

The Prophets and Psalmists as Exegetes - Class # 7

For Torah in Motion - by Menachem Leibtag

Re-examining Magid in Light of Tehillim 78

Intro: We all recall the 'multiplication tables' concerning the plagues towards the end of Magid, yet rarely to find time to discuss their meaning. In this week's shiur, we will uncover their source in Tehillim 78, to show how this short section may carry the Seder's 'take-home' message.

I. The Ten Plagues in Magid - the last drasha on "mikra bikurim

דָּבָר אַחֵר : בְּיַד חֲזָקָה - שְׁתִּים, וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה - שְׁתִּים,
וּבְמַרְא גָדֹל - שְׁתִּים, וּבְאֵתוֹת - שְׁתִּים, וּבְמִפְתִּים - שְׁתִּים.

אֱלוֹ עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל

הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן:

דָּם צְפַרְדֵּי כְּנִים

עֲרֹב דָּבַר שְׁחִין

בָּרַד אֲרָבָה חֲשָׁךְ

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הֵיךְ נוֹתֵן בְּהֵם סַמָּנִים:

דָּצ"ךְ עַד"שׁ בְּאַח"ב.

רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגְּלִילִי אוֹמֵר: מִנֵּין אֶתְּהּ אוֹמֵר

שְׁלָקוּ הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת

וְעַל הֵם לָקוּ חֲמִשִּׁים מִכּוֹת.

... אצבע... < יד [10x5=50 1:5]

**רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר : מִנֵּין שְׁכָל מַכָּה וּמַכָּה שֶׁהֵבִיא
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמַּצָּרִים בְּמַצָּרִים הִיְתָה שֶׁל
אַרְבַּע מִכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : יִשְׁלַח-בָּם, חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:**

עֲבָרָה- וְזַעַם- וְצָרָה- מִשְׁלַחַת מְלֹאכֵי רָעִים

Rabbi Eliezer says, “From where can you derive that every plague that the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was composed of four plagues? As it is stated (Psalms 78:49), ‘He sent upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and fury, and trouble, a sending of messengers of evil.’ ‘Wrath’ – one; ‘and fury’ – two; ‘and trouble’ – three; ‘a band of messengers of evil’ – four.

**וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר : מִנֵּין שְׁכָל מַכָּה וּמַכָּה שֶׁהֵבִיא
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמַּצָּרִים בְּמַצָּרִים הִיְתָה שֶׁל
חֲמִשׁ מִכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : יִשְׁלַח-בָּם:**

חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ- עֲבָרָה- וְזַעַם- וְצָרָה- מִשְׁלַחַת מְלֹאכֵי רָעִים.

Rabbi Akiva says, says, “From where can you derive that every plague that the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was composed of five plagues? As it is stated (Psalms 78:49), ‘He sent upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and fury, and trouble, a sending of messengers of evil.’ ‘The fierceness of His anger’ – one; ‘wrath’ – two; ‘and fury’ – three; ‘and trouble’ – four; ‘a sending of messengers of evil’ – five.

**כִּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמָקוֹם עָלִינוּ!
אֵלּוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמַּצָּרִים וְלֹא עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים...**

