

RED ALERT!

VA'EIRA

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DIVREI TORAH

- At the beginning of this Parsha, Hashem harshly responded to Moshe's complaint (at the end of last week's parsha) that Hashem made things worse for the Jewish slaves by being sent to Par'o. He contrasted Moshe to the Patriarchs. The text does not elaborate the full nature of Hashem's displeasure with Moshe. Hashem had promised each of the Patriarchs that He would give the Promised Land to their offspring, but did not fulfill that promise at all during their lifetime. And none of the Patriarchs complained to Hashem for not fulfilling this promise. Therefore Moshe should not have become disappointed when Hashem delayed the redemption. Hashem had told Moshe that the redemption will come about after a certain amount of time. So why did Moshe become upset? It must be because things got worse. It is one thing for it to be delayed, but there was no reason for it become worse!
- The Torah tells us that Amram married his aunt Yocheved, a relationship that will be prohibited in the future. The question here is why

did Hashem arrange it that the birth of Moshe is from a questionable union. We can see from this story that the great Jewish leaders all have blemishes in their background. (Chizkuni). Take a look, for example, to King David whose background includes Lot having relations with his daughter. And Yehuda being intimate with his daughter-in-law. And Ruth being aggressive in creating a relationship with Boaz. This means that the Mashiach will also have these blemishes in his background. So, even though the Torah will point out one's Yichus, one's pedigree, the main thing is who that person really is, his qualities, his character traits, etc. All of which better define who a person is. No one is perfect, but each can strive to be the best person possible, including Moshe Rabbeinu.

- The Biblical name for Hashem is the four letter Y-H-V-H. The first Y is for the future. The last H is for the past. The V in the middle is for the present. Bnei Yisrael can easily relate the Hashem of the past with His relationship to the patriarchs, and the Hashem of the future with the redemption of the Jewish people. But they could not relate to the Hashem of the present, suffering as they were in the Egyptian oppression. Therefore the full name of Hashem was not appropriate for them at this time. Only the other names for Hashem could be utilized at this time. [In our

time, I believe the references to the four letter name of Hashem could be used, but not articulated fully, since we are living without the Beit HaMikdash.]

- During the beginning of the Plagues, Par'o's heart was hard. Over the course of the latter Plagues, Par'o could have given in and freed the slaves, but Hashem hardened Par'o's heart in order to complete what He had in store for Egypt. Why didn't Par'o have the free will to free the Jews and repent? On Tish'a b'Av some years ago, Rav Soloveitchik raised the question: would Hitler have had the ability to repent for his sins? His immediate response was absolutely not! His sins were too immense and evil. Similarly Par'o has crossed the line in his vicious treatment of the Jewish people. Therefore Hashem had hardened Par'o's heart to make sure he would experience the full measure of divine punishment.

- The Talmud (Nedarim 32a) asks: Why was Avraham punished and his offspring sentenced to experience the Egyptian slavery for 210 years? The Talmud gives three answers:

1) Avraham used scholars to save Lot.

2) He asked Hashem how he would know that he would inherit the land.

And 3) He didn't convert the people he captured from S'dom. In my view,

the Talmud is admitting that we do not know the answer. This is because we cannot comprehend Hashem's ways when they are occurring. Hashem told Moshe later on that we will understand when we are able to view things from Hashem's perspective. Until then we just have to accept Hashem's ways. We aren't allowed to understand Hashem at this time. And this was the case for the Jewish people at this time, especially during this time of the divine Plagues.

- The current average rainfall for Cairo is about a quarter of an inch for the whole year. The annual average rainfall for New York City is about 48 inches. Quite a difference. There have been recorded hail for Cairo, even this year of 2025, but not very frequently at all. The existence of a harsh hail as it was in Egypt for the seventh Plague was extremely rare, as it would have been just for rain. Then when we read that there was no rain or hail in Goshen, this was an additional miracle because the climate in Goshen was the same as the rest of Egypt. All of these events proved to all that Hashem was in control, He and only He. Moshe was merely the conductor for Hashem's Egyptian concert. And Bnei Yisrael was the audience for this divine performance. Unlike the previous Plagues, hail could actually kill people if they would not take cover.

