



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Vayechi

December 26, 2015 14 Tevet, 5776

TORAH ARTSCROLL 268 HERTZ 180		Rabbi Sacks on Parshat Vayechi		
HAFTORAH ARTSCROLL 1145 HERTZ 191		<p>Jacob was on his death-bed. He summoned his children. He wanted to bless them before he died. But the text begins with a strange semi-repetition: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come. Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel." (Gen. 49:1-2) This seems to be saying the same thing twice, with one difference. In the first sentence, there is a reference to "what will happen to you in the days to come" (literally, "at the end of days"). This is missing from the second sentence. Rashi, following the Talmud, says that "Jacob wished to reveal what would happen in the future, but the Divine presence was removed from him." He tried to foresee the future but found he could not. This is no minor detail. It is a fundamental feature of Jewish spirituality. We believe that we cannot predict the future when it comes to human beings. We make the future by our choices. The script has not yet been written. The future is radically open.</p>	<p>difference between ancient Israel and ancient Greece. The Greeks believed in fate, moira, even blind fate, ananke. When the Delphic oracle told Laius that he would have a son who would kill him, he took every precaution to make sure it did not happen. When the child was born, Laius nailed him by his feet to a rock and left him to die. A passing shepherd found and saved him, and he was eventually raised by the king and queen of Corinth. Because his feet were permanently misshapen, he came to be known as Oedipus (the "swollen-footed"). The rest of the story is well known. Everything the oracle foresaw happened, and every act designed to avoid it actually helped bring it about. Once the oracle has been spoken and fate has been sealed, all attempts to avoid it are in vain. This cluster of ideas lies at the heart of one of the great Greek contributions to civilization: tragedy. Astonishingly, given the many centuries of Jewish suffering, biblical Hebrew has no word for tragedy. The word ason means "a mishap, a disaster, a calamity" but not tragedy in the classic sense. A tragedy is a drama with a sad outcome involving a hero destined to experience downfall or destruction through a character-flaw or a conflict with an overpowering force, such as fate. Judaism has no word for this, because we do not believe in fate</p>	<p>as something blind, inevitable and inexorable. We are free. We can choose. As Isaac Bashevis Singer wittily said: "We must be free: we have no choice!"</p> <p>Rarely is this more powerfully asserted than in the Unetaneh tokef prayer we say on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Even after we have said that "On Rosh Hashanah it is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed ... who will live and who will die", we still go on to say, "But teshuvah, prayer and charity avert the evil of the decree." There is no sentence against which we cannot appeal, no verdict we cannot mitigate by showing that we have repented and changed. There is a classic example of this in Tanakh. "In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, 'This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.' Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 'Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.' And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: 'Go back and tell</p>
Times				
Candle Lighting	4:14 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">KIDDUSH IS SPONSORED BY GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SEUDAH SHLISHIT IS SPONSORED BY LILIAN & GARY CHUBAK IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER, BENJAMIN CHUBAK, Z" L AND BY CHERYL AND ROBERT SPERBER IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 35TH YAHRZEIT OF HER FATHER ISAAC FORST, Z" L.</p>		
Friday Mincha	4:15 pm			
Hashkama	8:00 am			
Youth Minyan	8:30 am			
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am			
Main	9:00 am			
Beit Midrash	9:15 am			
Gemara Shiur	3:40 pm			
Mincha	4:10 pm			
Shabbat ends	5:23 pm			
Rabbi Reisman Video Shiur	7:30 pm			
Sunday, Dec. 27	7:30/8:30 am			
Mon., Thur.	6:35/7:45 am			
Tue. & Wed.	6:45/7:45 pm			
Friday (Jan. 1)	7:30/8:30 am			
Mincha	4:20 pm			
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei				
December 26	9:36/10:22 am			
January 2	9:37/10:23 am			
Next Shabbat Parshat Shemot				
Candle Lighting	4:19 pm			
Mincha	4:20 pm			

