



WEEKDAY DAVENING INFORMATION

	Sunday (12/16)	Monday (12/17)	Tuesday (12/18)	Wednesday (12/19)	Thursday (12/20)	Friday (12/21)
Fast Begins			6:04 AM			
Earliest Talit	6:12 AM	6:13 AM	6:14 AM	6:14 AM	6:15 AM	6:15 AM
Shacharit	8:15 AM	6:15 AM	6:00 AM	6:25 AM	6:15 AM	6:25 AM
Gedolah	12:15 PM	12:16 PM	12:16 PM	12:17 PM	12:17 PM	12:18 PM
Mincha - Maariv	4:15 PM		4:00 PM			4:15 PM
Shkia	4:29 PM	4:30 PM	4:30 PM	4:30 PM	4:31 PM	
Fast Ends			5:10 PM			
Tzait	5:14 PM	5:15 PM	5:15 PM	5:15 PM	5:16 PM	
Maariv Only		8:20 PM		8:20 PM	8:20 PM	

שבת פרשת ויגש
SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYIGASH
7 TEVET/DECEMBER 15
 Haftorah is Ezekiel 37:15-28.

FRIDAY NIGHT
CANDLE LIGHTING - 4:11 PM
MINCHA - 4:15 PM
TZAIT - 5:14 PM

SATURDAY
HASHKAMA - 8:15 AM
SHACHARIT MAIN - 9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHEMA - 9:33 AM
MINCHA - 3:55 PM
SHKIA - 4:29 PM
SHABBAT ENDS - 5:14 PM

CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM
18-25 SADDLE RIVER ROAD
FAIR LAWN, NJ 07410-5909
201-797-0502
WWW.AHAVATACHIM.ORG

BULLETIN INFORMATION
TO REQUEST A BULLETIN
ANNOUNCEMENT (BY 7:00 PM
WEDNESDAY) OR DEDICATE A
BULLETIN FOR \$36 (\$54 W/PHOTO),
EMAIL SEPLOTNICK@GMAIL.COM



Kiddush is sponsored by Lisa & Aryeh Brenenson in honor of Reuvain's Bar Mitzvah. Mazel tov and thank you to all the family and friends joining us!



Seudah Shlishit is sponsored by the Wigod and Sokoloff families in memory of Ron and Chery's^{ר"ע} parents Leonore (Leah bat Zev^{ר"ע}) and Benjamin (Boruch Chaim ben Zevulun Aryeh^{ר"ע}) Sokoloff. May their neshamot have aliyot.

עשרה בטבת
FAST OF TENTH OF TEVET
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

“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).

The tenth of Tevet - on which the siege of Yerushalayim began, was the beginning of the whole chain of calamities that finally ended with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. [From ou.org/chagim/roshchodesh/tevet/fast.htm]

Rabbi Ely Shestack **President Aryeh Brenenson**

Kiddush Information



- ☆ To sponsor a Kiddush (\$1000/\$613/\$318, plus scotch) email Gail at gplotnick@aol.com.
- ☆ If you are around when the Rabbi says “על המחיה”, your assistance in clean up would be appreciated.

Adult Education



- ☆ GEMARA SHIUR - On Winter Hiatus.
- ☆ DAYTIME TORAH VOYAGES - Thursdays at 1:00 PM.
- ☆ FUNDAMENTALS OF JEWISH THOUGHT - After Kiddush.
- ☆ PEREK ON THE LAWN, Pirkei Avot Periodic Shiur.

Community Events

- ☆ Dec. 16 – **United Hatzalah of Israel Event**, featuring Eli Beer, Founder & President, sharing amazing and powerful stories of life saving rescue and chessed. Childcare to be provided. Sunday morning, 9:00 AM, at Shomrei Torah. To attend or support the organization, contact Jason@israelrescue.org.

Gita Cooperwasser ע"ה

Youth Program

- ☆ Youth groups start at 10:00 AM!
- ☆ Contact our Youth Director Aliza Kaplan to discuss our children's youth programming at youthdirectoraliza@ahavatachim.org.



