



The seventh plague wreaked particular havoc on the fields of Egypt. The hail, a heavenly amalgamation of ice and fire, destroyed anything and everything that was left outdoors. This included crops, vegetation and animals. However, the *Torah* makes specific mention of what was NOT destroyed. The wheat and the spelt that was left outside were not destroyed since they are late in sprouting. **Rashi** cites the *Tanchuma* which explains that it was a “*Pele*” - a wonder, that these types were not destroyed. Why did the wheat and spelt deserve such a miracle? **R’ Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi *shlit’a*** explains that there was a lesson here for Pharaoh to realize - he should be flexible and yielding instead of brazen and impertinent - like the wheat and spelt whose flexibility in the fields allowed them to remain upright even as the devastating hail fell. The “*Pele*” is a reference to the fact that a miracle was performed for Pharaoh to see and he STILL didn’t want to recognize it.

Doing *chessed* for others takes a flexibility, an urge to give away of oneself for the benefit of another person. The famous *Baal Chessed*, **Reb Beinish Mandel *zt”l***, was renowned for his *Hatzalah* work, his kindness, his ability to put others at ease. He didn’t just do *chessed*; his motto in life was: “*Hatznea Leches Im Hashem Elokecha*” and he was always modest and discreet in his actions. Case in point: An Israeli rabbi once came to New York to seek treatment for cancer. He came alone and with little money. He knew almost no one and barely spoke a word of English. Somehow, he managed to find a basement apartment in Flatbush where he could stay for the months he was scheduled for treatment in New York.

Reb Beinish found out about this *Talmid Chacham* and asked him to move into his own home. Why should a man going through such a trying period remain alone? He begged and cajoled but the rabbi absolutely would not hear of it and at the very least, he agreed to come eat dinner a few nights a week at the Mandel home. On other nights, Reb Beinish would go visit him in his small room in the basement, just to cheer him up and give him *chizuk*.

Reb Beinish’s son Yitzy, recounts the following story in vivid detail, adding that from the time it happened until recently, he never spoke about it. Why? Because it was so natural and not in any way unusual for his father that he didn’t really think into it. It happened right after a large snowstorm had just hit the New York area and Yitzy, who was then a teenager, was outside shoveling the snow off the sidewalks around the Mandel home in Flatbush. It took some time and when he was finished, tired and sweaty, he walked into his house and put the shovel away in the corner near the door.

Just at that moment, he saw his father putting on his coat. Reb Beinish quietly motioned for him to take the shovel again and follow him outside. Opening the front door, he called out to no one in particular, “I’m going out with Yitzy for a bit,” to which his wife acknowledged with a wave from the kitchen. Yitzy closed his coat again and followed his father.

Reb Beinish got into his car and told Yitzy to put the shovel in the back seat and hop in. They drove a few blocks and pulled up in front of the house where the rabbi from Israel was staying. The snow was piled high and no one had shoveled the walkway and steps leading around to the basement entrance where the rabbi was staying. As an Israeli who probably never saw snow, and a cancer patient who was weak from treatment, Reb Beinish was concerned about the man trying to navigate the snow on the days he went out to the hospital. He asked Yitzy to please shovel the side of the house, adding that really he would do it but he was weak himself from his own cancer treatment. He also asked him to hurry before anyone sees them. Yitzy was happy to do his father’s bidding and in no time, he had shoveled the entire area clear of snow.

Satisfied, Reb Beinish and his son got back into his car and drove home. They walked up the front stairs and were about to enter the house when Reb Beinish looked at Yitzy and put his finger to his lips. “Ssshhhh...” he intoned softly and the two smiled knowingly. Then, he pushed open the door and announced in a booming voice, “We’re back!”

This story really made an incredible impression on Yitzy. His father was truly, *Nosei B’ol Chaveiro*, not only in a figurative sense but in a physical sense as well. (*Reprinted in honor of the wedding of Elisheva Mandel & Yoni Cohen*)

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**אשר בחר בנביאים טובים**  
 שים פניך על פרעה ... והנבא עליו ועל מצרים כלם (חזקוניא ב”ב)

While most prophecies were intended for the Jewish people, there were some that focused on the nations of the world, as well. In this week’s *Haftorah*, *Yechezkel HaNavi* is told to direct his attention to the impending destruction of the haughty and arrogant Egyptians. While they did indeed have numerous faults, *Chazal* tell us that their downfall was due to their extreme arrogance. The question is, why did *Yechezkel* invest so much attention to the downfall of the Egyptian empire? Why should it even matter to the Jewish people?

The **Maharal *zt”l*** (*Nesivos Olam*) explains that since the *Torah* is a non-physical, non-tangible entity, only someone who makes himself “non-physical,” can acquire knowledge from it. Humility is the polar opposite of arrogance, and while knowledge is crucial for spiritual development, it can only be attained if one has humility, a prerequisite for acquiring *Torah* knowledge properly. Once a person recognizes this, his humility will nullify his ego, defining him less as a physical being and more as a spiritual one. Although he may believe he has accomplished much, once the trait of humility sets in, he will realize that his arrogance was just impeding him from soaring higher, thereby limiting his ability to acquire *Torah* knowledge. Predicting the defeat of the conceited Egyptian nation, was *Yechezkel Hanavi’s* “lesson in humility” and a way to infuse this inherent lesson into the fiber of *Klal Yisroel*.

