

The Hand That Smites - Caresses

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vaeira

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The Tone of Moshe

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The Name of Hashem is Concealed

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The Words of Redemption & The Levels of Wealth

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Relating to the Concealed Name of Hashem

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The Name of Hashem and the Significance of 21

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Ramchal: The Knowing Heart

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Hypersensitivity Elicits A Response Of Insensitivity

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1. Moshe said to G-d, "Why have you brought difficulty upon this People?"
2. Midrash: Dasan and Aviram accused Moshe of souring their relationship with Pharaoh.
3. They blasphemed and cursed him.
4. Moshe was so deeply effected by their onslaught: their claim was a desecration if G-d's name.
5. Because of his pain he expressed himself to G-d in this manner.
6. This is similar to Avraham- when told by G-d that he was going to destroy Sodom.
7. Avraham's concern: there may be a mis-perception regarding the standing of the members of the Sodom community.
8. The population may believe G-d destroys the righteous together with the evil.

Heightened Intensity Yields Outstanding Results

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1. Moshe comes to Egypt as G-d's Agent to redeem the Jews.
2. He performs 3 miracles to prove he is the Redeemer.
3. The Jews believe and want to leave Egypt to go in the desert for 3 days to worship G-d.
4. Pharaoh withdraws the straw subsidy and demands the same quota of bricks.
5. The Jewish Overseers are beaten by Egyptians for not producing numbers.
6. They complain to Pharaoh it is impossible.
7. Pharaoh's response is they are lazy have too much time to think.
8. The overseers meet Moshe as they're leaving Pharaoh and fault him for all.
9. Moshe pleads to G-d: "Why are you making it so difficult for the people? Why did you send me?"
10. If the redemption was to begin with Moshe coming to Egypt why did the bondage intensify?
11. Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh: As G-d created the world, whenever there is transition from one state to another there is always resistance.
12. The darkest part of night is right before dawn; the end of winter is the coldest part of winter.
13. As transition is to take place from bondage to redemption, resistance causes an intensification of bondage before the redemption.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vaeira

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The Importance of Balance

Torah: “V’yedaber Elokim – G-d spoke to Moshe and said to him, “I am Hashem...”

Rashi citing Chazal: Moshe was addressed by G-d in a formal and reprimanding context. The appellation of “Elokim” connotes the Attribute of Justice, indicating that Moshe was being faulted for a failing. Additionally the usage of the term “v’yedaber (spoke)” is a formal manner of speech rather than “vayomer (said).” Moshe was addressed by G-d in this manner because of an inappropriate question that he had asked. After Pharaoh had withdrawn the straw subsidy from the Jewish people and demanded the same quota of bricks to be produced, Moshe approached G-d with the question, “My Lord, why have You done evil to this people, why have you sent me?”

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: “The question that was posed by Moshe to G-d was especially inappropriate because he had posed it to G-d Himself, a Great King.

Why did Moshe allow himself to ask a question that seems to be clearly inappropriate? It was because of his familiarity and intimacy with G-d. G-d had shown him a joyous Countenance that He had not previously revealed to anyone other than Moshe. As it states, ‘... My Name Hashem (YKVK) I did not make Myself known to them (the Patriarchs).’ This establishes the special relationship that Moshe had with G-d. After Moshe had asked the question that was inappropriate G-d revealed to him His Countenance of Judgment, which instills fear and awe. The verse states, ‘V’yedaber Elokim – G-d spoke to Moshe....I am Hashem’ Meaning, although G-d revealed His Countenance of Joy, through the Name Hashem (YKVK) Moshe should have experienced that joy within a context of trepidation. As the Gemara states, ‘Even in a moment of joy there should be trepidation.’”

Due to G-d demonstrating His overwhelming love for Moshe, he felt close to Him and thus took the liberty

to pose the question that he should not have asked. It was *Moshe's* love for G-d that compelled him to ask the question because he was concerned for the glory of G-d. Since *Moshe* had come to the Jewish people as G-d's Redeemer, which was proven and confirmed through the revealed miracles that G-d had instructed him to perform, indicating that it was immanent that the bondage would improve. However, when the bondage intensified, it created a setting for a desecration of G-d's Name. *Moshe's* question emanated from his love for G-d. He was concerned about how G-d would be perceived by the Jewish people.

