

Va'eira 2013

1.

Why couldn't Moshe turn the staff into a snake?

“When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Provide a wonder for yourselves,’ you shall say to Aaron, ‘take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh – it will become a snake!’” (7, 9)

"כי ידבר אלכם פרעה לאמר תנו לכם מופת ואמרת אל אהרן קח את מטך והשליך לפני פרעה יהי לתנין."

Nachalas Tzvi page 150:

Rashi (7, 10) explains why Aharon performed certain plagues instead of Moshe. For the plague of dam/blood Moshe didn't hit the water because the water saved him when he was an infant. For the plague of kinnim/locust, again Aharon performed the plague. Moshe didn't hit the ground since the ground protected him when it buried the Egyptian whom he killed.

The question arises, why couldn't Moshe turn the staff into a snake? For what reason did Aharon perform this task instead of Moshe?

One possible answer is that he would have been throwing the snake onto the ground; therefore out of respect to the ground which protected him, Moshe didn't do it himself.

The Nachalas Tzvi explains that Moshe saw the snake originally, by the bush, because he spoke lashon hara about the Jews. Therefore, it wouldn't have been fitting for Moshe to demonstrate this sign before Paroah.

He offers another answer based on the Zohar. There were three different staffs: the staff of Hashem, the staff of Moshe, and the staff of Aharon. The staff that Moshe was using up until this point was the staff of Hashem, which had the name of Hashem engraved upon it; and it was therefore obviously not fitting to turn that staff into a snake. **Therefore, Aharon's staff specifically is the most fitting to be used to turn into a snake because it did not possess as much holiness.** (This coincides beautifully with the explanation that we mentioned in parshas Shemos, regarding Moshe running away from the snake due to the tremendous level of impurity of the snake. (Nachalas Tzvi page 141))

2.

10 makkos were all midah k'neged midah

Tanna D'bei Eliyahu Raba (perik 7):

The ten makkos (plagues) that were brought upon the Egyptians were all midah k'neged midah (measure for measure) for what the Egyptians did to the Jews.

1. **Blood** was the first plague that befell the Egyptians because they would prohibit the Jews from performing tevilah (full body immersion). This prevented the Jews from having relations (due to their impurity). (The Shi Lemorah quotes the Tuve Chaim who points out that from what transpired we see the chashivus (importance) of going to the mikvah. Meaning, even in Egypt

and prior to matan Torah (the giving of the Torah) the Jews were stringent and attended the mikvah. (Furthermore, according to the Ramban (which we have mentioned in the past) the Jews in the diaspora before matan Torah were exempt from performing mitzvos.) (This concept of the Egyptians preventing the Jews from multiplying and fulfilling peru uravu will be a common theme. For example, this was the reason Hashem brought wild animals, pestilence, hail, and locusts.)

2. **Frogs** came because the Egyptians made the Jews touch all types of disgusting animals and creatures.

3. **Lice** came because the Egyptians forced the Jews to sweep the floors and fields.

4. **Wild Animals** came because they made the Jews tame lions and play games with the lions. This was done so the Jews couldn't go home and be with their wives.

5. **Pestilence** came because they would make the Jews shepherd over various types of animals. Consequently, the Jews weren't able to be with their wives.

6. **Boils** came because the Egyptians made the Jews heat up water and cool down water. Now the Egyptians couldn't enter the water at all because of the boils.

7. **Hail** came because they made the Jews plant orchards and trees in order that they wouldn't be able to be with their wives. Hashem therefore brought the hail to destroy all their plantings.

8. **Locusts**, as well, was because they made the Jews plant grains and other food items so the Jews couldn't be able to be with their wives.

9. **Darkness** came because there were Jews who didn't want to leave Egypt, so they died during darkness. (The Tanna D'bei Eliyahu does not explain how this darkness is midah k'neged midah. However the Kli Yakar (17, 7) explains that darkness came because the Jews and the midwives were forced to hide their children in a dark and hidden area so the Egyptians wouldn't kill them.)

10. **Deaths of the Firstborn** came because Paroah had ordered all Jewish males to die. This is also why the Egyptians died in the yam suf (Mediterranean Sea); because Paroah said to throw all the boys in the river.

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