

After the third of the plagues, lice, the Egyptian magicians exclaimed "It must be the 'finger of God'". What was the significance of this response that the Torah needed to record it?

### Bechor Shor Exodus 8:15

France, 12th c.

And when they saw that they could not nullify what he was doing, they said: It is the finger of God. For according to the plain meaning, what is the difference between blood and frogs, which they were able to produce, and lice, which they were unable to produce? And our Rabbis explained (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 67b): because a demon has no power over anything smaller than a lentil. And to this there is no refutation.

### בכור שור שמות פרק ח:טו

רב יוסף בכור שור

וכיון שראו שלא היו יכולין לבטל מה שהוא עושה, אמרו: אצבע אלהים הוא – כי לפי הפשט, מאי שנא דם וצפרדע שעשו, ומאי שנא כינים שלא היו יכולים לעשות. ורבותינו פירשו (בבלי סנהדרין ס"ז:): כי אין השד שולט על פחות מכעדשה. ועליהם אין להשיב.

The Bechor Shor explains that when it came to this plague, they were unable to reproduce it because their magic had no power over items that miniscule. Therefore, they realized that Moshe and Aharon must be acting by the word of God.

### Tur Peirush HaAruch Exodus 8:15

Germany, 13th c.

When the magicians mentioned that the plague was from God, they acknowledged the deed of Aharon. Therefore, they were not summoned from then on, for the magicians did not stand before Moshe in the plague of the swarms, nor in the other plagues, even though he warned them at first. And in order to minimize the matter, they said 'the finger of God' and did not say 'the hand of the Lord.'

### טור פירוש הארוך שמות פרק ח:טו

ר' יעקב בן אשר

בעבור שהזכירו החרטומים שהיתה מכה מאת השם הודו במעשה אהרן ועל כן לא קראו להם מכאן ואילך כי לא עמדו אחרי כן החרטומים לפני משה במכת הערוב ולא בשאר המכות אע"פ שהתרה בהם תחלה וכדי למעט הענין אמרו אצבע אלהים ולא אמרו יד ה'.

The Tur explains that once the magicians admitted defeat against God and Aharon, they were no longer called upon for future meetings with Moshe because they weren't an effective retort to the plagues.

## Panach Raza Exodus 8:15

France, 13th c.

“It is the finger of God.’ Our Rabbis said (Sanhedrin 67b) that a demon has no power over anything smaller than a lentil. And to them there is no reply. Another explanation: ‘It is the finger of God.’ Moshe said: Until now He has struck you only with His finger. When He strikes you with His whole hand, then the blow will be great. And that was at the sea, as it is said: ‘And Israel saw the great hand...’”

## פענח רזא שמות פרק ח:טו

רב יצחק בן יהודה הלוי

אצבע א-להים היא. רבותינו אמרו (סנהדרין סז:): שאין השד שולט על פחות מכעדשה. ועליהם אין להשיב. וכו' דבר אחר אצבע א-להים היא. אמ' משה עדיין לא הכה אתכם כי אם באצבע. כשיכה אתכם בכל היד אז תהיה המכה גדולה. והיא היתה של ים שנ' וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה.

In his second answer, The Panach Raza explains that the response of 'it's the finger of God' was not said by the magicians, rather by Moshe. He was chastising Pharaoh for not heeding the warnings of the first plagues.

### Questions for Reflection:

1. According to the second answer of the Panach Raza, why would Moshe make this comment specifically by this plague and not the others?
2. According to the Bechor Shor, once the Egyptians understood that Moshe and Aharon couldn't be using magic to perform the plagues, why wouldn't they send the Jews out right away?

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