

NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Vaera

(http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm)

Parsha Outline

- Moshe refuses the mission
- Moshe's genealogy
- Moshe returns to Pharaoh
- The staff becomes a serpent
- The Ten Plagues begin

Parsha Summaries

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/347676/jewish/Vaeira-Roundup.htm

Va'eira Roundup

In last week's Parshah, Moses cried bitterly to G-d about the hardships that the Jews were experiencing. Now, G-d speaks to Moses and promises him that he will indeed save the Jews. He tells him that he must go to King Pharaoh and demand that he let the Jews out of Egypt. But, G-d warns Moses that Pharaoh will not listen, because G-d will harden his heart so that He can show the Jews great miracles.

So Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh to try to convince him to let the Jews free. But Pharaoh refuses to listen. Aaron turns his stick into a snake, but still, Pharaoh says no. So when they go again, G-d tells them to tell Pharaoh that if he doesn't listen to G-d, the Nile River will be turned to blood.

Pharaoh says no, and so the punishing plagues begin. First, the Nile is turned to **blood**. Next, Egypt is overrun by swarms of jumping **frogs**, and then by itchy **lice**. In the fourth plague, hordes of massive, scary, **wild animals** invade the land, and in the fifth, all the animals belonging to the Egyptians **get sick and die**. Next, all the Egyptians get these horrible, painful **boils** all over their skin, and in the seventh plague, big balls of fire and ice fall down from the sky as **hail**.

And each time, Pharaoh begs Moses to get rid of the plague and promises that he will let the Jews go. But as soon as the plague is over, Pharaoh changes his mind. And no matter how much Moses warns him that a new plagues will come, and no matter how much he

knows the Egyptians will suffer, Pharaoh's heart remains hardened, and the Jews remain stuck in Egypt.

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/617210/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm

Va'eira Aliya Summary

General Overview: In this week's reading, *Va'eira*, Pharaoh refuses to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt, even after Aaron exhibits miraculous powers, transforming his staff into a serpent. The first seven plagues strike Egypt: Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild Beasts, Pestilence, Boils, and Fiery Hail.

First Aliyah: This week's portion opens with G-d's response to Moses (continuation from the end of last week's reading). G-d told Moses that He revealed Himself to the Patriarchs and established with them a covenant to give them the land of Canaan. And now the time has arrived to fulfill His promises. G-d told Moses to tell the Israelites that He has heard their cries, and He will now deliver them from Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land. Moses relayed the message, but their unbearable workload prevented them from accepting his words. G-d then told Moses to instruct Pharaoh to send the Israelites from his land. Moses protested: "If the children of Israel did not listen to me, how then will Pharaoh listen to me? I have a speech impediment?" (G-d's answer below in the Third Aliyah.)

Second Aliyah: The Torah takes a brief interlude and traces the lineage of Moses and Aaron, listing their family trees.

Third Aliyah: G-d tells Moses to go speak to Pharaoh, and Aaron should serve as his spokesman. G-d informed him that He will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will refuse to release the Israelites. At that point G-d will "multiply His wonders" in Egypt, until the Egyptians will recognize that G-d is the L-rd.

Fourth Aliyah: Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh. As per G-d's instructions, Aaron cast his staff on the ground, and it turned into a serpent. When Pharaoh's magicians did the same with their staffs, Aaron's staff swallowed theirs. Pharaoh remained unimpressed—and so the plagues commenced. Plague One: Aaron smote the Nile with his staff. The river and all the waters in Egypt turned into blood, and all the fish perished. Plague Two: Aaron stretched his staff upon the Nile and droves of frogs emerged. They covered the land, entered all the houses, even the ovens and kneading bowls. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged them to pray to G-d to remove the plague, after which he would release the Israelites.

Fifth Aliyah: Moses prayed to G-d, and the frogs all died. Egypt reeked from the odor of rotting frogs, and Pharaoh reneged on his promise. Plague Three: Aaron smote the earth with his staff, and swarms of lice attacked Egypt, covering man and beast. Even Pharaoh's magicians were amazed by this, and informed Pharaoh that this is the "finger of G-d." Plague Four: G-d dispatched Moses to warn Pharaoh that his land will be infested by a mixture of noxious animals. Only the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, would be spared.

Sixth Aliyah: The mixture of wild beasts descended upon Egypt, destroying the entire land with the exception of Goshen. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and offered to allow the Israelites freedom to serve G-d whilst still in Egypt. When Moses rejected this offer, Pharaoh capitulated and offered to release the Israelites if only the plague came to an end. Moses prayed, the plague ended, and Pharaoh reneged on his promise again. Plague Five: all the Egyptians' cattle suddenly died; none of the Israelites' animals were affected. Plague Six: Moses and Aaron took handfuls of furnace soot and threw them heavenward. The soot descended, covered the entire Egypt, infecting all its inhabitants with painful boils. G-d sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: Just as G-d wiped out all the Egyptian cattle, He could have easily slain Pharaoh and all his people too. "But, for this [reason] I have allowed you to survive, in order to show you My strength and to declare My name all over the earth!"

