



## *The promise of redemption*

### *Parashat Va'era (14) – I appeared*

**Torah:** *Shemoth* 6:2 to 9:35

**Haftarah:** *Yehezqēl* 28:25 to 29:21

**Apostolic Writings:** *Romiyim* 9:14-24

Not a week goes by that we don't emphasise the importance of *Torah* as our foundation. It wasn't only *Yeshua* and the prophets of old, but also people who lived many years after *Yeshua*'s resurrection and ascension, who used *Torah* as their basis, combined with knowledge of agriculture, to teach us about our relationship with others, especially pagans. *Sha'ul* teaches us in the Apostolic Writings:

*Qorintiyim Bēt 6* <sup>14</sup>Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness? And what fellowship has light with darkness?

The word 'unevenly' is also translated 'unequally' in some translations, almost signifying an ambiguous meaning. However, it is not 'unequal' in that sense of the word, but of a different type, as we see from the text that follows. This immediately refers us back to *Torah*:

*Deḡarim 22* <sup>10</sup>Do not plough with an ox and a donkey together.

This doesn't only pertain to the fact that one animal is scripturally pure and the other impure. An ox and a donkey have two different characteristics, with different power and endurance. Ploughing will not be accomplished as thoroughly as it should be, therefore it would be better to use two animals of the same type. In the Greek text only one word is used for "unevenly yoked", namely ἑτεροζυγοῦντες (*heterozygountes*), but what really sets this verse apart are the two words at the beginning: Μὴ γίνεσθε (*Mē ginesthe*), which translate to "do not become".

This verse can be fully applied to our own lives, as there may be something which needs to be explained in a more elaborate way. When we are taught "not to become", something should cause it to happen. Believers, followers of *Yeshua*, regularly gather together to study *Torah*. For some it may be cumbersome, as there could be certain elements that distract them; others simply bear the brunt and push through to the end without really paying much attention. Some congregation members don't even go to the trouble of joining, neither do they offer any apologies. Maybe it is not explicitly expressed, but this could also be what *Sha'ul* insinuates: cut yourself off from those with their own agendas and refuse to be yoked with them, those who "have become" different. It may also be a good idea to remove these people from social media and groups where unity seems to be a problem and should preferably be dissolved.

The same types of people were once part of the nation of *Yisra'el*. They refused to be taught by *Mosheh* and *Aharon*; they accused the two brothers for heavier burdens they had to endure and withdrew from what *Mosheh* and *Aharon* would be doing for them. *Mosheh* turns to *YAH* for help and we learn:

*Shemoth* 6 <sup>6</sup>“Say, therefore, to the children of *Yisra'el*, ‘I am יהוה, and I shall bring you out from under the burdens of the *Mitsrites*, and shall deliver you from their enslaving, and shall redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments,

Although this is the second study of *Shemoth*, we need to repeat one of the commentaries on this topic<sup>1</sup>:

“The exodus is not just a story of ancient times but also a prophetic vision for believers today. The book of Revelation is a reflection of the book of *Shemoth*. When the Apostle John was on the Island of Patmos, he saw the book of *Shemoth* in prophetic imagery, in a future time frame. That vision is called *The Revelation of Yeshua Ha Mashiach*. The plagues John witnessed and recorded were almost identical to the plagues of the exodus.”

When *YAH* speaks to *Mosheh*, He hands *Mosheh* and the nation a *k'tubah*, a marriage contract, onto which He places His signature: “I am יהוה”. The promise *YAH* makes here, is unilateral: He will care, irrespective. The nation only needs to react to the instructions they are given, without reserve. There is to be no resistance or self-will, whereby we also learn of four important promises, something we still commemorate during Pesach:

1. I shall bring you out from under the burdens of the *Mitsrites* (v. 6)
2. [I] shall deliver you from their enslaving (v. 6)
3. [I] shall redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments (v. 6)
4. [I] shall take you as My people, and I shall be your *Elohim* (v. 7)

During the *Pesach seder* we use four cups of wine based on these promises of *YAH*. We use an uncomplicated explanation of the exodus from *Mitsrayim* which points to *Yeshua* in all aspects. This document is available on [request](#) or can be [downloaded](#) from our website. The summary is as follows:

1. Cup of sanctification (1 *Yohanan* 3:4; *Bereshith* 2:3; *Shemoth* 12:14; *Qorintiyim Aleph* 6:19, 20; *Ib'rim* 10:10, 14; *Yohanan* 17:19);
2. Cup of deliverance/blessing (*Luka* 22:20; *Qolasim* 1:13; *Yeshayahu* 53:5-10);
3. Cup of redemption (*Mattithyahu* 26:26-27; *Luqas* 1:68; *Qolasim* 1:13,14, 20-22; *Eph'siyim* 1:4, 7; *Titos* 2:14; *Galatiyim* 3:13, 4:4-5; *Kēpha Aleph* 1:18; *Hazon* 5:9; *Romiyim* 8:14-17);
4. Cup of praise/restoration (*Mattithyahu* 26:29; *Qolasim* 3:1, 3, 15, 17; *Romiyim* 8:14-17; *Ib'rim* 13:15).