Tot Shabbat

- ☆ 10:40 AM, with the Shabbat reading often featuring a surprise story teller.



Stay & Play

- ☆ Next get together will be in the spring, on April 6. See you then.



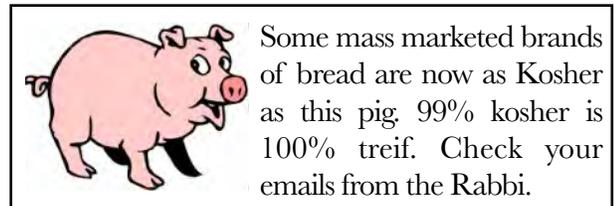
Teen Hashkama

- ☆ Dec. 22



Ahavat Achim Future Events

- ☆ Dec. 21 - Friday night Oneg, Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick's home, 6 Kershner Pl., 7:30 PM. Rabbi topic: “Polarizing Topics for the Winter Solstice’: Halachic Questions From The Polar Region”
- ☆ NCSY Friday Night Lights
- ☆ Dec. 22 - Siyum Mesechet Menachot at Suedah Shlishit
- ☆ Feb. 1 - Friday night Oneg/NCSY Friday Night Lights
- ☆ Mar. 1 - Friday night Oneg
- ☆ Mar. 9 - Yachad/Yavneh Shabbaton
- ☆ May 11 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Kira & Andrew Wigod in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month
- ☆ June 8 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Eli Zezion in memory of Shlomo ע"ה Ben Eliyahu (שלמה בן אליהו - זון נלב"ע ז סיון תשס"ד)
- ☆ June 22 - Suedah Shlishit sponsored by Eli Zezion in memory of Baroch Mafzir ע"ה Ben Samuel (ברוך מפציר בן שמואל) (- נלב"ע כ"ד סיון תשנ"ט)



Points To Ponder

- ☆ 1st/2nd - Shabbat Table Discussion - What did Yehuda say that convinced Yosef to reveal his identity to his brothers?
- ☆ 4th - What is the core message that Hashem gives to Yaakov on his way down to Egypt?
- ☆ 6th - What does Yosef do in anticipation of Yaakov's arrival?
- ☆ 7th - How do Yosef's policies impact the people of Egypt?

Answers to Points To Ponder

- ☆ 1st/2nd - The first aliyah mostly summarizes the story from last week's parsha, in the second aliyah Yehuda discloses how he took responsibility for Binyamin and would like to stay in his stead, and Yehuda explains how it will impact Yaakov.
- ☆ 4th - Hashem says that He will be with Yaakov's family during their sojourning in Egypt.
- ☆ 6th - He saddles his donkey and goes to greet him.
- ☆ 7th - It relocates them to cities and it gives the government ownership over all the land (except for that of the priests).



Shirley Vann has dedicated this week's Covenant & Conversation (used with permission of the Office of Rabbi Sacks) in memory of her beloved mother Necha bat Yitzchok ע"ה.





Ahavat Achim Presents: The Lizard Guys

Join us for a fun show with
lizards, snakes, turtles, frogs & bugs!



Sunday, February 10, 2019 2-4
18-25 Saddle River Rd
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410



Raffle



Photo Booth



Coloring



Bring along some diapers to
benefit families in need through
Jewish Family & Children's Services
of Northern NJ



Can't make it, but still want to donate?
e-mail diaperdrive@ahavatachim.org
to arrange another drop off time

RSVP to diaperdrive@ahavatachim.org
for the chance to win a raffle prize!

בס"ד

CONGREGATION AHAVAT ACHIM'S

ONEG SHABBAT LECTURE SERIES

Will Continue on Friday, December 21st

At the home of

Betsy & Marty Sonnenblick

6 Kershner Place

At 7:30 PM

Please join us for an enjoyable evening of learning with Rabbi Ely Shestack, friends, and refreshments.

