



JLC NEWS & Upcoming Events

CAPT. HYMAN P. GALBUT JEWISH LEARNING CENTER CHABAD • BAIS PERETZ SYNAGOGUE • 411 41ST STREET, MIAMI BEACH FL 33140 • 305-535-0094 • WWW.JLCONLINE.ORG

Shabbos Times

Shabbat Mevarchim Shevat/
Parshat Va'eira

Jan. 24th - 25th 2020
28th of Tevet, 5780

Candle Lighting: 5:40pm

Shabbos Schedule

Bais Peretz Synagogue

Friday, Jan. 24th, 2020

Mincha / Maariv: 5:50pm

Shabbos, Jan. 25th, 2020

JLC Kids Tehillim Club 9:00am

Shacharit: 10:00am

Kiddush / Lunch: 12:00pm

Mincha / Torah Time: 5:35pm

JLC FATHER & SON! 7:30pm

Daily Davening Schedule:

Shacharit: 9:15am
(Sunday - Friday)



**JLC Shabbos
Kiddush / Lunch
is available for
sponsorship**



**The JLC Kids
Shabbos Program
is sponsored by
the Hilel Family in
memory of Meir
Yaakov Yosef ben
Menachem Mendel**

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This Week @ The JLC

MONDAY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Teen Boys Program
for grades 5-8

7:15-8:15pm - 2nd Floor

Tuesday

TORAH & PIZZA

Girls grades 1-4

From 5:00-6:00pm

1st Floor

Wednesday

MINI MISHMAR

Boys, ages 5-8

5:00-6:00pm at JLC

MISHMAR

Boys, ages 9-13

6:00-7:15pm at JLC

Thursday

Young Jewish Professionals

Chassidus Shiur by Rabbi

Shmuli Lezak

7:30PM at the JLC

Teen Scene a.k.a Pickles &
Parsha 6:30pm for girls grades
6-9

Next Shabbos

Parshas Bo

Friday, Jan. 31, 2020

Candle Lighting: 5:45pm

Join the JLC whatsapp group
& receive a text with our
upcoming programs & Shabbos times
Text 305-414-9577 to join



Parsha

Reading in short



G-d reveals Himself to Moses. Employing the “four expressions of redemption,” take out the Children of Israel from Egypt, deliver them from their enslavement, redeem them, and acquire them as His own chosen people at “Mount Sinai”; He will then bring them to the land He promised to the Patriarchs as their eternal heritage.

Moses and Aaron repeatedly come before Pharaoh to demand in the name of G-d, “Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness.” Pharaoh repeatedly refuses. Aaron’s staff turns into a snake and swallows the magic sticks of the

Egyptian sorcerers. G-d then sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians.

The waters of the Nile turn to blood; swarms of frogs overrun the land; lice infest all men and beasts. Hordes of wild animals invade the cities; a pestilence kills the domestic animals; painful boils afflict the Egyptians. For the seventh plague, fire and ice combine to descend from the skies as a devastating hail. Still, “the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he would not let the children of Israel go, as G-d had said to Moses.”

Haftorah in a Nutshell

Ezekiel 28:25-29:21.

This week's haftorah begins with a mention of the ingathering of the exiles, echoing G-d's promise mentioned in the Torah portion: "I will take you out of the suffering of Egypt." The prophet then goes on to discuss the decimation of Pharaoh and Egypt, reminiscent of the primary theme of the Torah portion—the devastation G-d wrought upon Egypt.

Ezekiel begins with a description of what will occur during the ingathering of the exiles. "When I gather in the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they have been scattered, and I have been sanctified through them in the eyes of the nations, then shall they dwell on their land that I gave to My servant, to Jacob. And they shall dwell upon it securely..."

The prophet then proceeds to convey a prophecy regarding Pharaoh and Egypt, foretelling the fall of the Egyptian empire.

