

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת עקא עדנה  
צפורה ע"ה  
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# על פני השטח

## AL EI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

## Lessons in Fear

למען תדע כי אין כה' אלהינו

*So that you will know that there is none like Hashem, our G-d.* (Shemos 8:6)

Parshas Va'eira describes seven of the ten *makkos*, but, interestingly, the *aliyos* in this *parshah* are not broken up between the *makkos*. Instead, the *aliyos* end with lessons of *yiras Shamayim*: למען תדע כי אין כה' אלקינו; למען תדע כי אני

it dates back many generations and is thus worthy of deeper reflection.

So why is our *parshah* divided in this way? The conclusion is a position of emphasis, and its message remains in our memory; that's human nature. Although Pharaoh wasn't inspired by these messages of *yiras Shamayim*, our *ba'alei kriah* conclude the *aliyos* with them so that these lessons will become etched into our consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

While a *parshah's* internal subdivision into *aliyos* is not from Chazal, the division of one *parshah* from another is. Parshas Va'eira concludes with the pasuk, וַיִּחַזַק לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁלַח – אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה' בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה – *Pharaoh's heart became hard, and he did not send out Bnei Yisrael, as Hashem had spoken through Moshe* (9:35). What are we to learn from this conclusion of our *parshah*?

After all Pharaoh had been shown – *makkah* after *makkah*, demonstrating Hashem's absolute power – his heart remained hard, and he did not learn the lesson. *Sefarim* teach that Pharaoh represents the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara*, sent by Hashem to challenge us, can make us blind and deaf so that we

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*so that you will know that I am Hashem in the midst of the land* (8:18); *so that My Name may be declared throughout the land* (9:16). Although the breakup of *aliyos* is not *halachah l'Moshe m'Sinai*, nor was it instituted by Chazal, nevertheless

<sup>1</sup> See *Ibra D'Dasha*, vol. 2, *Shovavim* 5773, in footnote

## Miscellaneous Medley

וְאַרְאָ אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב

*I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov.* (Shemos 6:3)

Rashi comments on this: וְאַרְאָ – אֵל הָאֲבוֹת, *I appeared – to the fathers*. The *mefarshim* note that such a comment of Rashi is very unusual. Rashi generally expands upon the terse wording of a pasuk; here, he abridges the longer expression of the pasuk.

Let us suggest an approach to understanding this. Each of the Avos was on an unimaginable *madreigah*; Chazal say<sup>5</sup> that the Avos are Hashem's *Merkavah*. We are very far removed from such *madreigos*. A Yid might think he has no connection at all to the Avos; he might think of his relation to them as very distant.<sup>6</sup>

This is what Rashi is addressing with *I appeared – to the fathers*. True, when we refer to the Avos by name: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov – we have little connection to the vast levels those names represent. But they aren't merely great men whose great names resound; they are our *fathers*! When we look at them as such, we can have a connection

<sup>5</sup> Bereishis Rabbah 47:6; 82:6 cont. on page 3

<sup>6</sup> It is told that a Yid once went to see the Chozeh of Lublin, and the Rebbe gave him a small sum of money. The man said to the Chozeh, "I am a relative of yours; I should receive more!" The Chozeh replied, "It is a distant relation." The fellow waited some time, until once during davening, he heard the Rebbe read from his *siddur* a mention of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. He whispered into the Rebbe's ear, "It is a distant relation." His intent was, *Just as we invoke the merit of the Avos although they are so many generations removed from us; so too, I should receive a larger stipend as a relative even though our relation is distant.*

# Signs for the Ages

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manage not to gain lasting inspiration even from great *mofsim*. Although we hear the conclusions of each of the *aliyos* – so that you will know that there is none like Hashem; so that you will know that I am Hashem; so that My Name may be declared throughout the land – it is not enough to leave us with true determination toward *yiras Shamayim*. We must learn from the *parshah's* conclusion – *Pharaoh's heart became hard, and he did not send out Bnei Yisrael* – that true *yiras Shamayim* can only be gained by investing work toward it.

We say in davening, לעולם יהא אדם – *A person should always be G-d fearing in private and in public*. Why is the word “לעולם – always” necessary? The answer is that a Yid cannot rely on a *hisorerus* from yesterday, trusting that it will carry him through today. The *yetzer hara* will not suffice with yesterday's fight; he will try again today to cool off the person's *yiras Shamayim*. One must therefore have within himself a constant fire of *yiras Shamayim* with which to battle the *yetzer hara*. This is what is meant by לעולם יהא אדם ירא שמים.

