

Parshas Va'eira in a Nutshell
(Exodus 6:2-9:35)

G-d reveals Himself to Moses. Employing the "four expressions of redemption," take out the Children of Israel from Egypt, deliver them from their enslavement, redeem them, and acquire them as His own chosen people at "Mount Sinai"; He will then bring them to the land He promised to the Patriarchs as their eternal heritage.

Moses and Aaron repeatedly come before Pharaoh to demand in the name of G-d, "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness." Pharaoh repeatedly refuses. Aaron's staff turns into a snake and swallows the magic sticks of the Egyptian sorcerers. G-d then sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians.

(continued next column)

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Pharaoh is identified with his stubborn boasts, "I do not know G-d," and "the river is mine and I have fashioned it," denying G-d's influence in our world and replacing it with a belief in self and man's power.

The fundamental purpose of the plagues was to negate this approach, to manifest G-dliness openly so that all could see, and in doing so, to break the pride of Pharaoh and his nation.
-- The Rebbe

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The waters of the Nile turn to blood; swarms of frogs overrun the land; lice infest all men and beasts. Hordes of wild animals invade the cities; a pestilence kills the domestic animals; painful boils afflict the Egyptians. For the seventh plague, fire and ice combine to descend from the skies as a devastating hail. Still, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he would not let the children of Israel go, as G-d had said to Moses. ❖

תהילים
Tehillim - Psalms
Join us this Shabbos morning
Jan 1 at 8:00 AM for
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.
This week's Tehillim reading is
dedicated to
a refuah sh'laima
for
Yoel Avraham ben Yetta.

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Join us each weekday
morning **Mon-Fri** as we
delve into the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am, followed
immediately by Shacharis.

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, Jan 1, 2022
Eastern Standard Time
Earliest Tallis..... 6:19 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:38 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:24 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 3:45 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 5:11 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation
Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:
Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:
Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Dec 31 / Teves 27

Candle Lighting 4:20 pm
Mincha 4:20 pm

Shabbos Day – Jan 1 / Teves 28

Tehillim Reading 8:00 am
Shacharis..... 9:30 am*
Torah Reading..... 10:40 am
Kiddush 12:15 pm

Mincha 4:25 pm
Rabbi's Drasha 4:45 pm
Shabbos Ends..... 5:25 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:38 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am
Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am
Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm

Bulletin
This week's Bulletin
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Chassidic Masters

3 Powerful Insights From the Rebbe

Compiled by Mordechai Rubin

Seven of the ten plagues are described in this week's Torah reading.

Pharaoh claims of: "I do not know G-d," and "the river is mine, I have fashioned it," deny G-d's influence in our world. The fundamental purpose of the plagues was to negate this approach, to manifest G-dliness openly so that all could see.

The miracles of the exodus serve as testimony to G-d's control of the natural order. In Egypt, even Pharaoh had no choice but to acknowledge G-dliness. At other times however, G-d's influence may not be as evident, still, it is always He who is ordering our world and our destiny.

This is the message of the miracles of the plagues: to probe beneath the surface and become conscious of G-d's involvement in our lives. The only difference between the plagues in Egypt and our present situation is the degree in which G-d's hand is manifest.

Infinity

This week's Torah reading opens with the verse: "And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as the A-lmighty Shadai, but My name Y-H-V-H (יהוה) I did not make known to them."

Why are there different names for G-d? And what is the significance in

using one name over the other?

The Midrash asks these questions and quotes G-d as saying: "I am called according to My deeds," i.e., each of the different names of G-d is associated with a particular quality or attribute. The Zohar and the texts of the Kabbalah expand further on this concept, deriving different insights from the letters of the names and their vocalizations.

The name Shadai contains the Hebrew word dai which means "enough." Shadai refers to the aspect of G-dliness that establishes the limitations of the world's existence, concentrating G-d's infinite light in a measured manner that will enable the creation of a world in which G-dliness is hidden.

G-d's name Y-H-V-H, by contrast, represents the revelation of G-dliness in all its infinity. For that reason, the name Y-H-V-H is not pronounced. Its light is too powerful and all-encompassing to be expressed in speech.

Until this time, even spiritual giants like the Patriarchs received only a limited revelation of G-dliness, for G-dliness was meted out within the context of the name Shadai, according to the limitations that prevailed in the world.

In the future, Giving of the Torah, the Jewish people and the world at large would receive a revelation of the name Y-H-V-H, revealing G-d's infinity. From that point onward, every time a Jew performs a mitzvah, he establishes an essential bond with G-d, relating to a higher rung of G-dliness than the Patriarchs could access.

The Future is Now

The Torah portion of Va'eira contains four expressions of redemption: "I will release you... I will save you... I will liberate you... I will take you...."

The expression that follows, "and I will bring you" implies a special, superior quality. This refers to the future Redemption. Yet, since this fifth expression is mentioned in the context of the redemption from Egypt, it follows that the future Redemption in fact began (in some way) with the exodus from Egypt.

There is an important lesson here in terms of our spiritual service:

When a person realizes that the loftiest levels of the future Redemption, already exist, though unrevealed, then the person's service becomes much easier. The individual can more easily overcome all obstructions and hindrances in this world in general, and during the conclusion of this final exile in particular.

