



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH

ISSUE 14

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VA'EIRA

25th Teveth 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 6, verse 2 - 13

- ✚ Hashem explains to Moshe that he is the God of his forefathers and is tormented by B'nai Yisrael's cries of despair.
- ✚ Hashem sends Moshe out to speak to the Jewish people, stating that they are now Hashem's chosen nation and he will personally with an outstretched arm put an end to their oppression and slavery in Mitzraim and, lead them to the land of Israel.
- ✚ Moshe argued that the people were suffering so much, they'll refuse to listen or believe him, so Hashem appointed Aron to go with him.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 6, verses 14 - 28

- ✚ The heads of B'nai Yisrael houses, starting with Reuven are listed here.
- ✚ These are the elders who Moshe and Aron relayed Hashem's message to before embarking to relay Hashem's intentions to Pharaoh.

Sh'lisi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 6, verse 29 - Chapter 7, verse 7

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe that when Aron and Moshe stand before Pharaoh demanding the release of B'nai Yisrael, Hashem will harden his heart in order to bring forth a number of Plagues upon the whole land of Mitzraim.
- ✚ Moshe is eighty years old and Aron is eighty three when they both enter Pharaoh's palace to speak with him on B'nai Yisrael's behalf.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 7, verse 8 - Chapter 8, verse 6

- ✚ Pharaoh demands proof of Hashem's power, so Aron threw his staff to the ground and it became a serpent. Pharaoh then summons his magicians to repeat the trick but when they did Aron's staff swallowed them all up. Pharaoh dismisses this as proof of Hashem's power and refuses to admit defeat.
- ✚ Moshe warns Pharaoh if he does not comply, Hashem will turn all the water in Mitzraim into blood.
- ✚ After Pharaoh's refusal, Aron lifted up his staff over all the rivers and streams and immediately all the water did indeed turn to blood, killing all the fish making it impossible to drink for seven whole days.
- ✚ Aron points his staff once more over the rivers and lakes. This time frogs emerged from the water covering the whole land. Pharaoh agrees to let the Jewish nation go if the plague stops.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 8, verses 7 - 18

- ✚ Moshe prays and all the frogs die. However pharaoh stands his ground and refuses once again to let them leave.
- ✚ Next Aron strikes the sand with his staff, all the sand across the land suddenly transformed into lice. Goshen was the exception because Hashem's people dwelt there.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 8, verse 19 – Chapter 9, verse 16

- ✚ Three more plagues strike Mitzraim (Wild beast attacks, Pestilence, and Boils; yet after each one Pharaoh stood his ground and kept saying no.
- ✚ Although Pharaoh's magicians admitted it was the finger of Hashem that was causing the plagues, Pharaoh Remains obstinate and still denies to let the Jewish nation go.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 9, verses 17 - 35

- ✚ A hail storm combined with fire came next destroying everything in its path.
- ✚ This time Pharaoh himself admits defeat and tells Moshe and Aron that he has indeed wronged B'nai Yisrael.
- ✚ He implores for Moshe and Aron to pray on his behalf to end the plagues.
- ✚ Moshe complied but as soon as the hail stopped falling, Just as Hashem predicted, Pharaoh hardened his heart once again and refused B'nai Yisrael to leave.

Haftorah – YEHEZKEL (EZEKIEL) Chapter 28 verse 25 to Chapter 29 verse 21

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yehezkel begins with a description of what will occur during the ingathering of the exiles.
- ✚ The prophet then proceeds to convey a prophecy regarding Pharaoh and Egypt, foretelling the demise once again of the Egyptian empire.
- ✚ The Haftorah ends with another prophecy wherein Hashem informs Yehezkel that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, will be the one to conquer Egypt and take its spoils. This as a reward for his effort in defeating the wicked nation of Tyre.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ This week's Haftorah begins with a mention of the ingathering of the exiles, echoing Hashem's promise mentioned in the Torah portion: "I will take you out of the suffering of Egypt."
- ✚ Yehezkel then goes on to discuss the annihilation of Pharaoh and Mitzraim, and how he must, just like Moshe, warn the Egyptians that Hashem is preparing to punish them; which is also reminiscent of the primary theme of the Sedra. 'The devastation Hashem wrought upon Egypt'.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Open miracles' seem to be a very important part of our early Jewish history. In this week's Sedra, every Plague which struck Mitzraim (Egypt) blood, frogs, etc. were all such Miracles as each one represented a fantastic manipulation of nature which are turned upside down to help release Bnai Yisrael from their bondage.

To explain why the Ten Plagues had to be, we need to first explain the Jewish view on miracles in general. The main focal point is that all the processes which make up the physical universe are miraculous in of itself. We've just become so used to it that we simply don't notice. Judaism holds that nature does not act independently of Hashem, but, at the same time, Hashem created the laws of nature and does not like to interfere with them. Certainly it goes without saying that Hashem is capable of doing whatever He likes, but He doesn't like to play around with the physical world and its workings. Therefore, most miracles are considered a natural phenomenon with awesome and impeccable good timing.

The Ten Plagues however are a notable exception to this rule as they are a clear example of Hashem flipping the laws of nature on its end. We have hail which should be frozen that was consumed with fire; there's darkness so dense that no one can see or move; Plagues that effected the Egyptians but were not happening to anyone else living in close proximity to them etc.

This I believe is the reason why: 'Idolatry!' The whole essence of idol worship is the credence that every force in nature has a particular god that controls it. In Mitzraim they worshipped the Nile god, the sun god, the sheep god and hosts of others too. The Ten Plagues were designed by Hashem to flip all the laws of nature in order to demonstrate not just for the Jewish people and Egyptians living in that time but for all of humanity, until the end of time, that He alone controls all of nature, and the physical world, There is nothing outside of His control which he cannot manipulate to do his bidding.

If we examine the plagues carefully we can readily see that each one was designed to show Hashem's control of all the forces in nature and it's creations, Yet despite this, you can't help to be amazed by the amount of resistance on the part of not just Pharaoh, but the whole of the population of Mitzraim of not caring if the whole country is devastated by these continuous tragedies, just as long as Bnai Yisrael remained in their control.

I'm convinced that, had the Egyptians learned from any if not all of the previous nine plagues, forcing Pharaoh to free Bnai Israel sooner because Hashem had proven he does not go around making idle threats; then Hashem would had never taken the drastic action of Killing their first born.

Everyone needs to take Hashem's warnings seriously. If not, then unfortunately, we just have to suffer the consequences. However Hashem is fair, and will always allow anyone the chance to be spared if we do Teshuva and obey his wishes. May Hashem help all those who still need to learn this lesson today in order to make our world become a better place. Amen