Hezekiah, the ruler of my people: This is what the Lord, God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you.” (2 Kings 20:1-5; Isaiah 38:1-5) The prophet Isaiah had told King Hezekiah he would not recover, but he did. He lived for another fifteen years. God heard his prayer and granted him stay of execution. From this the Talmud infers, “Even if a sharp sword rests upon your neck, you should not desist from prayer.” We pray for a good fate but we do not reconcile ourselves to fatalism. Hence there is a fundamental difference between a prophecy and a prediction. If a prediction comes true, it has succeeded. If a prophecy comes true, it has failed. A prophet delivers not a prediction but a warning. He or she does not simply say, “This will happen”, but rather, “This will happen unless you change.” The prophet speaks to human freedom, not to the inevitability of fate. I was once present at a gathering where Bernard Lewis, the great scholar of Islam, was asked to predict the outcome of a certain American foreign policy intervention. He gave a magnificent reply. “I am a historian, so I only make predictions about the past. What is more, I am a retired historian, so even my past is passé.” This was a profoundly Jewish answer.

In the twenty-first century we know much at a macro- and micro-level. We look up and see a universe of a hundred billion galaxies each of a hundred billion stars. We look down and see a human body containing a hundred trillion cells, each with a double copy of the human genome, 3.1 billion letters long, enough if transcribed to fill a library of 5,000 books. But there remains one thing we do not know and will never know: What tomorrow will bring. The past, said L. P. Hartley, is a foreign country. But the future is an undiscovered one. That is why predictions so often fail. That is the essential difference between nature and human nature. The ancient Mesopotamians could make accurate predictions about the movement of planets, yet even today, despite brain-scans and neuroscience, we are still not able to predict what people will do. Often, they take us by surprise. The reason is that we are free. We choose, we make mistakes, we learn, we change, we grow. The failure at school becomes the winner of a Nobel Prize. The leader who

disappointed, suddenly shows courage and wisdom in a crisis. The driven businessman has an intimation of mortality and decides to devote the rest of his life to helping the poor. Some of the most successful people I ever met were written off by their teachers at school and told they would never amount to anything. We constantly defy predictions. This is something science has not yet explained and perhaps never will. Some believe freedom is an illusion. But it isn't. It's what makes us human. We are free because we are not merely objects. We are subjects. We respond not just to physical events but to the way we perceive those events. We have minds, not just brains. We have thoughts, not just sensations. We react but we can also choose not to react. There is something about us that is irreducible to material, physical causes and effects.

The way our ancestors spoke about this remains true and profound. We are free because God is free and He made us in His image. That is what is meant by the three words God told Moses at the burning bush when he asked God for His name. God replied, Ehyeh asher Ehyeh. This is often translated as “I am what I am,” but what it really means is, “I will be who and how I choose to be.” I am the God of freedom. I cannot be predicted. Note that God says this at the start of Moses’ mission to lead a people from slavery to freedom. He wanted the Israelites to become living testimony to the power of freedom. Do not believe that the future is written. It isn't. There is no fate we cannot change, no prediction we cannot defy. We are not predestined to fail; neither are we pre-ordained to succeed. We do not predict the future, because we make the future: by our choices, our willpower, our persistence and our determination to survive. The proof is the Jewish people itself. The first reference to Israel outside the Bible is engraved on the Merneptah stele, inscribed around 1225 BCE by Pharaoh Merneptah IV, Ramses II's successor. It reads: “Israel is laid waste, her seed is no more.” It was, in short, an obituary. The Jewish people have been written off many times by their enemies, but they remains, after almost four millennia, still young and strong. That is why, when Jacob wanted to tell his children what would happen to them in the future, the Divine spirit was taken away from him. Our children continue to surprise us, as we continue to surprise others. Made in the image of God, we are free. Sustained by the blessings of God, we can become greater than anyone, even ourselves, could foresee.



