

# Va'Aira

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The opening verse sets the stage for the rest of the *parsha*. Actually, for the rest of the Torah. Actually, for the rest of history. It says, “*God spoke to Moshe, and He said to him, ‘I am God’*” (*Shemos* 6:2), which tells us very little in English. But in Hebrew it reads, “*Elokim spoke to Moshe, and He said to him, ‘I am Hovayab’*.”

For those who do not know (or have just forgotten), these are two very different Names for just one God, Whom we are told never changes. But that’s okay, because the Names of God do not describe Him, just the trait of God that He has chosen to reveal to mankind at any particular moment in history.

As Pharaoh is about to learn the hard way, *Elokim* is the Name that indicates God is working through Nature. Hence, the *gematria* of *Elokim* and *HaTeva*—The Nature—are the same (86). *Hovayab* is the Name that indicates that God is operating in an obviously miraculous way, *supernaturally*, and is overriding the Laws of Physics that He created.

What is interesting is that it is *Elokim* Who is introducing *Hovayab* to Moshe *Rabbeinu*. That’s like an employee introducing their CEO to someone, which seems to be the opposite of how we end *Yom Kippur*. At the end of *Yom Kippur*, we repeat seven times, “*Hashem Hu HaElokim—Hovayab is Elokim*,” one for each level of “Heaven” the Divine Presence departs to at that time.

But the difference is obvious. In Moshe’s time, everyone lived on the level of *Elokim* and needed to learn about *Hovayab*. On *Yom Kippur* we operate on the level of *Hovayab*, and have to descend to the level of *Elokim* once it is over. We need to remind ourselves that, even though life is about to return to “normal” and the level of *Elokim*, we can’t lose sight of the fact that it is really *Hovayab*.

That is the entire test of life, every conscious moment of it. That is what it means to

walk with God. You know how, if you are in the room with someone else, you're always conscious of their presence, especially if you know them well? When they move, you can't help but see them move. If they make a noise, you hear it, and maybe wonder what they're doing. You might even look for an excuse to catch their attention and converse with them, even if you're busy or distracted.

That's how it is supposed to be with us and God. We're supposed to be sensitive to His Presence and every move or sound He makes, which sounds simple enough until we realize that God is invisible and, by normal standards, silent. So much so that we live as if He isn't in the "room" at all, like Chava when she ate from the *Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra*, and when Kayin killed his brother Hevel.

### **Shabbos Day**

BUT THAT'S ON us. People expect God to be the one to introduce Himself to them, and if He hasn't, it must be that He isn't actually there. They don't realize that it is just the other way around. As the *navi* said, "*Seek God when He is found, call Him when He is near*" (*Yeshayahu 55:6*).

Even though this verse is used in reference to *Elul Zman* and the *Aseres Yemai Teshuvah*, it really applies all the time. It's just that at that time of year God is reaching out to us even more than He does the rest of the year. Why disregard the spiritual opportunity?

What the verse really means is, seek out *Hovayab*, because *Elokim* is all around us in the form of nature. Don't relate to God only on the level of *Elokim*, because even Pharaoh did *that*. God gave us the Torah and 613 *mitzvos* to help us to ascend to a higher level of Divine recognition, to peel back the layers of *Elokim* and find the heart of *Hovayab* inside.

Not only is that the only path back to *Gan Aiden*, it *is* *Gan Aiden*. That's "all" *Gan Aiden* was, a higher level of God consciousness. That is the definition of paradise, because it is the greatest level of good a person can ever know in life. It is what the World to Come will be completely about.

Once upon a time, this was too abstract for people to understand. But today we live in a technologically advanced society that knows that the fabric of reality is very much determined by the people who perceive it. Once thought to be objective and concrete, regardless of the thinking of the people living within it, we now know that reality is also shaped by our perception of it.

That's why it is called a temporal reality. Not only will the physical world not last

forever, but even from day to day it is weaker. The only reason we can't yet walk through walls without breaking something, is because that is what we believe. And because it is what we believe, God makes it so.

