

An essay based on the shiur delivered by Morenu VeRabenu Hacham Elliyahu Mansour HY'V during Seudah Shelishit of Shabbat Hagadol.

A Very Interesting Analysis of The Ten Plagues

Preparation for Pesah, begins already from Purim. For almost a month, we clean our homes, buy new clothes, jewelry, food and other items for the upcoming holiday of Pesah, and everyone is gearing up for the great holiday called "Hag HaPesah", and when it comes to Pesah, it is clear that the highlight of the holiday, the centerpiece of the festival is the Seder. This night is so special, it only comes once a year or twice in the Diaspora, there is no night like it on the calendar, in which we sit with our children and extended family, in order to instill in them the Emunah, which is the basic principle of our belief. While Kadesh, we do Kiddush every Friday night, Urhas- we wash our hands, Carpas-we eat salads, Yahas- we break bread, which is not so different to the Seder night, but there is one thing we don't do on a regular Shabbat and that is Maggid. On Pesah night, everyone comes to the table with a tool kit, with books under their arms. This is Maggid, the telling over of the story of the Exodus, which is the essence of the Seder. Maggid is what makes Pesah stand out, we tell over the story that was told by our parents, and grandparents, to our children and grandchildren. Maggid is a positive commandment from the Torah, as the pasuk says, "vehigadeta Lebinha".

However what happens, as soon as we get to this moment of Maggid, the moment we have been preparing for, the moment we have done all this hard work to get to, there are blank faces. The problem is we are so busy preparing for every other item, the food, the marror, the wine, and all the other important items, but the main event, the main reason we gather together on this night is Maggid, and at that time, nobody has anything to say. They tell each other Bechabod!, and everyone looks around with a sudden blank look on their face. Then you see the father scratching around, trying to find a last minute hiddush at the bottom of the page.

Lehabdil, you know what this is similar too. There is a big game they play once a year in Football, called the Superbowl. This is the biggest game of the year, already from August they are preparing for this game, the players, the coaches, the media, and the fans. Lets imagine, it is Superbowl Sunday, and kick-off is only moments away, there are 100,000 screaming fans in the stadium, and what happens? The referee comes and announces, "Rabbotai, we have a minor technical problem, we are sorry to inform you that we don't have a football for the game". What, how could it be, after all that build up, the main item we don't have? So we laugh at this story, but lehabdil, we do the same thing when we come to the Seder and it comes up to the section called Maggid, and we don't have a hiddush, so there goes all the preparations. Instead each person brags about how quickly he completed the Maggid, one guy says he did it in 22 minutes, another guy in 16 minutes. On the contrary, we are taught, the more you discuss the story of the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy it is.

Therefore if you are reading this you are lucky, because you are going to read some insights and thoughts that can be said over during Maggid at your Seder. This is more important than any of the preparations you have done until now.

The Zohar Hakadosh says, at the time of the Maggid, HKB'H comes down with his "Pamalia" his legions of angels, and He listens intently to the story. This is G-d's favorite story. At that moment there is great bounty and abundance that comes down from the upper worlds for those that are involved in this ceremony. What is the proof that

Maggid, brings down this beracha? There are two names of HKB'H, that represent mercy, prosperity and beracha, one is The Name Havyah, and the other is Kel (Aleph Lamed), as the pasuk says, "Hesed el kol hayom". If you take both of these names and combine them, the numerical value you will get is 57. This is a magical number, because whenever one connects to that number, you connect to both of these names of mercy. That is why in birkat hamazon, when we pray for sustenance, we say, "Baruch atah Hashem.... Hael Hazan". Why do we mention Zan, because Zan means, "you sustain us", and the numerical value of Zan is also 57. That is why some people have the custom to say Psalm 23, "Mizmor Ledavid Hashem Roi.." before they sit down to a meal, because this mizmor contains 57 words which is a hint to these two holy names of Hashem, that denote mercy and beracha.