After these promises, *Mosheh* is commanded once again to speak to Pharaoh. In spite of his resistance and excuses, *YAH* ignores him and this time confirms the commandment to both the brothers. Then we see *Torah* taking a detour in teaching us about the genealogy of first three descendants of *Ya'aqob*; this will assist in our understanding why *Mosheh* is chosen as the officer in command of the entire nation and *Aharon* the communicator. Once we understand the family tree of *Lēwi* and their activities, we will have better understanding of Scripture; we will also learn how each ministry of the priestly order will lead the Bride of *Yeshua* on the Way of Truth – how to live a fully set-apart life. We will study this later intensely, but for now it is important to realise that only *Qehath* and his descendants were responsible for work inside the tabernacle. *Qehath* therefore served before *YAH*, while brothers *Gērshon* and *Merari* served the people in the outer court.

*Mosheh* and *Aharon* are distinguished by *Torah* due to their genealogy. *YAH* doesn't appoint people according to their knowledge and skills of theology, languages, history, music, literacy, mathematics,

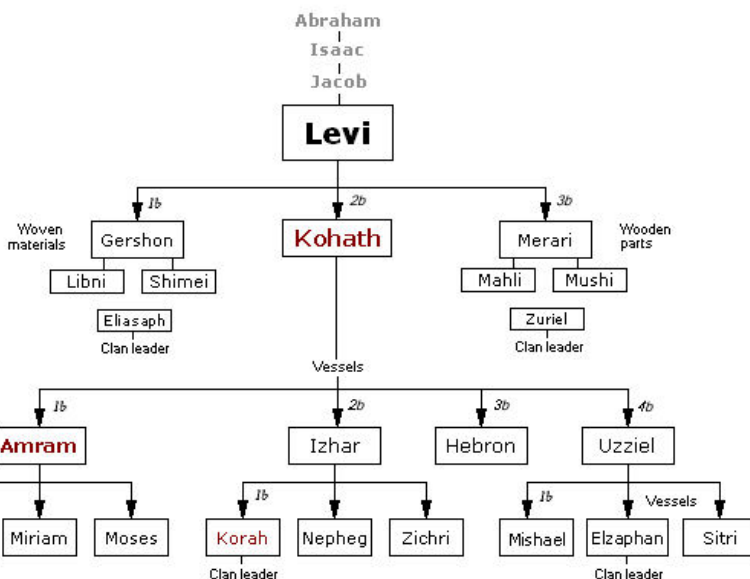
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<sup>1</sup> Julie Parker: Sheepfold Gleanings

science or other criteria, let alone their work or social status. Some people may feel inferior due to a lack of academic qualifications, while other will eulogise themselves with their academic qualifications or other achievements at work or their social life. However, we do not find any occurrence in *Torah* where any person is appointed to an office as a result of qualifications, but only by the legacy of their ancestors and mainly because of their alacrity. Should you need information about a person, get information on the person's ancestors and question the relatives.

After an elaborate explanation of the family tree, we learn from *Torah* "This is *Aharon*, and *Mosheh*, to whom...". Notice the order in v. 26: *Aharon* would later become high priest and his role is more important than that of a prophet; however, in v. 27 the order is changed, since *YAH* called and appointed *Mosheh* as redeemer of the nation, also as the leader who would take them through the wilderness. The narrative with the fractionary family tree shows us how important family ties are – something already started during Creation. It is crucial that the care and maintenance of our families

receive preference over work, studies, sports and other activities. Family is more important than academic achievements. A person who can't care for a family, will never accomplish the role of a leader in the Kingdom of *YAH*.



In one of our previous studies, [parashat vayigash](#), three weeks ago, we discussed something similar to what we notice here:

*Shemoth* 7 <sup>1</sup>So יהוה said to *Mosheh*, "See, I have made you an *elohim* to Pharaoh, and *Aharon* your brother is your prophet.