The Rabbi's Topic Will Be:

"Polarizing Topics for the Winter Solstice":
Halachic Questions from the Polar Region



The next Oneg of will be February 1st .

If you are able to host that Oneg,

Please call Lori at 791-1205 or email garfmom@gmail.com

SHABBOS
AFTERNOON

PARENTS AND ME

PLAY & STAY

Congregation Ahavat Achim



Kids 10 and
Under are
Welcome!

Returning on Shabbos
April 6, 2019



info: programmingaa@gmail.com

קהילת
אהבת אחים
Congregation
Ahavat Achim



COVENANT & CONVERSATION

THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA
FROM RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

בס"ד



I am deeply touched that Covenant & Conversation has been generously sponsored by THE MAURICE WOHL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl ז"ל. Maurice was a visionary philanthropist on a vast scale, driven throughout his life by a sense of Jewish responsibility. Vivienne was a woman of the deepest humanity and compassion, who had a kind word for everyone. Together, they were a unique partnership of dedication and grace, for whom living was giving. Through their Charitable Foundation, they continue to bring blessings to Jewish communities around the world. — RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

ויגש תשע"ט
Vayigash 5779

COVENANT & CONVERSATION: FAMILY EDITION

Covenant & Conversation: Family Edition is a new and exciting accompaniment to Rabbi Sacks' weekly *Covenant & Conversation* essay, aimed at connecting older children and teenagers with his ideas and thoughts on the *parsha*. To download the accompanying Family Edition to this *Covenant & Conversation* essay, please visit www.RabbiSacks.org/CCFamilyEdition or make sure you are subscribed to Rabbi Sacks' free mailing list via www.RabbiSacks.org/Subscribe.

Does My Father Love Me

It is one of the great questions we naturally ask each time we read the story of Joseph. Why did he not, at some time during their twenty-two year separation, send word to his father that he was alive? For part of that time – when he was a slave in Potiphar's house, and when he was in prison – it would have been impossible. But certainly he could have done so when he became the second most powerful person in Egypt. At the very least he could have done so when the brothers came before him on their first journey to buy food.

Joseph knew how much his father loved him. He must have known how much their separation grieved him. He did not know, could not know, what Jacob thought had happened to him, but this surely he knew: that it was his duty to communicate with him when the opportunity arose, to tell his father that he was alive and well. Why then did he not? The following explanation¹, is a tantalising possibility.

The story of Joseph's descent into slavery and exile began when his father sent him, alone, to see how the brothers were faring:

His brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem... So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. (Gen. 37:12–14)

What does the narrative tell us immediately prior to this episode? It tells us about the second of Joseph's dreams. In the first, he had dreamt that he and his brothers were in the field binding sheaves. His stood upright while the sheaves of his brothers bowed down to him. Naturally, when he told them about the dream, they were angry. "Do you intend to reign over us? Would you rule over us?" There is no mention of Jacob in relation to the first dream.

The second dream was different:

Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. (Gen. 37:9–11).

¹ I am indebted for this entire line of thought to Mr. Joshua Rowe of Manchester.

Immediately afterwards, we read of Jacob sending Joseph, alone, to his brothers. It was there, at that meeting far from home, that they plotted to kill him, lowered him into a pit, and eventually sold him as a slave.

Joseph had many years to reflect on that episode. That his brothers were hostile to him, he knew. But surely Jacob knew this as well. In which case, why did he send Joseph to them? Did Jacob not contemplate the possibility that they might do him harm? Did he not know the dangers of sibling rivalry? Did he not at least contemplate the possibility that by sending Joseph to them he was risking Joseph's life?

No one knew this better from personal experience. Recall that Jacob himself had been forced to leave home because his brother Esau threatened to kill him, once he discovered that Jacob had taken his blessing. Recall too that when Jacob was about to meet Esau again, after an interval of twenty-two years, he was "in great fear and distress," believing that his brother would try to kill him. That fear provoked one of the great crises of Jacob's life. So Jacob knew, better than anyone else in Genesis, that hate can lead to killing, that sibling rivalry carries with it the risk of fratricide.

