

1. The Frog Song (Shirley Cohen)

One morning when Pharoah awoke in his bed
There were frogs in his bed, and frogs on his head
Frogs on his nose and frogs on his toes
Frogs here, frogs there
Frogs were jumping everywhere.

2. Shemos 7: 26-29, 8: 1-2

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי:

יהוה said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says יהוה: Let My people go that they may worship Me.

וְאִם־מָאֵן אַתָּה לְשַׁלַּח הַנֶּגֶף אֲנֹכִי נִגַּף אֶת־כָּל־גְּבוּלְךָ בַּצְּפֹרְדָּיִם:

If you refuse to let them go, then I will plague your whole country with frogs.

וְשַׁרְץ הַיַּאֲרֹץ צְפֹרְדָּיִם וְעָלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבַחֲדָר מִשְׁכַּבְּךָ וְעַל־מִטְתְּךָ וּבְבֵית עַבְדֶּיךָ וּבְעַמֶּיךָ וּבְתַנּוּרֶיךָ וּבַמִּשְׁאָרוֹתֶיךָ:

The Nile shall swarm with frogs, and they shall come up and enter your palace, your bedchamber and your bed, the houses of your courtiers and your people, and your ovens and your kneading bowls.

וּבְכָה וּבְעַמֶּיךָ וּבְכָל־עַבְדֶּיךָ יַעֲלוּ הַצְּפֹרְדָּיִם:

The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your courtiers."

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אָמַר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן נִטָּה אֶת־יָדְךָ בְּמִטְּךָ עַל־הַנְּהָרֹת עַל־הַיַּאֲרִים וְעַל־הָאֲגָמִים וְהָעַל אֶת־הַצְּפֹרְדָּיִם עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

And יהוה said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Hold out your arm with the rod over the rivers, the canals, and the ponds, and bring up the frogs on the land of Egypt."

וַיִּט אַהֲרֹן אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל מִיַּמֵּי מִצְרָיִם וַתַּעַל הַצְּפֹרְדָּע וַתִּכַּס אֶת־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

Aaron held out his arm over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

3. Rashi Shemos 8:2

(. ותעל הצפרדע. צִפְרַדַּע אַחַת הָיְתָה וְהָיוּ מִכֵּין אוֹתָהּ וְהָיָה מִתְצַת נְחִילִים נְחִילִים, זֶהוּ מִדְרָשׁוֹ וּפְשׁוּטוֹ יֵשׁ לוֹמֵר, שְׂרוּץ הַצִּפְרַדְעִים קוֹרָא לְשׁוֹן יְחִידוֹת

Really there was only one frog, but when they struck at it, it was split into many swarms. But as a literal explanation one must say that the swarm of the frogs is denoted by the singular form.

4. Sanhedrin 67b

כתנאי רבי עקיבא אומר צפרדע אחת היתה ומלאה כל ארץ מצרים אמר לו רבי אלעזר בן עזריה עקיבא מה לך אצל הגדה כלה מדברותיך ולך אצל נגעים ואהלות צפרדע אחת היתה שרקה להם: והם באו

This matter is subject to a dispute between tanna'im: Rabbi Akiva says: It was one frog, and it spawned and filled the entire land of Egypt with frogs. Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said to him: Akiva, what are you doing occupying yourself with the study of aggada? Take your statements to the tractates of Nega'im and Oholot. (In other words, it is preferable that you teach the halakhot of the impurity of leprosy and the impurity imparted in a tent, which are among the most difficult areas of halakha and are within your field of expertise.)Rather, the verse is to be understood as follows: It was one frog; it whistled to the other frogs, and they all came after it.

