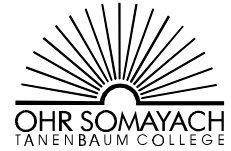


Parsha Q&A



Parshas Vaera

For the week ending 26 Teves 5758
23 & 24 January 1998

Parsha Questions

1. Did Hashem ever appear to Avraham and say "I am Hashem?"
2. What does "Orlah" mean?
3. How was Moshe commanded to act towards Pharaoh?
4. How long did Levi live?
5. Hashem told Avraham that his descendants would live as strangers for 400 years (*Bereishis 15:13*). When did this period begin?
6. Who was Aharon's wife? Who was her father? Who was her brother?
7. Why are Yisro and Yosef both referred to as "Putiel?"
8. After which plague did Hashem begin to "harden Pharaoh's heart?"
9. Why did Pharaoh go to the Nile river every morning?
10. Give two reasons why the plague of blood was chosen as the first plague.
11. How long did the plague of blood last?
12. Why did the frogs affect Pharaoh's house first?
13. What did Moshe mean when he told Pharaoh that the frogs would be "in you and in your nation?"
14. Why was Moshe not the one who struck the dust to initiate the plague of lice?
15. Why were the Egyptian sorcerers unable to bring out lice through their own magic?
16. Why didn't the wild beasts die as the frogs had?
17. What two miracles took place when Moshe hurled the soot upward to begin the plague of *shechin* — boils?
18. As a result of *dever* — cattle disease — "all the cattle of Egypt died" (9:6). Later, the Torah says that the *shechin* — boils — afflicted the Egyptians' cattle. (9:9) How can this be, if all their cattle had already died?
19. Why did Moshe pray to Hashem only after he left the city?
20. What was miraculous about the way that the hail stopped falling?

Rashi never just comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi's comments are answers to unspoken questions and difficulties arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah. Therefore, anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi's classic Torah commentary must always ask

"What's Bothering Rashi?"

"And G-d (Elo-him) spoke to Moshe and said to him, 'I am the Eternal'." (6:2)

Rashi, on the words "G-d spoke to Moshe" comments: "He spoke words of rebuke." Why doesn't Rashi take this opening phrase as a simple statement that G-d spoke to Moshe? **What's bothering Rashi?**

Answer: The obvious problem here is that the statement appears to be redundant, because immediately afterwards it repeats "and said to him...." We also know that the Hebrew word "*Elo-him*" means judges (as well as G-d) and that the Hebrew word *dabeir* ("speak" as opposed to "say") refers to harsh speech. Both of these together thus indicate rebuke.

Based on Dr. Avigdor Bonchek's new book "What's Bothering Rashi?" Feldheim Publishers



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Parshas Vaera — 26 Teves 5758, 23 & 24 January 1998

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I Did Not Know That!

Pharaoh "hardening his heart" was not Hashem's decree. Rather, it was the natural consequence of his continued sinning. Our Sages say, "Someone who wants to corrupt himself is given the opportunity to do so." Man is free to choose his own direction in life. However, as he progresses in his chosen corrupt direction, it becomes increasingly difficult for him to retreat.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

| | |
|---------|--|
| 6:2 | Subtle and Sensational Miracles |
| 6:6 | Four Dimensions of Redemption |
| 6:9 | Why Moshe was Ignored |
| 6:10 | The Meaning of "Leimor" |
| 7:3 | The Free Will of Pharaoh (also see <i>Sifsei Chachamim</i> on Rashi) |
| 8:6 | Why Pharaoh said "Tomorrow" |
| 8:18,25 | Uniqueness of Fourth Plague |
| 9:3 | The Cattle in the Field |

Sforno

| | |
|------|---------------------------|
| 7:3 | Pharaoh's Hard Heart |
| 8:12 | Structure of the Plagues. |
| 9:14 | Effects of the Plagues |

Kli Yakar

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 6:26-27 | Aaron and Moshe |
| 7:17 | Three Sets of Plagues |
| 8:27 | "Mesiras Nefesh" of the Frogs |

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Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

- 6:9 - Yes.
- 6:12 - Sealed.
- 6:13 - With the respect due a king.
- 6:16 - 137 years.
- 6:18 - With the birth of Yitzchak.
- 6:23 - Elisheva, daughter of Aminadav, sister of Nachshon.
- 6:25 - Yisro fattened (*pitem*) cows for idol worship. Yosef scoffed (*pitpet*) at his evil inclination.
- 7:3 - After the sixth plague — *shechin*.
- 7:15 - To relieve himself. Pharaoh pretended to be a god who did not need to attend to his bodily functions. Therefore, he secretly used the Nile for this purpose.
- 7:17 - a) Because the Nile was an Egyptian god.
8:17 - b) Because an invading army first attacks the enemy's water supply, and Hashem did the same.
- 7:25 - Seven days.
- 7:28 - Pharaoh himself advised the enslavement of the Jewish People.
- 7:29 - He warned that the frogs would enter their intestines and croak.
- 8:12 - Because the dust protected Moshe by hiding the body of the Egyptian that Moshe killed.
- 8:14 - The Egyptian sorcerers' magic had no power over anything smaller than a barley kernel.
- 8:27 - So the Egyptians would not benefit from their hides.
- 9:8 - 1) Moshe was able to hold four handfuls of soot (two of his own and two of Aharon's) in one hand. 2) This small amount of soot spread over the entire land of Egypt.
- 9:10 - In the plague of *dever* only the cattle *in the fields* died. The plague of *shechin* affected the surviving cattle.
- 9:29 - Because the city was full of idols.
- 9:33 - The hailstones stopped in mid-air and didn't fall to the ground.

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