Seventh Aliyah: Plague Seven: Moses warned Pharaoh that a catastrophic hail would descend upon the land. Man or beast that would remain in the field would be killed by the hailstones. Moses stretched his rod toward heaven and hail poured down—with fire

blazing inside the icy hail. Aside for damage to humans and animal, the hail destroyed all vegetation and trees. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "I have sinned this time," he declared. "The Lord is the righteous One, and I and my people are the guilty ones. Entreat the Lord, and let it be enough of God's thunder and hail, and I will let you go..." Moses prayed. The hail stopped. And Pharaoh changed his mind yet again.

<http://ohr.edu/tw/5759/shmos/vaera.htm#SUM>

Hashem tells Moshe to inform the Jewish People that He is going to take them out of Egypt; however, the Jewish People do not listen. Hashem then commands Moshe to go to Pharaoh and ask him to free the Jewish People. Although Aharon shows Pharaoh a sign by turning a staff into a snake, Pharaoh's magicians copy the sign, emboldening Pharaoh to refuse the request. Hashem punishes the Egyptians and sends plagues of blood and frogs, but the magicians copy the miracles on a smaller scale, again encouraging Pharaoh to refuse Moshe's request. After the plague of lice, even Pharaoh's magicians concede that only G-d could be performing these miracles. Only the Egyptians, and not the Jews in Goshen, suffer during the plagues. The onslaught continues with wild animals, pestilence, boils and fiery hail. However, despite Moshe's offers to end the plagues if Pharaoh will let the Jewish People leave Egypt, Pharaoh continues to harden his heart and refuses to let them go.

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1

(שמות ו:ב-ט:לה)

The Four Expressions of Redemption:

HaShem spoke to Moshe and told him He would take the Jews out of Egypt. He expressed this intent with four expressions "והוצאתי" – "and I shall take you out", "והצלתני" – "and I shall rescue you", "וגאלתי" – "and I shall redeem you", and "ולקחתני" – "and I shall take you".

The Process of Redemption Begins

HaShem now told Moshe to go once again and speak to Pharaoh. Nevertheless, HaShem told Moshe, Pharaoh will not listen and HaShem will then take the Jews out of Egypt miraculously.

The Second Meeting with Pharaoh

Moshe and Aharon came to Pharaoh and, as instructed by HaShem, Aharon threw down his staff and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned his magicians who duplicated this, throwing down their staffs and turning them into snakes. Aharon's staff then swallowed the other staffs. Despite this Pharaoh was stubborn and refused to release the Jews.

The Ten Plagues

At this point begins the series of plagues that HaShem brought upon the Egyptians that ended with the exodus from Egypt. Each plague lasted seven days unless it was ended earlier by the prayers of Moshe. None of the plagues affected the Jews. Before each plague Pharaoh was warned to let the Jews go. He refused until after the tenth plague.

1. דם – Blood

All the water within the land of Egypt changed into blood, even water that was stored in containers. The Egyptians suffered terribly from lack of water. (The only water which was unaffected by the plague was water which belonged to a Jew. In order for an Egyptian to get drinkable water he had to buy it from a Jew.)

2. צפרדע – Frogs

Frogs overran the land of Egypt. They were literally everywhere. (According to some sources, the plague began when a giant frog rose out of the Nile. When the Egyptians struck it, it split into swarms and swarms of frogs.) Pharaoh called Moshe and begged him to end the plague. Moshe prayed to HaShem and all the frogs died.

3. כנים – Lice

The land was filled with lice. The Egyptian magicians were unable to duplicate this plague.

4. ערוב – Wild Beasts

Swarms of dangerous animals came to Egypt.

5. דבר – Livestock Epidemic

All the livestock (cows, horses, etc.) belonging to Egyptians died.

6. שחין – Boils

HaShem told Moshe and Aharon to take two handfuls of furnace soot each and Moshe would throw them into the sky before Pharaoh. When the soot settled over the land of Egypt it formed boils and blisters on the bodies of the Egyptians.

7. ברד – Hail

A miraculous hailstorm struck the entire land of Egypt. The hail was stronger than had ever been seen in Egypt and the hailstones had fire within them. Anything that was exposed in the field, whether, plant, animal, or person, was destroyed.

Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/608057/jewish/Vaeira.htm

Lyrics:

The water is blood, all did shout
Frogs were jumping in and out
Bugs were crawling everywhere
Rrr, wild animals were a scare

Then came Dever by and by
All the farm animals died
Sh'chin, boils and pimples too
On the Mitzrim, not the Jews

Chorus:
Ten Makos, Makos ten
The Mitzrim were punished
Again and again

Borod was fire and hail
In Mitzrayim a loud wail
Grasshoppers flying quick
Then the darkness very thick

Makas B'choros was the last
Paroh ran to Moshe fast
He was afraid to die, so...
He said, "let those Jews all go!"

www.chinuch.org

In parshas Vaera we learn the middah of hakaras hatov from moshe rabbeinu, who did not hit the ground or water to bring makkos.

Lyrics:

Title: Bor she'sha'sis mi'menu mayim al tizrok bo even

Don't throw rocks in a well,
From which you had a drink,
You should be grateful,
Don't you think?

Hakaras Hatov you should show
Say the THANK YOU
That you owe!

Appreciate a happy face
Every person, thing or place!

(Tune: Kel Hahoda'os Adon Hashalom)
Hakaras Hatov.....Thank You

Hakaras Hatov.....Thank You
(tune: Yerushalayim)

Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1433>

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=5705&id=39&s=1,

http://www.chinuch.org/admin_topic_search.php?id=130,

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

K-2

Questions

1. In which country were the Jews enslaved?
2. What did Moshe want Pharaoh to do?
3. What reason did Moshe give to explain why he shouldn't go to Pharaoh?
4. What was Hashem's response?
5. How old were Aharon and Moshe when they went to Pharaoh?
6. What miracle did Aharon do in front of Pharaoh before the plagues started?
7. Why was Pharaoh not impressed?
8. What did the water turn into?
9. How were the Egyptians able to drink?
10. Who didn't suffer from the makkos (plagues)?

Answers

1. The Jews were enslaved in Egypt.
2. Moshe wanted Pharaoh to free the Bnei Yisrael (Jewish people).
3. Moshe said that he is aral sefasayim (unable to speak well).
4. Hashem sent Aharon along to be Moshe's spokesperson.
5. Aharon was 83. Moshe was 80.
6. Aharon's staff turned into a snake.
7. Pharaoh's magicians also turned their staffs into snakes.
8. The water turned into blood.
9. The Egyptians had to buy water from the Jews.
10. The Jews did not suffer from the makkos.

3-4

Questions

1. In which country were the Jews enslaved?

2. What did Moshe want Pharaoh to do?
3. What reason did Moshe give to explain why he shouldn't go to Pharaoh?
4. What was Hashem's response?
5. Who were Moshe's parents?
6. How old were Aharon and Moshe when they went to Pharaoh?
7. What miracle did Aharon do in front of Pharaoh before the plagues started?
8. Why was Pharaoh not impressed?
9. Why did Aharon, and not Moshe, take the staff to start the first three plagues?
10. What did the water turn into?
11. How were the Egyptians able to drink?
12. What happened by tzefardea (the plague of the frogs)?
13. Who didn't suffer from the makkos?
14. How long was Pharaoh warned before each makkah (plague) [except the last two].
15. How long did each makkah (plague) [except for the last two] last?

Answers

1. The Jews were enslaved in Egypt.
2. Moshe wanted Pharaoh to free the Bnei Yisrael (Jewish people).
3. Moshe said that he is aral sefasayim (unable to speak well).
4. Hashem sent Aharon along to be Moshe's spokesperson.
5. Amram and Yocheved.
6. Aharon was 83. Moshe was 80.
7. Aharon's staff turned into a snake.
8. Pharaoh's magicians also turned their staffs into snakes.
9. Moshe had hakaras hatov to the water and sand.
10. The water turned into blood.
11. The Egyptians had to buy water from the Jews.
12. Aharon hit the water and one big frog came out. When the Egyptians hit the frog, more frogs came.
13. The Jews did not suffer from the makkos.
14. 3 weeks.
15. 1 week.

5-6

Questions

1. In which country were the Jews enslaved?
2. What did Moshe want Pharaoh to do?
3. What are the four leshonos (expressions) of geulah (redemption) that Hashem used?
4. What do we do on the seder night to commemorate these words?
5. What reason did Moshe give to explain why he shouldn't go to Pharaoh?

6. What was Hashem's response?
7. Who were Moshe's parents?
8. How old were Aharon and Moshe when they went to Pharaoh?
9. What miracle did Aharon do in front of Pharaoh before the plagues started?
10. Why was Pharaoh not impressed?
11. Why did Aharon, and not Moshe, take the staff to start the first three plagues?
12. How many makkos (plagues) are in this week's parsha (Vaera)?
13. How many makkos (plagues) are in next week's parsha (Bo)?
14. What did the water turn into?
15. How were the Egyptians able to drink?
16. What happened by tzefardea (the plague of the frogs)?
17. Who didn't suffer from the makkos?
18. How long was Pharaoh warned before each makkah (plague) [except for the last two].
19. How long did each makkah [except for the last two] last?
20. List the ten makkos.

