

## Rabbi's Column

There is one school of thought which indicates that the reason there were ten plagues and not just one was that the Israelites had lost the energy and willingness to believe that anyone would care about them, and all they thought about was how worse things could get if they made any trouble for anyone. A close reading of the text we read this past Shabbat indicates that it is possible that until the plague of swarms, the Israelites suffered along with the Egyptians. They did not see miracles, they saw natural disasters - the water was less drinkable, there were far too many frogs, what were a few boils on top of the other physical ailments caused by ridiculously hard work? Then they finally get a break from disaster, and they still do not really believe that this is a good thing. Maybe, they might think, it's because Egypt gave us this suburb of Goshen that the local Gods of Destruction don't even think the area is worth punishing for any reason, because nothing better is expected of the people?

Finally the people seem to come around to the realization that they will have to leave. I really do not think they believe this is a positive thing until after the Reed Sea is crossed sometime next week.

It is a good thing to be grateful for what you have, whatever it might be, as there are worse alternatives. I feel it is a much better thing to be aware of the daily miracles, some of them disguised as natural events, and continue to maintain an awareness of our connection with God even during traumatic times.

If you haven't spent any time recently reading the Exodus story, I invite you to do so. The account at the Seder meal is merely a brief overview, and it skips all the literary gems that can be found in a close reading. (Some of which I cover as we study the text on Shabbat morning. Other parts of it will be covered on Torah Thursday (possibly a couple of years from now.))