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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON **VAEIRA** - 5769

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Weekly Insights from MOREINU
HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY zt"l
[Translated by Ephraim Weiss <Easykgh@aol.com>]
Vaeira 5766

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l
In the parshios of Vaeira and Bo, we read about the ten makos that were inflicted on the Mitzriim. A number of the miforshim struggle to understand the purpose of all these makos. Hashem, in his infinite power could have just as easily brought one great plague to punish the Mitzriim, and rescued Bnei Yisroel immediately. Why then was it necessary for Hashem to bring ten makos, which spanned a full year? The miforshim explain that the purpose of the makos was not merely to punish Pharaoh and the Mitzriim, but rather to convince them of Hashem's power and intervention in the world. A quick conclusion would not have accomplished these goals. Rather, it was necessary for the makos to come in stages, in order to ultimately convince Pharaoh of the existence of Hashem.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt"l points out how this concept can actually be seen from the pesukim themselves. The Torah tells us that the makah of dam did not impress Pharaoh in the least, and he remained adamant in his refusal to negotiate for the release of Bnei Yisroel. During the makah of tsfardaia, Pharaoh promised to free Bnei Yisroel, but never really intended to make good on his word. However, he had started to recognize in some small way that there was supernatural force acting for the benefit of Bnei Yisroel. During the plague of arov, Pharaoh granted permission for Bnei Yisroel to serve Hashem without leaving Mitzrayim, and when this was rejected, he gave permission to serve Hashem just outside the border. While he still refused to acquiesce to Moshe's demands, he had started to compromise a little, as he was beginning to realize that the suffering that his nation was enduring correlated directly to his mistreatment of Bnei Yisroel. During the plague of barad, Pharaoh actually admitted that he had sinned, and that Hashem was righteous, but that was only due to the harsh makah. Once the makah had stopped, he reverted to his former position. The next stage was the makah of arbeh, when Pharaoh agreed to let only the men leave. At this point, Pharaoh

had yet to fully recognize Hashem, as he only started to negotiate when threatened with more punishment, and ultimately denied Moshe's demands. By the time the makah of choshech came around, Pharaoh was considering freeing Bnei Yisroel. However, he was not totally convinced. The final stage occurred during makas bechoros, at which point Pharaoh abandoned all pretenses, and concurrent with his grudging recognition of Hashem, forced Bnei Yisroel to leave. Of course, as we know he was not totally convinced, as he ended up chasing Bnei Yisroel into the Yam Suf. Krias Yam Suf removed all doubt from his mind, and he finally realized Hashem's ultimate control over the world.

From: **Rabbi Goldwicht** [mailto:rgoldwicht@yutorah.org] Sent: Friday, January 27, 2006 1:20 AM Subject: Parashat Vaeira 5766

WEEKLY INSIGHTS BY RAV MEIR GOLDWICHT
Parashat Vaeira

Our parasha deals with seven out of the ten makkot dealt to Pharaoh and Mitzrayim. When we look at the structure of the makkot, a very interesting pattern is revealed. In preparation for the makah of dam, HaKadosh Baruch Hu commands Moshe to wait for Pharaoh early in the morning on the bank of the Nile, where Pharaoh would go every morning. In preparation for the makah of tzfarde'a, HaKadosh Baruch Hu commands Moshe to approach Pharaoh in his palace to alert him to the next makah. For the third makah, kinnim, HaKadosh Baruch Hu commands Moshe to carry out the makah without even warning Pharaoh. The Maharal explains that this pattern is meant to show how Moshe gained control over Pharaoh. First, he treated Pharaoh with respect, arising early in the morning to wait for him on the bank of the Nile. For the next makah, he approached Pharaoh rather than waiting for him. For the third makah, he struck without warning.

The difficulty with the Maharal's explanation is that it does not explain why the pattern repeats itself for the next two sets of makkot: 1) in preparation for the makah of arov, Hashem again commands Moshe to wait for Pharaoh early in the morning on the bank of the Nile; in preparation for the makah of dever, Hashem commands Moshe to again approach Pharaoh in the palace; and for the makah of sh'chin, the third in the set, there is again no warning. 2) In preparation for the makah of barad, Hashem commands Moshe to wait for Pharaoh on the bank of the Nile early in the morning; in preparation for the makah of arbeh, Hashem commands Moshe to go to the palace; and for the makah of choshech, Moshe again strikes without warning. What exactly is the message underlying the clear pattern and its repetition?

The explanation is that HaKadosh Baruch Hu essentially wished to respond to Pharaoh's statement to Moshe and Aharon, "Who is Hashem that I should listen to Him?" (Shemot 5:2). The first set of makkot demonstrate that there is a Creator. Dam's significance is that eliminates Pharaoh's belief that he is a G-d by preventing him from seeing his reflection in the Nile every morning as he used to and holding the impression that he stands above the Nile, a G-d of Mitzrayim. By tzfarde'a, an interesting conversation transpires. Pharaoh, in tremendous pain, calls Moshe to remove the tzfarde'a. Moshe responds with a very strange question: "When?" Obviously Pharaoh would want to end the pain immediately, or he would have waited to call you in! Pharaoh's response is even stranger: "Tomorrow." What is the real meaning behind this conversation?

Moshe says to Pharaoh: "You can talk to Hashem today and ask Him to influence tomorrow, unlike the other gods/forces that can influence nature today only, with no influence on the future. Do you want to see this in action?" Pharaoh, despite his pain, does not believe it and demands to see it in action, so he asks Moshe to pray now for the removal of the makah tomorrow. This is what we say in davening: "Shiru lashem kol ha'aretz, basru miyom l'yom yeshuato (you can daven to Hashem today to bring redemption tomorrow)." For the rest of the world, this is a chiddush. But

for Am Yisrael, this is no chiddush. Therefore we ask that “hamelech ya’aneinu b’yom kor’einu,” on the very day we ask.

Kinnim’s significance demonstrates the gradual progression that leads to Pharaoh’s acceptance of Hashem’s existence: dam shows Pharaoh is not god, tzfardea shows the real G-d can influence tomorrow even though we pray today, and kinnim, which the chartumim could not replicate, leads them to say “etzba Elokim hee.”