Torah: Pinchas as a zealot killed *Zimri*, the Prince of the Tribe of *Shimon* because he was openly desecrating the Name of G-d by cohabiting with *Cozbi* the Midianite princess. *Pinchas'* act of zealotry was rooted on his love for G-d and thus merited many miracles which protected him from being killed.

Ramban: The commandment to love G-d is a more advanced level than the commandment to fear G-d. Love is something that motivates while fear causes restraint. If this is so, why was *Moshe's* question considered inappropriate?

King *David* in *Psalms:* "But You offer forgiveness so that we may fear You..." Meaning, the reason G-d grants forgiveness is so that the Jewish people should fear Him. Understanding that only He can grant forgiveness will evoke fear and awe of G-d.

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin:* Although *Moshe* and the Jewish people were the direct beneficiaries of the revealed miracles of the exodus, they had not said "*Baruch Hashem!* (Blessed is G-d)." However, *Yisro* after hearing all that had transpired regarding the Jewish people when they had left Egypt, did acknowledge G-d in this manner.

Gemara: "It is something unbecoming (and a blemish on their record) that *Moshe* and the 600,000 Jews who left Egypt did not say '*Baruch* (Blessed)' while *Yisro* did say '*Baruch*.'" Although the Jewish people acknowledged every aspect of miracle that had transpired during the splitting of the Sea through the Song of the Sea, they did not express their thanks to G-d as *Yisro* had done. Despite the fact that the Jewish people had the clarity to describe the miracles in detail, they were not moved to the point of expressing their thanks.

Similarly, one can have an overwhelming love for G-d; however, one may take liberties because one does not simultaneously sense the awesomeness of His Being. Thus, it will not evoke fear within him. By fearing and revering G-d, one will understand the boundaries that exist between himself and the Creator.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: *Moshe* had a unique love for G-d, because what G-d had revealed to him but his fear of G-d was not commensurate with his love. Thus, he took the liberty to ask the question. G-d responded, "Now you will see (the redemption)."

Chazal: The word "Now" infers that *Moshe* will merit seeing the present redemption from Egypt but will not merit bringing the Jewish people into the Land of Israel.

The Perspective and Mindset of Miriam

Torah: Pharaoh had decreed that all Jewish newborn males should be thrown into the Nile. *Yocheved*, *Moshe's* mother, was able to conceal him for a number of months since he had been born prematurely. However, the time had come when she needed to take further measures to protect her son. She constructed a box and placed *Moshe* into the Nile.

Torah: "His sister (*Miriam*) stood at a distance to know what would be done with him (*Moshe*)."

Portion of *Beha'aloscha:* *Miriam* had spoken critically of *Moshe* to her brother *Aaron*, thus causing her to become a leper. *Miriam* needed, because of her leprous status, to be sent out of all the camps of Israel for a period of seven days. (The minimum recovery period of a leper before he can be reinstated).

Midrash: During the time *Miriam* was sequestered outside of the camp, the Jewish people did not travel, but rather, they waited until she recovered and was able to reenter into the camp. In the merit of her waiting to see what would happen to her brother *Moshe*, the Divine Presence, 600,000 males above the age of 20, and the Clouds of Glory, waited for *Miriam* for a period of seven days to recover. This was her reward– measure for measure. As she had waited to see the outcome of *Moshe's* fate, the Jewish people, Divine Presence, and the Clouds of Glory waited for her recovery. One would think that if *Miriam*, the prophetess had become a leper as a result

of speaking critically about *Moshe* the Redeemer, it would be considered a disgrace and she would want it to remain concealed from public knowledge. How could the waiting be considered a reward if it is the basis of disgrace?

Ramban: The positive commandment to remember what G-d had done to *Miriam* when the Jewish people left Egypt must be verbalized by every Jew. It is something that one is not permitted to forget. Seemingly, her disgrace continues until the end of time. Although she had put her life in jeopardy to see what would happen to her brother who she loved, and what she had said to *Aaron* was not said to be negative, she was nevertheless punished by G-d. This is the lesson that every Jew must learn from what had happened to *Miriam* in the desert.