Egypt merited this punishment for two reasons: a) They had reneged on their promise to come to Israel's aid against the attacking Babylonians. b) They had incredible arrogance, considering themselves un-reliant on G-d, instead attributing their success to the bounty their deified Nile afforded them. Therefore, Ezekiel warns: "And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and in ruins, and they shall know that I am the Lord! Because he [Pharaoh] said, 'The river is mine, and I have made it.'" G-d warns that the land of Egypt will be empty and desolate for forty years, after which G-d will return the people to the land to reinhabit it, but it will no longer be an important nation to be reckoned with.

The haftorah ends with another prophecy wherein G-d informs Ezekiel that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, will be the one to conquer Egypt and take its spoils. This as a reward for his effort in defeating the wicked nation of Tyre.

Parsha Q&A

“Behold, the Children of Israel have not listened to me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me when I am of uncircumcised (closed) lips?” (6:12)

QUESTION: Should he not have first said that he was “of uncircumcised lips,” and then that, if the Jews did not listen, Pharaoh would surely not listen?

ANSWER: Moshe loved the Jewish people and was very concerned about their well-being. Therefore, he said to Hashem, “The Jewish

people have not listened to me. Unfortunately, they are not willing to leave the galut in Egypt and move to Eretz Yisrael, ve’ich — and what would be if — yishma’eni Paroh — Pharaoh grants my request — and agrees to let the Jewish people go, then ve’ani aral sefataim — my lips will be closed — for I will be unable to plead any longer for my brethren, who do not recognize their plight and who do not want to leave.”

Rain, a River, Fire and Ice

On the eve of their entry into the Holy Land, Moses described to the Children of Israel the nature of their new homeland in the following way:

For the land which you are entering to inherit is not like the land of Egypt from which you are coming... it is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water of the rain of the heavens (Deuteronomy 11:10).

Our Sages explain that this distinguishes the Land of Israel from "the land from which you are coming" since "The land of Egypt does not drink rainwater; rather, the Nile rises and waters it" (Rashi, Genesis 47:10).

Rain represents the reciprocal relationship between heaven and earth. Chassidic teaching cites the Torah's description (Genesis 2:6) of the first rainfall: "A vapor rises from the earth" to the heavens, and the heavens return it as rain which "quenches the face of the land." This, explain the Chassidic masters, represents the spiritual truth that "an arousal from below evokes an arousal from above"--that G-d responds to the efforts of man, reciprocating our prayers, yearnings and deeds with nurture from Above. But rain alone does not suffice to make the land flourish and give fruit. The soil must be plowed—broken up and softened—before it can receive the seed and absorb the rain. Spiritually, this means that it is not enough to send up "vapors" of lofty feelings and virtuous works; one must first "plow" one's ego, crush the clods of coarseness and arrogance in one's personality, to make one's life receptive to the flow of divine nurture from Above. In the "Land of Israel" one plows, and is nourished by rain. But in "Egypt" things were different. Egypt was nourished not by descending rain but by the overflow of the Nile, which would periodically flood the land. Nor was it necessary to plow its soil: the floodwaters of the Nile would leave behind a layer of fertile silt which required no breaking up prior to planting. The spiritual "Egyptian" is one who does not recognize the Heavenly source of the blessings of life. He believes that all is generated from below—that everything he has and has achieved is of his own making. Nor does he see the need for any "plowing" of his personality—he is fine as he is, clods and all.

Perverted Rain

When rain does falls in Egypt, it falls as hail—hail that is ice without and fire within. Thus the Torah describes the seventh of the "ten plagues" to visit the Egyptians: And G-d rained hail upon the land of Egypt. And there was hail, and fire burning within the hail... (Exodus 9:23-24) We often speak of "warm" and "cold" personalities. A "warm" person is a passionate, loving, outgoing individual, always ready to extend a hand and a smile to a fellow. A "cold" person is reserved, self-centered, indifferent to the fate of others. But the cold individual is also aflame—fired with self-love, ablaze with egotistical passions. Indeed, it is his excess of inner heat that is the cause of his icy exterior. When rain falls in Egypt, it falls as a hail of ice-enclosed fire. In this unplowed land, where the heavenly source of its water is unseen and unrecognized, the nurture that descends from Above is perverted as a source of increased love of self and greater alienation between man and his fellow. The Exodus came to deliver us from this rainless, ice-fire state of existence, and bring us to a "holy land" defined by faith, humility and a reciprocal relationship between earth and heaven.