The second set of makkot teaches Pharaoh that Hashem is not just Creator, but also watches over His creation. Only the Egyptians were afflicted by the makkah of arov, not the Jews. Only the Egyptians’ animals were afflicted by the makkah of dever, not the Jews’. Only the Egyptians were afflicted by the makkah of sh’chin (including the chartumim).

The final set of makkot teaches Pharaoh that not only does Hashem watch over the world, but that He rewards and punishes those who obey and disobey Him, respectively. There is no simple discrimination between Jew and Egyptian, but between believer and non-believer. Therefore, by the makkah of barad, those Egyptians who demonstrated belief in Hashem by bringing their animals and servants inside were not harmed by the barad. Those Egyptians who did not believe, were harmed. By the makkah of choshech, Hashem punished even the non-believing Jews, removing 80% of the Jewish population. This was followed by makkat bechorot and the yetziat Mitzrayim.

The ten makkot come to strengthen our belief in a Creator Who watches over us and Who rewards and punishes those who obey and disobey him, respectively. In the merit of this emunah taught by the ten makkot, we merit the Aseret HaDibrot and the entire Torah.

Shabbat Shalom v’Chodesh Tov! Meir Goldwicht

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From: ZeitlinShelley@aol.com Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2006 5:42 PM To: ZeitlinShelley@aol.com

Leadership Qualities

By **Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**

In contemporary society, respect for our leaders is almost extinct. We’ve become cynical to the extreme - feeling that our leaders frequently talk out of both sides of their mouths, saying not what they believe but what they think you want them to say, and following the polls rather than their morals and beliefs. It is, therefore, very educational, reassuring, and refreshing to see in the beginning of Sefer Shmos the development and leadership qualities of Moshe Rabbeinu, one of the greatest leaders of all time. From these lessons, we can hopefully absorb what to aspire to and how to train our children. When Moshe Rabbeinu first met up with Hashem by the burning bush, the verse tells us that Moshe said, “Let me turn now and investigate this amazing sight.” Rav Avigdor Miller, Zt”l, Zy”a, points out that if Moshe Rabbeinu did not have an eagerness and desire to learn - as manifested by his turning and investigating, and he would have instead gone on his own way, he would have missed out totally on the revelation. Thus, we see a first step in greatness is the trait of always yearning to learn more. As a young man, raised with royal treatment in Paroh’s palace by the Princess Bisya, Moshe Rabbeinu did not allow himself to relax in splendor. Rather, he went out to his suffering brethren and shared in their fate. This is the great quality that we find in all of our leaders; namely, “Nosei b’ol im chaveiro -- Sharing in another’s suffering.” Thus, Rebbetzin Kotler, Zt”l, did not put sugar in her coffee or tea all the years of

the holocaust. And too, right now, many American Jews are praying feverishly, sharing in the plight of our brethren in Eretz Yisroel. When Moshe Rabbeinu saw an injustice being committed against one of his brethren, he didn’t consider his security or his comfort, but rather acted with alacrity in the defense of his own. Then, upon seeing the misbehavior of some of his brethren, he did not concern himself with the repercussions, but immediately chastised them properly. How many lessons can leaders learn from the study of Moshe Rabbeinu, even in his youth! Of course, another stunning attribute of Moshe Rabbeinu was his unparalleled humility. His was not a leadership motivated by the need for accolades or fanfare. His captancy was not fueled by a desire for power or adoration. For seven days and seven nights, he valiantly attempted to turn down Hashem’s offer of rulership of His people. This speaks volumes for the correct motivation for our aspiring young leaders. Then, we watch in awe on how Hashem trained Moshe Rabbeinu to pray for his archenemies, Paroh and Mitzrayim. Moshe repeatedly did this to remove the successive plagues from Egypt. I believe this was to train Moshe Rabbeinu in the important leadership quality of being able to pray for, and help even, his antagonists. Thus, in the desert, Moshe Rabbeinu was able to care lovingly for a nation about which he himself would testify, “Od me’at u’skaluni -- A little bit more and they would stone me.” In a similar vein, we find that Mordechai, although he was only, “Ratzui l’rov echav -- Favored by some of the people,” he was, “Doveir shalom l’chol daro -- Sought peace for all of the people.” This is a tough test of leadership - to be able to care for, and help, even the malcontents and the antagonists. Moshe Rabbeinu’s willingness to sacrifice personal ambition for the benefit of the Klal is yet another extraordinary example of his greatness as a leader. Upon coming down from Har Sinai, he reached the zenith of his dreams, bringing down G-d’s Torah to his people. Yet, he willingly sacrificed and smashed it in order that the perpetrators of the golden calf should be spared from defying the written words that he held in his hand. So too, with awesome courage he declared, “If you do not forgive them Hashem, “Macheini na mi’ sifricha -- Blot me out from your Torah.” We all know the famous Medrash that when Moshe was a shepherd, a lone sheep wandered far from the flock. Upon finding it, Moshe Rabbeinu saw that it was ill and carried it back upon his shoulders. Hashem commented, “You displayed such compassion to one of your flock, I desire you to lead My flock.” Thus we see that mercy, compassion, kindness, and care are necessary components of true Jewish leadership. Let’s not fall into the trap of being cynical about our own leaders. It is very natural that when someone criticizes us, we react by taking him or her down a peg or two. It is much easier to tear them down and negate their words than to consider that we might be wrong - and need improvement. This is one of the most frequent reasons why people disparage their own Rabbi’s, while still manifesting great respect for other Rabbonim. It is not only because they grow weary and used to their own Rav over the years. It is also because the other Rabbonim have not repeatedly chastised them personally. Furthermore, let us not succumb to the easy habit of always suspecting our own Rabbis and Roshei Yeshiva of doing things for the sake of kavod. Let us rather consider that by elevating the stature of our leaders, we are ensuring that our children will look up to them, be more likely to listen to them, and have a greater desire to be like them. In short, let’s aspire to the reward of the Talmud, “One who honors Rabbonim will have children who are Talmidei Chachomim.” As we start Sefer Shmos and learn about Geulas Mitzrayim, may Hashem bless us with long life, good health, and everything wonderful and may we all merit the final redemption speedily in our days.

