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General Editors

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Parashas Va’eira
2. "Elohim spoke to Moshe and He said to him, "I am Hashem." And I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov, with El Shaddai; but [through] My Name 'Hashem' I did not become known to them.

Moreover, I established My covenant with them, to give them the

CHUMASH TRANSLATION

1. The expression, spoke with (rather than spoke to), conveys direct and close communication; thus, "Hashem spoke with" connotes an intimate connection of prophecy. Onkelos uses this expression when speaking of Hashem's communication with all prophets in the Book of Bereishis; but from this point on, Onkelos reserves the expression, Hashem spoke with, for Hashem's communication with Moshe, whose level of prophecy exceeded that of all others (Pas'hegen to Bereishis 17:23; see Abarbanel to v. 10; see further, Nesinah LaGer, Beurei Onkelos, Chalitos Semalos, and Me'at Tzori to Vayikra 10:8).

It should be noted that Onkelos uses this sign of closeness only where the verse uses the term רבעך, and he spoke, not when it says ראך, and he said. This is because the word רבעך connotes direct, close speech (see Pas'hegen to v. 13 below; Pas'hegen HaDas, Devarim 2:16; Redjei Maya, ר"ץ יוהי). See also below, v. 13 note 19. [To be clear, Onkelos does use the expression spoke with in numerous places, even when not referring to prophecy. The above discussion pertains only to Onkelos' rendering of Hashem's speaking with people. In that case, Onkelos usually avoids the impression of direct close contact unless he is speaking of prophecy on a high level, as explained.]

2. With this statement, Hashem was responding to Moshe's question at the end of the previous parashah (above, 5:22): Why have you sent me? The words "I am Hashem" mean, "I am faithful in rewarding those who do My Will." Since I promised the Patriarchs that I would redeem their descendants from Egypt (as the following verses continue), I will certainly carry through on that promise, and your mission will certainly succeed (Rashi, with Mizrahi).

Rashi points out that this statement was delivered with the Divine Attribute of Strict Justice, for it was improper for Moshe to have questioned Hashem's plan. This is reflected either in the term רבעך (He spoke), which implies a strict tone, or in the description of Hashem as ה'כל, a Name associated with the Attribute of Strict Justice (Mizrahi). Onkelos, as is his practice, does not distinguish between the various Names, and renders all references to God as "Hashem."

3. Onkelos deviates from the literal, appeared, so as to avoid the impression that Hashem can be seen.

4. "My Name Hashem" refers to His four-letter Name [יהוה]. Certainly the Patriarchs knew this Name; see Bereishis 15:7, where Hashem introduced this Name

ONKELOS ELUCIDATED

2. מָלֵךְ — I am Hashem.[1] ווֹדֵל — and He said to him, "I am Hashem."[2] מָלֵךְ — And I was revealed[3] to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov — with the Name 'El Shaddai'; והוה — but My Name 'Hashem' — I did not inform them.[4] מָלֵךְ — Moreover, I established My covenant with them, to give them the

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land of Canaan — the land of their sojourn in which they sojourned. And I have also heard the outcry of the Children of Israel, that Egypt enslaves them, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore, say to the Children of Israel: 'I am Hashem, to Avraham. The verse here means that the implied meaning of this Name of Hashem was not revealed to them. Hashem related to the Patriarchs with the Attribute associated with the Name El Shaddai (the God Who provides every creature with its needs; Rashi Bereishis, 17:1). He did not relate to them with the Attribute associated with the Name “Hashem,” which is, “the One Who is faithful to His Word,” for He had not yet fulfilled His promises to redeem their descendants. As the following verses continue, Hashem is telling Moshe that the time has come for Him to fulfill these promises (Rashi).

Rashi, as well as most Rishonim, explain that the word נָעֲבּוּד is in the nif'al (passive) form, and means, I did not become known. According to Onkelos, however, although the word appears to have the form of a nif'al, this case is one of a number of exceptions to the general rule, and the word here actually has the meaning of an active form: I did not inform (see HaKessav VeHaKabbalah, Me'at Tzori; cf. Or HaTargum). For further discussion of Onkelos’ approach to this verse, see Marpe Lashon.

5. That is, I established a covenant with each of the Patriarchs, in which I pledged to bring their descendants to Eretz Yisrael (with Avraham in Bereishis 17:8; with Yitzchak, ibid. 26:3; and with Yaakov, ibid. 35:11; see Rashi).

6. Here, the word כן, also, has the sense of “therefore”: I have made those promises, and therefore I must also fulfill them (Rashi).

For discussion of Onkelos’ rendering of the words יָאֹמַר, as, it is heard before Me, see above, 2:24 note 34.

7. I.e., their cry was that the Egyptians are enslaving them (Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh).

8. In the Bris Bein HaBesarim (Covenant Between the Parts), Hashem promised Avraham, And also the nation for whom they shall labor, I will judge [i.e., punish] (Bereishis 15:14). When the Jewish people cried out to Hashem from the pain of their enslavement, Hashem remembered His covenant to hold their oppressors to account (Rashi, following Gur Aryeh).

Onkelos uses the present tense, and I remember (and not the literal past tense), to be clear that Hashem remembers everything at all times; it is only that there are certain times when Hashem chooses to act based on that which He remembers (see above, 2:24 note 34).
and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall take you to Me as a people and I shall be your God; and you shall know that I am Hashem your God, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt.

I shall bring you to the land about which I raised My hand to swear by My word — and I shall take you out from the midst of the oppression of the labor of the Egyptians.

9. In his rendering of this phrase, Onkelos adds the word מַאֲשֶׁר, oppression, and translates the word מַעֲכָס (literally, from under), as, from the midst of. Onkelos understands the term מַעֲכָס in this verse like its meaning in the verse (Shemos 23:5): מַעֲכָס עַל לוֹ פַּלְח. [the donkey...] crouching “under” its burden. In that verse the term under is not identifying the location of the donkey but describing the unbearable, crushing pressure that it is experiencing (see Bava Metzia 32a with Rashi). Similarly, Onkelos explains that מַעֲכָס מֵעַל פַּלְח means from amidst the crushing pressure of the Jewish people due to forced labor (Nefesh HaGer; cf. HaKesav VeHaKabbalah, Beurei Onkelos).

Onkelos’ rendering of this phrase reflects Or HaChaim’s approach, that here Hashem assured the Jewish people that the period of extremely harsh labor would end at that point, and their servitude would be eased (Me’at Tsori).

10. After causing their labor to be eased, Hashem will rescue the people from their servitude entirely (Or HaChaim).

11. Hashem’s arm, a metaphor for His action, will remain uplifted and continually acting against the Egyptians (Ramban; cf. Ibn Ezra).

12. Beurei Onkelos (Bereishis 2:15) notes that when the word מַעֲכָס, taking, refers to bringing the subject to higher levels of holiness, Onkelos uses the term bring close. This is in accordance with the explanation of Ibn Ezra and Ramban that this part of the verse refers to the Jewish people’s receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai.

13. According to some commentaries, the Aramaic words here are understood in the past tense: who took you out. The verse means that in the future you will know that I am Hashem, who had taken you out of Egypt (Nesinah LaGer; cf. Marpei Lashon; see Berachos 38a).

14. מִגּוֹ דְחוֹק פָּלְח, literally, raised My hand, refers to an oath, since when taking an oath one raises his
to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov; and I shall give it to you as a heritage — I am Hashem.’”

8So Moshe spoke accordingly to the Children of Israel; but they did not listen to Moshe, because of shortness of wind and hard work.

9Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, “Come and speak to Pharaoh, king of hand, often to grasp or gesture to some holy item (see Bereishis 24:2; Shevuos 38b; Ibn Ezra; Ramban, Devarim 32:40). Here, Hashem swears by His own Word. Rashi writes that Hashem swore by His Throne, i.e., His Sovereignty (Gur Aryeh; see also below, 17:16 with note 20, and Ramban, Devarim ibid.).

