

## VAERA-THE TEN PLAGUES- PUNISHMENTS TO PAROH AND MITZRAYIM

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Parshas Vaera contains seven of the ten plagues. The remaining three are in Parshas Bo. In Parshas Vaera, the Kli Yakar explains the lesson each plague contained. While Hashem's ways are really beyond our comprehension, nevertheless, the Kli Yakar does give us some insights to help us understand the plagues that were brought on Mitzrayim.

The plague of blood came from the Nile River that Paroh believed he was in control of. He had to be shown that it was Hashem who made and controlled the river and not him. Furthermore, the fish dying was a punishment for stopping the bracha that Bnai Yisroel were to multiply like fish as indicated in Yaakov's Bracha in Bereishis 48:16, Veyidgu Larov, that his descendants should multiply like fish, unaffected the any evil eye.

The plague of frogs came from Paroh not wanting to know who Hashem was. The frogs that were croaking all over the land were ready to jump into the fires in ovens glorify Hashem. The Gemara in Pesachim in states that Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah learned from the frogs to be ready to glorify Hashem. They reasoned that if the frogs who are not commanded to sanctify Hashem's name were ready to do so anyway as the Torah tells us that they would be in the ovens, they, as Hashem's people who are commanded to sanctify Hashem's name surely should be ready to into the furnace and disobey Nevuchadnezzar's orders to bow down to his statue.

The Kli Yakar explains the remaining plagues as follows. The lice were a punishment for the hard labor that was forced on Bnai Yisroel as lice often come from sweat. The wild animals were a punishment for enslaving Am Yisroel who are compared to various animals [in a good way] in the brachos from Yaakov Avinu. The plague of cattle disease was a punishment for taking away Am Yisroel's main occupation which was taking care of cattle as indicated in Bereishis. Because the Egyptians forced us to be away from our wives, they were smitten with *shechin*, boils which is known to make marital retaliations more difficult. Because Paroh said, "Who is Hashem that I should listen to his voice," he was forced to hear Hashem's voice in the hail and thunder. Paroh actively tried to reduce the numbers in Klal Yisroel so he was hit with locusts, a creature known to multiply exponentially. Because Am Yisroel had to hide their children in the dark to avoid their being found, the Egyptians were punished with darkness. Because Paroh tried to annihilate Hashem's *bechor*, first born, their first born were all killed.

We see that punishments are related to sin, Chazal tell us frequently that when one has problems, one should look at his/her actions. We certainly see this in the Kli Yakar's explanation of the plagues. If we look deeply enough we will find a connection and hopefully will be motivated to do the proper teshuva to put us back on the right path.