But a true *kabbalist* for whom the level of *Hovayab* is life, it is not so. They could do miracles at will because God loosened His hold on the physical reality for them to manipulate it as they saw fit. They weren't fooled by nature, as this little story tells us regarding one of the greatest miracle workers of his time, Rebi Chanina *ben* Dosa:

"One Friday night he noticed that his daughter was sad and asked her, 'My daughter, why are you sad?' She answered, 'My oil container got mixed up with my vinegar container and I lit *Shabbos* candles with it.' He told her, 'My daughter, Why should this trouble you? The One Who commanded the oil to burn will also command the vinegar to burn!'" (*Ta'anis* 25a)

We may know that too. But for Rebi Chanina, it was a bigger miracle that oil burned so consistently than it was that vinegar burned once. Every single time oil burns, it is God willing all over again that it should burn, and for as long as man has existed, it has continued to do that. Vinegar burning was a one-off thing, so what was the big deal?

### **Seudas Shlishis**

WHAT DOES THIS mean for us? It means not accepting the simplest level of Torah as the last level you learn on. Or the second level, or third level for that matter. The process of digging deeper into Torah concepts and *mitzvos* in general, accomplishes for us in a big way what the Ten Plagues are about to do for the Jewish people in these *parshios*.

Look at Torah and *mitzvos* as a tube that stretches from our mundane reality to the highest heights of Creation. It's upper end transcends the physical world and provides a glimpse into higher and hidden levels of Divine consciousness. The deeper the level of one's understanding, the clearer their vision will be of what's at the other end, which is *Hovayab*.

That is how you seek out God *and* find Him. When we had prophecy, that was the most direct way. But we don't have prophecy, so now *Pardes*, going from *Pshat* to *Remez* to *Drush* to *Sod*, the four levels of Torah learning (see my book, *The Big Picture*) is now the only real way to do it.

A simple example is the birth of baby, which just about everyone takes for granted. But if you take the time to understand what goes into giving birth, and then what's

involved in the fetus growing to the point of being born, and then all of the miracles that occur so that conception results in anything viable, you will become overwhelmed by the process. You will never take birth for granted anymore. You will see all of it as the great miracle that it is, and that will lead you to the sensing of *Hovayab*.

When a person approaches life in this way every day and for everything, they will find themselves “walking” with God. They will sense His Presence at all times and everywhere. They will feel constant inspiration to improve themselves, always look for ways to come closer to their Creator. It’s what we’re here to do, and our personal completion and freedom depend upon it.

## ***Acharis K’Reisbis, Part 2***

CONTINUING ON WITH the translation of the *sefer* and the discussion of *pekidab*, the initial stage of any redemption, it says:

Thus, it is explicit in the words of the *GR”A* mentioned previously (Ch. 1) that the future *pekidab* will be the leaving of the oppression of the nations, and that it will come before the days of *Moshiach Ben Dovid*. However, at the time of the revelation of *Moshiach Ben Dovid*, the designated times of the prophets will be fulfilled, [as it says] “*God will spill out His spirit on all flesh*” (*Yovel* 3:1).

In this way, the final *pekidab* [for the sake of the final redemption] will be similar to the *pekidab* in the time of Koresh. For, just as the “nations” (i.e., the Persian Empire) gave permission to [the exiled Jewish people to] go back and rebuild *Yerushalayim*, also in the final *pekidab* they will go out from the oppression of nations.

See *Aderes Eliyahu* on *Sefer Hoshea* (14:8), on the verse, “*Those who dwelt in its shade will return; they will revive [like] wheat and blossom like the vine, [its fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon].*” [The *GR”A* explains that the Hebrew word for] “*those who dwelt*” [refers to] those who dwelt in exile. “*In its shade*” [refers to] *Eretz Yisroel*. “*Revive like wheat*” [is talking about] the time of the resurrection of the dead; they will stand in their Torah, etc. “*Blossom like the vine*” is the building of the Temple, as it says in *Tehillim* (92:14): “*In the courtyard of our God they will blossom.*” “*Like the wine of Lebanon,*” that is, *Olam HaBa* (the World to Come), etc.

Thus, prior to the designated times of the prophets, the building of the Temple and the elimination of death, the Jewish people will already have gone out and returned from exile to settle *Eretz Yisroel*.

And so we have.

For essays on the current situation, go to [www.shaarnproductions.org](http://www.shaarnproductions.org).

*Good Shabbos,*  
Pinchas Winston