



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Vayechi

December 22, 2018 14 Tevet, 5779

<p>TORAH ARTSCROLL 268 HERTZ 180</p> <p>HAFTORAH ARTSCROLL 1145 HERTZ 191</p>	<p>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Vayechi</p>		
<p>Times</p>	<p>The scene that brings the book of Genesis to a close is intensely significant. Joseph's brothers were terrified that, after the death of their father Jacob, Joseph would take revenge against them for selling him into slavery. Years before, he had told them that he forgave them: "Now, do not worry or feel guilty because you sold me. Look: God has sent me ahead of you to save lives" (Gen. 45:5). Evidently, though, they only half-believed him. Their fear was based on the fact that, as is clear from the earlier story of Esau, sons were not allowed to take revenge against their brothers in the lifetime of their father. Esau had said, "The days of mourning for my father will be here soon. I will then be able to kill my brother Jacob" (Gen. 27:41). That is what the brothers now feared: that Joseph had not really forgiven them but was simply waiting until Jacob died. That is why, after Jacob's death, the brothers sent word to Joseph saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your</p>	<p>brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father" (Gen. 50:16). So Joseph had to tell them again that he forgave them: "Don't be afraid," said Joseph. "Am I in place of God? You intended to harm me but God intended it for good, to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Gen. 50:19-20)</p> <p>The episode is moving in itself, but it also resolves one of the central questions of the book of Genesis – sibling rivalry: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. Can brothers live peaceably with one another? This question is fundamental to the biblical drama of redemption, for if brothers cannot live together, how can nations? And if nations cannot live together, how can the human world survive? Only now, with the reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers, can the story move on to the birth of Israel as a nation, passing from slavery to freedom.</p> <p>These words of Joseph, though, tell us something more. I have previously argued that the entire drama Joseph put the brothers through when they came to buy food in Egypt – accusing them of being spies, and so on – was to test whether they had done teshuvah. Did</p>	<p>they realize the wrong they had done in selling Joseph and had they really changed as a result? At the height of the drama, as soon as Judah said he would stay as a slave so that his brother Benjamin could go free, Joseph revealed his true identity to them and forgave them. Judah, who had proposed selling Joseph as a slave, had completely changed. He had done teshuvah. He was now a different person.</p> <p>Yet something more is revealed in this last conversation between Joseph and his brothers. It concerns the most paradoxical of all rabbinic statements about teshuvah. It was said by one of the great baalei teshuvah, penitents, of the Talmud: the third-century sage known as Resh Lakish. Originally a highway robber, he was persuaded by Rabbi Yochanan to give up his lawless ways and join him in the house of study. Resh Lakish repented and became Rabbi Yochanan's disciple and colleague (and also his brother-in-law: he married Yochanan's sister). Perhaps speaking from his own experience, he said: Great is repentance, because through it deliberate sins are accounted as though they were merits, as it is said, "When the wicked man turns</p>
<p>KIDDUSH IS SPONSORED BY GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE</p>			
<p>SEUDAH SHLISHIT IS SPONSORED BY JAMIE & MICHAEL KATZ AND JUDY & BRETT BLATTER IN MEMORY OF THEIR MOTHER RAYMONDE KATZ Z"l</p>			
<p>Candle Lighting 4:12 pm</p> <p>Mincha 4:15 pm</p> <p>Hashkama 8:00 am</p> <p>Youth Minyan 8:30 am</p> <p>Parsha Shiur 8:30 am</p> <p>Main 9:00 am</p> <p>Beit Midrash 9:15 am</p> <p>Gemara Shiur 3:35 pm</p> <p>Mincha 4:05 pm</p> <p>Shabbat Ends 5:20 pm</p> <p>R' Reisman Video 7:30 pm</p> <p>Sun. Dec. 23 7:30/8:30 am</p> <p>Mon. & Thurs. 6:35/7:45 am</p> <p>Tue., Wed. & Fri. 6:45/7:45 am</p> <p>Mincha 4:20 pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei</p> <p>December 22 9:34/10:21 am</p> <p>December 29 9:37/10:24 am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Next Shabbat Shemot</p> <p>Candle Lighting 4:16 pm</p> <p>Mincha 4:20 pm</p>			

from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live thereby" (Ezekiel 33:19). This statement is almost unintelligible. How can we change the past? How can deliberate sins be transformed into their opposite – into merits, good deeds?

