded by the [first](one.html) born and then he murdered those very agents.

# VII. The Plagues and The Revelation

Now let’s look at the relationship between the plagues of Egypt and the plagues in the book of the Revelation. There is a clue in the Tanach that our [future](future.html) [redemption](redemption.html) will be like our past [redemption](redemption.html):

***Micah 7:14-17*** *Shepherd your people with your* [*staff*](staff.html)*, the flock of your* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, which lives by itself in a forest, in fertile pasturelands. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days long ago. “As in the days when you came* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, I will show them my wonders.”* [*Nations*](nations.html) *will see and be ashamed, deprived of all their power. They will lay their* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *on their* [*mouths*](body.html) *and their* [*ears*](body.html) *will become deaf. They will lick* [*dust*](rock.html) *like a snake, like creatures that crawl on the ground. They will come trembling out of their dens; they will turn in* [*fear*](fear.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our G-d and will be afraid of you.*

The Targum Yonatan ben Uziel contains a very definite description of each plague, where it is in Tanach and how it will happen. Likewise, the [Midrash](orallaw.html) also gives us some [insights](insights.html):

***[Midrash](orallaw.html) PESIQTA de RAB KAHANA Pisqa*** [***Seven***](seven.html)

*‎[Resuming the discussion begun at VII:XI with the information just now given:] R. Levi in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Hama bar Hanina: "He who exacted vengeance from ‎the former [oppressor] will exact vengeance from the latter. Just as, in Egypt, it was with* [*blood*](body.html)*, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: I will show wonders in the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and in the earth,* [*blood*](body.html)*, and* [*fire*](fire.html)*, and pillars ‎of smoke.[[105]](#footnote-105) ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with frogs, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: ‎The sound of an uproar from the* [*city*](city.html)*, an uproar because of the palace, an uproar of the Lord who renders recompense to his enemies.[[106]](#footnote-106) ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with lice, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: ‎The streams of Bosrah will be turned into pitch, and the* [*dust*](rock.html) *thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.[[107]](#footnote-107) Smite the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ‎earth that it may become lice.[[108]](#footnote-108) ‎ Just as, in Egypt, it was with swarms of wild beasts, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: The pelican and the bittern will possess it.[[109]](#footnote-109) Just as, in Egypt, it was with pestilence, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: I will plead against Gog with pestilence and with* [*blood*](body.html)*.[[110]](#footnote-110) ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with boils, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: ‎This will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples that have warred against* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*: their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their ‎*[*feet*](heel.html)*.[[111]](#footnote-111) ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with great stones, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: I will cause to rain upon Gog ... an overflowing shower and great hailstones.[[112]](#footnote-112) ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with locusts, so with Edom it will be the same: ‎And you, son of man, thus says the LORD God:* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *to birds of every sort ... the flesh of the mighty will you* [*eat*](eating.html) *...* [*blood*](body.html) *will you drink ... you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *fat until you ‎are full and drink* [*blood*](body.html) *until you are drunk.[[113]](#footnote-113) ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with darkness, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: He will stretch over* [*Edom*](edom.html) *the line of chaos and the plummet of emptiness.[[114]](#footnote-114) ‎Just as, in Egypt, he took out their greatest figure and killed him, so with* [*Edom*](edom.html) *it will be the same: A great slaughter in the land of* [*Edom*](edom.html)*, among them ‎to come down will be the wild oxen.[[115]](#footnote-115) ‎Said R. Meir, "[The* [*letters*](letters.html) *of the word for wild (reemim) may be read as Rome, thus,] 'Among them to come down shall be Rome."* ‎ ‎

Midrash PESIQTA de RAB KAHANA Pisqa Seven - ‎[Resuming the discussion begun at VII:XI with the information just now given:] R. Levi in the name of R. Hama bar Hanina: "He who exacted vengeance from ‎the former [oppressor] will exact vengeance from the latter.

1. Just as, in Egypt, it was with blood, so with Edom it will be the same: I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars ‎of smoke.

2. ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with frogs, so with Edom it will be the same: ‎The sound of an uproar from the city, an uproar because of the palace, an uproar of the Lord who renders recompense to his enemies. ‎

3. Just as, in Egypt, it was with lice, so with Edom it will be the same: ‎The streams of Bosrah will be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. Smite the dust of the ‎earth that it may become lice. ‎

4. Just as, in Egypt, it was with swarms of wild beasts, so with Edom it will be the same: The pelican and the bittern will possess it.

5. Just as, in Egypt, it was with pestilence, so with Edom it will be the same: I will plead against Gog with pestilence and with blood. ‎

6. Just as, in Egypt, it was with boils, so with Edom it will be the same: ‎This will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their ‎feet.

7. ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with great stones, so with Edom it will be the same: I will cause to rain upon Gog ... an overflowing shower and great hailstones.

8. ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with locusts, so with Edom it will be the same: ‎And you, son of man, thus says the LORD God: Speak to birds of every sort ... the flesh of the mighty will you eat ... blood will you drink ... you will eat fat until you ‎are full and drink blood until you are drunk.

9. ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with darkness, so with Edom it will be the same: He will stretch over Edom the line of chaos and the plummet of emptiness. ‎

10. Just as, in Egypt, he took out their greatest figure and killed him, so with Edom it will be the same: A great slaughter in the land of Edom, among them ‎to come down will be the wild oxen. ‎Said R. Meir, "[The letters of the word for wild (reemim) may be read as Rome, thus,] 'Among them to come down shall be Rome." ‎ ‎

## FROM THE [PSALMS](psalms1.html)

[***Psalm***](psalms1.html) ***78:41-51*** *Again and again they put* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *to the test; they vexed the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *of Israel. They did not remember his power--the day he* [*redeemed*](redemption.html) *them from the oppressor, The day he displayed his miraculous* [*signs*](signs.html) *in Egypt, his wonders in the region of Zoan. He turned their rivers to* [***blood***](body.html)*; they could not drink from their streams. He sent swarms of* ***flies*** *that devoured them, and* ***frogs*** *that devastated them. He gave their crops to the grasshopper, their produce to the* ***locust****. He destroyed their vines with* ***hail*** *and their sycamore-*[*figs*](bethphag.html) *with sleet. He gave over their cattle to the hail, their livestock to bolts of lightning. He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation and hostility--a band of destroying* [*angels*](angels.html)*. He prepared a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death but gave them over to the plague. He struck down all the* ***firstborn*** *of Egypt, the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.*

[***Psalm***](psalms1.html) ***105:26-36*** *He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his miraculous* [*signs*](signs.html) *among them, his wonders in the land of Ham. He sent* ***darkness*** *and made the land dark--for had they not rebelled against his words? He turned their waters into* [***blood***](body.html)*, causing their fish to die. Their land teemed with* ***frogs****, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers. He* [*spoke*](mashal.html)*, and there came swarms of* ***flies****, and gnats throughout their country. He turned their rain into* ***hail****, with lightning throughout their land; He struck down their vines and* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *trees and shattered the trees of their country. He* [*spoke*](mashal.html)*, and the* ***locusts*** *came, grasshoppers without* [*number*](nchart.html)*; They* [*ate*](eating.html) *up every green thing in their land,* [*ate*](eating.html) *up the produce of their soil. Then he struck down all the* ***firstborn*** *in their land, the firstfruits of all their manhood.*

## [BLOOD](body.html)[[116]](#footnote-116):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 7:14-24*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html) *is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the water. Wait on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *the* [*staff*](staff.html) *that was changed into a snake. Then say to him, ‘*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of the* [*Hebrews*](bereans.html)*, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the desert. But until now you have not listened. This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: By this you will* [*know*](daat.html) *that I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: With the* [*staff*](staff.html) *that is in my* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into* [*blood*](body.html)*. The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.’”* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Take your* [*staff*](staff.html) *and stretch out your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *over the waters of Egypt--over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs’--and they will turn to* [*blood*](body.html)*.* [*Blood*](body.html) *will be everywhere in Egypt, even in the wooden buckets and stone jars.” Moses and Aaron did just as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had commanded. He raised his* [*staff*](staff.html) *in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into* [*blood*](body.html)*. The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water.* [*Blood*](body.html) *was everywhere in Egypt. But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their* [*secret*](sod.html) *arts, and Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html) *became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said. Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to* [*heart*](body.html)*. And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.* [*Seven*](seven.html) *days passed after* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *struck the Nile.*

***Revelation 8:8-9*** *The second* [*angel*](angels.html) *sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A* [*third*](three.html) *of the sea turned into* [*blood*](body.html)*, A* [*third*](three.html) *of the living creatures in the sea died, and a* [*third*](three.html) *of the ships were destroyed.*

***Revelation 16:3*** *The second* [*angel*](angels.html) *poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into* [*blood*](body.html) *like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.*

***Revelation 11:3-6*** *And I will give power to my* [*two*](two.html) *witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the* [*two*](two.html) *olive trees and the* [*two*](two.html) *lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them,* [*fire*](fire.html) *comes from their* [*mouths*](body.html) *and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who* [*wants*](needs.html) *to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the* [*time*](time.html) *they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into* [*blood*](body.html) *and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

The [Jews](gen-jew.html) were saved by the live [blood](body.html) (and water.) The [blood](body.html) was created by Moses (God figure) by the [walking](walking.html) stick ([tree of life](eternal.html), shepherd’s [staff](staff.html), crucifixion [staff](staff.html).)