Interestingly enough, there is another familiar word in Judaism that also equals 57 and that is Maggid. The holy books explain, when you say the Maggid, you are tapping in to these names. It is also brought down that in the zehut of the Maggid, this helps to activate the redemption. Since there are four primary ssadikim that are involved in the final redemption, they are Moshe Rabbenu, Eliyahu Hanabi, Mashiah ben Yosef and Mashiah ben David. The word Maggid itself hints to this, the Mem stands for Moshe, the Gimel stands for Giladi (Eliyahu is referred to as Eliyahu hagiladi), the Yod stands for Mashiah ben Yosef, and the Daled represent Mashiah ben David. Therefore we see that by saying the Maggid we are activating the final redemption.

As a general rule when it comes to the Seder, the dibrei Torah must be suitable for all ages. This is not the night to begin flexing your pilpul muscles, explaining contradictions in RAMBAM, or Tashbit according to the Brisker Rab. On the seder night the dibrei Torah must be geared to things that can be easily understood, and you must paint a picture of what actually happened in Misrayim, in order to instill the emunah into the children. As we say in the order of the Seder, Kadesh, Urhas, what is Urhas? Literally it means to wash, but in Aramaic it means to rely on, as we say in Berich Shemeh, "La al enash Rahisnah", meaning we do not rely on any man, only HKB'H, this is the essence of the seder, to bring us to this level of total reliance on HKB'H.

Dam-Blood

Based on a careful analysis of the pesukim in parashat Vaera, we can say the following hiddushim. Regarding the plague of Blood, the pasuk says, "Wayach et Hamayim asher bayor", meaning he struck the water, however by the plague of Frogs, it says, "Vayet Aharon et yado" meaning Aharon stretched out his hand, but it does not say he hit the water. Secondly, by the plague of Blood it says, "asher bayor", which refers to the Nile river, but by Frogs the pasuk just says "al meimei misrayim" meaning over the waters of Egypt. Thirdly, by Blood it says, "Leenei Pharaoh, ulenei abada" in front of Pharaoh and his servants. What is the explanation of these three glaring differences between the pesukim by Blood and those by Frogs. There is a basic key to understanding the plague of Blood. The Midrash says, that when G-d comes after a nation, first he comes after their Deity. Once he shows them their god is fake, and he makes a mockery of their god, then he goes after the people. It is well known that in Egypt, one of the main gods they worshipped was the Nile River. Because in Egypt, it does not rain often, so the country is irrigated when the banks of the Nile overflow. When the Nile overflows, the water spreads out throughout the mainland. This then explains why Aharon didn't just lift his hand over the river but he actually "struck" the river. Because he is trying to show that we are beating their so called god, but by Frogs, this was not the purpose of the plague, it was not targeted against the god of Egypt, and that is why it had to be done in front of Pharaoh and all his men. Because HKB'H wanted to make a spectacle in front of all the notables of Egypt, to so to speak say, we are going to dismantle your belief system by turning your god into blood.

The next pasuk says, “vehadagha asher bayor meta”, there is a misconception about this plague, most people think that all the fish in Egypt died. But a careful examination of the Pasuk, shows something different. It says only the fish “asher bayor” that were in the Nile died, the other fish did not, so it was a miracle within a miracle. In the Nile itself all the fish died, but in all the other bodies of water, even though they all turned into blood, the fish remained alive in them. Why specifically did the fish in the Nile die? Because the pasuk says, “Vayibash Hayor” the Nile started to smell. Have you ever walked past a fish store, the stench is almost unbearable, even if you block your nose, still the first whiff after you pass the store you can smell it. Now can you imagine how much the Nile stunk, nobody could come near it, the stench was unbearable. This was specifically designed to make a mockery of their god and dismantle their religion. However in all the other waters, the fish didn’t die, because the function was to make a mockery of their Aboda Zara, to sort of say, look you can’t even come near your so called god, because of the stench, what a joke you’re your god is.

The pasuk then says, “Velo yachelu Misrayim lishtot mayim min hayor” the Egyptians couldn’t drink water from the Nile. What does this mean, they couldn’t drink water from any body of water as everything turned into blood, so why does the pasuk specifically mention the Nile? So the explanation is the Egyptians couldn’t go seven days without water as each plague lasted seven days. So where did they get water, the Jews would sell them water, and any water they paid for remained water. This is how it worked, the Jew would give the Egyptian the cup of water, and as soon as the Egyptian would take it, it turned into blood. So the Egyptian started to pay money to the Jew for the water, but it still remained blood, until the Egyptian paid the amount determined by G-d above. Each Egyptian was walking around Egypt discussing how much they paid for the water. The price was different for each Egyptian depending on how much that Egyptian owed each Jew. Therefore G-d ensured that whatever money was owed to a Jew was given back to him through this plague of blood. However there was one body of water that this system of payment did not work in, and that was the Nile. Even if an Egyptian would give \$1 million dollars it would work. This is why the pasuk specifically states that, “they couldn’t drink water from the Nile”, because no matter how much they paid it would remain blood. This again was to show the Egyptians that their god was useless, to tally destroy their deity.

Sephardea-Frogs

The next plague was Frogs. There was once an Ashkenazi guy, that came to Beth Torah to give a lecture, he was trying to impress us, so he said, “You Sephardeim”, he meant to say Sephardim, but he was trying to show that he knew how to pronounce the ayin. So one guy screamed out him, “you are Macat Hoshech”.

One point of note by Frogs, the pasuk says, Paraoh asked Moshe to get rid of the plague, “Veyaser Hasephadeim mimeni...” remove the frogs from me and my people, Paraoh wants them to go away, just as they came. However when Moshe responds to Paraoh he says, “Lehachrit et hasephardeim”. The Ramban explains that this pasuk means that they should die. That means there is a common misconception regarding the plague of frogs, the frogs did not just leave at the end of the plague. We always thought they marched out as they marched in, but a careful analysis of the text reveals this is not so, the frogs just died wherever they were and remained in Egypt. The pasuk says, “Rak Bayor tisharnah” the frogs would only remain alive in the Yeor, why? The explanation is if they would all die, Paraoh would say, this is some sort of virus or swine frog, and he would think all the frogs were dying because of some mad frog disease. But since some of the frogs remained alive, specifically in the Nile, in the worst conditions, because that

is where all the dead fish were, so the Nile got a double hit so to speak, and Paraoth could not say that this was any sort of disease which caused the frogs to die.

Kinim-Lice

Everybody goes to classes and they tell them in the class correctly, that Moshe Rabbenu did not do the plague of lice, because of Hakarat Hatob, since the ground helped Moshe in the past, so in order to show gratitude, Aharon performed the plague of lice. The only problem with this explanation is it doesn't say that in the pasuk. But the pasuk says "Vayaasu chen" They did it, meaning both Moshe and Aharon. So the explanation for this is, that in actual fact there were two stages to the plague of Lice. The first part of the plague was to hit the ground and turn all the ground into lice. However this was not the complete plague, if the plague would just be that you would just have millions of lice crawling on the ground but that doesn't affect the Egyptians so much. Therefore we must say that there was a second and more important stage to this plague and that was to move the lice from the ground onto the Egyptians and their animals. Therefore the first part of the plague, the hitting of the ground was done by Aharon, but the second part was done by Moshe. A precise reading of the Pasuk reveals this, as it says, Vatehi hakinam baadam ubabehemah kol afar haarets haya kinim" There are two different terms used for lice, "Kinnim" and "kinam" the lice on the ground was called Kinim and the lice on the Egyptians and their animals was called Kinam, and since there were two different phases to this plague there was no problem with Moshe Rabbenu performing this second stage.

We cannot fathom the severity of this plague, I remember when I was in elementary school, every so often they would bring in a lice checker, and the lady would come in dressed like an astronaut, because she didn't want to get affected. And if she would find one egg, this was tantamount to the child getting leprosy. The child would be banned from the Yeshiva, nobody could talk to him, he was outside the encampment, he had to put his head in tomato juice, and when he came back nobody would go near the guy. All they found is one little gnat in school. The Egyptians on the other hand were filled with them all over, the Midrash says it was as if they had been living 6 months in a garbage dump. They were crawling all over them. That is why the Egyptian magicians said, "esbah elokim hi", the Midrash says, this is the rashei teboth, "ein sarich bedika od" we don't need any more checking, they put up the white flag and surrendered. No matter what they did, all the showers they took, the lice just kept coming back onto them.