15.“Shortness of wind” is a sign of distress. Due to their intense distress, they were unable to accept Moshe’s words of consolation (Rashi, with Mizrahi). Marpei Lashon writes that Onkelos understood the phrase similarly; see, however, following note.

16. According to Nefesh HaGer, Onkelos’ words, they did not accept from Moshe, mean that that they no longer believed his message of redemption. Although at first they did believe him (above, 4:31), when they saw that their labor and distress only increased since his coming, they stopped believing him. This is what Onkelos means with the added words, because of the labor “that was hard upon them” (see Rashbam; cf. Ramban; see also above, 5:21 note 26, for other approaches, see Beurei Onkelos, Parshegen, Met’ut Tzori).

17. I.e., into the city (Chizkuni); or, into the royal palace itself (Ibn Ezra).
Egypt, that he send the Children of Israel from his land.”

12 Moshe spoke before Hashem, saying, “Behold, the Children of Israel have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me? And I have blocked lips!”

13 Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Aharon and commanded them regarding the Children of Israel — with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and command that he send the Children of Israel from his land.”

12. Moshe spoke before Hashem, saying, “Behold, the Children of Israel did not heed me, so how will Pharaoh heed me?” And furthermore, I am heavy of speech.”

13. So Hashem spoke with Moshe and to Aharon — and He commanded them to be messengers to the Children of Israel, R’ Avraham ben HaRambam writes that whenever Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon, He spoke to both of them simultaneously at different levels. Moshe was the greatest of prophets and his communication with Hashem was direct and close; Aharon was not as great as Moshe, and he received the same prophecy, but on his level. Accordingly, when the verse speaks of Hashem speaking to both of them, Onkelos differentiates between the two and writes בפיו. Moreover, Hashem spoke “with” Moshe and “to” Aharon (see above, note 1).

[According to Rashi (Yaviakra 1:1), whenever the Torah says that Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, it means that Hashem spoke to Moshe and instructed him to relay the prophecy to Aharon.]
and regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

14. These are the heads of their fathers’ houses: The sons of Reuven, the firstborn of Israel: Chanoch and Pallu, Chetzron and Carmi; these are the families of Reuven. 15. The sons of Shimon: Yemuel, Yamin, Ohad, Yachin, and Tzochar; and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Shimon. 16. And these are the names of the sons of Levi.

20. Rashi to Bereishis 50:16 writes that this verse means that Hashem sent them as messengers to the Children of Israel and to Pharaoh. Pas’shegen there writes that Onkelos’ word הַמִּצְרִים reflects this explanation. [Here, however, Rashi writes that Hashem commanded them certain matters regarding Pharaoh and the redemption of the Children of Israel, which the Torah will expand upon below, beginning with v. 29.]

One might wonder about Onkelos’ explanation that Moshe and Aharon were sent as messengers to Pharaoh and to the Jewish people: We know what Moshe and Aharon were commanded to tell Pharaoh, i.e., to allow the Jewish people to leave Egypt. But what was the message that they were sent to tell the Jewish people? The Brisker Rav, R’ Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, explains that Hashem made it clear above (v. 7) that the ultimate goal of the Exodus was not simply for the Jewish people to be free from Egyptian servitude, but rather, for them to become Hashem’s nation. This, then, was the message that Moshe and Aharon were sent to convey to the Jewish people, that together with their redemption they must accept upon themselves to be the Nation of Hashem (Toras Brisk).

21. Moshe and Aharon were descendants of Levi, but before giving Levi’s genealogy, the Torah presents that of his older brothers, Reuven and Shimon (Rashi).

22. See Rashi to Bereishis 46:10 with Gur Aryeh.
The sons of Levi: Machli and Amram; these were the families of Levi, in order of their birth.

17 The sons of Gershon: Livni and Shimi, according to their families.  
18 The sons of Kehas: Amram, Yitzhar, Chevron, and Uziel; the years of Kehas’s life were one hundred and thirty-three years.  
19 The sons of Merari: Machli and Mushi; these were the families of Levi, in order of their birth.

23. The Torah mentions the lifespan of Levi so that we can calculate how long the Jews were actually enslaved in Egypt, as follows: Yaakov was 84 when he married (Rashi to Bereishis 29:21), and we can presume that Levi, his third son, was born three years into his marriage, when he was 87. The Jews came to Egypt when Yaakov was 130 (Bereishis 47:9), so Levi was 43 years old at the time. Now, the Torah indicates that the Jews’ enslavement began once all of Yosef’s brothers had died (above, 1:6–10), which is the same as saying that it began once Levi died, since he outlived all his brothers (Seder Olam Rabbah 3). With our verse telling us that Levi died at age 137, we can calculate that the enslavement began 94 years after the Jews came to Egypt (137 – 43 = 94). And since they were in Egypt for a total of 210 years (see next note), it emerges that the enslavement lasted for 116 years [210 – 94 = 116] (Rashi; Riva).
The families of Korach.

20. Amram took Yocheved, his aunt, as a wife for himself, and she bore to him Aharon and Moshe; the years of Amram's life were one hundred and thirty-seven years.


23. Aharon took Elisheva daughter of Amminadav, the sister of Nachshon, as a wife; and she bore to him Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Isamar.

24. The sons of Korach: Assir, Elkanah, and Aviasaf; these were the families of Korach.

25. Though Onkelos generally renders ריה, took, as רבד (led) when referring to the taking of people, he uses ריכה when referring to “taking” in marriage (see above, 4:20 note 28).

26. Elsewhere in Chumash, the Hebrew term דודה means, his father's brother's wife (see, e.g., Vayikra 18:14 with Onkelos). Here, though, it means his father's sister, as Kehas (Amram's father) was Levi's son, and Yocheved was Levi's daughter (above, 2:1) (Rashi with Mitzrahi).

[Chumash, Bamidbar 27. This is the same Nachshon who later became the leader of the tribe of Yehudah (Bamidbar 1:7). The Torah mentions that he was Elisheva's brother to teach that when marrying a woman, one should check the traits of her brothers (Rashi).]
25 Elazar, son of Aharon, took for himself the daughters of Putiel as his wife, and she bore to him Pinchas; these were the leaders of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families. 26 This was the Aharon and Moshe to whom Hashem said, “Take the Children of Israel out from the land of Egypt, according to their legions.”

27 They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take the Children of Israel out of from Egypt; this is Moshe and Aharon.

28 And it was on the day when Hashem spoke to Moshe in the land Potipher’s wife (Bereishis 39:7-12) (Rashi; cf. Ibn Ezra).

29. I.e., they should leave Egypt grouped according to their tribes (Rashi; cf. Ramban to 12:51).

30. They remained steadfast in their mission and in their righteousness from beginning to end (Rashi).
of Egypt. 29 Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "I am Hashem. Speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, everything that I speak to you."

30 Moshe said before Hashem, "Behold! I have blocked lips, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?"

7.

1 Hashem said to Moshe, "See, I have given you as a master over Pharaoh, and Aharon your brother shall be your spokesman. You shall speak everything that I shall command you, in the land of Egypt, — in the land of Egypt,

29. התוות יא ובשש וכרופו — that Hashem spoke WITH Moshe, saying:

“Behold! I have blocked lips, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?"

30. ארא ומשה שוכ יא — Moshe said before Hashem:

“Behold! I am HEAVY OF SPEECH, and Pharaoh HEED ME?!”

7.

1. — Hashem said to Moshe, — See, I HAVE APPOINTED YOU a master over Pharaoh, — and Aharon your brother shall be your spokesman.

2. — You shall speak everything that

31. This is the very same command mentioned above (v. 11), but since the Torah interrupted its narrative so as to trace the ancestry of Moshe and Aharon (see above, note 21), it now repeats itself to reorient the reader (Rashi; cf. Ramban).

32. This is the same statement as in v. 12; it is repeated here on account of the interruption mentioned above (ibid.).

1. The Hebrew word יְצַוָּת, literally, I have placed you, sometimes refers to promoting someone to a new position or social station (see Rashi to Bereishtis 41:41). Onkelos here accordingly translates it as בָּדָא, I have appointed you.

