

Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

Published Mantua 1778*

Chapter XIV: Va'era (Ex. 6:2–9:35)

Essay 17. Lice, boils, and darkness

יש לתת טעם למה במכת הכנים והשחין והחשך לא מצינו בקו הַתְּרָאָה אֶל פְּרֵעָה קוֹדֵם הַמַּכָּה כְּמוֹ בְּכָל שְׂאֵר הַמַּכּוֹת. דְּאִתָּא בִּיּוֹט הָרְאוּבֵנִי בְּשֵׁם סֵפֶר הַפְּלִיאָה, שְׁלֹשָׁה מַכּוֹת הָיוּ מְשֻׁמְשׁוֹת בְּיַחַד עִם כְּנִיִּים וְחֹשֶׁךְ, בְּכָל מַכָּה שֶׁשִׁמְשָׁה אַחַת שִׁימְשׁוּ שְׁתֵּי הָאֲחֵרוֹת עִמָּה, הָרִי כְּנִיִּים וְשָׁחַן חֹשֶׁךְ כְּלוּלָה כֹּל אַחַת מִשְׁלֹשָׁתָן כְּזֹה:

כ	נ	ם
ח	ח	ן
ח	ש	ך

עכ"ל.

We should give a reason why for the third, sixth, and ninth plagues of lice [כנים] [*kinim*] and boils [שחין] [*shichin*] and darkness [חשך] [*choshech*], we don't find a warning to Pharaoh prior to the plague, as was given before all the remaining plagues. As it is brought in the Yalkut Re'uveini,¹ in the name of the Sefer HaPliah,² three plagues are served together with lice: boils and darkness. With each plague that was served, two others were operative with it. Thus, lice and boils and darkness include the other two with it, as shown. If we write the words horizontally: *kinim*, *shichin*, *choshech*, in three rows of three columns, we see that we can read the same words vertically, from bottom to top, left to right: *choshech*, *shichin*, and *kinim*.³

ולפי זה לא הינה יכול משה להתרות על אחת מהן לבדה שהרי היו שתיים האחרות משמשות עמה ונמצא חס ושלום משה בדאי, ולהתרות על כלן אי אפשר שעדיין לא הגיע הזמן העקרי של המכה האחרת.

According to this, Moses could not have warned Pharaoh about one of them alone, for the other two were served with it, and it would be found, G-d forbid, that Moses was a liar. Also, to warn about all three of them at once was impossible, for the principal time had not yet arrived for the other two plague[s].

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¹ Reuben Hoshke HaKohen (Sofer) (d. 1673), Kabbalist and rabbi of Prague, *Yalkut Re'uveini* (Prague 1660), p. 82a.

² *Sefer haPliah*, a 14th or early 15th century composition on parshat Bereisheet in which the anonymous author collected interpretations of early Kabbalists.

³ Obviously ignoring any distinction between the regular or final forms of the letters *caf* [כ, ך] and *nun* [נ, ן].

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כ	נ	ם
ח	ח	ן
ח	ש	ך

עכ"ל.

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