



Parshas Va'eira

פרשת וארא

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**Do We Need To Respect Everything**

*Akiva Kra ('21)*

There is a famous question: if a tree falls in the forest, does it make any noise? The answer is obviously yes. One doesn't need to hear the noise for it to be noise. But, if one chops down a tree in the middle of a forest, does it affect anyone?

Before answering the question, we need to look at *Parshas Va'eira*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* does not perform certain plagues to return a favor to those who helped him. Because Moshe was saved by the river, he didn't hit the river for the plague of blood. Because Moshe was able to hide a dead person in the sand, Moshe didn't hit the sand for the plague of lice. This is puzzling. The Nile and some sand are inanimate objects. They have no feelings! Further, the actual water that saved Moshe probably evaporated and wasn't even in the Nile anymore. Also, the sand that helped Moshe could've been blown away or in a different spot than where Moshe hit. Are we protecting the "brothers and sisters" of the pieces of sand and water droplets?!

The answer to this question is that although the river and pieces of sand are inanimate and have no feelings, Moshe was told to not harm them. Not for their sake, but his! If we show our respect and appreciation for senseless objects, we will remember to do the same towards people. This idea is also found in *Bava Kamma* 92b: "Do not cast a stone into the well from which you drank". Our actions need to always be proper.

Not only does always acting properly guarantee more appropriate and respectable actions by us, but it can also have a positive effect on others. *Sefer Chassidim* (874) says that a husband once gave his wife money for a coat. "Can I also use the money for other things?" she asked him. "Definitely", he replied.

The woman then bought a *sefer* and lent it to *rabbonim* to study from. (This was before the printing press.) Until then, their children struggled when learning. After the event, they had tremendous success. Was this a direct reward? Perhaps. But, some learn that because the mother used the money for buying a *sefer* instead of a coat, it had such an impression on her kids that they took their learning more seriously. When displaying her values, the mother gave them over to everyone around her.

So, to answer our original question, if one chops down a tree in the middle of the forest it WILL affect others. Not because others needed that tree, but because one's actions shape them. If one cuts a tree in the forest, the same mentality will show when he leaves it. Every action we do helps shape the person we are. This is why Moshe couldn't hit the things that saved him and we have to always be careful how we act. Hence, the first thing we are told in *Shulchan Aruch* is "I have always set *Hashem* before me" (*Tehillim* 16:8). One is always the same and therefore must always act properly.

### The Real Problem: Value Systems

*Arveh Kolber (21)*

As we read the first few *parshiyos* of *Sefer Shemos* concerning *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we witness a drawn-out confrontation between *Hashem* and Pharaoh. In this respect, the central player in these *parshiyos* can be said to be Pharaoh, not Moshe. Moshe is *Hashem's* messenger; his actions are very clear and consistent. Pharaoh on the other hand is more complex. Additionally, while it may not be what we would first respond to, most of us would relate better to Pharaoh. Moshe and Aaron are in direct contact with *Hashem*, whereas Pharaoh is more of an ordinary human being. Certainly, we would not be able to give the command to kill all the *bechorim*, nor defy *Hashem* for so long, but on a basic level, we each have the internal struggle that is shown in Pharaoh, but not in Moshe and Aaron. To quote Sun Tzu, if one knows their enemy and themselves, they "need not fear the results of a hundred battles." There is power in knowing

the challenges we may face and the motivations that urge one to do bad, so we are compelled to understand Pharaoh: his character and his motivations. Pharaoh suffers six *makkos*, six plagues, that show *Hashem's* might and control over this world. And yet, he consistently reneges on his promise to let the Jews go on a three-day journey to sacrifice *karbanos* to *Hashem*. He always finds a way to make sure the Jews stay in *Mitzrayim*, often by changing the terms of the deal. But during the *makkah* of *barad*, hail, Pharaoh all of a sudden calls to Moshe and Aaron, and his plea for them to stop sounds much more genuine than previous times. He tells them: "הֲטָאֲתִי הַכָּעָם יְהוָה הַצַּדִּיק " , "I sinned this time; G-d is righteous, and I and my people are wicked" (*Shemos* 9:27). Instead of just saying that he will let them out, Pharaoh adds in this more personal statement. He is confessing to a sin, a very exposing, and therefore sincere, action.

But to which sin is he confessing? When Achav ben Omri, the evil king of Yisroel (the Ten *Shevatim*), is rebuked by Eliyahu *HaNavi* in *Sefer Melachim I*, we know which sin he is being rebuked for and consequently does *teshuva* for, *avodah zara*. Pharaoh's sin is more obscure. Rav Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz explains that Pharaoh's sin lay not in a single action, but a lifestyle.

