

Parashas Va'era • January 15th • 2 Shevat 5781

Reminders

We are in the second week of the weeks of Shovavim. Shovavim is an acronym for the six weekly Torah portions: Shemos, Vaera, Bo, Beshalach, Yisro and Mishpatim. Shovavim is an auspicious time to review the Laws of Taharas Hamishpacha and examine our spiritual purity. Some say additional Tehillim and other Tikunim, and some fast on Mondays and Thursdays during this period.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Motzaei Shabbos, January 16th. The final opportunity is Wednesday night, January 28th.

Daf Yomi: Erev Shabbos is Pesachim 55

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to do the same!

Next on the Calendar

Tu B'shvat is in one week from Thursday, on Thursday, January 28th.

Purim is on Friday, February 26th.

Parshah in a Paragraph

VA'ERA: Hashem reaffirms to Moshe that He will bring the redemption • An overburdened Klal Yisrael ignores Moshe • The descendants of Reuven, Shimon and Levi are listed • Hashem sends Moshe to Pharaoh • Moshe attempts to defer due to his speech impediment • Aharon is appointed spokesman • Hashem warns Moshe and Aharon of Pharaoh's obstinance • Aharon's stick becomes a serpent • The sorcerers

mimic this, but Aharon's stick swallows theirs • The Makkos begin with Dam, then Tzefardei'a, then Kinnim • The sorcerers are finally impressed, and advise Pharaoh to accede to Moshe's demands • With Arov, Pharaoh offers to compromise by allowing sacrifices in Mitzrayim • Moshe insists on leaving Mitzrayim to bring sacrifices • Dever is followed by Shechin and Barad • Egyptians who heeded Moshe's warning are spared • Each Makkah lasts 7 days • Pharaoh claims to surrender, yet retracts when Barad is over

613 Taryag Weekly

VA'ERA: 121 Pesukim • No mitzvos listed (See however the section below)

For the Shabbos Table

"Vayetzaveim El B'nei Yisrael V'el Paroh Melech Mitzrayim L'hotzi Es B'nei Yisrael"

And I commanded B'nei Yisrael and Pharaoh the King of Egypt to send out the B'nei Yisrael (Shemos 6:13)

The Pasuk states that the command to set the Jews free was addressed to Pharaoh as well as to the B'nei Yisrael themselves. While the command to their master Pharaoh is understandable, what however were the B'nei Yisrael being commanded in regard to their own freedom from Pharaoh?

The Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashanah 3:4) explains that it was at this time that the B'nei Yisrael were commanded in the Mitzvah of Shiluach Avadim, to release a slave after a certain period of time. This, then, was their commandment, as hinted in our Pasuk. But the question remains: Why were they given this particular Mitzvah at this particular time?

The Dubno Maggid brings a parable of a man who sheltered a King from a rebellion. After

he narrowly saved the King from certain death, the man asked the King, "What was going through your mind when the rebels were mere inches away from capturing you?" The King responded to this question by condemning the man to death, claiming that the question was brazen. The man was brought to the gallows and the noose put around his neck. Suddenly the King cried for them to halt, and removed the noose and told the 'condemned' man, "Now you have your answer, now you know how I felt!"

The optimal way to perform Mitzvos Bein Adam L'chaveiro is by putting oneself in the recipient's position and trying to understand his needs. And so, just now, while the B'nei Yisrael were experiencing slavery and anticipating redemption, was the most opportune time for them to understand the Mitzvah of Shiluach Avadim, as now they can comprehend fully the plight of an enslaved person. By contemplating how one would want to be treated, a person will find it easier to perform interpersonal Mitzvos and Chesed in their highest form.

**When you have
nothing to say,
say nothing.**

-Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz zt'l

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