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Freedom of Choice

The question is ancient. If G d hardened Pharaoh's heart, then it was G d who made Pharaoh refuse to let the Israelites go, not Pharaoh himself. How can this be just? How could it be right to punish Pharaoh and his people for a decision – a series of decisions – that were not made freely by Pharaoh himself? Punishment presupposes guilt. Guilt presupposes responsibility. Responsibility presupposes freedom. We do not blame weights for falling or the sun for shining. Natural forces are not choices made by reflecting on alternatives. Homo sapiens alone is free. Take away that freedom and you take away our humanity. How then can it say, as it does in our parsha that G d hardened Pharaoh's heart?

All the commentators are exercised by this question. Maimonides and others note a striking feature of the narrative. For the first five plagues we read that Pharaoh himself hardened his heart. Only later, during the last five plagues, do we read about G d doing so. The last five plagues were therefore a punishment for the first five refusals, freely made by Pharaoh himself.

A second approach, in precisely the opposite direction, is that during the last five plagues G d intervened not to harden but to strengthen Pharaoh's heart. He acted to ensure that Pharaoh kept his freedom and did not lose it. Such was the impact of the plagues that in the normal course of events a national leader would have no choice but to give in to a superior force. As Pharaoh's own advisers said before the eighth plague, "Do you not yet realize that Egypt is destroyed." To give in at

that point would have been action under duress, not a genuine change of heart. Such is the approach of Yosef Albo and Ovadiah Sforno.

A third approach calls into question the very meaning of the phrase, "G d hardened Pharaoh's heart." In a profound sense G d, author of history, is behind every event, every act, every gust of wind that blows, every drop of rain that falls. Normally however we do not attribute human action to G d. We are what we are because that is how we have chosen to be, even if this was written long before in the divine script for humankind. What do we attribute to an act of G d? Something that is unusual, falling so far outside the norms of human behaviour that we find it hard to explain in any other way than to say, surely this happened for a purpose.

G d himself says about Pharaoh's obstinacy, that it allowed him to demonstrate to all humanity that even the greatest empire is powerless against the hand of Heaven. Pharaoh acted freely, but his last refusals were so strange that it was obvious to everyone that G d had anticipated this. It was predictable, part of the script. G d had disclosed this to Abraham centuries earlier when he told him in a fearful vision that his descendants would be strangers in a land not theirs.

These are all interesting and plausible interpretations. It seems to me, though, that the Torah is telling a deeper story and one that never loses its relevance. Philosophers and scientists have tended to think in terms of abstractions and universals. Some

have concluded that we have freewill, others that we don't. There is no conceptual space in between.

In life, however, that is not the way freedom works at all. Consider addiction. The first few times you smoke a cigarette or drink alcohol or take drugs, you so freely. You know the risks but you ignore them. As time goes on, your dependency increases until the craving is so intense that you are almost powerless to resist it. At that point you may have to go into rehabilitation. You no longer, on your own, have the ability to stop. As the Talmud says, "A prisoner cannot release himself from prison."

Addiction is a physical phenomenon. But there are moral equivalents. For example, suppose on one significant occasion, you tell a lie. People now believe something about you that is not true. As they question you about it, or it comes up in conversation, you find yourself having to tell more lies to support the first. "Oh what a tangled web we weave," said Sir Walter Scott, "when first we practice to deceive."

