



CONGREGATION TIFERETH BETH DAVID JERUSALEM

Shabbat Bulletin

שבת פרשת ויגש
יא טבת ה'תשפ"א

Shabbat Parshat Va'yigash
December 25-26, 2020 / 5781

Please print this bulletin before Shabbat.

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Chazzan Sheini
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SHABBAT SHALOM • שבת שלום

Ta'anit Asara B'Tevet is on Friday, December 25. Fast begins at 6:09am and ends at 4:51pm.

Shabbat Parshat Va'yigash

Haftara: Yechezkel 37:15 - 37:28

Minyanim on Shabbat are restricted to those who have pre-registered. When davening at home, it is preferable to do so at the same time as the rest of the community.

Friday, December 25

- 3:00pm Daf Yomi on Zoom
- 3:30pm Minha et Kabbalat Shabbat -
Minyane Sépharade - Lower Hall
- 3:40pm Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat -
Indoor only - Dvar Torah by
Stan Nattel
- 3:58pm Candle Lighting
- 4:17pm Sh'kiah
- 4:51pm Fast ends. Kiddush should be
recited after the fast before eating.

Shabbat, December 26 / 11 Tevet 5781

- 8:30am Shacharit - Sanctuary
Dvar Torah by
Rabbi Baruch Solnica
- 8:45am Shacharit - Upper Social Hall
Dvar Torah by
Rabbi Baruch Solnica
- 8:45am Shaharit - Minyane Sépharade -
Lower Social Hall
- 9:45am Sof Zman K'riyat Shma
- 10:20am Shacharit - Sanctuary
Dvar Torah by Ami Drazin
- 10:30am Shacharit - Upper Social Hall
Dvar Torah by Ami Drazin
- 12:15pm Early Mincha - Indoor
- 3:45pm Minha et Arvit - Minyane
Sépharade - Lower Social Hall
- 3:50pm Mincha, Shiur and Maariv -
Indoor - Shiurim by Rabbi Eliyahu
Gateno and KTM Bachurim
- 4:18pm Sh'kiah
- 5:08pm Havdala
- 6:30pm Musical Havdala and Kumzitz
on Facebook with Rev. Bender
- 6:30pm Daf Yomi on Zoom

COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Reverend Amiel & Cheryl Bender** and their families on the birth of a grandson on Thursday, December 17 in Hollywood, Florida. Proud parents are Ayelet & Ari Gottesman. Sharing in their simcha are big brother Ishay, grandparents Michael Gottesman and Leah Gottesman, great grandfather Rabbi Karpol Bender and many delighted aunts, uncles and cousins. Lovingly remembered at this time are Ayelet's grandparents Rachel & Isaac Gnatt z"l and Rena Bender z"l.

Mazal Tov to **Ariella & Tovi Berk** and their families on the birth of a daughter on Wednesday, December 23. Sharing in their simcha are big sister Lily, grandparents Ann & Naftali Winter, Rochelle Berk and Larry Berk, great grandmothers Esther Winter, Judy Weiss and Elise Glassenberg and many delighted aunts, uncles and cousins.

SPONSORSHIPS AND THANK YOUS

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 - Tevet 15).

DAILY SCHEDULE: DECEMBER 27 - JANUARY 1

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Shacharit: 8:00 & 9am | Shacharit 6:50 & 8:00am | Shacharit 7:00 & 8:00am |
| Mincha 4:00pm | Mincha 4:00pm | Mincha 4:00pm |
| Shkiah 4:18pm | Shkiah 4:19pm | Shkiah 4:20pm |
| WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
| Shacharit 7:00 & 8:00am | Shacharit 6:50 & 8:00am | Shacharit 8:00 & 9:00am |
| Mincha 4:00pm | Mincha 4:00pm | Mincha-Sefardic 3:55pm |
| Shkiah 4:21pm | Shkiah 4:22pm | Mincha 4:05pm |
| | | Candle Lighting 4:03pm |
| | | Sh'kiah 4:22pm |

UPCOMING PROGRAMS



Tuesday, December 29 at 1:00pm

Virtual Diaspora Series - Visit to Buenos Aires, Argentina



Monday, January 11 at 1:00pm

Book and Film Club Review of "1945" (2017 - Hungarian with English Subtitles) - film available to rent or buy on iTunes, YouTube or Amazon Prime

For more details, go to programming.tbdj.org

Positivity in the Face of.....