The quotation from Ezekiel does not prove the point. If anything, it does the opposite. The prophet is speaking about a person who, having undergone teshuvah, now does good instead of evil – and it is because of his good deeds, not his earlier evil ones, that "he shall live." The verse says that good deeds can overcome a previous history of wrongdoing. It does not say that they can turn bad into good, deliberate sins into merits. Resh Lakish's statement is intelligible only in the light of Joseph's words to his brothers after the death of their father: "You intended to harm me but God intended it for good." The brothers had committed a deliberate sin by selling Joseph into slavery. They had then done teshuvah. The result, says Joseph, is that – through divine providence ("God intended it") – their action is now reckoned "for good." Not only is this the source of Resh Lakish's principle; it also enables us to understand what it means. Any act we perform has multiple consequences, some good, some bad. When we intend evil, the bad consequences are attributed to us because they are what we sought to achieve. The good consequences are not: they are mere unintended outcomes.

Thus, in the case of Joseph, many positive things happened once he had been brought to Egypt. Eventually he became second-in-command of Egypt, overseer of its economy, and the man who saved the country from ruin during the years of famine. None of these consequences could be attributed to his brothers, even though they would not have happened had the brothers not done as they did. The reason is that the brothers neither foresaw nor intended this set of outcomes. They meant to sell Joseph as a slave, and that is what they did. However, once the brothers had undergone complete repentance, their original intent was cancelled out. It was now

possible to see the good, as well as the bad, consequences of their act – and to attribute the former to them. Paraphrasing Shakespeare's Mark Antony, the good they did would live after them; the bad was interred with the past (Julius Caesar, act III, scene 2.). That is how, through repentance, deliberate sins can be accounted as merits, or as Joseph put it: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." This is a hugely significant idea, for it means that by a change of heart we can redeem the past.

This still sounds paradoxical. Surely time is asymmetrical. We can change the future but not the past. We can choose what is yet to be, but, in the words of the sages, "What has been, has been," and we cannot alter it. We now see, through Joseph's and Resh Lakish's words, a revolutionary idea. There are two concepts of the past. The first is what happened. That is something we cannot change. The second is the significance, the meaning, of what happened. That is something we can change. The great truth about the role of time in our lives is that we live life forwards, but we understand it only looking back. Consider an autobiography. Reading the story of a life, we see how a deprived childhood led to the woman of iron ambition, or how the early loss of a parent drove the man who spent his later years pursuing fame in search of the love he had lost.

It might have been otherwise. The deprived childhood or the loss of a parent might have led to a life dominated by a sense of defeat and inadequacy. What we become depends on our choices, and we are often free to choose this way or that. But what we become shapes the story of our life, and only in hindsight, looking back, do we see the past in context, as part of a tale whose end we now know. If life is like a narrative, then later events change the significance of earlier ones. That is what the story of Joseph and his brothers is telling us, according to Resh Lakish. Joseph was saying to his brothers: by your repentance, you have written a new chapter in the story of which you are a part. The harm you intended to do me ultimately led to good. So long as you stayed the people prepared to sell a brother into slavery, none of that good could be attributed to you, but now you have transformed yourself through teshuvah, you have transformed the story of your life as well. By your change of heart you have earned the right to be included in a narrative whose ultimate outcome was benign. We cannot change the past, but we can change the story people tell about the past. But that only happens when we ourselves change.

We can only change the world if we can change ourselves. That is why the book of Genesis ends with the story of Joseph and his brothers. It tells on an individual level the story that the book of Exodus tells on a national level. Israel is charged with the task of transforming the moral vision of mankind, but it can only do so if individual Jews, of whom the forerunners were Jacob's children, are capable of changing themselves. Teshuvah is the ultimate assertion of freedom. Time then becomes an arena of change in which the future redeems the past and a new concept is born – the idea we call hope.