## FROG(S)

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:1-14*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs. The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. The frogs will go up on you and your people and all your officials.’” Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *with your* [*staff*](staff.html) *over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’” So Aaron stretched out his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. But the magicians did the same things by their* [*secret*](sod.html) *arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “*[*Pray*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.” Moses said to Pharaoh, “I leave to you the honor of setting the* [*time*](time.html) *for me to* [*pray*](prayer.html) *for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile.” “Tomorrow,” Pharaoh said. Moses replied, “It will be as you say, so that you may* [*know*](daat.html) *there is no* [*one*](one.html) *like* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God. The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials and your people; they will remain only in the Nile.” After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them.*

***Revelation 16:12-13*** *The* [*sixth*](six.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the* [*East*](east.html)*. Then I saw* [*three*](three.html) *evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the dragon, out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the beast and out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the false prophet. They are spirits of* [*demons*](demons.html) *performing miraculous* [*signs*](signs.html)*, and they go out to the kings of the whole* [*world*](worlds.html)*, to* [*gather*](gather.html) *them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.*

**Frogs** - They could not [sleep](mashal.html) day and night; they are unclean.

[***Psalm***](psalms1.html) ***105:30*** *Their land teemed with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers.*

***Revelation 16:13*** *Then I saw* [*three*](three.html) *evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the dragon, out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the beast and out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the false prophet.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 11:10*** *But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales--whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water--you are to detest.*

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 11:41*** *“‘Every creature that moves about on the ground is detestable; it is not to be* [*eaten*](eating.html)*.*

## GNATS:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:16-19*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your* [*staff*](staff.html) *and strike the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ground,’ and throughout the land of Egypt the* [*dust*](rock.html) *will become gnats.” They did this, and when Aaron stretched out his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *with the* [*staff*](staff.html) *and struck the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ground, gnats came upon men and animals. All the* [*dust*](rock.html) *throughout the land of Egypt became gnats. But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their* [*secret*](sod.html) *arts, they could not. And the gnats were on men and animals. The magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html) *was hard and he would not listen, just as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said.*

***Revelation 11:3-6*** *And I will give power to my* [*two*](two.html) *witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the* [*two*](two.html) *olive trees and the* [*two*](two.html) *lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them,* [*fire*](fire.html) *comes from their* [*mouths*](body.html) *and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who* [*wants*](needs.html) *to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the* [*time*](time.html) *they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into* [*blood*](body.html) *and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

## BEASTS (flies):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:20-21*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the water and say to him, ‘This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of beasts on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of beasts, and even the ground where they are.*

***Revelation 11:3-6*** *And I will give power to my* [*two*](two.html) *witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the* [*two*](two.html) *olive trees and the* [*two*](two.html) *lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them,* [*fire*](fire.html) *comes from their* [*mouths*](body.html) *and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who* [*wants*](needs.html) *to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the* [*time*](time.html) *they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into* [*blood*](body.html) *and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

**Gnats** - A fly has a very short life span. Also, the word can mean maggots or gnats, which could be found in wine.

***Matityahu (Matthew) 23:24*** *You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.*

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 51:6*** *Lift up your* [*eyes*](body.html) *to the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, look at the earth beneath; the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my* [*salvation*](salvation.html) *will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.*

**Flies** - connected to gnats, maggots:

***Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 10:1*** *As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.*

The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word zebub refers to Baal- Zebub was worshipped zebub (Satan and [demons](demons.html).) See:

***II Melachim (Kings) 1:2-17*** *Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, “Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury.” But the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ Therefore this is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: ‘You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!’” So Elijah went. When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, “Why have you come back?” “A man came to meet us,” they replied. “And he said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, “This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending men to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!”‘“ The king asked them, “What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?” They replied, “He was a man with a garment of* [*hair*](hair.html) *and with a leather belt around his waist.” The king said, “That was Elijah the Tishbite.” Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *on the top of a hill, and said to him, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’” Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may* [*fire*](fire.html) *come down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consume you and your fifty men!” Then* [*fire*](fire.html) *fell from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed the captain and his men. At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, this is what the king says, ‘Come down at once!’” “If I am a man of God,” Elijah replied, “may* [*fire*](fire.html) *come down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consume you and your fifty men!” Then the* [*fire*](fire.html) *of God fell from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed him and his fifty men. So the king sent a* [*third*](three.html) *captain with his fifty men. This* [*third*](three.html) *captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! See,* [*fire*](fire.html) *has fallen from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and consumed the* [*first*](one.html)[*two*](two.html) *captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!” The* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king. He told the king, “This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!” So he died, according to the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *that Elijah had spoken. Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 10:25*** *It is enough for the student to be like his* [*teacher*](teacher.html)*, and the servant like his master. If the* [*head*](body.html) *of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his* [*household*](househld.html)*!*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 12:24-27*** *But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of* [*demons*](demons.html)*, that this fellow drives out* [*demons*](demons.html)*.”* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*knew*](daat.html) *their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every* [*city*](city.html) *or* [*household*](househld.html) *divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out* [*demons*](demons.html) *by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out* [*demons*](demons.html) *by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 11:14-20***[*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *was driving out a* [*demon*](demons.html) *that was mute. When the* [*demon*](demons.html) *left, the man who had been mute* [*spoke*](mashal.html)*, and the crowd was amazed. But some of them said, “By Beelzebub, the prince of* [*demons*](demons.html)*, he is driving out* [*demons*](demons.html)*.” Others tested him by asking for a* [*sign*](signs.html) *from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*knew*](daat.html) *their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out* [*demons*](demons.html) *by Beelzebub. Now if I drive out* [*demons*](demons.html) *by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out* [*demons*](demons.html) *by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.*

Baal, in Greek, is ‘master of the house’. It would seem that flies refer to [demons](demons.html) let loose:

***Rev. 18:1-2*** *After this I saw another* [*angel*](angels.html)[*coming*](coming.html) *down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. He had great* [*authority*](authority.html)*, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: “Fallen! Fallen is* [*Babylon*](bavel.html) *the Great! She has become a home for* [*demons*](demons.html) *and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.*

Flies have a short life span: In Rev. 12:12, Satan has a short [time](time.html) that he is loose.

## LIVESTOCK PLAGUE:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:1-7*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of the* [*Hebrews*](bereans.html)*, says: “Let my people go, so that they may worship me.” If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, The* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the* [*field*](field.html)*--on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats. But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.’”* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *set a* [*time*](time.html) *and said, “Tomorrow* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will do this in the land.” And the next day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not* [*one*](one.html) *animal belonging to the Israelites died. Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even* [*one*](one.html) *of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his* [*heart*](body.html) *was unyielding and he would not let the people go.*

***Revelation 11:3-6*** *And I will give power to my* [*two*](two.html) *witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the* [*two*](two.html) *olive trees and the* [*two*](two.html) *lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them,* [*fire*](fire.html) *comes from their* [*mouths*](body.html) *and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who* [*wants*](needs.html) *to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the* [*time*](time.html) *they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into* [*blood*](body.html) *and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

Livestock - Symbol For [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). Note the sheep of Israel do not get plagues:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:4*** *But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.’”*

[Gentiles](gen-jew.html) can have sheep also:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:3*** *The* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the* [*field*](field.html)*--on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats.*

but they would be sheep without a master.

## BOILS:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:8-16*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a* [*furnace*](furnace.html) *and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. It will become fine* [*dust*](rock.html) *over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land.” So they took soot from a* [*furnace*](furnace.html) *and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on men and animals. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hardened Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html) *and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said to Moses. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of the* [*Hebrews*](bereans.html)*, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, Or this* [*time*](time.html) *I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may* [*know*](daat.html) *that there is no* [*one*](one.html) *like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my* [*name*](name.html) *might be proclaimed in all the earth.*

***Revelation 16:1-2*** *Then I heard a loud voice from the* [*temple*](temple.html) *saying to the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*angels*](angels.html)*, “Go, pour out the* [*seven*](seven.html) *bowls of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s wrath on the earth.” The* [*first*](one.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.*

Boils is in Iyov (Job). Satan sends Boils upon Iyov (Job):

***Iyov (Job) 2:7*** *So Satan went out from the presence of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and afflicted Iyov (Job) with painful sores from the soles of his* [*feet*](heel.html) *to the top of his* [*head*](body.html)*.*

But Satan cannot touch the elect during the Tribulation or [Passover](passover.html) period. G-d reverses this and used it on the followers of Satan.

## HAIL:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:13-35*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of the* [*Hebrews*](bereans.html)*, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, Or this* [*time*](time.html) *I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may* [*know*](daat.html) *that there is no* [*one*](one.html) *like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my* [*name*](name.html) *might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. Therefore, at this* [*time*](time.html) *tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the* [*field*](field.html) *to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the* [*field*](field.html)*, and they will die.’” Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *left their slaves and livestock in the* [*field*](field.html)*. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Stretch out your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt--on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.” When Moses stretched out his* [*staff*](staff.html) *toward the sky,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *rained hail on the land of Egypt; Hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a* [*nation*](nations.html)*. Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields--both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. “This* [*time*](time.html) *I have sinned,” he said to them. “*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong.* [*Pray*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don’t have to stay any longer.” Moses replied, “When I have gone out of the* [*city*](city.html)*, I will spread out my* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *in* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may* [*know*](daat.html) *that the earth is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s. But I* [*know*](daat.html) *that you and your officials still do not* [*fear*](fear.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God.” (The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.) Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the* [*city*](city.html)*. He spread out his* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *toward* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html) *was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said through Moses.*

***Revelation 8:6-7*** *Then the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*angels*](angels.html) *who had the* [*seven*](seven.html) *trumpets prepared to sound them. The* [*first*](one.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and* [*fire*](fire.html) *mixed with* [*blood*](body.html)*, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A* [*third*](three.html) *of the earth was burned up, a* [*third*](three.html) *of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.*

Hail - Destruction of [food](food.html). This relates to story of [Joseph](joseph.html) where there was a [famine](famine.html) in the land with no harvest (no [resurrection](techiyat.html)) for the [wicked](wicked.html). Hail destroys the grain and brings it to the ground.

## LOCUSTS:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 10:12-20*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Stretch out your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *over Egypt so that locusts will swarm over the land and devour everything growing in the fields, everything left by the hail.” So Moses stretched out his* [*staff*](staff.html) *over Egypt, and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *made an* [*east*](east.html) *wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; They invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great* [*numbers*](nchart.html)*. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again. They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail--everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God and against you. Now* [*forgive*](forgive.html) *my* [*sin*](sin.html) *once more and* [*pray*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God to take this deadly plague away from me.” Moses then left Pharaoh and* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *changed the wind to a very strong west wind, which caught up the locusts and carried them into the* [*Red Sea*](stages.html)*. Not a locust was left anywhere in Egypt. But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hardened Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html)*, and he would not let the Israelites go.*

***Revelation 9:1-12*** *The* [*fifth*](five.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *sounded his trumpet, and I saw a* [*star*](mazaroth.html) *that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The* [*star*](mazaroth.html) *was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*. The* [*sun*](hachama.html) *and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for* [*five*](five.html) *months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their* [*hair*](hair.html) *was like women’s* [*hair*](hair.html)*, and their* [*teeth*](body.html) *were like lions’* [*teeth*](body.html)*. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for* [*five*](five.html) *months. They had as king over them the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of the Abyss, whose* [*name*](name.html) *in* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon. The* [*first*](one.html) *woe is past;* [*two*](two.html) *other woes are yet to come.*

Locusts -

***Yoel (Joel) 1:4*** *What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have* [*eaten*](eating.html)*; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have* [*eaten*](eating.html)*; what the young locusts have left other locusts have* [*eaten*](eating.html)*.*

***Yoel (Joel) 2:25*** *‘I will repay you for the years the locusts have* [*eaten*](eating.html)*--the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm--my great army that I sent among you.*

Locusts [eat](eating.html) things down to the ground so there is nothing left to pick up, Yoel (Joel) 1:4. In Yoel (Joel) 2:25 God sends His great ARMY as locusts as a metaphor.

