



# Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Vayigash

December 23, 2017 5 Tevet, 5778

<b>TORAH</b> <b>ARTSCROLL 250</b> <b>HERTZ 169</b>		<b>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Vayigash</b>		
<b>HAFTORAH</b> <b>ARTSCROLL 1144</b> <b>HERTZ 178</b>		<p>The sequence from Bereishit 37 to 50 is the longest unbroken narrative in the Torah, and there can be no doubt who its hero is: Joseph. The story begins and ends with him. We see him as a child, beloved – even spoiled – by his father; as an adolescent dreamer, resented by his brothers; as a slave, then a prisoner, in Egypt; then as the second most powerful figure in the greatest empire of the ancient world. At every stage, the narrative revolves around him and his impact on others. He dominates the last third of Bereishit, casting his shadow on everything else. From almost the beginning, he seems destined for greatness. Yet history did not turn out that way. To the contrary, it is another brother who, in the fullness of time, leaves his mark on the Jewish people. Indeed, we bear his name. The covenantal family has been known by several names. One is Ivri, "Hebrew" (possibly related to the ancient apiru), meaning "outsider, stranger, nomad, one who wanders</p>	<p>from place to place." That is how Abraham and his children were known to others. The second is Yisrael, derived from Jacob's new name after he "wrestled with God and with man and prevailed." After the division of the kingdom and the conquest of the North by the Assyrians, however, they became known as Yehudim or Jews, for it was the tribe of Judah who dominated the kingdom of the South, and they who survived the Babylonian exile. So it was not Joseph but Judah who conferred his identity on the people, Judah who became the ancestor of Israel's greatest king, David, Judah from whom the messiah will be born. Why Judah, not Joseph? The answer undoubtedly lies in the beginning of Vayigash, as the two brothers confront one another, and Judah pleads for Benjamin's release.</p>	<p>speech of monstrous callousness. There is no word about the evil of murder, merely pragmatic calculation ("What will we gain"). At the very moment he calls Joseph "our own flesh and blood" he is proposing selling him as a slave. Judah has none of the tragic nobility of Reuben who, alone of the brothers, sees that what they are doing is wrong, and makes an attempt to save him (it fails). At this point, Judah is the last person from whom we expect great things.</p>
<b>BAR MITZVAH</b> <b>OF</b> <b>LEO SIEGELMAN</b>				
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Candle Lighting	4:13 pm			
Mincha	4:15 pm			
Hashkama	8:00 am			
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am			
Main	9:00 am			
Beit Midrash	9:15 am			
Gemorah Shiur	3:35 pm			
Mincha	4:05 pm			
Shabbat Ends	5:21 pm			
R' Reisman Video	7:30 pm			
Sunday Dec. 24	7:30/8:30 am			
Mon.	6:35/7:45 am			
Tue., Wed., & Fri.	6:45/7:45 am			
<b>Thursday</b> <b>Asara B'Tevet</b>	6:30/7:45 am			
Mincha	4:20 pm			
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei				
December 23	9:35/10:21 am			
December 30	9:38/10:24 am			
Next Shabbat Vayechi				
Candle Lighting	4:17 pm			
Mincha	4:20 pm			

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**IN HONOR OF THE BAR MITZVAH OF THEIR SON LEO**

brother's fate has been transformed into courage on his behalf. He is willing to suffer what he once inflicted on Joseph so that the same fate should not befall Benjamin. At this point Joseph reveals his identity. We know why. Judah has passed the test that Joseph has carefully constructed for him. Joseph wants to know if Judah has changed. He has. This is a highly significant moment in the history of the human spirit. Judah is the first penitent – the first baal teshuvah – in the Torah. Where did it come from, this change in his character? For that, we have to backtrack to chapter 38 – the story of Tamar.

Tamar, we recall, had married Judah's two elder sons, both of whom had died, leaving her a childless widow. Judah, fearing that his third son would share their fate, withheld him from her – thus leaving her unable to remarry and have children. Once she understands her situation, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute. Judah sleeps with her. She becomes pregnant. Judah, unaware of the disguise, concludes that she must have had a forbidden relationship and orders her to be put to death. At this point, Tamar – who, while disguised, had taken Judah's seal, cord and staff as a pledge – send them to Judah with a message: "The father of my child is the man to whom these belong."

