

Bo 5781
January 22nd, 2021



a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



The Plague of Math

by Rabbi Dani Locker

"I'm on a clock here, could we please get this over with? These plagues are going to take how long?" If I were Pharaoh, that might have been one of my questions. My other questions might have sounded like, "How did this porcupine get into my pillow case?" and "Did someone turn the lights out?" You are probably familiar with the 10 plagues God brought upon the Egyptians, but did you know that they took a full year? Yup, a full year.

I know you probably hate math. Math could have been the 11th plague. But only if it was bad at math, because 10 doesn't equal 11. Even I know that. Nevertheless, I'd like to figure out how they took a year. Each plague lasted a month (the actual plague was one week, with time before and after

so one plague per month, times ten plagues equals... anyone? 10 months. So how did that turn into a whole year? The answer is that there were two month-long time outs. Why?

The great sixteenth century rabbi known as Maharsha explains why. The Egyptians were big believers in astrology and had great faith in the power of the stars and constellations. Had the plagues ended after just ten months, Pharaoh and his cronies might have claimed that our God had no power over those two constellations, and they might have- even after the incredible, terrible plagues- refused to believe in God and to give in. Therefore the plagues has to last a



Henderson	4:39
Las Vegas	4:39
Reno/ Tahoe	4:50
San Diego	4:54
Irvine	4:55
Los Angeles	4:55
Oakland	5:03
Park City	5:14
Scottsdale	5:31

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totalling a month).



whole year.

Are you thinking what I'm thinking? No, it isn't a plot to take over the world. It's that the math still doesn't work! If there were no plagues during 2 months, Pharaoh might still claim that God has no power over those two months. Think about it. I'll give you the answer in a minute, but I'll be super impressed if you think of it on your own.

Wait for it...

OK, if you read the answer and you accurately fig-

Iyar	Sivan	Tamuz	Av	Ellul	Tishrei
BLOOD	FROGS		LICE	BEASTS	PLAGUE
Cheshvan	Kislev	Teves	Shevat	Adar	Nissan
	BOILS	NAIL		LOCUSTS	DARK 1st BORN

ured it out, email me and I'll give you a shout out next week! If not, don't worry, I didn't figure it out on my own either.

The plagues started and ended in the middle of the month. We know that because Passover is on the 15th of the month. So even with two time outs, there was a plague during every constellation's time. [Take a look at the diagram above.](#) Each month has part of a plague in it. It's pretty amazing if you think about it, how careful God was to make sure people would understand, at least one time in history, that He has complete and total control over all aspects of nature.

This is also perhaps, a reason for the first mitzvah in the Torah (at least, the first mitzvah given to

the Jewish people as a nation). As we were preparing to leave Egypt, packing our grilled cheese sandwiches and asking the post office to hold our mail, God interrupts our preparations with what seems to be a very random commandment. We are told to establish a Jewish calendar and to make Nissan (the month of Pass-over) the first month. OK. I get that it's import-

ant, but it's always seemed a bit weird to me that this calendar commandment is sandwiched (grilled cheese again?) right in middle of our travel preparations. But now; now it makes a lot more sense. The miracles of the plague actually had a lot to do with the calendar, and specifically with the 12 months. That sounds like an appropriate time to give the mitzvah of keeping our special calendar.

Our lessons from this? Maybe one lesson is learn your math well, because it may save you someday from an evil king. Also, WOW, how careful and specific God is with every detail. Not just the details of the plagues were planned, but even the exact moment in time each would come. Even the timing of when each commandment was given to the Jewish people. Cool!

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Summer info session

Sunday night, January 31st,
7:00-7:45pm pacific
on zoom
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ask burning questions

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MAZEL TOV!

to Aurelia Zohar who celebrated her Bat Mitzvah this week!

PICKLE JEWS

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cient heiroglyphic
tablet I found in
the tomb!



Online Translation:

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Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question.

Have a question? Please send it in to stump@nageelawest.org

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.



#156 The General Rule

Hi Rabbi,

Boy do I have a lot of questions. First of all, who do you have to win the super bowl this year? Also, I was wondering about Shabbat. All I hear about is Shabbat, shabbat, shabbat, shabbat, shabbat. It seems to be such a big and important part of being Jewish, but I don't really understand it. Why no work? Why all the prayers? Why is it every week, and why on Saturday? Can you explain the different customs and observances? Basically, can you give me a run down of the what, why, when, where, and how of Shabbat?

Thanks,
Esther R.

Dear R Ester,

Shabbat? Never heard of it. Is that some sort of Jewish custom? Let me check Wikipedia. While we're waiting, definitely going for the Yankees in the Super Bowl. OK, now I'm ready. There are so many parts to understanding Shabbat that this might take a couple of weeks.

Captain Adam First was one of the finest officers in the entire army. His strategies were usually on point, he commanded the respect of his troops, and his uniform always looked freshly pressed and perfect. The general was pleased with Capt. First's work, and generally thought of him as his top go-to guy. Until it happened. The regiment was in the midst of an important and sensitive military operation in enemy territory. The general gave his orders, and everything was going smoothly. Then, the enemy forces did something unanticipated, and the captain reacted. Captain First's first

thought was, "I should follow the general's orders. Captain First's second thought was, "I am the best strategist in this army. I can do this on my own! He ignored the general's orders, and used his own plan. It seemed to work out fairly well and he was pleased with himself. The general was not. The captain's neglect of his superior's orders could have put other units at extreme risk.

