

## Water and Chaos Theory in Jurassic Park and the Exodus Story

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Source: Esther D. Kustanowitz



As I was preparing for the sederim (that's plural of "seder!") this year, I read a source about hand washing from Chabad.com here on Haggadot.com - it said that water represents the healing power of wisdom. Thinking about that, and the two hand-washings that are part of the Seder order, one cinematic image popped into my mind: the scene from Jurassic Park in which Jeff Goldblum explains - or maybe today we'd call it "mansplains" - chaos theory to Laura Dern by applying drops of water to her hand and trying to predict which way the water will run. He explains that chaos theory reveals the unpredictability of complex systems, also referring to it as the butterfly effect. (If you need a refresher, [the clip is here](#))

And I started thinking about unpredictability as it relates to Passover. In times of Egyptian slavery, life was predictable: each day as a slave is the same because you have no choices to make. No one would have predicted that Prince Moses would have killed an Egyptian taskmaster for oppressing a slave, forcing Moses to flee. No one would have predicted that Moses would return to Egypt to demand freedom from his people because a burning bush told him to. Every one of the ten plagues subverted predictions and expectations. And water, too behaves unpredictably: the Nile turns to blood, and the Red Sea - chaotically and unpredictably - parts.

In our Seder, we have one hand washing without a blessing, and one with a blessing. As we know from movies and from life, sometimes droplets run in one direction, and sometimes in the other. And when we encounter something unpredictable, it helps to know that it's part of a larger context, whether you call it a narrative, a belief system, a theory or a Seder.