



CONGREGATION TIFERETH BETH DAVID JERUSALEM

# Shabbat Bulletin

יד טבת התשפ"ג  
שבת פרשת ויחי

Shabbat Parshat Va'yechi  
January 6 - 7, 2023 / 5783

Please print this bulletin before Shabbat.

Rabbi  
Zolly Claman

Chazan Sheini  
Rev. Amiel Bender

President  
Josh Orzech

Executive Director  
Stephanie Nagus

6519 Baily Road, Côte Saint-Luc, Québec H4V 1A1 Canada • 514-489-3841 • www.TBDJ.org • stephanie@tbdj.org

## SHABBAT SHALOM • שבת שלום

### Shabbat Parshat Va'yechi

Haftara: Melachim Alef 2:1 - 2:12

#### Friday, January 6

- 3:55pm Minha et Kabbalat Chabat -  
Minyane Sépharade -  
Lower Level Chapel
- 4:08pm Candle Lighting
- 4:10pm Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat  
and Maariv - Main Sanctuary
- 4:27pm Sh'hiah

#### Shabbat, January 7 / 14 Tevet

- 8:00am Shacharit - Hashkama Minyan
- 8:30am Shacharit - Minyane Sépharade
- 8:40am Parsha Shiur  
with Rabbi Claman
- 9:00am Shacharit - Main Sanctuary
- 9:48am Sof Zman Kriyat Sh'ma
- 10:00am Kef Club Shabbat Programs  
for Kids - Lower Level
- 4:00pm Minha, Seoudah Shleesheet  
et Arvit - Minyane Sépharade
- 4:00pm Mincha, Seoudah Shleesheet  
and Maariv - Main Sanctuary
- 4:28pm Sh'hiah
- 5:17pm Havdala and Melaveh Malka
- 5:35pm Daf Yomi

### COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Rabbi Yechezkel & Rifki Freundlich** and their family on the wedding of their daughter Racheli to Rafi Kreitman on Thursday, January 5 in New York. Sharing in their simcha are Rafi's parents Riki & Robert Kreitman, Racheli's grandparents Zina & Ushi Freundlich and Chaya & Lester Pollak and many delighted siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins in both families.

Mazal Tov to **Samuel Gewurz** on being appointed to the Order of Canada "for his groundbreaking contributions to Montreal's urban development, and for his transformational philanthropy and community engagement."

Condolences to **Shelley Smith** and her family on the loss of her beloved mother TBDJ Member **Frances Green Smith z"l** who passed away on Wednesday, January 4. Funeral is scheduled for 12:00pm on Friday, January 6 at Paperman's. Shiva at Shelley's home until Monday, January 9 - masks required; 7:00pm-9:00pm on Saturday and Sunday; 2:00pm-4:00pm on Sunday and Monday; Maariv services on Sunday at 7:30pm.

Refu'a Shleima to **Michael Goodwin** - מאיר זלמן בן רחל

### THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

Kiddush is sponsored by **Sharon & Robert Hecht** and their family in memory of Robert's beloved father Ben Hecht z"l (Dov Ber ben Avraham - 14 Tevet) and in honour of the upcoming birthdays of Jacob, Victoria and Adina.

Rabbi Claman's Shabbat Sermon is sponsored by **Rosaleen & David Hutman** in memory of David's beloved father Harry Hutman z"l (Chaim Alter ben Yaacov Yosef v'Chaya Freida - 16 Tevet).

This Shabbat Bulletin is sponsored by **Susan Orenstein & Bennett Little** in memory of Susan's beloved mother Rae Orenstein z"l (Hodi Rachel bat Yaacov Leib - 15 Tevet).



Weekly camaraderie,  
lunch, and Parsha!

## Lunch & Learn

with Rabbi Claman

WEDNESDAYS

Lunch at 11:30am

Class from 12:00-12:30pm

Resumes next week on January 11!!!

\$10 per person for lunch

### NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Mincha/Maariv: 4:15pm

Shacharit

Sunday: 8:00am / Monday and Thursday: 6:50am

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 7:00am

Friday, January 13

Mincha - Minyane Sépharade: 16h00 / Mincha - Main Sanctuary: 4:20pm

Candle Lighting is at 4:17pm



## Yaakov Avinu's Life in Retrospect

וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂר שָׁנָה

Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.

Breisheet 47:28

As a result of the terrible famine plaguing the region, Yaakov Avinu and his family have descended into Egypt. The Torah tells us he lived there for seventeen years, from the age of one hundred and thirty until the age of his passing, one hundred and forty-seven. These years are good years for Yaakov, and in their goodness, they are a mirror of his first seventeen years with his beloved son Yosef, before Yosef was taken away from the household by his brothers at the age of seventeen.

It is a feel-good ending to the life of a patriarch of our people about whom much is written and whom we learned to identify with. The story of Yaakov spans seven Torah portions and is rich in content. Though our nation's years in Egypt are temporary, beginning with the descent of Yaakov and his family, commentary teaches that the word *וַיְחִי* - *lived*, which suggests permanence, is used by the Torah instead of the word *וַיָּגֵר* - *sojourned*, to teach us of the quality of Yaakov's life in Egypt.