## DARKNESS:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 10:21-29*** *Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses, “Stretch out your* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt--darkness that can be felt.” So Moses stretched out his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for* [*three*](three.html) *days. No* [*one*](one.html) *could see anyone else or leave his place for* [*three*](three.html) *days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go, worship* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind.” But Moses said, “You must allow us to have sacrifices and* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*s to present to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God. Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshiping* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God, and until we get there we will not* [*know*](daat.html) *what we are to use to worship* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.” But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hardened Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html)*, and he was not willing to let them go. Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my* [*face*](body.html) *you will die.” “Just as you say,” Moses replied, “I will never appear before you again.”*

***Revelation 8:12-13*** *The* [*fourth*](four.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *sounded his trumpet, and a* [*third*](three.html) *of the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *was struck, a* [*third*](three.html) *of the* [*moon*](chodesh.html)*, and a* [*third*](three.html) *of the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*, so that a* [*third*](three.html) *of them turned dark. A* [*third*](three.html) *of the day was without light, and also a* [*third*](three.html) *of the night. As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other* [*three*](three.html)[*angels*](angels.html)*!”*

***Revelation 16:10-11*** *The* [*fifth*](five.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their* [*tongues*](spirit.html) *in agony And cursed the God of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.*

## DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 11:4-10*** *So Moses said, “This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt--worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.’ Then you will* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, ‘Go, you and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will leave.” Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said to Moses, “Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you--so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.” Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hardened Pharaoh’s* [*heart*](body.html)*, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.*

***Revelation 9:13-21*** *The* [*sixth*](six.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice* [*coming*](coming.html) *from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the* [*sixth*](six.html)[*angel*](angels.html) *who had the trumpet, “Release the* [*four*](four.html)[*angels*](angels.html) *who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the* [*four*](four.html)[*angels*](angels.html) *who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a* [*third*](three.html) *of mankind. The* [*number*](nchart.html) *of the mounted troops was* [*two*](two.html) *hundred million. I heard their* [*number*](nchart.html)*. The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their* [*mouths*](body.html) *came* [*fire*](fire.html)*, smoke and sulfur. A* [*third*](three.html) *of mankind was killed by the* [*three*](three.html) *plagues of* [*fire*](fire.html)*, smoke and sulfur that came out of their* [*mouths*](body.html)*. The power of the horses was in their* [*mouths*](body.html) *and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury. The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*; they did not stop worshiping* [*demons*](demons.html)*, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or* [*walk*](walking.html)*. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

***Revelation 20:11-15*** *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small,* [*standing*](mashal.html) *before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of* [*fire*](fire.html)*. The lake of* [*fire*](fire.html) *is the second death. If anyone’s* [*name*](name.html) *was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of* [*fire*](fire.html)*.*

***Revelation 21:8*** *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”*

## SEAL & [SIGN](signs.html):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 11:7*** *But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.’ Then you will* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.*

***Revelation 7:3-4*** *“Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” Then I heard the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the* [*tribes*](tribes.html) *of Israel.*

**DEFINITION:**

Darkness -

***Amos 5:20*** *Will not the* [*day of HaShem*](hashem.html) *be darkness, not light--pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?*

Now, lets take a look at what the [Midrash](orallaw.html) tells us about the [future](future.html) plagues.

*‎*[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***PESIQTA de RAB KAHANA - Pisqa*** [***Seven***](seven.html) ***VII:XI*** *[Resuming the discussion begun at VII:XI with the information just now given:] R. Levi in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Hama bar Hanina: “He who exacted vengeance from ‎the former [oppressor] will exact vengeance from the latter.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plagues** | [**Future**](future.html) **Plagues** |
| [Blood](body.html), | Just as, in Egypt, it was with [blood](body.html), so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *I will show wonders in the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and in the earth,* [*blood*](body.html)*, and* [*fire*](fire.html)*, and pillars ‎of smoke* (Job 3:3). |
| Frogs, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with frogs, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *‎The sound of an uproar from the* [*city*](city.html)*, an uproar because of the palace, an uproar of the Lord who renders recompense to his enemies* (Is. 66:6). ‎ |
| Lice, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with lice, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *‎The streams of Bosra will be turned into pitch, and the* [*dust*](rock.html) *thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch* (Is. 34:9). *Smite the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ‎earth that it may become lice* (Ex. 8:12). |
| Beasts, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with swarms of wild beasts, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *The pelican and the bittern will possess it* (Is. 34:11). |
| Cattle Pestilence, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with pestilence, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *I will plead against Gog with pestilence and with* [*blood*](body.html) (Ez. 38:22). |
| Boils, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with boils, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *‎This will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples that have warred against* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*: their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their ‎*[*feet*](heel.html) (Zech. 14:12). |
| Hail, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with great stones, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *I will cause to rain upon Gog ... an overflowing shower and great hailstones* ‎‎(Ez. 38:22). ‎ |
| Locusts, | Just as, in Egypt, it was with locusts, so with Edorn it will be the same: ‎*And you, son of man, thus says the LORD God:* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *to birds of every sort ... the flesh of the mighty will you* [*eat*](eating.html) *...* [*blood*](body.html) *will you drink ... you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *fat until you ‎are full and drink* [*blood*](body.html) *until you are drunk* (Ez. 39:17-19). |
| Darkness, | ‎Just as, in Egypt, it was with darkness, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *He will stretch over* [*Edom*](edom.html) *the line of chaos and the plummet of emptiness* (Is. ‎‎34:11). |
| Death of the Firstborn. | ‎Just as, in Egypt, he took out their greatest figure and killed him, so with [Edom](edom.html) it will be the same: *A great slaughter in the land of* [*Edom*](edom.html)*, among them ‎to come down will be the wild oxen* (Is. 34:6-7). ‎Said R. Meir, “[The [letters](letters.html) of the word for wild (*reemim*) may be read as *Rome,* thus,] ‘*Among them to come down shall be Rome.*” |

## Possible Fulfillments Today

*War with China*

Consider this: China has a 200-million-man army (Revelation 9:16) that has invaded the western world. They have conquered almost every stronghold. They now control nearly every lever of power because many lack integrity and do not fear HaShem. Wuhan flu, vaccines, and money are the keys to their control. Those that are under their influence are the force of evil in the world.

*Plague of Darkness*

Back in the old days my father knew a man in Williamsburg who was fond of saying “The oylem is a goylem”. There is no substitute for the original Yiddish, but basically it means that the world is full of fools.

We are supposed to believe that this experimental vaccine (that is what it is, regardless of how they spin it) is a miracle drug that will help eradicate Wuhan flu from our midst. Not only are we supposed to believe it, we are supposed to be absolutely sure of it. If we harbor any discomfort, it’s because we’re stupid and unqualified; we should trust the experts, who have decided almost as one that it’s perfectly safe, and get injected as soon as possible. Humanity depends on it.

That’s what they tell us, and if you don’t get on board they will mock you, condemn you, and censor you. It’s your fault people are dying and everyone is suffering. Murderer.

I’m not going to share any “conspiracy theories”, because being a “conspiracy theorist” has become the second-worst insult one can have hurled at him, right behind “racist”. I will simply share what we know, and encourage you to think for yourself – the exact opposite of what they do.

The executives and board members of Pfizer have not taken their own vaccine, stating that they don’t want to “cut in line”. Imagine that! These millionaires and billionaires, with private jets and private islands, who hobnob with the wealthiest and most powerful people in the world, are moving to the back of some imaginary line so YOU can take their vaccine first! After a lifetime of deferring to the common person and letting others go first, which is the secret behind their wealth and power, they are now making the ultimate sacrifice.

They are not even bothering to pretend and take a placebo – they want you to know that they are not taking it because you are ahead of them in line, as you always are. Despite the hundreds of millions of doses they are distributing, they can’t even hog a few for themselves. That would just be wrong.

At the same time, if the vaccine has some unfortunate, unintended consequences, those who are harmed cannot sue anyone. Tough luck. Of course, all the experts – the REAL experts – agree that you should absolutely not worry about this happening, although if by some crazy chance it does happen, you’re hung out to dry. If your quality of life should become too unbearable, one of their doctors will be happy to make you comfortable and offer the most merciful way of ending your pain. That’s become quite a trend.

We are supposed to believe that, even though the vaccine is perfectly safe (or just about) there is no reason for the drug oligarchs to put their money where their mouth is and make it possible to bankrupt their companies and their personal fortunes if it turns out otherwise. Nope. You’re supposed to wager your wellbeing and your life, but they wager nothing of substance. At worst their reputation will take a temporary hit, and they will come out with a “new and improved” version, sending their stock price soaring to new heights.

The oylem is a goylem.

Even the drug pushers acknowledge that there are a lot of unknowns about the vaccine, at the same time they assure you that it’s entirely safe. How does that work? I don’t know! But I do know that you’re crazy and stupid if you don’t accept this, and you have an obligation to humanity to take the vaccine as soon as possible with a smile on your face.

They also tell us that these vaccines are an “essential step” toward removing the tyrannical, draconian restrictions the oligarchs have imposed on us. At the same time, they cannot tell us how many more steps are required; in fact, every time we take a step, they discover a few more.

Furthermore, after being injected with this experimental miracle drug that will save humanity, which you have an obligation to do as soon as possible, your life will not improve in any tangible way. You will still have to cover your face with a disgusting piece of blue toilet paper (or pink), which everyone agrees doesn’t stop coronavirus from spreading if the virus particles are attached to anything smaller than a glob of saliva or a booger. If you are genuinely afraid of flying boogers hitting your face and spreading disease, I fully respect that. But if you think the blue toilet paper is protecting you or anyone else from microscopic aerosols, you are a golem.

Ah, but they tell us to wear the blue toilet paper not to protect ourselves, but to protect others from us! Because somehow the coronavirus can still flow past the blue toilet paper from the outside and infect you, but it can’t get out the same way it came in. Perhaps if we wear the mask inside out it would have the opposite effect? I don’t know. I’m not an expert.

They tell us that after getting vaccinated we will still have to be confined to our homes as often as possible like criminals under house arrest, for we are all a danger to one another. The masses must wallow in poverty while the oligarchs become even more wealthy, because if it saves even one life it’s worth it.

Meanwhile, it’s fine to smoke like a chimney. Sure, a life or tens of millions might be lost here or there, but it’s your body and you are free to take calculated risks with it. If smoking improves your life today, you have the right to do it, even if it kills you or someone near you down the road.

But opening your store? Going to work? Meeting a friend? Going on a date? Visiting your elderly parent or grandparent who hasn’t seen you in a year? That’s deadly. The human race just can’t afford that risk.