Judah now understands the whole story. Not only has he placed Tamar in an impossible situation of living widowhood, and not only is he the father of her child, but he also realizes that she has behaved with extraordinary discretion in revealing the truth without shaming him (it is from this act of Tamar's that we derive the rule that "one should rather throw oneself into a fiery furnace than shame someone else in public").

Tamar is the heroine of the story, but it has one significant consequence. Judah admits he was wrong. "She was more righteous than I," he says. This is the first time in the Torah someone acknowledges their own guilt. It is also the turning point in Judah's life. Here is born that ability to recognize one's own wrongdoing, to feel remorse, and to change – the complex phenomenon known as teshuvah – that later leads to the great scene in Vayigash, where Judah is capable of turning his earlier behavior on its head and doing the opposite of what he had once done before. Judah is ish teshuvah, penitential man.

We now understand the significance of his name. The verb lehodot means two things. It means "to thank," which is what Leah has in mind when she gives Judah, her fourth son, his name: "this time I will thank the Lord." However, it also means, "to admit, acknowledge." The biblical term vidui, "confession," – then and now part of the process of teshuvah, and according to Maimonides its key element – comes from the same root. Judah means "he who acknowledged his sin." We now also understand one of the fundamental axioms of teshuvah: "Rabbi Abbahu said: In the place where penitents stand, even the perfectly righteous cannot stand" (Berachot 34b). His prooftext is the verse from Isaiah (57:19), "Peace, peace to him that was far and to him that is near." The verse puts one who "was far" ahead of one who "is near." As the Talmud makes clear, however, Rabbi Abbahu's reading is by no means uncontroversial. Rabbi Jochanan interprets "far" as "far from sin" rather than "far from God." The real proof is Judah. Judah is a penitent, the first in the Torah. Joseph is consistently known to tradition as ha-tzaddik, "the righteous." Joseph became mishneh le-melekh, "second to the king." Judah, however, became the father of Israel's kings. Where the penitent Judah stands, even the perfectly righteous Joseph cannot stand. However great an individual may be in virtue of his or her natural character, greater still is one who is capable of growth and change. That is the power of penitence, and it began with Judah.



**Great Neck 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: [greatneckyoetzet@gmail.com](mailto:greatneckyoetzet@gmail.com).  
 All conversations and emails are kept confidential.



**Great Neck Synagogue**  
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 516-487-6100

**Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi**  
**Rabbi Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi**  
**Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z"l, Rabbi Emeritus**  
**Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus**  
**Rabbi Sholom Jensen, Youth Director**  
**Zehava & Dr. Michael Atlas, Youth Directors**  
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**Lisa Septimus, Yoetzet Halacha 516-415-1111**

**Great Neck Synagogue  
Bikur Cholim**



If you would like to volunteer for Bikur Cholim please fill out the form below and submit to the Synagogue office or Diane Rein at [drein@verizon.net](mailto:drein@verizon.net).

**Contact Information**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>I would like to volunteer for</b>	<b>Time(s) available*</b>	<b>Day(s) of week available**</b>
( )	Transportation (shopping, doctor appointments, etc.)		
( )	Call people		
( )	Visit people at home or hospital		
( )	Shop for people		
( )	Deliver food (homemade or store bought challah, soup, etc.)		
( )	Other (Please specify:) _____		

**\*Times Available**

- All Day
- AM Only
- PM ONLY
- Evenings Only

**\*\*Days Available**

- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Shabbat afternoon home visits

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5778 IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF **PINCHAS BEN YOSEPH** FOR OTHER SUCH OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT HOWARD WOLF 516-643-3344

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

## OFFICE HOURS FOR RABBI POLAKOFF

**Wednesdays: 10-12; Thursdays: 1-3.** He can always be reached via 516.637.3674 or [dpolakoff@gns.org](mailto:dpolakoff@gns.org).

## UPDATE FROM THE CHAZZAN SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee has been working hard to find our shul's next Chazzan. Our work has been divided into three main stages.