5. Daniel 3:12-30

There are certain Jews whom you appointed to administer the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; those men pay no heed to you, O king; they do not serve your god or worship the statue of gold that you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar, in raging fury, ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to be brought; so those men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke to them and said, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my god or worship the statue of gold that I have set up? Now if you are ready to fall down and worship the statue that I have made when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, zither, lyre, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all other types of instruments, [well and good]; but if you will not worship, you shall at once be

thrown into a burning fiery furnace, and what god is there that can save you from my power?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego said in reply to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter, for if so it must be, our God whom we serve is able to save us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will save us from your power, O king. But even if He does not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship the statue of gold that you have set up." Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego that his visage was distorted, and he gave an order to heat up the furnace to seven times its usual heat. He commanded some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to throw them into the burning fiery furnace. So these men, in their shirts, trousers, hats, and other garments, were bound and thrown into the burning fiery furnace. Because the king's order was urgent, and the furnace was heated to excess, a tongue of flame killed the men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. But those three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, dropped, bound, into the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and, rising in haste, addressed his companions, saying, "Did we not throw three men, bound, into the fire?" They spoke in reply, "Surely, O king." He answered, "But I see four men walking about unbound and unharmed in the fire and the fourth looks like a divine being." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the hatch of the burning fiery furnace and called, "Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, servants of the Most High God, come out!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came out of the fire. The satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the royal companions gathered around to look at those men, on whose bodies the fire had had no effect, the hair of whose heads had not been singed, whose shirts looked no different, to whom not even the odor of fire clung. Nebuchadnezzar spoke up and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who sent His angel to save His servants who, trusting in Him, flouted the king's decree at the risk of their lives rather than serve or worship any god but their own God. I hereby give an order that [anyone of] any people or nation of whatever language who blasphemes the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb, and his house confiscated, for there is no other God who is able to save in this way." Thereupon the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the province of Babylon.

6. Shemos Rabba 10:2

וּבַתְּנוּרֵיךְ וּבַמְּשָׁאוֹתֶיךָ, כְּשֶׁהִיְתָה הַמְצָרִית לְשָׂה אֶת הָעֵסָה וּמִסְקַת אֶת הַתְּנוּר, בְּאֵין הַצְּפָרְדֵּים וְיִוְרְדִין לְתוֹךְ הָעֵסָה וְאוֹכְלִין אֶת הַבָּצֶק וְיִוְרְדִין לְתוֹךְ הַתְּנוּר וּמִצְנִינִין אוֹתוֹ וְנִדְבָקוֹת בַּפֶּת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּבַתְּנוּרֵיךְ וּבַמְּשָׁאוֹתֶיךָ, וְאֵימְתִי עֹנֶתָה שֶׁל עֵסָה לְהִדְבֵק בַּתְּנוּר, הֲוֵי אוֹמֵר בְּשָׂעָה שֶׁהוּא מִסָּק מִן הַצְּפָרְדֵּים נִשְׂאוֹ חֲנֻכָּה מִשָּׂאֵל וְעֲזָרָה קַל וְחוֹמֵר בְּעֶצְמָן, וְיִרְדוּ לְתוֹךְ כִּבְשָׁן הָאֵשׁ

7. Pesachim 53b

תָּא שָׁמַע. עוּד זִי דְרַשׁ תּוּדוּס אִישׁ רוּמִי: מָה רָאוּ חֲנֻכָּה מִשָּׂאֵל וְעֲזָרָה שֶׁמְסָרוּ [עֶצְמָן] עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם לְכַבְּשָׁן הָאֵשׁ?

What did Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah see that led them to deliver themselves to the fiery furnace for sanctification of the name of God rather than worship idols under duress?

כְּשֶׂאוֹ קַל וְחוֹמֵר בְּעֶצְמָן מִצְּפָרְדֵּים. וּמָה צְפָרְדֵּים שָׂאִין מְצִוִּין עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם, כְּתִיב בְּהוּ: "וּבְאוּ [וְעָלוּ] [בְּבֵיתְךָ] וְגו' [וּבַתְּנוּרֵיךְ וּבַמְּשָׁאוֹתֶיךָ], אֵימְתִי מְשָׁאוֹת מְצִוִּוֹת אֶצֶל תְּנוּר? הֲוֵי אוֹמֵר בְּשָׂעָה שֶׁהַתְּנוּר חָם. אָנוּ שֶׁמְצִוִּין עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם — עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה

They drew an a fortiori inference on their own from the plague of frogs in Egypt. With regard to frogs, which are not commanded concerning the sanctification of the name of God, it is written: "And the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into your house, and into your bedchamber, and onto your bed, and into the houses of your servants, and upon your people, and into their ovens and kneading bowls" (Exodus 7:28). When are kneading bowls found near the oven? You must say that it is when the oven is hot. If in fulfilling the command to harass the Egyptians, the frogs entered burning ovens, all the more so, we, who are commanded concerning the sanctification of the name of God, should deliver ourselves to be killed in the fiery furnace for that purpose

8. Midrash Tehillim 28

מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ מַה אִם הַצְּפָרְדֵּים שָׂאִין לָהֶם זְכוֹת אֲבוֹת וְלֹא בְרִית עַל יְדֵי שְׁנַתְנוּ עִצְמָן וּמְסָרוּ נַפְשָׁן עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם לֹא מֵתוּ. אָנוּ עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה שָׂאִין בְּנֵי אֲבֵרָה יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיֵשׁ לָנוּ זְכוֹת אֲבוֹת וְנִצְטוּיֵנוּ עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה

9. Pesach Haggadah

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסובין בבבלי ברכ וקיי מספרים ביציאת מצרים כלאותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

It happened once [on Pesach] that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak and were telling the story of the exodus from Egypt that whole night, until their students came and said to them, "The time of [reciting] the morning Shema has arrived."

10. Tosefta Pesahim 10:12

מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין בבית ביתוס בן זונין בלוד והיו עוסקין בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר, הגביהו מלפניהם ונועדו והלכו להן [לבית המדרש

Once, Rabban Gamliel and the elders were reclining in the house of Boethus ben Zonin in Lod, and they were occupied in studying the laws of Pesach all that night, until the cock crowed. They lifted the table, made themselves ready and went to the house of study [to pray].

11. Kiddushin 40b

וכבר היה רבי טרפון וזקנים מסובין בעליית בית נתזה בלוד נשא אלה ז' בפניהם תלמוד גדול או מעשה גדול נענה רבי טרפון ואמר מעשה גדול נענה רבי עקיבא ואמר תלמוד גדול נענו בולם ואמרו תלמוד גדול נענה תלמוד מביא לידי מעשה

And there already was an incident in which Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were reclining in the loft of the house of Nit'za in Lod, when this question was asked of them: Is study greater or is action greater? Rabbi Tarfon answered and said: Action is greater. Rabbi Akiva answered and said: Study is greater. Everyone answered and said: Study is greater, but not as an independent value; rather, it is greater as study leads to action.

12. Sanhedrin 74a

א"ר יוחנן משום ר"ש בן יהוצדק נימנו וגמרו בעליית בית נתזה בלוד כל עבירות שבתורה אם אומרין לאדם עבור ואל תהרג יעבור ואל יהרג חוץ מעבודת כוכבים וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים

Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: The Sages who discussed this issue counted the votes of those assembled and concluded in the upper story of the house of Nitza in the city of Lod: With regard to all other transgressions in the Torah, if a person is told: Transgress this prohibition and you will not be killed, he may transgress that prohibition and not be killed, because the preserving of his own life overrides all of the Torah's prohibitions. This is the halakha concerning all prohibitions except for those of idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and bloodshed. Concerning those prohibitions, one must allow himself to be killed rather than transgress them

13. Brachos 61b

תְּנוּ רַבָּנַן: פַּעַם אַחַת גָּזְרָה מַלְכוּת הַרְשָׁעָה שְׁלֹא יַעֲסִקוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹרָה. בָּא פַּפּוּס בֶּן יְהוּדָה וּמְצָא לְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא שְׁהִיָּה מְקַהֵיל קְהֵלוֹת בְּרַבִּים וְעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה. אָמַר לוֹ: עֲקִיבָא אֵי אַתָּה מְתִירָא מִפְּנֵי מַלְכוּת?

The Gemara relates at length how Rabbi Akiva fulfilled these directives. The Sages taught: One time, after the bar Kokheva rebellion, the evil empire of Rome decreed that Israel may not engage in the study and practice of Torah. Pappos ben Yehuda came and found Rabbi Akiva, who was convening assemblies in public and engaging in Torah study. Pappos said to him: Akiva, are you not afraid of the empire?