Don’t worry, if you get depressed, you can also smoke marijuana until you feel gooood, and play online games, and let big tech companies entertain you. What concerns them more than anything is that you have access to a wide range of views and think for yourself. That’s how they make their money.

Whatever you do, don’t go outside and get sunlight and fresh air, which boosts your immune system, or exercise, or keep your blue toilet paper lowered while you chew, because it’s just too dangerous for yourself and others.

Even some rabbis have been raising the alarm about these reckless behaviors. We must not even kiss a Torah, because someone else might have touched it without wearing gloves and disinfecting himself first. That kiss could be the kiss of death, much like the one you can’t give your parents or grandparents anymore. But stay strong! We will get through this together! Well, not really together, because it’s deadly to be together, but in a manner of speaking.

Personally, I think that if you kiss a disease-laden Torah, get sick, and die, most likely it was just your time to go.

Here’s a question: what if a Torah is in danger of being destroyed, and the only way to save it is to grab it without the benefit of gloves and disinfectant? Surely one must not risk his life to save a Torah, right?

The expert rabbis preach to us that “God watches over fools”, and that therefore we have an obligation to trust the establishment and get vaccinated as soon as possible. Never mind the fact that tens of thousands of non-establishment experts are raising serious red flags about it. Never mind the fact that the drug pushers themselves aren’t taking it and admit that much is unknown. Never mind that in a best-case scenario it merely lowers the chance of getting a serious case of the virus if you do get infected, while not improving your life in any tangible way. Never mind that you can lower your chance of getting a serious case of the virus just as well or better by doing simple things to boost your immune system, with absolutely no risks or unknowns, though that doesn’t enrich the oligarchs or justify tyrannical restrictions.

No. If you do not vaccinate you are a fool and a murderer. So God has spoken. Be a fool so He can watch over you.

If you kiss the Torah, however, or visit your parents, or go to work, or meet your friends, or go on a date, or exercise outside, or lower the toilet paper from your face, God will NOT watch over you, for the experts have declared otherwise. You have no right to take such crazy chances with your life and the lives of others.

We are afflicted with a plague of darkness. The most ridiculous lies and spin are eagerly accepted by the oylam, while those who even raise doubts are mocked, censored, and punished. We have become afraid of being called names, of being responsible for the continuation of suffering and draconian restrictions, of murdering masses of people and going to hell merely for being close to another human being that does not live with us. We have become paranoid of everyone and everything, and life has only gotten worse because of it.

How long do we have to play along? When do we collectively say “Enough”?

I do not deny that coronavirus is real and serious. I believe we need to adjust our lifestyles in some ways to protect ourselves and others, and I believe that scientific advances that are conducted with transparency and integrity can benefit us.

I am not an “anti-vaxxer”, which is another pejorative to bully those who raise concerns into submission. But I am against coercing or pressuring people in any way to take a vaccine that is experimental, radically different from previous vaccines, which has many red flags surrounding it, and whose potential benefits are both small and achievable through safer means. I am against stupid, tyrannical restrictions that have caused immense suffering, under the guise of protecting us from each other.

The concept of “God watches over fools” does not apply to taking this sort of vaccine. It applies to people who live normal lives, touch things other people touched, go out and work, and don’t believe every person in their vicinity is the angel of death.

King Solomon has another comment about fools: A fool believes everything.

By all means, don’t blindly trust anything I say. I would never hammer someone with my credentials or expertise; I would only encourage them to consider the merit of my words compared to those of others. I don’t believe you are too stupid or unqualified to think for yourself and make intelligent decisions, even about matters in which you need information from those with greater expertise.

Do not make important decisions out of fear, desperation, convenience, or copying what the golem next to you is doing.

If you believe my words have merit, please share them as widely as you can. Perhaps together we can help end the plague of darkness.

# VIII. The Protective Abode

There are numerous examples of the last part of the Tribulation as darkness when Israel or [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) are put into a protective abode ([Succah](succoth.html)) during the darkness. A few examples:

**1.** Lot’s house (night)

***Gen. 19:1-16*** *The* [*two*](two.html)[*angels*](angels.html) *arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *in the gateway of the* [*city*](city.html)*. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his* [*face*](body.html) *to the ground. “My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your* [*feet*](heel.html) *and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.” “No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.” But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without* [*yeast*](chametz.html)*, and they* [*ate*](eating.html)*. Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the* [*city*](city.html) *of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have* [*sex*](marriageact.html) *with them.” Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him And said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *thing. Look, I have* [*two*](two.html) *daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.” “Get out of our way,” they replied. And they said, “This fellow came here as an* [*alien*](aliens.html)*, and now he* [*wants*](needs.html) *to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door. The* [*two*](two.html) *men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here--sons-in-*[*law*](law.html)*, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the* [*city*](city.html) *who belongs to you? Get them out of here, Because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.” So Lot went out and* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *to his sons-in-*[*law*](law.html)*, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, “Hurry and get out of this place, because* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is about to destroy the* [*city*](city.html)*!” But his sons-in-*[*law*](law.html) *thought he was joking. With the* [*coming*](coming.html) *of dawn, the* [*angels*](angels.html) *urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your* [*two*](two.html) *daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the* [*city*](city.html) *is punished.” When he hesitated, the men grasped his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of his wife and of his* [*two*](two.html) *daughters and led them safely out of the* [*city*](city.html)*, for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *was merciful to them.*

**2.** Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) homes (night):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:6-13*** *Take care of them until the* [*fourteenth*](fourteen.html) *day of the month, when all the people of the* [*community*](community.html) *of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the* [*blood*](body.html) *and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they* [*eat*](eating.html) *the lambs. That same night they are to* [*eat*](eating.html) *the meat roasted over the* [*fire*](fire.html)*, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without* [*yeast*](chametz.html)*. Do not* [*eat*](eating.html) *the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the* [*fire*](fire.html)*--*[*head*](body.html)*,* [*legs*](body.html) *and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to* [*eat*](eating.html) *it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your* [*feet*](heel.html) *and your* [*staff*](staff.html) *in your* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*.* [*Eat*](eating.html) *it in haste; it is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s* [*Passover*](passover.html)*. “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. The* [*blood*](body.html) *will be a* [*sign*](signs.html) *for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the* [*blood*](body.html)*, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:28-33*** *The Israelites did just what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *commanded Moses and Aaron. At midnight* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me.” The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. “For otherwise,” they said, “we will all die!”*

**3.** Rahab’s house (night)

***Josh. 2:3-9*** *So the king of* [*Jericho*](stages.html) *sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.” But the woman had taken the* [*two*](two.html) *men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not* [*know*](daat.html) *where they had come from. At dusk, when it was* [*time*](time.html) *to close the* [*city*](city.html) *gate, the men left. I don’t* [*know*](daat.html) *which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the* [*Jordan*](stages.html)*, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut. Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof And said to them, “I* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has given this land to you and that a great* [*fear*](fear.html) *of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in* [*fear*](fear.html) *because of you.*

**4.** Jonah’s (vine) (night):

***Jonah 4:5-8*** *Jonah went out and sat down at a place* [*east*](east.html) *of the* [*city*](city.html)*. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the* [*city*](city.html)*. Then* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his* [*head*](body.html) *to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. When the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *rose, God provided a scorching* [*east*](east.html) *wind, and the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *blazed on Jonah’s* [*head*](body.html) *so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”*

**5.** Parable

***Matt. 25:1-13*** *“At that* [*time*](time.html) *the kingdom of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *will be like* [*ten*](ten.html) *virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.* [*Five*](five.html) *of them were foolish and* [*five*](five.html) *were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long* [*time*](time.html) *in* [*coming*](coming.html)*, and they all became drowsy and fell* [*asleep*](mashal.html)*. “At midnight the* [*cry*](mashal.html) *rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the* [*wedding*](wedding.html) *banquet. And the door was shut. “Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ “But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t* [*know*](daat.html) *you.’ “Therefore keep watch, because you do not* [*know*](daat.html) *the day or the hour.*

**6.** Parable

***Matt. 14:22-36*** *(note vs 25, night, mid-point into Tribulation) Immediately* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to* [*pray*](prayer.html)*. When evening came, he was there alone, But the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the* [*fourth*](four.html) *watch of the night* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *went out to them,* [*walking*](walking.html) *on the lake. When the disciples saw him* [*walking*](walking.html) *on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in* [*fear*](fear.html)*. But* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” “Lord, if it’s you,” Tzefet (Peter) replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Tzefet (Peter) got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord,* [*save*](salvation.html) *me!” Immediately* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *reached out his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

# IX. Selected Essays

***The*** [***Ten***](ten.html) ***Plagues***

by Rav Shlomo Aviner

There were precisely [ten](ten.html) plagues. “[Ten](ten.html) and not [nine](nine.html), [ten](ten.html) and not [eleven](eleven.html)“[[117]](#footnote-117). The [number](nchart.html) [ten](ten.html) signifies a whole comprised of individual parts, all of the various possibilities available on any theme: “The [world](worlds.html) was created with [ten](ten.html) sayings”; with all the different possibilities of divine revelation in the [creation](bara.html). “There were [ten](ten.html) [generations](toldot.html) between [Adam](adam.html) and Noach”; every variety of the general-historical appearance of mankind. “[Avraham](avraham.html) was tested with [ten](ten.html) tests”; every method possible to reveal his individual personality and to activate his psychological potential. “Our forefathers tested [HaShem](hashem.html) with [ten](ten.html) tests in the wilderness”; every [type](types.html) of “insult” which detaches the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) man from the divine light. Despite everything - [HaShem](hashem.html) is with us and does not despise us for it. And here we have the same idea: “[HaShem](hashem.html) plagued the Egyptians with [ten](ten.html) plagues”; every form of [attack](attacks.html) on a national lifestyle which denies the divine orientation of the [world](worlds.html)[[118]](#footnote-118).