Rabbi Dovid Kviat z"l (1920-2009) wrote that Yaakov's seventeen years in Egypt were the most pleasant and the least anxious ones of his life. He cited the *Baal Ha-Turim* who explained that Yaakov's previous twenty-two years weren't considered "life" because he was in constant mourning for his son whom he thought was dead. In Egypt, however, Yaakov was no longer in mourning and therefore he was finally able to enjoy the harmony and tranquility that had previously eluded him.

For most of his adult life, Yaakov Avinu faced what seemed like one crisis after another. At his mother Rivkah's urging, Yaakov flees from home for fear of being killed by his brother after stealing his blessings. Yaakov spends twenty years with his devious father-in-law Lavan - from the ages of 77-97. Yaakov then returns to the land of Canaan and faces Esav on the way. Fearing a conflict, Yaakov prepares for a serious confrontation with the enemy that he feared several decades before. On the way to meet his brother Esav, 97-year old Yaakov endures an all-night struggle with the guardian angel of Esav and dislocates his hip-socket. He also loses his beloved wife Rachel after some thirteen years of marriage. And one year later, Yaakov deals with the abduction of his daughter Dinah.

Into his hundreds, Yaakov deals with the dissension between Yosef and his brothers, and then with episode of the mysterious disappearance of Yosef. Yaakov's son Shimon is kept by Yosef as a prisoner in Egypt as "payoff" to the fact that when the brothers threw him into a pit, Shimon was the main instigator of the plot to harm him.

Putting Yaakov's age factor into a contemporary perspective, his tenacity and dedication is nothing short of astounding. Yaakov left home as a bachelor at the age of sixty-three, a short two years before people today start contemplating retirement. Though it is everyone's wish to live to be as old as this patriarch, we can barely imagine handling the sequence of severe life stressors that he faced in the last decades of his life.

When Yaakov meets Pharaoh, upon his descent into Egypt, he describes his challenging life to the Egyptian ruler:

*The days of the years of my sojournings are one-hundred and thirty years, few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my fathers in their sojournings.*

Breisheet 47:9

Yaakov's negative description of his life seems to correspond with the Torah verse which records his passing. The wording in the verse does not offer any qualitative description about the life that he lived. It differs from the Torah verses which record the deaths of his forefathers, verses which describe fulfilled lives:

*And Avraham expired and died at a **good age, mature and content**, and he was gathered to his people.*

Breisheet 25:8

*And Yitzchak expired and died, and he was gathered unto his people, **old and fulfilled of days**.*

Breisheet 35:29

*When Yaakov finished instructing his sons, he drew his feet unto the bed, he expired and gathered unto his people...*

Breisheet 49:33

On his deathbed, Yaakov prodigiously and prophetically embarks on the positive mission of preparing and laying the groundwork and foundation for the future of our nation. His will - actually Hashem's will - involves Yaakov distributing blessings to his sons and to his grandsons Ephraim and Menashe. He then passes on, and the Torah records his passing without mention of any positive quality of his life.

Why is this? Maybe because it was difficult for Yaakov to see the positive in his challenging life and he focused on the negative rather than the positive. As described above, we can see this in the way Yaakov responded to Pharaoh's inquiry into his well-being - the traditional "how are you?" one asks when being introduced to someone new. Yaakov responded that his years were few and bad and that he had not reached the age of his forefathers. Commentary teaches that Yaakov looked very old and therefore Pharaoh asked him how old he was. Yaakov responded *I am not really that old, but I have had a rough life and that is why I look so old*.

Commentary also teaches that Yaakov was punished for his response. The midrash from דעת וקנים cites Hashem's words to Yaakov: *"After all the things I did for you, you are complaining about your life. I saved you from Esav and Lavan. I brought you back your daughter Dina and your son Yosef. And you are complaining that you had a rough life?"* As a result, Yaakov's life was cut short by thirty-three years, corresponding to the total number of words which the Torah used to record Pharaoh's question and Yaakov's negative response. As a result, Yaakov lived until the age of 147 instead of 180. It is possible that Yaakov's negative answer to Pharaoh is connected to the nature of the wording in the verse about his passing where there are no positive connotations.

The Torah could have easily left out the Pharaoh-Yaakov dialogue. We know however, that the Torah does not waste words. The above midrash teaches us the importance of positivity and the danger of negativity. Yaakov's response to Pharaoh's question is a *half-empty cup* answer rather than a *half-full cup* answer. While it is obviously difficult for us to question the nature of Yaakov's response following many decades filled with serious and frightening life challenges, and while we can certainly appreciate and understand his heartache, we learn that Hashem wants us to value the good in our lives and to understand that focusing on the positive is a divine blessing which can enhance and strengthen the life that Hashem has given each of us - even in the most challenging of circumstances.

Shabbat Shalom,

*Rev. Amiel*