Gemara in Tractate *Sotah*: *Miriam* initially prophesized before the birth of *Moshe*, "My mother will give birth to the Redeemer of Israel."

Midrash: "When *Moshe* was born, the house was illuminated by his presence, confirming that he was indeed destined to be the Redeemer. They had seen the Divine Presence upon him. *Amram* (*Miriam*'s father) kissed her on her head and said, 'My daughter your prophecy has come true.' When *Yocheved* was forced to place *Moshe* into the Nile, *Amram* tapped *Miriam* on the head and said, 'What will become of your prophecy?' (Meaning that it is not certain that *Moshe* will survive the Nile). Thus, *Miriam* stood and waited by the bank of the Nile to see if her prophecy regarding *Moshe* would come to fruition."

Miriam's concern for *Moshe* was not merely a sister's concern for a brother's survival. She understood, as a prophetess, that *Moshe* was the only one who was qualified to be the Redeemer of Israel. If *Moshe* would not survive the Nile, the Jewish people would not be redeemed from Egypt. Consequently, the exodus from Egypt with the objective to receive the *Torah* at Sinai would never take place.

The purpose of creation, which is the fulfillment of the *Torah* by the Jewish people would never be achieved. *Miriam*'s concern was about G-d's glory. Because she understood that everything was at stake, she was willing to put her life in jeopardy to see what the outcome would be. Just as *Miriam* had waited, despite the danger to her own life, for G-d's Glory, so too measure for measure the Divine Presence, the

Jewish people, and the Clouds of Glory waited for her to recover from her leprous state so that it should be known that one is not permitted to speak negatively about his fellow, although it was a disgrace to *Miriam* for all to be aware of her condition. *Miriam*, being the object of the lesson that was being taught, ultimately brings Glory to G-d because it demonstrates that His Will should not be violated for any reason. Every Jew until the end of time will verbalize what had happened to *Miriam* so that we should remember the seriousness of speaking something that one is not permitted to say.

The Means to Internalize Spirituality

Torah: "Say to the Children of Israel: 'I am *Hashem*, 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 be a G-d to you..."

Torah: "So *Moshe* spoke accordingly to the Children of Israel, but they did not listen to *Moshe* because of shortness of wind (*kotzeir ruach*) and hard work." Although *Moshe* had communicated to the Jewish people that their redemption was imminent, they nevertheless could not accept it because they were overwhelmed from the bondage. They had no capacity to internalize what *Moshe* had told them.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: "The term '*kotzeir ruach*' means, of limited capacity. Since the Jewish people in Egypt did not engage in *Torah* study (except the Tribe of *Levy*) they were limited in spirit. It is the study of *Torah* that broadens the heart of man." Although one may be able to comprehend a concept or fact through one's intellect, if he does not engage in *Torah* study, he will not have the broadness of heart or depth to fully internalize its value to be willing to sacrifice on its behalf. It is only through the study of *Torah* that one can actualize and internalize the importance of the issue at hand. Thus, the Jewish people who did not have *Torah* were overwhelmed by the demand to produce the quota of bricks with the threat of being punished, could not internalize what they had believed.

Gemara in Tractate *Taanis*: If one sees a *Torah* sage reacting with anger when the *Torah* is being violated, it is the *Torah* that is "burning within him." As the verse states, "My (G-d's) words (*Torah*) are like fire."

Rashi: Because of his *Torah* study, the *Torah* sage has a broadness of heart – and thus a depth of understanding and sensitivity to be able to focus on what is being transgressed. This is the basis for his agitation. Therefore, one must give the benefit of the doubt to the *Torah* Sage who reacts in an angry manner, because his understanding of the transgression is more profound due to his broadness of heart.

Chofetz Chaim: The *Torah* Sage, because of the fire of *Torah* that exists within him is the equivalent of a fire. The one who is associated with the *Torah* Sage will be influenced by him and would be considered the equivalent of a first vessel (*klee rishon*) that is heated by the fire. Regarding the laws of *Shabbos*, a first vessel has the ability to cook; however, when it is removed from the fire for an extended period of time it will cool and will no longer have any trace of the original fire. It will no longer have the ability to be affective as a cooking vessel.

