

"And the river shall swarm (with) frogs which shall go up and enter your home... and into your ovens." (7:28)

The second plague which Hashem brought against the Egyptians was frogs, which invaded the entire Egyptian community. No place was free of this menace, not even the heated ovens. The *Talmud (Pesachim 53b)* relates that Chananya, Mishael and Azaria, who entered the fiery furnace in defiance of Nevuchadnezar, had developed a *kal v'achomer* (a priori argument) from the frogs. If frogs who have no *mitzvah* to sanctify Hashem's Name, nevertheless entered the fiery furnaces in order to glorify His Name, how much more so should we who are enjoined in the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* be obligated to do so. We may question their argument since the frogs were commanded to enter the ovens, while they were not commanded, they followed their own prerogative.

The *Darhei Mussar* gives a simple, but profound answer to this question. He states that the frogs, in addition to being commanded to enter the ovens, were also commanded to enter other places in the community. It would have been convenient to refrain from going into the ovens in exchange for another place. The frogs did not entertain such thoughts but rather seized the opportunity to sanctify Hashem's Name not shirking from their responsibility.

How often are we faced with situations in which an opportunity to perform a *mitzvah* or to perform an act of kindness for another Jew arises, and we conveniently "volunteer" another person to discharge this deed? If one seeks excuses, he will always find them. We may even suggest that when one trains himself in this manner regarding simple tasks, he will eventually reinforce his lack of responsibility to his community, even to *mitzvos* in general. An integral component in the proper fulfillment of *mitzvos* is the ability to seize the opportunity when it arises and discharge the *mitzvah* with the appropriate intentions.