

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VA'ERA

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Get the message!



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This week's parasha is Golden Buzzer worthy! We reach the pinnacle of the Jewish people's journey out of Egypt and are introduced to the first seven of the ten plagues. Let's take a deeper look into these plagues. The first thing we can recognise is how the plagues fit into three major categories, with the tenth plague standing alone. The three categories are as follows:

Plagues 1-3: proving God's existence. "Through this shall you know that I am God" (Shemot 7:17). The first three plagues were intended to prove God's existence to Pharaoh, because he had denied God's existence previously. An interesting thing to note about the second

plague (frogs) is that some rabbinic commentaries suggest it could also mean crocodiles. I don't know about you, but crocodiles are far more worrying than frogs! Even though it was impossible for the Egyptian sorcerers to ignore the fact that there was divine intervention with the first three plagues, they still only called it 'a finger of God' (Shemot 8:15), meaning they believed it wasn't so bad.

Plagues 4-6: proving God's day-to-day involvement in the world.

These plagues were important to not only show God's strength, but also to show how He is directly involved in our world. This can be most clearly seen with the fifth plague (death of the cattle). Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194-1270) notes that the cattle of the Egyptians were located in the fields near the Israelites' cattle and would intermingle with them, but when the fifth plague hit, only the

Egyptians' animals died, thereby showing God's involvement in the day-to-day affairs of the world.

Plagues 7-9: showing that God is all-powerful. These plagues defied nature even more than the previous plagues, demonstrating God's power. The seventh plague (hail – a miraculous combination of fire and ice) can actually be seen as two miracles in one. The first miracle was that the fire was shooting downwards when fire usually rises, and the second was that water and fire were working together in unison.

The plagues were not chosen at random; they carried a message for Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. Their purpose was not just as a punishment, but through the plagues, the Egyptians were to recognise God's power and involvement in the world.

SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES

