

Deut. 26:8

The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. 7 We cried to the ETERNAL, the God of our fathers, and the ETERNAL heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. 8 **The ETERNAL freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome/fearful power, and by signs and portents.** 9 [God] brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Haggadah

“By a mighty hand”—As it says (Ex. 9:3), “then the hand of the ETERNAL will strike your livestock in the fields — the horses, the asses, the camels, the cattle, and the sheep — with a very severe pestilence.”

“By an outstretched arm”—this is the sword, as it says (I Chronicles 21:16), “David looked up and saw the angel of the ETERNAL standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand directed against Jerusalem. David and the elders, covered in sackcloth, threw themselves on their faces.”

“Awesome/fearful power”—this is the revelation of the Shechinah, as it says (Deut. 4:34), “Or has any god ventured to go and take for himself [sic.] one nation from the midst of another by prodigious acts, by signs and portents, by war, by a mighty and an outstretched arm and awesome power, as the ETERNAL your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?”

“By signs”—this is the staff, as it says (Ex. 4:17), “And take with you this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.”

“And portents”—this is the blood, as it says (Joel 3:3), “Before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will set portents in the sky and on earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.”

“Wise-hearted Women,” by Ella Ronen Samuels (in *Dirshuni* Vol. 2)

The Holy Blessed One only took us out of Egypt through the merit of the wise-hearted women.

“By a mighty hand”—this was Levi’s daughter [Yocheved], who strengthened her hand to cast her son upon the water, as it says (Ex. 2:3), “When she could hide him no longer, she got a wicker basket for him and caulked it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child into it and placed it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.”

“By an outstretched arm”—this is Pharaoh’s daughter, as it says (Ex. 2:5), “She spied the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl [*amatah*, interpreted by Rashi as her arm] to fetch it.”

“Awesome/fearful power”—these are Shifra and Puah, and it says (Ex. 1:17), “The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.”

“By signs and portents”—this is Miriam; for all the years that Israel wandered in the desert, the wondrous well that was given through her merit traveled with them, until the very day that she died and the well disappeared, as it says (Num. 20:1-2), “The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon, and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there. The community was without water, and they joined against Moses and Aaron.”

Therefore it says, (Ex. 35:26), “All the women whose hearts were lifted up with wisdom...”—through those same women whose hearts were lifted with wisdom and who overcame weakness of hand, learned helplessness, fear of the government, and human limitations. Of them it says (Shir HaShirim 3:5), “...If you should wake or rouse Love until it pleases.” With these deeds they awakened and roused the lower and upper powers for redemption.