The plagues did not all appear at once as a sudden and immediate act. There isn’t just [one](one.html) plague but [ten](ten.html), and they take place over quite a long period of [time](time.html). The plagues appear gradually. The [world](worlds.html) was also created gradually: “The [world](worlds.html) was created with [ten](ten.html) sayings”, even though it could easily have been created with [one](one.html) saying. From the perspective of Divine power there is nothing to prevent the [world](worlds.html) being created at once. But there is a universal human inability to absorb such a [creation](bara.html) cognitively, emotionally and practically. Suddenness breeds crises that [one](one.html) is not always able to endure. The plagues in Egypt didn’t all come at once either. Nor did they begin with the most severe - the plague of the firstborns. Instead gradually, step by step, the destruction of Egypt and Israel’s conception becomes clear - to Egyptians and Israelites alike. This psychological upheaval did not happen in a single day or even in a month - the hearts became more and more efficient at absorbing this fundamental change in international history. It takes [time](time.html) to get used to this [new](new.html) appearance of [HaShem](hashem.html) in the [world](worlds.html). “Can the Earth begin in a day, a [nation](nations.html) be conceived in a moment?” The course of [creation](bara.html) proceeds slowly but surely. “Will I bring on labor and not give [birth](birth.html)? Will I bring on labor and then stop it?” The gradual process comes to aid the acceptance of the phenomenon in the human [world](worlds.html). So to the forming of Am Yisrael in our [time](time.html) is gradual and not by miraculous leaps - that is the way [HaShem](hashem.html) redeems his people. Just as the process of childbirth has its [stages](stages.html), a gradual progression and ever-increasing labor pains - so it is with the [birth](thebirth.html) of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [Nation](nations.html)[[119]](#footnote-119). (From “Tal Chermon”)

***Bo***

by Shlomo Riskin - Efrat, Israel

How are we to understand the [ten](ten.html) plagues?

Perhaps it would be fair to say that the Torah records [three](three.html) major destructions in the annals of human history. The [first](one.html) [two](two.html) destructions are pre-Abrahamic [events](feasts.html): the flood which devastated the entire [world](worlds.html), and the confusion of languages which resulted from the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) debacle. There was also a [third](three.html) destruction, which is not usually noted as such, and that was the [ten](ten.html) plagues which devastated Egypt. And fortunately that devastation was followed by re-[birth](birth.html) and re-[creation](bara.html): the splitting of the [Red Sea](stages.html).

The [first](one.html) thing we must understand is that, from a biblical perspective, Egypt undermined the very purpose of G-d’s original [creation](bara.html) - and thereby in effect destroyed G-d’s [world](worlds.html) - by its policy of slavery. Undoubtedly the reality of slavery predates the enslavement of the Israelites, but in many ways the enslavement of [Jacob](israelja.html)‘s descendants was rather unique.

Clearly any form of slavery is dehumanizing, a stain on the soul of humanity. But the enslavement of the Israelites constitutes a particularly horrendous form of dehumanization. We have to remember that the Israelites were never captured, they never fought a war with the Egyptians. On the contrary, the government of Egypt invited them to stay on in Goshen. Strangers yes, with their own customs perhaps, but they were model citizens - loyal. [One](one.html) might even say that the Israelites’ historic memory had merged with the historic memory of Egypt since both peoples remembered [Joseph](joseph.html) as a great hero and a symbol of how [one](one.html) man (and [HaShem](hashem.html)) could divert a national disaster, saving civilization from collapse.

If we have problems imagining how a [new](new.html) Pharaoh could arise who did not recognize [Joseph](joseph.html), instituting murderous racial [laws](law.html) and sweeping legislation legalizing slavery against [Joseph](joseph.html)‘s family, all we have to do is go back several decades to when a [new](new.html) Pharaoh arose in Germany. And, despite the fact that no greater patriotic [community](community.html) existed in all of Europe - the [Jews](gen-jew.html) of Germany were, after all, war heroes on behalf of the Fatherland in [World](worlds.html) War 1, and committed devotees of the poetry of Goethe and the music of Beethoven - nevertheless the [new](new.html) Pharaoh issued edicts that resulted in the enslavement of an entire people by the Nazi regime. And it was not even merely slavery; the dehumanization inexorably led to the crematoria of Auschwitz and Treblinka. Darkness descended over Europe just as darkness had once descended over Egypt.

How, if we consider the account of [creation](bara.html) that opens the Book of Genesis, we find that G-d’s crowning achievement - the “last for which the [first](one.html) was made” - was the fashioning of the human being at the end of the [sixth](six.html) day. What began that day with the appearance of living creatures and cattle and all that walks on the earth culminates in the Divine declaration: “Let us make the human being in our image and likeness... G-d created the human being in His own image. In the image of G-d, He created him/her.” [Gen. 1:26 -27].

If the essence of the human being is the fact that he was created in the image of G-d, then slavery stands directly opposite to the path of [creation](bara.html), the antithesis of G-d’s purpose for humanity. The enslavement of the Israelites constitutes a perversion of [creation](bara.html). In a word, enslaving a person removes his fundamental image of G-d, his ability to be free, his G-d-given right to become a partner with the Divine in perfecting the created [world](worlds.html). Subjugation turns human being from subject to object, from chief to chattel.

In actuality, the perversion of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [creation](bara.html) began when Pharaoh assumed the role of [HaShem](hashem.html), and instead of encouraging the divinity within human beings he enslaved them. Hence in a fascinating usage of terms, when Moses pleads to be released from [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leadership because “Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how will Pharaoh ever listen to me?” [Ex. 6:30], the Almighty responds, “I have made you a G-d unto Pharaoh...” [Ex. 7:1]

Rashi’s comment that in this context ‘G-d’ (Elohim) means a “judge and an executor of judgment to punish Egypt with plagues and afflictions,” [7:1] may be alluding to the single most important reason why the Egyptians were made to suffer the destructive power of the [ten](ten.html) plagues. Moses will become the true representative of a G-d unto Pharoah, the only fitting punishment for Pharaoh who wanted to be a G-d unto his slaves. By becoming a G-d, an executor of judgment and affliction against Egypt, Pharoah’s [desire](needs.html) to twist humanity into his own image, rather than allowing humanity to bloom in the image of G-d, will be stunted. The tables are being turned. Instead of Pharaoh functioning as a G-d, Moses the stutterer, because that is G-d’s will, shall become a G-d unto Pharaoh.

And since Pharoah attempted to destroy [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [creation](bara.html) by his policy of slavery, [HaShem](hashem.html) will now - measure for measure - destroy Pharaoh’s [creation](bara.html) of Egypt. And indeed that is what we find. All [ten](ten.html) plagues, from [blood](body.html) to the death of the [first](one.html)-born, can be seen in some way expressing the shadow, or antithesis, of G-d’s original intention when He created the [world](worlds.html). The plagues become the mirror image of [creation](bara.html).

The opening of Genesis deals with the primal waters: “Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the [face](body.html) of the deep, and the spirit of G-d hovered over the [face](body.html) of the waters.” [Gen. 1:2] Water, the source of life, is the source of [creation](bara.html) . In the [first](one.html) plague, the waters of Nile, source of Egyptian prosperity, is now turned to [blood](body.html), symbol of death.

[HaShem](hashem.html) then said: Let the waters swarm with swarms (sheratz) of living creatures... (Bereshit (Genesis) 1:20) The second plague has the river swarm forth frogs to devastate the Egyptians.

[HaShem](hashem.html) then created grass, evolving from the earth: “Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding [seed](flower.html), and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind...” [Gen. 1: 11] The [third](three.html) plague has the very same earth evolve ghastly gnats.

[HaShem](hashem.html) created the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind...” [Gen. 1:25] The [fourth](four.html) and [fifth](five.html) plagues bring a mixture of noxious animals and murrain on the cattle to subvert [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s creations.

The earth which was, after water, the source of evolved [physical](physical.html) creations, has now, with the [sixth](six.html) plague, brought about the [dust](rock.html) all over the land of Egypt which became boils affect man and beast (Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:9). [HaShem](hashem.html) created a, [heavens](heaven.html) in the midst of the waters, dividing the waters from the waters (Genesis) 1:6-8. Moses extended his [hands](fourteen.html) up to that very same firmament and caused it to rain down giant hail stones ([Exodus](exodus.html) 9:18,22) which only brought destruction in their wake and produced the [seventh](seven.html) plague.

In [creation](bara.html) it was the earth which gave [birth](birth.html) to living creatures (Bereshit (Genesis) 1:24), and Moses now causes the [face](body.html) of the earth to be covered by debilitating locusts, with the [eighth](eight.html) plague.

The very [first](one.html) utterance of the Almighty pursuant to [creation](bara.html) is ‘Let there be light’ (Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3), and the [ninth](nine.html) plague is the black viscous darkness which encompasses Egypt.

And of course the final plague is the most apparent antithesis to [creation](bara.html): the death of the [first](one.html) born. Pharoah attempted to usurp [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s place and subvert [creation](bara.html); [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself, through Moses, brings anti-[creation](bara.html), destruction, upon Egypt. But at the same [time](time.html), the Almighty plants the [seeds](flower.html) for re-[creation](bara.html), producing the cure before the disease. The [birth](thebirth.html) of Moses is Biblically described: And the woman conceived and bore a son, and saw that he was good (Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 2:2), resonating with the Divine declaration of ‘it is good’ after every act of [creation](bara.html). The [Midrash](orallaw.html) picks up on this theme, commenting on the verse: When Moses was born, the house became filled with light. Perhaps the primordial light of [creation](bara.html) now the instrument for re-[creation](bara.html). At the [Red Sea](stages.html), the waters split, creating in their stead dry land. Here, too, we have a moment of re-[creation](bara.html), a replay of the initial waters, which were [gathered](gather.html) to [one](one.html) side and from which the dry land initially emerged (Bereshit (Genesis) 1:9,10). Pharoah attempted to destroy [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [world](worlds.html); through Moses and the people of Israel, the [world](worlds.html) is to be recreated and perfected under [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s dominion.

# X. The Plagues and the Decalogue

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Water is turned into** [**blood**](body.html)**.** Shemot 7:20 | Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods. |
| **Frogs**  Shemot 8:5 | Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. |
| [**Dust**](rock.html) **becomes gnats.**  Shemot 8:17 | Thou shalt not steal. |
| **Beasts**  Shemot 8:24 | Thou shalt not commit adultery. |
| **Livestock all dies.**  Shemot 9:6 | Thou shalt not murder. |
| **Festering boils.**  Shemot 9:10 | Honor thy father and thy mother |
| **Hail mixed with** [**fire**](fire.html)**.**  Shemot 9:23 | Remember the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) and keep it holy. |
| **Locusts everywhere.** Shemot 10:13 | Thou shalt not take the [name](name.html) of the Lord thy G-d in vain |
| **Darkness.**  Shemot 10:22 | Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. |
| **Death of the firstborn.** Shemot 12:29 | I am [HaShem](hashem.html) thy G-d, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. |
|  |  |

**IX. The Plagues and** [**Creation**](bara.html)

There is a relationship between the plagues that [HaShem](hashem.html) sent on Egypt, and the inverse order of [creation](bara.html):

The perversion of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [creation](bara.html) began when Pharoah assumed the role of [HaShem](hashem.html) - and instead of encouraging the divinity within human beings he enslaved them. Hence in a fascinating usage of terms, when Moses pleads to be released from [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leadership because:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 6:30*** *“Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how will Pharaoh ever listen to me?”*

The Almighty responds:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 7:1*** *“I have made you a –G-d unto Pharaoh...”*

Rashi’s comment that in this context ‘G-d’ (Elohim) means a “judge and an executor of judgment to punish Egypt with plagues and afflictions,” may be alluding to the single most important reason why the Egyptians were made to suffer the destructive power of the [ten](ten.html) plagues. Moses will become the true representative of a G-d unto Pharoah, the only fitting punishment for Pharaoh who wanted to be a G-d unto his slaves. By becoming a G-d, an executor of judgment and affliction against Egypt, Pharoah’s [desire](needs.html) to twist humanity into his own image --rather than allowing humanity to bloom in the image of [HaShem](hashem.html)-- will be stunted. The tables are being turned. Instead of Pharaoh functioning as a G-d, Moses the stutterer, because that is [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s will, shall become a G-d unto Pharaoh.

