

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

January 14 – January 21, 2010

28 Tevet – 6 Shevat 5770



Candle lighting time 5:33 pm
Friday January 15

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

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## Parashat Vaera (Shabbat Rosh Hodesh)

Annual (Ex. 6:2-9:35): Etz Hayim p. 351  
Triennial (Ex. 8:16-9:35): Etz Hayim p. 362  
Maftir (Num. 28:9-15): Etz Hayim p. 930  
Haftarah (Isaiah 66:1-24): Etz Hayim p. 1220



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| <p><b>Best Wishes for a Speedy Recovery to:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Art Besser, Elaine Dreizin, Nathalie Goodrich, Ethel Koplin, Henry Koplin, Paul Kruger, Ida Miller</p>                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>Ruth Farber, Al Bayme, Leeanne Gero, Fran Kirsh and Sharon Baum</p>                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>Pearl Hutten, Samuel Karesh, Meryl Egdal, Pearl Kell Miller, Louis Chanin, Fannie Kaplan, Floyd Bob Chaite, Aaron Dreizin, Mary Kline Levine, Celia K. Moore, Jack Adler, Max Belson, Yetta Kirsh, Rose Zarks</p> |

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**NO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL ON SUNDAY
& OFFICE CLOSED ON MONDAY IN OBSERVANCE OF
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**

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**The next Tefilat Lev Shaleym whole heart one  
hour service is scheduled for Saturday, January 30th  
beginning at 10:30am**

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Family Shabbat Dinner

This Friday - January 15th

Services begin at 6:15 pm featuring our 4th Grade Class
and Cantorial Intern, Richard Bessman
with dinner to follow

**NOTE: Due to the good response to the dinner,
we will accept reservations up to NOON tomorrow.
If you are planning to attend, you MUST make a reservation. Thank you!**

Adults - \$10, Children - \$7, Kids under 3 free
All Religious School students are free

Please call 745-4571 or email: secretary@csimacon.org to make a reservation

Adult Education Class

Jewish History, Part I

taught by Rabbi Rachel Bat-Or

Tuesday Night, January 19
7:15 - 8:15pm at the synagogue

Also on Jan. 26, Feb 2, & 9
Feb. 23, March 2, 9, 16 & 23 - Jewish Prayer
April 13, 20, 27, May 4 & 11 - Jewish History, Part II

The format of the class is discussion based on material read and questions from class participants. It is not a lecture class.

If you would like to join the classes and/or need additional information, please contact the Rabbi, 478.745.0182 or Stephanie Kross, 478.405.0643.

For the history classes we are using, A Short History of the Jewish People by Raymond Scheindlin.

WRAP SERVICE

SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 7TH – 9:30 AM

This year our congregation will take part in the National World Wide Wrap Service sponsored by the Federation of Jewish Men's Club on Sunday, February 7th at 9:30am. This service is to celebrate the wearing of Tefillin on week day mornings.

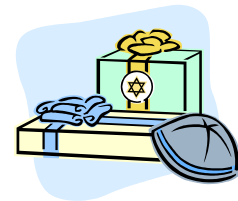
The oldest two classes in our Religious School (our fifth/seventh graders and teens) will make their own sets of tefillin to wear during the service.

Please join us, bring your tefillin, and learn about the Mitzvah of tefillin.

The CSI Gift Shop

for all your gift needs

Weddings - Housewarming Gifts
Birthdays - Anniversaries - B'nai Mitzvahs



Don't forget the CSI Cookbook - makes a great gift!

*Free gift wrapping and local delivery.
Contact Terri Frolich or Deborah Adler any time*

Parashat Vaera

Exodus 6:2-9:35

This week's commentary is by Rabbi Neal Joseph Loevinger who is currently the rabbi of Temple Beth-El in Poughkeepsie, NY.

Overcoming Self-Doubt - Moses's complaint and God's response teach us that despite our doubts and insecurities, we can, and should, work to accomplish our unique missions in life.

The previous parashah ends with the Israelites suffering greatly in servitude to Pharaoh; rather than heed God's instruction to let his slaves go, Pharaoh increases their workload and even refuses to give them straw for the bricks they must make. Moses goes back to God, and in the beginning of this week's Torah portion, God reassures him that the Israelites will indeed be delivered by God's own

action. The plagues upon Egypt then commence, but Pharaoh will not be moved. Eventually, God "hardens" Pharaoh's heart, and the plagues upon Egypt continue, becoming more wondrous each time.

In Focus

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 'Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites depart from his land.' But Moses appealed to the Lord, saying: 'The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me--a man of impeded speech!'" So the Lord spoke to both Moses and Aaron in regard to the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt, instructing them to deliver the Israelites from the land of Egypt. (Exodus 6:10-13)

Pshat

Moses complains to God several times before this that God's mission for him--to proclaim to Pharaoh that he must free the Hebrew slaves--is impossible, or too difficult, or that Moses is the wrong man for the job. Moses seems not only to doubt his own capabilities but he also comes across as a bit jaded about human nature.

