

J.L.C. Connections

The Jewish Learning Connection's Weekly Newsletter



Parsha Va'era

January 12, 2024 / 2 Shevat 5784

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Candlelighting: 5:01 pm

Waxman Torah Center · 2195 S. Green Road · University Heights, OH 44121 · (216) 691-3837 · www.clevelandjlc.com

Friday, January 12

5:01pm Candlelighting
5:05pm Mincha / Maariv
8:15pm Parsha Shiur
@ R. Nisenbaum

Shabbos, January 13

8:45am Shacharis
Kiddush is available for sponsorship
4:30pm Laws of Shabbos
4:55pm Mincha / Shalosh Seudos
6:09pm Maariv

Sunday, January 14

9:15am Parsha Class
(R. Nisenbaum)
10:00am "The 613 Mitzvos"
(R. Stoll)

Monday, January 15

8:00pm "Wisdom of Koheles"
(R. Nisenbaum)

Tuesday, January 16

8:00pm Tanna d'vei Eliyahu
(R. Stoll)

Wednesday, January 17

8:00pm Nach Still Speaks –
Tehillim (R. Stoll)

Thursday, January 18

10:15pm Parsha Class
(R. Nisenbaum)

Torah Podcast

Listen to Rabbi Nisenbaum's "Torah Podcast" at Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeartRadio, and more, or download at www.maverickpodcasting.com

New episodes twice a week!

Weekday Minyanim

7:00am Shacharis (M-F)
8:00am Shacharis (Sun)
10:00pm Maariv (Sun-Th)

Class Connection

R. Nisenbaum:

425-436-6200 #352171

"The Torah Podcast" weekly at all podcast locations

R. Stoll:

Zoom: 876-619-3551

Audio: 669-900-9128

Va'era

G-d sent Moshe and Ahron to Pharaoh to order him to free the Jews. The mission appeared to be a failure. Pharaoh first mocked the Al-mighty, and then made the Jewish people work even harder, accusing them of laziness. The Jewish people, too, were angry with Moshe for having made things worse for them. Moshe complained to G-d that he would not accomplish anything by returning to Pharaoh. G-d, however, assured Moshe that the people would be redeemed amidst great wonders and miracles.

Ten plagues were brought upon the Egyptians. These accomplished two goals. First, they served as a punishment for the Egyptians' mistreatment of the nation. But they also served as a lesson for both the Egyptians and the Jews, showing that G-d was in total control over the world and over nature.

Moshe warned Pharaoh that if he would not let the people go, all the water throughout Egypt would be turned to blood. The Nile River was considered to be a god in Egypt, serving as the sole source for water in the region. By first afflicting the Egyptian god, it proved G-d's superiority over their idols. This was also the significance of the fifth plague, pestilence, which killed the Egyptian cattle, another god of the Egyptians.

Following the first plague, G-d brought a plague of frogs throughout Egypt. The swarming frogs

wreaked havoc, inundating the whole country with their croaking noise. This was followed by a plague of lice, and then by a plague of wild animals that roamed the country. A plague of pestilence killed most of the livestock, followed by a plague of boils that afflicted the Egyptians themselves. The last plague mentioned in this portion was that of a miraculous hail-and-fire mixture, that destroyed almost all the Egyptian vegetation.

Each of the plagues lasted for a week, and then Pharaoh was given three weeks to reconsider letting the people go. Pharaoh refused to be impressed by the miracles that Moshe and Ahron performed. Even when he saw that his own magicians could not duplicate the miracles, he hardened his heart and would not let the people go. After the first few plagues the suffering became so great, that Pharaoh did consider allowing some segments of the people to leave temporarily. This, however, was not acceptable to Moshe.

After five plagues of suffering throughout Egypt, and despite the pleas of his own nation, Pharaoh still refused to recognize the hand of G-d. By that time, since he had been given so many opportunities, G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart and did not allow him to let the nation go. This would pave the way for him to receive the next five plagues and eventually the punishment he, and the Egyptian people, deserved.

Sponsorships

*Kiddush, Shalosh Seudas, etc.. can be sponsored for a **yahrzeit, birthday, or any occasion – or none at all!***

Insights: Va'era

"Go to Pharaoh, behold he is going towards the water..." (Ex 7:15) The Midrash explains why Hashem deliberately had Moshe confront Pharaoh near the Nile River. Pharaoh claimed he was a god and had no bodily needs like other people. Early in the morning, when no one else was present, he would take care of his needs in the river. By sending Moshe at that time Hashem wanted to impress upon Pharaoh that not only is Hashem able to control Nature, but that there is literally nothing in Nature, even something as seemingly insignificant as relieving body waste, that is not under His total control. A Ba'al Teshuva once confided that what attracted him to Torah more than anything else was the blessing of Asher Yatzar. The idea that one can develop a meaningful relationship with the Al-mighty by recognizing His involvement and kindness with the most mundane activities, such as relieving body waste, impressed him more than any philosophical argument.

Did You Know?

There are several situations that require washing one's hands. 1. Cutting one's nails or hair; 2. entering a bathroom; 3. attending a funeral or cemetery; 4. scratching one's head; 5. touching parts of the body normally covered; 6. touching shoes; and 7. after marital relations. It is sufficient to wash the hands one time in these situations and no cup is necessary, although some authorities are stringent to require three times upon leaving the bathroom, leaving a cemetery and after relations.

Thought for the Week: *Some men we relate to as persons; others we regard merely as phenomena (A Candle By Day)*