אָמַר לוֹ: אֲמֻשׁוּל לָךְ מִשָּׁל, לָמָּה הַדְּבָר דּוֹמֶה — לְשׁוֹעֵל שְׁהִיָּה מְהַלֵּךְ עַל גַּב הַנְּהָר, וְרָאָה דָּגִים שְׁהִיּוּ מְתַקְבְּצִים מִמְּקוֹם לְמְקוֹם. אָמַר לָהֶם: מִפְּנֵי מָה אַתֶּם בּוֹרְחִים? אָמְרוּ לוֹ: מִפְּנֵי רִשְׁתוֹת שְׁמֵבִיאִין עָלֵינוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם. אָמַר לָהֶם: רְצוֹנְכֶם שְׁתַּעֲלוּ לִיבְשָׁה, וְנִדְוֹר אָנִי וְאַתֶּם, כְּנֶשֶׁם שְׁדָרוּ אֲבוֹתַי עִם אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם? אָמְרוּ לוֹ: אַתָּה הוּא שְׁאוּמְרִים עָלֶיךָ פִּקְחַ שְׁבַח־יּוֹת! לֹא פִקְחַ אַתָּה, אֶלָּא טַפְשׁ אַתָּה! וּמָה בְּמִקוֹם חַיִּיתָנוּ, אָנוּ מְתִירָאִין, בְּמִקוֹם מִיתָתָנוּ — עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה. אַף אֲנַחְנוּ עֲכָשְׁיוּ שְׁאָנוּ יוֹנְשָׁבִים וְעוֹסְקִים בְּתוֹרָה, שְׁפָתוֹב בָּהּ: "כִּי הוּא חַיִּיד וְאַרְךָ יָמֶיךָ", כִּן, אִם אָנוּ הוֹלְכִים וְיִמְבָטְלִים מִמָּנָה — עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה!

Rabbi Akiva answered him: I will relate a parable. To what can this be compared? It is like a fox walking along a riverbank when he sees fish gathering and fleeing from place to place.

The fox said to them: From what are you fleeing?

They said to him: We are fleeing from the nets that people cast upon us.

He said to them: Do you wish to come up onto dry land, and we will reside together just as my ancestors resided with your ancestors?

The fish said to him: You are the one of whom they say, he is the cleverest of animals? You are not clever; you are a fool. If we are afraid in the water, our natural habitat which gives us life, then in a habitat that causes our death, all the more so.

The moral is: So too, we Jews, now that we sit and engage in Torah study, about which it is written: "For that is your life, and the length of your days" (Deuteronomy 30:20), we fear the empire to this extent; if we proceed to sit idle from its study, as its abandonment is the habitat that causes our death, all the more so will we fear the empire.

אָמְרוּ: לֹא הָיוּ יָמִים מוֹעֲטִים, עַד שֶׁתִּפְסוּהוּ לְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְחִבְשׁוּהוּ בְּבַיִת הָאֲסוּרִים, וְתִפְסוּ לְפָפּוֹס בֶּן יְהוּדָה וְחִבְשׁוּהוּ אֲצֵלוֹ. אָמַר לוֹ: פָּפּוֹס, מִי הֵבִיאָךְ לְכָאן? אָמַר לוֹ: אֲשֶׁרִיךָ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא שֶׁנִּתְפַּסְתָּ עַל דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה. אוֹי לוֹ לְפָפּוֹס שֶׁנִּתְפַּס עַל דְּבָרִים בְּטָלִים.

The Sages said: Not a few days passed until they seized Rabbi Akiva and incarcerated him in prison, and seized Pappos ben Yehuda and incarcerated him alongside him. Rabbi Akiva said to him: Pappos, who brought you here? Pappos replied: Happy are you, Rabbi Akiva, for you were arrested on the charge of engaging in Torah study. Woe unto Pappos who was seized on the charge of engaging in idle matters.

בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהוֹצִיאוּ אֶת רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא לְהַרְיָגָה זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע הָיָה, וְהָיוּ סוֹרְקִים אֶת בְּשָׂרוֹ בְּמַסְרְקוֹת שֶׁל בְּרָזָל, וְהָיָה מְקַבֵּל עָלָיו עוֹל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם. אָמְרוּ לוֹ תַלְמִידָיו: רַבֵּינוּ, עַד כָּאן?! אָמַר לָהֶם: כָּל יְמֵי הָיִיתִי מַצְטַעַר עַל פְּסוּקַת זֶה "בְּכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ" אֲפִילוֹ נוֹטֵל אֶת נִשְׁמַתְךָ. אָמַרְתִּי: מִתִּי יָבֵא לְיָדִי וְאֶקְיִימֶנּוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו שָׁבָא לְיָדִי, לֹא אֶקְיִימֶנּוּ? הָיָה מְאָרִיךְ בְּ"אֶחָד", עַד שֶׁיִּצְתָה נִשְׁמַתוֹ בְּ"אֶחָד" יִצְתָה בְּתַת קוֹל וְאָמְרָה: "אֲשֶׁרִיךָ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא שֶׁיִּצְאָה נִשְׁמַתְךָ בְּאֶחָד".

The Gemara relates: When they took Rabbi Akiva out to be executed, it was time for the recitation of Shema. And they were raking his flesh with iron combs, and he was reciting Shema, thereby accepting upon himself the yoke of Heaven. His students said to him: Our teacher, even now, as you suffer, you recite Shema? He said to them: All my days I have been troubled by the verse: With all your soul, meaning: Even if God takes your soul. I said to myself: When will the opportunity

be afforded me to fulfill this verse? Now that it has been afforded me, shall I not fulfill it? He prolonged his uttering of the word: One, until his soul left his body as he uttered his final word: One. A voice descended from heaven and said: Happy are you, Rabbi Akiva, that your soul left your body as you uttered: One.

”אָמְרוּ מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת לִפְנֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא זֶה תּוֹרָה וְזֶה שְׂכָרָה? ”מִמֵּתִים יָדָה ה' מִמֵּתִים וְגו'”
אָמַר לָהֶם: ”חֶלְקֶם בְּחַיִּים.” יִצְתָה בֵּת קוֹל וְאָמְרָה: ”אֲשֶׁרֶיךָ רַבִּי עֵקִיבָא נְשִׂאתָה מְדוּמָן לְחַיֵּי
הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.”

The ministering angels said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: This is Torah and this its reward? As it is stated: “From death, by Your hand, O Lord, from death of the world” (Psalms 17:14); Your hand, God, kills and does not save. God said the end of the verse to the ministering angels: “Whose portion is in this life.” And then a Divine Voice emerged and said: Happy are you, Rabbi Akiva, as you are destined for life in the World-to-Come, as your portion is already in eternal life.

14. Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim 150

It is said about King David, at the time he completed sefer Tehillim, a thought came to him. He said before Him “Master of the Universe, is there anyone in the world that sings shira like me?” Hashem prepared one frog and it said to him “don’t be so proud of yourself, because I sing shira more than you!”

15. Perek Shira 4

צְפַרְדֵּי אֹמְרֵת. בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

The Frog is saying, “Blessed is the Name of his resplendent Majesty in the Cosmos forever.”

16. Midrash Tehillim 28:2

מה כתיב בהן (ובתנור ובמשארותיך. ואימתי משארת מצויה אצל תנור בשעה שהתנור חם מלמד שהיו משלימות עצמן לתוך התנור לקדש שמו של הקב"ה. ומה פרע להם. שכל הצפרדעים מתו ואותם שירדו לתנור לא מתו מפני שמסרו עצמן לשריפה כדי לקיים גזירתו של הקב"ה.

In your ovens and your kneading bowls.' When are kneading bowls found near an oven? When the oven is hot. This teaches us that they offered themselves to the flames to sanctify the name of the Holy One, blessed be He. What happened to them? All the frogs died, but those that went into the oven did not die because they had given themselves over to be burned in order to fulfill the decree of the Holy One, blessed be He."