He points out that a slave people isn't likely to believe the wild reports of a wandering shepherd regarding their redemption, and Pharaoh is even less likely to heed seditious suggestions in the name of an unknown God. In this verse, as before, Moses protests that he is not a fluent speaker; it's not clear whether this means that he had a physical speech defect, or was self-conscious and inarticulate. (Cf. 4:10.)

Drash

Digging a bit deeper into the question of Moses's "impeded speech," we find that even explanations of the term fudge a bit as to whether it is a physiological or emotional problem. In this verse, quoted above, the literal translation of Moses's complaint is that he has "uncircumcised lips," which doesn't help us at all.

Rashi says that "uncircumcised" means "closed," or "stopped up," and gives several examples from other verses to corroborate this definition. However, he doesn't say what it actually means to have "closed" lips--it could be a kind of thickness of speech, or it could mean that his words don't flow very well, that he has inadequate rhetorical skills.

Moses makes his complaint a bit differently in the earlier verse referred to: "Oh Lord, I am not a man of words, not yesterday and not from the day before, nor from the time You have spoken to Your servant, for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue." (4:11)

Kaved in this verse literally means "heavy," and is sometimes also translated as "slow of mouth and slow of tongue," or something like that. Once again, it's not clear exactly what Moses means; the only thing that's clear is that Moses thinks this condition disqualifies him from being God's agent in the task of confronting Pharaoh.

Nahum Sarna, a Biblical scholar, in his book *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel*, offers a third possibility. Moses grew up as an Egyptian, speaking the language of the land--perhaps he's trying to tell God that after so many years in the land of Midian, his fluency in Egyptian isn't what it used to be. Thus, he doesn't possess the language skills to engage in this task of high-level communication and negotiation.

After looking at the various interpretations of Moses's protests, Sarna does something unusual for a Bible scholar (whether of the old-time rabbinic variety or of the modern academic persuasion): he tells us that the exact nature of Moses's problem really doesn't matter at all. Moses felt inadequate to address Pharaoh as God's agent; God replies that it's God's words, not Moses's, that will be spoken.

To quote Sarna:

“To this, God replies with what in effect is...the essence of Biblical prophecy. The chosen messenger conveys not his own word but the word of God, and he does so because he irresistibly compelled by a Force and a Will more powerful than his own. Prophetic eloquence is not a matter of native talent, but of revelation that derives from the supreme Source of truth that is external to the speaker.

“The facile talker, the golden-tongued, the consummate demagogue, is not the recipient of the prophetic word or the vehicle of its transmission. Prophetic eloquence is a divine gift bestowed for [a] purpose on him who is elected, often against his will, to be the messenger. In these circumstances, experience and talent are irrelevant qualities.”

To me, this explanation of Moses's protests is reassuring and discomfoting at the same time. It's reassuring because we can take from it hope that indeed, despite our human limitations and frailties, we can accomplish our unique tasks in life. To be sure, most of us don't have a destiny as dramatic as Moses's, but each of us is commissioned for something, and given tools and talents and challenges to meet as best we can.

Moses, despite his absolutely extraordinary life, is also just like all the rest of us: called by God to be a partner in the work of Redemption, called by a God Who has faith in us even when we don't have faith in ourselves.

It's reassuring to think that God chose not the strongest or the fastest or the smartest or the most beautiful, but implanted Divine Truth into a person "slow of mouth and slow of tongue." If Moses could rise to the occasion and speak words to Pharaoh that would change the whole course of human history, then I too can rise to the occasion and express to the world whatever sparks of Divinity I have been given.

Yet this is exactly what is discomfoting about these verses: they strip from us all our excuses, all our rationales for procrastination, all our lack of self-confidence masquerading as humility. By appointing Moses, the man of "uncircumcised lips," as a prophet-president-diplomat-preacher (i.e., a man completely dependent on words), God is telling the rest of us: you have to get on with your spiritual mission in life, despite your limitations, despite your self-doubts, despite all the problems that seem to be in the way.

It's much easier to shrug off the task as beyond our capacities, or to wish fervently, as Moses did, that God would appoint someone else in our place. Not everyone is chosen to lead a nation of slaves to freedom, but each of us must consider seriously and apply to ourselves Rabbi Tarfon's famous challenge: "You are not obliged to finish the task, but neither are you free to neglect it." (Pirkei Avot 2:21)

For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:

Aish.com

ISJL Taste of Torah

JTS

MyJewishLearning.com

USCJ Torah Sparks

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[United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)  
[JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha](#)  
[Audio Siddur](#)  
[Jewish Telegraphic Agency \(JTA\)](#)  
[Israeli News Broadcast – in English](#)  
[The Jewish Ethicist](#)  
[Synagogue 3000](#)  
[Learn through USCJ online](#)  
[The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum](#)  
[United Jewish Communities \(UJC\)](#)  
[American Jewish University](#)

**For the children (or the young at heart):**

[Torah Portion Coloring Pages](#)  
[Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie](#)