To receive a weekly cassette tape or CD directly from Rabbi Weiss, please write to Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss, P.O. Box 140726, Staten Island, NY 10314 or contact him at RMMWSI@aol.com. Attend Rabbi Weiss’s weekly shiur at the Landau Shul, Avenue L and East 9th in Flatbush, Tuesday nights at 9:30 p.m. Rabbi Weiss’s Daf Yomi shiurim can be heard LIVE on Kol Haloshon at (718) 906-6400. Write to KolHaloshon@gmail.com for details. (Sheldon Zeitlin transcribes Rabbi Weiss’ articles. If you wish to receive Rabbi Weiss’ articles by email, please send a note to ZeitlinShelley@aol.com.)

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Rabbi Mayer Twersky Sojourners and Residents

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, in speaking to Moshe Rabbienu, invokes His promise to give Eretz Yisroel to the avos, Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. In so doing Hakadosh Baruch refers to Eretz Yisroel as eretz meguraihem, the land of their sojourning. The word meguraihem is related to the word ger, sojourner. Malbim explains that a Jew's ultimate home is not in this physical world, but rather in the spiritual world in spiritual proximity to Hashem. Thus, we are strangers in this world. Eretz Yisroel - eretz meguraihem - is the land most suitable for sojourners because of its inherent sanctity.

The Torah reiterates this point in parsha Behar when it stipulates that "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for you are sojourners and residents with Me" (Vayikra 25:23, Stone ed. translation).

We intuitively sense that one element of being responsible is planning for the future. We disapprovingly shake our heads when we see someone profligately spending without a thought for the future. We have savings accounts, retirement accounts, etc. And, of course, such planning is prudent and thus appropriate. But are we equally prudent in planning for our ultimate future? Do we live with alacrity and industriousness, recognizing the inestimable, incomparable value of time? Do our priorities reflect the fact that we live in eretz meguraihem, that we are only sojourners and residents? Do we prepare for our eternal future?

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January 22, 2009 War Brings Soldiers Closer to Their Judaism By Stephanie Carmon

"Welcome. Hashem is With You" reads a spray-painted wooden sign posted at the entrance to the army base at Gaza's southernmost tip. This is the Israeli army's main infantry training grounds and for the past several weeks it has been the site of major activity as Israel's soldiers entered Gaza to root out Hamas operatives firing rockets into southern Israel.

I am inside car #3 of a six-vehicle convoy carrying top military rabbinical brass from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and organization leaders from the Orthodox Union including Israel Director General Rabbi Avi Berman who I catch a lift with that day. "Hashem certainly is with us. Yes indeed," Rabbi Berman nods and smiles.

It is week three of Operation Cast Lead and a ceasefire is in the works. The six-car-convoy mission is en route to delivering tefillin to soldiers who have specifically requested them. The tefillin - 200 pair - are a gift from the OU and sponsored by Beth Jacob Synagogue in Beverly Hills and its leader Rabbi Steven Weil, the Orthodox Union's incoming Executive Vice President.

In Israel, the tefillin delivery is commandeered by OU Mashiv Ha'Ruach Project Director Rabbi Rafael Even Danan. Mashiv Ha'Ruach is a program aimed at helping soldiers return to their roots and get connected and anchored to Eretz Yisrael.

"We need to have very clear values in the army of why we, as Jews, live in this country," Rabbi Even Danan explains. "That is our backbone. Through things such as tefillin we are trying to strengthen Israel's soul and spirit to build up the soldiers in the field and elevate their Jewish spark and give them Jewish values and an attachment to this country. The minute you're attached to a country you are automatically a better fighter."

Because a good number of soldiers grow up in central Israel and do not venture to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria or other parts of the country, they are disconnected from greater Israel. Mashiv Ha'Ruach exposes them to various geographical regions and

Jewish traditions by bringing them to meet students/soldiers in hesder yeshivot and visit cities in Judea and Samaria and introducing them to the people living there. In this way the soldiers gain a greater understanding of fundamentally important - and strategic - locations, while connecting to the people they are defending.

Rabbi Berman explains: "This is the only place we have in the world and we have to fight for it. It was given to us by G-d over 4000 years ago. But if a soldier doesn't know where Sderot is, he'll say to himself: 'Why should I go there to protect those people?' 'We're here to show them that we're all one nation. We protect each other. It doesn't matter if I go to shul on Shabbat and another guy goes to the beach as long as we understand that we both come from the same nation and this is our God-given land, then we can go out and defend our nation together.'"

As we slowly wind our way through the sprawling base - a mini-city in its own right - activity abounds. Fatigue clad soldiers practice at artillery ranges, mill about in a makeshift outdoor mess hall, stand in the parking lot, return from Gaza missions or rest outside barracks.

We park the cars and set out on foot led by Rabbi Even-Danan who is carrying bagfuls of tefillin encased in waterproof packs. The half dozen rabbis accompanying Rabbi Even-Danan greet officers and soldiers along the way.

We arrive at our destination: the Golani infantry unit synagogue in the midst of the army camp. Mincha is getting underway and the rabbis are welcomed warmly as they enter the synagogue and stand alongside the soldiers for the service. For the most part, the minyan is made up of young boys in their early to late twenties. The sounds of artillery fire and two-way radio communications break through the hum of prayer.

When the service concludes, the rabbis head outdoors into the chill of the late January afternoon carrying the bags of tefillin with them. Within ten minutes word has gotten out: There is tefillin on base and the rabbis are helping wrap and recite brachot (blessings). A crowd gathers and for the next two hours the rabbis are surrounded by a steady stream of soldiers patiently waiting to receive the tefillin they ordered in advance.

As the soldiers get their tefillin, there is joy and hugging, there are brachot (blessings) and kind words and most of all, there is emunah, faith, in abundance. Stories of military missions and miracles begin to surface.

Ezer, a tall 28-year-old with a long pony tail hanging down his back, is from a Northern Israel development town. Visibly weary, he has been in Gaza since day 1 of Operation Cast Lead.

"There's no dilemma for me about being here in Gaza; the tefillin helps me with my deep inner strength and deep inner beliefs. It helps me to be. To live. To be true to myself. To be strong. Do I think of mortality when I'm on a mission in Gaza? Always. When you're in danger you have thoughts. 'Is this my time? Isn't it?' The belief, the practice...it helps pull the strength to the surface during those times."