Similarly, when one associates with a *Torah* Sage he becomes inspired and motivated to understand and appreciate the precepts of the *Torah*. However, if one is no longer exposed to the presence of the *Torah* Sage, although he may intellectually recall and retain the teachings that he had learned, his feeling and motivation will wane because he is no longer associated with the fire of *Torah*. While not every Jew is destined to become a *Torah* Sage, he can nevertheless assume the role of a first vessel that is associated with the fire of *Torah*.

There is a positive commandment for a Jew to attach himself to G-d (*bo tidbok*) – “to Him you shall cleave.”

Gemara in Tractate *Pesachim*: “If G-d is fire, how can one attach himself to fire? One should associate himself closely with a *Torah* scholar. One should marry the daughter of a *Torah* scholar, engage in business with him, and eat and drink with him.” One should be associated with a *Torah* scholar on multiple levels to be exposed to many aspects of his life. Through this level of association, one will be warmed with the fire that exists within the *Torah* scholar, which is the equivalent of cleaving to G-d.

Meriting Clarity

Torah: G-d told *Moshe* to present the Jewish people with the four expressions of redemption. “So *Moshe*

spoke accordingly to the Children of Israel, but they did not listen to *Moshe* because of shortness of wind (*kotzeir ruach*) and hard work.”

Sforno: “The Jewish people did not reflect sufficiently upon the salvation of G-d. If they would have had faith and accepted the imminent redemption, G-d would have considered it a righteousness. As the *Torah* states regarding *Avraham*, our Patriarch after he was informed by G-d that he would have a son, ‘He believed in *Hashem*, and it was considered a righteousness.’ Therefore, although G-d had promised the Jewish people in Egypt that they would inherit the Land, because they did not have sufficient faith in the redemption, G-d gave the Land to their children and not to them.”

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: “G-d had promised the Land to the Jewish people in Egypt. He had used an expressed that was the equivalent of an oath regarding their entering into the Land. If so, how could G-d not bring them into the Land? The promise that G-d had given them was contingent on them having sufficient faith. Because they did not fulfill the prerequisite and allowed themselves to be overwhelmed by the hard work, they did not merit entering into the Land.”

Sforno: The generation of the Jewish people in Egypt did not merit entering into the Land of Israel because they did not have sufficient faith in G-d’s redemption due to their lack of reflection. However, the *Torah* tells us that the generation that left Egypt did not merit to enter into the Land because of the sin of the spies. The spies that were initially sent to scout-out the land returned with slanderous reports, which were believed by the people, despite G-d’s promise that they will conquer the Land.

How do we reconcile *Sforno*’s explanation with the incident of the spies? The spies questioned G-d because of their lack of faith. Had the Jewish people in Egypt had sufficient faith they would have embraced *Moshe*’s words and internalized the fact that they would be redeemed. This would have been considered a righteousness by G-d, thus allowing them to merit clarity in the desert and not fail as a result of the sin of the spies. The only reason they did not merit this special level of clarity was because they did not initially have sufficient faith in Egypt.

Very often we are confronted with situations that are too difficult with which to contend. In these instances

one needs Divine Assistance. However, in order for G-d to intercede and provide this Assistance one needs to merit it. One needs to have previously done something special in order to merit Divine Assistance. Had the Jewish people in Egypt reflected sufficiently upon G-d's imminent redemption, it would have been considered for them a righteousness. They would have thus merited Divine Assistance that would have protected them from failing in the desert.

The Expressions of Redemption, a Precursor for the End of Time

Torah: G-d spoke to *Moshe* and commanded him to communicate the four expressions of redemption to the Jewish people. "Say to the Children of Israel: 'I am Hashem 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 for a people.'"

Baal Haturim: "Each of the four expressions of redemption correspond to each of the four exiles that will be experienced by the Jewish people until the end of time (Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Edomite/Roman)...Regarding the Edomite exile G-d states, 'I will take you...' Why did G-d choose this expression of redemption? It is because the Edomite exile is the longest and most intense exile. The expression 'I will take you...' connotes that G-d will need to forcefully take us out of the Edomite exile because they are unwilling to relinquish their dominion over the Jewish people."