II. The context of this verse in Tehillim 78

- לח** וְהוּא רַחוּם, יִכַּפֵּר עֲוֹן- וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִית
וְהִרְבָּה, לְהִשְׁיב אָפוֹ ;
וְלֹא-יַעִיר, כָּל-חַמָּתוֹ.
- לט** וַיִּזְכֹּר, כִּי-בֶשֶׂר הָמָּה ;
רוּחַ הוֹלֵךְ, וְלֹא יָשׁוּב.
- מ** כַּמָּה, יִמְרוּהוּ בַמִּדְבָּר ;
יַעֲצִיבוּהוּ, בְּיַשִּׁימוֹן.
- מא** וַיִּשׁוּבוּ וַיִּנְסוּ אֵל ;
וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַתּוֹן.
- מב** לֹא-זָכְרוּ אֶת-יָדוֹ ;
יוֹם, אֲשֶׁר-פָּדַם מִנִּי-צָר.
- מג** אֲשֶׁר-שָׂם בְּמִצְרַיִם, אֶתֹתָיו ;
וּמוֹפְתָיו, בְּשֵׂדֵה-צֹעַן.
- מד** וַיַּהֲפֹךְ לָדָם, יְאֲרִיָּהֶם ;
וַנְּזַלֵּיהֶם, בַּל-יִשְׁתִּיּוּן.
- מה** יִשְׁלַח בָּהֶם עֲרָב, וַיֹּאכְלֵם ;
וַצַּפְרִידַע, וַתִּשְׁחִיתֵם.
- מו** וַיִּתֵּן לַחֲסִיל יְבוּלָם ; וַיִּגְיַעֵם, לְאֲרָבָה.
- מז** יַהֲרֹג בַּבָּרָד גִּפְנִים ;
וְשִׁקְמוֹתָם, בַּחֲנַמְל.
- מח** וַיִּסְגֹּר לַבָּרָד בְּעֵינָם ;
וּמִקְנֵיהֶם, לְרֶשֶׁפִים.
- מט** יִשְׁלַח-בָּם, חֲרוֹן אָפוֹ--עֲבָרָה וְזַעַם
וְצָרָה ; מִשְׁלַחַת, מִלְּאֲכֵי רָעִים.
- נ** יִפְלֵס נְתִיב, לְאָפוֹ : לֹא-חֲשָׂךְ מִמּוֹת
נַפְשָׁם ; וַחֲתִיתָם, לְדַבַּר הַסְּגִיר.
- 38** But He, being full of compassion, forgiveth iniquity, and destroyeth not; {N} yea, many a time doth He turn His anger away, and doth not stir up all His wrath.
- 39** So He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
- 40** How oft did they rebel against Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert!
- 41** And still again they tried God, and set bounds to the Holy One of Israel.
- 42** They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He redeemed them from the enemy.
- 43** How He set His signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan;
- 44** And turned their rivers into blood, so that they could not drink their streams.
- 45** He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.
- 46** He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.
- 47** He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees with frost.
- 48** He gave over their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to fiery bolts.
- 49** He sent forth upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, a sending of messengers of evil.
- 50** He levelled a path for His anger; He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;

נא וַיִּדֹף כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּמִצְרַיִם ;
רֵאשִׁית אוֹנִים, בְּאֹהֲלֵי-חַם. 51 And smote all the first-born in Egypt, the first-fruits of their strength in the tents of Ham;

נב וַיִּסַּע כְּצֹאן עֵמוֹ ;
וַיְנַהֲגֵם כַּעֲדָר, בַּמִּדְבָּר. 52 But He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

נג וַיְנַחֵם לְבָטָח, וְלֹא פָחַדוּ ;
וְאֶת-אוֹיְבֵיהֶם, כָּסָה הַיָּם. 53 And He led them safely, and they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

נד וַיְבִיאֵם, אֶל-גְּבוּל קֹדְשׁוֹ ;
הַר-זֶה, קָנְתָה יְמִינוֹ. 54 And He brought them to His holy border, to the mountain, which His right hand had gotten.

נה וַיְגַרֵשׁ מִפְּנֵיהֶם, גּוֹיִם-
- וַיַּפִּילֵם, בְּחֻבַּל נַחְלָה ;
וַיִּשְׁכְּנוּ בְּאֹהֲלֵיהֶם, שְׁבֻטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. 55 He drove out the nations also before them, and allotted them for an inheritance by line, {N} and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

III. The opening lines of Psalm 78

א מִשְׁכִּיל, לְאָסָף :
הֲאִזְיִנָה עַמִּי, תּוֹרָתִי ;
הִטּוּ אָזְנוֹכֶם, לְאִמְרֵי-פִי. 1 Maschil of Asaph. {N} Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

