
THE WEISS EDITION

וּאֵירָא

Va'eira



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Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' **ישעי' זוסיא**
ב"ר **אברהם דוד** ע"ה
ווילהעלם

מקושר לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
שליח למדינת פנמה
מנהל וראש ישיבת מתיבתא אהלי תורה
הוגה בתורה בהתמדה רבה
פה מפיק מרגליות
חיבר ספרים והרביץ תורה ברבים
בנגלה ובחסידות
עסק בהפצת המעיינות
תמך במוסדות ובשלוחי הרבי
אהוב על הבריות, רודף צדקה וחסד
ביתו פתוח לרווחה וקעיבל את כולם בסבר פנים יפות
העמיד דור ישרים מבורך, צאצאים ותלמידים
ומהם שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר ועושי דברו
נלב"ע ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

וַאֲרָא *Va'eira*

7:20 | ז:ב

וַיִּהְיוּ כָּל הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר לְדָם

*And all the water that was in the Nile
turned to blood.*

Escaping the Cold

Bnei Yisrael's exile in Egypt seemed interminable. Slavery was such a deep part of their identity that they refused to believe that their redemption was imminent. Egypt's oppression of Bnei Yisrael was so severe that even Moshe struggled to understand how it could be part of G-d's plan. It was only when G-d struck the Egyptians with the Ten Plagues that Egypt's grip on the Jewish people began to crumble.

"In every generation and every day, one must regard himself as though he has come out of Egypt on that very day."¹ The Torah's name for Egypt, *Mitzrayim*, shares a common root with the Hebrew word *meitzar*, constraint. Accordingly,

1. Mishnah, Pesachim 10:5, cf. Tanya, chapter 47.

Chassidus explains that “in every generation and every day,” one must constantly strive to escape his personal “Egypt”—the internal constraints that hinder and restrain his devoted service of G-d. In this context, the Ten Plagues represent ten steps through which we can breach even the toughest internal barriers, freeing our souls to fully experience our attachment to G-d.

In the first plague, the waters of the Nile River—which the Egyptians worshipped as a god—turned into blood.

Water is naturally cold; thus, the waters of the Nile represent coolness and indifference toward things that are G-dly and holy. This attitude of coolness is the root of all spiritual ills, for it is impossible for a person to remain perpetually unexcited about both holiness and that which challenges holiness. Consequently, even if a person observes all the mitzvos but does so coldly and apathetically, his detachment will invariably bring him to interest in and attraction to ideas that are incompatible with a life of holiness.

The first and most crucial step toward our escape from Egypt is therefore to rid ourselves of the cold waters of the Nile, and infuse our Judaism and Torah observance with passion.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, pp. 119–124

7:28 | זכח

וְשָׂרֵץ הַיָּאֵר צִפְרֹדָּעִים וְעָלוּ וּבָאוּ בְּבֵיתָהּ וּבְחֹדֶר מִשְׁכְּבָהּ
וְעַל מִטָּתָהּ וּבֵית עֲבָדֶיהָ וּבְעֻמָּהּ וּבְתִנּוּרֶיהָ וּבְמִשְׁאָרֹתֶיהָ

*The river will swarm with frogs, and they will emerge
and come inside your home and into your bedroom and
upon your bed, and inside the homes of your servants
and among your people, and into your ovens and your
kneading troughs.*

Blood Before Frogs

G-d's battering of the Egyptians began with the waters of the Nile turning into blood. Next, G-d smote the land with a plague of frogs, which swarmed from the waters of the Nile into the Egyptians' homes, bedrooms and kitchens.

The Torah's name for Egypt, *Mitzrayim*, shares a common root with the Hebrew word *meitzar*, constraint. Accordingly, the ten plagues that brought down mighty Egypt represent the steps we must take to break out of our personal "Egypt"—the internal limitations that hinder and constrain our service of G-d.

The first two plagues both involved water. Water, which is cold by nature, symbolizes an attitude of coolness—detachment and indifference. The first plague, in which the waters of the Nile were transformed to warm and lifegiving blood, symbolizes that we must imbue our service of G-d with warmth and excitement. In contrast, the second plague, in which creatures of the water, frogs, swarmed, everything related to Pharaoh and Egypt—and particularly, their ov-

ens—symbolizes that breaking through our internal “Egypt” requires developing a coolness towards material pleasures.