Pharaoh did not lead a standard life. He grew up as a king of a country that believed their king was a god. He was worshipped as a god and was told since his childhood that he was a god. By being a god, all of his actions were inherently moral. This enabled him to order the death of all the Jewish male children because his will was the moral standard. He could not do an immoral action. However, once he experiences *makkas barad*, he realizes that he is not a god. He is not the perfect being that he, and his entire country, made him out to be. This forces him to change his entire perspective on how he lived his life and all the actions that he performed during that time. His premise of "I am always right" becomes undeniably false and he is finally able to judge his actions unprejudiced. He realizes his mistakes and tells Moshe "I have sinned".

He does not end there, however. He continues "I and

### A SHORT VORT

*Akiva Kra (21)*

In this week's *parsha*, Aharon conducts some of the plagues. This can seem a bit strange at first glance as *Hashem* had told Moshe that it should be Moshe who conducts the plagues.

The reason behind Aharon's role in bringing about these certain plagues is that they involved the hitting of the land and sea. To turn the water into blood, the Nile was hit. To bring about the plague of lice, the sand was hit. Moshe objected to hitting the water and sand as they had the two had helped him previously. The sand had buried the Egyptian he killed and the water had floated him safely down the Nile when he was a baby. We see from Moshe's kindness towards the water and sand to always show appreciation and help out those who have helped us. May we all be able to do this.

## 5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אָמַר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח מַטֵּף וּנְטֵה-יָדְךָ עַל-מִימֵי  
מִצְרַיִם עַל-נְהַרְתָּם עַל-יְאִרֵיהֶם וְעַל-אֲגַמֵיהֶם וְעַל כָּל-מִקְוֵה  
מִימֵיהֶם וְיִהְיוּדָם וְהָיָה דָם בְּכָל-אֲרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּבְעֵצִים וּבְאֲבָנִים:

"And Hashem said to Moshe: say to Aharon "take your staff and spread your hand our above the waters of Mitzrayim, over their rivers, over their canals, over their ponds, and over every pool of water, and it will become blood; and the blood will be in the whole land of Mitzrayim, and in the trees and stones" (Shemos 7:19)

**Q.** The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* (363:101) rules that the *mitzvah* of lighting candles on *Shabbos* is primarily that the candles should be lit, not the actual action of lighting them. As such, it is permitted to send someone who is not a *bar shelichus* (fit to fulfil a *mitzvah*) to light the candles, since as long as they are lit, the action of lighting makes no difference. (This can also be seen in the language of the Rambam (*Hilchos Shabbos* 5:1), who says that the *mitzvah* is for every Jewish man and woman to "have a lit candle in their house" for *Shabbos*.) However, if the candles happened to be lit during the middle of the day, they still must be extinguished and lit again before *Shabbos*. This is because even though the *mitzvah* is not the action of lighting the candles, they still must have been lit for the purpose of the *mitzvah*. (That is to say, even though the lighting of the candles is not the actual *mitzvah*, the one who lit them must have had in mind that the candles were being lit for the purpose of serving as *Shabbos* candles.) However, by the *mitzvah* of *kisui hadam*, covering the blood of an animal after it has been *shechted*, we *pasken* that if the wind caused dirt to blow over the blood and cover it, one does not need to uncover it and cover it again, since the main point of the *mitzvah* is that the blood should be covered, not the action of covering. How is this any different from *neiros Shabbos*, where we say that even though the *mitzvah* is that the candles be lit, the action of lighting must still be done for the purpose of the *mitzvah*?

**A.** The main focus of *kisui hadam* is on the blood; we are required to see to it that the blood from the animal ends up covered. However, the purpose of *neiros Shabbos* is that the candles should remain lit as a way of giving honor to the *Shabbos*. Thus, by *kisui hadam*, no specific action is necessary, since so long as the blood is covered at the end of the day, the obligation has been fulfilled. However, candles which happen to be lit cannot really be called *kavod Shabbos* unless they were lit for that express purpose. Thus, while the main fulfilment of the *mitzvah* is that the candles remain burning on *Shabbos* and give *kavod* to the *Shabbos*, this can only be accomplished if they were first lit for that purpose. -Source: *Mishmeres Chayim Chelek I, "Inyanei Shechitah" 5*

my people are wicked." Why? Rav Steinsaltz explains that Pharaoh adds this statement because he is thinking about the actions he/his predecessors (depending on the *meforash*) committed hundreds of years prior by enslaving the Jews. While this may seem like an obvious sin, it is much harder to realize when we are in that situation ourselves. Human beings are all guilty, to some extent, of the attribute of hubris. We may not believe ourselves to be gods as Pharaoh did, but we each have this inborn attribute that changes our perspectives on our own actions. In fact, studies have shown that when one grades an assignment they know to be their own, they will grade it more favorably than if they thought it was someone else's. We are not an honest judge of our own character and actions.