That is as far as individuals are concerned. When it comes to organizations, the risk is even greater. Let us say that a senior member of staff has made a costly mistake that, if exposed, threatens the entire future of the company. He will make an attempt to cover it up. To do so he must enlist the help of others, who become his co-conspirators. As the circle of deception widens, it becomes part of the corporate culture, making it ever more difficult for honest people within the organization to resist or protest. It then needs the

rare courage of a whistle-blower to expose and halt the deception. There have been many such stories in recent years.

Within nations, especially non-democratic ones, the risk is higher still. In commercial enterprises, losses can be quantified. Someone somewhere knows how much has been lost, how many debts have been concealed and where. In politics, there may be no such objective test. It is easy to claim that a policy is working and explain away apparent counter-indicators. A narrative emerges and becomes the received wisdom. Hans Christian Anderson's tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, is the classic parable of this phenomenon. A child sees the truth and in innocence blurts it out, breaking the conspiracy of silence on the part of the king's counselors.

We lose our freedom gradually, often without noticing it. That is what the Torah has been implying almost from the beginning. The classic statement of freewill appears in the story of Cain and Abel. Seeing that Cain is angry that his offering has not found favor, He says to him: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." The maintenance of freewill, especially in a state of high emotion like anger, needs willpower. As we have noted before in these studies there can be what Daniel Goleman calls an 'amygdala hijack' in which instinctive reaction takes the place of reflective decision and we do things that are harmful to us as well as to others. That is the emotional threat to freedom.

Then there is a social threat.

After the Holocaust, a number of path-breaking experiments were undertaken to judge the power of conformism and obedience to authority. Solomon Asch conducted a series of experiments in which eight people were gathered in a room and were shown a line, then asked which of three others was the same length. Unknown to the eighth, the seven others were associates of the experimenter and were following his instructions. On a number of occasions the seven gave an answer that was clearly false, yet in 75 per cent of cases the eighth was willing to give an answer, in conformity with the group, he knew to be false.

Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram showed that ordinary individuals were willing to inflict what appeared to be devastatingly painful electric shocks on someone in an adjacent room when instructed to do so by an authority figure, the experimenter. The Stanford Prison Experiment, conducted by Philip Zimbardo, divided participants into the roles of prisoners and guards. Within days the 'guards' were acting cruelly and in some cases abusively toward the prisoners and the experiment, planned to last a fortnight, had to be called off after six days.

The power of conformism, as these experiments showed, is immense. That I believe is why Abraham was told to leave his land, his birthplace and his father's house. These are the three factors – culture, community and early childhood – that circumscribe our freedom. Jews through the ages have been in but not of society. To be a Jew means keeping a calibrated distance from the age and its idols. Freedom

needs time to make reflective decisions and distance so as not to be lulled into conformity.

Most tragically there is the moral threat. We sometimes forget, or don't even know, that the conditions of slavery the Israelites experienced in Egypt were often enough felt historically by Egyptians themselves. The great pyramid of Giza, built more than a thousand years before the exodus, before even the birth of Abraham, reduced much of Egypt to a slave labour colony for twenty years. When life becomes cheap and people are seen as a means not an end, when the worst excesses are excused in the name of tradition and rulers have absolute power, then conscience is eroded and freedom lost because the culture has created insulated space in which the cry of the oppressed can no longer be heard.

That is what the Torah means when it says that G d hardened Pharaoh's heart. Enslaving others, Pharaoh himself became enslaved. He became a prisoner of the values he himself had espoused. Freedom in the deepest sense, the freedom to do the right and the good, is not a given. We acquire it, or lose it, gradually. In the end tyrants bring about their own destruction, whereas those with willpower, courage and the willingness to go against the consensus, acquire a monumental freedom. That is what Judaism is: an invitation to freedom by resisting the idols and sirens calls of the age.

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Here's what's happening at the JLC

Some of this year's exciting programs.....



Father & Son Learning Program
Girls are welcome

Learn Torah
Win Prizes
For Boys & Girls
ages 5 & up

Motzel Shabbos
7:30pm-8:30pm

Brought to you by
Bais Peretz Synagogue

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Come & enjoy Pizza and Ice Cream!
You could even win an iPad air, iPad Mini, iPad touch, Nintendo Switch, X-Box and other exciting prizes!

