

And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt. (10:2)

The *Torah* places emphasis upon relating the miraculous nature of the ten plagues to one's children/descendants - specifically concerning the plague of locusts. What is the significance of the plague of locusts that it has become the focus of transmission to future generations? **Horav Simcha Zissel Broide, shlita**, observes that the dialogue which ensued between Moshe and Pharaoh was not limited to *Bnei Yisrael's* release from Egypt. Moshe was also using this forum to demonstrate to Pharaoh the identity of the Master of the world. It was Pharaoh who audaciously challenged Moshe with the words, "*Who is Hashem that I must listen to His voice?*" Pharaoh denied the existence of a Supreme Being who directed the world. The miracles and wonders that occurred in Egypt were "lessons", with which Moshe sought to imbue Pharaoh with an awareness that Hashem is the Creator and Ruler of the earth.

The first plagues did not seem to have a great effect upon Pharaoh. He remained resolute in his denial of Hashem, renewing the zeal with which he enslaved the Jews. As the plagues progressed, the pain and affliction which he and his people suffered became increasingly difficult to endure. Thus, Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aharon to put a stop to the plagues. His pleas were always accompanied by the same false, vacuous promises of freedom for the Jews. As soon as each plague ended, Pharaoh would renege on his word and persecute the Jews once again.

Pharaoh appeared to his nation to be an all-powerful king whom no one could vanquish. Even if he "seemed" to give in to the effects of the plague, it was only a transitory change. Indeed, immediately after the plague had ceased, Pharaoh returned to his previous stance.

This ruse continued for the seven plagues which preceded the plague of locusts. Now, in the aftermath of the plague nothing was left! All of the grain had been totally obliterated. No longer did Pharaoh have to beg Moshe to rescind the plague; the locusts retreated of their own accord because nothing was available for them to eat. Pharaoh no longer had reason to display a show of strength, for he had nothing to gain. The plague had run its course, and he and his people were devastated. Now Pharaoh retreated, meekly crying out, "*I have sinned to Hashem.*" Pharaoh had seen the effects of total destruction. He could only hope that his repentance would avert a new calamity. He was like a child who has been hit by a stick many times. The fear of an upraised stick was sufficient to frighten him into submission.

The idol had fallen! Pharaoh's subterfuge had come to an abrupt halt. The mighty ruler who feared no one was now scared of his own shadow. The plague of locusts had finally put Pharaoh in his place. It forced him to shed his arrogance, exposing the fraud that he had perpetrated against his people.