To overcome this challenge, we have to learn from Pharaoh's remorse that he expresses to Moshe and Aaron. Remorse has multiple obstacles that can ruin one's attempts to grow. Sometimes, one will repent and mess up again. This action is a natural part of growth, but if one messes up multiple times, the *Gemara* in *Yoma* tells us that the sin will become permissible to us. Another obstacle we get caught up in is feeling remorse for the wrong aspect of our sin. We would say it is absurd for someone to repent for stealing a rope but ignore the fact that the rope was attached to a cow. Obviously, the main part of the robbery was the cow. A third struggle we may face is that we rectify part of the situation, but leave the heart of the matter unresolved. When I was in the second grade, I had appendicitis, an inflammation of the appendix due to a buildup of bacteria. It is a relatively simple operation to remove it, but the surgeon missed some bacteria that had leaked from the appendix. Despite taking the appendix out, the doctor missed the main cause of my discomfort, the bacteria. I continued to feel discomfort and had to be operated upon a second time to finish the procedure. Pharaoh realized that his current sins were only outgrowths of a much larger problem that had started hundreds of years in the past and he felt remorse for that problem as well.

This idea manifests in the words we say in Vidui: "אָנַחְנוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ" *We and our fathers have sinned.*" Rav Steinsaltz explains that the reason we are asking for our parents' forgiveness, as well as our own, is because we are doing *teshuvah* for our value system as well as our sins. During the course of our introspection, it is easy to come to the conclusion that we are good people because we live up to the values established by our value system, a system set up by our parents and our society. But "we and our fathers have sinned" causes us to ponder that although we already evaluated ourselves, we also have to evaluate the system by which we are judging ourselves. My ninth grade *rebbe*, Rabbi Danto, would often ask what our value system was. He emphasized that we must ensure our value system

was a proper, moral system because he understood that it was easy to live as a zombie and follow a value system that is not proper. Part of *teshuva* is not just mending our ways, it is also fixing the crux of our mistake.

When we correct a problem at its roots, correct the system that causes the problem, we see a much different view than we did before. When Pharaoh experiences the seventh plague, he has an epiphany. He realizes that he is not a god and at that moment, he has to reconsider all of his previous actions and all that he thought was true about those actions.

Only once the most basic and root conceptions are shattered, and the perspectives are realigned, does it become possible to start again from the beginning. To rebuild and reach even greater heights.

### Avoiding Complicity

*Chaim Davidowitz (21)*

When Moshe is speaking to *Hashem*, *Hashem* instructs him on what to say to the Jewish people in order to bring them some hope. One of the things that Moshe is instructed to say to the Jewish people is “*v’hotzei eschem mitachas sivlos mitzrayim.*” “*And I will take them out from under the burdens of Egypt.*” *Hashem* then continues and mentions the other three *lishonos shel Geulah* that we are all so familiar with from the *Haggada* on *Pesach*. The Kotzker Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, is confused by this *possuk*. He asks what exactly is “*Sivlos Mitzrayim?*” Why couldn’t *Hashem* just say that he’d take them out from “*Mitzrayim?*” What is the purpose of the word “*Sivlos?*” The Kotzker explains: the word “*Sivlos*” is the *Lashon* of *Savlanut*, it is a language of patience. The Kotzker is saying that the Jews were getting too complicit in *Mitzrayim* and were just adapting and assimilating to their surroundings. They were not even attempting to leave Egypt anymore, they were comfortable where they were. They were showing patience- *Savlanut*, showing no drive to leave *Mitzrayim*. The Kotzker is explaining that due to the assimilation, the enemy isn’t even the Egyptians anymore, the enemy is the mindset of the Jewish People. *Hashem* now needs to rescue them from this terrible mindset. Moshe is being told by *Hashem* to relate to the Jewish people that *Hashem* is going to save them from this complicitness and bring them out of *Mitzrayim*.

The Kotzker explains that this is such an important idea to implement into our lives. We often accept the “*Sivlos*” of our lives. We are in mediocre circumstances many times in our lives, but we can’t afford to be complicit in our struggles and just accept where we are, we have to have a fire in our heart to keep pushing forward and get out of the quicksand that we too often get stuck in. *Hashem* understood that this

“*sivlos*” was the greatest enemy the Jews faced then in *Mitzrayim*, and He recognizes that this is still the great enemy which we face in our current times. We all must remember to never be complicit with mediocrity!

### Sevens Days of Plague

*Meir Morell (22)*

"וַיִּמְלֵא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים אַחֲרֵי הַכּוֹת יְהוָה אֶת-הַיָּאֵר:"

"When seven days had passed after the Lord struck the Nile (Shemos 7:25)"

The *Midrash* (*Shemos Rabbah* 9:12) learns from this *possuk* that each plague happened for seven days.

Radbaz (1479-1573) (to learn about his life and *Derech Hapsak*, see *Studies in the Judicial Methodology of Rabbi David ibn Abi Zimra*, authored by Professor R' Dr Samuel Morell Z"l) in *Sheilos Uteshvos Radbaz*, *Cheilek* 2, *Siman* 813, asks how this *Midrash* makes sense. Since we know that *Makkas Bechoros* only took one second, *Makkas Dever* one day and *Makkas Choshech* three days, how could the *Midrash* say that every plague took seven days?