DRAG YOUR PARENTS TO FAMILY LEARNING AT THE JLC, YOU WILL NOT REGRET IT!!! COME LEARN; EAT PIZZA; HEAR AN AMAZING STORY; WIN A PRIZE IN MOTTY'S RAFFLE! ... AND DON'T FORGET THE ICE CREAM!!!!

COME TO TORAH & PIZZA AT THE JLC AND HAVE A BLAST MAKING ARTS AND CRAFTS; LEARNING ABOUT THE PARSHA; AND OF COURSE, PIZZAAAAAAA!



THE TORAH & PIZZA CLUB

All girls grades 1-4
are invited to join in the fun
Tuesdays
from 5:00-6:00pm
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Craft, Torah, Pizza & Prizes

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YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS MISHMAR! PLAY SPORTS; LEARN ABOUT THE PARSHA; MAKE NEW FRIENDS; AND OF COURSE,

PIZZAAAAAAA!



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Wednesdays At the Jewish Learning Center Chabad
Bais Peretz Synagogue
411 41st Street, Miami Beach

Enjoy Games, Pizza, Torah, Raffle & More!!!
Mini-Mishmar: Boys Ages 5-8 5:00-6:00pm
Mishmar: Ages 9-13 from 6:00-7:15pm

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Food for thought boys learning program

Wednesdays from
7:15-8:15PM,
upstairs at the
JLC! For boys
from 5th to 8th
grade

Bais Peretz Synagogue

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

A burglar broke into a home.

He heard a soft voice say, “G-d is watching you.” Thinking it was his imagination, he continued his search.

Again, he hears: “G-d is watching you.”

He turned his flashlight around and saw a parrot in a cage.

He asked the parrot if he was the one talking. The parrot said, “Yes.” So he asked the parrot his name, and the parrot replied, “Moses.”

The burglar asked, “What kind of people would name a parrot Moses?”

The parrot replied, “The same kind of people who would name their pit bull, G-d.”

A senior citizen called her husband during his drive home.

“Herman, I just heard on the news that there’s a car going the wrong way on Interstate 90. Please be careful!”

Herman replied, “It’s not just one car. There’s hundreds of them!”

A linguistics professor was lecturing to his class one day. “In English,” he said, “a double negative forms a positive. In some languages though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative.”

“However,” he pointed out, “there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative.”

A voice from the back of the room piped up, “Yeah. Right.”

Gary was having a good time in Tel Aviv and was invited to a party. Unfortunately, during the evening, he lost his wallet. So Gary, not being of the shy kind, stood on a chair and shouted,

“Excuse me ladies and gentlemen, I’ve just lost my wallet with over \$500 in cash in it. To the person that finds my wallet, I will give \$50.”

A voice from the back of the hall shouted, “I will give \$75.”

Maurice took his new pair of pants to a tailor to have them altered. But the next day, Maurice was called to Israel on a last-minute job assignment. It was over 5 years before he was able to return to his home.

One day, while he was dressing, Maurice reached into his jacket pocket and to his surprise found the tailor’s receipt for his pants. So Maurice went straight away to the tailor’s shop, which fortunately was still there.

Maurice handed him the receipt, and asked, “Are my pants here?”

“Yes, of course,” said the tailor. “Be ready next Tuesday.”

Moishe heard the loud crying of a woman and went to investigate.

A woman was at a grave and was weeping “Oh, Joseph, it’s been 4 years since you left me but I still miss you so much.”

Moishe asked her “Who are you mourning?”

“My husband”, she replied, “I miss him dearly.”

But Moishe noticed something strange, and said to her “Your husband? But it says on the headstone IN MEMORY OF FREDA GOLDBERG”

“Oh yes”, she replied, “he put everything in my name.”