



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat January 5, 2008 / Tevet 27, 5768
Parashah #14
Torah: *Sh'mot* (Names), *Va'era* (And I appeared) 6:2-9:35
Haftorah: *Yechezk'el* (Ezekiel) 28:25-29:21
Suggested *Messianic Writings*: Revelation 16:1-21

Shalom,

The previous parashah ended with Moshe questioning HaShem as to why He had not yet delivered Israel from the evil Pharaoh. Why did He even send Moshe if He was not going to do anything. Then HaShem told Moshe, "Now you will see what I am going to do to Pharaoh." One of the first attributes that our Creator causes us to learn and re-learn as His children is the virtue of patience.

Our parashah begins with HaShem telling Moshe, "אֲנִי יְהוָה, *ah-nee ADONAI*, I am ADONAI [YHVH]." HaShem is not introducing Himself to Moshe, or telling him His name for the first time. Rather, He was impressing upon Moshe, "that the guarantee of the fulfillment of the Divine promises lay in the nature of the Being who had given the promises. Even as the phrase, 'I am Pharaoh,' is an assertion of royal authority and power, in the same manner, 'I am ADONAI,' means, 'I am He who has the power and the faithfulness to fulfill any promise vouchsafed by Me. I have promised Redemption, and I shall fulfill that promise; I will and can do it. Israel shall yet know that I am the Lord; and Pharaoh, who had contemptuously declared, I know not the Lord! – he too shall know it.'"¹

It must be noted that ADONAI appeared to the Patriarchs "as El Shaddai," not "with My name El Shaddai." That is, He was to them the One who was all-sufficient, but the name of ADONAI represents Him as the One who carries out His promises. And He had promised a release from the slavery of Egypt and a return to the land first promised to the Patriarchs. The Fathers – Avraham, Yitz'khak v' Ya'akov – had not realized that promise. The ArtScroll commentary says, "Or *HaChaim*² comments that God's essence is represented by the Name. Even though the Patriarchs *knew* that Name, only Moses had the degree of prophecy that enabled him to *comprehend* its significance to the highest degree possible for Man."

And what a marvelous promise is found in 6:6-8 – "I am ADONAI; I will *free you*; I will *rescue you*; I will *redeem you*; I will *take you* as My people." These are known as *the four expressions of redemption*, and are represented by the four cups at the Pesakh Seder. Then He continues the promise: "I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Avraham, Yitz'khak and Ya'akov – I will give it to you as מוֹרָשָׁה *moh-rah-shah*." This Hebrew word is alternatively translated as *inheritance* or *heritage*. And because of the double translation, this indicates a high significance to the term. Inheritance is something handed down from generation to generation, while heritage indicates something a little deeper – this is your legacy, this is from your roots, this is from your blood, this is from your family, and you are [expected] to continue to develop this gift and give it proper care.

So Moshe went to the people of Israel and repeated the promise to them. "But they wouldn't listen to him, because they were so discouraged, and their slavery was so cruel" [CJB]; "But they did not heed Moses, because of shortness of breath and hard work" [ArtScroll]. The ArtScroll commentary explains that most of the ancient commentators believe that the negative attitude was not due to lack of faith, but to the difficult emotional and physical circumstances under which they labored. One commentator, *Sforno*³, however interpreted the verse to mean that the Israelites did not give Moshe's message the sort of consideration that would have convinced them to have faith in HaShem as Avraham did, and as a result, they lost the privilege of going to the Promised Land, and their children received the fulfillment of the promise. When one is discouraged and weary, however, it is difficult to muster up faith, even though the faith is there. I would tend to lean toward the former.

Moshe and Aharon's *pedigree* is then given, in order to show to history that they were indeed worthy of becoming the first leaders of Israel, and the spokesmen for the Creator Himself.

I have heard it expressed that if HaShem hardened Pharaoh's heart, then He was controlling him as a puppet. Essentially the phrase means that HaShem was simply allowing Pharaoh to become fully who he truly was. Seldom is a crime or any sin committed without prior dallying in that particular area, i.e., the crime of murder is seeded by a dislike which becomes a hatred, which then grows into something worse.

It is the same with any type of continued evil. Human nature has a natural bent this way which must be controlled. To go the opposite way is more difficult for our flesh-man. This is why *Kefa* (Peter) would command us to “try your hardest to furnish your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with perseverance, perseverance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if you have these qualities in abundance, they keep you from being barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah” [2 Kefa 1:5-8]. At the end of this same writing (3:17-18), Kefa warns, “Guard yourselves, so that you will not be led away by the errors of the wicked and fall from your own secure position... keep growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah.”

As we know, Pharaoh refused to allow Moshe and Israel to leave, and this Parashah lists the experience of plagues one through seven. We will read in a future Parashah that Pharaoh was not even changed after the final plague of the death of the first-born. A hardened heart is difficult to change. Revelation 16 reveals that in the final days, however long those may be; there will be those who will curse God for sending terrible plagues upon the earth.

The prophecy of Yechezk'el 28:25-26 is a yet-to-be-fulfilled promise, for in our time roughly only 40%⁴ of the house of Israel has been gathered to the Land of Israel from the world's population of Jewish people; the holiness of HaShem has not yet been fully shown in Israel as the nations watch; Israel is not really living in security and safety yet. A day is coming when ADONAI will gather all of the Jewish people home, and when He executes judgments against all of Israel's contemptuous neighbors (pray for our own nation), then all will know that ADONAI is Israel's God.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah

(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi (Marc)

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

(Acts 1:11 CJB)

¹ From Rabbi Hertz, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain during the WWII era, in his Torah commentary.

² From Wikipedia: Chaim ben Moses ibn Attar was a Talmudist born at Mequenez, Morocco, in 1696; died in Jerusalem in 1743. He was one of the most prominent rabbis in Morocco. In 1733 he decided to leave his native country and settle in the Land of Israel, then under the Ottoman Empire. He published *Ohr haChaim* (The Light of Life) in Venice in 1742. This writing is a commentary on the Torah after the four methods collectively known as *Pardes*; it was reprinted several times. His renown is based chiefly on this work. He is buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

³ Wikipedia notes that *Sforno* is the name of a prominent Jewish Italian family, many members of which distinguished themselves as rabbis and scholars in the 15th to 17th centuries. Eight prominent names are listed. ArtScroll quotes from a commentary by Ovadiah Sforno of Rome and Bologna, Italy (1470-1550).

⁴ Per a Google search.