The boys flock to Rabbi Berman, Even-Danan and Stavsky who radiate warmth as they utter quiet words of encouragement. Ezer applies tefillin with the aid of Rabbi Stavsky, the Director of the Baal Shem Tov outreach home and a steady OU volunteer, who offers a bracha and hug to each soldier he helps.

Former Memphis, Tennessee NCSY'er Yair Ben Yishai, a bubbly 22-year-old sporting matching black fleece cap and jacket over his fatigues, says he already has a pair of tefillin. He has approached Rabbi Berman on behalf of his commander, rumor reached him about the OU's visit and he "wants a pair but is too shy to come here with the crowd".

Ben-Yishai, also in Gaza since the start of the Operation, says this has been a war that has solidified emunah.

"The whole war you could really feel Hashem. My mom was telling me: 'There's no atheist in a foxhole.' Here you see people who never believed who started coming to shul. People in my unit who never thought anything about emunah are wearing tzeezet. Every time we go into a battle we blow the shofar and pray. You really feel that this is a Jewish army; we're doing what we need to do for Eretz Yisrael and that's where you feel really close to God."

Later that night as we exit the base, a satisfied Rabbi Berman sums up the mission.

"When you're a pilot or a tank commander and you have to push that button, it's not easy to do; you don't get over it. But what gives you strength and gets you through it is belief in the Almighty and the land that He gave us. Whether your relationship with G-d is expressed three times a day or once a year in synagogue it's about that personal connection. We're trying to help these soldiers develop that relationship with the Almighty and build a sense of comfort around that."

Help strengthen our soldiers

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

When Orthodox Union Rabbis Avi Berman, Rafael Even-Danan and half a dozen other leading OU and military rabbis delivered tefillin to soldiers serving in Israel's Operation Cast Lead, the soldiers discussed the significance of the delivery for them and shared their stories about war and emunah. These are some of the stories. . .

Assaf Azriel, Chief Rabbi, Kfir Infantry Battalion:

"A few weeks ago, Itai, the commander of the Kfir Battalion, was getting his men ready to go into Gaza. He called me over specially to say the traditional blessing before going into battle.

All of a sudden, Itai starts screaming the Shemah at the top of his lungs. And all of his soldiers – very few were religious – start screaming it after him. And he continues with the next verse and says it seven times. And it's all screaming. And the soldiers are screaming it after him. Then they put on their vests and helmets and go into Gaza.

The next day I got a report that an anti-tank missile hit the home they were operating from and that Itai was hit. I helicoptered to the hospital to be with him but it was too late.

Since then, the soldiers from his unit have been approaching me – one after the other – for tefillin and tzeezet. They want to do something in his memory and they feel very strongly that the shemah was his final atonement before going into battle.

On Shabbat the Bet Knesset was full – soldiers were praying and singing and they stayed for shiureem. These are special times. These are strong soldiers. We're strong.

Brian Elbert, 25 – originally from Philadelphia. Made aliya in 2006. Serving in Golani Infantry for a year.

I've been in Gaza since the operation started and I spoke with my mother for the first time today – my parents are in the U.S. It was very traumatic. My parents were literally freaking out for weeks.

I was raised secular but since making aliya I've moved more and more toward religion. I always felt I was lacking something spiritually and the more I've learned the more I appreciate what I'm learning.

Getting tefillin today is a very big step for me. Because religion played very strongly during this war. When you're faced with fear, moral dilemmas and the reality of what's going on around you the religious component becomes more meaningful and authentic.

For the past three weeks I prayed like I've never prayed before. And I promised myself that if I got through this okay I'd get off my behind and learn more and reach a point where I want to be spiritually.

Every day I prayed to G-d to just let me see my parents again. Just let me see my parents again.

So the tefillin symbolizes a reward. I made it. G-d answered my prayers to get through this okay and now I've got to keep up my end of the bargain and my commitment to praying regularly.

Yair Ben Yishai, 22. Golani Brigade. Born in Israel, lived in Memphis during high school years

Usually when you're in the army, if you're serving somewhere random & you're not doing much of anything, G-d is nice as a concept but he's not really there. Suddenly in a time of war, you really feel an explosion of religion and let me tell you. ... It's an incredible feeling.

Also: We heard an incredible story about a paratroop unit serving in Gaza going from house to house to search for Hamas terrorists.

Sometimes the houses are booby-trapped but the soldiers never know so they're very careful.

So this unit is searching and suddenly an old lady comes out of a house and says to them in Hebrew, Don't go to this house, this house and this house – they're all booby-trapped.

So the soldiers ask: Who are you? You're in Gaza and you speak perfect Hebrew? Where did you come from?

She answered: I'm Rachel mother of Joseph and Benjamin and I'm here to protect you. And then she disappeared.

When we heard the story, people who were not religious at all said: The mashiach has finally come. Finally. It's time.

Alexi Shun, 20, Golani Infantry Brigade. In Gaza since the start of the Operation.

I'm from Ashkelon but I was born in St. Petersburg, moved to Israel as a child and at 13 moved to Washington, D.C. for a few years. When I turned 18 I came to Israel and went into army.

I did a bar mitzvah but grew up completely secular. I started saying prayers and doing a few things like that when I went into the army because a few of the guys in my unit would put on tefillin each morning and pray. I decided I wanted to too. It calls you to do it. It's the Jewish connection.

I came out here today to get tefillin because I don't have any and I want my own. I don't want to take them from my friends anymore.

I'm glad I found this – religion and tefillin and the customs. Because when you pray it gives you strength and reminds you inside and out that you're Jewish. It renews your pact with that connection and reminds you that you have to protect this country. It's part of the obligation.

From Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>
Outlooks & Insights <outlooks@shemayisrael.com> date Thu, Jan 22,
2009 at 3:23 AM subject **Outlooks & Insights by Rabbi Zev Leff -**
Parshas Vaera

Parshas Vaera Torah and Nature Paths to Ahavas Hashem

The Nile will swarm with frogs, and when they emerge, they will be in your palace, in your bedroom, and [even] in your bed. [They will also be in] the homes of your officials and people, even in your ovens and kneading bowls (Shemos 7 28).