On a similar note, there is a well-known question on the wording of *Birkas HaChodesh*. We request *yiras Shamayim*, and several requests later, we ask for *yiras Shamayim* again. Why? Because once we recognize that the *yetzer hara* stands in perpetual, relentless battle against us, we understand that we must daven for *yiras Shamayim* again and again.

כל המחלה אשר שמתיה במצרים לא אשים עליה כי אני ה' רפא – *all of the diseases that*

*I brought upon Mitzrayim, I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem, your Healer* (15:26). *Sefarim hakedoshim* explain that this does not refer only to the plagues and physical suffering that Hashem brought upon Mitzrayim. Included in this is also the spiritual malady of *Pharaoh's heart became stubborn* (9:7) – the inability to gain inspiration from a moving experience. About this, too, Hashem says, *I will not bring it upon you*. To the contrary, Bnei Yisrael will constantly seek and gain *hisorerus* from their surroundings, thus growing in their *yiras Shamayim* ever more.<sup>2</sup>

We find an allusion to this in the *pasuk*: the first letters of רפאני ה' רפא spell *[G-d] fearing*. Hashem will heal us of the disease He brought upon Mitzrayim, when He withheld from them the ability to glean *yiras Shamayim*, and thus, we may become יראי שמים so that we can strengthen ourselves in our battles against the *yetzer hara*.

What is the significance of maintaining *yiras Shamayim* “בסתר – in private and in public”? The *Sfas Emes* explains<sup>3</sup> that בגלוי refers to *yiras Shamayim* gained from open wondrous acts of Hashem, from which a person recognizes that Hashem controls all of Creation. But that is not enough. While witnessing the *makkos*, Moshe told Pharaoh, ואתה ועבדיך ידעתי כי טרם – *And as for you and your servants, I know that you are not yet afraid of Hashem, G-d* (9:30). *Sefarim* explain that this means that when the *makkah* would pass, the *yetzer hara*

would lead them back to their previous frame of mind.

The *yiras Shamayim* that comes בגלוי is transient in nature. This is why a person must also fear Hashem בסתר, in private. This means attaching oneself to Hashem and searing into one's consciousness that his every move is only through the power of Hashem. This form of *yiras Shamayim* is truly valuable, as it brings a person to use all his energies to bring *nachas ruach* to Hashem.

The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 31a) states: “A person who possesses Torah but not *yiras Shamayim* is like a treasurer who was given the treasury's inner keys but not its outer keys.” Why is *yiras Shamayim* viewed as the outer keys?

The *Sfas Emes* explains<sup>4</sup> that in reality, all of Creation proclaims Hashem's splendor. As we say in davening, מלא כל הארץ כבודו – *The entire world is full of His glory*. And in *zemiros*, תאיר ארץ מכבודך – *May the land shine with Your glory*. Nothing at all can exist without Hashem's constant support. Why isn't this obvious for all to see? Because the superficiality of this world obstructs the truth, so that it seems as if the physical world is intrinsically valuable and stands on its own. *Yiras Shamayim* is the outer key that can break open this externality, so that the truth becomes manifestly visible: that all of existence is sustained and continues to endure only through Hashem's ongoing act of creation.

(וארא תשפ"ג – ס"ג)

<sup>2</sup> See *Chasam Sofer*, *Beshalach* s.v. *Ki Ani Hashem*

<sup>3</sup> See *Bamidbar* 5631 s.v. *R' Meir; Likutim, Vayigash* s.v. *Pasuk vayigash*

<sup>4</sup> See *Shavuos* 5653 s.v. *Issa; Ekev* 5632 s.v. *Mah*

# Miscellaneous Medley

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to their greatness. After all, *a tatteh iz a tatteh!* In fact, the Yerushalmi<sup>7</sup> states that were he alive today, Avraham would be invalid to serve as a witness to anything relating to his descendants, since they – we – are his relatives.

This reality – that we are the flesh and blood of our great Avos – is a marvelous *zechus*; however, it is also a responsibility. We must actualize our relationship with

drowned out. In order that Moshe's voice could be heard as he davened, he needed to cry out.

We may suggest another approach. The Gemara (Pesachim 53b) states: "From where did Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah learn to give up their lives by entering a fiery furnace? From the *tzefarde'im*, the frogs. They reasoned: if frogs, who are not commanded with *kiddush Hashem*, entered hot ovens – extrapolating from the pasuk (Shemos 7:28) וְעָלוּ וּבָאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וְגו' וּבְתַנּוּרֶיךָ וּבְמִשְׁאָרוֹתֶיךָ – and they shall ascend and come into your palace... and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls, that they were to enter while the ovens were hot, when there were kneading bowls nearby – then we, who are commanded with *kiddush Hashem*, must certainly do so."