Answers

1. The Jews were enslaved in Egypt.
2. Moshe wanted Pharaoh to free the Bnei Yisrael (Jewish people).
3. V'Hotzeiti, Ve'Hetzalti, V'Gaalti, V'Lackachti.
4. We drink four cups of wine.
5. Moshe said that he is aral sefasayim (unable to speak well).
6. Hashem sent Aharon along to be Moshe's spokesperson.
7. Amram and Yocheved.
8. Aharon was 83. Moshe was 80.
9. Aharon's staff turned into a snake.
10. Pharaoh's magicians also turned their staffs into snakes.
11. Moshe had hakaras hatov to the water and sand.
12. seven.
13. three.
14. The water turned into blood.
15. The Egyptians had to buy water from the Jews.
16. Aharon hit the water and one big frog came out. When the Egyptians hit the frog, more frogs came.
17. The Jews did not suffer from the makkos.
18. 3 weeks.
19. 1 week.
20.
 - a. Dam (blood)
 - b. Tzefardea (frogs)
 - c. Kinim (lice)
 - d. Arov (wild animals)
 - e. Dever (cattle disease)
 - f. Shecheen (boils)

- g. Barad (hail)
- h. Arbeh (locusts)
- i. Choshech (darkness)
- j. Makas Bechoros (death of the first born)

Parsha Riddle

I am a mixed up thing. What am I? (The answer is three Hebrew letters- Barad-ברד).

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POEM-Shir shel Makkos

Now listen to us Paroh
 We worked for you, you know
 And the wages that you paid us
 Were mighty, mighty low
 We're sick of mixing mortar
 It's time for us to go
 But Paroh shakes his head and laughs
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

But you'll be sorry Paroh
 You'd better let us go
 But Paroh keeps on laughing
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

The blood remember Paroh
 Was not a glass of beer
 How did you like the froggies
 All croaking in your ear?
 Why don't you take a warning
 And right now let us go
 But Paroh shakes his head and sneers
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

But you'll be sorry Paroh
 You'd better let us go
 But Paroh keeps on laughing
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

They itched and twitched you, Paroh
 The lice sure took to you
 And the wild beasts came to visit

They grabbed a bite or two
Your cattle seemed unhealthy
So why not let us go
But Paroh shakes his head and shouts
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

But you'll be sorry Paroh
You'd better let us go
But Paroh keeps on laughing
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

The boils were pleasant Paroh
You looked so puffy and red
Did you really mind the hailstones
That rapped you on the head
But better yet is coming
Unless you let us go
But Paroh shakes his head and groans
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

But you'll be sorry Paroh
You'd better let us go
But Paroh keeps on laughing
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

What hungry locust Paroh
They picked your country clean
And the darkness really scared you
You couldn't sit or lean
Just stood there looking silly
Now wise up let us go
But Paroh shakes his head and moans
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

But you'll be sorry Paroh
You'd better let us go
But Paroh keeps on laughing
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

How sad your firstborn Paroh
That there is no fun for him
We're glad that when the sea split
You came along to swim
We simply must be leaving
Oh won't you miss us so
But Paroh shakes his head and cries

Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

But you'll be sorry Paroh
You'd better let us go
But Paroh keeps on laughing
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively NO!

One final word dear Paroh
Let's hear it clear and slow
And that's what Paroh's crying
Definitely, Absolutely, Positively GO!

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Play

The Ten Makkos

Dam: Blood

#1: OK, everyone! Quiet down! We have no time to waste-this is our last practice.
#2: But we don't know our parts yet!
#3: Well, let's just start. OK, the first plague please stand up.
#4: Hello, everybody! I'm "DUM."
#5: Hey, what do you mean I'm "DUM?" Rabbi Karmel, which one of us is DUM?
Rabbi Karmel: How many times do I have to tell you dummies—you're both DUM! Now get on with it.
#4: OK. Hello everybody. The first of the ten makos-plagues-was the plague of "DUM" – blood.
#5: All the water in Egypt turned into blood and the Egyptians had nothing to drink.
#4: Unless, of course, they bought it from the Jews.
#5: I was going to say that, you dummy!
#4: Anyway, it was a real bloody mess.

Tzefardea: Frogs

[#6 and #7 come jumping on to the stage with a few stuffed Kermit's].
#6: Hi! I'm Kermit the Frog and here is my pal.
#7: We've been having a great time these past couple of months... You know frogs just love leap years.
#6: All you guys think you were the only ones with ancestors in Egypt. Well, so did we!
#7: Yeah, and the story goes that those Egyptians were really bad until we took over the country.
#6: Yeah, we drove them so crazy, some of them even croaked!