Here *YAH* places an exceptional status on *Mosheh*, as we read in the Hebrew text נְתַתִּיךָ אֱלֹהִים (*ne-ta-Ti-cha e-lo-Him*), give you [the office of] *elohim*. This is the second time we see this in Scripture (the first time being at 4:16) and it is evident that this is not a name, but a specific position or task. The title *elohim* contains powerful authorisation, as it is used in the *TaNaKh* for the judges of *Yisra'el* (cf. *Shemoth* 22:9; *Mizmor* 82:1). Secondly we learn that the plural does not necessarily pertain to more than one person or being. *Mosheh* is one person, but receives the title *elohim* in the plural – he is human, but acts with the authority of *YAH*. We see a similar case when examining the word *Ba'al* (cf. *Shof'tim* 8:33; *Melakim Aleph* 18:27) where reference is made to a unity. The plural should therefore be understood as an extended task, rather than more than one person or being. It is used in Hebrew in similar fashion as we use capitals at the beginning of a word as in English, German and other languages. *Yeshua* is seen in the Name of *YAH*, but performs tasks as prescribed (cf. *Yohanan* 17:11, 21):

*Yohanan* 10 <sup>30</sup>"I and My Father are one."

**Please note: a serious warning not to use the above text, or any similar texts, to try and prove that *YAH* and *Yeshua* are part of a trinity. This is simply to teach us that *Yeshua* is sent in the authority of *YAH* – he has full permission to perform the tasks assigned to him, but is still a being on his own, albeit an exalted being. This is explicitly expressed:**

**The word ‘one’ is אֶחָד (e-Chad) in the source text and denotes a singular one. YAH is unique and even before Creation He was echad. We have a comprehensive study available on request.**

Mosheh is authorised to address Pharaoh as if it were YAH addressing him personally – he doesn’t appear before Pharaoh in his personal capacity, but represents YAH and himself. He would at later times as though it was YAH acting directly, as this chapter is already the start of the wonders that will happen progressively in Mitsrayim. The first miracle only authorises the two brothers officially before Pharaoh and his servants. No penance is involved, but it will instil credibility as to the requests brought before Pharaoh, as well as a nation that has lost all trust in everything and everyone. After this, many signs will prove that YAH is in control of the powers of nature. All the plagues that will follow will be natural occurrences and nothing the land has never experienced before, but it will be exacerbated to show the might of YAH. Throughout the year, at different times, Mitsrayim is stricken by frogs, gnats, swarms of flies and much more. However, this time these natural phenomenon will strike at irregular times and be more severe than normal. At first, nobody will experience any form of loss or suffering. It will gradually become more intense and one infliction will follow the other more rapidly, ultimately destroying animals and crops, ending with the death of all the firstborn of Mitsrayim. Each affliction will show the context between traditions and customs of Mitsrayim and their idol worship; every plague will point out their superstitions and even though some may at first be reversible, it will not be the case with all of them, especially the last infliction. These penances would also be necessary to turn some renegades of Yisra’el back from their worshipping idols of Mitsrayim (cf. Yehezqel 20:1-9). One of the poets of Tehilim was well aware of the apostasy of Yisra’el:

*Tehilah 106* <sup>7</sup>Our fathers in Mitsrayim did not understand Your wonders; They did not remember Your many loving-commitments, But rebelled by the sea, the Sea of Reeds.

Scripture gives us a lovely indication of the time period in history these events took place by the ages of Mosheh and Aharon. Mosheh is the only person in Scripture who experienced three equal periods of 40 years in his lifetime. Studying a book of Bernard Ramm<sup>2</sup> we read:

“D. L. Moody wittily said that Moses spent forty years in Pharaoh's court thinking he was somebody; forty years in the desert learning he was nobody; and forty years showing what God can do with somebody who found out he was nobody.”

When appearing before Pharaoh, Mosheh and Aharon act in the exact fashion as prescribed by YAH. Although Aharon communicates, Mosheh gives the instructions. At the charge of Mosheh, Aharon throws down his rod, which turns into a snake. The wise men and the practisers of witchcraft of Pharaoh are not to be defeated and when they throw down their rods, snakes appear as well! This is when the snake of Aharon swallows the other snakes – or does it? We were all taught this lie during Sunday school, youth meetings, images in the bible of *hasatan* and it is even preached from pulpits: the snake of Aharon swallowed the other snakes and it became a rod in his hand when he picked it up. However, this is lie from the pit of hell, as many other lies that are taught in Christianity!

