

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

Vol 6, # 14

Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

beverlyhillshabad.com

Rabbi Yosef Shusterman 310-271-9063

The Torah portion of Va'eira recounts the plagues that G-d inflicted on the Egyptians. Most lasted one week, with the exceptions of the plague of darkness and the slaying of the firstborn.

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, provides the timetable: In general, each plague occupied a period of one month. The first week was the plague itself, followed by three weeks during which Moses repeatedly warned Pharaoh about the plague to come.

At first glance, this categorization seems odd. Wouldn't the three weeks of warning belong to the next plague, rather than the one which preceded it? No, Rashi insists, the three weeks in which Moses admonished Pharaoh and forewarned him about the coming plague relate to the plague that was already visited upon the Egyptians.

Here we see the deeper significance of Moses' actions: In warning Pharaoh, Moses' intention was not merely to prepare him for the next round of punishment, but to "break" him. The whole purpose of the Ten Plagues was to shatter Pharaoh's arrogance, to intimidate him. In fact, the warning phase that followed each plague was an integral part of this process.

By reprimanding Pharaoh immediately upon the completion of each plague, the fear and damage inflicted by that plague was intensified manifold. With each warning, Pharaoh came that much closer to being "broken."

The Torah relates that even before the plagues began, Moses was sent before Pharaoh and his magicians to perform the miracle in which his staff turned into a serpent. The very next day, with the impression still fresh in Pharaoh's mind, Moses warned him about the plague of blood.

Concerning this mission, G-d commanded Moses, "The staff that turned into a snake, you shall take in your hand" - thereby emphasizing the connection between the miracle and Moses' words of admonition. With Pharaoh still under the influence of what he had witnessed, Moses' warning made the miracle seem that much more wondrous.

Pharaoh is symbolic of the obstacles a Jew encounters in his service of G-d; the plagues represent his efforts to wage war against them. Applying the above principle to our lives we see that it's not enough to "attack" these impediments; we must "break" them completely until total victory is attained.

Chasidut explains that this desire to prevail is deeply rooted in the soul. And just as a king will spend vast amounts of money to be victorious in war, G-d opens His "treasury" and grant the Jewish people storehouses of strengths.

We, the generation of the "footsteps of Moshiach," are particularly equipped with the strength to overcome difficulties. And by standing strong we will attain the ultimate victory of all: the Final Redemption with Moshiach. (Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 31 From: L'Chaim 5759, # 552) - lchaimweekly.org

And Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (7:12) G-d said: "If Aaron's serpent will swallow up the serpents of the Egyptians, there will be nothing remarkable in that, for serpents usually swallow each other. Therefore let it resume its original form and swallow up their serpents." (Midrash Rabbah)

The Torah's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17) -- our task is to create light, not to battle darkness. Nevertheless, there are times when we are forced to resort to battle, when we must vanquish those who seek to vanquish us. Thus Moses, the gentle shepherd of Israel, and Aaron, the ultimate man of peace, find themselves in the role of "judge and chastiser of Pharaoh," crushing the might of Egypt and obliterating its icons and myths.

Therein lies the lesson to be derived from the fact that Aaron's rod swallowed the "serpents of the Egyptians" after it had reverted back to its original form, rather than as a serpent itself. For even when he wages war, the Jew is not a warrior. Even when he consumes the serpents of the enemy, he is not a serpent himself, spewing poison and hate. His instrument of vengeance is devoid of vengeful feeling as a petrified rod, as cold to the rage of war as a lifeless stick. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) – chabad.org

And the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was no longer poured upon the earth (9:33) The hailstones which were on the way down when Moses prayed were suspended in midair, and did not reach the earth. When did they descend? In the days of Joshua they descended upon the Amorites, as it is written (Joshua 10:11): "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel... that G-d cast down great stones from heaven upon them." The remainder will descend in the days of Gog and Magog (Midrash Rabbah) - ibid

The frogs shall come up (7:29) After the passing of Reb Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, a number of Chassidim were sitting together, discussing the ways and habits of their late rebbe. One of that brotherhood, Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi, posed a question: "Is anyone here able to explain why every morning at dawn our rebbe was accustomed to stroll near the lakes, where the frogs croak?"