Moshe would show his mastery over Pharaoh by bringing makkos and affliction upon him (Rashi).

2. The Hebrew word for the term, your spokesman, is נוֹבִיא, whose root is נבא. Although this root is usually translated as "prophecy," in a broader sense it refers
I shall command you, and Aharon your brother shall speak with Pharaoh, that he should send the Children of Israel from his land. But I shall harden Pharaoh’s heart and I shall multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh will not listen to you, and I shall put My hand upon Egypt; and I shall take out My legions — My people, the Children of Israel — from the land of Egypt, with great judgments. And Egypt shall know that I am Hashem, to oration in general; the prophet is called a אֲדָמָה because he orates words of rebuke to the people (see Rashi).

For discussion of the Aramaic term, וְאָדָם, and of Aharon’s role as Moshe’s spokesman, see above, 4:16 note 23.

3. Hashem knew that Pharaoh would never wholeheartedly repent. He therefore hardened Pharaoh’s heart to withstand the makkos and refuse to release the Jews under duress, so that He would inflict many signs and wonders against him, and the Jewish people would thus recognize His might (Rashi; see further, Ramban).

4. Ordinarily, when the Torah refers to Hashem’s Hand inflicting punishment or death, Onkelos presents it as His strike (see, e.g., below, 9:3). However, in verses that describe Hashem’s Hand as striking the Egyptians, Onkelos presents it as מֵהֶלֶק, a stroke of might. This is in accordance with the Gemara (Berachos 58a), which teaches that the מֵהֶלֶק of Hashem (mentioned in
when I stretch out My hand over Egypt; and I shall take the Children of Israel out from among them."

6 Moshe and Aharon did as Hashem commanded them; so they did. 7 Moshe was eighty years old and Aharon was eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

8 Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon, saying, "When Pharaoh will speak to you, saying, 'Provide a wonder for yourselves,' you shall say to Aharon, 'Take your staff

I Divrei HaYamim 29:11) refers to His deliverance of the Jewish people from the Egyptian bondage (Parshegen to 9:16 below; see also Nefesh HaGer to 8:5 below). See further, Onkelos to Devarim 33:3.

5. Onkelos consistently renders the Hebrew expression ר יי, stretching out the hand, as raising the hand (see also below, 14:16,19). Onkelos similarly renders the Hebrew expression ל תב, outstretched arm (Devarim 4:34) as ש ו, upraised arm (Parshegen).

6. They never deviated from Hashem's instruction that Moshe should speak and Aharon should convey his words to Pharaoh (Maharil Diskin).

7. Since the verse says י י, Hashem said (not י י, Hashem spoke), Onkelos renders it "to Moshe and to Aharon," not "with Moshe ..." See above, 6:2 note 1; 6:15 note 19.

8. The Torah uses the word יי, which Onkelos usually translates as קבוס, wonder (see, e.g., v. 3 above). Here, though, he renders it קק, a sign. This is because Pharaoh was not asking Moshe to perform a wonder

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and cast it down before Pharaoh — it will become a snake!”

Moshe and Aharon came to Pharaoh and they did so, as Hashem had commanded; Aharon cast down his staff before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a snake.

Pharaoh, too, summoned his wise men and sorcerers, and they, too — the necromancers of Egypt — did so with their incantations.

Each one cast down his staff and they became snakes; and the staff of Aharon swallowed their staffs.

for its own sake, but as a sign that Hashem had the power to alter nature (see Rashi with Be’er Yitzchak and Lehet Bahir; see, similarly, Lechem VeSimlah; cf. Nefesh HaGer).

Elucidation of the Aramaic עירא as snake follows Rashi’s interpretation of the Hebrew עירא (see further, Mizrachi and HaKesav VeHaKabbalah; see also Targum Yonasan here; cf. R. S. R. Hirsch).

The Aramaic עירא reflects that the actions of sorcerers are done in silence, like שעיק, deaf-mutes (Nesinah LaGer to Bereishis 41:8). This silence finds further expression at the end of our verse, in the Aramaic word שעיק, with their incantations, as the literal meaning of this word is with their whisperings.

See further, note 26.

11. Onkelos translates both the Hebrew word עירא as necromancer, and the Hebrew word עירא in this one, as sorcerers, in keeping with his translation of these terms elsewhere in the Torah (see, e.g., Onkelos to 22:17 below, and to Bereishis 41:8). [The Torah uses two different words because each of them expresses a different type of sorcery (see Rabbeinu Meyuchas), or may be a more general term that encompasses all types of sorcery (see Ramban; see further, Lechem VeSimlah).] Rashi to Bereishis (41:8), however, maintains that עירא are necromancers.

12. After Aharon’s snake turned back into a staff, it swallowed all the others (Rashi).
Pharaoh’s heart became strong and he did not listen to them, as Hashem had spoken.

Hashem said to Moshe, “Pharaoh’s heart is heavy, he has refused to send the people. Go to Pharaoh in the morning — behold! he goes out to the water — and you shall stand opposite him at the bank of the Canal, and the staff that was turned into a snake you shall take in your hand. You shall say to him, ‘Hashem, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying:

Pharaoh’s heart became strong — and he did not heed them, as Hashem had spoken.

Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn, — he has refused to send the people.

Go to Pharaoh in the morning — behold! he goes out to the water — and you shall stand by to meet him at the bank of the Nile River — and the staff that was turned into a snake you shall take in your hand.

You shall say to him, ‘Hashem, the God of the Jews, has sent me to you, saying:

13. [Literally (in both Hebrew and Aramaic), heavy.] Our text of Onkelos reads יקר, is stubborn, which follows the version endorsed by Rashi. He explicitly rejects the alternate version of ישן, has become stubborn, asserting that it cannot be reconciled with the conjugation of the Hebrew רב. See also Radak.

Ibn Ezra, though, interprets the Hebrew word to mean, became stubborn. Mitzvah further notes that since the next clause says he has refused to send the people, in past tense, our clause must mean that Pharaoh’s heart has become stubborn, also in past tense, since that is what caused his refusal. See also Marpe Lashon.

14. See above, 2:4 note 7, regarding the Aramaic יקר.

15. See above, 1:22 note 24, regarding the term יקר.

16. This would seem to refer to the staff that Aharon had thrown down before Pharaoh, presuming that when the Torah said (v. 10) that it turned into a serpent, it means a snake (see above, note 9; Targum Yonason). Another possibility is that our verse is referring to the staff of Moshe, which had turned into a snake at the Burning Bush (4:3 above; see Alshich). [Notably, several commentaries maintain that Aharon had thrown Moshe’s staff down before Pharaoh, so these two staffs are actually one and the same. See Ibn Ezra to v. 10; HaKesav VeHaKabbalah and Malbim here. Cf. Haamek Davar to v. 9.]

17. See above, 1:15 note 15.
Send out My people that they may serve Me in the wilderness — but behold, you have not listened up to now. 17 So says Hashem, ‘Through this shall you know that I am Hashem.’ Behold, I shall strike with the staff that is in my hand upon the waters that are in the Canal, and they shall turn to blood.

18 The fish-life that is in the Canal will die and the Canal shall become foul. Egypt will grow weary trying to drink water from the Canal.’”

19 Hashem said to Moshe, “Say to Aharon, ‘Take your staff and send me to you, saying!’

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sent me to you, saying: — Send out My people that they may serve BEFORE Me in the wilderness — but behold, you have not HEEDED up to now.”

17. So says Hashem, — Behold, I shall strike with the staff that is in my hand upon the waters that are in the RIVER, and they shall turn to blood.

18. The fish that are in the RIVER will die — and the RIVER shall become foul. THE EGYPTIANS will grow weary trying to drink water from the RIVER.”

19. Hashem said to Moshe, — “Say to Aharon, ‘Take your staff and the fish that are in the river will die, in plural form. This is in line with his general approach to such phrases. For example, in Bereishis 32:4 the Torah says ox and donkey, referring to the species as a whole, and Onkelos renders it זכרון וְיִנֵּבָא מַיָּהּ מִן הַמְּדָם — THE EGYPTIANS will grow weary trying to drink water from the RIVER.”

— Onkelos, 2:2, note 2.

21. That is, they would grow weary from seeking a way to make its waters fit to drink (Rashi; cf. Sforno).

22. Since the Nile had protected Moshe when he was cast into it, it was not fitting that he should be the one...
and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt: over their rivers, over their canals, and over all their gatherings of water, and they shall become blood; there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, and in the wood and in the stone.'"

20 Moshe and Aharon did so, as Hashem had commanded. He held the staff aloft and struck the water that was in the Canal in the presence of Pharaoh to devastate it by turning it to blood. Aharon did this instead of Moshe. For a similar reason, it was Aharon who caused the Nile to breed frogs at the onset of the second makkah [see v. 28] (Rashi).

23. Although the verse says, ים מצרי, the waters of Egypt, Onkelos renders it as ים מצריים, the waters of the Egyptians, as indicated by the continuation of the verse, which reads, over "their" rivers, over "their" canals, and so forth. Onkelos thus seems to support the view of Rashbam and Ramban (to 8:18) that the first three makkos did not affect the land of Goshen, where the Jews were concentrated (cf. Ibn Ezra to v. 24). Additionally, the Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 9:10) teaches that the water owned by the Jews did not turn to blood. Thus, it was only the waters of the Egyptians that turned to blood, not all the waters in Egypt. An alternate version of Onkelos, however, reads just ימי מצריים, the waters of Egypt. See also below, 8:2 with note 1.

24. Although the literal meaning of המקוים 믿מי is their gatherings of water, Onkelos consistently translates the phrase המקוים 믿מיו as "a place of" gatherings of water. This seems to be based on Bereishis 1:10, where the Torah says that the קיים 믿מי of קיים were called קיים 믿מי, seas; the term קיים refers to the floor of the sea (which contains the sea water), not the sea water itself (see Rabbeinu Bachya loc. cit.). Similarly, then, the term המקוים 믿מיו here refers to the containers of the gathered water rather than the gathered water itself.

25. Onkelos clarifies that when the verse says that the waters in the wood and in the stones would turn to blood, it is referring to the waters contained in vessels made from these materials, not to water particles that might be found within the wood and stone themselves (see Rashi with Sifrei Chachamim; cf. Haamek Davar).
and in the presence of his servants, and all the water that was in the Canal turned to blood.  
21. The fish-life that was in the Canal died and the Canal became foul; Egypt could not drink water from the Canal, and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt.  

22. The necromancers of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; so Pharaoh's heart became strong and he did not listen to them, as Hashem had spoken.  
23. Pharaoh turned away and came into his house. He did not take this to heart either.  
24. All of the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — All of the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — and in the presence of Pharaoh and in the presence of his servants, and in the presence of his servants, — and all the water that was in the River turned to blood.

21. THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — and the River became foul; all the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from the RIVER, — and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt.

22. THE SORCERERS of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; — so Pharaoh's heart became strong — and he did not HEED THEM, — and he did not HEED THEM, — as Hashem had spoken.

23. Pharaoh turned away — Pharaoh turned away — and came into his house. — All of the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — and he did not take this to heart either.

24. THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — and THE RIVER became foul; — and THE RIVER became foul; — all of the Egyptians dug roundabout THE CANAL — and all the water that was in THE RIVER turned to blood.

21. THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — and the River became foul; all the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from the RIVER, — and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt.

22. THE SORCERERS of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; — so Pharaoh's heart became strong — and he did not HEED THEM, — and he did not HEED THEM, — as Hashem had spoken.

23. Pharaoh turned away — Pharaoh turned away — and came into his house. — All of the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — and he did not take this to heart either.

24. THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — and THE RIVER became foul; — and THE RIVER became foul; — all of the Egyptians dug roundabout THE CANAL — and all the water that was in THE RIVER turned to blood.

21. THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — and the River became foul; all the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt.

22. THE SORCERERS of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; — so Pharaoh's heart became strong — and he did not HEED THEM, — and he did not HEED THEM, — as Hashem had spoken.

23. Pharaoh turned away — Pharaoh turned away — and came into his house. — All of the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — and he did not take this to heart either.

24. THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — and THE RIVER became foul; — and THE RIVER became foul; — all of the Egyptians dug roundabout THE CANAL — and all the water that was in THE RIVER turned to blood.

21. THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — THE FISH THAT WERE IN THE RIVER DIED, — and the River became foul; all the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — THE EGYPTIANS could not drink water from THE RIVER, — and the blood was throughout the land of Egypt.

22. THE SORCERERS of Egypt did the same by means of their incantations; — so Pharaoh's heart became strong — and he did not HEED THEM, — and he did not HEED THEM, — as Hashem had spoken.

23. Pharaoh turned away — Pharaoh turned away — and came into his house. — All of the Egyptians dug roundabout the Canal — and he did not take this to heart either.
28. The Hebrew means, from the waters of the river; but Onkelos clarifies that only the waters that were in the river were undrinkable; the waters drawn roundabout the river were fit for drinking [see Ibn Ezra (Lechem VoSimlah)].

29. The Hebrew word refers to a set of seven days, so the phrase in plural for the sake of simplicity.
and they shall ascend and come into your house and into your bedroom and upon your bed, and into the house of your servants and of your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. 29? And into you and into your people and into all your servants will the frogs ascend.’”

8.

1. Hashem said to Moshe, “Say to Aharon, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals, and over the ponds, and raise up the frogs over the land of Egypt.’”

2. Aharon stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frog-inestation ascended and covered your bread-filled ovens, and your kneading bowls, and your house and into your bedroom and upon your bed, and into your people and into all your servants will the frogs ascend.'”

8.

1. Here again, as in 7:19, Onkelos renders the Hebrew phrase as your bread-filled ovens, the waters of Egypt, as your kneading bowls follows Nesinah LaGer to 12:34 below (see also Binyamin Musfaya cited in Lechem VeSimlah). Others explain that it means your bread-filled ovens (Sechel Tov; Aruch בָּשֵׁל טוב; or your doughs (Nefesh HaGer to 12:34 and Me’at Tzori here, based on Onkelos to Bamidbar 15:20). 34. The frogs entered the Egyptians’ intestines (Rashi).
the land of Egypt. The necromancers did the same through their incantations, and they brought up the frogs upon the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aharon and said, “Entreat Hashem that He remove the frogs from me and my people, and I shall send out the people that they may bring offerings to Hashem.”

Moshe said to Pharaoh, “Glorify yourself over me — for when should I entreat for you, singular form. Simply understood, this phrase refers to the multitude of frogs, or to the species as a whole, as a single entity (see Rashi; Lekach Tov; Ibn Ezra). Onkelos apparently agrees with this, and renders it in plural in line with his usual approach for such terminology; see also 7:18 above with note 20. [See, however, v. 12 below with note 13.]

According to Rashi, the specific use of the Hebrew word יִֽתְפָּאֵר, from the root יָפָר, abundant, indicates that Pharaoh was asking Moshe and Aharon to pray profusely, i.e., to entreat Hashem. Onkelos, however, translates it as יִֽתְפָּאֵר, which is the basic Aramaic term for “pray.” Apparently, Onkelos maintains that יִֽתְפָּאֵר is simply another term for prayer (see Nefesh HaGer to Bereishis 25:21; see further, Yalkut Shimoni, Va’eschanan §811).

4. This is Onkelos’ rendition of the Hebrew יִֽתְפָּאֵר, glorify yourself. As Rashi explains, Moshe was challenging Pharaoh to try and show his cleverness by asking Moshe for a display of Hashem’s might that, to Pharaoh’s mind, was impossible (see R’ David Tzvi Hoffman). The Aramaic יִֽתְפָּאֵר, literally, ask for yourself, is an idiomatic way of saying, “Go ahead and ask” (see Lechem VeSimlah); and the word יִֽתְפָּאֵר, might, is often used by Onkelos in reference to Hashem displaying His power against the Egyptians (Nefesh HaGer; see above, 7:4 note 4; cf. Marpei Lashon; see Agra D’Kallah for a Kabbalistic approach).

