

Parsha Plug: Parshat Vaeira

Shemot 7:13-25	שמות ז: יג-כה
<p>13 But Pharaoh's heart remained steadfast, and he did not hearken to them, as the Lord had spoken. 14 The Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is heavy; he has refused to let the people out. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning; behold, he is going forth to the water, and you shall stand opposite him on the bank of the Nile, and the staff that was turned into a serpent you shall take in your hand. 16 And you shall say to him, "The Lord God of the Hebrews sent me to you, saying, "Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me in the desert," but behold, until now, you have not hearkened. 17 So said the Lord, "With this you will know that I am the Lord." Behold, I will smite with the staff that is in my hand upon the water that is in the Nile, and it will turn to blood. 18 And the fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become putrid, and the Egyptians will weary [in their efforts] to drink water from the Nile.'" 19 The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch forth your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their canals, over their ponds, and over all their bodies of water, and they will become blood, and there will be blood throughout the entire land of Egypt, even in wood and in stone.'" 20 Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord had commanded, and he raised the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile before the eyes of Pharaoh and before the eyes of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile turned to blood. 21 And the fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became putrid; the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile, and there was blood throughout the entire land of Egypt. 22 And the necromancers of Egypt did likewise with their secret rites, and Pharaoh's heart was steadfast, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had spoken. 23 Pharaoh turned and went home, and he paid no heed even to this. 24 All the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink because they could not drink from the water of the Nile. 25 Seven full days passed after the Lord had smitten the Nile.</p>	<p>(יג) וַיִּחְזַק לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה כְּבֹד לֵב פַּרְעֹה מֵאֵן לְשַׁלַּח הָעָם: (טו) לֵךְ אֶל-פַּרְעֹה בֹּבֶקֶר הַיּוֹם יֵצֵא הֵנָּה יֵצֵא הַמִּיָּמָה וּנְצַבְתָּ לְקִרְיָתוֹ עַל-שֵׁפֶת הַיָּאֵר וְהִמַּטְהָ אֶשְׁרֵי-נְהַפְךָ לְנַחֲשׁ תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ: (טז) וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִיִּים שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר שְׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי בְּמִדְבָּר וְהִנֵּה לֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ עִדְכָה: (יז) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּזֹאת תֵּדַע כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם מִכֹּה בְּמַטֵּה אֶשְׁרֵי-בְיָדִי עַל-הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר וְנִהְפְּכוּ לְדָם: (יח) וְהִדְגָה אֶשְׁרֵי-בַיָּאֵר תַּמּוּת וּבִבְאֵשׁ הַיָּאֵר וְנִלְאֹו מִצְרַיִם לְשֵׁתוֹת מִיַּם מִן-הַיָּאֵר: (יט) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אָמַר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח מַטֵּן וְנִטְהַר יָדְךָ עַל-מַיְמֵי מִצְרַיִם עַל-נְהַרְתָּם עַל-יַאֲרֵיהֶם וְעַל-אֲגַמְיָהִם וְעַל כָּל-מִקְנֵה מִימֵיהֶם וַיְהִי־דָם וְהָיָה דָם בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּבַעֲצִים וּבְאֲבָנִים: (כ) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה וַיִּרְם בְּמַטֵּה נֶדְךָ אֶת-הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר לְעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה וּלְעֵינֵי עַבְדָּיו וַיִּהְפְּכוּ כָּל-הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר לְדָם: (כא) וְהִדְגָה אֶשְׁרֵי-בַיָּאֵר מָתָה וּבִבְאֵשׁ הַיָּאֵר וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ מִצְרַיִם לְשֵׁתוֹת מִיַּם מִן-הַיָּאֵר וַיְהִי הַדָּם בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: (כב) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן חֲרַטְמֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּלִטְיָהֶם וַיִּחְזַק לֵב-פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא-שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: (כג) וַיִּפֹּן פַּרְעֹה וַיָּבֵא אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וְלֹא-שָׁת לִבּוֹ גַם-לְזֹאת: (כד) וַיַּחְפְּרוּ כָּל-מִצְרַיִם סְבִיבֹת הַיָּאֵר מִיַּם לְשֵׁתוֹת כִּי לֹא יָכְלוּ לְשֵׁתוֹת מִמַּיְמֵי הַיָּאֵר: (כה) וַיִּמְלֵא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים אַחֲרֵי הַכּוֹת-יְהוָה אֶת-הַיָּאֵר:</p>

Rashi on Shemot 7:17	רש"י על שמות ז: יז
<p>And it will turn to blood: Since there is no rainfall in Egypt, and the Nile ascends and waters the land, so the Egyptians worship the Nile. He therefore smote their deity and afterwards He smote them.</p>	<p>ונהפכו לדם: לפי שאין גשמים יורדים במצרים, ונילוס עולה ומשקה את הארץ, ומצרים עובדים לנילוס, לפיכך הלקה את יראתם ואחר כך הלקה אותם:</p>

Rav Michael Hattin, <i>The Plague of Blood</i>
<p>If the people of Israel left the land of Egypt on the fifteenth day of the "first month" or the fifteenth of Nissan, then the plague of blood must have struck about nine months earlier during the month of Tammuz. Or, to put the matter in</p>

seasonal terms, if the people were freed during the "month of spring" (13:4), say sometime in late March or early April, then the Nile must have been stricken during the summer month of June. What is most remarkable about the results of this calculation is that they are in perfect agreement with the natural cycle of the Nile's most astonishing feature, the miracle of the Inundation! The Nile River is fed by great tributaries deep in Africa that annually fill its basin with the copious spring rains that pour down from the Ethiopian plateau...The water saturates the soil with such fertility that three or four crops may be cultivated and harvested annually. These life-giving waters continue until October, when they begin to recede. Then, the water is held in reserve by means of man-made canals and reservoirs. The ancient Egyptians were so dependent upon the annual miracle of the Inundation that they would take careful measurements of the Nile's level at critical points along its course...If the plague of blood struck during the month of June, then the effects of that plague were all the more manifest and impressive. After all, here was the proud Pharaoh and his devoted people eagerly anticipating the annual Inundation when Hapi the river god would restore the Nile to life and bring blessing upon the land, when suddenly and unexpectedly the waters turned to blood, so that their life-giving effects were now lethal and deadly. The fish and other organisms in the river perished, and the stench of the waters ominously hung over the chastened land! Who indeed was this God who had overpowered the cycles of the river and imposed His will upon it?