Yet Jacob sent Joseph to his other sons knowing that they were jealous of him and hated him. Joseph presumably knew these facts. What else could he conclude, as he reflected on the events that led up to his sale as a slave, that Jacob had deliberately placed him in this danger? Why? Because of the immediately prior event, when Joseph had told his father that "the sun and moon" – his father and mother – would bow down to him.

This angered Jacob, and Joseph knew it. His father had "rebuked" him. It was outrageous to suggest that his parents would prostrate themselves before him. It was wrong to imagine it, all the more so to say it. Besides which, who was the "moon"? Joseph's mother, Rachel, the great love of Jacob's life, was dead. Presumably, then, he was referring to Leah. But his very mention of "the sun and moon and eleven stars" must have brought back to his father the pain of Rachel's death. Joseph knew he had provoked his father's wrath. What else could he conclude but that Jacob had deliberately put his life at risk?

Joseph did not communicate with his father because he believed his father no longer wanted to see him or hear from him. His father had terminated the relationship. That was a reasonable inference from the facts as Joseph knew them. He could not have known that Jacob still loved him, that his brothers had deceived their father by showing him Joseph's bloodstained cloak, and that his father mourned for him, "refusing to be comforted." We know these facts because the Torah tells us. But Joseph, far away, in another land, serving as a slave, could not have known. This places the story in a completely new and tragic light.

Is there any supporting evidence for this interpretation? There is. Joseph must have known that his father was capable of being angered by his sons. He had seen it twice before.

"This places the story in a completely new and tragic light."

The first time was when Shimon and Levi killed the inhabitants of Shechem after their prince had raped and abducted their sister Dina. Jacob bitterly reprimanded them, saying:

"You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed"(Gen. 34:30).

The second happened after Rachel died. "While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah – and Israel heard of it" (Gen. 35:22). Actually according to the sages, Reuben merely moved his father's bed², but Jacob believed that he had slept with his handmaid, an act of usurpation.

² Rashi to Bereishit 35: 22; Shabbat 55b

As a result of these two episodes, Jacob virtually broke off contact with his three eldest sons. He was still angry with them at the end of his life, cursing them instead of blessing them. (See Genesis 49:4–7) So Joseph knew that Jacob was capable of anger at his children, and of terminating his relationship with them (that is why, in the absence of Joseph, Judah became the key figure. He was Jacob’s fourth son, and Jacob no longer trusted the three eldest).

There is evidence of another kind as well. When Joseph was appointed second-in-command in Egypt, given the name Tzafenat Pa’neah, and had married an Egyptian wife, Asenat, he had his first child. We then read:

Joseph named his firstborn Menasheh, saying, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s house.” (Gen. 41:51)

Uppermost in Joseph’s mind was the desire to forget the past, not just his brothers’ conduct towards him but “all my father’s house.” Why so, if not that he associated “all my trouble” not just with his siblings but also with his father Jacob? Joseph believed that his father had deliberately put him at his brothers’ mercy because, angered by the second dream, he no longer wanted contact with the son he had once loved. That is why he never sent a message to Jacob that he was still alive.

If this is so, it sheds new light on the great opening scene of Vayigash. What was it in Judah’s speech that made Joseph break down in tears and finally reveal his identity to his brothers? One answer is that Judah, by asking that he be held as a slave so that Benjamin could go free, showed that he had done *teshuvah*; that he was a penitent; that he was no longer the same person who had once sold Joseph into slavery. That, as I have argued previously, is a central theme of the entire narrative. It is a story about repentance and forgiveness.

“What was it that made Joseph break down in tears and finally reveal his identity to his brothers?”

But we can now offer a second interpretation. Judah says words that, for the first time, allow Joseph to understand what had actually occurred twenty-two years previously. Judah is recounting what happened after the brothers returned from their first journey to buy food in Egypt:

Then our father said, “Go back and buy a little more food.” But we said, “We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother is with us will we go. We cannot see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.”

