



Parent Child Learning

פֶּרֶשֶׁת וַאֲרָא

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Topic:

Pharaoh's ♥



Read about how Hashem finally sends Moshe and Aharon to appear before Pharaoh...

שמות פרק ז, א-יד

¹ The LORD replied to Moses, "See, I place you in the role of God to Pharaoh, with your brother Aaron as your prophet. ² You shall repeat all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from his land. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that I may multiply My signs and marvels in the land of Egypt. ⁴ When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay My hand upon Egypt and deliver My ranks, My people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with extraordinary chastisements. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from their midst." ⁶ This Moses and Aaron did; as the LORD commanded them, so they did. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they made their demand on Pharaoh. ⁸ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ "When Pharaoh speaks to you and says, 'Produce your marvel,' you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh.' It shall turn into a serpent." ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh and did just as the LORD had commanded: Aaron cast down his rod in the presence of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and it turned into a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh, for his part, summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and the Egyptian magicians, in turn, did the same with their spells; ¹² each cast down his rod, and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed their rods. ¹³ Yet Pharaoh's heart stiffened and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. ¹⁴ And the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go.

(א) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֵק אֶל מֹשֶׁה רְאֵה נִתְּתִיד אֱלֹהִים לְפָרְעֹה וְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיד יְהִי נְבִיאָד: (ב) אַתָּה תְּדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶנְךָ וְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיד יְדַבֵּר אֶל פָּרְעֹה וְשַׁלַּח אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרְצוֹ: (ג) וְאֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה אֶת לֵב פָּרְעֹה וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת אֹתֹתַי וְאֶת מוֹפְתֵי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: (ד) וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵכֶם פָּרְעֹה וְנִתְּתִי אֶת יָדִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת צְבָאוֹתַי אֶת עַמִּי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים: (ה) וְיָדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי יְקֹנֵק בְּנִטְוֹתַי אֶת יָדִי עַל מִצְרַיִם וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם: (ו) וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְקֹנֵק אֹתָם כְּן עָשׂוּ: (ז) וּמֹשֶׁה בֶן שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְאַהֲרֹן בֶּן שְׁלֹשׁ וּשְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה בְּדַבְּרָם אֶל פָּרְעֹה: פ (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֵק אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: (ט) כִּי יְדַבֵּר אֲלֵכֶם פָּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר תִּנְנוּ לָכֶם מוֹפֵת וְאַמְרַתְּ אֶל אַהֲרֹן קַח אֶת מִטְּדָךְ וְהִשְׁלַךְ לִפְנֵי פָרְעֹה יְהִי לְתַנּוּן: (י) וַיָּבֵא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל פָּרְעֹה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְקֹנֵק וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אַהֲרֹן אֶת מִטְּהוֹ לִפְנֵי פָרְעֹה וּלְפָנָיו עֲבָדָיו וַיְהִי לְתַנּוּן: (יא) וַיִּקְרָא גַם פָּרְעֹה לְחֻכְמָיִם וּלְמַכְשָׁפִים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ גַם הֵם חֲרָטְמֵי מִצְרַיִם בְּלִהְטִיהֶם כֹּן: (יב) וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ אִישׁ מִטְּהוֹ וַיְהִיו לְתַנּוּנִים וַיִּבְלַע מִטְּה אַהֲרֹן אֶת מִטְּתָם: (יג) וַיַּחֲזֹק לֵב פָּרְעֹה וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְקֹנֵק: פ (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֵק אֶל מֹשֶׁה כְּבֹד לֵב פָּרְעֹה מֵאֵן לְשַׁלַּח הָעָם:

Discuss the following questions based on the text you read...

- 1) What does it mean in the first pasuk that Moshe and Aharon are now 'masters' to Pharaoh? Aren't they still slaves?
- 2) What does it mean that Hashem will "harden Pharaoh's heart"? Is Pharaoh still in control of himself and making his own decisions?
- 3) What two miracles happened to Aharon's rod (staff)? Which of the miracles did Pharaoh's magicians copy?
- 4) Why would Hashem have Moshe and Aharon perform a miracle that could be copied by the magicians? How would that show that Hashem is the only true God?
- 5) How did Pharaoh react to the miracles of the rods? Is his reaction good for the Jewish people or bad?
- 6) [Middle School Question] If Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart, why should Pharaoh be responsible for refusing to free Bnei Yisrael? Hashem made him refuse! See Seforno below.

ספורנו

ואין ספק שלולא הכבדת הלב היה פרעה משלח את ישראל בלי ספק, לא על צד תשובה והכנעה לאל יתברך, שיתנחם מהיות מורד, אף על פי שהכיר גדלו וטובו, אלא על צד היותו בלתי יכול לסבול עוד את צרת המכות, כמו שהגידו עבדיו באמרם הטרם תדע כי אבדה מצרים וזאת לא היתה תשובה כלל. אבל אם היה פרעה חפץ להכנע לאל יתברך, ולשוב אליו בתשובה שלמה, לא היה לו מזה שום מונע. והנה אמר האל יתברך ואני אקשה את לב פרעה, שיתאמץ לסבול המכות ולא ישלח מיראת המכות את ישראל, למען שיתי אותותי אלה בקרבן, שמהם יכירו גדלי וטובי וישובו המצרים באיזו תשובה אמתית.

There can be no question that without God stiffening Pharaoh's heart, he would have collapsed much sooner and would have sent the Israelites on their desired journey. However, this would not have been the result of his repentance and humbling himself before the Lord, involving genuine regret about his previous errors, but the result of his impotence to withstand the pressure applied to him. He would have acted out of terror of what the next plague would do to him and to his country. If we needed confirmation of this, all we have to do is look at what his servants said to him when Moses threatened with the plague of locust. They said to him: "how long will you be obstinate, do you not see that Egypt will go down the drain?!" There was not a single word of regret of past errors, no word of recognition that G'd could have killed them all long before this and that He must therefore be very patient, and kind, but mere terror forced them to utter these words. (10,7) Keeping all this in mind, it is foolish to ask how G'd could punish Pharaoh after he Himself had interfered with his decision-making process by "stiffening his heart," ואני אקשה את לב פרעה, I will stiffen the heart of Pharaoh, etc." not in order to punish him but in order to finally trigger repentance in his heart. The operative clause is "in order that I can demonstrate all these miracles of Mine in his midst" (10,1), the purpose being to bring about his humbling himself in repentance and genuine contrition.