Class #14- Parshat Va’era – Who is Pharoh today?

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

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[Local recovery experts discuss staying sober during pandemic - Bing video](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=discuss+recovery+alcohol&&view=detail&mid=CF4F9FA01619E1D30642CF4F9FA01619E1D30642&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Ddiscuss%2520recovery%2520alcohol%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Ddiscuss%2520recovery%2520alcohol%26sc%3D0-24%26sk%3D%26cvid%3DC84456DF73CB495799465CA9A5323A7B)

1) Why is the community of alcohol and drug addicts struggling during the pandemic?

# New survey finds 71 million Americans have gained weight during the coronavirus

As many as 71 million Americans have gained weight during the coronavirus pandemic, and over half feel down about the way they now look, according to a new survey.

Sixty-three percent of people queried said that healthy lifestyle habits are hard to keep in the midst of COVID-19, 52% have been feeling depressed about the way they look, and nearly 3 in 5 are on a mission to lose weight, according to the survey commissioned by Boston-based Gelesis.

2) How is weight gain and over-eating during epidemic the same issue as the addiction community?

**“…as that is the craft of the evil inclination. Today it tells him do this, and tomorrow it tells him do that, until** eventually, when he no longer controls himself, **it tells him worship idols and he goes and worships** idols. – Shabbat 105b

3) What is the Yetzer Harah?

4) Does the Yetzer Harah merely want us to do individual evil activities or something more sinister?

5) How does it achieve its “craft”?

Did Hashem remove Pharaoh’s Free-Will during the plagues of Egypt?

Rambam, Laws of Teshuva 5:3

A person may commit a great sin or many sins causing the judgment rendered before the True Judge to be that the retribution [administered to] this transgressor for these sins which he willfully and consciously committed is that his Teshuvah will be held back. He will not be allowed the chance to repent from his wickedness so that he will die and be wiped out because of the sin he committed.

For these reasons, it is written in the Torah [[Exodus 14:4](https://www.chabad.org/9875#v4)], "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." Since, he began to sin on his own initiative and caused hardships to the Israelites who dwelled in his land as [[Exodus 1:10](https://www.chabad.org/9862#v10)] states: "Come, let us deal wisely with them," judgment obligated that he be prevented from repenting so that he would suffer retribution. Therefore, The Holy One, blessed be He, hardened his heart.

Why did [God] send Moses to [Pharaoh], telling him: “Send [forth the people], repent”? The Holy One, blessed be He, had already told Moses that he would not release [the people], as [[Exodus 9:30](https://www.chabad.org/9870#v30)] states: “I realize that you and your subjects [still do not fear God].”

[The reason is stated in [Exodus 9:16](https://www.chabad.org/9870#v16):] “For this alone, I have preserved you… so that My name will be spoken about throughout the earth],” i.e., to make known to all the inhabitants of the world that when the Holy One, blessed be He, withholds repentance from a sinner, he cannot repent, but he will die in the wickedness that he initially committed willfully.

4) This is what is implied in the requests of the righteous and the prophets in their prayers, [asking] God to help them on the path of truth, as David pleaded [[Psalms 86:11](https://www.chabad.org/16307#v11)]: "God, show me Your way that I may walk in Your truth;" i.e., do not let my sins prevent me from [reaching] the path of truth which will lead me to appreciate Your way and the oneness of Your name.

6) What lesson about themselves have the Righteous learned from the case of Pharoh?

7) How is the fear of becoming like Pharoah explained by the concept of Yetzer Harah?

7) Joe MJE’er has been working from home since March. It is 6pm and he looks at his inbox and he has 9 more emails to answer. He thinks let me get a start on tomorrow by “cleaning out my inbox”. He looks up and realizes its 8pm. How does Joe deal with challenge of working from home and not having the clear work/home boundary? How is this compulsion for work, the work of the Yetzer Harah?

8) Jane MJE’er has been working from home since March. She is bored during this droning zoom conference call. She turns off her video and opens a bag of chips and pours herself a bowl. “Just one bowl”, she says! By the end of the day, she has eaten the entire large bag of chips. How is this compulsion to endlessly snack the work of the Yetzer Harah?

9) Steve MJE’er has been working from home since March. He receives a funny video from his friend via WhatsApp. It takes him to Youtube.com to view it. Next thing he knows it that he has seen 45 minutes of videos during his workday. How is this compulsion to endlessly watch videos the work of the Yetzer Harah?

What is the solution?

**So** too **the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Israel: My children, I created an evil inclination,** which is the wound, **and I created Torah as its antidote. If you are engaged in Torah** study and mitzvot **you will not be given over into the hand** of the evil inclination, **as it is stated: “If you do well, shall it not be lifted up?”** ([Genesis 4:7](/Genesis.4.7)). One who engages in Torah study and it’s lifestyle lifts himself above the evil inclination. - Kiddushin 30b

10) How is Torah study and it’s lifestyle an antidote to the Yetzer Harah?