



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Zack Morrow

Parshat Va'Aeira: Seeing Hashem in Our Life



Sometime in the last few weeks a peculiar episode occurred in Gaza. Two soldiers were going through homes searching for Hamas militants, and paused before entering the next house. Suddenly a woman dressed in black exited the house. She walked a couple feet and then turned, looked at the soldiers and said "When you enter the house, go right, not to the left." The soldiers looked back at her, confused and asked "Who are you? What is your name?" The woman immediately replied "Rachel *Imainu*," and then continued walking away from the house. The soldiers headed towards the house and dismissed the event. Without thinking they entered the house and turned right. Not two minutes later they heard an explosion emanate from the other room, the room they would have currently been standing in had they turned left. Many versions of this story have been circulating in the last few days, of course it could just be a story, or it could be truth, but as Rav Binny says, "Even if it's not true, it certainly should be."

In this week's *Parsha* there are a number of things worthy of mention, but when I read through it I couldn't get past the first two lines. "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as *Kel- Shakkai*, but with my name *Yud-Key-Vav-Key*, I was not known to them. (*Shemot* 6:3)" Let's think about this; what does it mean, that he did not make himself known with a certain name? Clearly there is something about the name *Kel Shakkai* that is fundamentally different, and expresses another quality of *Hashem*. So what is it? A closer examination yields another problem when you look at many of the stories involving our *Avot*. In *Bereishit* 13:4 it clearly states "And Abraham called in the name *Yud-Key-Vav-Key*." It clearly states that Avraham knew that name of *Hashem*! So what does this name mean? If we understand the breakdown of the name, then we can understand what it is doing here.

In learning with Rav Aaron we discussed the name *Yud-Key-Vav-Key*, and in *shiur* it was described as "Reality." We know this because time and space make up reality, and when you rearrange the letters of this name you get the description of time: Was (*Hayah*), Is (*HoVeh*), and Will Be (*Yehiyeh*). If *Hashem* is the Universe and beyond, if he is all, our reality is therefore the underlying force that guides us all, what we are all part of. It is then within the concept of reality to supersede it's natural limits. We can see this clearly in the text. *Hashem* appears to Avraham, which certainly exceeds what we know as our natural universe. For Moshe, he has just

come in contact with *Yud-Key-Vav-Key* in the burning bush, and soon in the Ten Plagues. In both instances Hashem is peeling back the rules of the relative universe to whoever was in that moment, regardless of whether they were there, or reading it thousands of years later.

Rashi states in this week's *Parsha* that the reason the Torah says the name *Yud-Key-Vav-Key* was not known to Avraham was because he did not truly know him by this name. To understand this we need to have a better understanding of the word *Da'at*. In Hebrew the word *Da'at* (know), means something more powerful than to merely "know" somebody, like I "know" a friend. When it describes relations between Adam and Chava, it is described as "Adam had known Chava. (*Bereishit* 4:1)" The word when translated to its fullest extent in English means "to relate to something fully and comprehend it." Thus, Avraham was not able to fully know the name *Yud-Key-Vav-Key* because he had not seen it truly at work. Moshe however, he will "know" this name. The next few *Parshiot* are amazing, spectacular, and supernatural. The plagues, the splitting of the sea and the giving of the Torah, what name of Hashem would be more fitting for Moshe to relate to. The struggle for us is achieving this in our generation. Too often we miss the little things, the little miracles that change the world. This woman in Gaza, who knows what she was doing there, was she just some bystander? Or was she somehow possessed by the *neshama* of Rachel *Imainu*? Does it even matter? We should strive every day to allow ourselves to see the influence of *Yud-Key-Vav-Key*, and the miraculous parts of our life. If we strive to see miracles in our life, they will be that much easier to find.

Zach graduated from the Morrison Prep High School in Los Angeles. He was on the NCSY Valley Student Board and won the 2008 OU Youth Leadership Award for the West Coast Region. Zack is a black belt and instructor in the Tang Su Do Discipline as well as a very talented Chef.

Zach's favourite part about Orayta is: "Rav Binny's Thursday night Learning Program. The Q & A and Kumsitz promotes a feeling of achdut (unity) amongst the guys. And it feels like the right way to get ready for Shabbat."