- These Plagues were serious, and every time that Moshe said something would happen, it did. So why didn't the Egyptian people begin to take Moshe seriously? It is possible that Hashem had hardened their hearts as well. Let us take a step back and view these events through Par'o's eyes. He is being asked to release over 2 million people and send them out into the desert for a three day convocation. Serious preparation is necessary for this to take place. Firstly, the release of such a large workforce would wreak havoc upon the economy of the nation. Secondly, the Jews would need the time to pack up and prepare for the weekend in the desert. There would be other needed items which would also delay the trip. More time was needed for all things to happen. Par'o is being placed in a hard and difficult predicament.

- MIDRASH. Par'o deserved to die immediately for his sins. Hashem delayed his end from coming so soon, in order to allow the World to see and recognize Hashem's existence. Par'o was required to recognize Hashem's existence and proclaim it to the entire world. The divine goal was to reveal Hashem's existence to the entire world!

Questions by RED

From the text

1. How many Plagues are there in this Parsha?
2. Why was Hashem upset with Moshe? (6:3)
3. Why did Bnei Yisrael not listen to Moshe's speech concerning Hashem redeeming them? (6:19)
4. When the Torah recaps the family's history of Moshe and Aharon, it mentions the names of only two women. Who were they? (6:20,23)
5. How old were Moshe and Aharon when they first spoke to Par'o? (7:7)

From Rashi

6. Why did Aharon bring the first Plague, turning the water into blood, and not Moshe? (7:19)
7. How long did each Plague take? (7:25)
8. Why did Aharon smite the land with Lice, and not Moshe? (8:12)
9. According to Rashi, which animals were killed by the Plague of the Dever Epidemic? (8:10)
10. How was the Plague of Hail a "miracle within a miracle"? (9:24)

From the Rabbis

11. Hashem told Avraham that Bnei Yisrael would be in Exile for 400 years. It was only 210 years. How do we understand 400 years? (Seder Olam)

12. Were Par'o's magicians really able to perform some of the same miracles that Moshe performed? (Rambam vs other commentators)

13. When Aharon's staff swallowed up the Egyptian magicians' staffs, what did this symbolize? (Rabbeinu Bachya)

Midrash

14. What made the Plague of Hail truly a miracle?

Haftara - Yechezkeil

15. What king will conquer Egypt later in history, predicted by Yechezkeil?

Relationships

- a) Moshe - Rechavia
- b) Miriam - Uri
- c) Aminadav - Salma
- d) Adam - Enosh
- e) Avraham - Eisav

ANSWERS

1. Seven

2. Because Moshe complained to Hashem for making things worse after Moshe's first encounter with Par'o.

3. Because they were overwhelmed with the slavery.

4. Yocheved and Elisheva

5. Moshe: 80 years old. Aharon: 83.

6. Because the water protected Moshe when he was cast into the River when he was an infant.

7. The plague itself was one week. But it was preceded by 3 weeks of warnings. So, the entire Plague was one month.

8. Because the land helped Moshe hide the Egyptian whom he killed.

9. Only the animals that were outside in the field.

10. Within each ball of hail, there was fire. The Fire and Water made peace with each other in order to perform Hashem's will.

11. Compute the 400 years from the time of Yitzchak's birth.

12. Rambam: all of the magicians' work was sleight of hand. Other Commentators: Yes, the magicians were able to perform those acts as well.

13. When the staff would swallow the other staffs, it symbolized when the sea swallowed up Par'o and his army.

14. No rain fell in Egypt, much less hail.

15. Nevuchadnetzar

Relationships

a) Grandfather & Grandson
(Rechavia was Eliezer's son)

b) Grandmother & Grandson

c) Grandfather & Grandson
(Salma was Nachshon's son)

d) Grandfather & Grandson

e) Grandfather & Grandson