Pesikta Zutarta on Shemot 7:17	פסיקתא זוטרתא (לקח טוב) ז:יז
Because they spilled the blood of Israel like water, their Nile will turn to blood...	לפי ששפכו דמם של ישראל כמים, נהפכו לדם יאוריהם...

Reicanti on Shemot 7:17	ריקאנטי שמות ז:יז
The turning of water into blood hints at the turning of the attribute of mercy (known Kabbalistically as water) into judgement (kabbalistically, blood) for them.	והפיכת המים לדם רמזתי כי מדת רחמים נהפכה להם למדת הדין

Maarechet Heidenheim on Pesach Haggadah Maggid

Wonders: This refers to the blood. Why does the Haggadah single out the plague of blood?...Israel became wealthy because of the plague of blood...[W]hen an Israelite and an Egyptian tried to drink water from the river, the Egyptians drew out blood and the Israel drew out water. As a result the Egyptians had to buy water from the Israelites at great cost...Blood: Why did the Holy One bring a plague of blood?...Since the Egyptians did not allow the daughters of Israel to immerse themselves in water to be purified from their impurity so that they could fulfill the commandment of "Be fruitful and multiply", so God punished them with water.

Chizkuni on Shemot 12:13	חזקוני שמות פרשת בא פרק יב פסוק יג
The blood will be a sign for you that you upheld the mitzvah. Alternatively, a sign and remembrance that they spilled your blood.	והיה הדם לכם לאת שאתם מקיימים את המצוה. ד"א לאת וזכר ששפכו את דמכם.

Kedushat Levi Vaera 18	קדושת לוי וארא יח
<p>“Pharaoh turned and went to his palace and did not pay attention even to this.” Our sages, analyzing the word: לזאת, “to this,” where the Torah introduces the Temple service of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, with the words: “equipped with this Aaron is to enter the Sanctuary, etc;” as an allusion to the collective soul of the Jewish people. For the world was created for Israel-- they are the essence that caused the creation of the world and so in this the congregation of Israel is hinted at in the word זאת. We find this repeated when Moses blesses the Jewish people for the last time before dying when the Torah writes: וזאת הברכה אשר ברך משה וגו' “and this is the blessing which Moses invoked, etc.” When Moses, on the occasion of the first plague visited upon the Egyptians uses the word זאת, he does so to bring home to Pharaoh the idea that the Jewish people are the essence, and it was this that Pharaoh refused to believe and that is why he chose to ignore the plague.</p>	<p>ויפן פרעה ויבא אל ביתו ולא שת לבו גם לזאת כו' (שמות ז, כג). ויבואר על דרך מה שאמרו חכמינו ז"ל בזאת יבוא אהרן אל הקודש (ויקרא טז, ג) בזאת רומז על כנסת ישראל. ובאמת למה זאת רומז על כנסת ישראל, כי באמת כל העולמות לא נבראו אלא בשביל ישראל הם העיקר הגורם לבריאת העולם ובזה מרומז כנסת ישראל במלה זאת, כלומר זאת הוא עיקר והגורם. וזהו הרמז (דברים לג, א) וזאת הברכה אשר ברך משה. וכאן שמשה הראה לפרעה ואמר לו שישאל הם עיקר ופרעה לא רצה להאמין זה וזהו ולא שת לבו גם לזאת:</p>

Vayikra 17:11-14	ויקרא יז: יא-יד
<p>11 For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have therefore given it to you [to be placed] upon the altar, to atone for your souls. For it is the blood that atones for the soul. 12 Therefore, I said to the children of Israel: None of you shall eat blood, and the stranger who sojourns among you shall not eat blood. 13 And any man of the children of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who traps a quarry of a wild animal or bird that may be eaten, and sheds its blood, he shall cover it [the blood] with dust. 14 For [regarding] the soul of all flesh its blood is in its soul, and I said to the children of Israel: You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of any flesh is its blood all who eat it shall be cut off.</p>	<p>יא כִּי נֶפֶשׁ הַבֶּשֶׂר, בַּדָּם הוּא, וְאֲנִי נֹתְתִיו לָכֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם: כִּי-הַדָּם הוּא, בְּנֶפֶשׁ יִכְפֹּר. יב עַל-כֵּן אֶמְרָתִי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ מִכֶּם לֹא-תֹאכַל דָּם; וְהִגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם, לֹא-יֹאכַל דָּם. יג וְאִישׁ אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמִן-הִגֵּר הֹגֵר בְּתוֹכְכֶם, אֲשֶׁר יִצוּד יְצִיד חַיָּה אוֹ-עוֹף, אֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל--וְשִׁפָּךְ, אֶת-דָּמוֹ, וְכִסָּהוּ, בְּעֶפְרָן. יד כִּי-נֶפֶשׁ כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר, דָּמוֹ בְּנַפְשׁוֹ הוּא, וְאָמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, דָּם כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר לֹא תֹאכְלוּ: כִּי נֶפֶשׁ כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר דָּמוֹ הוּא, כָּל-אֹכְלוֹ יִכָּרֵת.</p>