In reality, all obstructions and hindrances to Torah and mitzvot are ultimately unreal — concealments which serve to arouse man's latent abilities to serve G-d.

When we realize that we are dealing with mere illusion, we will act with vigor and holiness, and such action will remove even the appearance of concealment. We will then realize how everything that happened, even things that seemed adverse at the time, were for the good, and ultimately even "for the best." ❖

From Our Sages

Jacob I will bring you out, I will save you, I will redeem you, I will take you (Exodus 6:6–7)

The four expressions of redemption (represented at the Passover Seder by the Four Cups of wine) relate to the four aspects of our liberation from Egypt:

- 1) "I will bring out"—our physical removal from the geographical boundaries of Egypt;
- 2) "I will save"—our delivery from Egyptian hegemony (Egypt was a superpower that enslaved and oppressed many nations and peoples outside its borders);
- 3) "I will redeem"—the elimination of any future possibility of enslavement, by the "great judgments" inflicted upon the Egyptians;
- 4) "I will take you to Myself as a nation, and I will be to you a G-d"—our election as G-d's chosen people at Mount Sinai, the purpose of the Exodus.

-- (Nachmanides; Soforno)

Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (Exodus 7:12)

G-d said: "If Aaron's serpent will swallow up the serpents of the Egyptians, there will be nothing remarkable in that, for serpents usually swallow each other. Therefore, let it resume its original form and swallow up their serpents."

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

The Torah's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17)—our task is to create light, not to battle darkness. Nevertheless, there are times when we are forced to resort to battle, when we must vanquish those who seek to vanquish us. Thus Moses, the gentle shepherd of Israel, and Aaron, the ultimate man of peace, find themselves in the role of "judge and chastiser of Pharaoh," crushing the might of Egypt and obliterating its icons and myths.

Therein lies the lesson to be derived from the fact that Aaron's rod swallowed the "serpents of the Egyptians" after it had reverted back to its original form, rather than as a serpent itself. For even when he wages war, the Jew is not a warrior. Even when he consumes the serpents of the enemy, he is not a serpent himself, spewing poison and hate. His instrument of vengeance is as devoid of vengeful feeling as a petrified rod, as cold to the rage of war as a lifeless stick.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

[The frogs] will go up and come into your house, into your bedchamber, into your bed and into your ovens (Exodus 7:28)

"Self-sacrifice" is not just the willingness to die for one's beliefs; it is the way in which one lives for them. It is the willingness to sacrifice one's "self"—one's desires, one's preconceptions, one's most basic inclinations. Indeed, the Hebrew term for self-sacrifice, *mesirut nefesh*, means both "giving of life" and "giving of will."

Thus the lesson of self-sacrifice is derived from a frog, a cold-blooded creature, who enters a burning oven. The ultimate test of faith goes beyond the issue of life and death—it is the ability to transcend one's very nature for the sake of a higher truth.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) ❖

Haftorah for Va'eira in a nutshell

Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

This week's haftorah begins with a mention of the ingathering of the exiles, echoing G-d's promise mentioned in the Torah portion: "I will take you out of the suffering of Egypt." The prophet then goes on to discuss the decimation of Pharaoh and Egypt, reminiscent of the primary theme of the Torah portion—the devastation G-d wrought upon Egypt.

Ezekiel begins with a description of what will occur during the ingathering of the exiles. "When I gather in the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they have been scattered, and I have been sanctified through them in the eyes of the nations, then shall they dwell on their land that I gave to My servant, to Jacob. And they shall dwell upon it securely..."

The prophet then proceeds to convey a prophecy regarding Pharaoh and Egypt, foretelling the fall of the Egyptian empire. Egypt merited this punishment for two reasons: a) They had reneged on their promise to come to Israel's aid against the attacking Babylonians. b) They had incredible arrogance, considering themselves un-reliant on G-d, instead attributing their success to the bounty their deified Nile afforded them. Therefore, Ezekiel warns: "And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and in ruins, and they shall know that I am the Lord! Because he [Pharaoh] said, 'The river is mine, and I have made it.'" G-d warns that the land of Egypt will be empty and desolate for forty years, after which G-d will return the people to the land to reinhabit it, but it will no longer be an important nation to be reckoned with.

The haftorah ends with another prophecy wherein G-d informs Ezekiel that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, will be the one to conquer Egypt and take its spoils. This as a reward for his effort in defeating the wicked nation of Tyre. ❖

Hidden and Revealed

The concealment of G-dliness creates the framework of our existence. On the other hand, the progress of civilization is directed towards one goal: that He make Himself known.

One of the tools that He uses to make Himself known is nature itself. The natural makeup of the world conceals G-dliness, creating the impression that the world exists independently with its own rules and on its own power. On the other hand, when a person probes more deeply, he or she comes to the awareness that nature cannot exist on its own. The inner harmony that pervades the world is too deep and encompassing to ignore. This is one way that man comes to appreciate G-d.

— The Rebbe

שבת שלום גוט שבת!



Gutt Shabbos and Gutten Choidesh to all!