

Va'eira



Part 1: Parsha Summary

Following many years of slavery, Hashem instructs Moshe and Aharon to visit Pharaoh and demand from him to free the Jewish people. Pharaoh refuses, and Hashem brings the first seven *makkot* (plagues) upon Egypt (the last three will be in Parshat Bo, next week). After each plague, Pharaoh refuses to let the Jewish people go.



Part 2: The Inside Scoop

Let's look at the promises that Hashem tells Moshe to give to the Jewish people that He will redeem them shortly, known as the "*leshonot shel geulah*," expressions of redemption.

Shemot 6:6-8	שמות פרק ו פסוקים ו-ח
Therefore, say to the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will take you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will save you from their labor, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.	לְכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבֻלַת מִצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲבָדָתָם וְגִאלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים:
And I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be a God to you, and you will know that I am the Lord your God, Who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.	וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהָיִיתִי לְכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וַיְדַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבֻלֹת מִצְרַיִם:



Part 3: Let's Discuss

Kids:

- How would you summarize these promises in your own words? What is the main idea of all of them?
- What do you think was the purpose in Hashem giving the Jewish people these promises after so many years of slavery? How was it supposed to help them?

- Do you think people who are suffering or who are having a hard time with something will be encouraged if they know that there is hope and their difficulty will end at some point?
- Share an example of something that was difficult or painful for you. What was it? What would you want your parents or friends to say to you that could give you hope or make you feel positive?
- *Your younger brother is getting a shot from the doctor and is very scared. What might you say to him that could make him feel a little better or encourage him that he will be ok?*

Grownups:

- How would you feel if you were one of the Jewish people listening to Moshe's message of the expressions of redemption?
- Share one time that you tried to make someone else feel more hopeful or better about something difficult that they were experiencing. What was it, and what did you say? Do you think it helped at all?



Part 4: Activity

Younger Grades:

Watch [this](#) video about the idea "*gam zu l'tovah*" (everything that happens is for the best).

- How did Rabbi Akiva react to what happened to them? Why did they have hope and believe that things would be ok?
- Have you ever had a time when everything went wrong? What do you think Rabbi Akiva would do in that case?

Older Grades:

Watch [this](#) video of Jewish singer Benny Friedman singing the song "Yesh Tikvah" ("There is Hope") while reading the English captions explaining the meaning.

- According to the words of the song, why is it important to have hope and where does the hope come from?
- How do you feel when hearing this song? Does it make you feel that there can be hope even when you are having a hard time? Why or why not?



Part 5: Bonus

The expressions of *geulah* that we learned above are related to one of the mitzvot that we fulfill on Pesach at the Seder. Look at the comment of the Mishnah *Berurah* below, which are based upon the Talmud Yerushalmi (*Pesachim* 10:1).

Mishna Berura, Orach Chaim 472:43	משנה ברורה, אורח חיים תעב:מג
The four cups [of wine] were instituted to correspond to the four expressions of redemption: And I will take you out, and I will save you, and I will redeem you, and I will take you.	וד' כוסות נתקנו כנגד ד' לשונות של גאולה והוצאתי אתכם והצלתי אתכם וגאלתי אתכם ולקחתי אתכם

- Which mitzvah is connected to the four expressions of redemption?
- Why do you think this mitzvah specifically might be related? What does it symbolize?
- How might this mitzvah serve as a good model to show people why it is important to have hope even when things are difficult?



Part 6: More on the Parsha – For Grownups

In his lecture at the Herzog College Yemei Iyun b'Tanakh, Rabbi Menachem Leibtag reexamines the story of the Exodus from Egypt to clarify its apparent inconsistencies. He suggests that the purpose of the miracles was not to convince Pharaoh to let Israel go, but rather to convince Israel to leave.

<https://www.hatanakh.com/en/lessons/real-story-exodus-why-book-better-movie>