The second plague which G-d brought upon the Egyptians was 1 frogs. These frogs invaded every place in Egypt, including the ovens fired up for baking. The Talmud (Pesachim s3b) relates that the frogs were the inspiration for Chananiah, Misha'el and Azaryah

What did Chananiah, Misha'el, and Azaryah see that caused them to enter the fiery furnace of Nevuchadnezzar? They reasoned a fortiori from the frogs of Egypt. If frogs, which are not commanded to sanctify God's Name, entered the fiery furnace in order to sanctify God's Name, how much more so should we, who are commanded to sanctify God's Name, do so.

This Gemara raises the issue of how nature can serve as a means of coming to the knowledge of Hashem. Let us consider some of the uses and misuses of the contemplation of nature.

Rambam in Sefer Hamitzvos says that the path to love of Hashem is through Torah learning. Yet, in Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah, Rambam says that contemplating the natural world and its awe-inspiring wonders leads one to love of Hashem. The fact is that both of these paths are ultimately one. The Torah was the blueprint for the creation of the world, and thus nature is merely the physical manifestation of Torah. The Ten Commandments (Aseres Hadibros), in which the entire Torah is alluded to, correspond to the Ten Utterances (Asarah Ma'amaros), with which the world was created. Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference between nature and Torah as paths to Hashem.

The Midrash says that HaKadosh Boruch Hu did not create the world with the first letter, aleph, for it signifies-cursed-but rather with the second letter, beis, which signifies-blessing. But to placate the aleph, which felt slighted, Hashem began the Ten Commandments with an aleph-anoyeche. When it comes to using nature as a path to Hashem, one's explorations must be carefully guided, so that one indeed finds Hashem through his observation of nature. As King David proclaimed, Hashem is to be found in nature "When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, I am inspired to realize my insignificance in relationship to God, Who is overwhelming" (Tehillim 8 4). But there remains a danger in the observation of nature as the Torah warns us: "Lest you raise your eyes heavenward and observe the sun, the moon and the stars, and you are enticed to bow to them and serve them" (Devarim 4:19)

Yuri Gargarin, the first Soviet cosmonaut, announced upon returning to earth that he was now sure that G-d did not exist, chas veshalom, because he did not see Him. On the other hand, American astronauts on one of the Apollo missions transmitted breathtaking views of the earth from space, and recited Psalm 119, "The Heavens declare the glory of God..." Two observations of the same thing, two divergent responses.

The basis of blessing must be clear and decisive when it comes to observing G-d through nature. However, the path of Torah is not fraught with such danger. Quite the contrary, the inner light of Torah study guides one toward the good. When it comes to Torah, even that which can potentially be a curse, the aleph, can be inspired and directed by the inner light of Torah for the good. For this reason, Torah study must always be the primary path, the aleph. Only one steeped in the study of Torah can truly and properly utilize the path of observing nature, the second path, the bats.

Two blessings precede Krias Shema, which contains the mitzvah of love of Hashem. The first, Yotzer ohr, deals with nature and all of its aspects. The second, Ahavah rabbah, deals with Torah study. Creation precedes the giving of the Torah chronologically, and hence the blessing on nature is

first. The blessing of nature, however, begins with a *bais* -- *boruch atah* - while the blessing of Torah begins with an *aleph* -*ahava rabbah*. In actual practice, the study of Torah must be given priority.

The custom is to recite *Barchi nafshi* after *Minchah* on *Shabbos* during the winter, and to learn *Pirkei Avos* during the summer months. *Barchi nafshi* represents the path towards Hashem through nature and *Pirkei Avos* the path of Torah study. In the winter, nature is dormant, while Torah study is at its peak, since the long nights are conducive to the study of Torah. Therefore the path of nature must be emphasized through the recitation of *Barchi nafshi*, which speaks of the wonders of nature. In the summer, however, the opposite is true. Nature is in its full glory, but the nights are short and Torah study is at its low ebb. Hence the need to learn *Pirkei Avos* which emphasizes the path of Torah. Here, too, *Barchi nafshi*, nature, begins with a *bais*, and *Avos* begins with an *aleph*, to inform us which path must always be primary.

All creation was designed to inspire and lead us to love Hashem. The *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a) says that on the fifth day of the week, we recite Chapter 81 of *Tehillim*, "Sing out to the G-d of our strength," for on this day birds and fish were created to praise Hashem's Name. *Rashi* explains that it is not the birds and fish themselves which sing Hashem's praises; rather when people observe the birds and fish, they give praise to the One Who created them. Similarly, *Perek Shirah*, which relates the songs of various animals, plants and inanimate objects, is explained by *Rabbi Yosef Mitrani*, in his work *Beis Elokim*, as referring not to the utterances of these creatures and objects but to the responses the natural phenomena evoke in the human beings who observe and study them.

The accessibility of nature to our physical senses is an important supplement to our knowledge of Hashem. As physical beings, we are affected more by what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste than by what we know intellectually. Although Moshe was informed of the sin of the Golden Calf by Hashem, he did not actually break the *Luchos* (Tablets) until he personally observed the sin himself.

Emanah and *ahavas Hashem* must be made as real and intense as that which we experience with our senses. The Torah manifested in nature helps one concretize his *emunah*.

Entering the fiery furnace to sanctify Hashem's name required great strength and commitment. Unless *Chananiah*, *Mishatel* and *Azaryah* had reached a level where their knowledge of *kiddush Hashem* had become concretized by their senses and observed as a fact of nature, they might have shied away from taking that awesome step and wrongly justified themselves by misapplying the command to "live by them." They saw in nature the sanctification of God's Name by the frogs, and this supplemented their knowledge of the mandate to sanctify God's Name. Their new knowledge gave them the courage and will to fulfill that which they knew to be intellectually binding. By seeing *kiddush Hashem* represented in nature, they sensed it, they felt it. If frogs have the strength to do this, they reasoned, surely that same strength exists within us.

May we steep ourselves in Torah learning so that in observing the world around us, we can be inspired, encouraged and strengthened to navigate our paths to *emunah* and love of Hashem.

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Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Vaera

PARSHAS VAERA Moshe spoke before Hashem... "Behold, Bnei Yisrael have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me? And I have sealed lips!" (6:12) The lives of some people are situated between the proverbial "rock and a hard place." They want so much to do good, to change their miserable lifestyles, which they know are inappropriate and heading nowhere. Yet, when "push comes to shove," they are powerless to make a commitment due to the acquired habits endemic to their lifestyles. This is not novel. Moshe Rabbeinu confronted a similar challenge upon speaking to Klal Yisrael about the upcoming redemption from Egypt.