5. This is how Onkelos renders the Hebrew יִֽתְפָּאֵר, up on...
for your servants, and for your people, to excise the frogs from you and from your houses. Only in the Canal shall they remain.” ٨He said, “For tomorrow.” And he said, “As you say—so that you will know that there is none like Hashem, our God. The frogs will depart from you and your houses, and from your servants and your people; only in the Canal shall they remain.”٩

٨Moshe and Aharon left Pharaoh’s presence; Moshe cried out to Hashem concerning the frogs me (Nesinah LaGer; first approach); Moshe meant that Pharaoh should impose a time upon him (see end of next note).

6. Onkelos understands that the Hebrew מַעַן, only in the river shall they remain, cannot mean that all the frogs that were now inundating Egypt would make their way back to the river, since the Torah later tells us that they died (v. 9). It means, rather, that only frogs that are currently in the river would remain (see Me’at Tzori; see also Sforno and Malbim to v. 8).

Moshe was not saying that he would pray for the end of the plague and it would immediately end. He meant that he would pray immediately, but the plague would end only later, at whatever time Pharaoh would choose (Rashi). [This would clearly show that the plague was from Hashem and not due to Moshe’s sorcery, since sorcerers cannot cast spells with a delayed effect (Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) to v. 6; see also Or HaChaim.)]

7. [See previous note.] The Hebrew וְיָאמְר, and he cried out, is among the verbs used by the Torah to connote prayer (see Devarim Rabbah 2:1).
that He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. 9Hashem carried out the word of Moshe, and the frogs died — from the houses, from the courtyards, and from the fields. 10They piled them up into heaps and heaps, and the land became foul. 11Pharaoh saw that there had been a relief, and kept making his heart stubborn. He did not listen to them, as Hashem had spoken. 12Hashem said to Moshe, “Say to Aharon, ’Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land;
The lice, throughout the land of Egypt. [11]

The necromancers did the same with their incantations to draw forth the lice, but they could not. And the lice-infestation was on man and beast. [15] The sorcerers said to Pharaoh, when discussing infestations that are typical of lice, and we know from Onkelos that it shall become a lice-infestation throughout the land of Egypt. [12]

11. Throughout this passage, Onkelos does not differentiate between the Hebrew נפשו, the lice, and הבו, the lice-infestation (see Rashi to v. 13), rendering both as כִּנִּים. This Aramaic word is in the singular form, and thus likely means a lice-infestation, referring to the mass of lice as a single entity (see also Targum to Tehillim 105:31). This is the reverse of Onkelos’ usual approach of translating references to a species in singular form as though they were in plural; see note 3 above.] In contrast, Targum Yonasan here renders הבו as לְמַעְלָת קָלֵמָה, lice, in plural form (see also Berachos 57b and Niddah 20b).

Notably, Rabbeinu Tam (cited in Or Zarua, Sec. 2, Ch. §31) uses Onkelos here to prove that the Hebrew word הבו means lice rather than fleas: Since the Gemara (Berachos and Niddah ibid.) refers to lice when discussing infestations that are typical of lice, and we know from Onkelos that it shall become a lice-infestation throughout the land of Egypt, it follows that הבו are lice. This identification is critical for the proper application of the Gemara’s ruling with regard to killing הבו on Shabbos (see Shabbos 12a and 107a; see further, Tosafos, Shabbos 12a s.v. מְבָא; Or HaChaim to v. 13; Marpe Lashon here).

12. I.e., they too struck the dust (Ibn Ezra; see Ramban for a further approach).

13. They tried to produce lice by way of demonic incantations, but demons have no power over creatures that are smaller than a grain of barley, such as lice (Rashi).
It is a finger of God! But Pharaoh’s heart became hardened and he did not listen to them, as Hashem had spoken.

16 Hashem said to Moshe, “Arise early in the morning and station yourself before Pharaoh — behold, he goes out to the water — and you shall say to him, ‘So said Hashem: Send out My people that they may serve Me.’ For if you will not send out My people, behold, I shall incite against you, and against your servants, your people, and your houses, the mixture of wild beasts; [O]nkelos Elucidated — “It is a STRIKE FROM BEFORE HASHEM!” [14] — “It is a STRIKE FROM BEFORE HASHEM!” [14] — But Pharaoh’s heart became hardened and he did not HEED THEM, because Pharaoh and his magicians hard of heart and they did not LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF MOSHE [15].

16. — Hashem said to Moshe, “Arise early in the morning, and station yourself before Pharaoh and behold, he goes out to the water — and you shall say to him, ‘So said Hashem: Send out My people, and they may serve ME.’

17. — For if you will not send out My people, behold, I shall dispatch against you, and against your servants, your people, and your houses, the mixture of wild beasts; [16]...
and the houses of Egypt shall be filled with the mixture of wild beasts, and even the ground upon which they are. 18 And on that day I shall set apart the land of Goshen upon which My people stands, that there shall be no mixture of wild beasts there; so that you will know that I am Hashem in the midst of the land. 19 I shall bring about redemption — between My people and your people — tomorrow this sign will come about.’

17. In the Torah’s earlier record of Aharon raising his hand over the waters, in advance of the Plagues of Blood and Frogs, Onkelos translated the word יפרשת סאת in the land of Goshen as Egyptians, rather than Egypt, thus expressing that the Jews were not affected by these plagues (see 7:19 note 23; and v. 2 above, note 1). Here, though, he translates the phrase יפרשת סאת as the houses of Egypt, even though the next verses clearly state that the Jews would not be affected by the Plague of Wild Beasts! Parshegen suggests that Onkelos means to stress that the wild animals would not merely affect the Egyptians in their own homes; rather, even if the Egyptians ran into empty buildings, the wild animals would pursue them there. An alternate version of Onkelos, however, reads יפרשת סאת, the houses of the Egyptians.

18. This version of Onkelos is a direct translation of the Hebrew יפרשת סאת, with the word, stands, connoting that the Jewish people yet tarries in the land of Goshen (Sechel Tov; cf. Malbim). An alternate version of Onkelos reads יפרשת סאת, upon which my people dwells.

19. Onkelos clarifies that Hashem’s statement that He is “in the midst of the land” means that He rules over the land and orchestrates its events. As Ramban explains (here and to 13:16 below), this is to counter those who imagine (as Pharaoh did — see Sechel Tov; cf. Malbim) that Hashem dwells in the heavens and is disconnected from events on earth (Shaarei Aharon). See also Sechel Tov.

20. Onkelos, like Ramban here, understands that the Hebrew word יפרשת סאת means redemption. The idea of “redemption” is to exchange one thing for another; for example, one “redeems” a consecrated item by transferring its sanctity to another item. The phrase יפרשת סאת, פְּרֵישׁבְּיוֹמִים יִכְּבֶּרֶת and I will bring about redemption

Hashem did so, and a severe mixture of wild beasts came to the house of Pharaoh and to the house of his servants; and throughout the land of Egypt the land was being destroyed because of the mixture of wild beasts.

Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aharon and said, “Go — slaughter sacrifices before your God in the land.” Moshe said, “It is not proper to do so, for we will offer the abomination of Egypt between My people and your people” thus means that instead of this plague befalling the Jews, it would be visited upon the Egyptians. The Jews needed redemption from this makkah in particular because it was a traveling plague, since wild animals roam, and it would have been natural for them to enter Goshen. Hashem incited the animals against the Egyptians to save the Jews (Shemos Rabbah 11:2, as explained by Yechezkel Tzvi and Eitz Yosef; see Ramban). A number of Rishonim, however, understand the Hebrew term מִפְּנֵי to mean distinction. Thus, Hashem is saying here that He will make a distinction "between My people and your people" (Ibn Ezra; Rashbam; see Rashi).

