

# Parashat Va'era

Exodus 6:2–9:35

JANUARY 24, 2020



## SUMMARY

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.

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*.

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.

*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.

### From Our Commentators:

#### Chizkuni

ולא שמעו אל משה. נתיראו לשמוע אל משה  
מחמת קוצר רוח של העבודה הקשה שצוה  
אליהם פרעה כבר, "תכבד העבודה על האנשים  
ואל ישעו בדברי שקר" של משה.

“**And they did not heed Moshe**” they were afraid to heed *Moshe* on account of their crushed spirits, since Pharaoh had already imposed hard labor on them, “Make heavier the work upon the people, and they will not not pay attention to deceitful words,” (Exodus 5:9) of *Moshe*.

### FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) G!d shares the name *A-donai* with *Moshe* and tells *Moshe* that--although G!d is the same G!d of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya’akov*--this is a new name! Why might G!d choose to use a new name with *Moshe* that G!d had not used with *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya’akov*?
- 2) Why do you think G!d sent Moshe to lead the Israelites out of slavery? If G!d wanted to take the Israelites out of slavery, wouldn't it have just made more sense for G!d to do it?
- 3) Even before there are any plagues--*Moshe* tells the Israelites that G!d will take them out of slavery to the Promised Land, but they don't listen to him and won't follow him. Why do you think they might not follow *Moshe* out of slavery right away?