Since this *makkah* would bring about a great *kiddush Hashem* at the time of Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah, Moshe needed an especially strong *tefillah* – one of *tze'akah* – to bring it to an end.

As well, Moshe certainly foresaw at that time that Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah's *kal v'chomer* would be made by others, too – the millions of Yidden throughout the ages who would give up their lives *al kiddush Hashem*. Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah were miraculously saved; but many others would not be. Moshe used this opportunity to cry out to Hashem, pleading that the merit of these martyrs should be aroused before Him.

Moshe certainly foresaw that Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah's *kal v'chomer* would be made by others, too – the millions of Yidden throughout the ages who would give up their lives *al kiddush Hashem*

them by following in their ways. There is another message in this: Our Heavenly Father, too, eagerly awaits His children, yearning for them to mend their ways and return to Him.



וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' עַל דְּבַר הַצְּפָרְדִּים

*Moshe cried out to Hashem concerning the frogs.* (8:8)

The *mefarshim* point out that only regarding the *makkah* of *tzefarde'a* did Moshe daven in a manner of *tze'akah*, crying out. Why?

*Moshav Zekeinim* explains that Moshe wanted it to be clear that he removed the frogs through davening, not magic. However, the frogs created a deafening noise, so that one's regular voice would be

וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה מִעַם פְּרָעָה וַיִּעְתָּר אֶל ה'

*Moshe left Pharaoh's presence and entreated Hashem.* (8:26)

Rashi comments: שנתאמץ בתפלה וכו' – He davened strongly... and davened increasingly. The *mefarshim* ask why such a great intensity of *tefillah* was necessary.

When Pharaoh asked Moshe to end the *makkah* of hail (*barad*), Moshe replied, כִּצְאֹתִי אֶת הָעִיר אֶפְרֹשׂ אֶת כַּפֵּי אֶל ה' – *When I leave the city, I shall spread out my hands to Hashem* (9:29). Rashi explains that Moshe couldn't daven in the city because it was full of idols. The *mefarshim* say that this was true of every time Moshe davened for a *makkah* to be removed.

The royal city where Pharaoh resided was doubtlessly a large city, surrounded by smaller towns. It must have taken Moshe a long time to make his way out to the wilderness to daven. By the time Moshe was able to daven, the *tefillah* simply burst forth from his heart, where it had been confined for so long. This is what Rashi means by שנתאמץ בתפלה וכו' ויירבה להתפלל – Moshe exercised extraordinary strength in holding the *tefillah* inside his heart, so that when he finally let go, he let out a great surge of *tefillah*.

Let us illustrate this idea with a different account from Chazal. The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 35a) relates that Rav Yehudah would daven only once every thirty days. Does this mean that Rav Yehudah satisfied his obligations of *tefillah* with such minimal effort?

Rashi explains the pasuk (Bereishis 48:22) בְּחַרְבִּי וּבִקְשֵׁתִי – *with my sword and with my bow*, as referring to *chochmah* and *tefillah*. *My bow* refers to *tefillah*: the Kotzker Rebbe explains that just as a bow shoots an arrow only as intensely as it was pulled back in preparation; so too, *tefillah* is only as potent as the preparation it was given.

After each time Rav Yehudah davened, he began to prepare for his next *tefillah*. For thirty days, Rav Yehudah would accumulate *koach* and passion toward speaking to Hashem. Finally, at thirty days' end, his *tefillah* would shoot forth from his heart and mouth and rise up to Hashem.

(בנאות דשא – וארא תשפ"א)

7 See Rashbam, Bava Basra 128a s.v. *Leis*, cited by *Beis Yosef*, C.M. 33; *Nimukei Yosef*, Bava Basra 57a (of *dapei haRif*).

# Attributable Agency

הִנֵּה אֲנִי מִכָּה בַּמַּטָּה אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדִי עַל הַיַּמִּים אֲשֶׁר  
בְּיָאֵר וְיִהְיֶה לָדָם

Behold, with the staff that is in my hand I shall strike the waters that are in the river, and they shall change to blood. (Shemos 7:17)

The *mefarshim* point out that Moshe did not strike the river; Aharon did. Why did Moshe say he would?<sup>8</sup> The Riva<sup>9</sup> cites Chazal: We learn from here that a *shaliach's* action is attributed to his sender (שלוחו של אדם כמותו).<sup>10</sup>

*Tosefos Rid*<sup>11</sup> asks a well-known question: Since *sheluchos shel adam k'moso*, why does a person need to personally do any mitzvah? Why can't a person make a *shaliach* to sit in a *sukkah* for him, or to wear *tefillin* for him?