Onkelos interprets the Torah’s statement that the mixture of wild beasts was כבד, heavy, to mean that it was מִתְחַבָּלַת, severe. This is apparently unlike R’ Saadiah Gaon and Sechel Tov, who explain that it was vast in number which would be ערב in Aramaic] (see Shaarei Aharon).

Rashi cites Onkelos in support of his contention that the Hebrew כבד is not to be understood in future tense, will be destroyed, since the animals had already come and begun the destruction (see Mizrachi).

Also, Onkelos here does not interpret the word יִרְאָת, the land, as a reference to the inhabitants of the land, unlike his approach in numerous other places in the Torah (e.g., Bereishis 41:47 and 57). This is in keeping with Sechel Tov, Abarbanel, and Or HaChaim, who explain that the animals indeed destroyed everything in their path, including trees and vegetation (Shaarei Aharon).

23. I.e., in Egypt; I am not granting your request to go into the wilderness (Rashi).

24. Onkelos’ translation is consistent with Rashi’s first explanation of the Hebrew phrase מִיָּרָע־מִצְרָיִם, the abomination of Egypt. The Torah refers to the false god of the Egyptians as an abomination.

Moreh Nevuchim (3:46) cites Onkelos when he

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to Hashem, our God; behold, if we were to slaughter the abomination of Egypt in their sight, will they not stone us? 23 We will go on a three-day journey in the wilderness, and slaughter to Hashem, our God, as He will tell us.

24 Pharaoh said, “I will send you and you shall slaughter to Hashem, your God, in the wilderness; proposes that the reason the Torah tells us to bring offerings to Hashem specifically from sheep and cattle is in order to counter the attitudes of the ancient idolaters. He writes that, according to Onkelos, the Egyptians deified the Aries constellation (מִלְחַם), and they therefore forbade the slaughter of sheep, and hated shepherds (see Bereishis 44:16). He adds that most idolaters were repulsed by the idea of slaughtering cattle. See similarly, Ibn Ezra here.

Me’at Tzori notes, though, that Onkelos does not say “the sheep [קרית] that the Egyptians worship,” but rather “the animal [שבעות] that the Egyptians worship.” Since שבעות is a general term for domesticated animals, Onkelos implies that the Egyptians worshiped both sheep and cattle. Me’at Tzori therefore suggests that Onkelos follows Zohar (Vol. 3, p. 251b), who maintains that the Egyptians indeed deified all domesticated animals, and that is why Hashem killed the firstborn of all such animals (see below, 12:29).

25. The Hebrew phrase that we will slaughter to Hashem, our God, could have been taken to mean that the Jews would slaughter only those particular, individual animals that the Egyptians had worshiped. Onkelos therefore clarifies that Moshe meant that they would take from that type of animal to bring as offerings. Onkelos uses the words הדוג יקבל, מִנֵּה הָא נְדוּד יִקְרֵא, from it we shall take, based on 10:26 below, where Moshe insists that the Jews would take all of their livestock with them into the wilderness, saying: יְבָא מִן נַחֲלָת הָאָרֶץ יִקָּרֵא, for “from it we shall take” to serve Hashem, our God; see Onkelos there. That verse shows that the Jews would be slaughtering those kinds of animals, not specifically those that had been worshiped by the Egyptians (see Lechem VeSimlah).

26. The simple understanding of the Hebrew יִהְמוּר לְמִרְגְּמָנָא, will they not stone us, is that it refers to death by stoning. But this cannot be taken at face value, since it would be impossible for the Egyptians to stone all the Jews to death (Beurei Onkelos), and Moshe was certain of Hashem’s protection in any event (R’ Avigdor Nebenzahl, cited by Parshegen). Onkelos therefore
only do not go far off — entreat for me!"

25 Moshe said, "Behold! I leave you and I shall entreat Hashem — and the mixture of wild beasts will depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people — tomorrow. Only let Pharaoh not continue to mock, by not sending out the people to slaughter to Hashem."

26 Moshe left Pharaoh's presence and entreated Hashem. 27 Hashem did in accordance with Moshe's word and He removed the mixture of wild beasts from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained.

clarifies that Moshe meant that the Egyptians would want to stone them.

Rashbam, however, explains Moshe's statement to mean that the Egyptians would hurl stones not to kill the Jews, but out of contempt for them.

27. See note 3 above regarding the meaning of the Hebrew word עזרה.

An alternate version of Onkelos reads עלixo ךְּלָא הָאָצַּרְוָא לאָ חָרוֹקְוָא בְּלִיּוֹ — only do not go far off — PRAY for me!27

25. — Moshe said, — Behold! I leave you and I shall entreat Hashem — and I shall PRAY BEFORE Hashem, offer a sacrifice and He removed the mixture of wild beasts from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people — tomorrow. Only let Pharaoh not continue TO DECEIVE, — by not sending out the people to slaughter sacrifices BEFORE Hashem."


27. Hashem did in accordance with Moshe's word and He removed the mixture of wild beasts from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained.29

28. Onkelos consistently renders the Hebrew root בְּדִיל as 'סבְדוֹהִי וּמֵע — to slaughter, sacrifices."

29. Hashem removed the wild animals, and did not
28 But Pharaoh made his heart stubborn even this time, and he did not send out the people.  

9. 

1. Hashem said to Moshe, “Come to Pharaoh and speak to him,” So said Hashem, the God of the Hebrews: Send out My people that they may serve Me. 

2. For if you refuse to send out, and you continue to hold them; 

3. behold, the hand of Hashem is on your livestock that are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the cattle, and on the flock — have them die like the frogs, so that the Egyptians would not benefit from their hides (Rashi). 

1. See above, 1:15 note 15. 

2. In earlier verses in the parashah (above, 7:4-5), Onkelos presented references to Hashem’s hand as הַזֹּאת כִּדְנָן, a stroke of might, whereas Onkelos here renders הַזֹּאת כִּדְנָן פֲמַר יְיָ פֱלָהָפ דִיהוּדָאֵי, which is potentially more specific. This is because the earlier verses refer to the makkah as a whole that would affect the Egyptians themselves, whereas our verse introduces a specific makkah that would affect only the animals (Torah U’Peirushah). Alternatively, the Name of Hashem that appears in our verse follows, whereas Onkelos here renders מִן קֳדָם יְיָ קֳדָמָי שַׁלַּח יָו עַמִּי, even though he had promised to release them (v. 24), he did not fulfill his promise (Rashi). 

28. That is, even though he had promised to release them (v. 24), he did not fulfill his promise (Rashi).
and not a thing of all that belongs to the Children of Israel will die. ³Hashem has set an appointed time, saying: Tomorrow Hashem shall carry out this word in the land.' ⁴Hashem carried out this word on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died, and of the livestock of the Children of Israel not one died. ⁵Pharaoh sent messengers to survey the damage,⁶

a very severe epidemic. ⁴Hashem shall distinguish between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, and not a thing of all that belongs to the Children of Israel will die. ⁵Hashem has set an appointed time, saying: Tomorrow Hashem shall carry out this word in the land.' ⁶Hashem carried out this word on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died, and of the livestock of the Children of Israel not one died. ⁷Pharaoh sent messengers to survey the damage,

3. An alternate version of Onkelos reads בַּיּוֹמָא דְבָנְי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָא מָיְת, which means that not only would there be no death of animals among the Jews (as stated in verse 6 below), but even a part of their animals, such as a limb, would not lose its vitality (HaKesay VeHaKabbalah).

4. The Hebrew term רֶשֶׁת and the Aramaic שֶׁם, a thing, denote that not only would there be no death of animals among the Jews (as stated in verse 6 below), but even a part of their animals, such as a limb, rather than the entire animal (וְהִפְלזּ בְּיוֹמָא לְמֵימָר). But if it refers to a very severe death, it seems that these two versions reflect different understandings of the Aramaic שֶׁם, death. If it refers to the plague, it makes sense to call it severe. But if it refers to the actual death of the animals, then calling it severe implies that the animals would die in a severe manner, which was not necessarily the case. The verse means, rather, that the death would be widespread.

