

Vaera 5786

Jeremiah 5:6

Therefore the lion from the woods struck them, the wolf of the aravot raided them...

Genesis 15:13

And G-d said to Abram, "Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years;

Exodus Rabbah 11:2

Reish Lakish said: Gd told them, "You made mobs and mobs against My children, I will also make the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the land mobs and mobs against you." As it says, "Behold, I send against you... the arov" – beasts and birds, mixed [m'urbav] together.

Exodus Rabbah 11:3

Why did He bring arov upon them? Because they told Israel, "Go out and bring us bears, lions and leopards" in order for them to pain them. Therefore He brought upon them mixed beasts, per Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Nechemiah said: Types of wasps and gnats. And Rabbi Yehudah's position seems correct, for regarding the frogs it said, "And the frogs died," because they would not benefit from their hides, but for arov, where one could benefit from their hides, therefore, "Not even one remained." Had they been wasps and gnats, they should have been left to rot.

"We will go three days' journey into the wilderness" – to trick them. Why did they say three days, and not "We will go forever"? Why did they say this? So the Egyptians would err and pursue them when they left, saying, "He only rescued them to go for three days and bring Him korbanot, and they have tarried so long," and they would pursue them after three days, and He would drown them in the sea, to give them the measure they had meted out, "Every boy born, throw into the river, etc."

Rashi on Exodus 11:5

And why were the maids' children struck? For they enslaved the Jews and rejoiced at their pain.

Exodus Rabbah 11:1

"Rise early in the morning" – As Mishlei 22 says, "You see a man who is quick at his work [he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before those who are darkened]"... "Rise early in the

morning and stand before Pharaoh" – Why early? Rabbi Berechiah said: Because wicked Pharaoh said, "This son of Amram comes and goes before us every morning! Before he arrives, I will depart from here." Gd, who examines hearts, told Moshe, "Know that this wicked one is thinking this in his heart, so before he leaves, stand before him." Therefore it says, "Rise early in the morning," And Rabbi Pinchas haKohen, son of Rabbi Chama, said: This is the meaning of Iyov 36:13, "And those of wicked heart increase rage." Gd looks for the wicked to repent, and they do not – so even if they wish to do so at the end, He removes their will so that they do not repent... Pharaoh wished to pray, and Gd said to Moshe, "Before he leaves [to pray], go stand before him."

Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah 6:3

A person may commit a great sin or many sins causing the judgment rendered before the True Judge to be that the retribution [administered to] this transgressor for these sins which he willfully and consciously committed is that his Teshuvah will be held back. He will not be allowed the chance to repent from his wickedness so that he will die and be wiped out because of the sin he committed.

For these reasons, it is written in the Torah [Exodus 4:21], "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." Since, he began to sin on his own initiative and caused hardships to the Israelites who dwelled in his land as [Exodus 1:10] states: "Come, let us deal wisely with them," judgment obligated that he be prevented from repenting so that he would suffer retribution. Therefore, The Holy One, blessed be He, hardened his heart.