

# Parsha Press

## PARSHAT VA'ERA

### Recognizing G-D Michal Jager

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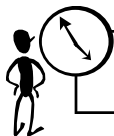
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Shabbat Starts:  
4:27

Moshe warned Pharaoh and the Egyptians that there was going to be a devastating hail that would destroy living creatures that remained out in the open. The *passuk* then says:

“Those who feared the word of the Almighty from the servants of Pharaoh brought his servants and his cattle into the house. And those who did not pay attention to the word of the Almighty left their servants and cattle in the field.”



The people who left their servants and cattle outside did so not because they believed that Moshe's claim was false. They neglected his warning because they did not pay any attention to it. This stemmed from lack of attention to the Almighty, the opposite of fear of G-d.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz questioned: Why didn't the servants flee to safety? They should have feared for their lives and ran to protect themselves. Rav Chaim answered that they too did not pay attention. When someone does not pay attention to danger, it is as if it doesn't exist.

It says in *Masechtas Tamid* 32a, that the wise man is one who sees the future consequences of his behavior. The *Chofetz Chaim* in his introduction to *Chovas Hashmirah* writes, that the word “seeing” is used to tell us a means of

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### Hakaras Hatov Daniella Dobe Friedman

The first seven Makos take place in this week's parsha. We see that the first three makos are performed by Aharon and not by Moshe. Why is this? Rashi says that Moshe didn't hit the water for the first two makos because the water had protected him when he was a baby, when his mother put him there. He also didn't hit the dust of the land for the third maka because the land had also protected him when he killed the mitzri and buried him in the sand. We see a tremendous amount of Hakarat hatov that Moshe had, that he even expressed it towards inanimate things.

Whenever Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the Kotzker Rebbe, replaced a pair of worn out shoes, he would neatly wrap up the old ones in newspaper before placing

### News From Israel

- Israel sent enormous amounts of rescue and aid to the Asian countries hit by the Tsunami
- A committee of Jewish dentists from Ohio flew to Israel recently to provide medical assistance to the residents of Kfar Saba, Columbus' "sister city"
- A large sit-in of anti-disengagement demonstrators is planned for this week outside the Knesset. A massive turnout is expected

-The Jewish Press  
Week in review

them in the trash, and he would declare, "How can I simply toss away such a fine pair of shoes that have served me so well these past years!?"

The Mussar teacher Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian (1872 - 1970) was once talking to a student after prayers, and at the same time was folding up his *tallis*. The *tallis* was large and he had to rest it on a bench to fold it. After he had finished the folding, Reb Elyah noticed that the bench was dusty, and so he headed out to fetch a towel to wipe it off. The student to whom he was speaking realized what Reb Elyah was doing and ran to get the towel for him. Reb Elyah held up his hand. "No! No! I must clean it myself, for I must show my gratitude to the bench upon which I folded my *tallis*." (from Reb Elyah by David Schlossberg, p.121.)

Chazal teach us that a person must recognize the good from which he benefited even if it came from something inanimate. You are therefore not allowed to cause it shame. In *Michtav Me' eliyahu*, Rav Eliyahu Dessler says, the water and the land are inanimate, and they don't feel anything, so it won't be a *bizayon*, embarrassment, to them if Moshe hit them. All the more so, by moshe hitting them a *nes* will occur and they will go against their nature and they will become vessels through which the name of Hashem is sanctified. If so, how is this an embarrassment if through them being used for *avodas Hashem*, they are elevated a lot?

Rav Dessler answers by saying, if you show *hakaras hatov* to something even if it is inanimate and it doesn't know, you are affected and in the future you will be able to express *hakarat hatov* toward others. Through this *middah* of *Hakaras Hatov*, you will learn to recognize the greatness of Hashem's kindness toward every creation and through this you will gain a closer relationship to Hashem.

Even in this time of high stress when you are taking finals, when someone gives you their notes or helps you study, you must recognize the good and thank them for it. Good Luck on all your finals and Good shabbos.

## Getting the Message Michelle Zomber

In this week's parsha, one of *B'nei Yisrael's* worst enemies and tormentors begins to get his punishment for the suffering he caused us. After the third *maka*, *makat kinim*, Pharaoh decides he can no longer bear the consequences of keeping the Jews in *Mitzrayim*:

*"Vayishlach Paroh vayikrah l'mosheh v'l'Aharon va'yomer eilayhem chatati hapa'am Hashem tzaddik v'ani v'ami ha'risha'im"*

*And Pharaoh sent and he called Moshe and Aharon and he said to them, I have sinned this time. The Almighty is righteous and I and my people are wicked."* (Shemos 9:27)

Yet after he repents, Pharaoh goes back on his word and continues to sin! How could he declare that Hashem is completely right and, immediately afterwards, return to his evil ways?