What we see in Scripture is totally different, as most people believe the lies they hear and do not study Scripture themselves. The end of v. 12 states: “But the **rod** of Aharon swallowed up their **rods**.” [emphasis added]. Even the contentious translation of King James agrees with this. Aharon’s rod, not the snake, swallowed the other rods, not snakes. Why? This is because Aharon, with a sense of compassion, delivers even the most recalcitrant person with a chord of love. When every other effort has failed, he raises a rod of rebuke, maybe even a trifle unwillingly, to swallow a callous ego. However, this is never done in the way of a venomous snake, with rage or rapacity, but the snake is exchanged for a dry rod – a staff that may at some point in time be used for protection. He seems partially apathetic, without deriving joy from another

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2 Bernard Ramm, His Way Out, p. 54.

person's discomfort. This is how we could also be a student of *Aharon*: before swallowing someone else's ego, you should cast out your own venom.

There are many opinions as to the rods of the practisers of witchcraft becoming snakes. The most acceptable solution is the teaching from Scripture that *hasatan* is able to equip unbelievers to perform certain signs (cf. *Ma'asei* 8:9-11; 13:6-11). In spite of how it may be explained, we notice the word בָּלַע (*ba-la*), swallow, which can also be translated as 'engulf' or 'inundate'. This word is used four more times in *Torah* and always in a sense of destruction (*Shemoth* 15:12 (2), *Bemidbar* 16:32; 26:10, *Debarim* 11:6). This may be seen as a shadow picture of the destruction of the army of *Mitsrayim* when they are swallowed up by the Sea of Reeds.

We learn from *Bereshith* 1 how *YAH* created order from chaos (formless and empty), which is rendered as תְּהוֹ וְבֹהוּ, *to-hu v'bo-hu* in Hebrew. In our *sidrah* the word תַּנִּין (*ta-Nin*) is translated as snake, but is also used in various places in Scripture and other publications in the ANE to refer to demonic powers, conquered by *YAH* at Creation. When the rod of *Aharon bala*, swallows, the other rods, we see the creation power of *YAH* once again, where He creates order from chaos.

Since the wise men and the practisers of witchcraft of Pharaoh also have the ability to mimick the signs of *Aharon*, he refuses to recognise the authority of *YAH* and refuses to let the people go. At this time *Mosheh* is commanded to start the actual inflictions in dead earnest, that which will eventually break Pharaoh's resistance. These plagues are brought forth in three sets of three, before the ultimate and decisive infliction takes place. Within each group of three, only the first two are preceded by warnings. When Pharaoh ignores them, the first two act as 'witnesses' and the third plague follows immediately. In this way *YAH* demonstrates His novel power over nature, proving that nothing can be compared to Him. The third plague in each set is never announced, but serves as penance for Pharaoh and his people who refuse to comply with the request from *Mosheh*:

1. Water in blood, frogs, gnats;
2. Flies, pestilence on the livestock, boils/sores;
3. Hail, locusts, darkness;
4. Death of the firstborn.

*Mitsrayim* is one of the countries that gets very little rain, but the Nile river rises seasonally and provides water as needed for agriculture, livestock and humans; it is also used as a waterway to convey goods for trade with other nations and in this way it controls the economy of the country. This phenomenon has the effect that the Nile is seen as a god and therefore worshipped by *Mitsrites*. Every year during summer, normally at the end of what is also known as june, the river rises and is coloured red due to silt that gets flushed in. This lasts approximately three months but doesn't affect the quality of the water – it is still fit for human and animal consumption.

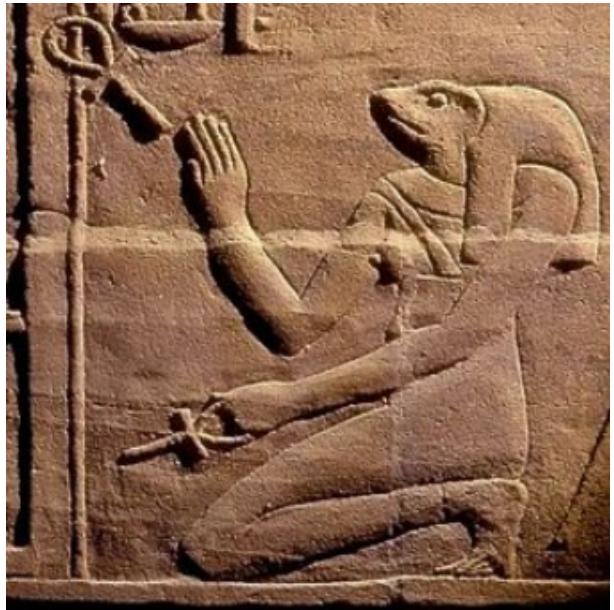
*Mosheh* is instructed to take his staff, the one inherited from *Adam*, touch the water of the Nile while Pharaoh is watching. In fact, he and *Aharon* await him when he comes to the Nile for his morning ritual, his "morning dedication", when he washes himself in the river for inspiration for the day. While Pharaoh is watching, possibly while in the water, *Mosheh* touches the water with his staff and suddenly the water is red and undrinkable. While it isn't physical blood, it is a fluid deprived of oxygen; fish die and the stench is smelled throughout the entire land. Instead of three months, this plague only lasts for seven days, the standard time of cleansing after being *tamei*, unclean, for whatever reason.