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.
 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
Yitzy Spinner, Cantor
Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus
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Lisa Septimus, Yoetzet Halacha 516-415-1111

FAST OF 10TH OF TEVET, SISTERHOOD CHALLAH BAKE & DEADLINE FOR POLAND TRIP

Tuesday, December 18th 2018 - Fast of the 10th of Tevet

Fast Begins: 5:45 am

Shacharit: 6:20/7:45 am

Mincha: 4:00 pm

Fast Ends: 5:07 pm

The Tenth of Tevet marks the day on which the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began in the year 588 BCE, an event which eventually led to the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE and the first exile from Israel. The Tenth of Tevet is considered a "minor fast" and orthodox Jews refrain from eating or drinking from sunrise to sunset on the day of fasting. In Israel, the Tenth of Tevet has also come to be marked as a memorial day for the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The kaddish is recited on this day for people whose date or place of death during the Holocaust is unknown and that is how the date has gotten the unofficial Hebrew moniker, Yom Ha-kaddish ha-kleli, literally translated as The General Kaddish Day.


"And it was in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth (day) of the month, that Nebuchadnetzar, King of Babylon came, he and all his hosts, upon Yerushalayim, and he encamped upon it and built forts around it. And the city came under siege till the eleventh year of King Tzidkiyahu. On the ninth of the month famine was intense in the city, the people had no bread, and the city was breached" (Second Melachim 25). We see then, that the tenth of Tevet — on which the siege of Yerushalayim began, was the beginning of the whole chain of calamities which finally ended with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash.

The essential significance of the fast of the Tenth of Tevet, as well as that of the other fast days, is not primarily the grief and mourning which they evoke. Their aim is rather to awaken the hearts towards repentance; to recall to us, both the evil deeds of our fathers, and our own evil deeds, which caused anguish to befall both them and us and thereby to cause us to return towards the good. As it is said: "And they shall confess their transgressions and the transgressions of their fathers." (Vayikra 26. Rambam Hilchot Ta'anit Chapter 5). The aim of fasting, therefore, is to subjugate our evil inclination by restriction of pleasure; to open our hearts and stir us to repentance and good deeds through which the gates of Divine mercy might be opened for us.

Therefore, each person is obligated to examine his deeds and to repent during these days. As it is written of the people of Ninveh: "And the Lord saw their actions" (Yonah 3)...upon which the Rabbis say: "It is not said, He saw their sackcloth and fasting, but rather their actions" (Ta'anit 22). We see hence that the purpose of fasting is repentance. Therefore, the people, who fast but engage in pointless activities, grasp what is of secondary importance and miss what is essential. Nevertheless, repentance alone without fasting is also insufficient. There is a positive commandment of Rabbinic origin to fast on his day.

GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE'S
JOURNEY TO POLAND
TRIP DATES: May 14 - 19, 2019

LAST CALL
Registration
will close
December 20th



LEARN ABOUT THE UPCOMING GROUP TRIP
WITH CHAZZAN SPINNER AND HISTORIAN,
RABBI DAVID ABRAHAMOVITZ
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT CHAZZAN YITZY SPINNER
YSPINNER@GNS.ORG



GNS Sisterhood Challah Baking

While the dough is rising, Rebbitzen Katie Lichter will speak about the significance of the three women's Mitzvot: Challah, Taharat Hamishpacha and Hadlakat Neivot.

Thursday, December 20, 2018 at 6:30pm

Great Neck Synagogue Youth Center
36 Old Mill Road, Great Neck

\$20 per Person - Reservations required

Sponsorships Available:
Bronze—\$36, Silver—\$72, Gold—\$100

All ingredients included to make your own
5 lbs of homemade delicious challah.

Please click here for online registration or Contact Mark Lemenik at
646.220.8105 or markalemenik@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5779
IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF **DOVID BEN NISSAN v'LEAH**
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

Tuesdays 10:00-12:00; Thursdays 1:00-3:00. He can always be reached on his cell 516.637.3674 or at dpolakoff@gns.org.