Kinim: Lice

#8: Hey, guess what. What were you able to find in all the freezers in Egypt during the third plague?

#9: I give up.

#8: Lice cubes!

#9: Bad joke but good point! If you think those frogs were bad, we had them itching and scratching a whole day long.

#8: Anyway, we gotta go. Have a lice day!

Arov: Wild Animals

#10: Hey, why are we picked for this part?

#11: Because the next plague was “Arov”—wild animals—and everyone knows we’re wild animals.

#10: Man, just imagine the trouble our ancestors made during the fourth plague when wild animals came from anywhere. Boy, were those Egyptians on the run!

#11: How did they get away with all that trouble?

#10: I guess Mrs. Hartenstein’s ancestors didn’t give out detentions back then.

Dever: Death of Cattle

#12: What has four legs and flies?

#13: I give up.

#12: All the Egyptians’ animals during the plague of “Dever” – when all the livestock died.

#13: That’s not funny!

#12: You bet it wasn’t funny for the Egyptians with all their herds gone.

#13: Boy, it must’ve smelled as bad as Travis Robins’ locker.

Shechin: Boils

#14: Hey, what’s happened to our faces? We look like we’ve broken out in a rash.

#15: Well, to tell you the truth, I just hope those Jews would break out in a rash!

#14: Yeah, why doesn’t King Pharaoh let them go—these pimples are killing me.

#15: Don’t complain, just wait till you get to high school!

Barad: Hail

#16: What’s hot and cold and hurts all over?

#17: How can something be hot and cold at the same time?

#16: That’s exactly what the Egyptians said until they were hit with icy hail with fire inside.

#17: I guess when Pharaoh wanted the Jews to hail the king he didn’t know what he was in for!

Arbeh: Grasshoppers

#18: Boy, after that hail there must have been nothing in Egypt left to eat!
#19: Well, whatever was left was now destroyed by the eighth plague of Arba-locusts.
#18: I'll bet Pharaoh's popularity wasn't too high at the time.
#19: No, it wasn't. As a matter of fact, if the elections were held today, Bill Clinton would've won Pharaoh in a landslide.

Choshech: Darkness

#20: Hey, why did my alarm go off in the middle of the night?
#21: Black out! Black out! I can't see a thing! Are the lights off all over town or only in the house? Did we blow a fuse?
#20: I don't think so—but I'm about to blow a fuse! It looks like the only lights are coming from the Jewish section of town. Boy, what could be worse than this?
#21: Well, that depends if you're a first born...

Makkas Bechoros: Death of the Firstborn

#22: Why is that guy going jogging in the middle of the night—in his pajamas?!?
#23: Well, it looks like some kind of emergency. He's banging on all the doors looking for Moshe.
#22: Hey, am I crazy or is that Pharaoh?
#23: You are crazy, and it is Pharaoh!
#22: Are you sure?
#23: Yeah, I've heard that he has little airplanes and hockey players on the royal pajamas. It must be him.
#22: Hey, what's that announcement? All the Jews are free to have as much extra outdoor recess as they want!
#23: Yes, and we celebrate this every year.

Parsha Stories

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349093/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm

Living with the Parsha: Escape!

By [Tali Loewenthal](#)

Benjy could feel himself getting angry. That was the third time David had cheated in this game. He was doing it on purpose! Benjy felt the rage grow inside him, and explode.

"That's it, I told you before! Those dice added up to nine, not eight! You should have landed on Fleet Street, on my hotel, but you cheated as usual, just because you're scared of losing!"

He threw his street cards onto the board, upsetting the pieces. Getting up, he stalked out of the room.

Rachel and David gazed after him in amazement. "Benjy, I didn't do that on purpose, I'm just not so good at adding, you know that," David pleaded. But his older brother ignored him.

Stalking into the kitchen, he went to get himself some orange squash. By the time he had finished, he had already calmed down. Rachel came into the kitchen.

"Benjy, now David's very upset. Why did you do that? He didn't mean to cheat."

Benjy reddened. "I don't know, I just have such a bad temper. I just can't help it. I know I'm getting angry, and that I shouldn't, but there's nothing I could do, and then I say things that I regret later."

As he said this, he suddenly remembered what he had been taught in school that day. They had been learning about the plagues that G-d brought upon the Egyptians because Pharaoh would not let the Jewish people leave.

Their teacher told them that we are supposed to relive the going out of Egypt as if we were there ourselves. "How is that possible?" a boy had asked, "It all happened so long ago."