GNS Yoetzet Halacha Lisa Septimus
 Welcomes your questions about mikvah, observance of taharat mishpacha (halacha relating to married life) and women's health, as it connects to Jewish law. Reach out to her at:
 Phone: 516.415.1111
 Email: gnsyoetzet@gmail.com.
 All conversations and emails are kept confidential.



Great Neck Synagogue
 26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
 516-487-6100

Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Rabbi Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi
Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z”l, Rabbi Emeritus
Zeev Kron, Cantor
Eleazer Schulman, z”l, Cantor Emeritus
Rabbi Sholom Jensen, Youth Director
Zehava & Dr. Michael Atlas, Youth Directors
Mark Twersky, Executive Director
Dr. James Frisch, Assistant Director
Dr. Hal Chadow, President
Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board
Lisa Septimus, Yoetzet Halacha 516-415-1111

Tuesday, December 22nd
Asara B'Tevet (Fast of Tevet)

Fast Begins: 5:47 am
Shacharit: 6:30/7:45 am
Mincha: 4:10 pm
Fast Ends: 5:09 pm

Whoever delights in the Sabbath is granted a boundless heritage as well as all his heart's desires....
Tractate Shabbat 118a -118b

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARK ORBACH, Z"L

gn yoetzet halacha event

When the phone rings ...
My life as a Yoetzet Halacha

Given by
MRS. LISA SEPTIMUS
Great Neck Yoetzet Halacha

AT THE HOME OF SHIRA AND BENJY NEREN
196 MYRTLE DRIVE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22nd, at 8:00 PM

**ANNUAL
OHHEL SHABBATON
@ GNS**

DECEMBER 25-26

**JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL ONEG
FRIDAY NIGHT AT 7:00 PM
WITH FOOD & DANCING
BRAUN YOUTH CENTER**

BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!!



Great Neck Synagogue

Presents Sunday Conversations with

Bret Stephens

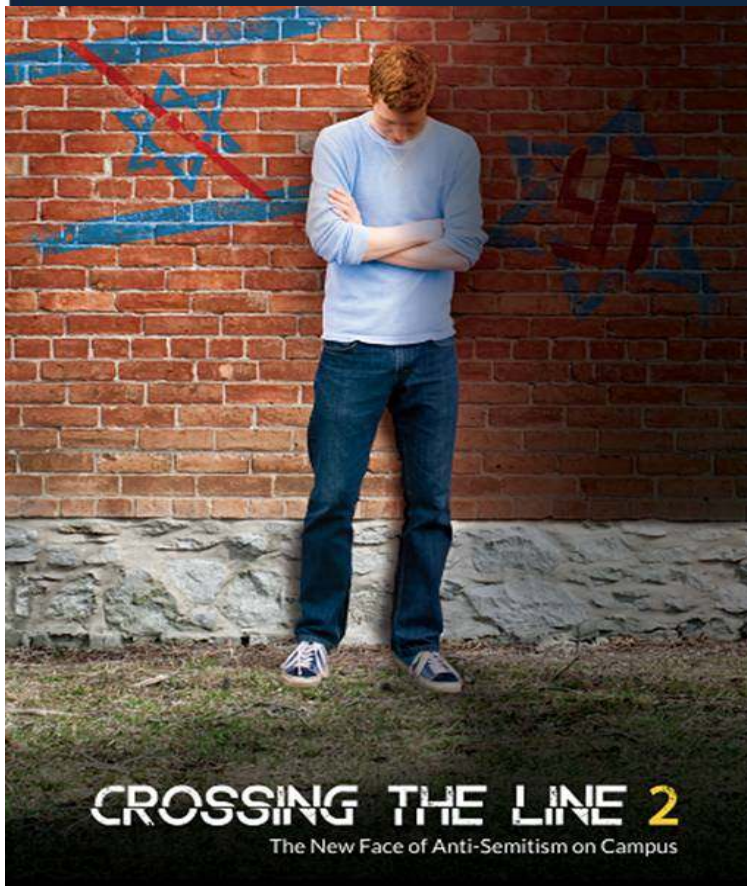
**Come Hear a Great Friend of
Israel in Today's Media**