Receiving no answer, he continued: "Then let me tell you what our rebbe's intention was in doing this. Do we not read in Perek Shirah how every particle of Creation, animate and inanimate, from the loftiest to the humblest, sings its own paeon of praise to its Creator? Well, the frogs too have their own song, and the rebbe wanted to hear how these creatures praise their Maker." (From: A Treasury of Chassidic Tales, artscroll)

The Quality of Silence

R' Yitzchak said: Which craft should man pursue in this world? He should make himself like a mute (Chullin 89a). R' Yitzchak's description of the quality of silence as a craft, conveys a number of important lessons: If a person who is unfamiliar with a certain trade seeks to create a product of that trade with his own hands, he will find the task exceedingly difficult, regardless of how simple he may have imagined it to be. To become skilled in a given craft requires a period of training and experience.

So it is with the art of silence. The ability to restrain oneself from speaking when the situation warrants silence is, indeed, precious. With the quality of silence, man is protected from the many sins which are related to speech; without it, it is exceedingly difficult to refrain from verbal transgression.

A person who exercises restraint in speech only when the possibility of forbidden speech seems likely, but at all other times speaks whatever comes to mind, will be unable to avoid transgression. Such a person is simply not accustomed to restraining himself in this area, and is totally unprepared when the moment of trial arrives.

Therefore, one should train himself, like someone learning a craft, to exercise restraint in speech. One must reach the point where such restraint comes naturally to him. Which craft should man pursue in this world? He should make himself like a mute. Then he will surely refrain from forbidden speech and avoid any such sin. The following segment is a translation from the Chofetz Chaim's writings on the philosophy of proper speech from the Sefer Shmiras Halashon. (From: Chofetz Chaim A Lesson a Day) - chofetzchaim .shemayisrael.com

On This Date :Shevat 1: Moses repeats Torah (1273 BCE) On the 1st of Shevat of the year 2488 from creation Moses convened the Jewish people and began the 37-day "review of the Torah" contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, which he concluded on the day of his passing on Adar 7 of that year. – chabad.org

The daily recital of Tehil Lim after davening¹ applies equally to Chabad chassidic shuls and to those who follow the Ashkenazic or Polish nusach² - may G-d be with them.³ On account of ahavat Yisrael, love of our fellow...and especially in view of the importance and inner purpose of saying Tehil Lim with a minyan, which literally affects all of Israel, materially in "children, life and sustenance," and spiritually...we must endeavor with every means possible that it become an established practice in every shul of every nusach. (From Rebbe's Hayom yom shevatT 1).

On a sweltering summer day, an old man went down into a cool cellar for some relief. The moment he entered, he was blinded by the darkness. "Don't worry," said another man in the cellar, "it is natural that when you go from light to darkness, you're unable to see. But soon enough, your eyes will grow accustomed to it, and you will hardly notice that it is dark." "My dear friend," replied the old man, turning to leave, "that is exactly what I am afraid of. Darkness is darkness, the danger is convincing yourself that it is light.

-Toward A Meaningful Life - The wisdom of the Rebbe Adapted by Simon Jacobson

PARTICIPATE IN DAILY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Makos (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chassidus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM
Sunday 9:00 AM
Mincha/Maariv: 5:00 PM

There will be no class on Monday, January 6th.

SHUL SHABBATON

Chabad of Beverly Hills takes great pleasure in inviting you to a Shabbaton at the Luxe Summit Hotel Bel Air

***Shabbos Parshas Bo
7th -8th of Shevat 5763
January 10th -11th, 2003***

For information and reservations:

***Estee Kesselman
(310) 278-5613***

***Sara Mayberg
(310) 795-0616***

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAERA

Shabbos Rosh Chodesh

January 3, 2003

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 4:39 PM

Friday Mincha: 4:55 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:28 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- **Tanya 8:45 AM**
- **Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush & Cholent**
- **Chumash 4:05 PM**
- **Mincha 4:35 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit**
- **Shabbat ends 5:39 PM**

Seuda Shlishit is being sponsored by Ms. Margaret Novak-Datels in memory of Albert Dattels Ya rtzheit.

Yartzheits: Albert Dattels – Shevat 1, George Meisel – Shevat 4.

Happy Birthday to Benyamin Illulian, Melody Mahtaban & Chaya Riva Mayberg,

Happy Anniversary to David and Lynda Schnell.

Mazel Tov to Levi and Naomi Selwyn on the birth of a new baby girl, to Efraim Levy on the birth of a granddaughter and to Sam and Helen Levy on the birth of a great-granddaughter.

Mazel Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Illulian on the bar Mitzvah of Benyamim Illulian.

GOOD SHABBOS!