



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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The second of the ten plagues, the plague of frogs, contains within it (like each of the plagues), profound symbolism and eternal messages.

The *pasuk* tells us: *VaTa'al HaTzfardya vat-echas et eretz Mitzrayim- And the Tzfardaya arose and covered the Land of Egypt.*

Rashi in a famous comment explains: *VaTa'al HaTzfardya- Tzfardaya Achat Hayta- One frog rose from the water-vehayu makin ota vhi matezet nichilim nichilim- they hit the frog, and it streamed forth swarms and swarms of frogs...."*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe zy'a, points out the significance of the miraculous way in which this particular *makka* becomes gradually worse, initially there was only one frog, and once that frog was struck suddenly there came forth swarms of frogs. The Rebbe pointed out that this plague emphasized that unlike some of the other plagues which were able to be imitated or copied by the sorcerers in *Paroh's* court, it's perhaps true that these sorcerers could bring forth frogs, but what they could not replicate was the miraculous capacity for one frog to suddenly spew swarms and swarms of additional frogs. Only *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* could orchestrate such a miracle.

The **Meor Einayim, the Rebbe of Chernobyl zy'a**, offered an interesting insight as to the message inherent in this particular plague.

"The essence of the suffering caused by the frogs was not their presence, but their sound. For sound that is unanchored in inner depth obscures rather than reveals."

The **Sefat Emet, the Gerrer Rebbe zy'a**,

explains that the word for frog- *tzfaardaya*, is comprised of the letters which make up the words *tzipor deia* — **a bird of awareness**. When the mind is in exile, this awareness scatters into **many voices and cries**, like the frogs filling all of Egypt. The *makka* of *tzfardaya*, represents the noise and confusion of exile.

Rav Shamshon Refael Hirsch zt'l explained that a frog is noisy in the evening, but with day break becomes silent. How might *Rav Hirsch's* words help us to understand the eternal message within the plague of frogs? If the frogs were indeed annoying, or a major nuisance how should the Egyptians have responded to that annoyance? How should we in turn respond when someone annoys or irritates us through their words, actions or world view?

The great tzadik **Rabbi Dr. Avraham J. Twerski zy'a**, offered this beautiful insight to address this fundamental question regarding responding to annoying or offensive actions or comments:

We may be negatively affected by what we hear just as we may cause harm by what we say. It

is important to be as selective about our hearing as we are about our speech...

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, zt'l affectionately known as *the Steipler Gaon*, writes that initially the dreaded plague of



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frogs only consisted of one frog, as *Rashi* teaches us. However, the Egyptians apparently didn't like the frog, and hit it in an attempt to make it go away. Unbeknownst to them, this frog had the miraculous capacity that each time it was struck, it actually multiplied and spewed forth many more frogs.

While one might understand the first few attempts to strike the frog, if indeed the frog kept reproducing with each time it was struck, at some point it should have been clear that they should no longer strike the frog, as it just kept making the situation worse!

The *Steipler* explained that this is what happens when one lets their anger overcome their intellect. When one gets caught up with anger, they tend to lash out, lose all sense of rational thought, and ultimately can make an uncomfortable or upsetting circumstance exponentially worse. We all can look in retrospect at how foolish and counterproductive it was for the Egyptians to continue to strike these frogs, so perhaps we also need to begin to ask ourselves why we so often fail to learn from their foolishness, and allow our anger to get the best of us.

The eternal message from the plague of *Tzfardaya*, is an important and relevant *musar haskel* for each of us. When we encounter any annoyance or frustration in life, it is important not to lash out at that annoyance in anger, which can only make the situation worse, but rather to take a step back, restrain ourselves, and let that nuisance pass, rather than lash out and make it potentially worse.

May we merit to heed each of these powerful messages that our sages suggest can be learned from the *makka* of *tzfardaya*. ■

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