At first, Radbaz only answers the question on *Makkas Bechoros*. He explains that since *Chazal* learns the idea of seven days from *Makkas Dam*, it had to have had a *Makkah* after it, like *Makkas Tzfardea* (which followed *Makkas Dam*). And since *Makkas Bechoros* didn't have a *Makkah* after it, it is not included in the *drasha* of seven days. Additionally, Radbaz adds that it was not necessary for there to be seven days (after *Makkas Bechoros*) because they left the next day.

With regards to *Makkas Choshech*, Radbaz answers that if we see the *possuk* it says :

"וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ-אֲפֹלָה בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים: לֹא-רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אֶחָיו וְלֹא-קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחַתוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים..."

"...and thick darkness descended upon all the land of Egypt for three days. People could not see one another, and for three days no one could get up from where he was..." (Shemos 10:22-23)

Since it mentions the *Choshech* twice, we can infer that there were six days of *Makkos Choshech*, three of normal darkness, three of thick darkness in which one couldn't even stand up. By the seventh day, it was light at some points and dark at some points.

Radbaz finishes by explaining that by *Makkas Dever* the plague only came down on one day, but it spread and killed animals throughout the seven days.

We see from Radbaz that the *Midrash* does indeed fit in with the *pesukim*.

### The Purpose of the Ten Plagues

*Emmanuel Izrailov (22)*

This week's torah portion discusses how the Egyptians were smitten with the first seven plagues: blood, frogs, lice, wild animals, pestilence, boils, and hail. The question that is often asked on the plagues is why they had to happen in the first place, especially when *Hashem* could have liberated *Bnei Yisroel* straight out of *Mitzrayim* with no plagues at all?

To answer this question we must first understand that *Hashem* works differently than people. When a person is hurt, either physically or emotionally, their innate reaction is to retaliate with emotion and lash out. A person is able to control their actions, but is still unable to control their instinctive reaction of retaliating against a threat to their well being. *Hashem*, however, can never be "hurt" by any action that man does, so instead of reacting based on emotion, He acts with the trait of justice.

*Hashem* instituted a system of reward and punishment where every action has a consequence. *Mitzvos* bring about blessing and reward in this world and the next, while *aveiros* can generate punishments in this world and the next.

With the above in mind, we can have a better understanding of why *Hashem* punished the Egyptians with all ten plagues. Each plague had a reason behind it and was brought about because of the Egyptians bad deeds and behavior towards *Hashem's* nation.

May we merit to receive much blessing in this world and the next and see *mashiach* soon!

### Hi, My Name Is ...

*Elisha Price (23)*

Last week's parsha described Moshe's introduction to G-d, which was done with the words *איה אשר איה*, *I will be what I will be.*" In this week's parsha, Moshe meets *Hashem* again, but this time *Hashem* tells Moshe that *איה אשר איה* לכן אמר לבני ישראל אני *Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the Lord.*"

Why does *Hashem* use two different names for Himself? Is there a difference between the two names, or do they both simply refer to Him?

In trying to answer this question, Rashi (*Shemos* 3:14) explains that *איה אשר איה* isn't a name, but rather a way to soothe *Bnei Yisroel*, saying that they shouldn't worry because I, *Hashem*, am with them now as I always was and will always be.

The Ramban (3:13) rejects the idea that Moshe is asking for advice of what to tell the people if they were to ask who this G-d is. Ramban suggests that *Hashem* is saying that they will have no need for My name since they will have all the proof they need that I am with them in their struggles and hardships.

Similarly, Rav Gad Eldad suggests that *Hashem* thought a name wasn't necessary because names are used for identification purposes. For example,

when Yaakov fought the *Malach* and asked for his name, the *Malach* refused. Yet again, when Manoach saw the *Malach* that told him he'd have a child, and asked his name, the *Malach* refused. Why? Because angels don't get credit for what they've done, says Rav Eldad, angels don't need to be identified. *Hashem* is the only G-d; there is no purpose in naming Him, for He requires no identification.

If that is the case, why did Moshe even ask for a name? Didn't he know there is only one G-d and no identification is needed?

Rav Eldad answers that Moshe knew that personally, but he didn't think that *Bnei Yisroel* knew it. Being that they were so integrated into Egyptian society, Moshe believed that if he were to tell them "G-d spoke to me," they would respond "which one?" Therefore, Moshe thought it necessary to obtain a name to share with the people. *Hashem*, knowing that Moshe's analysis was incorrect, abstained from answering until three *perakim* later. Rather than name Himself, *Hashem* gave Moshe a title to relay to the nation; a title that proclaimed that He would always be with them when they need Him most.

So according to Rav Eldad, the names that *Hashem* told to Moshe are vastly different in meaning. *איה אשר איה* means that *Hashem* is with the people, whereas ה' is His actual name.