And since Pharoah attempted to destroy [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [creation](bara.html) by his policy of slavery, [HaShem](hashem.html) will now - measure for measure - destroy Pharoah’s [creation](bara.html) of Egypt. And indeed that is what we find. All [ten](ten.html) plagues, from [blood](body.html) to the death of the [first](one.html)-born, can be seen in some way expressing the shadow, or antithesis, of G-d’s original intention when He created the [world](worlds.html). The plagues become the mirror image of [creation](bara.html).

The commentators point out a further aspect of the [ten](ten.html) plagues. They can be perceived as a parallel to--or echo of--the [ten](ten.html) Divine pronouncements which brought the [world](worlds.html) into existence (See Ethics of the [Fathers](fathers.html) 5:1). The [redemption](redemption.html) of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html) would, thus, appear to be a counterpart to the [creation](bara.html) of the [world](worlds.html). The process of [creation](bara.html) showed God as the master of nature; the Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) showed him as the ruler of history, bending the [laws](law.html) of nature to His purposes.

From a different vantage point, we can view [Creation](bara.html) as a process of building, and the plagues as acts of destruction necessary for [creation](bara.html). The 17th century commentator Maharal points out that the [ten](ten.html) pronouncements created the [world](worlds.html), whilst the [ten](ten.html) plagues brought about the [creation](bara.html) of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people.

Our Sages ask why the [world](worlds.html) was created by [ten](ten.html) pronouncements rather than [one](one.html); they reply that this was done so that evildoers would be punished for ruining a [world](worlds.html) created by [ten](ten.html) pronouncements, and the righteous would be rewarded for sustaining such a [world](worlds.html).[[120]](#footnote-120) God [knew](daat.html) that man, given the power of free choice, would do harm to the [world](worlds.html). He, therefore, created it in [ten](ten.html) [stages](stages.html)--and the downfall of the evildoers through the [ten](ten.html) plagues would serve to redress the harm done to every stage. Moreover, there would be men eager to do right--and they would be given the [ten](ten.html) [commandments](cmds613.html) to sanctify the [world](worlds.html) in every respect. The revelation of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s Kingship, as a result of the [ten](ten.html) plagues, thus opened the way for the further disclosure of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s will, through the [ten](ten.html) [commandments](cmds613.html).[[121]](#footnote-121)

The following is the breakdown according to the Maharal:[[122]](#footnote-122)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sayings of Creation in the Book of Bereshit** | **The Ten Plagues in the Book of Shemot** | **Connection** |
| 1:1 In the beginning…[[123]](#footnote-123) | 12:29 Death of the firstborn | There is a parallel theme of beginning.[[124]](#footnote-124) |
| 1:3 G-d said, ‘Let there be light’ | 10:22 Darkness | The opposite of light is darkness. |
| 1:6 G-d said, ‘Let there be a firmament’ | 9:23 Hail | G-d made the firmament and now commanded unnatural hail (mix of fire and ice) to rain down from it. |
| 1:9 G-d said, ‘Let the waters gather and let the earth appear’ | 8:13 Lice | G-d revealed the earth and now the dust of earth transformed into lice, as it says: *G-d said to Moshe, ‘Tell Aharon, stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land and it shall become lice throughout the land of Egypt*.*’* (Shemot 8:12) |
| 1:11 G-d said, ‘Let the earth bring forth vegetation’ | 10:13 Locusts | The locusts ate the vegetation. (Even though the plague of hail also destroyed vegetation, locusts *only* destroyed vegetation, while hail also killed animals.) |
| 1:14 G-d said, ‘Let there be luminaries’ | 9:6 Epidemic | The luminaries affect the state of the air that we breathe which can cause an epidemic. (See Maharal) |
| 1:20 G-d said, ‘Let the water sprout forth living creatures’ | 8:2 Frogs | G-d created creatures that came from water; now frogs came in excess out of water. |
| 1:24 G-d said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures’ | 8:20 Wild animals | G-d created living creatures on earth and now those animals came in excess and attacked in an unnatural manner. |
| 1:26 G-d said, ‘Let us make man’ | 9:10 Boils | The plague of boils was the only one that affected man’s body so directly. Also, man was made in the image of G-d, and the boils tainted that spiritual idea. |
| 1:29 G-d said, ‘Behold I have given vegetation… for food to eat’ | 7:20 Change of water to blood | Food of Egypt depended on the Nile and nutrients of food are transported through blood. |

The following table contrasts the plagues with the sayings of [creation](bara.html):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PLAGUE** | **SAYINGS OF** [**CREATION**](bara.html) |
| **1.** Water is turned into [blood](body.html). ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 7:20*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:2*** “Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the [face](body.html) of the deep, and the spirit of G-d hovered over the [face](body.html) of the waters.” |
| Water, is the source of life, it is the source of [creation](bara.html). In the [first](one.html) plague, the waters of Nile, source of Egyptian prosperity, is now turned to [blood](body.html), symbol of death. | |
|  | |
| **2.** Frogs everywhere. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:5*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:20*** G-d then said: Let the waters swarm with swarms (sheratz) of living creatures... |
| The second plague has the river swarm forth frogs, living creatures, to devastate the Egyptians. | |
|  | |
| **3.** [Dust](rock.html) becomes gnats. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:17*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:11*** G-d then created grass, evolving from the earth: “Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding [seed](flower.html), and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind...” |
| The [third](three.html) plague has the very same earth that produced grass and fruit, now produces ghastly gnats. | |
|  | |
| **4.** Beasts everywhere. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 8:24***  **5.** Livestock all dies. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:6*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:25*** G-d created the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind...” |
| The [fourth](four.html) and [fifth](five.html) plagues bring a mixture of noxious animals and murrain on the cattle to subvert [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s creations. | |
|  | |
| **6.** [Dust](rock.html) becomes festering boils. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:10***  **7.** Hail mixed with [fire](fire.html). ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:23*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:6-8*** G-d created a -[heavens](heaven.html) in the midst of the waters, dividing the waters from the waters. |
| The earth which was, after water, the source of evolved [physical](physical.html) creations, has now, with the [sixth](six.html) plague, brought about the -[dust](rock.html) all over the land of Egypt which became boils affect man and beast. Moses extended his [hands](fourteen.html) up to that very same firmament and caused it to rain down giant hail stones which only brought destruction in their wake, and produced the [seventh](seven.html) plague. | |
|  | |
| **8.** Locusts everywhere. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 10:13*** | In [creation](bara.html) it was the earth which gave [birth](birth.html) to living creatures (***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:24***). |
| Moses now causes -the [face](body.html) of the earth to be covered by debilitating locusts, with the [eighth](eight.html) plague. | |
|  |  |
| **9.** Darkness. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 10:22*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3*** G-d said, “Let there be light.” |
| The very [first](one.html) utterance of the Almighty pursuant to [creation](bara.html) is, “Let there be light”, and the [ninth](nine.html) plague is the black viscous darkness which encompasses Egypt. | |
|  |  |
| **10.** Death of the firstborn. ***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:29*** | ***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:1*** For the sake of the things called [first](one.html), G-d created the [heavens](heaven.html) and the earth. |
| And of course the final plague is the most apparent antithesis to [creation](bara.html): the death of the [first](one.html) born. Pharoah attempted to usurp [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s place and subvert [creation](bara.html); [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself, through Moses, brings anti - [creation](bara.html), destruction, upon Egypt. But at the same [time](time.html), the Almighty plants the [seeds](flower.html) for re-[creation](bara.html), producing the cure before the disease. | |

The [birth](thebirth.html) of Moses is Biblically described: And the woman conceived and bore a son, and saw that he was good (Ex 2:2), resonating with the Divine declaration of -it is good after every act of [creation](bara.html). The [Midrash](orallaw.html) picks up on this theme, commenting on the verse: when Moses was born, the house became filled with light - perhaps the primordial light of [creation](bara.html) now the instrument for re-[creation](bara.html). At the [Red Sea](stages.html), the waters split, creating in their stead dry land. Here, too, we have a moment of re-[creation](bara.html), a replay of the initial waters, which were [gathered](gather.html) to [one](one.html) side and from which the dry land initially emerged (Bereshit (Genesis) 1:9,10). Pharoah attempted to destroy [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [world](worlds.html); through Moses and the people of Israel, the [world](worlds.html) is to be recreated and perfected under [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s dominion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PLAGUE** | **“IT IS GOOD”** |
| **1.** Water is turned into [blood](body.html). Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 7:20 | **10.**Then G-d said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” Bereshit (Genesis) 1:26 |
|  |  |
| **2.** Frogs everywhere. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:5 (frogs increase in [number](nchart.html) and fill...?) | **9.** G-d blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in [number](nchart.html) and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” Bereshit (Genesis) 1:22 |
|  |  |
| **3.** [Dust](rock.html) becomes gnats. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:17 (sky teems with creatures?) | **8.** And G-d said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” Bereshit (Genesis) 1:20 |
|  |  |
| **4.** Beasts everywhere. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 8:24 | **7.** And let them be [lights](lights.html) in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:15 |
|  |  |
| **5.** Livestock all dies. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:6 (plants give livestock life.) | **6.** Then G-d said, “Let the land produce vegetation: [seed](flower.html)-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with [seed](flower.html) in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:11 |
|  |  |
| **6.** Festering boils. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:10 (boil means “to burn”) | **5.** And G-d said, “Let the water under the sky be [gathered](gather.html) to [one](one.html) place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:9 |
|  |  |
| **7.** Hail mixed with [fire](fire.html). Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 9:23 (Hail from the sky?) | **4.** G-d called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:8 |
|  |  |
| **8.** Locusts everywhere. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:13 (Locusts in the expanse?) | **3.** G-d said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.” Bereshit (Genesis) 1:6 |
|  |  |
| **9.** Darkness. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:22 | **2.** G-d said, “Let there be light.” Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3 |
|  |  |
| **10.** Death of the firstborn. Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 12:29 | **1.** In the beginning G-d created the [heavens](heaven.html) and the earth. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:1 |

