

PARSHAT VAERA
EXODUS 6:2-9:35
HAFTARAH EZEKIEL 28:25-29:21
26 TEVET 5786/15 JANUARY 2026



Breathing Watercolor
Jeppe Hein

THE BREATH OF REDEMPTION

1. "...the children of Israel *lo sham'oo*" (Exodus 6:9).

"...Pharaoh's heart became hardened, *lo sh'ma*" (Exodus 7:22)

"Please, O God, I have never been a man of words...I am slow of speech and slow of tongue...Please, O God, make someone else Your agent." (Exodus 4:10-13).

"I am of uncircumcised lips." (Exodus 6:12)

2. "The Israelites could not hear Moses because of shortness of breath (קִצְרֵי רוּחַ) and hard labor" (Exodus 6:9).

קִצַּר - v., to be short, ineffective, powerless

קִוְצָר - n., impatience

קָצַר - v., reap, harvest

קִצִּיר - n., harvest

3. "...work that was hard for them" (Targum)
4. In the midrash, we find: "They did not listen – because it was hard for them to separate from idolatry, as it is written, 'They did not cast away the detestable things they were drawn to' (Ezekiel 20:8). In order to hear, one must be clear of all obstructions....This is the essence of exile, even now, that one cannot clear oneself of distractions and forget the vanities of the world, so that one's heart is clear to hear the word of God, without foreign thoughts. (Sefat Emet)
5. In the act of telling about the Exodus, the miracle itself is continually fulfilled and enhanced....That is why the rabbis added to the tale, saying that there were really fifty plagues rather than ten, and even more. That's what telling the tale does: it keeps drawing out further potential. (Sefat Emet)