"Well, that's why we're studying this topic now," their teacher explained. "For example, do you know we are in Egypt now?" The class looked a bit blank. Wasn't Egypt a long way away?

"Look at the Hebrew word for Egypt, *Mitzrayim*." The teacher wrote it on the board. "If you read it a different way, it can also be read as *Mitzrayim*, meaning boundaries or limitations."

The teacher gazed around the class. Robert at the back in the corner was looking out of the window. Simon the captain of the house cricket team seemed to be writing something, probably cricket scores. The teacher sighed. A few pupils did seem to be listening. Then he went on.

"We all have limitations - we might be lazy by nature, or very shy, or lose our temper easily, but we must work to get out of these limitations, in order to have our own personal escape from Egypt. It might not be easy - but nor was getting out of Egypt."

Now, remembering this, Benjy realized what his limitation was. The teacher had said it: losing his temper! Could he really get beyond this limitation? Benjy frowned, and then he smiled. It might not be easy to control his temper, but it could be done. He would escape from the limitation of his temper, his own Egypt - and Pharaoh wouldn't be able to catch him.

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/349102/jewish/Vaeira-Parshah-Lesson.htm

Va'eira Parshah Lesson

By [Malka Touger](#)

Hebrew school in Evergreen, Colorado promised to be very exciting and Sarit could not wait.

"This week we will be learning about the ten plagues," Sarit said excitedly.

"Aharon caused the first two plagues by striking the Nile River and pointing his staff at it. Moses could not do this himself, because he had been saved by the river," said Maya.

Mrs. Stein loved her class and saw it as a challenge that many of the students prepared the Torah portion in advance. "Since you know so much about the portion already, let me ask you some questions that will make you think." The class was eager to hear the questions, and they listened attentively.

"Why did G-d bring the plagues upon the Egyptians in the first place?" asked Mrs. Stein.

"Because they deserved to be punished," answered Sarit.

"But G-d can punish people in many different ways. Why did He choose to punish the Egyptians with these strange and wondrous plagues? He could have destroyed them all in a single instant. Why did the plagues have to take several months, and why were there so many miracles?"

The girls did not know the answer, so Mrs. Stein continued: "When G-d told Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Jews leave Egypt, what was Pharaoh's first reaction?"

"I know," said Sarit. "Pharaoh stubbornly asked: 'Who is G-d that I must listen to Him?'"

Mrs. Stein continued, "The Egyptians didn't believe in G-d. So G-d punished them by bringing supernatural plagues. These miracles forced them to learn about G-d and to realize how great G-d is."

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-Vaera.pdf?docid=3349&ie=1&showobject=1>

LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

EMPATHY

Rabbi Gross, may I please speak to your about something important?" "Surely, Reb Yehoshua. How can I help you?" "I am in a very difficult situation, Rabbi Gross. I am having a conflict with my neighbor about apartment renovations. As a result of this, we are barely on speaking terms. I want to work it out, but we just do not have the right communication. In addition to that, an older person in my family is very sick, and I must take care of him. I am running from doctor to doctor, getting him tests and treatments." "Oy vey." "Rabbi, one of my sons is not doing well in the Talmud Torah. I need to find him a private teacher, but no one is available. In the meantime, he is falling farther and farther behind. To top it all off, my oldest daughter wants to get married, but we have not found someone suitable for her. Time is moving quickly, and she is not getting any younger." Rabbi Gross listened with a sympathetic ear. His warm eyes full of empathy looked at Reb Yehoshua's sad face. Reb Yehoshua's spirit was crumbling under the stress of all of his problems. The load was too much for him to bear. Tears began to well up in his eyes. Rabbi Gross put his arm around him. He patted him softly on the shoulder.

Everything will be okay, Reb Yehoshua. I feel for you. My heart is with you. Your tsores (trouble) is my tsores. Your problems are my problems. We will work them out together. Hashem will help us. Come; let us come up with a way to speak to the neighbor." And so, Rabbi Gross sat patiently with Reb Yehoshua, and went through each problem, step by step. Reb Yehoshua's heart lightened with every sympathetic word. He was no longer fighting his battle alone. Someone was with him to share his burden. "Rabbi Gross, you are such a big comfort and help to me. How did you learn to be so empathetic?" "Reb Yehoshua, empathy, or 'sharing another's burden' is a Jewish trait that goes back to the roots of our nation. The Shelah speaks about it in this week's parasha. In Mitzrayim, the Tribe of Levi was not enslaved like the rest of Klal Yisrael. They did not undergo the hard, cruel, labor. Although they did not suffer themselves, they were empathetic with the plight of their brothers. How do we know this? By the names given to the sons of Levi – Gershon, Kehas, and Merari. Gershon comes from the word 'ger' – stranger. The Levites were sympathetic with the fact that the Jewish people were strangers in a land that was not their own. Kehas comes from the word 'kehos' – blunt. The Mitzrim blunted the teeth of the Jews. Lastly, Merari is from the word 'mar' – bitter. The taskmasters