Many years before little Hebrew baby boys were tossed into the river, one of the reasons why the first infliction is executed on the main source of life for *Mitsrayim*. This god, with its patrons *Amon* and *Khnum*, can't stand against the might of the most high Creator. *Hapi*, the fertility goddess, is seen as the one who



allows the Nile to rise every year to a point of overflowing and now a mockery is also made of her! Due to the importance the Nile presents for the entire country, it is seen as the life blood of *Osiris*, but suddenly this worship turns into aversion and detestation. The Nile perch, also known as the African snook, (*lates niloticus*) is the largest fish in the Nile and together with the smaller Nile tilapia need to be protected by *Nathor*, the Nile goddess. However, Pharaoh is not impressed, as his wise men and the practisers of witchcraft can do the same with untainted water found elsewhere.

Most scholars agree that the plagues started during the middle of the year, with the water turning into blood being the first; all the others would follow monthly until the end of what is now known as the month of march. Every plague would take place at the end of a period of three weeks during which *Mosheh* and *Aharon* would warn Pharaoh of the impending infliction. It is therefore possible that three weeks pass without any problems before the frogs and other atrocities would start. Exceptions as to the duration of an infliction, is when Pharaoh would request that it be stopped.



After the water of the Nile is once again back to normal and can be used for its actual purpose, *Mosheh* and *Aharon* again find themselves before Pharaoh, warning him about frogs that would penetrate every area of the country should he refuse to let the people go. As expected, he refuses and as soon as *Mosheh* stretches out his rod over the streams, frogs start appearing – more than usual. They take over every household, moving in on beds, baking ovens and utensils, jumping up against everyone. The wise men and the practisers of witchcraft are called in and can replicate this infliction, which causes Pharaoh not to pay any notice to *Mosheh's* request. Frogs were a symbol of inspiration for the goddess *Osiris* and were considered divine beings. Any person found killing a frog, could be sentenced to death. This infliction is therefore a mockery of *Heka (Heqt)*, the *Mitsrite* frog goddess and wife of *Khnum*. She is depicted as a woman with the head of a frog and was also the goddess of resurrection and reproduction, yet now the opposite was happening. Although the wise men and the practisers of witchcraft could replicate producing frogs, possibly with the assistance of *hasatan*, they couldn't make them go away. To get Pharaoh to understand that *YAH* is in full control of everything, he gets Pharaoh to decide when the frogs should disappear. He asked that they be gone by morning, but when he saw no more frogs appearing, he didn't keep to his promise to let the people go and once again hardened his heart in total resistance to the will of *YAH*.

Many people have asked the question, something we will also examine closely at a later stage: why did *YAH* harden Pharaoh's heart? *Torah* teaches us that Pharaoh was not willing to recognise who *YAH* is, as we saw earlier. When anyone refuses to be humble before *YAH* and to answer to His call, he hardens his own heart. Our Creator-*Elohim* is extremely patient and has infinite passion and care for people, since He created everyone. He will use every possible way to teach these people discernment, to the point where they acknowledge Him to *t'shuvah* and return to Him. However, when a person is remorseless, his entire being refuses to show any esteem for *YAH* and that soul is lost forever – it can't be redeemed.

Most of us pray to *YAH* to establish something positive in our lives, especially to appreciate and reciprocate His love and righteousness. *YAH* wants to give us what we need when we ask Him for it, and should it be a hardened heart, He obliges, mostly because we do not acknowledge and respect Him. In this case, *YAH* reaps the benefit from Pharaoh's callousness by hardening his heart – you get what you ask for! The main reason we see here is that *YAH* is not only showing his omnipotence to the people of *Mitsrayim*, but also to

a growing nation, His firstborn, *Yisra'el*. Without Pharaoh's resistance, no inflictions or miracles would have been forthcoming. Pharaoh personally caused his soul to be lost, but his task on earth had not yet been accomplished. *YAH* is now using his recalcitrance, his hardened heart, to redeem a nation from slavery, as well as to give us a preview of our redemption in *Yeshua*. It is impossible, though, to receive redemption while your heart is filled with bitterness, unforgiveness, hate and other negative feelings.