Arob-Wild Animals

In this plague, G-d let loose like the Bronx zoo and the San Diego zoo, and all the different zoos in the world into Egypt. Imagine bulls, and hippopotamuses, tigers, lions, bears, and wolves all these dangerous animals without leashes. You know once in a while you hear in New Jersey, there is a black bear on the loose, and nobody leaves their houses, until a swat team comes and shoots him dead with the swat team on the roof. Can you imagine in Egypt, there are thousands of animals coming and attacking. When we walk down Ocean Parkway, and we see a dog, we try to cross the road or walk the other way, and the dog has a leash. Imagine all these wild animals roaming around without a leash.

A precise reading of the pesukim here also reveal some interesting insights. The pasuk says, "Vehifleiti" there is going to be a distinction in Goshen, there will be no wild animals where the Jews lived, as if there was an imaginary line, when they got to Goshen they knew not to go in. The next pasuk says "vesamti fedut", there will be a distinction ben ami uben amecha. Why does the pasuk repeat itself, by saying again there will be a distinction, we

know that from the first pasuk? So the explanation is that there is a second distinction, lets say a Jew doesn't want to stay in Goshen, he wants to take a walk in Tahrir Square, so the hiddush here was that an Egyptian and a Jew could be walking together, and a bear would come and say, "Boker Tob" to the Jew, however it would maul the Egyptian, while the Jew keeps walking calmly down the street and seeing the Egyptian getting eaten alive, he would recite Yitgadal veyitkadash sheme raba. For this reason, there are two separate pesukim noting distinction, to refer to the two cases explained above. Yishtabah Shemo laad, who can put the wisdom in the animals if not Borei olam, the animals knew who was Jewish.

Another hiddush regarding this plague is, the pasuk says, "Ulchol eres misrayim tishaheth haares mipenei haarob". What does Tishahet mean, why is future tense used? Technically it would make more sense for the pasuk to speak in the past tense, it should say, the land was destroyed, It should say, the land was destroyed, why does it use the word "Tishahet" the land will be destroyed. The explanation is as follows. The rumors got out in Egypt, there are no animals in Goshen so what did they do, they all packed up and went to Goshen, winter vacation in Goshen, this was good for the Jewish people, as they could do more business in their falafel stores. The Egyptians didn't care where they lived, they just wanted to escape the wild animals. Therefore they had no idea of the havoc that was being wreaked across Egypt. The wild animals were breaking windows, doors, turning everything upside down, it was bedlam. When did the Egyptians realize the damage, only a week later when they came back from Goshen. When it came to Blood, Frogs and lice they saw immediately, by Wild Animals, they were away and only saw the damage when they returned, hence the future tense in the pasuk.

Deber – Pestilence

In this plague all the animals of the Egyptians died. But Rashi explains that not all the animals died, only the animals that the Egyptians left out in the fields died. The Egyptians that had fear of G-d, brought their animals inside their homes, and they survived. How long did this plague last? The plague of Deber took only a second. After one second, all the animals that were in the field at the time of the plague died. However, as we know each of the plagues in Egypt lasted seven days, and Deber was not an exception. So if all the animals died in one second how did this plague last seven days? So the answer is that for seven days, those Egyptians that didn't want their animals to die, had to keep them in the house with them. Now can you imagine what it is like living with a horse and a cow in your living room for seven days. The people who have dogs, they wake up in the wee hours of the morning to walk them, why? Because they don't want them to have to perform their bodily functions in the house. Can you imagine what it was like for seven days to have all these livestock running around your home, the stench, the mess, and if the Egyptian couldn't take it anymore, and therefore decided to take his horse outside, immediately it would drop dead. So if they didn't want to lose their animals they had to keep them inside. This is why the plague was really a seven day plague.

Shehin- Boils

The plague of boils stuck both the Egyptians and the animals, and this was a big embarrassment for the Egyptian sorcerers and magicians, because even they had their whole bodies including their faces covered with boils, so they were embarrassed to go out, because they could do nothing about it. Imagine you have one little blister on your body, it is so painful if you lie on it or sit on it. The Egyptians didn't have one blister, they had boils and blisters all over their body from head to toe.