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At the beginning of our *parsha*, we read what is known as the four expressions of *Geulah*: "ולקחתם", "ולקחתם", "ולקחתם", "ולקחתם". The fourth and final stage - "ולקחתם" - occurred when *Hashem* gave *Bnei Yisroel* the *Torah*. The four expressions of *Geulah* are: wine which we drink at the *Pesach Seder* were instituted to commemorate the above four expressions of *Geulah*. Just as wine causes a change in a person, affecting the way one thinks and conducts himself, so too, each stage of the redemption brought about a significant change in the Jewish Nation's condition. We therefore drink wine to commemorate these various stages of redemption.

There is a curious *halacha* in reference to the four cups at the *Seder*. If a person wishes, he is permitted to drink between the various cups of wine. For example, if a person feels thirsty after *Karpas* and wants to drink some wine between the first and second cups, he is permitted. However, between the third and fourth cups, from *Birchas Hamazon* until after *Hallel*, it is forbidden to drink any wine. Our *Chachamim* wanted to emphasize the strong connection between the third and fourth *kosos* and therefore issued the prohibition of drinking in between these two. In light of this, my *machshava* is as follows: The third cup of "וגאלתי" represents *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. That is when we became a free nation. The fourth cup, corresponding to "ולקחתם" represents *Matan Torah*. *Chazal* wanted to teach us that there can be no interruption between these two events - namely *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Matan Torah*. We did not become truly free when we left Egypt because we still had no clear direction of how to live as a Jew. An existence without *Torah* can hardly be called freedom. True freedom is to pursue a *Torah*-driven life, which only became possible after *Matan Torah*. Thus, there must not be any break (*hefsek*) between the third and fourth cups.

May we be *zoche* to internalize all the lessons of these *Geulos* and continuously grow in *Torah* and *Yiras Shamayim*.

**משל למת הדבר דומה**  
(ה-ט)  
והנה לא מת ממקנה ישראל עד אחד וכבוד לב פריקה ... (ט-ה)

**משל**: Once there was a king who raised ten wild, rabid dogs. He used them to torture and kill any of his ministers whom he wished to punish. One of the ministers once gave an opinion which the king didn't like, so he ordered that the minister be thrown to the dogs. The minister pleaded, "Your Majesty, please give me ten days to prepare myself before you throw me to the dogs." The king agreed to this final request.

During those ten days, the minister went to the handler who was in charge of the dogs and asked if he can watch them for the next week or so. The guard was baffled, but he agreed. The minister started feeding the dogs, cleaning for them, washing them, providing all sorts of comfort for them.

When the ten days were up, the king ordered that the minister be thrown to the dogs for his punishment. But when he was thrown in, everyone was amazed to see that the dogs were licking the minister's hands, instead of tearing him apart.

**EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS  
ON THE MIDDAH OF ... תפילה**  
(ה-ח)  
ויצק משה אל ה' על דבר הצפרדעים אשר שם לפרקה ... (ח-ה)

**דרגה יתירה**  
FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF  
R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

Rashi tells us how the plague of frogs began. One giant frog rose up from the Nile. The Egyptians immediately began to hit it, but to their surprise, with every strike, swarms of frogs streamed out of it and quickly overran the Land of Egypt. What a baffling experience! The more they struck it, the more they were surrounded by croaking, slimy reptiles. Finally, Pharaoh realized that by fighting the big frog, they were exacerbating the problem and he called Moshe and Aharon, saying, "Pray to your G-d that He remove the frogs from me and my people." It was clear to Pharaoh that there was no natural way to deal with this problem, and that only praying to *Hashem* would help. Moshe and Aharon did indeed *daven* and the frogs disappeared.

**R' Avraham Pam ז"ל** writes that this *Medrash* sheds light on one of the deadliest plagues of our times. In the 1960's the PLO was a small threat to the security of Israel. But after one attack was met with a military response, the danger of terrorism multiplied and spread across the globe. Since then, terrorist groups have popped up almost as fast as the giant frog spewed forth frogs! Each time we try to ward off our enemies or strike back, we become inundated with countless acts of terror by groups and individuals. The situation in *Eretz Yisroel* is scary and difficult. Adults are constantly on alert and children play games such as "*Mechabel and Hatzala*." (Not cops and robbers, but "Terrorists and Rescue" members!) It is untenable and clearly unnatural. The amount of terror attacks over the last few years is beyond the realm of normal, even for the Land of Israel!

R' Pam is making an important point. We must open up our eyes and realize that this situation is so unnatural that **ONLY Hashem** can help. What we need is **TEFILAH**! Are we begging *Hashem* every day to bring an end to this plague? *Hashem* can easily whisk away all the terrorists as He removed the millions of frogs from Egypt. It's up to us - we know what we need to do!