After about three weeks, this time without any prior warning, *YAH* charges *Mosheh* to get *Aharon* to stretch out his rod and strike the dust of the land. This causes gnats to appear in the entire land of *Mitsrayim* – as though every morsel of dust had turned into a gnat. However hard they try, the wise men and the practisers of witchcraft can't replicate this infliction and immediately admit: "This is the finger of *Elohim*!" This is a typical expression of the people of *Mitsrayim* and other pagan nations when they realise they have been defeated, standing against something bigger they can't comprehend. However, they only bring recognition to 'god' or *elohim*, but not to *YAH*. We notice this expression in various passages in Scripture where *Ruach HaQodesh* is present (cf. *Luqas* 11:20; *Mattithyahu* 12:28), but the most important is learnt (cf. *D'varim* 9:10; *Mizmor* 8:3):

*Shemoth* 31<sup>18</sup> And when He had ended speaking with him on Mount *Sinai*, He gave *Mosheh* two tablets of the Witness, tablets of stone, written with the finger of *Elohim*.

Up to this point we see no division between *Mitsrayim* and *Goshen*, and can agree with dr John Lightfoot<sup>3</sup> that both *Yisra'el* in *Goshen* and the rest of *Mitsrayim* all endured the same inflictions. The gnats are extremely small, almost imperceptible with the naked eye, but have an extreme and irritable painful reaction on the skin of people. They crawl into the eyes and nose and many problems arise when their eggs are laid inside a person. The word here is in the plural, **כִּנָּם** (*ki-Nam*), lice or midges. Even though Scripture teaches us that all the dust turned into gnats, we see a play on words which indicates that these insects were extremely small, like dust particles, and could hardly be discerned.

This is yet another mockery of idols. The root of the Hebrew word *kinam* we have just learned, means to delve; it is therefore possible that this little insect delves into the skin where it lies its eggs and cause many problems. The priests of *Mitsrayim* would probably have to endure much more, as they regularly shave their heads and a single robe could certainly not prevent them from becoming infested with these little insects. The result is that the priests couldn't keep themselves pure and we see the following commentary from the Greek historian, Herodotus<sup>4</sup>:

"The priests shave their bodies all over every other day to guard against the presence of lice, or anything else equally unpleasant, while they are about their religious duties; the priests, too, wear linen only, and shoes made from the papyrus plant -- these materials, for dress and shoes, being the only ones allowed them. They bathe in cold water twice a day and twice every night -- and observe innumerable other ceremonies besides."

The priests of *Mitsrayim* couldn't enter their temples as they were unclean, therefore their gods couldn't be worshipped – something caused by the gods themselves! This was one of the most humiliating circumstances these priests experienced, as they were highly regarded, not only on a spiritual level, but also on economic and political level. To a large degree they had plenty of power over the people, controlling their minds and their hearts. As we find in many pagan practises, even in our modern age, these priests put on masks of animals which would represent certain deities. From these rituals the people would understand which god was impersonated and would perform specific activities and dances.

Approximately 120 days after the rising of the Nile, Pharaoh would go to the river with pomp and circumstance where he would partake in spiritual festivities. This would take place in what is known as the end of October or beginning November. At this stage, the flow of the river had slowed down and the first

3 Rev. Dr. John Lightfoot, *The Whole Works*, Volume II, p. 135

4 Herodotus, *The Histories*, p. 99

signs of vegetation would be visible on the fresh earth. This would prove to be an excellent time when *Mosheh* could entertain a large audience, therefore *YAH* sends him and *Aharon* to speak to Pharaoh. If he still refused to let the people go, large swarms of flies would be sent against all the people of *Mitsrayim*. Considering that the wise men and the practisers of witchcraft attributed the dust to be the power of their 'elohim' and still didn't recognise *YAH*, there would be a separation between *Goshen* where *Yisra'el* resided and the rest of the land. This denotes the separation that will be established between the followers of *YAH* in the *olam haba*, the world to come, and the *olam hazeh*, the current (idolatrous) world. It also adds nails in the coffin of the rapture folly, since *YAH* will protect His people against everything He would be sending against the unbelievers.