There was another miracle regarding the plague of boils, in that the plague was initiated by both Moshe and Aharon, taking two handfuls of soot, and then these four hands full of soot, Moshe was able to hold in one hand, so you had a miracle of a confined space being able to hold more than its capacity, this was a physical impossibility. It was reminiscent of the miracle that used to take place in the Bet Hamikdash. Even though the Bet Hamikdash was filled to capacity, however there was always room for more, people just kept coming in, and the surveyors were wondering, how are these people fitting in. Not only that, everyone had room to be able to prostrate their whole bodies down to the ground like we do on Kippur, again a miracle in the limitations of space being suspended. There was another miracle in this plague, in that when Moshe would pick up the soot which was only a limited amount of four handfuls, this soot spread out over the entire land of Egypt, so you had a miracle that a limited amount of substance was able to expand itself to cover the entire land of Egypt.

Barad-Hail

By the plague of Wild Animals it says, “ben ami uben amecha” G-d calls the Jewish people Ami, what is ami? My nation, however at the seventh plague the plague of Hail, the pasuk says, “asher sham benei yisrael” By the plague of Hail we are called “Benei Yisrael”, why the difference, which is more complimentary? It is obvious, benei Yisrael is more complimentary. “Benei Yisrael” is a more specific term, where as “ami” is generic. Why in the 4th plague are we “Ami”, and by the 7th plague we are “Benei Yisrael”? So the explanation is based on a perush from the Maggid Midubna. The Maggid Midubna says, the purpose of the plagues was in order to instill in the Jewish people belief in Borei Olam. Each of the plagues demonstrated how G-d controls over a different element of creation, from, the water, the earth, than animals on the earth, the wind, the fire, all the elements are under G-d’s dominance. It gave us tremendous faith and belief in G-d. So the Maggid of Dubna says, I have no problem, but should this come about on the back of the Egyptians? So he said, there was a story of a wealthy couple that had a child. In those days the wealthy people would hire a wet nurse to nurse the baby. The baby one day came down with a serious illness, the doctor said, “the only way to cure this child is that he needs to take a certain medicine, the only problem is the child cannot swallow it himself, it is too bitter” So they tell the wet nurse you take it, and feed it through her milk. However the wet nurse refused to take this medicine. So they go back to the doctor, and the doctor explained to the wet nurse, “that it was her responsibility to take the medicine, since this baby has only been nursing from you, therefore you gave him the disease, therefore you must suffer, and take it and give it to him.” Similarly the Jewish people, when they came down to Egypt, they came down as Benei Yisrael, as the pasuk says “Veeleh shemot Benei Yisrael”. We were religious, we had emunah, we came with Yaakob abinu, but over 210 years living in Egypt they took away our belief, before you knew it, we were worshipping idolatry like them. So G-d says these children were healthy when they came down, you Egyptians got us sick, therefore the medicine must come through you that is why the plagues which were basically rehabilitation for the Jewish people had to come through the Egyptians being punished.

However it is well known in rehabilitation, you cannot rehabilitate in one or two sessions, similarly you cannot teach emunah in one plague, it takes a lot of time in order for the emunah to be resuscitated. Arov was the fourth plague, at that plague G-d refers to the Jewish people as, “ami” by plague seven, G-d says I see the old nation that came down to Egypt, now they are no longer “Ami”, they are “Benei Yisrael”, therefore by this stage we already see the emunah started to pulsate through their systems again.

The plague of Barad was miraculous, in that it was a combination of fire and water, two elements that usually cannot co-exist, coming together as one. The miracle of the plague was that when it comes to weather, there is usually a gradual decline before things get worse. This means that on a 90 degree day in the summer, it is not going to suddenly become thunderous and lightning. First there are dark clouds, then a little darker, then comes the rain, then it gets heavier, then you might get some thunder and maybe lightening. But in Egypt, Moshe Rabbenu told Paraoh that tomorrow there would be hail, he marked a line on the wall and said, "when the sun hits this spot the hail will come." So the next day, all the weather experts were predicting sun, there wasn't a cloud in the sky, Paraoh was out by the pool and laughing with his servants, saying, "look at this Moshe, he thinks that it there is going to be hail, impossible." As the time got closer and closer they started to count down, and they were sure that Moshe was wrong, there was no chance there would be hail in Egypt. Then as they got to the last second, like lehabdil the ball that drops from Time square, boom at that second miraculously, the sunshine turned into hail.

