



## *Parshas Va'era 2024, the leadership gamechanger*

***The Parsha Perspective is in honor of Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers. May G-d return all the hostages and return them immediately.***

*The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and those who need to experience a speedy and complete recovery with G-d's help.*

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

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.

However, after Moshe approached Pharaoh, the Egyptians no longer provided them with the necessities to make cement. Yet, they kept the same 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 and will punish the Egyptians and redeem the Jewish people.

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. The plague lasted one week, but Moshe and Aaron would warn Pharaoh about the upcoming plague for three weeks.

However, a question comes to mind: After Moshe tells the Jewish nation that G-d has heard their cries for salvation, they do not believe him. Pasuk writes (6:9) *"Moshe spoke to the Jewish people, but they did not listen from the shortness of breath and hard work."* Yet, when Moshe repeats to G-d what occurred, he says they did not listen "because I have a lisp." Why did Moshe change the reason for the Jewish people not heeding his words of redemption?

The Alshich Hakadosh, Rav Moshe Alshich, gives an interesting answer; he differentiates why the Jewish people did not listen and why Pharaoh ignored Moshe Rabbeinu. So when speaking with G-d, Moshe tries to add to why he is not the right person for this job.

The Alshich writes that the Torah has a simple reason why the Jewish nation did not listen to Moshe: because of the shortness of breath and hard work. But adding a stutter that Pharaoh would mock and ridicule leads Moshe to feel that he is not fit for this monumental position.

However, the Ibn Ezra, Rav Avraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that this conversation between G-d and Moshe Rabbeinu demonstrates in no uncertain terms that he is the right person for this task, why he is the ultimate leader and the only person who could lead the Jewish nation from Egypt to the promised land.

The Ibn Ezra answers that Moshe knew exactly why the Jewish nation and Pharaoh would not listen to him. The lack of spirit for the Jewish people, and a speech impediment for Pharaoh. But when speaking with G-d, Moshe takes the responsibility and blame for what is happening to his people.

Moshe could have said to G-d, "I told you by the burning bush that the Jewish people will not listen to me; I am not the right fit for this job." Instead, Moshe put the fault on his shortcomings, on his inability to articulate G-d's words in an effective manner. He would not blame his people, who have been subjugated for the past 200 years, for their lack of spirit.

The Ibn Ezra explains that the fact Moshe would not criticize the Jewish nation for not listening to his words of redemption demonstrates his leadership ability. It reveals why G-d chose Moshe to lead his people despite the stated deficiencies and Imperfections. Moshe personified the most fundamental aspect of redeeming Jewish people: genuine care and love for each person.

He first demonstrated his devotion to the Jewish nation when he left Pharaoh's palace and chose to kill the evil Egyptian and join his people. When presented with the opportunity, he chooses his people once again.

This lesson is ever more relevant as we prepare for Yud Shevat, the day that the Rebbe took leadership over the Chabad - Lubavitch movement in 1951.

From the onset, the Rebbe stated that leadership means empowering every person to lead in their own way. Some people lead synagogues and communities, while others lead by infusing G-d into everything they do. Together, we will complete the monumental task of sharing G-d's oneness with the world.

In our daily lives and during these trying times, we are challenged to lead; as the war in Israel progresses, so does the hate against Jews across the globe. Today, January 11th, Israel is defending its right to exist as a genocide case brought by South Africa in the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

Not that it matters, but from the early 2000s, American and British intelligence has warned about terrorist training camps in South Africa.

In 2022, the US Treasury sanctioned many South Africans connected to funding ISIS and other terrorist networks throughout the world.

Although the irony looms large, we can not shy away from the task set before us. We must empower each other to recognize the uniqueness of every soul and their duty in G-d's vast universe. Whether they are close friends, family, or just strangers, we should inspire them to fill their piece of the puzzle and bring about the ultimate redemption!

**"Leadership is, I have argued, the acceptance of responsibility.**

**Therefore if we are all responsible for one another,  
we are all called on to be leaders, each within our sphere of influence,  
be it within our friend group, our family, or in our community."**

**- Lessons in leadership by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos!*

*Rabbi Sholom Yemini*