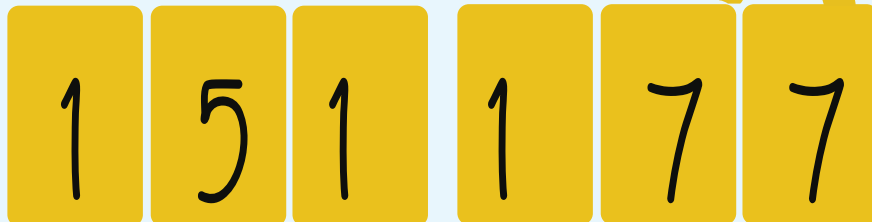
Over the next few

months, the captain, impressed with his own brilliance, and not



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Stump the Rabbi; continued

realizing how the big picture in the army was effected, started making more and more boldly independent decisions, often forgetting about direct orders from the general himself. The general decided he needed to act. He did not want to fire Captain Adam, because of his obvious potential for greatness. Yet, he needed to do something. Adam must be constantly reminded that he was not in charge, and his talents must be used in the service of the army, under the direction of the general. He came up with a plan.

The following Tuesday, Captain Adam First was paged to come to the general's office. At the office, the chief officer explained to Adam that from now on, though he would still be a high ranking officer, each Tuesday he would lose his privileges for that day. On Tuesday he would not have his personally chauffeured humvee available, his private secretaries doing his work or running errands for him. He would not be allowed to wear his rank insignia, and he would not be allowed to give any orders to troops. But that wasn't all. The general wanted his captain to also remember who was in charge, so he continued with the rest of the Tuesday rules. Every Tuesday, the captain was to report to the general's

office where he would work as the general's personal assistant, pouring coffee, making photo copies, and driving the general around. Once per week, Captain First would be reminded of who wasn't in charge, and who was.

God had a problem. That doesn't sound right. Let's try that again. The world had a problem, and God had a solution. The problem was US made. I don't mean 'made in the USA' I mean the problem was made by us, the human race. God created humans to be great. He gifted us intelligence, passion, creativity, desire, love, and so many other great abilities. Look at what we've done. We've created great art, walked on the moon, and made an app to do silly dances. We've constructed massive skyscrapers, bridges and wondrous technology. It is SO easy (just like the captain) to think about how great we are, and forget who is truly in charge, and that our talents should be used within the system He created and His instructions. We forget that all too often. God's solution? ONE DAY A WEEK (in this case it's not Tuesday- gotcha there) we stop doing all the things that make us forget God. We stop our working and our schooling. In fact, we stop most creative activities. Instead, we spend time learning from 'the general.' We go to synagogue, say special prayers, hear the Torah being read, recite

Kiddush and havdalah, to remind ourselves that God created the world in 6 days and rested on the seventh. In short, we do everything we can to use Shabbat as a reminder that all our talents come from God and He is truly in charge.

Guess what? It worked! We're 4000 years into the 'Jewish experiment' and we as a nation- particularly those who keep Shabbat holy and special- have not forgotten who is the general.

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

the Rabbi

THAT AWKWARD MOMENT WHEN YOU TURN
YOUR STAFF INTO A SNAKE...



AND IT TURNS OUT PHARAOH IS A PARSELMOUTH

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COMING THIS WEEK
SUNDAY- Arizona Leadership Event Online
SUNDAY- Orange County Leadership Event Online
MONDAY- Las Vegas Crafts Event
MONDAY- San Diego Leadership Event
TUESDAY- CHAPTER WARS- Bad Apple Edition
WEDNESDAY- LA Valley Fruitman Driveby Event
THURSDAY- LA City Tu B'Shvat Seder

DID JEW KNOW?

There were actually 7 types of grasshoppers involved in the 8th plague: Arbeh, Salam, Chargol, Chagav, Gazam, Yelek and Chasil.



Which Egyptian medical experts rode on ambulance chariots?

Pyramedics!

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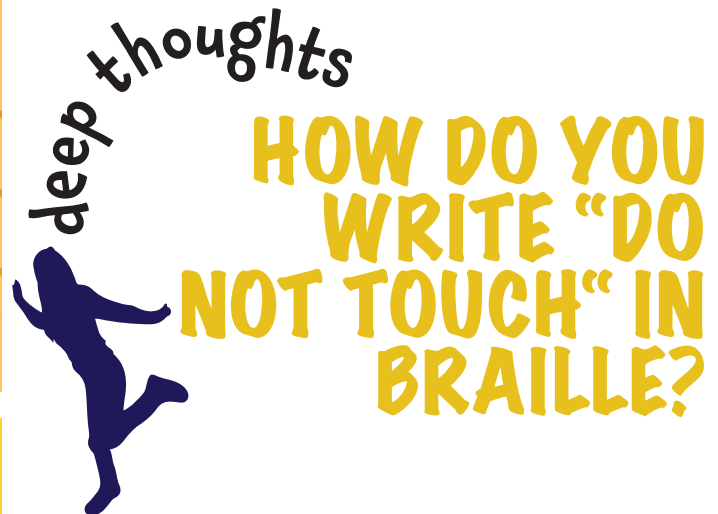
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