ב אֶפְתָּחָה בְּמִשְׁלַל פִּי ;
אֲבִיעָה חִידוֹת, מִנִּי-קֹדֶם. 2 I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter dark sayings concerning days of old;

ג אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְנוּ, וַנִּדְעֵם ;
וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, סִפְרוּ-לָנוּ. 3 That which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us,

ד לֹא נִכְחַד, מִבְּנֵיהֶם--
לְדוֹר אַחֲרוֹן,
מִסִּפְרֵים תְּהִלּוֹת יְהוָה ;
וְעֲזוֹזוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. 4 We will not hide from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, {N} and His strength, and His wondrous works that He hath done.

ה וַיִּקַּם עֲדוֹת, בְּיַעֲקֹב,
וְתוֹרָה, שָׁם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל :
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה, אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵינוּ--
לְהוֹדִיעֵם, לְבְנֵיהֶם. 5 For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, {N} which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children;

ו לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ, דּוֹר אַחֲרוֹן-- בְּנֵים
יִוִּלְדוּ; יִקְמוּ, וַיִּסְפְּרוּ לְבְנֵיהֶם.
6 That the generation to come
might know them, even the
children that should be born;
who should arise and tell them
to their children,

ז וַיִּשְׂימוּ בְּאֱלֹהִים, כְּסָלָם :
וְלֹא יִשְׁכְּחוּ, מַעֲלָלֵי-אֵל; וּמִצְוֹתָיו יִנְצְרוּ.
7 That they might put their
confidence in God, and not
forget the works of God, but
keep His commandments;

ח וְלֹא יִהְיוּ, כְּאֲבוֹתָם-
- דּוֹר, סוֹרֵר וּמָרָה :
דּוֹר, לֹא-הִכִּין לְבוֹ;
וְלֹא-נֶאֱמְנָה אֶת-אֵל רוּחוֹ.
8 And might not be as their
fathers, a stubborn and
rebellious generation; {N}
a generation that set not their
heart aright, and whose spirit
was not stedfast with God.

ט בְּנֵי-אֶפְרַיִם, נוֹשְׁקֵי רוּמִי-
קֶשֶׁת; הִפְכוּ, בְּיוֹם קָרָב.
9 The children of Ephraim were
as archers handling the bow,
that turned back in the day of
battle.

י לֹא שָׁמְרוּ, בְרִית אֱלֹהִים;
וּבַתּוֹרָתוֹ, מֵאֲנוּ לְלַכֵּת.
10 They kept not the covenant
of God, and refused to walk in
His law;

יא וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ עֲלִילוֹתָיו;
וַנִּפְלְאוֹתָיו, אֲשֶׁר הִרְאָם.
11 And they forgot His doings,
and His wondrous works that
He had shown them.

יב נִגְדוּ אֲבוֹתָם, עֲשֵׂה פְלֵא;
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׂדֵה-צֹעַן.
12 Marvellous things did He in
the sight of their fathers, in the
land of Egypt, in the field of
Zoan.

יג בָּקַע יָם, וַיַּעֲבִירָם;
וַיַּצֵּב-מַיִם כְּמוֹ-נֵד.
13 He cleaved the sea, and
caused them to pass through;
and He made the waters to stand
as a heap.

לב בְּכָל-זֹאת חֲטָאוּ-עוֹד; וְלֹא-הֶאֱמִינוּ, בְּנִפְלְאוֹתָיו.
32 For all this they sinned still, and
believed not in His wondrous works.

לג וַיִּכַּל-בְּהֶבֶל יְמֵיהֶם; וּשְׁנוֹתָם, בִּפְהֵלָה.
33 Therefore He ended their days as a
breath, and their years in terror.

לד אִם-הִרְגָם וַדַּרְשׁוּהוּ; וְשָׁבוּ, וְשִׁחְרוּ-אֵל.
34 When He slew them, then they would
inquire after Him, and turn back and seek
God earnestly.

לה וַיִּזְכְּרוּ, כִּי-אֱלֹהִים צוּרָם; וְאֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גֹּאֲלָם.
35 And they remembered that God was
their Rock, and the Most High God their
redeemer.

לו וַיַּפְתּוּהוּ בְּפִיהֶם; וּבִלְשׁוֹנָם, יִכְזְּבוּ-לוֹ.
36 But they beguiled Him with their
mouth, and lied unto Him with their
tongue.

לז וְלִבָּם, לֹא-נִכְוֹן עִמּוֹ; וְלֹא נֶאֱמְנוּ, בְּבְרִיתוֹ.
37 For their heart was not stedfast with
Him, neither were they faithful in His
covenant.

לח וְהוּא רַחוּם, יִכַּפֵּר עוֹן-- וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִית :
וְהִרְבָּה, לְהִשִּׁיב אָפוֹ; וְלֹא-יַעִיר, כָּל-חַמָּתוֹ.
38 But He, being full of compassion,
forgiveth iniquity, and destroyeth not; {N}
yea, many a time doth He turn His anger
away, and doth not stir up all His wrath.

IV. The plague of "barad" -

יג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, הִשָּׁכֶם בַּבֹּקֶר, וְהִתְיַצַּב לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה; וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו, כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים, שְׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי, וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי.

13 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him: Thus saith the LORD, the God of the Hebrews: Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

יד כִּי בַּפְּעַם הַזֹּאת, אֲנִי שֹׁלַח אֶת-כָּל-מִגַּפְתֵי אֶל-לַבָּד, וַיַּעֲבֹדֶיךָ, וַיַּעֲמֹד--בְּעֵבוֹר תִּדְעַע, כִּי אֵין כָּמוֹנִי בְכָל-הָאָרֶץ....

14 For I will this time send all My plagues upon thy person, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like Me in all the earth.

יח הַנְּנִי מִמָּטִיר כְּעֵת מָחָר, בָּרָד כָּבֵד מְאֹד, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-הָיָה כָמוֹהוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, לְמוֹן-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד-עֲתָה.

18 Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the day it was founded even until now.

יט וְעַתָּה, שְׁלַח הָעִזוֹ אֶת-מִקְנֶךָ, וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לְךָ, בַּשָּׂדֶה: כָּל-הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר-יִמָּצֵא בַּשָּׂדֶה, וְלֹא יֵאָסֹף הַבֵּיתָה--וַיֵּרֶד עֲלֵהֶם הַבָּרָד, וַיָּמָתוּ.

19 Now therefore send, hasten in thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; for every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.'

כ הִירָא אֶת-דְּבַר יְהוָה, מֵעַבְדֵי פַרְעֹה--הַנִּיס אֶת-עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת-מִקְנֵהוּ, אֶל-הַבָּתִּים.

20 He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses;

כא וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁם לְבוֹ, אֶל-דְּבַר יְהוָה--וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת-עַבְדָּיו וְאֶת-מִקְנֵהוּ, בַּשָּׂדֶה. {פ}

21 and he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field. {P}

כב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, נִטֵּה אֶת-יָדְךָ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיְהִי בָרָד, בְּכָל-אָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: עַל-הָאָדָם וְעַל-הַבְּהֵמָה, וְעַל כָּל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה--בְּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

22 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Stretch forth thy hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.'

כג וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מִטְּהוֹ, עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיְהִי נִתְּנוֹ קֶלֶת וּבָרָד, וַתִּהְלַךְ אֵשׁ אֲרָצָה; וַיִּמְטֵר יְהוָה בָּרָד, עַל-אָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם....

23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down unto the earth; and the LORD caused to hail upon the land of Egypt.

.....

כז וַיִּשְׁלַח פַרְעֹה, וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן, וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם, חָטָאתִי הַפְּעַם: יְהוָה, הַצַּדִּיק, וְאֲנִי וְעַמִּי, הַרְשָׁעִים.

27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them: 'I have sinned this time; the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.