- Writes Global View, the foreign-affairs column of The Wall Street Journal
- Won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary
- Has a weekly political talk show on Fox News
- Was editor-in-chief of Jerusalem Post



Sunday Evening Jan. 10, 2016 at 7:00 pm

Dessert reception to follow program



**Saturday Night
Theatre
January 16th at 8:30 pm**

Join us for a screening of
CROSSING THE LINE 2
The new face of Anti-Semitism
on Campus is a new
documentary that reveals the
rise of anti-Israel activity and
anti-Semitic rhetoric on North
American university campuses,
and demonstrates when
reasonable criticism of Israel
'Crosses the Line' into
Anti-Semitism.

Understanding BDS and How to Respond

Event Sponsors:

IRANIAN AMERICAN JEWISH
FEDERATION OF NEW YORK



Event Panelists:



Community Partners:

Ahavat Shalom Synagogue
Babylonian Jewish Center
Congregation L'Dor V'Dor
Congregation of Shaare Zion
of Great Neck
Great Neck Synagogue
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth
Hadassah Synagogue
Lake Success Jewish Center
New York NCSY
North Shore Hebrew Academy
Temple Beth El of Great Neck
Temple Israel of Great Neck
Young Israel of Great Neck

College and college-bound students are cordially invited to join the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for a special event to further understand and learn response strategies to campus issues including:

- **Anti-Semitic Comments and incidents**
- **Anti-Israel Bias**
- **The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel**

[View a 90-second video of anti-Israel demonstrations on college campuses](#)



Dr. Nancy Kaplan

Associate VP of Academic Support Services, St. John's U
Dr. Kaplan is a long-time educator, community advocate, and proponent of social justice and has spent the past 18 years as an ADL workshop facilitator.



Elizabeth Liz Berney, Esq.

ZOA Director of Special Projects and Legal Expert
Liz uses her legal expertise, speaks publicly, writes and organizes demonstrations to defend Jewish rights and Israel, and combat BDS and anti-Semitism.



Jason Holtzman

ADL Research Analyst and Campus Expert
Jason has worked as an Analyst in ADL's Research Center since May 2012. His research focuses on anti-Israel activity on American college campuses.



Jonathan Ginsburg

ZOA New England Campus Coordinator
Jonathan made Aliyah to Israel in 2007 and served in the IDF. He is excited to help support the ZOA mission of providing factual based Israel advocacy on US college campuses.

Where: Mashadi Jewish Center, 54 Steamboat Road, Great Neck, NY

When: Monday, January 11, 2016

7:00-7:45 PM: Glatt Kosher light dinner and refreshments

7:45-9:30 PM: Program to start promptly

9:30 PM: Dessert Reception

****Photo ID will be checked at registration – Please come early***

Save the Date!

Introducing
Great Neck Synagogue's
Women's Learning Series

Join us & warm up with a shiur on Prayer
by the inspirational speaker,

Ms. Chevi Garfinkel

*"Without Hashem, I can't -
Without me, Hashem won't"*

Tuesday evening
January 12th
8:00 pm
At the Chadow home
50 Dickenson Place

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5776, IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF **PINCHAS BEN YOSEPH** FOR OTHER SUCH OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT HOWARD WOLF [212-686-9800](tel:212-686-9800) EXT 220

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS MOVING INTO THE GREAT NECK AREA PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW.

HASHKAMA KIDDUSH

Kiddush is sponsored by **Pari and Henry Schwartz.**

CHOLENT BOWL 2016

Our annual Cholent competition will be **Shabbat, Feb. 6th.** If you are interested in placing a cholent in the contest, please speak with chairman of the cholent, Elie Cohen. As in past years, all cholents will be cooked in GNS kitchen. Sign up soon as spots are limited.

CHAVERIM CENTER

Our next scheduled event will be on **Wed. Jan 6.** We are looking for people who can teach an interesting craft or have a particular talent that they can share with the group. Please let the office know.