This infliction which is announced and would start the following day, mocks *Khepfi*, the god of insects. The word in the original text is עָרֹב (*'a-Rov*), which simply translates as 'mixture' or 'swarms' (cf. *Tehilah* 78:45; 105:31). Some people may ask for an explanation of 'mixture' and this is where we notice diverse opinions from the sages. While some insinuate that it could be a mixture of wild animals, it clashes with 'swarms', as the word עֶדֶר (*'E-der*) refers to herd or flock. If it were indeed a mixture of wild animals, as also noted in the Book of *Yashar*, the land would have been devastated, leaving nothing to be damaged by hail that was to follow later. The insect described here is a horse-fly, which acts in similar fashion as the mythical vampire. A horseleech could also be a good description, as the danger to humans and animals is real. Some scholars believe that more than one type of insect was part of this plague. The most important fact we need to take notice of, is that these insects were not found anywhere in *Goshen*, as *YAH* had promised.

At least this seems to have caught Pharaoh's attention, but not in the way *Mosheh* was hoping for. Pharaoh is now at the stage where he recognises the *Elohim* of *Avraham*, *Yitz'chaq* en *Ya'aqob*, but insists that the nation of *Yisra'el* do their worship and sacrifices in the land of *Goshen*. *Mosheh* explains that the people of *Mitsrayim* would consider this an abomination and that it is important for *Yisra'el* to travel to the wilderness. Pharaoh eventually agrees, but orders that *Yisra'el* doesn't wander too far into the wilderness, requesting that *Mosheh* also brings makes supplication on his behalf. *Mosheh* agrees to the latter and the plague is stopped, but when Pharaoh finds no more nasty insects, he refuses once again to let the people go.

*Mosheh* receives another instruction from *YAH* to go to Pharaoh and request that the people may leave to worship *YAH*; if he refuses, all the animals of *Mitsrayim* will be inflicted with pestilence. This will be the second plague that will only come upon the people and animals of *Mitsrayim*, but it is the first that will cause death. This time no animal is spared; cattle, horses, donkeys, camels and sheep bear the brunt of this infliction. *Mosheh* is not directly involved in this outbreak, to let Pharaoh realise that this happens by the hand of *YAH*. All the animals in the field die, but none of the animals of *Yisra'el* are affected. The mockery in this case is against *Apis*, the bull god and his feminine counterpart, *Hathor*, the cow goddess. In *Mitsrayim* many animals were considered to be gods; the lion, wolf, dog, cat, monkey and goat were very important in all their rituals and worshipping. They believed that the soul of *Osiris* lived in the body of the bull, *Apis*! This is one of the reasons *Mosheh* alleged them having to go into the wilderness. Not believing *Mosheh*, Pharaoh sends people to *Goshen* to confirm that they didn't suffer any losses, but he still doesn't accede to them leaving. All previous inflictions only caused pain and suffering for animals and people, something that could be healed and forgotten; now *YAH* is working on the wealth of *Mitsrayim*, since dead animals can't easily be replaced and handicaps the economy of the land, as well as their deities.

Pharaoh remains the callous person, totally unreasonable, therefore the sixth infliction, plague, is sent without warning, as we mentioned earlier. This time it is not only the residual animals that suffer, but all the people of *Mitsrayim* – the people in *Goshen* experience none of this. The deity being mocked in this case is *Toth* or *Imhotep*, the god of medicine, intelligence and wisdom. During special occasions the people of *Mitsrayim* would offer human sacrifices to their gods, throwing the ash of the victims in the air whereby



blessings would be bestowed upon those on whom the ashes fall. Scripture gives us a detailed explanation of how this infliction was brought about:

*Shemoth 9* <sup>10</sup>So they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and *Mosheh* scattered them toward the heavens. And they caused boils, breaking out in sores on man and beast. <sup>11</sup>And the magicians were unable to stand before *Mosheh* because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the *Mitsrites*.

This was one of the most powerful miracles, because a small amount of ashes dispersed over the entire *Mitsrayim* to display the power of *YAH*. The ashes caused anthrax to break out on man and beast; it created black abscesses and invaded the immunity system of the victim. The consequence was impurity in the blood, similar to sexually transmitted diseases. With this infliction, *Thoth* was mocked and even the wise men and the practisers of witchcraft of Pharaoh couldn't stand before *Mosheh*, neither could they replicate it. As in previous cases, none of the people of *Yisra'el* were affected.