When Moshe received a "cool" reception from the Jewish slaves to his good news, he asked Hashem, "How can I expect Pharaoh to listen to me in light of my speech impediment?" Chazal tell us that this is one of the ten *kal v'chomer*, a *fortiori*, arguments in the Torah. Moshe was reasoning from a minor to a major principle. An example of such reasoning is: if a weak man can knock down a door, surely a strong man can do the same. The commentators point out that Moshe's argument was flawed, as the reasoning for the lack of enthusiasm which they evidenced were their *kotzer ruach*, shortness of temper, and their *avodah kashah*, the fatigue of their hard labor. This was not likely to be the same in Pharaoh's case.

In response to this question, *Horav Meir Bergman*, *Shlita*, cites the *Baalei Tosfos*, who explain Moshe's logic. Regardless of Klal Yisrael's difficulty -from both the physical and emotional demands-- with their shortness of temper, they should have embraced the opportunity to leave the country. If a man is incarcerated, he would surely be ecstatic about the notion of freedom. No matter how depressed he is, his mind is occupied day and night with the thought of leaving prison. Klal Yisrael's unresponsiveness to Moshe was not typical of the average slave. If they paid no attention to Moshe, Pharaoh would certainly not listen, especially given that Moshe had come to free the slaves.

Apparently the desire to leave prison should supersede the people's state of nervous prostration and physical exhaustion. If Klal Yisrael, whose desire to leave was so strong, still listened to Moshe dispassionately, what could be expected of Pharaoh? He surely did not want the Jewish slaves to leave Egypt. Moshe's arguments seem to be within reason. If so, why did the people refuse to listen to him? *Rav Bergman* cites the *Mechilta*, which gives us a totally new perspective on their "short temper" and "hard labor" that affected their desire to listen to Moshe.

The *Mechilta* begins by stating that, regardless of the difficulty of the labor, when a person hears good news, his attitude quickly changes. He wants to listen, which did not occur when Moshe spoke to the Jews. Where was their joy in the knowledge that this miserable bondage was finally coming to an end? Chazal explain that it had nothing to do with the actual labor to which the Egyptians subjected them. Rather, it was hard for them to say good-bye to their idols. Yes, the Jews were taken in by the Egyptian culture of idol worship. It had become a way of life for them. True, they did not want to be slaves to Pharaoh, but they were not yet prepared to leave Egypt. It was the classic syndrome to which many of our co-religionists throughout history have succumbed. We want to be recognized as members of our host country; we want to live like them and be like them, but we do not want to be persecuted as outsiders, as Jews. Live with *goyim*, be like *goyim*, and expect the *goyim* to recognize us as *goyim*. It just does not work, because we are not *goyim*. We are Jews, and when a Jew acts like a *goy*, he pays for it.

Hashem's command to the Jews was to desist from idolatry, in order to prepare to leave Egypt. They wanted to leave Egypt, but they did not want to abandon their idolatry. It meant too much to them - even more than leaving Egypt. Chazal are laying bare for us the depths of human psychology. Ostensibly, the Jews wanted desperately to be told the news of the redemption, but subconsciously they were opposed to hearing anything that meant giving up their relationship with their idols. Regrettably, this latter impulse won out, and they refused to hear what Moshe had to say. It was this inner struggle between the desire to leave the misery of Egypt and the gravitational pull to idolatry that caused their "shortened breath" and their "hard labor." The word *avodah*, labor, refers specifically to *avodah zarah*, idolatry.

This is the battle of life - one which often puts us between "a rock and a hard place." We want to live a life of the spirit, a life devoted to serving Hashem, a life of observance, a life of joy, but we are unwilling to give up the idolatry. We want to gain freedom, but we are loathe to leave our enslavement to the acquired habits of materialism. Our ears are deafened to Hashem's message, because it means giving up what has become our comfort zone of life, our lifestyle of decadence. Moshe's *kal v'chomer* made sense. The Jewish people had much to gain from freedom. Yet, they turned a deaf ear to Moshe's message. Their deep-rooted interest in maintaining their Egyptian lifestyle outweighed even their desperate longing for freedom. Now, if they - who had so much to gain-- would not listen to Moshe, Pharaoh would be even less willing to listen. After all, he wanted to maintain his slaves.

They are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh... This is Moshe and Aharon. (6:27)

Rashi explains the meaning of this *pasuk*: "They are the ones who were commanded, and they are the ones who fulfilled all that they were commanded. They remained steadfast and righteous in their mission from beginning to end." What *Rashi* is telling us is that Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen remained committed to carrying out their mission, so that they did not deviate in any way from their elevated level of piety and virtue. One would expect nothing less from these two paragons of *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven. After all, Moshe was the quintessential leader of Klal Yisrael, and Aharon was the *Kohen Gadol*, High Priest. This level of dedication was an integral part of their ongoing devotion to Hashem and their service to Him.

In an alternative approach, Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, distinguishes between fulfilling a mortal's command and carrying out Divine commandments. Essentially, they are two different types of fulfillments, involving disparate goals and objectives. For instance, in the human realm, a general leads an army, and his soldiers aggressively adhere to his commands. Their goal, however, is to win the war. They believe that the general's strategy can accomplish this goal. Hashem also issues commands, but His directives are not focused on the outcome or the achievement, because He does not need us for that. Hashem can implement His goals without human intervention. Thus, man's motivation and focus in mitzvah performance is one point: Hashem has so commanded. We act to carry out the ratzon Hashem, will of G-d, not due to the achievement involved.

One can attain such a level of performance only with humility. One who "holds of himself" is concerned primarily with the outcome, the result, and how it will bear on his list of personal accomplishments. He is concerned with himself and thus every achievement adds to his personal portfolio. How can such a person ignore his own intentions and serve Hashem purely for His sake, to carry out His will, because He has so commanded?

When Moshe and Aharon fulfilled Hashem's command, they did so purely because Hashem had so commanded-- and not with any other ulterior motives. They did this throughout the entire command from beginning to end. It was because of their outstanding humility and overwhelming joy in carrying out Hashem's command that they merited to be the vehicles for the redemption from Egypt.