Your servant my father said to us, “You know that my wife bore me two sons. One of them went away from me, and I said, ‘He has surely been torn to pieces.’ And I have not seen him since. If you take this one from me too and harm comes to him, you will bring my grey head down to the grave in misery.” (Gen. 44:27–31)

At that moment Joseph realised that his fear that his father had rejected him was unwarranted. On the contrary, he had been bereft when Joseph did not return. He believed that he had been “torn to pieces,” killed by a wild animal. His father still loved him, still grieved for him. Against this background we can better understand Joseph’s reaction to this disclosure:

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh’s household heard about it. Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” (Gen. 45:1–3)

Joseph’s first thought is not about Judah or Benjamin, but about Jacob. A doubt he had harboured for twenty-two years had turned out to be unfounded. Hence his first question: “Is my father still alive?”

Is this the only possible interpretation of the story? Clearly not. But it is a possibility. In which case, we can now set the Joseph narrative in two other thematic contexts which play a large part in Genesis as a whole.

The first is tragic misunderstanding. We think here of at least two other episodes. The first has to do with Isaac and Rebecca. Isaac, we recall, loved Esau; Rebecca loved Jacob. At least one possible explanation, offered by Abarbanel³, is that Rebecca had been told “by God,” before the twins were born, that “the elder will serve the younger.” Hence her attachment to Jacob, the younger, and her determination that he, not Esau, should have Isaac’s blessing.

The other concerns Jacob and Rachel. Rachel had stolen her father’s *terafim*, “icons” or “household gods,” when they left Laban to return to the land of Canaan. She did not tell Jacob that she had done so. The text says explicitly, “Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods” (Gen. 31:32). When Laban pursued and caught up with them, he accused Jacob’s party of having stolen them. Jacob indignantly denies this and says “If you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live”. Several chapters later, we read that Rachel died prematurely, on the way. The possibility hinted at by the text, articulated by a Midrash and by Rashi⁴, is that, unwittingly, Jacob had condemned her to death. In both cases, misunderstanding flowed from a failure of communication. Had Rebecca told Isaac about the oracle, and had Rachel told Jacob about the *terafim*, tragedy might have been averted. Judaism is a religion of holy words, and one of the themes of Genesis as a whole is the power of speech to create, mislead, harm or heal. From Cain and Abel to Joseph and his brothers (“They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him”), we are shown how, when words fail, violence begins.

The other theme, even more poignant, has to do with fathers and sons. How did Isaac feel towards Abraham, knowing that he had lifted a knife to sacrifice him? How did Jacob feel towards Isaac, knowing that he loved Esau more than him? How did Leah’s sons feel about Jacob, knowing that he loved Rachel and her children more? Does my father really love me? – that is a question we feel must have arisen in each of these cases. Now we see that there is a strong case for supposing that Joseph, too, must have asked himself the same question.

“Though my father and mother may forsake me, the Lord will receive me,” says Psalm 27. That is a line that resonates throughout Genesis. No one did more than Sigmund Freud to place this at the heart of human psychology. For Freud, the Oedipus complex – the tension between fathers and sons – is the single most powerful determinant of the psychology of the individual, and of religion as a whole.

Freud, however, took as his key text a Greek myth, not the narratives of Genesis. Had he turned to Torah instead, he would have seen that this fraught relationship can have a non-tragic resolution. Abraham did love Isaac. Isaac did bless Jacob a second time, this time knowing he was Jacob. Jacob did love Joseph. And transcending all these human loves is divine love, rescuing us from feelings of rejection, and redeeming the human condition from tragedy.

Shabbat shalom

Jonathan Sacks

“Transcending all these human loves is divine love, rescuing us from feelings of rejection, and redeeming the human condition from tragedy.”



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⁴ Rashi to Bereishit 31:32; Bereishit Rabbah and Zohar ad loc.