SUNDAY CONVERSATIONS

Please join us on **Sunday evening, January 10th** at 7:00 pm for a talk given by Bret Stephens, columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and ardent defender of the State of Israel. It will prove to be a very enlightening and informative evening and an excellent opportunity to hear from one of the most important voices shaping the media's approach to Israel.

OHEL SHABBATON

The annual OHEL Shabbaton will be this Shabbat, December 25-26. In addition to OHEL clients staying at homes and eating meals within our community, there will be a Friday night Oneg at GNS at 7:00 pm. Everyone is invited to attend.

SUPPORT GREAT NECK EIRUV

Our yearly fundraising for the Great Neck Eiruv will be in January. We depend on your generosity to maintain our Eiruv. The minimum suggested donation will remain at \$180.00, though, if you are able, a larger donation would be GREATLY appreciated. If you would like to make your fully tax deductible charitable donation before year end, you may do so by either:

A. Mailing a check to G N Eiruv Association, P.O. Box 234243, Great Neck, NY 11023

B. Donating on line at: <http://greatneckeiruv.org/donate>

Thanking you in advance for your support of our community Eiruv. GN Eiruv Association

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

December 26: OHEL Shabbaton
January 10: Sunday Conversations: Bret Stephens
January 12: Women's Learning Series
January 16: Movie Night: Crossing the Line 2

MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Haifa & Dan Shavolian** in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter **Talia.**

Mazal Tov to **Lauren & Joseph Hyman** on the birth of a granddaughter born to their children, **Rebecca & Jonathan Katz.**

Mazal Tov to **Phyllis & Albert Safdieh** on the marriage of their daughter, **Lisa** to **Sharone Levy** son of **Cantor Meir & Miryam Levy** of Brooklyn.

Mazal Tov to **Ken Magida** on the engagement of his son, **Jason**, to **Emily Pugach**, daughter of **Sam and Niki Pugach** of Wellesley, MA.

NORTH SHORE HEBREW ACADEMY NEWS

Get a taste of Pre-School. NSHA invites moms to sign up for our exciting new Mommy and Me class at YIGN for toddlers ages 12-24 months, running for twelve Tuesdays, beginning in January 2016. Contact Elana Helfgott at ehelfgott@nsha.org.

NSHA is hosting a Kiddush for new and prospective families on **January 9th**, following shul. Location to be advised. If you have any questions please contact Karen Hammerman at karen.hammerman@gmail.com.

Hyman Katz and family would like to thank Rabbis Polakoff, Lichter, Cantor Kron, Sharon Goldwyn and the entire community for the outpouring of support and sympathy following the loss of his mother Sally Katz z"l.

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Saturday, 14 Tevet

Helen Ishofsky for Willie Herskovits
Judy Blatter for Raymonde Katz
Henry Katz for Raymonde Katz
Michael Katz for Raymonde Katz
Sadie Frank for Meyer Leshkowitz
Murray Weiss for Harry Weiss
William Wolff for Bernard Wolff

Sunday, 15 Tevet

Leon Fuks for Emanuel Fuks
Kenneth Magida for Jacob Magida
Ellen Polakoff for Casper Pinsker
Goldie Lorber for Ethel Winter

Monday, 16 Tevet

Gary Chubak for Benjamin Chubak
Dorothy Reiser for Theodore Cohen
Ron Malen for Eli Malen
Henry Schwartz for Max Schwartz
Mitchell Siegel for Morris Turner

Tuesday, 17 Tevet

Norman Fisher for Molly Fisher
Cheryl Sperber for Isaac Forst
Ester Noy for Rachel Nir
Grace Oster for Joseph Abraham Oster

Wednesday, 18 Tevet

Mahin Aryeh for Malka Aryeh
Michelle Berman for Naomi Kahn
Leslie Kahn for Naomi Kahn
Trudy Jettelson for Lena Sirota

Thursday, 19 Tevet

Harvey Ishofsky for Morris Ishofsky
Gladys Moslin for Solomon Moslin