However, there is another approach one can take to decipher the code of G-d's name.

If you look at the *pesukim* in which *Hashem* introduces Himself to human beings, there are patterns that emerge.

By Avraham, the *possuk* (*Bereishis* 17:1) says: "When Avram was ninety-nine years old, *Hashem* appeared to him and said, "I am Kel Shakai. Walk in My ways and be perfect."

The *possuk* contains the name of *Hashem*, *Kel Shakai*, and a reassurance that He would provide protection for Avraham.

Similarly by Yaakov, the *possuk* (*Bereishis* 28:13) states: וה' נצב עליו ויאמר אני ה' אלקי אברהם אביך ואלהי והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתיו בכל אשר-תלך

"And *Hashem* appeared to him and He said: "I am *Hashem* the G-d of Avraham your father and the G-d of Yitzchak." "And behold I will be with you and guard you everywhere that you may go."

These *pesukim* follow the same theme: introduction via the name of ה', then the mention of the forefathers (this was inapplicable by Avraham, as he was the first forefather), and lastly the reassurance that *Hashem* is looking after the listener.

However, none of the *Avos-Hashem* introductions better parallel our case than Yitzchak.

The *possuk* (*Bereishis* 26:24) says: "And *Hashem*

appeared to him on that night, and He said "I am the G-d of your father Avraham, do not fear for I am with you."

And yet again, the format of this *possuk* is introduction via a name, mention of the patriarchs, and reassurance of protection.

Furthermore, we use this format three times a day in our *Shemonah Esrei*:

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב...מלך עוזר ומושיע ברוך אתה ה', מגן אברהם:

We begin with His name, 'ה followed by the patriarchal connection and concluding with the same theme of G-d being with us and protecting us at all

times.

Clearly this layout is not arbitrary; Hashem uses it at least four times to introduce Himself, and *Chazal* uses it to introduce our prayers.

Therefore, perhaps we can argue that saying something like *יהוה אשר אלהינו* isn't a novelty, but merely part of *Hashem's* standard introduction, so we can therefore understand this no-longer-unique method of identification that *Hashem* instructs Moshe to tell to the nation.

## CHUMASH B'IYUN

### G-d's Names

*Rabbi Mayer Schiller*

Unfortunately, for technical reasons, the deadline for this week's *Shema Koleinu* is the earliest it has been since I have been writing for this august publication. Given this constraint, the subject to follow, which deserves far more extensive researches and presentations due to its prominent *peshat* issues as well as major *hashkofic* implications, will be presented in brief. Hopefully, we may yet, *i'H*, return to it in a longer offering.

The *parshah* begins with a puzzling two *pesukim*. "And G-d (*Elokim*) spoke to Moshe and said to him, "I am *Hashem* (*YKVK*) and I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak and to Yaakov as *El Shaddai*, but through my name *Hashem* (*YKVK*) I did not become known to them." (Shemos 6: 2 – 3)

Rashi comments on this *possuk* that, under the name of *El Shaddai*, *Hashem* made promises to the *Avos*.

However, in Rashi's words, "I was not recognized by them in my aspect of truth, because of which I am named *Hashem* (*YKVK*) which implies I am faithful to uphold my word, for I have promised but not yet fulfilled." (Rashi 2: 3)

Now, as Rashi himself points out on the ninth *possuk* of this chapter, *Hashem* has already appeared to the *Avos* with the name of *YKVK*. In fact, there are at least five such appearances throughout *Bereishis*, (14: 22, 15: 7, 16:2, 28:13, 49: 18) So what are we to make of Rashi's comment that the name of *YKVK* was not known previously?

Rashi also dwells on the fact that the *possuk* (2:3) doesn't say "I did not make known" my name of *YKVK*. Rather, "And my name of *YKVK* was not known to them."

The Ramban offers an explanation of what was added in "knowing of *YKVK*" was in it being the Name of overtly changing nature. All the promises made to the *Avos* were fulfilled within the rules of nature. *YKVK* working within nature. Now, He becomes the *YKVK* in His essence, who steps

beyond nature. The fulfillment of YKVK in *Shemos* steps beyond the confines of the natural order.

However, it seems there is far more going on here. If we turn back to Hashem appearing to Moshe at the burning bush we find that Moshe asked G-d about a question the *Bnei Yisroel* will ask him when he first visits them in Egypt. The question, "What is His name?" begs for an explanation. Had they lost memory of all the names *Hashem* had used in the past?

Moshe replies, "YKVK, the G-d of your fathers . . . has sent me to you; this is my name (*sh'mi*) forever and this is my remembrance for generation to generation." (*Shemos* 3: 14, 15) Here *Rabeinu Yosef Bechor Shor* explains at some length that it is here that *Hashem* is revealing the *shem* of YKVK is not simply a name. It is the very essence of *Hashem*. Other names describe Him. This name is His very essence. Eternal, that is Eternal Existence without beginning or end.