Moshe cried out to Hashem concerning the frogs. (8:8)

The Talmud Berachos 31A states that it is forbidden to raise one's voice in prayer. This is derived from Chanah's prayer in Shmuel 1:13, where it is written, "Her voice was not heard." Furthermore, the Talmud says that one who raises his voice in prayer indicates that his level of emunah, faith in the Almighty, is slight. It is as if he were implying that the Almighty hears only if one speaks loudly, a statement which is inconceivable. The Talmud goes so far as to say that one who raises his voice is included among the false prophets. This is because he is presenting Hashem as some form of mortal that can only hear from afar when one shouts, an inference which is ludicrous. If so, why did Moshe Rabbeinu find it necessary to "cry out" to Hashem? Surely, his prayer would have been just as efficacious had he respectfully uttered his words of prayer in a relaxed, low voice.

We find other instances of prayer when the word tzaakah, crying out, is used. When Klal Yisrael stood at the banks of the Red Sea, closed in between water and the Egyptians, they "cried out to Hashem" (Shemos 14:10). When Miriam was stricken with tzaraas, leprosy, "Moshe cried out to Hashem, saying, "Please, Hashem, heal her now" (Bamidbar 12:13). The list goes on with pesukim in Navi and Tehillim in which "crying out" constituted a legitimate form of prayer. How does this coincide with the words of Chazal?

A number of commentators address this question, the first of whom is the Mabib. In his Bais Elokim, he explains that the daily tefillos which we recite under all conditions should be said in a quiet, relaxed tone. Those prayers, however, which one recites during an eis tzarah, troublesome time, period of misery, cannot really be spoken with a calm demeanor. When one hurts, he cries! By raising his voice, he indicates the reality that he is going through a difficult time and that the One Who can alleviate his pain is Hashem. These emotions are evinced through his crying out in prayer.

In his sefer on Meseches Brachos, Chashukei Chemed, Horav Yitzchok Zilberstein, Shlita, cites his brother-in-law, Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, who distinguishes between the ten loshonos, terms, describing the various forms of prayer. Among them is the term zeakah, which means raising one's voice in prayer. This does not mean that he screams, but rather that he raises his voice from the deepest recesses of his heart, evoking his inner emotions. His voice remains the same; it is the emotions and inner yearnings that are elevated.

Horav Eliyahu Schlessinger, Shlita, relates that in a talk to his students, the Pnei Menachem, previous Gerrer Rebbe, zl cited the commentary of the Sfas Emes, concerning the naarah ha'meorasah, betrothed girl, who had relations with a man. The girl receives capital punishment because "she did not cry out," indicating that this was not a forced relationship, but consensual. The Sfas Emes derives from here that one who does not scream, even though later the situation turned into an oneis, accident, whereby the woman was under pressure, is considered negligent and complicit. When it hurts, one screams. When the opportunity to scream presents itself and one remains silent, he is a poshea, lax and derelict, and considered responsible for what has occurred. It was preventable, and his attitude of disregard played a role in his downfall. The Rebbe concluded with the words: "If one can accomplish with screams and he does not, it is not considered an accident." He then raised his voice and said, "Woe that people do not appreciate fully the incredible power of crying out to Hashem from the depths of the heart."

In another context, the word zeakah is defined as mobilizing, or calling up personnel, as in Shoftim 4:10, Vayazeik Barak es Zevullun, "Barak mustered

/mobilized Zevullun." Zeakah, concerning prayer, is then defined as the realization that the situation is dire and one must mobilize and do everything within his power to ask Hashem for mercy. While the focus of this thesis has been emphasizing the significance of added emotion, prayer with greater intensity, resonant and pulsating expression of one's pleas, this is not necessarily the only way to be heard, as illustrated by the following story.

A young Torah scholar in a small community in Eretz Yisrael became gravely ill. It reached the point that he was at death's door. A prayer-gathering was convened during which the assemblage poured out their hearts to the Almighty. Afterwards, the group discussed ways to help their stricken friend. One of the suggestions that was presented and agreed upon was to have everyone obligate himself to come to davening on time, not to leave until after davening had been concluded, and not to speak during davening. Sounds like a seemingly benign commitment. It worked. From that day on, davening changed. Everyone was there when Birchos HaShachar were recited. The last Kaddish was no longer "orphaned" with barely a minyan remaining to answer amen. The decorum in shul was enhanced. It looked like a shul. Davening became a serious pursuit. Slowly, there were subtle spiritual changes in the lives of all of the participants. The most significant result of this change was the return to complete health of the choleh, sick scholar.

The rabbanim acquainted with this phenomenal experience explained its success in the following manner. One may daven and daven, stretching out his davening as long as he wants, but if he does not demonstrate by his actions that he values and appreciates davening, his prayers do not garner their complete effectiveness. Who cares how long he stretches out his Shemoneh Esrai, as long as he comes to davening late and leaves early? He shows how much he really values the davening. When the entire kehillah, community, joined together to demonstrate the significance of davening in their lives, it achieved the greatest efficacy.

The hail struck in the entire land of EgyptMoshe went out from Pharaoh...and he stretched his hands to Hashem; the thunder and hail ceased and rain did not reach the earth. (9:25, 33)

Moshe Rabbeinu prayed to Hashem, and the hail-- with its accompanying thunder and rain-- ceased. When Moshe prayed the plague came to a sudden stop to the point that the hail falling to earth was suspended in mid-air. In the Midrash, Chazal tell us that the hail stones remained suspended in the air for quite some time. During the days of Yehoshua, when he was battling the Emorites, the hail came crashing down from heaven. The remainder of the hail is to fall during the war of Gog and Magog prior to the advent of Moshiach. Rabbeinu Bachya adds that the thunder also came into use during the days of Elisha against the kingdom of Aram.

This is all very impressive, but was it necessary? Human beings never know what tomorrow will bring, so they save. During times of plenty, they put away for a rainy day, for a time when they might not have the resources available to achieve their goals. Hashem, the Creator of all things, does not have this "problem." He creates anew whatever He wants. Why was it necessary for Him to "save" the thunder, to suspend the hail in mid-air, to put them away for a later date? Why does He not simply create new thunder and new hail?