In this week's Torah portion of Vayigash we read of the journey to Egypt of our patriarch Yaakov and his family. Yaakov's son Yosef is now the viceroy of Egypt, and they have not seen each other in 22 years. Following a touching reunion after Yaakov's arrival, Yosef brings him to meet Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh opens a short dialogue and poses a question to Yaakov: כמה ימי שני חי-יך - How many are the days of your life? Daas Zekayneem teaches that Pharaoh saw before him a very old man whose hair and beard had whitened with age and that this was the reason for his question. Another commentary offers an opinion that this question was prompted by Pharaoh observing a man who lived longer than the general life span of the subjects of his country. The notes of the Torah cantillation, טעמי המקרא, help us understand the meaning behind the words of the Torah and may suggest that "how old are you?" was not the only question implied in these words. The word כמה in Hebrew means "how many." However, the same word, כמה, pronounced כ-מה also means: Like what? The Torah cantillation note which is on the letter "מ" seemingly supports the following question: What were the days of your life like? What was the quality of your life?

Was Pharaoh actually asking Yaakov both questions: How old are you and what were the days of your life like? It seems that Yaakov offered answers to both. I have seen in the commentaries that Pharaoh was in awe of Yaakov's appearance. While there is an opinion that Pharaoh saw an old man before him, it is also possible that Pharaoh recognized Yaakov as the father of Yosef the Hebrew - his brilliant "second-in-command" who interpreted his dreams and planned the economic strategy for his country at a time when a famine could have endangered his nation. Upon meeting Yaakov, Pharaoh met a man who brought a large extended family with him to Egypt. A true patriarch and leader. Without a doubt, Pharaoh must have been in awe of that as well. Yaakov was an elder statesman who commanded respect without seeking it. Yaakov's stature as the patriarch of a great family radiated with obvious "nachas" and contentment, something that probably prompted Pharaoh to ask him what the days of his life were like in a qualitative sense, what did Yaakov do right to bring him to this point?

The first answer is factual: Yaakov told Pharaoh that he was 130 years old. The second answer regarding the question of the quality of Yaakov's life is a little more difficult to understand and must have taken the king by surprise: "The days of the years of my life have been few and miserable, and they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my forefathers in the days of their sojournings". This answer is also intriguing as this is the first meeting between two men who were in fact two total strangers. Yaakov's words related a candid recollection of the challenging aspects of his life and really should have been part of a conversation between two people who were well acquainted with each other - not between two people who were meeting for the first time.

According to the Daas Zekayneem, this negative answer was indeed not favourable in the eyes of the Almighty and Yaakov was punished severely for his words. As mentioned above, Yaakov told Pharaoh that his days did not reach the days of his forefathers in their lifetimes. Our patriarchs Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov were each destined to have lifetime spans of 180 years. Avraham lived until the age of 175 passing away 5 years before his time, as his grandson Esav was going off the path of Yiddishkeit and Hashem wanted to spare him the agony that his grandson would cause him. Yitzchak lived the full 180 years. As we will read in next week's Torah portion of Vayechi, Yaakov lived until the age of 147. The Daas Zekayneem commentary on the verse continues with Hashem's response to Yaakov when he used the words "few and miserable" to describe his life. Hashem said: "I helped you escape from Esav and from Lavan and I returned Dina and Yosef to you...and you are upset about the days of your life that are few and miserable..." Hashem's words of rebuke continued to state that Yaakov's life span in years will not reach his father Yitzchak's 180 years, rather that the number of words (from Pharaoh's first word until Yaakov's last) in the short dialogue between Pharaoh and Yaakov will be counted a word for a year to be subtracted from Yaakov's destined life of 180. As there were 33 words in the dialogue, Yaakov lived until 147.