SISTERHOOD CHALLAH BAKE

Join the Sisterhood Challah Bake on **Thursday evening, December 20th** at 6:30 pm. \$20/person; RSVP required to marlalemonik@gmail.com.

POLAND TRIP

Last call for the GNS Journey to Poland, May 14-19, 2019. registration will close **December 20th**. Please see Chazzan Spinner for more information.

SIYUM! ALL WELCOME!

The Wednesday night Gemara Shir invites the community to a Siyum celebrating the completion of Masechet Yoma. After shacharit at the Midrash Breakfast on **Sunday, January 27, 2019**. Sponsored by Andy Adler, Sam Yehaskel and Robert Spitalnick. Join us!

SAVE THE DATE

Yeshiva of Central Queens 78th Annual Dinner on **March 2nd, 2019**, at Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation, honoring our own Randi (Beeber) Luxenberg '73 with the Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award! Please join for what promises to be an amazing dinner and share this special evening with Randi and her co-honorees in support of YCQ. Visit ycqdinner.com for more information.

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.

MIAMI MARATHON—ANNA GLASMAN

Anna Glasman is hoping to raise \$5,000 for Chai Lifeline and has organized a team for the Miami Marathon in January in memory of her close friend Adeena Paknoush who passed away from cancer almost a year ago. The link to her personal page is: <https://www.teamlifeline.org/team-lifeline-miami/annasteam>

LEV HAOLAM ORGANIZATION

The Lev HaOlam Organization has taken up the call to fight the global boycott of Israel in general, and Judea and Samaria in particular. It does so by, among other things, sending packages with products from Judea and Samaria to Israel's supporters around the world every month. To find out more, please visit www.levhaolam.com.

MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to Mark Gersten on the Bar Mitzvah of his grandson, **Ephraim Gersten**, son of **Avigdor & Tamara Gersten**.

Mazal Tov to Laden & Elly Elyassoff on the engagement of their son **Jacob** to **Liora Shayestehfrouz**.

YESHIVA HAR TORAH 30TH ANNUAL DINNER

Yeshiva Har Torah's 30th Annual Scholarship Dinner will take place, Motzaei Shabbat, March 9, 2019, at Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation. Our Guests of Honor are Lisa & Eli Schilowitz. We will also pay tribute to the legacy of our board member and dear friend, Mr. Harvey Kaylie, a"h.

MAKE EVERY MILE MATTER - JOIN TEAM SHAARE ZEDEK

Need a spot in the NYC Half Marathon or the Jerusalem Marathon? We've got you covered!

To register for the NYC Half Marathon on March 17, 2019 contact Sharon Goldwyn at sgoldwyn@acsz.org or 212-764-8062. To join Team Shaare Zedek/Team Caleb at the Jerusalem Marathon, visit <https://teamcaleb.eventbrite.com>

Dassie Barth would like to thank Rabbis Polakoff and Lichter and the entire community for their outpouring of support following the passing of her dear father, Rabbi Israel Orenstein tz"l. We especially thank those who visited, sent messages and provided food.

Y A H R Z E I T

Saturday, 14 Tevet

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

Sunday, 15 Tevet

Margalit Soleimani for Moshe ben Nechemia & Malka
Leon Fuks for Emanuel Fuks
Mansour Farhadian for Nasser Kewmehr
Ken 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

Perry Schneider for Ann Colton
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
Susan Sedgh for Nosrat Heravi
Michelle Berman for Naomi Kahn
Leslie Kahn for Naomi Kahn
Trudy Jettelson for Lena Sirota

Thursday, 19 Tevet

Harvey Ishofsky for Morris Ishofsky
Judy Hoffman for Frances Karbowitz
Stephen Karbowitz for Frances Karbowitz
Bijan Niknam for Yitzchak Mordechai

Friday, 20 Tevet

Grace Oster for Freda Horowitz
Vivian Kron for Salim Mahlab
Fred Pomerantz for Mina Pomerantz
Nathaniel Weisel for Estelle Sechster