In the first stage, we considered the resumes and recordings of applicants for the position. We narrowed down our list to the top-10 (although we are continuing to receive and consider additional applicants).

In the second stage, we are meeting each of those top-10 candidates in person, interviewing them, and asking them to sing for the Committee in the main sanctuary of the shul. This second stage is ongoing.

In the third stage, we anticipate bringing the top few candidates to the shul for "probas" (i.e., auditions) on a Shabbat so the entire shul membership will be able to hear the top candidates, meet them, and provide feedback. We are continuing to work to make sure that our next Chazzan will be hired before the next High Holiday season.

## PARLOR MEETING FOR HOUSE OF HOPE

Please join us for a Sushi and wine evening to learn more about a unique girls home and orphanage in Netanya, Israel, Bayit v'tikvah (House of Hope). **Wed. evening, Dec. 20th at 8:00 pm**, hosted by Sharon and Akiva Fishman, 35 [Beverly Road](#). (Event Chairs Jonathan Muller, Andrew Feldschreiber, Alan Steinberg & Akiva Fishman). Presentation by executive director Rabbi Brian Thau for American Friends of House of Hope.

## MEN'S CLUB DONATES TO THE SHIVA CHESED FUND

The Synagogue would like to thank the Men's Club. As a result of the recent announcement of the Shiva Fund (which assists Shiva families with meals and whatever may be needed) running low, the GNS Men's Club has contributed \$1,800 to begin its replenishment. You can also make a donation to the fund by sending a check to the Synagogue made out to the GNS Shiva Chesed Fund or online at <https://www.gns.org/about/affiliates/>

## CHAVERIM CENTER

The next Chaverim meeting will be Wednesday, **Dec. 27th from 11:30-2:00**. Presentation by Carole Libby and a book club discussion on "The Dictionary of Mutual Understanding."

## RABBINIC INTERN

If you would like to invite our rabbinic intern, **Aron & Leia Rubin** for a Shabbat meal, please contact them at 917.500.1411. They will be here for Shabbat on: **Dec. 23rd; Jan. 13th & 27th; Feb. 10th & 17th.**

## MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

**Mazal Tov to Heather & Jerry Siegelman** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Leo**.

**Mazal Tov to Marilyn & Ira Rosenberg** on the birth of a great grandson born to their grandchildren **Hadassah & David Rosenberg** in Jerusalem.

**Mazal Tov to Oliver Rein and David Adler** on being honored by New York State for their heroic actions in saving the victims of a serious car accident. Oliver and David each received a New York State Senate Proclamation from Senator Elaine Phillips. Oliver was also presented with a Liberty Medal and an award from the Great Neck Alert Fire Company. **Mazal Tov** to parents **David & Diane Rein and Josh & Iris Adler**.

**Mazal Tov to Jayne Altman & Joe Rosenthal** on their recent marriage.

**Mazal Tov to Alisa & Michael Hoenig** on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson **Israel Lev Ingber**, son of **Rebekah & Adam Ingber** of White Plains.

## 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 online at: <http://greatneckeiruv.org/donate>  
Thank you in advance for help to maintain our Eiruv.

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### Saturday, 5 Tevet

Albert Miller for Molly Miller  
Deena Heisler for Samuel Jacob Wachsberg

### Sunday, 6 Tevet

Randi Luxenberg for Evelyn Beeber  
Stewart Kaplan for David Kaplan  
Rabbi Shimon Wolf for Rebecca Miller  
Susan Goldman for Ilana Pachinsky

### Monday, 7 Tevet

Ron Malen for Gladys Noveck  
Zinat Yacobi for David Yacobi

### Tuesday, 8 Tevet

Ellen Siegel for Blanche Givner  
Barbara Shaw for Gussie Schwartz

### Wednesday, 9 Tevet

Stephen Rabinowitz for David Getreu  
Stephen Rabinowitz for Morris Getreu

### Thursday, 10 Tevet

Nathan Rosenblatt for Seymour Rosenblatt  
Rafael Yehoshua for Tikvah Yehoshua

### Friday, 11 Tevet

Tami Kramer for Irving Secunda  
Pari Schwartz for Aziz Rebbe Torkan  
Jerrald Weinstein for Shifra Weinstein