Following the *Bechor Shor*, we may be able to explain what was missing in the YKVK appearances in the past and why only this revelation is totally faithful (following Rashi) and not just the name of one of G-d's manifestations but of His very essence. Earlier uses of YKVK unaccompanied by the *EKYK* revealed at the bush and described as the Eternal Name forever were not yet given as the totality of Godliness. Only now when Hashem is poised to step beyond nature, and fulfill all promises does the YKVK become one with Him.

We will have more to say on this matter at some future point, *i'H*.

## MUSSAR MOMENTS

*Max Korenman ('22) and Avidan Loike ('22)*

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Vaeira*, we see a flurry of interactions between Moshe and Pharaoh. Upon *Hashem's* request, Moshe continues to ask for the release of the Jewish people, however, through his heart being hardened, Pharaoh numerous times refuses even a three day journey to serve Hashem. While the first six *Makkos* don't faze Pharaoh, the seventh *Makkah*, the *Makkah* of hail, seems to make Pharaoh fold. Pharaoh tells Moshe "ה' הַצַּדִּיק" *Hashem is The righteous One*", and admits that he and his nation have sinned. This moment seems rather bizarre as it's extremely rare for an individual with Pharaoh's stature to not only admit defeat, but to also admit to being wrong and faulty. The Chasam Sofer explains the cruciality behind his words. Due to the fact that Pharaoh sanctified the name of Heaven, he merited to have his name mentioned in the *Torah*. This teaches us the importance of a *Kiddush Hashem* and how great an effect it has. Even though after this fiasco Pharaoh rescinds on his decision to let the Jews out, he was still able to merit his name being mentioned in the *Torah* through a mere few words he said of praise to *Hashem*. So, as we go into *Shabbos* and the reading of this week's *Parsha*, we should realize how crucial it is to continue to make *Kiddushei Hashem* and not, *Chas V'shalom*, *Chillulei Hashem*.

# WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH

## Yechezkel 28:25 - 29:21

דָּבַר וְאָמַרְתָּ לְהֵאמָר וְהָ אֱלֹהִים הִנְנִי עָלֶיךָ פְּרַעֲהַ מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם הַתְּנִיחַ הַגְּדֹל הַרְבֵּץ בְּתוֹךְ יַאֲרֵיוֹ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לִי יַאֲרֵי וְאֲנִי עָשִׂיתִנִּי:

"Speak and say" so says Hashem, behold, upon Pharaoh king of Egypt [with] the great serpent that crawls in its river and declares "this is my river and I have created it" (Yechezkel 29:3)

This week's *Haftorah* speaks about the punishment which was due to the Pharaoh in the time of Yechezkel, upon whom the Jews had come to rely for economic and military support. Interestingly, the overarching metaphor used in this *nevuah* is that of the ocean, with the *Mitzrim* being compared to fish and Pharaoh to the biggest fish in the river. Rashi explains that this metaphor is more literal than one might assume; since there is virtually no rain in Egypt, the people relied almost entirely on the Nile River for their support. Thus, the people of *Mitzrayim* are compared to fish, since, much like fish, they lived off the water in the river. While this detail about Ancient Egypt's agricultural methods may be interesting, it would not seem at first glance to warrant an entire prophecy on it. What message was Hashem trying to get across with this metaphor?

As a general rule, people do not like to feel dependent upon others. We want to feel that we are in control of our own destinies, and as a result, we resent the notion that our success is somehow based on the kindness or charity of others. This is especially true when it comes to Hashem- many people refuse to believe that events around them are out of their hands and Hashem controls whether or not they will succeed. So people come up with all sorts of explanations for their success- my brain, my work ethic, my personality, and so on. What they fail to realize, however, is that all of their success stems from the fact that the *Borei Olam* provided them with the means and opportunity to accomplish what they did! They are like the fish who sits in the river Hashem made for him and declares "this is my river, and I have made it!"

This refusal to acknowledge others in one's success is a fundamental *middah* of *Mitzrayim*. The *posuk* at the beginning of last week's *parsha* tells us that a new king arose in Egypt "that did not know Yosef" (*Shemos 1:8*). Rashi famously explains that while this new Pharaoh was of course aware of Yosef, he acted as if he didn't know him, meaning that he refused to acknowledge all the good Yosef did for his people. To this new king, it was anathema to admit that an outsider was the source of his country's current economic prosperity. Pharaoh wanted to believe that, somehow, he was the reason for Egypt's thriving infrastructure. This is why the Medrash tells us that Pharaoh not knowing Yosef was directly correlated to his later declaration of "I do not know Hashem" (*Shemos 5:2*). Pharaoh's refusal to acknowledge any other factors in his success other than himself inevitably led to his refusal to acknowledge Hashem, instead claiming to be a god himself.