Arbeh-Locusts

The question that is asked about this plague is, how did Moshe Rabbenu know to tell Paraoh about the plague of Locusts, nowhere in the pesukim does it say that G-d told Moshe about this plague. So the explanation is that Moshe learnt it from a precise understanding of the effects of the plague of Hail, based on what G-d commanded him regarding this plague. The Hail itself was fire and water and the Torah says that the purpose of the plague was to discern which amongst the Egyptians had true fear of G-d, so the plague was purely a test for the Egyptians, it was not a plague against the crops. When an Egyptian would walk out in the street, all of a sudden, hail stones would shoot our all around him and lock him in, like with a wall of ice around him, and if he tried to break through the ice, so he would be burnt to death. However if you look at and analyze the pesukim, it says, that the plague will also attack the crops, as well as the Egyptians and their animals. So based on this we must explain it that only the crops which were surrounding the people were destroyed, but the crops in the field other than those where the Egyptians were standing were not touched. A careful analysis of the text reveals this conclusion, the pasuk writes, "Vayach habarad bechol eres misrayim et col asher basadeh meadam veud behema veet col eseb hasadeh hika habarad" When it comes to the man and the animal, it says, "bechol eres misrayim", but when it comes to the grass of the field, it only says, "hika habarad" implying that only where the Egyptians actually were standing, over there the crops were destroyed, but everywhere else they were not touched. So when Moshe Rabbenu, saw this he realized that there must be another plague that G-d is waiting to send to destroy the crops of the Egyptians.

Hoshech- Darkness

Just one observation about this plague, it says that during this plague four fifths of the Jewish people perished. Now let's make a calculation, if 600,000 men left Egypt, so that means there were probably also 600,000 women or even more, plus children, so let's say 3 million people left Egypt. That means 12 million people died in the plague of Hoshech, now the miracle is, you had 12 million corpses and not one Egyptian noticed this. This is another unbelievable miracle, how such a large amount of people could perish, and be buried and it would go under the radar that the Egyptians had no idea what had happened.

Macat Bechorot- Plague of the Firstborns

All the Rabbis ask, why Macat, just say Bechorot, every other plague we don't say Macat, could it be because of the pizmonim that we sing, surely not! It is well known that every house in Egypt had a casualty, how could it be, there wasn't a firstborn in every house, so it says, if there was no first born the elder of the house would die. That means,

on the night of the plague of the Firstborns, the Egyptian firstborn tells his family, "I am going to my friend's house tonight", the brother says, "please Mohammad, don't go, if you go I am next in line". So what ended up happening, they both died. But the Midrash says something amazing, even the Egyptians that were out of the country, they also died specifically during this plague. Why? Because the Egyptians said, Moshe is 9 for 9, why should we stay, so they all left, they hopped on cruises, some checked in to Hotel Uman, and what ended up happening, wherever they went, they were still killed at midnight when the plague struck. There was no escaping, a firstborn could have been on a cruise in the Greek Islands, and at midnight, he would automatically drop dead. So, by leaving the firstborns actually caused a doubling in the population of deaths, so it back fired. That is why this plague specifically is called "Macat bechorot", there was a macah in the house on the eldest of the household at the time, and the firstborn still died, even though he wasn't in the house at the time.

Maharal from Prague – Desah-Adash-Beahab

In the Haggadah of Pesah, we read about the acronym of Ribei Yehuda, which he composed for the 10 plagues, being Desah-Adash-Beahab. Many explanations have been given explaining exactly what the intention of Ribei Yehuda was by giving this acronym. Obviously he had specific kavanot when he made this acronym, and it was not just making a simple acronym using the first letters of each of the plagues, because any child could come up with such a thing. So what is the explanation of Ribei Yehuda's composition?

One explanation is that, whenever we have stam Ribei Yehuda in the Gemara, it refers to Ribei Yehuda Bar Ilai, who was known to be extremely poor. Therefore he composed this acronym because he couldn't afford to pour 10 drops of wine at the Seder, so instead he would only need to pour 3 drops, and thereby he would conserve the wastage of wine.

Some explain that the reason he gave this acronym was because that was the acronym that was engraved on the stick of Moshe, which was used to perform all of the plagues.