embittered their lives. Although the tribe of Levi did not endure this cruelty, they were empathetic, and recorded this fact forever with the names of the heads of their tribe. This teaches us a lesson for all times – that a Jew must be sympathetic with his friend’s plight. He should lend his ear to hear the other’s problems, and his heart to feel the other’s pain.” “Rabbi Gross, that is so comforting. One of the most difficult parts of a problem is feeling that you are all alone. Knowing that someone is with you gives you the strength to go on.” “Reb Yehoshua, let us move forward together, and face our problems with a renewed strength and confidence.”

Kinderlach . . .

Your friend is nervous because he has a big test coming up. Comfort him. Encourage him. Learn with him and help him get a good grade. Your neighbor is down because he is sick. Visit him. Bring him a warm smile and cheer him up. Your sister is sad because someone hurt her feelings. Put your arm around her and give her a comforting hug. Listen to her while she unburdens her heart. Make her feel that she is not alone in her problem. These are all ways to be empathetic. Empathy is a wonderful middah, kinderlach. Lend your ear. Lend a comforting hug. Lend your heart.

THE VOICE OF PEACE

“Tzviki, you took my ball!” “You gave me permission to play with it!” “No, I didn’t!” The two brothers begin fighting. Imma, who was listening in the next room, calmly steps in. “Come, boys. Let’s not fight. There is nothing to be gained, and a lot to be lost. Making peace is the best thing.” The boys calm down and Tzviki smiles at his Imma.” “Imma, our soft words always make peace.”

This was Aaron and Moshe to whom Hashem said, ‘Take the Children of Israel out of Mitzraim’” (Shemos 6:26). The Malbim comments that theirs was a twofold mission: the physical redemption from the slavery, and the spiritual salvation from the tumah (defilement) of the Egyptian society. Moshe Rabbeinu had the main responsibility for the physical redemption. He spoke to Paroh. He initiated most of the plagues. Aaron Ha-Kohen shouldered the burden of the spiritual salvation. He uplifted the spirits of a downtrodden people who did not know the ways of Hashem. Why were his words heard? Because he was a lover and pursuer of peace. His soft words warmed their hearts.

Kinderlach . . .

To whom do you listen? To one who shouts at you and makes a fool of himself? Or to one who speaks softly and patiently. Aaron HaKohen was able to make peace between people. Therefore, his words were able to raise the Jewish people from the lowest levels of tumah. He is a role model for us to emulate. Speak kind words of encouragement and peace to everyone. Lift up your self and those around you.

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/pArchive.asp?eventType=14&eventName=Va%26%2339%3Beira>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Being_Stubborn.asp

Va'eira (Exodus 6:2-9:35) **Being Stubborn**

From this week's Torah Portion

Stubbornly refusing to listen to or learn from others can cause a person a lot of unnecessary frustration and pain. In this week's Torah portion Pharaoh acts stubbornly when he refuses to listen to Moses' call to free the Jewish slaves. He pays a heavy price. Let's learn from this and not be stubborn.

Story

In our story, a kid discovers that stubbornness doesn't pay.

WHAT GOES AROUND - COMES AROUND

"Mike, I think we've been around this block already. See, there's that same corner candy store we've already passed once."

Mike and Benji were trying to get to a playground in the next neighborhood. The guys were supposed to meet up with some friends for a pick-up touch football game, but they were having trouble finding their way.

"Yeah? Maybe, but I'm sure we'll find the park any minute now."

"*Any minute?* We've been walking so long, already. Hey, let's go into that store and ask directions - for sure the guy working there will know."

"Nah."

"Why not?"

"What do we need to ask anyone for? I've got my own directions right here," he tapped his forehead. "Let's just keep going and I'm sure we'll find the place."

Following Mike's 'directions' the boys walked on until they came to the very same corner a *third* time.

"This is crazy, man!" Benji exclaimed. "There's that same store *again!* We're going in circles! This time, I'm going in to get directions."

"Well, leave me out of it," Mike huffed, refusing to follow. Benji ran into the store and ran back out a minute later with a big smile on his face.

"Okay, I wrote it all down. We just have to go right, then..."

"Hey, I told you I'm not interested," Mike cut in, his arms crossed. "I know perfectly well how to go on my own."

"Come off it. Don't be stubborn. We're lost and you know it. Now we'll just follow the directions and we'll get right there. Let's go."

Mike shook his head, "You can, if you want, but I'm going to figure it out myself."