5. Onkelos here translates the Hebrew מַכְּה מִצְרִים as מַכְּה שֶׁמַּיְת מִצְרִים, the livestock of Egypt, rather than מַכְּה מִקְנִשֵּׁי, the livestock of the Egyptians, thus indicating that even the animals in Egypt that belonged to other nations died (Parshegen; see also Haamek Davar to v. 4 above).

וניהו לא-אמר וממנה ישראל ידר אחריהם וזכות בין פירעה ולא יזה לא מית מביניהםוורים דבר ה', והניח על לא ופרעה ולא שלח את-תנינו: מ

ויאמר יהוה ואל-אמרת ה' deps הקח禄כמלامة החנ宮

פשי וכנף לארץ מנשה אל-אמרת ה' חشاشة לא-מש ו sonra

ויהי מְפִיחָן וּמְנִשְׁרָפִים בְּכִבְשָׁן וּבְלע"ז אולבי"ש.

פשת ביבר וחק מדשא ושם לעמנים לעין פירעה: ויהי לאבקה

על כל ארץ מצרים בתוך על-הארץ 얼-ההמרה לשבת

ויהי ביבר וחק מדשא לע כל ארץ על-עד-על-עד השמיים

מי עגבעות כל ארץ מעבר: ותנינו: ותנו ה', ח'PlainText: Chumash Translation

and behold, of the livestock of Israel not even one had died — yet Pharaoh's heart became stubborn and he did not send out the people.

8Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon, "Take for yourselves your handfuls of kiln soot, and let Moshe hurl it heavenward before Pharaoh's eyes. It will become dust over the entire land of Egypt, and it will become boils erupting into blisters on man and beast throughout the land of Egypt." 10They took soot of the kiln, 7The Aramaic word כורס, furnace, appears in Daniel 3:6, where Rashi explains that it refers to a pit in which stones are burned and made into lime.

8Translation of הָאָבֶק עִל, as toward the heavens follows Mizrachi here, and Meturgeman (יעט וך). Others understand it to mean the peak of the heavens (Nesinah LaGer and Divrei Shaul to Bereishis 28:12).

9Although in everyday language the Hebrew word יָת עִל, as toward the heavens follows Mizrachi here, and Meturgeman (יעט וך). Others understand it to mean the peak of the heavens (Nesinah LaGer and Divrei Shaul to Bereishis 28:12).
and stood before Pharaoh, and Moshe threw it heavenward; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast. The necromancers could not stand before Moshe because of the boils, because the boils were on the necromancers and on all of Egypt. Hashem strengthened the heart of Pharaoh and he did not listen to them, as Hashem had spoken to Moshe.

Hashem spoke to Moshe, “Arise early in the morning and station yourself before Pharaoh; say to him, “Arise early in the morning and station yourself before Pharaoh;” — and stood before Pharaoh, and Moshe threw it heavenward; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast. — and Moshe threw it toward the heavens; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast.

— The sorcerers could not stand before Moshe — because of the boils. — and it became heat of blisters, spreading them on man and beast. — spreading them on man and beast.

11. — Arise early in the morning and station yourself before Pharaoh;” — and stood before Pharaoh, and Moshe threw it heavenward; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast.

— and Moshe threw it toward the heavens; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast.

— The sorcerers could not stand before Moshe — because of the boils. — and it became heat of blisters, spreading them on man and beast. — spreading them on man and beast.

12. — Arise early in the morning and station yourself before Pharaoh;” — and stood before Pharaoh, and Moshe threw it heavenward; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast. — and Moshe threw it toward the heavens; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast.

— The sorcerers could not stand before Moshe — because of the boils. — and it became heat of blisters, spreading them on man and beast. — spreading them on man and beast.

13. — Arise early in the morning and station yourself before Pharaoh;” — and stood before Pharaoh, and Moshe threw it heavenward; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast. — and Moshe threw it toward the heavens; and it became boils and blisters, erupting on man and beast.

— The sorcerers could not stand before Moshe — because of the boils. — and it became heat of blisters, spreading them on man and beast. — spreading them on man and beast.
כֹּֽה־א֠צּ
כִּי אִילּוּ רָצִיתִי, כְּשֶׁהָיְתָה יָדִי בְּמִקְנְךָ שֶׁהִכִּיתִים

any way (that the difference between Hashem and others is not severity to all the other people that they may serve)

my heart, and against your whole world.

to 7:27 above). Onkelos accordingly here translates it as כּוֹֽה־א֠צּ

So said Hashem, the God of the Hebrews: Send out My people that they may serve Me. 14 For this time I shall send all My plagues against your heart, and against your servants and your people, so that you shall know that there is none like Me in all the world. For now I could have sent My hand and stricken you and your people with the pestilence.

13. The essential meaning of the Hebrew Kavanaugh, plague (as in the word קָוָנוֹן, My plagues) is a strike (see Rashi to 7:27 above). Onkelos accordingly here translates it as כּוֹֽה־א֠צּ.

14. Onkelos renders the Hebrew קָוָנוֹן, like Me, as קָוָנוֹן, "that is" like Me (as opposed to כּוֹֽה־א֠צּ, like Me), to convey that the difference between Hashem and others is not merely quantitative, but rather that He is unlike them in any way (Lechem VeSimlah to v. 18). See further, note 23.

15. The meaning of Hashem’s statement, that there is none like Him in the world, is that He is its sole, absolute ruler, and no one can prevent Him from carrying out His Will. Hashem meant to counter Pharaoh’s misconception that He lacks the absolute power to affect matters in this world at His Will (Ramban to 13:16 below; Rabbeinu Bachya here; see also R’ S. R. Hirsch).

16. Onkelos clarifies that Hashem here is describing what He had almost done, not what He was still going to do or what he had already done (see Nefish LaGer and Devek To). Rashi similarly explains that Hashem was saying what He could have done (see Nefish LaGer).

17. The Aramaic word כּוֹֽה־א֠צּ has no Hebrew parallel. According to many commentators it is a grammatical “helping word” that implies that the action being described is a conditional one. Without this word, יהיה היה would mean literally, that I sent. The word כּוֹֽה־א֠צּ changes it to, that I “would have” sent (see Introduction of Nefesh HaGer).
and you would have been obliterated from the earth. However, on account of this have I left you standing: in order to show you My power and so that My Name may be declared throughout the world.

You still oppress My people, by not sending them out. Behold, at this time tomorrow I shall rain a very heavy hail, that there has never been like it in Egypt, and you would have been obliterated from the earth.

I inflicted upon the animals of Egypt, in order to show you My power, and so that THEY SHALL RECOUNT THE MIGHT OF MY NAME throughout the world.

— HaGer, Mahadura Tinyana [printed at beginning of Vayikra, p. 27; Nesinah LaGer; Me'at Tzori]. [For other understandings of the term זע, see Pos'shegen here; Lechem VeSimlah to Bereishis 26:10. See also below, 17:4 with note 4.]

The Aramaic שׁוֹרֶשׁ can also be interpreted as I have kept you alive (see Schel Tvos).

When Hashem here says that people would recount His “Name,” it means that they would talk about “the might” of His Name, i.e., the miracles He performed to effect the Jews’ release from the Egyptian bondage (see above, 7:4 note 4).

Onkelos’ rendition of the Hebrew כָּעֵת as they shall recount makes it clear that Hashem did not mean that Pharaoh would do this recounting, but rather that others would do so (throughout the generations). See also Ibn Ezra; cf. Chizkuni.

20. The root of the Hebrew שׁוֹרֶשׁ is סלָּחוּתְהוֹן, a road [Bamidbar 20:19] (Rashi). Hashem’s statement meant that Pharaoh was continuing to bear down on the Jews with his crushing rule, as one paves a road by flattening it with a heavy weight. The Aramaic שׁוֹרֶשׁ likewise conveys pressing down hard, as when paving a road. Targum Yonasan to Yeshayah 11:16 and 19:23 renders the word שׁוּרֶשׁ, as אָבַר (Abar), a flattened road.