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, explains that Hashem treasured the barad, hail, which He created to plague Egypt. This hail represented the groans, sighs and tears of the Jewish slaves. Every hailstone was filled with Jewish tears. The Jews suffered greatly at the brutal hands of the cruel Egyptians. Men, women and children would raise their voices in pain and sorrow, gazing Heavenward for salvation. "Please, Hashem, put a stop to our misery." Their tears would flow freely as they beseeched Hashem for His mercy. Every groan, every tear meant so much to Hashem. He saved them and used them as the principle substance for the hail and the thunder. The hot tears became the fire within the hail. Is it any wonder that these hailstones and the thunder were so precious to Hashem?

The entire people responded together and said, "Everything that Hashem has spoken we shall do!" (Shemos 19:8) In the Midrash Shir HaShirim, Chazal ask for how long this rapturous declaration of Naaseh V'Nishmah, "We will do and (then) we will listen," lasted for Klal Yisrael? They reply that the reverberation of this sound continued on until the time of Shlomo HaMelech. When he built the Bais HaMikdash and brought in the Aron HaKodesh, with the Kohanim and Leviim participating together, with special singers dressed in their finery and accompanied by trumpeters, cymbalists, drummers, and harpsichordists, all singing together in unison, all of Klal Yisrael participating together in harmony - then the sound of Naaseh V'Nishmah was incorporated in all the pomp and glory! No, it was not a singular event. It would last for generations, due to its sincerity and overwhelming significance.

No prayer is wasted; no tear is ignored; no groan or sigh is overlooked. Hashem saves them all and uses them at an appropriate time and suitable place.

A Jew who was obviously very ill came to the Steipler Rav, zl, and beseeched him for a blessing. The Steipler listened to the man's pleas, his heartrending cry, his broken-hearted lament, as he related the pain, the trauma - both physical and emotional - which he and his family had endured as they weathered crisis after crisis.

Finally, the Steipler spoke. "The heartfelt prayer of a choleh, sick person, is heard by Hashem. This is a verity. It is axiomatic. I suggest that you pray for yourself. Pour out your heart to the Almighty. Entreat Him for mercy. He will certainly listen. He always listens. No prayer returns empty-handed. Every prayer accomplishes something. It might achieve the entire request. At times, it might only negotiate a small percentage of the original request. Even if one does not notice an immediate response of some sort, it means nothing, for it might be a month or two in coming - even a year, five years. Sometimes, it may take up to ten years before one sees Hashem's response," the Steipler concluded his words and bid the man good day.

The sick person began to pray with greater fervor, more intense passion and deeper feeling. Exactly ten years after he had visited the Steipler - yes, it took ten years - the man was completely healed from his illness. The answer came. It just took some time.

Tefillah has efficacy. The potency of one's tefillah is determined by its sincerity and the manner in which it is expressed. The following incident took place a few years ago in the study of Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita. My purpose of relating this story is to demonstrate that tefillah works, and that one need not be a gadol hador, preeminent leader of the generation, in order for his prayer to obtain a favorable result.

One day a young kollel fellow, a scholar who studied in one of the distinguished Kollelim, post-graduate fellowship Torah programs, in Bnei Brak, presented himself together with his seven year old son before Rav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita. "Rebbe," the young man said, "I would like to relate to his honor a moving, incredible story that occurred concerning my son. As his honor can see, my son was diagnosed a short while ago with the dread disease. As part of his treatment, the doctors said that he would have to undergo several rounds of serious chemotherapy. Among the many side effects that he might suffer, losing all of his body hair was a certainty. My son has accepted Hashem's decree of strict justice with great love, far beyond a child of such young years. Yet, despite his incredible emunah, faith, and bitachon, trust, in the Almighty that whatever is decreed for him is all for the good, he became hysterical when he heard he would lose his hair. He told us, 'I do not care about the hair on my head, even if it will look strange and the other children might look at me in a ridiculing manner. I cannot, however, tolerate losing my payos, sidelocks. My payos maintain my appearance as a Jewish child. How can I lose my payos?'"

"My son cried and cried, and he prayed and prayed. He supplicated Hashem with the following words: 'My merciful Father in Heaven. I am confident that everything that You do to me is for the good. No one has greater compassion than You. This is what my parents have taught me. Therefore, I accept unequivocally and with utmost love all that You will send me. I accept everything that is connected with this disease that I have, because I am certain that You will not forsake me. I am willing to lose my hair, even though I will be greatly embarrassed thereby.'

"Suddenly, my son burst out into bitter weeping. As he sobbed, he cried out, 'Hashem, I will give it all up- but not my payos! How can I be without payos? I cannot overlook my payos. They are what make me look like a Jew. Please, Hashem - leave my payos!'

"My son davened like this for over an hour, repeating his entreaty amid bitter wailing. Rebbe - lo and behold - look at my son. His payos have not been touched. The drugs ravaged his body. Every hair is gone - except for his payos. Hashem listened to my son's prayers."

Rav Chaim was so taken by this incident that he immediately summoned all the members of his family who were in the house to come to see the power of innocence, the power of sincerity, the power of prayer from a pure heart.

The key to prayer is sincerity. This means that the supplicant believes that only Hashem can help him. Therefore, he turns his heart to Him, understanding that any other avenue is only part of the process called hishtadlus, endeavor. This is something which we must do, but we may never forget that the result can only be affected by Hashem.

Va'ani Tefillah Retzon yireiav yaaseh, v'es shavasam yishma v'yoshieim

Yishma v'yoshieim, He hears and He saves them. The text is seemingly redundant, especially once it has already been stated that Hashem performs the will of the G-d fearing. The Chasam Sofer cites the Talmud in Taanis 25b, which states that upon occasion, Hashem will grant someone his wish before he even expresses it. In other words, Hashem knows what the person is going to ask, so He pre-empts the question by performing what the individual is about to ask. Hashem really has no interest in listening to the man's prayer. Those who fear Him, however, are different. Hashem wants to hear them. Therefore, He grants them their wish. This is because Hashem loves to hear and carry out the wishes of His faithful. This is the meaning of David HaMelech's statement in Tehillim 91:15, "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him." It is only after he calls out to Me what I will answer him. I want to hear his

voice, to listen to his plea. My love for him is so great. I am happy to respond to him, but I first want to hear from him.

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