This is the first time we see *YAH* hardening the heart of Pharaoh as he still refuses to let the people go. When someone simply refuses to bow before *YAH* in atonement, it is the choice of that person to act remorseless. We know that *YAH* has plenty of patience, using various methods to get them to *t'shuvah*, turning back to Him. However, if such a person keeps on sinning, not answering *YAH's* calling, there is no turning back and the soul is lost forever.

Again *YAH* reaps the benefit of a callous Pharaoh by giving what he asks for: an attitude of negative behaviour towards the almighty Creator and a conduct focused on himself only. The miraculous power of *YAH* is not only exhibited to a pagan nation, but also to the newly-formed nation of *Yisra'el*. Only the Name of *YAH* will triumph. The soul of Pharaoh is lost, but his mission on earth is becoming operative; his harsh attitude against *YAH* and *Yisra'el* has fulfilled *YAH's* objective towards *Yisra'el*.

Although these miracles of *YAH* are exceptional, we still encounter His grace and care in everything. He could have wiped out *Mitsrayim* all at once (v. 15), but to teach everyone that He is the Creator, the One who maintains everything and has power over everyone, he was benevolent towards Pharaoh and the people of *Mitsrayim*. He sends *Mosheh* to warn Pharaoh to safeguard all their livestock, to get them out from the fields and under cover. What is to follow, is something *Mitsrayim* has never experienced before. This is a serious mockery of *Nut*, the goddess of the air; other deities that are flouted, include *Shu*, the god of wind and *Horus*, the god of the air with a head like a falcon. Even deities such as *Isis* and *Seth*, who are supposed to protect vegetation, are now defeated. Many monuments of deities who are regularly worshipped, are demolished and lie faceless on the ground after this infliction.

At the command of *YAH*, *Mosheh* stretches out his rod toward heaven and *YAH* sends hail and thunder down to earth. This is coupled with fire and the great miracle is that the fire doesn't melt the hail, neither does the rain extinguish the fire. The vegetation, ready to be reaped at this stage, would have been flax and barley, but everything is destroyed by the severity of the hail. Flax is used to manufacture linen garments for the priests and other wealthy people, indicating yet another judgement over the priests. Barley is used to produce beer, as well as feed for the livestock, while it is also the staple diet of the poor. These crops would normally start germinating end of January or early February, teaching us the exact time this takes place.

Pharaoh is now alarmed and he sends for *Mosheh* and *Aharon*, begging them to stop the plague. He even admits to him and his people having sinned against *YAH* and promises to let the people go. *Mosheh* agrees to stop the ordeal, but knows that Pharaoh is still hard-hearted. When he sees no more rain and hears no more thunder, we learn another attitude of his from the word כָּבֵד (*ka-Bed*), to be heavy: his heart has become more resistive, *kabed*, and again he refuses to let the people go.

This narrative in *Shemoth* teaches us prophetically how we, as believers in and followers of *Yeshua*, live in a period on earth where most of the world is ruled by evil people similar to Pharaoh. It will be destroyed when *Yeshua* returns to claim his bride. War will ensue, but there will also be a wedding. Where will you find yourself? Will you be preparing for a wedding feast or for war? Every true shepherd will be busy teaching his flock everything regarding being set apart, a covenant relationship and set-apart festivals to prepare the bride for meeting the bridegroom. We can certainly learn from words penned by *Sha'ul*:

*Qorintiyim Bět 6* <sup>17</sup>Therefore, “Come out from among them and be separate, says יהוה, and do not touch what is unclean, and I shall receive you. <sup>18</sup>“And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says יהוה the Almighty.” [emphasis original]

Regardless of the callousness of Pharaoh, warnings from his own wise men and the practisers of witchcraft and the nation of *Yisra'el* being exempt from certain inflictions, *YAH* is true to His promise of redemption. He expects obedience and smiles on us in love. It is extremely important that we stay where He wants us, do what He wants from us. Like we started this study with a citation of *Sha'ul*, we want to end with something that everyone needs to consider very seriously:

*Timotiyos Bět 4* <sup>3</sup>For there shall be a time when they shall not bear sound teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves teachers tickling the ear, <sup>4</sup>and they shall indeed turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to myths.

We must never become or even look like those who want to serve *YAH* according to their own rules.

*Shabbat shalom!*

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## **Sources:**

Unless otherwise stated, all text is quoted from *The Scriptures* (2009)<sup>5</sup>. Due to personal belief, the word ‘God’ is replaced with the Hebrew '*Elohim*' or sometimes inflections thereof.

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*The Word of יהוה is free, therefore this study may be distributed free of charge, provided no changes are made.*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://isr-messianic.org/>