This is unlike Radak (Sefer HaShorashim, שׁושׁה שֶׁל פּוֹן), who maintains that the Hebrew word שׁוּרֶשׁ means raising yourself up, i.e., Pharaoh was inflating his ego by refusing to send the Jews out. See also Targum Yonasan and Ibn Ezra.


22. The verse says that the hail would be רֶשֶׁב, heavy.
Onkelos conveys that it would not be heavy in the sense of weighing a lot (וָשַׂךְ in Aramaic), but that it would be כְּשֶׁהִיא מִתְפּסָל, strong. See similarly above, v. 3, and 8:20 with note 21.

23. Onkelos’ rendition of the Hebrew יָתְעֵן, like it, as בָּכָה, “that is” like it (as opposed to 메ָכָה, like it), conveys that this hail would not merely be stronger than any previous hailstorms, but would be completely unlike them (Lechem VoSimlah; see note 14 above).

24. Rashi explains the Hebrew יָתְעֵן as chased, so the verse describes how they made the servants and livestock come in. Onkelos’ translation, however, focuses on the purpose, which was gathering the servants and livestock to safety, rather than on the process of chasing them (see Pas’shegen).
Hashem said to Moshe, “Stretch out your hand toward the heavens and there will be hail in the entire land of Egypt, on man and beast, and on all the grass of the field in the land of Egypt.”

Moshe stretched out his staff toward the heavens, and Hashem sent thunderclaps and hail, and fire went earthward, and Hashem rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail, and fire blazing inside the field — very heavy, that there had never been like it.

22. Hashem said to Moshe, “RAISE your hand toward the heavens — and there will be hail in the entire land of Egypt — on man and beast, and on all the grass of the field in the land of Egypt.”

23. Moshe RAISED his staff toward the heavens, and Hashem sent thunderclaps and hail, and fire WAS GOING UPON THE EARTH — and hail rained upon the land of Egypt.

24. There was hail, and fire blazing inside the hail — very STRONG, that there has never been before.

25. According to Onkelos, the Hebrew phrase יַחְדָּה מְטִאָה זוֹרָה does not mean that the fire went (in past tense) toward the earth, but rather that it was moving about (ָּֽרֶפֶשְׁת, in the constant form) from place to place along the earth (Lechem VeSiimlah; see also Onkelos to Bereishis 7:18).

26. Both our verse and v. 18 above feature the root רטפ in verb form (הֵשֵׁב here and הֵשֵׁב in verse 18), but Onkelos here renders it as רטפָא, rained, and there translated it as רטפ, bring down. The general rule is that when the verse is referring to actual rain, Onkelos renders it מְטִאָה, bring down rain (see, for example, Bereishis 2:5). If, however, the verse is “borrowing” this root to refer to other things falling from heaven, it depends: If the verse uses the word יֹּֽאַה, upon (as in our verse), and it is thus clear that the thing is moving downward, Onkelos uses the root רטפ, rained. But if the verse does not use the word יֹּֽאַה (as in verse 18), then Onkelos renders it מְטִאָה, bring down (Me‘at Tzori; Parshegen).

27. This was a miracle within a miracle: The fire and hail were intermingled; and even though hail is made
in the entire land of Egypt, from the time it became a nation.

25. The hail struck in the entire land of Egypt, everything that was in the field from man to beast; all the grass of the field the hail struck and every tree of the field it smashed. Only in the land of Goshen, where the Children of Israel were, there was no hail.

27. Pharaoh sent and summoned Moshe and Aharon and said to them, “I have sinned this time; Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones.

of water, which by nature cannot coexist with fire, they made peace between themselves to perform the Will of Hashem (Rashi).

28. The verse refers collectively to the trees that were destroyed as הריסת גבעת יתירה, the tree of the field, in singular. Onkelos uses the plural form, as he often does in such cases (see above, 7:18 note 20).

29. Onkelos generally translates the Hebrew root אשם, sin, as ארם (literally, guilt), when used in reference to sins against Hashem. The word רע, I have sinned, is of the same root, in verb form.

[The root אר further bears the connotation of debt. Reishis Chochmah (Shaar HaTeshuva §3, cited by Me'ot Tzori) explains that when one sins, he “borrows” the life and abilities that Hashem has given him to use for good, and misuses them. The sin thus creates a debt toward Hashem that He collects, as it were, by way of punishing the sinner.]

30. The word רע, Righteous One, literally means, innocent, i.e., Hashem is blameless and vindicated (see Ramban to Bereshit 6:9).

31. Onkelos’ renders the Hebrew קרעים, the wicked
Entreat Hashem — there has been an over-abundance of Godly thunder and hail; I shall send you out and you shall not continue to remain.”

"When I leave the city, I shall spread out my hands to Hashem; the thunderclaps will cease."
and the hail will no longer be, so that you shall know that the earth is Hashem’s.  

And as for you and your servants, I know that you are not yet afraid of Hashem, God.”

The flax and the barley were stricken, for the barley was nearly ripe and the flax was in its stalks. And the wheat and the spelt were not stricken, for they are late-ripening.

Onkelos provides unusual translations for two Hebrew words in this clause. The first is מַטִּיקָה, which he usually renders מַכָּה, not yet (see, e.g., 12:34 below), but here he translates it as מַטִּיקָה, still not. The point of “still not” is that, while Pharaoh claimed to recognize Hashem’s righteousness (v. 27), he actually continued to be unhumbled and would revert to his arrogant behavior after Moshe prayed to end the makkah (based on Rashi; see Parshegen and Lechem VeSimlah). [See Radak, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban for another understanding of the term מַטִּיקָה.]

Onkelos’ second departure from the norm is his translation of the word שַׁוְּעִיר. The root שָׁעִיר is usually rendered שָׁעָר, fear (see, e.g., Bereishis 22:12), but Onkelos here says שַׁוְּעִיר. Perhaps this is because Moshe’s words indicate that Pharaoh and his servants would eventually experience שַׁוְָעִיר before Hashem, and we see that they never gained a true fear of Him, but were merely humbled before Him on account of the makkos (see Parshegen; cf. Chalifos Semalos).

36. I.e., that He created the earth and thus controls everything that is in it (Ramban below, 13:16).

37. Onkelos provides unusual translations for two Hebrew words in this clause. The first is מַטִּיקָה, which he usually renders מַכָּה, not yet (see, e.g., 12:34 below), but here he translates it as מַטִּיקָה, still not. The point of “still not” is that, while Pharaoh claimed to recognize Hashem’s righteousness (v. 27), he actually continued to be unhumbled and would revert to his arrogant behavior after Moshe prayed to end the makkah (based on Rashi; see Parshegen and Lechem VeSimlah). [See Radak, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban for another understanding of the term מַטִּיקָה.]

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38. See note 40.

39. These plants were at the point that they were hard and brittle, and they therefore broke upon being hit by the hail (see Rashi).

40. The Hebrew יָבֹא (and יָבָא in the previous verse) does not mean, struck (ועב in Aramaic), as all the vegetation in Egypt was struck (i.e., hit) by the hail. The Torah means that the barley and flax were damaged (ועב in Aramaic) whereas the wheat and spelt were not. See also Rashi to v. 31.

41. These plants were still soft and supple, so they were able to withstand the hail (Rashi).

Moshe went out from Pharaoh, from the city, and he stretched out his hands to Hashem; the thunderclaps and hail ceased, and rain did not reach the earth. Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunderclaps ceased, and he continued to sin; and he made his heart stubborn, he and his servants. Pharaoh’s heart became strong and he did not send out the Children of Israel, as Hashem had spoken through Moshe.

42. The added phrase that was descending, is in accordance with the Gemara (Berachos 54b; see Rashi there and to our verse), which teaches that even the hailstones that were in midair did not reach the ground.