# XI. The [Time](time.html) and Timing of the Plagues

The punishment of the Egyptians lasted [one](one.html) year--exactly as long as that of Noah’s [generation](toldot.html) that perished in the Flood, and as long as the punishment of evildoers in Gehinom after death. On the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) month [Nisan](feasts.html), exactly [one](one.html) year before the [Exodus](exodus.html), Moses had the vision at the burning bush (Shemot [[Exodus](exodus.html)] 2:2), and then returned to Egypt to appear before Pharaoh. The plagues followed -- each lasted [seven](seven.html) days, and was preceded by [twenty](twenty.html)-[four](four.html) days of warning, or (according to another opinion) the warning lasted [seven](seven.html) days and the plague [twenty](twenty.html)-[four](four.html) (Tanchuma). Listen to what Rashi say

**Shemot (**[**Exodus**](exodus.html)**) 7:25** [**Seven**](seven.html) **full days passed**-Heb. וַיִּמָּלֵא, literally, [seven](seven.html) days were filled. Since the word וַיִּמָּלֵא is singular, Rashi explains: The [number](nchart.html) of [seven](seven.html) days that the Nile did not return to its original state [was filled], for the plague would be in effect for a quarter of a month, and for [three](three.html) quarters [of the month], he [Moses] would exhort and warn them.-[from Tanchuma, Va’era 13, Exod. Rabbah 9:12, as explained by Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh].

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also speaks of this timing:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***IX:12*** *AND* [*SEVEN*](seven.html) *DAYS WERE FULFILLED, AFTER THAT THE LORD HAD SMITTEN THE RIVER (VII, 25). R. Judah and R. Nehemiah discussed this.* [*One*](one.html) *of them said that God warned them for* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *days prior to bringing the plague upon them, the actual plague lasting* [*seven*](seven.html) *days; while the other said that for* [*seven*](seven.html) *days did He warn them, the actual plague lasting* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *days. According to the* [*one*](one.html) *who maintains that for* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *days He warned them, the words AND* [*SEVEN*](seven.html) *DAYS WERE FULFILLED refer to the actual plague; and according to him who maintains that for* [*seven*](seven.html) *days He warned them, the words AND* [*SEVEN*](seven.html) *DAYS WERE FULFILLED, AFTER THAT THE LORD HAD SMITTEN THE RIVER refer to the warning given for another plague.*

By [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html), the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [New](teruah.html) Year, the [Jews](gen-jew.html) no longer had to work, and in [Nisan](feasts.html) they were [redeemed](redemption.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Debarim (Deuteronomy) VII:6*** *In Egypt He wrought miracles for you and your* [*eyes*](body.html) *saw it.’ Whence this? For it is said, The great trials (ha-massoth) which thine* [*eyes*](body.html) *saw (Deut. XXIX, 2). What is the force of ‘ ha-massoth ‘? It implies that the plagues weakened (me-massoth) the* [*bodies*](body.html) *of the Egyptians. What is the meaning of ‘ the* [*signs*](signs.html) *‘ (ib.)? The Rabbis say: The plagues became engraven on their* [*bodies*](body.html)*. For example, the words Dam (*[*Blood*](body.html)*), Zefardea’ (Frog), Kinnim (Vermin). What is the meaning of ‘And the wonders’ (ib.)? The plagues deceived them.[[125]](#footnote-125) How? The plagues came every* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *days[[126]](#footnote-126) and lasted for* [*seven*](seven.html) *days[[127]](#footnote-127) and then departed. The Egyptians had thus respite for* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*three*](three.html) *days between* [*one*](one.html) *plague and the next.’ This proves that [the plagues] deceived them.*

[**Nisan**](feasts.html) **1**: No plague.

[**Iyar**](feasts.html): Egypt was afflicted with the [first](one.html) plague: [**Blood**](body.html). [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***7:19*** [*Seder*](haggada.html) *Olam 3* (Sapphire [staff](staff.html))

[**Sivan**](feasts.html): No plague.

[**Tammuz**](feasts.html): No Plague.

[**Av**](feasts.html) **1**: Egypt was afflicted with the second plague: **Frogs**. [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***8:2*** [*Seder*](haggada.html) *HaDorot* (Sapphire [staff](staff.html))

[**Elul**](elul.html) **1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [third](three.html) plague: **Lice**. [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***8:16*** *Zikhron Yemot Olam* (Sapphire [staff](staff.html))

[**Tishri**](feasts.html) **1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [fourth](four.html) plague: **Beasts** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***8:24*** *Zihron Yemot Olam* ([HaShem](hashem.html))

**Cheshvan 1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [fifth](five.html) plague: **Cattle plague** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***9:3*** *Zihron Yemot Olam* ([HaShem](hashem.html))

[**Kislev**](feasts.html) **1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [sixth](six.html) plague: **Boils**. [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***9:9*** *Zichron Yemot Olam* ([HaShem](hashem.html))

**Tevet 1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [seventh](seven.html) plague: **Hail and** [**fire**](fire.html).[***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***9:24*** *Zichron Yemot Olam* (Sapphire [staff](staff.html))

[**Shevat**](feasts.html) **1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [eighth](eight.html) plague: **Locusts**. [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***10:4*** *Zichron Yemot Olam* (Sapphire [staff](staff.html))

[**Adar**](feasts.html) **1**: Egypt was afflicted with the [ninth](nine.html) plague: **Darkness**. [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***10:21*** *Zikhron Yemot Olam*. (Sapphire [staff](staff.html))

[**Nisan**](feasts.html) **15**: Egypt was afflicted with the tenth plague: **Death of the firstborn**. [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***33:3-4*** ([HaShem](hashem.html))

**[Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabbah - Shemot (**[**Exodus**](exodus.html)**) X:7** AND [HaShem](hashem.html) SAID UNTO MOSES: SAY UNTO AARON: STRETCH OUT THY [ROD](staff.html), AND SMITE THE [DUST](rock.html) OF THE EARTH (VIII, 12). R. Tanhum said: [HaShem](hashem.html) said to Moses: ‘It is not proper that thou shouldst smite the earth which protected thee when thou didst kill the Egyptian.’ On this account did Aaron perform [three](three.html) plagues.**[[128]](#footnote-128)** AND AARON STRETCHED OUT HIS [HAND](fourteen.html) WITH HIS [ROD](staff.html) (VIII, 13). Why did He bring gnats upon them? Because they made Israel the scavengers of their streets; on this account did their [dust](rock.html) become gnats, so that when they dug, cubit by cubit, there was no earth there, as it says: ALL THE [DUST](rock.html) OF THE EARTH BECAME GNATS. AND THE MAGICIANS DID SO WITH THEIR [SECRET](sod.html) ARTS TO BRING FORTH GNATS, BUT THEY COULD NOT (VIII, 14). From here you can learn, said R. Eleazar, that a [demon](demons.html) cannot create anything less than the size of a barley-corn; but the Sages say, They cannot create even the size of a camel, [save](salvation.html) that these [the larger creatures] they can assemble [by magic] whereas the others they cannot assemble.**[[129]](#footnote-129)** THEN THE MAGICIANS SAID UNTO PHARAOH: THIS IS THE FINGER OF G-D (VIII, 15)As soon as the magicians realized that they were not able to produce gnats, they recognized that the deeds were those of a [HaShem](hashem.html) and not witchcraft. They no longer claimed to compare themselves with Moses in producing the plagues.**[[130]](#footnote-130)**

From the Arizal:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **plague** | **smiting sub-*Sefirah* in the holy *Nukva*** | **evil sub-*Sefirah* smitten** |
| [blood](body.html) | *malchut* | *keter* of *Nukva* |
| frogs | *yesod* | *brains* of *Nukva* |
| lice | *hod* | skull [hair](hair.html) of *Nukva* and *malchut* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| horde | *Netzach* | *yesod* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| pestilence | *Tiferet* | *hod* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| boils | *Gevurah* | *Netzach* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| hail | *chesed* | *Tiferet* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| locusts | *bina* | *Gevurah* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| darkness | *chachma* | *chesed* of *Zeir Anpin* |
| firstborn | *keter* | *keter-chochma-bina* of *Zeir Anpin* |

\* \* \*

**1.** [**Blood**](body.html)- the Egyptians believed that since the [moon](chodesh.html) controls the tides of the ocean that it had power over the water. Therefore [HaShem](hashem.html) brought the plague of [blood](body.html) to show that there is a greater power than the [moon](chodesh.html) that controls the water.

**2.** **Frogs**- the Egyptians believed that Mercury was responsible for controlling all living things in the water. Therefore again [HaShem](hashem.html) caused frogs to come out of the water and jump into the ovens and into the Egyptian’s stomachs, to prove that there is a greater power than Mercury.

**3.** **Lice**- Venus is supposed to manipulate all beauty in the [world](worlds.html). [HaShem](hashem.html) thus brought lice, once of the most disgusting creatures, over Egypt to show that He is the master over all including the beauty of the [world](worlds.html).

**4.** **Wild animals**- they believed that the [sun](hachama.html) had a controlling power on those animals that lived in the desert where the [sun](hachama.html) shines brightly. However, [HaShem](hashem.html) proved otherwise by causing many wild animals to leave their habitats and enter Egyptians cities. Thus, [HaShem](hashem.html) once again showed that he has the power to control the instincts of all animals and where they are to live.

**5.** **Plague on the Animals-** The Egyptians believed that Mars was responsible for [blood](body.html) and [body](body.html) warmth. The Yalkut Me’am Loez explains that during this plague all [body](body.html) heat was lost in the animals due to cold air therefore causing them to die. [HaShem](hashem.html) showed that he is the once who controls health and warmth.

**6.** **Boils**- it was believed that Jupiter was responsible in the balance of human [body](body.html) fluids. However, the boils caused an extreme imbalance of fluids on the skin hence causing a tremendous amount of pain to the Egyptians.

**7.** **Hail**- The Egyptians believed that there were gods that worked with Saturn that control all things that relate to ice, snow, or cold. However, when [HaShem](hashem.html) brought down a hail that contained [fire](fire.html) from within, He proved that there were no such gods that existed.

**8.** **Locusts**- the Zodiac was supposed to have influence on all the animals and control where they wander. However, [HaShem](hashem.html) showed that He is more powerful than the Zodiac and allowed multitudes of locusts to cross Egypt’s border and consume everything that the hail had left over.

