



## *Parshas Va'era 2021, the freedom mentality*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Shaul Ben Berta, Michaela Bas Noga, and Noga Bas Nava.*

Our Parsha begins with G-d responding to Moshe's outcry about why He allowed the situation to worsen. Before Moshe demanded that Pharaoh let the Jewish people go, the Egyptians provided straw to make cement. But after Moshe approached Pharaoh, the Egyptians no longer provided them straw to make cement. Yet, they kept the number quota of cement blocks that each Jew had to supply.

G-d responded by revealing one of His most holy names to Moshe, a name that He did not reveal to our forefathers. G-d tells Moshe that He heard the nation's cries; now He will punish the Egyptians and take the Jewish people out of Egypt.

The Parsha contains seven of the ten plagues that G-d struck the Egyptians for enslaving the Jewish nation. **Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild animals, Death of Cattle, Boils, and Fiery Hail.**

Each plague's cycle lasted one month. Moshe and Aaron would warn Pharaoh about the upcoming plague for the first three weeks, which would last one week.

Amazingly, during the plague of fiery hail, Pharaoh told Moshe (9:27), "*I have sinned this time. The Lord is the righteous One, and my people and I are the guilty.*" Nevertheless, as soon as Moshe stopped the plague, Pharaoh's conscience disappeared and refused to set them free.

However, a question comes to mind: When Moshe's message of hope and freedom fell on deaf ears, he turned to G-d. He lamented that if the Jewish people wouldn't listen to him, how could Pharaoh heed his warnings? G-d responded to both Moshe and Aaron (6:13), "*instruct the Jewish people and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt to let the Jewish nation out of Egypt.*" But how is that an answer to Moshe's question?

Furthermore, why did G-d instruct Moshe to tell Pharaoh and the Jewish people that they should be freed?!

Rashi (*Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading commentary on the Torah*) answers this question by explaining how Moshe was to interact with Pharaoh. He writes that G-d instructs Moshe to deal with Pharaoh with respect to royalty, as he would with his people. He is meant to be calm, level-headed and balanced when communicating with Pharaoh or the Jewish people.

Since his complaint to G-d was about the Jewish people not listening, he is being instructed to act and eventually convince the Jewish nation and Pharaoh. He must not be disrespectful, rude or angry when dealing with them; rather, he should be a leader.

However, the Ramban (*Rav Moshe Ben Nachman, a leading scholar, philosopher, and Kabbalist*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He

writes that since Pharaoh and the Jewish people both play a part in their freedom, G-d is answering that he must convince each side.

He needs to convince Pharaoh that it is in his best interest to free the nation. But he must also persuade the Jewish people to **WANT** to be free. The Jews didn't even want to hear or think of freedom at that time, as the Pasuk states (6:9) *"they would not listen to Moshe because of the slavery and hard labor."*

The Ramban explains that Moshe's job as a leader is to ensure the release of his people, but since they don't think they can be freed, he must change their minds. **Because if they don't even think about liberation, they will never experience it.**

They won't have the drive and fight within themselves to survive until they are released. G-d's answer to Moshe is to prepare the Jewish people for freedom and convince Pharaoh to free them.

In our daily life, we cannot have a victimhood mindset if we wish to grow and succeed because it is an attitude of compromise and defeat rather than progress and development. How can we prosper during challenging times if we cannot face the possibility of disappointment and failure?

The modern-day Exodus is not allowing ourselves to be broken down when things do not go our way. To have a survivor mindset and let go of the voice within ourselves that we cannot reach success. We must be flexible and take on each challenge with the intensity, energy and dedication it requires to overcome it.

***"The greatest achievements are accomplished not through strength but perseverance."***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*