The answer lies in Pharaoh's initial confession. Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel of Slobodka points out that Pharaoh only said that Hashem was righteous for punishing his evil ways; Pharaoh only saw the *makot* as a penalty for his actions, rather than as a sign to improve them. He could not recognize that suffering is a message from Hashem, a reminder to change his ways for the better.

Pharaoh's flawed *teshuvah* serves to teach us a very important lesson. We all undergo many challenges in life and each person has his or her own kind of suffering. But, it is a comfort to know that if we can see our hardships as divine messages and use them as a means of elevation, they become so much more meaningful and so much easier to cope with.

~Based On an article from *Growth Through Torah*



Arutz Sheva

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making future events real. Seeing something with your eyes leaves a stronger impression than just hearing it.

If a person strives to recognize the existence of Hashem at all times, he will be able to refrain from transgression by remembering that G-d is watching. Rav Packouz from Aish.com presents some concrete ways to connect to Hashem. Some of these are:

1. Have a constant awareness of our Father, our King, Creator and Sustainer of the universe. As soon as you think of the Creator, you immediately connect with Him. Think of Him often.
2. Everything you have in life, you have because it is a gift from the Creator. Be constantly grateful because this gratitude creates love.
3. Realize that everything that the Almighty causes to happen in your life, He causes to happen for a positive purpose. Some you will recognize, some you won't. Frequently repeat, "this too is for the good"
4. Every prayer you say, whether formal or in your own words, is an expression of connecting with the Creator.
5. You are always in the present moment. Right now, connect with the Creator even if you've gotten off track a moment ago.
6. Realize that you are never alone. Wherever you are, the Almighty is always with you. Speak to Him in your own way and ask Him for your wants and needs.

Remember that Hashem loves you and is always there.

*"Shivisi Hashem L'negdi Tamid"*

Shabbat Shalom

## Story of a Gadol

A man was once astonished to see R' Aharon Kotler playing chess with an elderly gentleman. The reason that he was perplexed was that R' Kotler barely had time for meals, much less chess games. However, he later learned that the elderly gentleman had lost his family in the Holocaust and was suffering from depression because of that. Therefore, R' Kotler took upon himself to play chess with that man in order to make him feel better.

R' Kotler was extremely humble. When introducing himself he would say "this is Kotler," never giving himself the title "Rabbi."

He additionally had much concern for other people. For example, while driving on a parkway, he instructed his driver to go to the toll collector person rather than the machine. He felt it was incumbent upon him to give respect to everyone even if it would take a bit more time.

We can learn from R' Kotler the importance of *kavod haBriot*, respecting every person regardless of his/her status in society.

~Based on a story from Builders by Hanoch Teller

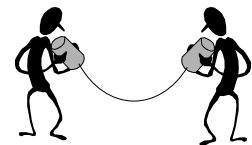
## Quote of the Week

"There are no shortcuts to any place worth going."



## SHMIRAT HALASHON

SPEAKING LASHON HARAH IN PUBLIC IS AN EVEN GREATER SIN BECAUSE IT ALSO CAUSES A CHILUL HASHEM  
 CHOFETZ CHAIM:  
 A DAILY COMPANION



## FAST FACTS on the *TEN MAKOT* Chaya Green



- The ten *Makot* were *mida kneged mida* (examples: **lice** because the Jews were forced to clean the courtyards and marketplaces from dust, dust which later turned to lice for the *mitzrim*. **Wild animals** because the Jews were forced to bring bears and lions so that the Jews would be hurt by them)
- All ten plagues came within one year
- The Ari z"l says that Paroh gave *nevuah* without realizing it, when he said "*Mi Hashem asher eshma be'kolo*," because the word *asher* is equal in *gematria* to *detzach adash beachav*
- The Tor and the Baal Machzor Vitry say that the reason for the separation of the *makot* into the acronyms, *detzach adash* and *beachav*, is that *dam* and *tzfardea* were given through a sign, but *keenim* was not; *arov* and *dever* were given through a sign, but *shchin* was not; *barad* and *arbe* were given through a sign, but *choshech* was not. *Makas bechoros* is put with the last group because it does not have its own separate category

~Based on an article from *Torah Ladaat* by Rabbi Matis Bloom



## Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov Dani Lent on the marriage of her sister Shira (SKA '01) this coming Sunday.  
Mazel Tov to Mrs. Elsant on the marriage of her son Michael to Hudi Lerner  
Mazel Tov to Marlee Katz on the birth of a baby boy to her cousin

January 13th  
Leora Lerman

January 10th  
Orly English

January 14th  
Arielle Kaish

January 11th  
Giti Kinger  
Shira Thalheim

Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls



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