



## פרשת וארא

### שמות ז: כה-כט

וַיִּמְלֵא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים אַחֲרֵי הַכּוֹת־יְהוָה אֶת־הַיָּאֵר: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא  
אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי: וְאִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה  
לְשַׁלַּח הַנֶּחָשׁ אֲנֹכִי נִגַּף אֶת־כָּל־גְּבוּלְךָ בַּצְּפַרְדְּעִים: וְשַׁנַּץ הַיָּאֵר צְפַרְדְּעִים וְעָלוּ וַבָּאוּ  
בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבַחֲדָר מִשְׁכַּבְּךָ וְעַל־מִטַּתְךָ וּבְבֵית עַבְדֶּיךָ וּבְעַמְּךָ וּבְתַנּוּרֶיךָ וּבְמִשְׁאָרוֹתֶיךָ:  
וּבָכָה וּבְעַמְּךָ וּבְכָל־עַבְדֶּיךָ יַעֲלוּ הַצְּפַרְדְּעִים:

Seven full days passed after the Lord had smitten the Nile. The Lord said to Moses, "Come to Pharaoh and say to him, 'So said the Lord, "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let [them] go, behold, I will smite all your borders with frogs. And the Nile will swarm with frogs, and they will go up and come into your house and into your bedroom and upon your bed and into the house of your servants and into your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading troughs; and into you and into your people and into all your servants, the frogs will ascend."

### Jacob Plumb- Class of 2021 Frogs: Deadly or Simply Disturbing?

This passage details the plague of the frogs, the second plague. For the first plague, Hashem told Moshe to warn Pharaoh about turning the Nile into blood, and then he instructed Aharon to turn the Nile into blood with his staff. Pharaoh's magicians are able to replicate Aharon's demonstration, so Pharaoh doesn't pay any heed to divine the plague. When Seven days passed, Hashem instructed Moshe to warn Pharaoh that he would infest the country with frogs if Pharaoh did not comply. The text goes on to detail the extent to which the frogs occupied the land.

Rashi comments on Pasuk 27, that the word *Nogef* does not connote killing, rather just smiting, or attacking in layman's terms. Rashi comes to clarify that the plague of the frogs was not meant to kill the Egyptians. Rashi cites other sources throughout Tanach to prove the non-lethal connotation of the word *Nogef*. I would add, though,

that the reason for the non-lethal nature of the frog plague was so that it could not be ignored. Hashem saw that Pharaoh was not disturbed by the first plague, so Hashem sent forth a plague that was so obnoxious and such a nuisance that it literally refused to be ignored, they afflicted the Egyptians in every second of every day.

נגף את כל גבולך. מִכָּה, וְכֵן כָּל לְשׁוֹן מִגֹּפֶה אֵינוֹ לְשׁוֹן מִיְתָה אֶלָּא לְשׁוֹן מִכָּה, וְכֵן "וְנִגְפוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה" (שמות כ"א), אֵינוֹ לְשׁוֹן מִיְתָה, וְכֵן "וּבִטְרָם יִתְנַגְּפוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם" (ירמיהו י"ג), "פֶּן תִּגְרַף בְּאַבְן רַגְלְךָ" (תהילים צ"א), "וּלְאַבְן נִגְרַף" (ישעיהו ח'):

### **Ellen Morgan- Class of 2023: Frogs: Midah K'Negged Midah**

Right before this the first plague of blood occurs and the Egyptians didn't have any clean water to drink so it is thought that maybe now Pharaoh would let the Jewish people leave. So Hashem sent Moshe and Aaron to speak to Pharaoh and command him to let the Jewish people go. Pharaoh refuses and because of this Hashem instructs Moshe to start the second plague which was the take over of frogs in Egypt.

The modern commentary that I am using is one by Todd Berman. He is the Associate director at Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi. Todd Berman also founded the Jewish Learning Initiative at Brandeis University and served a rabbinic advisory to the Orthodox community there for several years.

In his blog he discusses: Why frogs? And particularly why didn't Hashem pick a different animal that would do more damage? We learn in the Haggadah and with all the plagues that every plague was a measure for a measure. But Frogs still doesn't seem like anything the Jews went through. He explains that having peace and safety in the home is one of the most important values and Pharaoh took this away from the Jewish people when they were enslaved. When the frogs took over Egypt they weren't just in the streets, they actually came into the Egyptians homes disturbing the safety and health the Egyptians previously had.

I think that this is a very nice idea, I had always thought that the frogs was just kind of like the funny plague that didn't really do any harm. I was able to see that maybe the plague of the frogs wasn't just a funny plague with frogs everywhere but that it may have done more damage than any other plague, and that damage isn't always on the exterior it may be on the inner level of your family as well.

## **Rena Schwartz- Class of 2020: Ohr Hachayim; An exploration of the time frame?**

These Pasukim, in essence, are the warning Moshe was told to give Pharaoh about the plague of frogs- how devastating the inundation of frogs would be to the ancient Egyptian civilization. These frogs would go into their houses, on their resting places, into their servants houses, into where their food is made, a burden on their people.

Medieval - Ohr Hachaim

Pharaoh was so stubborn he let a week go by without making an effort to somehow have this plague canceled. This is following the opinion in Shemot Rabbah 9,12 that Moses spent 24 days warning Pharaoh of the impending plague and once the plague materialised it remained in effect for seven days. According to the opinion that it was the other way around, i.e. that Moses warned Pharaoh of the impending plague for seven days running, where once the plague started it lasted for 24 days, the seven days mentioned in these pesukim refer to the period of warning. The plague then would've stayed for the remainder of the month. The problem with this explanation is the plague of darkness is described as being intense for three days. Maybe both the plague of darkness and the plague of blood were exceptions and the author of the opinion that the plagues remained in effect for 24 days agrees that the water in the river did not remain blood for 24 days on end. This would account for the fact that the Torah mentions a time frame only in the case of those two plagues. The Ohr Hachayim believes even though God had set a time-limit for each plague, Moses' prayer would've canceled the plague in the first place