

## But Pharaoh's heart was strong and he did not heed them, as Hashem had spoken. (8:15)

The Torah informs us that Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart and then continues to relate concerning the next plague, *arov*, mixture of animals. What happened to the *kinnim*, lice? Did they leave? Nothing is mentioned of their disappearance. **Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl**, suggests that quite possibly the lice became permanent residents of Egypt. Why? Because Pharaoh did not beg for them to be removed – as he did earlier with the frogs. Indeed, as support for this, *Rav Sholom* cites the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 105:31: *Amar va'yavo arov, kinnim b'chol gevulam*, "He spoke and hordes of beasts arrived, and lice throughout their borders." This alludes that when the *arov* arrived, the *kinnim* were included among them.

Without prayer – one receives nothing! Thus, if Pharaoh does not beg, it does not happen on its own. Likewise, we do not find that Pharaoh asked to have the *shechin*, boils, removed. Possibly, they walked around with boils. Indeed, this might be implied from the *pasuk* in the Torah (*Devarim* 28:27) *Ya'kecha Hashem b'shechin Mitzrayim... asher lo suchal l'heirafei*, "Hashem will smite you with the boils of Egypt... from which you cannot be cured." Egypt was not healed of their boils, because they refused to make the request. Prayer is the only ticket through which we receive Hashem's beneficence. When we obstinately refuse to entreat the Almighty – we receive as much as we asked for – nothing!

*L'hisadein B'ahavasecha* quotes a compelling story related by *Horav M.D. Soloveitchik, Shlita*, which underscores the amazing power of prayer. Years past there was a *shiur* given by a *Kabbalist* delving into the esoteric secrets of the Torah. This *shiur* was attended by a number of *Yerushalayim's* elite who would come to the *Churvah Shul* to listen and imbibe the lessons of the *Zohar HaKadosh* and the *Arizal*. A number of the *rabbanim* who came to imbibe these holy secrets brought with them their young children who would spend the time quietly playing under the tables. Unbeknownst to their fathers, those children would pick up Torah thoughts, but because of their limited ability due to age and knowledge, could hardly digest them properly.

One Friday night, a young boy who had often accompanied his father to the *shiur*, heard his mother gagging in bed. Something had gotten stuck in her throat and she was choking. His mother gave a loud scream *Oy Tatte!* "Oh Father!" which was not an uncommon cry for a person in pain. At that moment, the young boy remembered that as a person is about to leave this mortal world, he sees his father and mother who greet him, prepared to accompany him on his journey to the next world.

The child became overwhelmed with fear of his mother's sudden passing. The thought of being left alone was too much for this young child to bear. He ran from his bedroom to the nearest *shul*, opened up its *Aron HaKodesh* and cried out, "*Ribono Shel Olam*. I do not want to end up in the *Diskin Orphanage!*" He said this over and over again, accompanying his entreaty with bitter weeping. Hashem listened and his mother was able to expurgate the bone on which she had been

choking. His sincere prayer begot a positive response.