The whole of *yetzias Mitzrayim* was intended to impress upon us that it is Hashem who runs the world, who can take a people from slavery to rulership, and nobody else. Each of the *makkos* was intended to rebut this *middah* of Egypt, which remained ingrained even in the Pharaoh in Yechezkel's time, by demonstrating Hashem's full mastery over all facets of nature. While *Klal Yisrael* are also called fish, we are meant to be "to multiply like fish close to the land" (*Bereishis 48:16*). In other words we cannot be blinded by your own personal "ocean" and believe that we are the causes of our own success. Instead, we must be "בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ" imbued with the knowledge that there is a creator who runs the whole world and each part of our individual lives.

## HALACHA HASHAVUAH

*Josef Weiner (23)*

This week's column will continue last week's discussion of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*. Last week the "how" of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* was discussed. This week's column will focus on what one may use to fulfill one's obligation.

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that Rashi is just like *Targum* and can therefore be used in its place. Furthermore, one who is "God fearing" should use both Rashi and *Targum Onkelos* (*Orach Chayim* 285:2). However, Rav Chaim Kanievsky is of the opinion that it is better to use *Targum*, not Rashi, even if one does not understand it well (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:16). The *Mishnah Berurah* explains that Rashi can be used in *Targum's* place because Rashi explains the meaning of the *Pesukim* just like *Targum*. Ideally, one should do *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* with both Rashi and *Targum* as each has a specific benefit. Rashi explains the *pesukim* according to the teachings of *Chazal*, while the *Targum Onkelos* was given at Har Sinai and explains each and every word. Furthermore, there are some *Pesukim* (especially in *Sefer Vayikra*) which are essentially impossible to understand using Onkelos alone (M.B. 285:6). Rav Vosner writes that one who is using Rashi instead of *Targum* must say the words; however, if he is using both *targum* and Rashi he may simply look at the words of Rashi without mouthing them. (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:14).

One may not use a translation that only contains the literal meaning of the words as *Targum* is not just a translation; rather, it is a translation with an explanation woven into it (M.B. 285:4). However, the *Mishnah Berurah* comments that one who does not understand Rashi may use a translation that explains the *Pesukim* according to the interpretation of *Chazal*. Based on this, Rav Moshe Feinstein was of the opinion that one may use an English translation of Rashi to fulfill his obligation of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum* (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:15).

According to Rav Vosner, the *Chofetz Chaim* had the personal practice to read the pasuk twice followed by *Targum*, Rashi, and then the Ramban (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:6). Furthermore, the *Chofetz Chaim* writes that in times of the *Gemara* one was able to comprehend the *pesukim* through the use of *Targum Onkelos*; however, nowadays when most would not be able to understand the parsha by means of *Targum* one must use Rashi to fulfill their obligation (*Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* 285:17).

## PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to [shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org](mailto:shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org) along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. What are the only two things the *Torah* refers to as a *morasha* rather than a *yerusha*? What is the difference between these two terms?
2. This week's *parsha* begins with *Hashem* telling Moshe that He had appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov as Keil Shakai. Where does *Hashem* appear to Yitzchak with this name?
3. To which two people in the *Torah* was the nickname Puti'eil given?

## GEDOLIM GLIMPSE: RAV YITZCHAK KADURI

*Meir Morell (22)*



Rabbi Yitzchak Kaduri (1898/1901/1902-2006) was born in Baghdad, to Rabbi Katchouri Diba ben Aziza, a spice trader.

As a young child, Kaduri excelled in his studies and began learning *Kabbalah* while still in his teens, something he would continue studying for the rest of his life. He was a child student of the *Ben Ish Chai*, Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, and studied at the *Zilka Yeshiva* in Baghdad. Rabbi Kaduri moved to the British Mandate of Palestine in 1923. It was here that he changed his name from Diba to Kaduri.

He went to learn at the *Shoshanim Ledovid Yeshiva* for kabbalists from Iraq. There he learned from the leading kabbalists of the time, including Rabbi Yehuda Ftaya, author of *Beis Lechem Yehudah*, and Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, author of *Kaf Hachaim*. He later immersed himself in regular *Gemara* study and halacha in the *Porat Yosef Yeshiva* in Jerusalem's Old City, where he also studied *Kabbalah* with the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Ezra Attiya, Rabbi Saliman Eliyahu (father of Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu), and other learned *Rabbis*.

In 1934, Rabbi Kaduri and his family moved to the Old City, where the *Porat Yosef Yeshiva* gave him an apartment nearby with a job of binding the *yeshiva's* books and copying over rare manuscripts in the *yeshiva's* library. The books remained in the *yeshiva's* library, while the copies of manuscripts were stored in Rabbi Kaduri's personal library. Before binding each book, he would study it intently, committing it to memory. He was reputed to have photographic memory and also mastered *Shas* by heart, including the *Rashi* and *Tosafos* commentaries.

