

Shabbos - January 15th

Candle Lighting	4:34
Friday Night Minyan	4:40
Shachris	8:50
Chassidus Shiur (R' Avi)	4:00
Mincha Shabbos Day	4:30
Maariv	5:43
Father Son Learning	7:00

Weekday Schedule

Shachris on Sunday	8:00
Shachris (Mon-Fri)	7:00
Mincha / Maariv	4:45
Maariv (Mon-Thurs)	9:00



Listen to 700+ Hashevanu Shiurim on the go

Follow us on your favorite podcast app like **SoundCloud**, **Spotify**, or join our **WhatsApp** group to receive a notification when a new shiur is available.

Also available on
[Hashevanu.org/learning](https://www.hashevanu.org/learning)

144-49 72nd Dr Flushing
646-591-7025
hashevanu4u@gmail.com
www.hashevanu.org

Vaeira - Serving Hashem with Passion

R' Avi Zakutinsky

In this week's parsha, the redemption of the Jewish people begins. The Seforim explain that the process of leaving Mitzrayim was not an exodus that merely took place thousands of years ago. Rather, it is an ongoing experience for every Jew. We all find ourselves in a spiritual Mitzrayim, which makes it difficult to serve Hashem, and it is our objective to learn how to leave those restraints.

The first step of redemption takes place in this parsha with the first "Makkah" of blood., in which Hashem tells Moshe and Aharon to strike the water of Egypt and turn the water to blood. The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l explains that this process is also the first step in every individual's spiritual redemption. Each Jew must begin by "turning water to blood". The Rambam , (Yesodei Hatorah 4:2), writes that one of the characteristics of water is that it is naturally cold. Blood, however, symbolizes warmth and vibrancy. If a Jew finds him or herself in their own "spiritual Egypt" where serving the creator is difficult, the first thing a Jew must do is to make sure his Judaism is filled with excitement and warmth. He must go from water (cold) to blood (warmth and vibrancy). It is not enough to just perform the mitzvos- rather, they must be performed with passion and enthusiasm.

This is an essential element to religious life. As the Aish Kodesh zy"a writes in his diary Tzav V'Zaruz, "The soul craves excitement and sensation... This is an absolute requirement of the soul, like any of a person's other natural needs. Therefore, only one who fulfills this requirement with Avodas Hashem and with exciting Torah and tefillah will guard his soul. But if someone does the work of serving Hashem without feeling, then the soul will gratify its need for excitement with other, cheaper things, even through aveiros, just in order to fulfill its fundamental need for excitement."

May we all take this first step of redemption by infusing excitement into our relationship with Hashem and may this lead to the full redemption of our people steadily in our days!

The Power of Silence

Rabbi Yehuda Zakutinsky

In this week's parsha, we are told about the plague of frogs. The passuk (Shemos 7:28) says, "The river shall swarm with frogs, and they shall ascend and come into your palace and your bedroom and your bed, and into the house of your servants and of your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls." The Gemara in Pesachim (53b) explains that the frogs jumped into furnaces in order to fulfill the decree of Hashem to swarm all parts of the land.

Continued on the next page

continued - The Power of Silence

This is the source for a wondrous act of sanctification by the frogs, willing to give up their lives in order to create a Kiddush Hashem. Chazal add that as a reward for this act the frogs that jumped into the furnaces did not die when entering the furnace.

The frogs were not the only animal that fulfilled the will of Hashem in Egypt. The passuk (Shemos 11:7) tells us that as the Jewish people left Egypt, no dog barked at them. As a reward for holding back their barks to the Jews, the Torah commands the Jewish people to take all meat that was not slaughtered properly and feed it to the dogs. Harav Meilich Biederman shlit"a (Haggadah Beer Hachaim) wonders why the reward for the dogs seems to be greater than that of the frogs. The frogs were willing to sacrifice themselves and yet their reward was only for them, and did not continue to future generations. The dogs, however, refrained from barking, a seemingly simpler act, and were rewarded with meat until the end of time. Rav Biederman, quoting Rav Dovid of Tolna zt"l, explains that it is in fact easier to "jump into a furnace" than to "not bark" when being rebuked or embarrassed. Therefore, the restraint that the dogs showed was indeed more impressive than the actions of the frogs.

This concept is also clearly illustrated through the story of Yehuda and Tamar. When Tamar was accused of having performed a sin with the punishment of death, Tamar is willing to die rather than embarrass Yehuda. Her action, or rather lack of action, is one of the defining moments of Jewish history. It was her power of silence that merited her being the matriach of the Messianic dynasty, and it will be with this same power that we will merit her descendent, Mashiach's arrival.