What was it in Yaakov's words that prompted such a severe punishment? It is clear to all that Yaakov had a difficult and challenging life with many obstacles along the way. How would we deal with so many challenges in our lives? Rabbi Gur Alon of the Hesder Yeshiva Har Bracha cites a midrash from Parashat Vayechi explaining that Yaakov's words to Pharaoh were also directed towards heaven. Just as a person is to bless Hashem on good things that happen, he should do so for the not so good things. Yaakov did not do this. Yaakov failed to recognize that good things may also come as a result of bad things. In Parashat Vayechi next week we will read the words of reconciliation of Joseph directed to his brothers, explaining the divine aspect of their conflict, shortly before his passing: "Indeed, you intended evil against me, [but] G-d designed it for good, in order to bring about what is at present to keep a great populace alive". We must accept and bless the challenging things in our lives. While it is very easy to appreciate the good in our lives, when difficult and problematic things occur we tend to forget that "כל מאן דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד" - all that Hashem does in the world is for good. Rabbi Eliezer Melamed adds that when we bless the more challenging things in our lives it gives us the strength to cope with the challenges. Even if we can't understand what good can come from a bad thing, the understanding that everything that Hashem does in the world is for good helps us pick ourselves up to deal with the challenge. While this is obviously not easy, strong faith in Hashem gives us the necessary coping power in difficult times.

Over the past nine months or so that I have been writing these Shabbos bulletin messages, I have often referred to the Covid-19 challenge that we have all been facing. My reason for doing so is to have a historical account of sorts for future reference for our children and future generations, maybe even future TBDeers who take interest in finding out different aspects of how we coped with it, necessary changes in Torah reading, davening etc. Reading Rabbi Akiva Eiger's accounts dealing with the cholera pandemic of 1831 was a fascinating eye opener for me. Much of the guidance that we have received from Rabbi Freundlich and our community leaders during this pandemic will be studied with keen interest years from now. We often hear about a tsunami in Asia, an earthquake in Chile, forest fires out west. In Montreal, we experienced the Ice Storm of 1998. Everything that happens always happens "somewhere else" for most of the world's population. The challenging threat of Covid-19 is different – it is upon all of us – synchronous for all of humanity, reaching beyond race, colour and religion. The people of São Paulo in Brazil and Melbourne in Australia are facing the same threat that we in Montreal have faced over the past nine months.

With regard to the good things and not so good things in our lives, can we possibly bless this serious medical challenge as we would bless a good thing? I do not have the answer to that question. I do know that Hashem gave the scientific tools for coping with this challenge to the medical leaders of our world - knowledge and wisdom for survival which has been taught to us by these experts in the field. We know that we have to wash our hands repetitively throughout the day, to wear a mask at all times when in public places and outside our family bubbles, to keep sufficient physical distancing and more. We have been taught about the danger involved with taking these directives lightly and we have witnessed a shocking number of deaths worldwide. There is a divine directive in the words found in Parashat Va-Etchanan in the book of Devarim: "Veneeshmartem meod l'nafshoteichem... - And you shall watch yourselves very well..." This directive, though possibly taken out of context, is an assurance of sorts from Hashem that we can take care of ourselves, we can safeguard ourselves. The directive to watch over ourselves is written in the Torah in plural. For the duration of this pandemic we know that being safe isn't only about ourselves, it is about being cautious in the way we conduct ourselves in the face of the pandemic and taking special care not to endanger those around us. In the face of this terrible virus, our emunah - our faith - will sustain us as the world races to inoculate millions of people and as the world's scientists search for permanent cures and treatments for those who are already infected.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rev. Amiel