During the period of Arab-Israeli friction that led up to the Israeli war of Independence, the *Porat Yosef Yeshiva* was virtually turned into a fortress against frequent flashes of violence. When the Jewish quarter of the Old City fell to the invading Jordanian Army, the Jordanians set fire to the *yeshiva* and all surrounding houses, destroying all the books and manuscripts that Rabbi Kaduri could not smuggle to *Beis El Yeshiva* (*Yeshivas HaMekubalim*) in Jerusalem. He knew all the writings of the Arizal, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, by heart. After the passing of the leading kabbalist, Rabbi Efraim Hakohen, in 1989, the remaining kabbalists appointed Rabbi Kaduri as their leader.

Rabbi Kaduri did not publish any of the works that he authored on *Kabbalah*; he allowed only students of *Kabbalah* to study them. He did publish some articles criticizing those who engage in "practical *Kabbalah*", the popular dissemination of advice or amulets, often for a price. Rabbi Kaduri said "It is forbidden to teach a non-Jew *Kabbalah*, not even *Gemara*, not even simple Torah," perhaps referring to pop celebrity Madonna's publicized interest in *Kabbalah*; he also said that women (even Jewish) are not allowed to study *Kabbalah*.

Over the years, thousands of people would come to seek his advice, blessings and amulets which he would create specifically for the individual in need. He was also known for saying over events that would happen in the future, something that seemed much like prophecy.

Rabbi Kaduri lived a life of poverty and simplicity. He ate little, spoke little, and prayed each month at the gravesites of *tzaddikim* in Israel. His first wife, Sara, died in 1989. He remarried in 1993 to Dorit, a *baalas teshuvah* just over half his age.

In January 2006, Rabbi Kaduri was hospitalized with pneumonia in the *Bikur Cholim Hospital* in Jerusalem. He died on 29 Teves 5766.

An estimated 300,000 people took part in his funeral procession on January 29, which started from the *Nachalas Yitzchak Yeshiva* and wound its way through the streets of Jerusalem to the *Givat Shaul* cemetery near the entrance to the city of Jerusalem.

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## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

*Yisroel David Rosenberg ('23)*

### The Makkah Behind the Mask - Tzefardei'a and Arov

There are plenty of animals in this week's *parsha*. Each of the first five *makkos* directly involve animals. First the fish die as the Nile turns to blood, then frogs emerge from the river, followed by creeping lice, wild beasts, and pestilence over the livestock.

But is this list a correct understanding of the *pesukim*? Are these really the animals that besieged Egypt?

The Ibn Ezra (*Shemos* 7:27) mentions a disagreement amongst *meforshim* as to whether the word "tzefardei'a" refers to frogs or to crocodiles. He says that some are of the opinion that the word refers to the common "min dag" - "type of fish" (aquatic creature) of *Mitzrayim* that resides by the river and attacks people. In other words, the crocodile. Ibn Ezra himself, however, disagrees with this interpretation and says that he believes the *tzefardei'a* must have been the creature found in most rivers that "makes its voice heard". This creature is the belligerent, croaking frog.

The *Netziv*, in his *peirush* on the *Chumash*, *Ha'emek Davar*, (*Shemos* 7:29) combines both approaches and says that the whole of Egypt was plagued with frogs while Pharaoh himself was subject to deadly crocodiles.

There is also a *machlokes* regarding the identity of the creatures of *arov*. The word literally means "mixture" which leads to two conclusions in the *midrash* (*Shemos Rabbah* 11:3). Rabbi Yehudah states that the plague was a mixture of wild animals such as lions, tigers and bears. Rabbi Nechemia disagrees and says that the mixture was one of insects, swarms of mosquitoes and hornets.

The *midrash* continues to explain that Rabbi Yehudah may have this opinion because *Hashem* called the *arov* away at the end of the plague. This is juxtaposed to the rotting, odorous bodies of the creatures from *makkas tzefardei'a* which *Hashem* had left behind as further torment to the *Mitzrim*. Had the fourth plague really been swarming insects, there would have been no reason not to leave them back. Only the wild beasts with their valuable hides would have been called away from *Mitzrayim* so as not to benefit the people.

These are just a couple of examples that show how important it is to pay attention to the text of the *chumash* and learn what is said about unique words. It is good to discover what they truly mean and not simply a translation that, by nature, can follow only one opinion.

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## Parsha Summary

Moshe and Aharon, acting on the command of *Hashem*, come to Pharaoh and demand for *Bnei Yisroel's* freedom. Pharaoh refuses, so *Hashem* sends upon Egypt the *makkos* of *dam*, where the waters of Egypt turned to blood; *tzefar-dei'a*, a frog infestation; *kinim*, a lice infestation; *arov*, an infestation of wild animals, *dever*, a deadly plague amongst the cattle; *shechin*, boils; and *bar-ad*, devastating hail. *Hashem* explains that the reason for these *makkos* is so that the whole world will recognize His greatness. Despite all of these *makkos*, Pharaoh still refuses to set *Bnei Yisroel* free.

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