Vaeira - The Stick of Redemption

Meira Zakutinsky

The Jewish people were enslaved by the most powerful nation at that time. They appeared to be sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of an endless exile with seemingly nothing to pull themselves out. They were being submerged in quicksand with no rope to save them. They were in a spiritual and physical pit, one in which they could not dig out of.

How did they merit being taken out? One word. A word that can change the way one looks at everything in his life. A word that makes the noise produced by worry, doubt, and desperation turn to peaceful silence in his mind. This word, the key to redemption, is, was, and always will be, Emunah. (Nesivas Shalom: Va'eira)

In order to redeem the Jewish people, Hashem sent Moshe Rabbeinu with the "key" to redemption in his hand, a stick. This stick represented something much deeper than what meets the eye. It would be used not only by Moshe Rabbeinu but by future generations to lean upon anytime they felt themselves spiritually limping. They would use this anytime they found themselves stumbling and falling deeper into the despair of exile.

David Hamelech alludes to this stick when he writes in Tehillim (23:4) "Shivtecha Umishantecha, Heima Yenachamuni" "Your stick and Your rod, they comfort me". The difference between the term stick and rod depicts the two aspects of life in which we find ourselves. A stick is an aid used to support, and give assistance in order to make life easier. While a rod is used to show strength, and can possibly create pain at times (Rashi). Why are such opposing forces being used in the same breath to describe Hashem's ways, and how can both situations create comfort? The answer lies in that one word, that peaceful silence-Emunah. Living with Emunah means knowing that regardless of whether we're experiencing the soft ease and support that a stick provides, or feeling the pain of a rod, in both circumstances, Hashem's loving outstretched Hand can be found on the other side.

continued - The Stick of Redemption

In essence then, both the stick and the rod are one and the same, simply masquerading itself as two different entities. This renders all pain as being both purposeful, as well as having an expiration date. "Heima Yenachamuni" this gives me comfort. This was the stick of Moshe Rabbeinu, a stick of Emunah. Hashem sent Moshe Rabeinu with this in his hand in order to help the Jewish people unlock the gates of their own redemption.

This is possibly why we have the custom of singing this perek of Tehilim at shalosh sheudos as Shabbos is ending, and our soul begins to fear the impending absence of its presence for the next 6 days. In that very moment, we are reminding both ourselves and each other, that regardless of whether the events of this upcoming week will present itself as a stick or a rod, Hashem's Hand is on the other side. As we sing these words, we are handing each other the stick of Moshe Rabbeinu. We are giving each other the gift of Emunah, the gift of redemption.

Just as Moshe Rabbeinu's stick witnessed a myriad of miracles that Hashem performed as He saved the Jewish people from Egypt, in the merit of our Emunah, may Mosiach come with very same stick in his hand and take us out of our exile as well.

Assorted Laws Related to Beis Knesses

R' Avi Zakutinsky

1) The Shulchan Aruch (151) rules that if one enters a shul purely in order to get someone who is in the shul he must first learn some Torah, Mishna or say some Psalms, etc. and then call his friend. The Mishnah Berurah (12) explains that one must learn before calling his friend and one may not call his friend (take care of his own needs) and then learn. 2) Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l (Hanhagos Upsakim Rav Yosef Chaim page 48) explains that the main reason that one must learn before calling his friend is in order to instill within himself the respect for shuls. Therefore, this halacha applies even if the shul is relatively empty and no one will notice that he entered the shul for his own needs. He adds that if there are many people in the shul, he should learn in a way that it is clear to everyone present that he has respect for shuls and only then call his friend. 3) May one enter a shul in order to get out of the rain and if not would reciting some learning permit it? Entering a shul because it is hot or raining outside is forbidden. (S.A. 151:6) The Mishnah Berurah writes that the aforementioned eitzah of saying a halacha etc would not work in this situation. The reason is because one has a choice not to enter the shul for shelter since he can go somewhere else. 4) Parenthetically one who is going into shul to get or return a siddur may do so without saying a halacha etc. since he is going in for a mitzvah (chesed) 5) The Rama (98) writes that one may not kiss one's children in shul. The ban on kissing one's children in the synagogue was instituted in order to remind ourselves that the love we must feel for God should exceed even that which we feel towards our children. The prohibition applies to people other than one's children as well. 6) Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l is cited as ruling that the prohibition only applies during the times of davening. However, many poskim disagree and rule that the prohibition applies anytime in a Shul, being that a Shul is designated for the worship and love of G-d. (Refer to Piskei Teshuvos ibid.) 7) Rav Ovadia Yosef zt"l (Yechava Daas 4:12) was asked regarding the Moroccan custom to kiss the hand of people who received an Aliyah, He responded that it is not permitted. However, it is however permitted according to all to kiss a person who one is obligated to respect and honor, such as to kiss the hand of a Rav or one's father. 8) In addition, one may kiss his small child who got hurt in order to calm the child down. (Piskei Teshuvos ibid.)