*Tosefos Rid* answers<sup>12</sup> that one can only make a *shaliach* for an action to which he remains inherently connected; for example, to deliver a *get*, which has his name written in it. Conversely, there would be nothing connecting a *shaliach's* wearing of *tefillin* to his *meshale'ach* (sender).

*Ketzos Hachoshen*<sup>13</sup> asks: The halachah is that אין שליח לדבר עבירה – One cannot assign a *shaliach* for an *aveirah*.<sup>14</sup> This is derived from a pasuk. It follows that if the pasuk would not teach us this, then *shelichus* would be applicable for an *aveirah*. But according to *Tosefos Rid's* approach, *shelichus* should be inapplicable regardless, since the *aveirah* would have no intrinsic connection to the *meshale'ach*.

There are two possible forms of *shelichus*: either the *shaliach* performs the act solely for the *meshale'ach*, or the *shaliach* does the act for himself, but intends to include

the *meshale'ach* in it as well. The second manner – where the *shaliach* performs the act primarily for himself – is a stronger form of *shelichus*, since the deed takes foremost effect upon himself.

In a similar vein, R. Shlomo Eiger is cited<sup>15</sup> as saying that although one cannot become a *shaliach* for a non-Jew, if one performs an act for a Jew and a non-Jew, it is effective for the non-Jew, as well.

Similarly, *Avnei Nezer*<sup>16</sup> writes that although a *shofar* must be sounded through an act of blowing, nonetheless, others can be *yotzei* from a *ba'al toke'a* in accordance with *shelichus*. But why is this different from any active mitzvah, which cannot be done through *shelichus*? Clearly, since the *ba'al toke'a* is blowing for himself, he can become a *shaliach* to blow for others, too.

The idea that a *shelichus* performed mainly for oneself is stronger certainly holds true of *shelichus* of *divrei reshus* (discretionary matters, neither mitzvah nor *aveirah*). What about a *shelichus* of a mitzvah or an *aveirah*?

The Gemara (Kiddushin 42b) suggests that *shelichus* should be effective in a certain case, to which the Gemara answers that it cannot, since אין שליחות לדבר עבירה. Rashi explains the Gemara's question as maintaining that only the *meshale'ach* should be held responsible, not the *shaliach*. *Tosefos Rid* reads it differently, explaining that both the *shaliach* and *meshale'ach* should be responsible.

It is clear that in *Tosefos Rid's* understanding, if one could make a *shaliach*

for an *aveirah*, the act would not need to be performed solely for the sender; the *shaliach* could be doing it for himself and the *meshale'ach*.

In regard to mitzvos, however, this may not be true. Perhaps, if *shelichus* would be applicable to mitzvos, they would need to be performed solely for the *meshale'ach*.

If so, how could a *ba'al toke'a* be *motzi* others, since the mitzvah is dependent on the act of blowing? The main part of the mitzvah of *shofar* is to hear the sound – only that the sound must originate from someone blowing a *shofar*. Thus, this secondary aspect, the act of blowing, could be performed as a *shelichus*, so that others who hear the sound may fulfill the mitzvah.

In fact, *Ohr Same'ach*<sup>17</sup> maintains this position – that a mitzvah performed as a *shelichus* would need to be done specifically for the sender.<sup>18</sup> If we assume this stance, we may answer *Ketzos Hachoshen's* question on *Tosefos Rid*: How could *shelichus* possibly apply to an act of *aveirah*, since the act is not connected to the *meshale'ach*?

It is only a *shelichus* of mitzvah, which must be done solely for the sender, that needs to have a connection to the sender – otherwise, it cannot take effect. However, a *shelichus* of *aveirah*, which, per *Tosefos Rid's* own position, the *shaliach* could perform both for himself and for the *meshale'ach*, would not need to be connected to the sender. Since the act takes effect upon the *shaliach*, it would be effective for the *meshale'ach*, as well, even if it maintains no connection to him.

(בנאות דשא – וארא תשפ"ג)

8 See Ibn Ezra

9 17:5

10 See *Tzafnas Pa'ane'ach*, 7:17

11 Kiddushin 42b

12 There is a discussion in the Acharonim as to the intent of *Tosefos Rid's* answer, but we present it as it seems.

13 182:1

14 Kiddushin, ibid

15 *Derush V'Chiddush R. Akiva Eiger*, Kesubos 11a

16 *O.C.* 40:6

17 Beginning of *Hilchos Sheluchin*.

18 *Ohr Same'ach* holds this way for reasons of his own.