However the Maharal from Prague offers a novel Hiddush to explain Ribei Yehuda's acronym. He explains that the plagues were split into three groupings that start from the lower elements of creation and work their way up to the higher elements of creation, to show the sovereignty of G-d over all of creation. The plagues of Dam, Sephardea and Kinim, affected the lowest areas of creation, the dust and the water of the earth. The next series of plagues, shows G-d's sovereignty over what is above the earth, that is the Arob (wild animals), the Deber (pestilence) and the Shehin (boils). The Arob and the Deber affected the animals, and the Shehin affected the humans, showing G-d's sovereignty over those creatures that walk on the earth. The third grouping of plagues, shows that G-d controls not only the earth, and what is above the earth, but also that which is beyond the earth, that which is in the heavens. The Barad(Hail) is from shamayim, winds and hail are all elements above the surface of the earth, so too Arbeh(locusts) is flying creatures which are above the ground, and Hoshech (darkness) is the covering of the sun, which is also beyond the earth. Finally the last plague Macat Bechorot (Death of the Firstborn), shows G-d's control over an even higher level of creation, which is control over life and death. All the other plagues show G-d's control of physical aspects of creation, whereas Macat Bechorot already proves that G-d is in control over the Neshama(soul) of man which is the apex and highest level of creation. So therefore we see that the plagues had a specific purpose to show G-d's sovereignty over all of creation, and it achieved this by starting from the lowest level of creation, and working up to the highest level of creation which is the Neshama. This then explains why Ribei Yehuda split the

plagues into 3 specific sections in forming the acronym Desah-Adash-Beahab. Each grouping lifted the ante to a higher level than the proceeding group.

This explanation, can be proved by a careful examination of the pesukim. Regarding Dam, it says “Bezot tedah ki ani Hashem”. It just says Hashem, nothing more, because the first series of plagues was to just show that there is a G-d in the world, that is the lowest level of belief, it only proves to Paroah that G-d exists and has control of the elements of the earth. However G-d was trying to teach Emunah in Him in stages, it is not possible to reach the full level of emunah in one class, one needs to build his emunah gradually. Therefore these first 3 plagues were one lesson in Emunah.

By Arob, which is the first of the next grouping of plagues the pasuk writes, “leman tedah ki ani Hashem bekereb haaress” which means, now G-d is also in control of “bekereb haaress”, which is the middle stage of the three stages, “bekereb” means in between, and this is the in between of the three groupings of plagues.

However, when you get to Barad, which is the 3rd elevation in the series of plagues, the pasuk says, “baabur tedah ki ein camoni bechol haaress” This is coming to include and teach G-d’s control and mastery of the upper elements of creation, as we have explained above, that is why the pasuk says, “bechol haaress”, to denote that at this stage G-d had shown his control over everything. So you see from here that before each of the 3 elevations of plagues, there is a different language used to denote the distinctions explained above.

Finally, by Macat Bechorot, which is the apex of the plagues, the pasuk writes, “leman tedeun, asher yafleh Hashem bein misrayim, uben Yisrael” (so that you should know that Hashem has differentiated between Egypt and Israel). Here by this final plague, you see from the pasuk not only a separation between people, not only a mastery of all the physical aspects of creation as was shown by the other plagues, but a separation between the Goof(body) and Neshamah, which is the highest level of G-d’s control . That is why in the Haggadah, we say by Macat Bechorot, ani veloh malaach, ani velo seraph ani velo shaliah, because after this plague the final dosage of emunah was instilled into the people, proving G-d’s absolute control over every aspect of creation, whether physical or spiritual.

These are the dibrei Torah that one must give over at the seder. It is not rocket science, everyone comes away with understanding. This is what it means “Maggid”, when we start talking like this we activate the shemot, Kel, and Havyah which equals 57, and then beezrat Hashem it will activate, Moshe, Eliyahu, and Mashiah ben Yosef and David as a result of this sippur yesiat misrayim, and they will come in order to redeem us.

I bless you all Kahal Kadosh, “Kimei sethecha meeres misrayim, arenu niflaoth” – Just as G-d made miracles at the time of Egypt, He will also make miracles when the Mashiah comes, but these miracles will be greater. These miracles will make the Egyptian miracles pale in comparison. Be’ezrat Hashem It will be fulfilled on us the pasuk, “yagel Yaakob yismah yisrael”, am yisrael will rejoice in the final geulah amen.