

Parashat Va'era

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[Exodus 6:2-9:35](#)

<https://miowitztorahreading.weebly.com/vaera.html>

Summary

SAM: This week we will be reading the first 3 verses of *Parashat Va'era*--Exodus Chapter 6, Verses 2-4. At the beginning of this Torah portion--in the verses we will chant--G!d tells Moshe, "I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, but I did not make my name, *A-donai*, known to them." G!d also tells Moshe that G!d has made a covenant--a 2-sided promise--with our ancestors that they will inherit the land of Canaan as a place to live. G!d then tells Moshe to go to the Israelites and tell them that G!d will lead them out of Egyptian slavery and be their G!d and take them to the land that was promised to them.

ELIANA: When the Israelites did not follow Moshe, G!d told Moshe to talk to Par'oh and demand that he let the Israelite slaves go. Moshe did not want to go. He believed that Par'oh would not listen to him, just as the Israelites did not. G!d insisted and sent Moshe and his brother Aharon to perform wonders in the court of Par'oh.

SAM: In Par'oh's court, Aharon's walking staff is turned into a serpent. Par'oh's magicians perform the same trick, but then Aharon's staff swallows the Egyptians' staves. Par'oh still refuses to release the Israelite slaves, so Moshe and Aharon--with G!d's help--started to bring plagues on the Egyptians.

ELIANA: Par'oh's magicians can copy the first two plagues of turning water into blood and bringing lots of frogs to Egypt, but they couldn't copy the third plague of lice. After each terrible plague sent to the Egyptian nation--seven of which are described in *Parashat Va'era*--Par'oh refuses to free the Israelites.

Questions

Eliana: In the second *pasuk* we read today, G!d said to Moshe, “I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov as *E-I Sha-ddai*, but I was not known to them by my name *A-donai*. Why do you think G!d only made one of G!d’s names known to *Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov*, but now G!d is sharing the name “A-donai” with Moshe--a name that *Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov* did not know G!d by?

Eliana: My friends call me Elly, my parents call me Elle, and I have lots of other nicknames with different friends and cousins. Different people have different names for G!d at different times.

Sam: Rashi explains that Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov knew G!d as *El Shaddai*--the creative G!d--but they did not know G!d as, *A-donai*--the promise-keeping G!d. Now that G!d is responding to the Israelites call to take them out of slavery, by keeping the promise to deliver them, G!d tells Moshe that G!d will be seen by both Moshe and the Israelites as *A-donai*. It is time for G!d to bring the Israelites out of slavery and to the land that G!d promised Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

2) Sam: When Moshe goes to speak to Paro'h, one way he shows Par'oh that G!d is powerful is by telling his brother, Aharon to throw down his walking stick. The stick turns into a serpent. Par'oh calls his magicians. They throw down their walking sticks and these *a/so* turn into serpents.

Eliana: When we studied these verses we noticed that the next thing the Torah says is, "Aharon's walking stick swallowed their walking sticks." Shouldn't it have said Aharon's serpent swallowed their serpents? Why do you think the Torah is talking about walking sticks? <<Eliana picks 3>>

Eliana: I think that the Torah is saying that something *really surprising* happened. The walking sticks turned from walking sticks into serpents, then back into walking sticks--and when they were walking sticks again Aharon's walking stick swallowed up the walking sticks of Paro'hs magicians. The Torah is telling us that, in some ways, it's actually 3 miracles or acts of magic that happened!

3) Sam: Each time Par'oh refused to let the Israelites go pray in the wilderness for a few days, Moshe brought a new plague on the Egyptians. When Moshe had Aharon hold out his walking stick over the water and turn the water into blood, the Egyptian magicians showed that they could do the same thing. Then when Moshe told Aharon to hold out his walking stick over the waters of Egypt and make swarms of frogs to come out of the water onto dry land, the magicians showed that they could do the same thing.

Eliana: When Aharon hit the dust with his walking stick and turned all of the dust of the whole land of Egypt into lice, the Torah says that the Egyptian magicians could not copy the plague of lice. Why do you think they could copy the first two, but not this one? <<Sam picks 2, Eliana picks 1>>

Eliana: The Torah says that ALL THE DUST IN THE LAND OF EGYPT turned into lice, so I think that the magicians had nothing left to turn into lice--all the dust had already been used.

Sam: Also I wonder why the Egyptians created *more* blood and frogs for the first 2 plagues. Wouldn't they have appeared more powerful if they had just turned the blood back into water or made all the frogs go away?