

## PRAYER

We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted.

*We need one another when we are in trouble and crave help.*

We need one another when we are in the deep waters of temptation and a strong hand might pull us out.

*We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose and cannot do this alone.*

We need one another in our defeats, when with encouragement we might strive again: and in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our bliss.

*And we need one another when we come to die, and would have gentle hands prepare us for the journey.*

All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us.

*We best live when we bring to one another our understanding and our solace.*

*Unknown*

## THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

To succeed it is necessary to accept the world as it is and rise above it.

*Michael Korda*



January 21, 2012

כז שבט תשע"ב

*Parashat Va'era* - Exodus 6:2 - 9:35 (וארא)  
Hertz – p 232 Stone – p 318

*Haftarah* – Ezekiel 28:25 – 29:21 (יהזקאל)  
Hertz – p 244 Stone – p 1149

*Kiddush* luncheon sponsored by  
Sid & Barbara Levin  
in honor of Sid's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Additional treats provided by:

Boaz & Jane Roth in gratitude and appreciation  
Joe & Florence Schachter in honor of their birthdays  
Sol & Michelle Segal in honor of Bella's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Rabbi Gordon's Talmud Class – 3:30 PM**  
*Minchah* - 4:45 PM **Shabbat Ends – 5:51 PM**

## ON THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

וַאֲרָא

At the Passover *sefer*, we gather with family and friends to celebrate the release from Egyptian bondage of the children of Israel. Within the *Haggadah*, the story, the passage containing plagues that the Lord brought upon the Egyptian people, their animals, and the land, receives particular attention. In this week's *parashah*, *Va'era*, and next week's, *Bo*, there is discussion of these ten plagues. An initial question that can be considered is what were the goals and purposes of the plagues?

Several replies can be suggested to view the Almighty's goals and purposes of these devastating plagues. A few prominent themes in *Va'era* are that the plagues demonstrated that the all powerful G-d is the G-d of Israel; that the children of Israel shall be released from Egypt to serve the Lord; that Egyptians and the children of Israel shall know that he is the Lord, G-d of Israel; and that Pharaoh must submit to the Lord's demands as conveyed through Moses. An idea that captures some of these themes is that the G-d of Israel brought plagues to show his existence and his control over the natural world.

Egyptians had multiple gods and they worshipped inanimate natural objects, such as the Nile River. Many of their gods, often through astrologers and magicians, claimed wondrous individual events, such as turning rods into serpents (Ex VII:10-12). In contrast, the G-d of Israel claimed and showed that he could change the nature of things at will. The G-d of Israel had to overcome the disbelief—or in terms of modern psychology, the cognitive dissonance—of the Egyptian population and Pharaoh's arrogance and stubbornness. In this *parashah*, we find that the scope of the plagues increases and the dynamic elements of the G-d of Israel's control over nature is shown.

For example, the plagues prior to gnats were stationary and of limited geographic scope while later plagues were mobile and encompassed the entire nation. Further, the later plagues, such as the gnat plague, specifically excluded residences of Israelites (Ex VIII 18-19). The plagues provided clear evidence to Israelites that the Lord, G-d of Israel, was a protector of their interests. Earlier in this *parashah* (Ex VI:7), prior to the plagues, the Lord asks Moses to convey the following message to the leaders of the tribes of Israel: "I will take you to ME for a people, and I will be to you a G-d, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your G-d, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." The leaders and children of Israel do not heed this message from Moses. Nachmanides argues that bringing forth of plagues was evidence of the Lord's miracles performed for the sake of Israel. This analysis leads to the interesting suggestion that the plagues brought additional knowledge about the all-knowing and all-powerful G-d of Israel to the children of Israel.

*Shabbat Shalom,*  
*Steven Puro*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 22 Acting auditions for grades K-8, 2:00-5:00 PM. Also Feb. 5 for musicians grades 6-12, 2:00-4:00 PM. JCC Chesterfield, 12608 Baxter Rd. Contact John Wolbers 314-442-3239.

Tuesday, January 24 Brodsky Library Night at the Movies, debut screening of "The Debt" starring Helen Mirren. Kopolow Building, \$4/person. RSVP required 314-442-3720.

*Shabbat*, January 28 **Kiddush Luncheon and Interactive Tish with Rabbi Gordon:** "Fun with *Pirkei Avot*."

Tuesday, January 31 *Tu B'Shevat* PJ Storytime at Brodsky Library, 6:45 PM for ages 3-9 and parents/grandparents. Stories, puppets, crafts, treats. RSVP required, 314-442-3720.

*Shabbat*, February 4 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by the family of Ann Cohn** in honor of Ann's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Sunday, February 5 **Knosh & Knowledge** featuring Sol Segal. Continuing our series about Jews from around the world, Sol will discuss growing up Jewish in Brazil—family, friends, school, community, society, university and work. Brunch begins at 9:45 AM, the presentation at 10:45. Please RSVP to Marian at 314-576-5230 by Jan. 31.

*Motzei Shabbat*, February 11 **Casino Night and Silent Auction.** Casino games, food, drinks, live music, karaoke & silent auction. See Newsletter for admission packages. We need your donation of items or services for our Silent Auction—sports tix, theater tix, a case of wine, a service you provide...? Call Jennifer Tobias at 636-532-6621 and let her know what you can contribute to our Silent Auction, and tell your friends to mark their calendars for Feb. 11.

**Plans are underway for Graduation Shabbat** on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Contact Claire Hack if you have a high or college grad you'd like to be included (even if they're unable to attend). If your graduate would like to participate in the service or if you can help with the event, please contact Claire at [ceh1492@hotmail.com](mailto:ceh1492@hotmail.com).

Crown Center needs volunteers 1-2 hours/week to deliver hot kosher dinners to older adults in UCity. Contact Florence Schachter, 314-991-2055, if you can help.

**Refuah Sh'leimah to...**Dina Rinder; Anne Frohman  
**Mazal Tov to...**Barbara Mirowitz and Marty & Marilyn Levison on the recent marriages of their granddaughters/nieces, Eliana Axelbaum to Aryeh Freylicher, and Lisa Mogil to Jonathan Fruchter.

## DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday morning – 9:00 AM      Monday-Friday mornings – 7:00 AM  
Monday-Thursday evenings – 6:30 PM  
Friday evening – 5:45 PM