Midrash: Each of the words of the opening verse of the *Torah* alludes to the four exiles that will take place in the future.

Torah: Regarding Creation, "*Bereishis bara Elokeem es ha'shamaiyim v'es ha'aretz: v'ha'aretz hoysa sohu v'vohu v'choshech al panei sahom v'ruach Elokeem merachefes al panei ha'maiyim* (In the beginning G-d Created the heavens and the earth – when the earth was empty, with darkness upon the surface of the deep, and the Divine Presence hovered upon the surface of the waters)."

Midrash: "*Sohu* (empty)," refers to the Babylonian exile. "*Vohu* (chaotic)" refers to the Persian exile. "*Choshech* (darkness)," refers to the Greek exile; as

the *Midrash* tells us, "they blackened our eyes with their decrees." "*Sahom* (of the deep)" alludes to the Edomite exile, which is as unending as the "deep" source of water. (We are still experiencing the Roman exile after more than 2,000 years.) "*V'ruach Elokeem* (the Divine Presence)" refers to the spirit of *Moshiach*."

The *Torah* alludes to the four exiles in the verses pertaining to Creation in order to indicate that part of the fabric of Creation and the objective of the world is for the Jewish people to experience and evolve through the four exiles to a state of perfection and ultimately be redeemed with the coming of *Moshiach*. The ultimate redemption will come because G-d will "take" the Jewish people out of exile as it states, "I will take you."

Torah: During the Covenant between the parts, G-d had instructed *Avraham* to take several species of animals and sever them into two parts, each of which represented one of the four exiles that the Jewish people were destined to experience. Why did G-d reveal the four exiles to *Avraham* and not to *Yitzchak* his son? It is because *Avraham* as the founding Patriarch of the Jewish people needed to be informed of the evolution of the Jewish people until the end of time, as G-d had set forth at the beginning of Creation its evolution through the four exiles that were destined to be.

Torah: *Yaakov* our Patriarch had a prophetic dream on Mt. Moriah. He had seen angels ascending and descending the ladder that extended into heaven. Each of the angels that ascended and descended the ladder was an archangel of the civilization into which the Jewish people will be exiled.

Midrash: "*Yaakov* was shown the archangel of Babylon. He ascended 70 rungs of the ladder and then he descended. (Indicating that the Babylonian exile was going to be 70 years). *Yaakov* was then shown the archangel of Persia which ascended 52 rungs before descending. The archangel of the Greeks ascended 100 rungs and then descended. However, when *Yaakov* saw the archangel of the Edomites (Roman) it continued to ascend without any indication of descending.

"*Yaakov* upon seeing this was frightened. He said to G-d, "Is it possible that this angel will ascend without ever descending? (Indicating that the exile of *Edom*/

Roman will be forever).” G-d responded, “My servant Yaakov, do not fear. Even if you will see him (the archangel of *Edom*) ascending up to the point that is next to Me, from there I will bring him down.” As it is written, “If they rise like an eagle and perch among the stars, from there I (G-d) will bring them down.”

We see that despite the fact that the Edomite exile is so severe and overwhelming, G-d will ultimately “take” His people out of that exile. Yaakov, being the Patriarch who had fathered the twelve tribes, the Tribes of G-d, was made aware of the extent of the four exiles in order for him to inculcate the ability to withstand and overcome all of the issues travails of exile into each of his children who are the founding fathers of each of their respective tribes. The process of redemption had begun before the Jewish people left Egypt. It culminated at Sinai when they were taken as G-d’s chosen people.

It is at this time that G-d mentioned the four expressions of redemption that allude to the four exiles that the Jewish people will experience in the future. They were about to begin their evolution through the various exiles, that will culminate with the coming of *Moshiach* when G-d will “take” His people by extricating them from the dominion of the Edomites. In order to achieve the objective of Creation, which is to ultimately bring humanity to recognize the Omnipotence of G-d, it is necessary for the Jewish people to spiritually develop through the four exiles. In order to reassure the Jewish people that they will in fact be able to endure the process of the exiles, G-d in advance communicated to them the four expressions of redemption, which allude to every one of the exiles that they will experience in the future.



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