**9.** **Darkness**- Day and night was believed to be controlled through a power called the Outer Sphere. [HaShem](hashem.html), on the other [hand](fourteen.html), proved that it is He who controls when it is day or night. Thus He brought [seven](seven.html) days of darkness upon Egypt.

**10.** **Death of the** [**First**](one.html) **Born-** The intellectual sphere was believed to bless all [first](one.html)-born children at [birth](birth.html) giving them special advantages through a direct link with this sphere. However [HaShem](hashem.html) confirmed that He is the [one](one.html) and only who controls life and the well-being of any [first](one.html) born child and thus killed all [first](one.html)-born Egyptian people and animals.

✡ ✡ ✡

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1. Shemot (Exodus) 7:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Tan. reads: Smite what is in the Nile, etc. This involves a very slight change in the original (חכח instead of חכל). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Bereshit (Genesis) 15:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. And the fish,’ etc., seems irrelevant to what follows. Y.M. refers it to the preceding section: Fish are very prolific and therefore a symbol of fertility. Hence, because the Egyptians attempted to curb the natural increase of the Israelites, God punished them by killing their fish. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Shemot (Exodus) 7:20-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bereshit (Genesis) 15:14 And afterwards shall they come out with great substance. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See also Targum Yonatan 7:22, Me’am Lo’ez 9:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This section was written by Dov Bar-Leib. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Torah insight by Mordecai Kornfeld [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The authors of Tosafot in Da’at Zekenim and Hadar Zekenim, Shemot 7:25; Rosh, beginning of Vaera; Hagahot Maimonei, end of Chametz U’Matzah, #2; Abudraham and KolBo, in Haggadah shel Pesach; Pardes Yosef, Shemot 7:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Tosafot, Hagahot Maimonei and Abudraham [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Gemara Pesachim 6b [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. see Shemot 10:21 and Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Shemot 10:2, beginning of Parashat Bo [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ramban writes “the explanation of the question which everyone asks…” Ramban Shemot 7:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Mishle (Proverbs) 3:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Midrash Rabbah - Shemot 13:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The Midrash introduces a play on words with LEV meaning heart, and KAVED meaning liver; Paro’s heart became like a liver: FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS HEART. What does ‘hikbadti’ imply? That HaShem made his heart like a liver (kaved) into which even if boiled a second time no juice enters; so also, was the heart of Pharaoh made like a liver, and he did not receive the words of HaShem. Hence FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS HEART, etc. Midrash Rabbah - Shemot 13:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This reads as if Paro had hardened his own heart, but based on the next verse, the reading shifts and it seems to have been the work of HaShem. See the comments of the Chizkuni. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See the comments of the Ramban 7:3 where he brings both explanations, and declares that they are both true! [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See the comments of the Sforno in 4:21 where this idea could be understood, though perhaps the thesis stated here goes beyond the Sforno’s intention. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See Yoma 69b Shir HaShirim Raba 7:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The curious case of “Aher”, Elisha ben Avuya, the sage-turned-heretic and murderer, who ostensibly lost his ability for spiritual rehabilitation, will be considered at a later date. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Tanchuma [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XII:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XII:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XII:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Gevurot Hashem [page 253], Chapter 57 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Much of this part of the study is taken from the book: “Studying the Torah“, by Avigdor Bonchek. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Ediot 2:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Shemot (Exodus) 7:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. from Tanchuma, Vaera 13, Exod. Rabbah 9:12, as explained by Mizrachi and Gur Aryeh [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Shemot Rabbah 5:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Tanchuma [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Rabbi Dr. Michael S. Berger [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Midrash Hagadol; Maharal [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Thus punishing first the heavenly hosts worshipped by antiquity and then the kings. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Mah.: It is often the custom of the Midrash to cite a phrase at the end of a section without an accompanying comment. This, however, is rather doubtful, and the quotation may be misplaced; cf. supra, VII, 5, p. 113, n. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Tan. reads: Smite what is in the Nile, etc. This involves a very slight change in the original (vfv instead of kfv ) [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. ‘And the fish,’ etc., seems irrelevant to what follows. Y.M. refers it to the preceding section: Fish are very prolific and therefore a symbol of fertility. Hence, because the Egyptians attempted to curb the natural increase of the Israelites, God punished thern by killing their fish. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Gen. XV, 14 And afterwards shall they come out with great substance. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Pesachim 53b [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Note that Nimrod brought the people together to make bricks, not to make a tower. They made bricks! (Genesis 11:3) [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. In his Commentary on Exodus 8:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. The blood, frogs, and gnats. The earth protected Moses, because in it he hid the slain Egyptian, cf. supra, I, 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The meaning is that magicians can transplant existing things into new surroundings, but cannot create them. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Having admitted to Pharaoh that it was ‘ the finger of God’. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Pharaoh had told him to sacrifice in the land, V. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Supra, III, 8, end. So that they might then pursue Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. ‘Behold ‘ is applicable to an object immediately visible, and hence to something that was to be done without delay. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. V. p. 138, n. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The object being, according to the Tanchuma, to remove them into the jungles, far from their homes, in order that they should not increase so plentifully. Radal reads: in order to make sport of them. It is possible that this Midrash is an echo of the sad tirnes after the fall of the Jewish State when thousands of Jews were made to fight wild beasts in the rena as a public spectacle. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. The *midrash* in *Shemot Rabba parasha* 10 cites R. Yehoshua ben Levi, who asserts that every plague was accompanied by *dever - pestilence*, further affirming an influential role for the plague of *dever*. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Owing to enforced absence from their homes. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. That the beast, whose ownership they had contested, belonged to Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Shemot (Exodus) 9:19-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Midrash Tanchuma, Bishalach 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Shemot (Exodus) 13:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Debarim (Deuteronomy) 11:13-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Cf. Gen. R. V, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. V. infra, XII, 4; XV, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Radal: So that their bodies could not stand either hot or cold. This is preferable. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. “The Jerusalem Bible”, Koren Publishers, Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Cf. Gen. Rabbah 33 (end). The word ka-’eth implies at exactly the same time. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. This translation disregards the punctuation of cur. edd., which makes the meaning very doubtful, and is in accord with Y.M. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. The prophecy is against Gog; cf. infra, XXIII, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Sot. X 11a: cf. supra, 1, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. From the Gk. Gr. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. The hail was below and the fire above with the fire flashing up amidst the hail. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. V. S.S R. III, 11, ¤ 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Jast. reads t,yrp, a word meaning ‘split.’ The reading t,ubrp he thinks is corrupt (v Low. Pfl., p. 364). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The root reshef is used in both connections, hence the identification of ‘fiery bolts’ with birds that ‘fly upward’. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. This word occurs nowhere else in the Tanach, and hence is eminently fitted to be made by the Rabbis a subject for ingenious comment. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Mah. M.K. translates: it came down gently and cut off everything. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Cf. supra, XI, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. The miracle here was that the wheat and spelt were not smitten, although the fire and hail destroyed all else. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. As E.V. According to R. Judah, no miracle at all occurred. Being late to ripen their stalks were not hard enough to be smitten down. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Which includes even those of late ripening. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. The particle eth for ‘ from ‘ is unusual, and the Midrash therefore understands it in the sense of propinquity: he went out, but was yet in contact with the city, as it were. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Cf. Ber. 54a, Gen. Rabbah 22:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Supra, X, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. See Bereshit (Genesis) 3:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Namely, not into the borders of Put, Ethiopia, and Canaan; cf. supra, X, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. A thing which they had disputed among themselves prior to the solution provided by this plague. Zedek here means what is right, viz. the true borders of Egypt and Ethiopia. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. This shows that they were still not debarred from penitence. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. This translation is necessary because the Scriptural phrase may merely mean ‘ a sea wind ‘. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. They derive maru from maruth, authority, and translate (in direct opposition to E.V.): and accepted not His word as authority. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. This agrees with E.V., but makes ‘they’ (rebelled not,etc.) refer to the angels. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. An unusual addition, and points to a later date of composition. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. This refers to the nether-world; v. preceding verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Text as emended (Rashash). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. All the advancement and success of the Egyptians were due to their dark magic; darkness was, therefore, their proper due. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. The verse then meaning: I led him (into Gehinnom); cf. Gen. R. XXXIII, I; Num. R. I, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Note the unusual form, also the additional descriptive phrases, and cf. p. 156, n. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Which proves that it is a natural phenomenon, and does not come from God. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Excessively thick. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Text as emended (Radal). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Shemot (Exodus) 4:22-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Which had to be eaten in the night. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. See for instance *Pesiqta De-Rav Kahane*, *Pesiqta* 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Iyov (Job) 3:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 66:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 34:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Shemot (Exodus) 8:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 34:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 38:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Zechariah 14:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 38:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 39:17-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) ‎‎34:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 34:6-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. I am indebted to Ken Brown for his excellent ideas on the plagues. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Sefer Yetzirah, Chapter 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Avot, Chapter 5:1-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. (c) 1996. Ateret Cohanim - The Jerusalem Reclamation Project. All Rights Reserved. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Ethics, 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Chidushei HaRim in Mayana shel Torah and the Sfat Emet. R. Yehuda Loew of Prague, The Maharal, in his work Gevurot HaShem, chapter 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Maharal, Gevurot Hashem, 57, the reason why they don’t match up in order is because the plagues had to be in order of intensity, going from lowest to highest. See Ohr Gedalyahu to Parshat Bo for a different reason for the difference in order. See also the Haggadah called ‘Ma’aseh Nissim’ that similarly points out the parallel between the plagues and “the sayings of creation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. See the Gemara in Rosh Hashana 32a that says that “*Bereshit*” is one of the sayings of creation. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. The Alshich (Torat Moshe to Shemot 34:17-18) points out further that the plague of the firstborn was done directly through G-d as opposed to intermediaries. As it says in the Haggadah: *I (G-d) will pass through the land of Egypt, I and not an angel; I will smite all the firstborn, I and not a seraph; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments I and not a messenger; I am G-d, it is I and no other.* This parallels the first saying of creation when there was nothing besides G-d, as angels were only created on the second day. (Rashi to Ber. 1:5 quoting Ber. Rabbah 3:8) [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Connecting the word mofethim (‘wonders’) with the root pathah to deceive, and reading ha-mefathim. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Cf. Ex. R. IX, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. See Chizkuni on Shemot 12:15 (in the middle of his pirush) where he explains that Chag HaMatzah is specifically seven days to correspond to the seven days that each plague lasted. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. The blood, frogs, and gnats. The earth protected Moses, because in it he hid the slain Egyptian, cf. supra, I, 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. The meaning is that magicians can transplant existing things into new surroundings, but cannot create them. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Having admitted to Pharaoh that it was ‘ the finger of HaShem ‘. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)