Now, under normal circumstances, ridding ourselves of competing loyalties—symbolized by the plague of frogs—would be the first step to take before attempting to live a life devoted to G-d and G-dliness. We see, however, that the plague of frogs was not the first plague but the second; the plague of blood preceded it. The order of these two plagues teaches that even before we have succeeded at cooling down our material pleasures, we must already infuse our Torah and mitzvos with fervor, for the light and warmth of our passion-filled mitzvos will assist in dispelling any dark and undesirable passions that remain.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, pp. 123-125*

 ח:ב | 2:8

וַיִּט אַהֲרֹן אֶת יָדוֹ עַל מִימֵי מִצְרַיִם וַתֵּעַל
הַצִּפְרִידָּע וַתִּכָּס אֶת אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

*Aharon stretched forth his hand over the waters of Egypt,
and the frog came up and covered the land of Egypt.*

When the Bare Minimum is Optimal

Our Sages place great emphasis on executing a mitzvah from start to finish, rather than leaving it incomplete.² Nevertheless, when it is unclear what exactly constitutes completion of a particular mitzvah, we must examine the mitzvah in question before rushing to complete it to the fullest measure. If the mitzvah is charity-related or the like, we should obviously extend our involvement beyond any risk of leaving it incomplete. In other instances, however, we are best off fulfilling only the bare minimum, even at risk of not seeing the project through from beginning to end.

For example, when a *beis din* must inflict *malkos*, lashes, upon transgressors of certain sins, the Torah warns, “He shall flog him with forty lashes; he shall not exceed, lest he give him a more severe flogging than these.”³ Since the Torah prohibits exacting excessive punishment, if we are in doubt regarding

2. See Rashi, Devarim 8:1.

3. Devarim 25:3.

the extent of our obligations in this mitzvah, we suffice by fulfilling our duty to the bare minimum.⁴

This explains the Midrash which discusses how the plague of frogs was set into motion. Aharon was instructed to afflict the Egyptians with frogs—plural—that would swarm through the entire land,⁵ yet the verse states, “Aharon stretched forth his hand... and *the frog* came up and covered the land,” implying that only one frog emerged through Aharon’s efforts. The Midrash explains that Aharon brought one frog from the Nile, but when people hit that frog, swarms of frogs miraculously streamed from it and covered the land.

Since G-d’s instruction to Aharon involved inflicting pain on other human beings, the Midrash opines that Aharon was as minimally involved as possible in its completion; he drew only one frog out from the Nile, and allowed the rest of the plague to come about at the hands of others.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, pp. 84–85

4. In fact, though the verse implies that the *beis din* must administer 40 lashes per transgression, the maximum amount of lashes ever meted out for a single sin is actually 39. According to some opinions, this is to avoid coming too close to exceeding the limit. See Targum Yonasan, Devarim 25:3.

5. See Shemos 8:1.

 9:24 | ט:כד

וַיְהִי בָרָד וַאֲשׁ מִתְלַקַּחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד

There was hail, and fire flaming within the hail.

Fire and Ice

In the seventh of the Ten Plagues, G-d caused a devastating hailstorm to rain down upon Egypt, striking all the people and livestock that were not indoors, and crushing all the remaining crops and trees. In addition, says the Torah, the balls of ice miraculously contained fire.

The purpose of this unusual and doubly miraculous plague was not only to destroy Egypt's crops, but also to crush the Egyptians' delusional arrogance.

Egypt did not depend on rain for the irrigation of its crops. Rather, from time to time the waters of the Nile would rise, and through a system of pools and canals the entire land would be irrigated. This independence from rain led the people of Egypt to believe that they were entirely self-sufficient and not at G-d's mercy for their survival. The prophet Yechezkel therefore describes Pharaoh as "the great crocodile that lies down in the midst of its rivers, who said, 'My river is my own, and I made myself.'"⁶ As the commentaries explain, Pharaoh felt that "I do not need the heavens, for my river provides all my necessities."⁷

To strike down their arrogance and false sense of security, G-d caused a supernatural mix of fire and ice to rain from the heavens.

 6. Yechezkel 29:3.

7. Rashi ad loc.

Ice represents the conceited person's coldness—his aloofness and indifference to others. At the same time, the arrogant person can be heatedly passionate—about himself. These two manifestations of arrogance are in fact two sides of the same coin: the conceited person's iciness toward others is due to his adoration of himself.

Accordingly, G-d crushed the Egyptians' arrogance with the plague of hail—a combination of fire and ice.

—*Reshimos*, no. 27

לזכות

הת' **דוד** שי'

לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות בשעטו"מ
ביום כ"ו טבת ה'תשפ"ו

יה"ר שיגדל להיות חסיד, ירא שמים ולמדן
לנח"ר הוריו וכל משפחתו שיחיו

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נדפס ע"י הוריו

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לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת **יואל זוסמאן**

ב"ר **יצחק מנחם הכהן** ע"ה

ענגעל

נלב"ע ביום ר"ח שבט ה'תשנ"ג
תנצב"ה

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וזוגתו מרת **רשא לאה** שיחיו **ענגעל**

לעילוי נשמת

מרת **עטיל** בת ר' **ישעיה** ע"ה

שגלוב

נלב"ע ביום ב' שבט ה'תשנ"א
תנצב"ה

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לעילוי נשמת
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קציר
נלב"ע ביום כ"ט טבת ה'תשע"ד
תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י ולזכות חתנו ובתו
הרה"ת אורן יהושע אביגדור
וזוגתו מרת נילי דפנה
וילדיהם
חי' מושקא
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שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות
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