Benji shrugged, followed the directions and quickly got to the playground to join the game in progress. Every once in a while he'd look around to see if Mike was coming but he was nowhere in sight. About an hour and a half later, the game ended and the kids split up to go home.

"Great game guys! Next week - same time, same place."

Benji started walking home, scratching his head wondering whatever happened to his buddy. On his way back he passed the same corner candy store and stopped in to buy a snack for the road. He had just stepped back out of the store when he heard someone call out his name. "Benji!" The boy looked up and saw Mike walking slowly toward him. The kid looked dog-tired and one of his sleeves was torn.

"Mike! What happened? Why didn't you show up? Why are you still here?"

"Um, well, I'm not exactly *still* here. I've been, um, kinda wandering all over. I don't know ... I just kept getting more and more lost. I even tried to cut through the woods and got seriously stuck in some thorn bushes. Finally I saw this store I recognized from before and...", he threw up his hands, "I realized I'd been way too stubborn about the whole thing. I was about to go in and ask for directions to the park. But since I found you here that means the game is over - so maybe instead I'll ask *you* for directions ... how to get home."

Discussion Questions

Ages 3-5

Q. How did Mike feel at first about asking for directions?

A. Even though he was lost he stubbornly refused to ask.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. He felt like it was okay to ask for help.

Ages 6-9

Q. What life-lesson do you think Mike discovered that day?

A. Up until then, he'd been acting stubbornly, insisting on doing everything himself, his own way. The experience of not only missing out on a fun day, but wandering around uncomfortably for hours, taught him that sometimes you just have to give in and listen to others.

Q. Is there ever a time that stubbornness is a positive thing?

A. When we tap into the trait of stubbornness and don't give up when we are trying to reach a worthwhile goal, it is very positive. Also, it's a positive thing to stubbornly refuse to do things that are unethical or harmful. But to stubbornly refuse to listen to advice or ask for help when needed is just plain - stubborn.

Ages 10 and Up

Q. Our sages tell us that a wise person is one who learns from everyone. What do you think this means?

A. Wisdom doesn't mean 'knowing it all.' Wisdom means that a person values worthwhile knowledge so much that he's willing to do whatever's necessary to acquire more, and often that means being willing to ask and accept the advice of others.

Q. What do you think might be the relationship between stubbornness and humility?

A. Many times we act stubbornly simply because we feel too conceited to admit to others or to ourselves, that we don't know something or have made a mistake. A truly humble person will easily admit these things and will not be stubborn over trivialities.

Parsha Games

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

K-2

Hashem punishes the wicked Egyptians in lots of different ways. There is blood in the water, frogs all over the ground, lice on the people, wild animals everywhere, animals dying all over the place, horrible boils on people and huge hail stones falling from the sky

Middah/ Jewish Value

- Hashem protects the Jewish people (they didn't suffer from the plagues)

Activity

A 'no touching' game. Divide the group so that some children are Bnei Yisrael and others are the wild beasts or frogs, or whichever plague they fancy. (They must tell their choice before the activity starts.) Bnei Yisrael mime doing their everyday things - wash, get dressed, have breakfast, clean teeth, go to school/work etc. - while plagues roar, jump etc (for a few seconds) powerlessly from behind a row of chairs or an 'invisible line' (depending on the children's understanding). An 'invisible line' is a better representation of Hashem's power. Roles can be swapped depending on the time available.

3-4

Hashem tells Moshe to go and ask Paroh to let B'nei Yisrael leave Mitzrayim/Egypt. Moshe does not speak clearly, so he is worried that Paroh will not understand him. Hashem tells Aharon to go with Moshe and speak on his behalf

Middah/ Jewish Value

- Helping each other

Activity

Activity One:

Prepare three sets of 'Plagues' cards - one set of Hebrew words, one set of English words and one of pictures - a pack of postcards would serve the purpose. The pictures could be drawn or clipart/pictures used. Place cards face down on table or floor. Divide the children into small groups of 2/3. One group is selected to match up the three sets of cards. A second group acts as 'timers'. As timing and measuring is not permitted on Shabbat, the 'timer' group will sing a designated song of a certain length (monitored by the leader) and when they finish singing, the group matching the cards must stop. Swap groups, the winners being those who make most sets.

5-6

Moshe does not bring about the first three plagues, his brother Aharon does. Why? When Moshe was a baby the river protected him. When he killed the Egyptian he hid him in the sand. Moshe was grateful to the river and the sand. Moshe did not want to harm the two things which had saved him

Middah/ Jewish Value

- **Showing gratitude**

Activity:

Have a discussion on why the world has reason to be grateful to the following famous Jews:

- 1. Albert Einstein**
- 2. Jonas Salk**
- 3. Robert Winston**
- 4. Bob Dylan**
- 5. Simon Marks**
- 6. Steven Spielberg**