

## Why Does G-d Test Us?

### Exodus, Chapter 7

2. G-d spoke to Moses, and He said to him, "I am the L-rd.
3. I revealed myself to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob with [the name] Almighty G-d, but [with] My name YHWH, I did not become known to them.
4. And also, I established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojourning in which they sojourned.
5. And also, I heard the moans of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians are holding in bondage, and I remembered My covenant.
6. Therefore, say to the children of Israel, 'I am the L-rd, 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.
7. And I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be a G-d to you, and you will know that I am the L-rd your G-d, Who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
8. I will bring you to the land, concerning which I raised My hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it to you as a heritage; I am the L-rd.' "

### Commentaries:

*And G-d spoke to Moses*

#### Rashi

He spoke to Moses with words of rebuke, for speaking harshly and saying, "why have you harmed this people?"

#### Rashi

G-d said to Moses: I regret the loss of those who have passed away and are no longer found. Many times I revealed Myself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; they did not question My ways, nor did they say to me, "What is Your name?" You, on the other hand, asked from the start, "What is Your name?" and now you are saying to Me, "You have not saved Your people!" (Talmud, Sanhedrin 111a).

You questioned My ways; unlike Abraham, to whom I said, "Isaac shall be considered your seed" and then I said to him, "Raise him up to Me as an offering" -- and still, he did not question Me.

*By My name, Y-H-V-H, I did not make Myself known to them*

#### Rashi/Nachmonides

I did not reveal My quintessential truth," represented by the divine name Y-H-V-H, to the Patriarchs; they knew Me only by the name El Sha-dai which represents a more limited manifestation of My being. They accepted that they could never comprehend My infinite, unknowable essence. You, on the other hand, to whom I have revealed My truth, question My ways

#### Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

To the Patriarchs -- G-d is saying to Moses -- I revealed Myself only as El Sha-dai, relating to them only via the constraints and limitations that define My investment within the created reality. But to you and your generation I shall reveal, for the very first time, "My name Y-H-V-H," the name that connotes "My quintessential truth." For the purpose of the Exodus (as G-d said to Moses at the burning bush) is the



#### פרק ז

ב. וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים  
 אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר  
 אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה' :  
 ג. וַאֲרָא אֶל  
 אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק

וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שְׂדֵי וְשְׂמִי ה' לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם :  
 ד. וְגַם הִקְמַתִי אֶת בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם לְתַת לָהֶם אֶת  
 אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרִיהֶם אֲשֶׁר גָּרוּ בָּהּ :  
 ה. וְגַם אֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת נַאֲקַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר  
 מִצְרַיִם מַעֲבֹדִים אִתָּם וַאֲזַכֵּר אֶת בְּרִיתִי :  
 ו. לָכֵן אֹמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי  
 אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם  
 מִמַּעֲבָדֵיהֶם וְגֵאֲלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזֵרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְשַׁפְטִים  
 גְּדֹלִים :  
 ז. וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהִיִּיתִי לְכֶם לֵאלֹקִים  
 וַיִּדְעֹתֶם כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם  
 מִמִּצְרַיִם מִמִּצְרַיִם :  
 ח. וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת  
 יְדֵי לְתַת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב וְנִתְתִּי  
 אֹתָהּ לְכֶם מִרְשָׁה אֲנִי ה' :

revelation at Mount Sinai and the communication of My Torah, which is the very embodiment of My wisdom and will.

## The Lubavitcher Rebbe

The revelation of the Exodus and the concealment that preceded it are two faces of the same reality. In order for the people of Israel to relate to the quintessential truth of G-d revealed at Sinai, they first had to unearth their own quintessential truth -- which could manifest itself only in the nadir of their Egyptian galut.

"Truth" is that which is consistent and unchanging, the core reality of a thing that remains unaffected by all external circumstances. The quintessential truth of the Jewish soul is its loyalty and attachment to G-d; but loyalty and attachment to G-d under conditions of spiritual enlightenment and material prosperity cannot, in themselves, attest to this truth. There is no indication that the relationship would endure under less ideal conditions. But when the Jewish soul perseveres in its loyalty and attachment to G-d in the darkest hour of galut, it manifests the truth of its bond with G-d, demonstrating that this loyalty and attachment is, in fact, the unalterable core of its being.

*And I revealed Myself to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob*

## Rashi

To the forefather.

## Rosh Hashana 26a

A witness cannot serve as a judge. Once a person has seen the commission of crime, he is unable to fairly evaluate an argument advanced on behalf of the defendant.

## The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the progenitors of the Jewish people in every sense of the word. Just as a child inherits the physical and psychological characteristics of his parents, in the same way, each and every Jew inherits the qualities of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Their every trait, experience, and achievement are stamped in our spiritual genes.

Because our fathers' faith in G-d was as absolute and unequivocal as sight, the potential for such faith exists within each and every one of us. No matter what our more external senses perceive, we can delve into our own selves for the inherent ability to see G-d: to sense His commitment to us even in the "darkest" of times.

## SUMMARY

- All life, say the Kabbalists, is characterized by a to-and-fro. The heart contracts and expands; the lungs exhale and inhale; the body sleeps in order to rejuvenate its energies. Times of extraordinary illumination from Above are always preceded by periods of profound spiritual darkness.
- "Truth" is that which is consistent and unchanging. When we perseveres in our loyalty to G-d even in the darkest hour of hardship, the truth of our bond with G-d become manifest.
- The patriarchs possessed unshakable faith. As their progeny, we inherit it and must nurture it.
- Vaeira: even in the darkest moments of exile, it is possible to be as certain of G-d's reality as we are about what we see with our own eyes.

