



The Chabad Weekly

Vol. 23 Issue 12

Parshas Vayechi

Friday, Teves 13, 5780 / Jan. 10, 2020



Candlelighting (Los Angeles)

4:43 PM

Friday Mincha:

5:00 PM

LATEST SHEMA: 9:30 AM

Shabbat Schedule

- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush, Cholent & Farbrengen
- Class 4:05 PM
- Mincha 4:35 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 5:43 PM

Announcements:

Kiddush is sponsored by the Sulami family in memory of Gertrude Sulami's yartzzeit.

Yartzheits: Gertrude Sulami - Teves 15, Moshe Stienfeld - Teves 15, Aliza Harkham - Teves 16, Yadja Milstein - Teves 17.

Happy Birthday to Penina Levin, Tammy Urman, Avi Ganjian, Avishai Or Hezghian, Shalom and Bina Noormand.

GOOD SHABBOS

Born in Egypt

By Yossy Goldman

There is a tradition when we conclude a book of Torah or Talmud that we hold a Siyum, a celebration marking the successful conclusion of an entire section of Torah. At such occasions it is customary for the student/celebrant to deliver a talk where he or she connects the beginning of the book with the end, thus revealing a thematic thread that runs through the whole work.

This week's Parshah, Vayechi, concludes the entire Book of Genesis. What connection can we find between the beginning and end of the first book of the Torah? The first part of the book tells the story of Creation while the end deals with the passing of Jacob and the Children of Israel down in Egypt.

What is Creation? Not just a Big Bang or even Intelligent Design, but an expression of a much higher and deeper purpose. The mystics teach that G-d was not content to have angels in heaven singing His praises. He wanted earthly beings, men and women of flesh and blood with earthly passions and temperaments living physical lives, who will nevertheless be capable to rise above the moment to experience the spiritual purpose of it all. He desired human beings who would be exposed to all the distractions associated with the physical condition—from beach holidays to December sales—and still remain focused on the spiritual.

When we endow our material lives with spiritual value, with a sense of higher purpose, meaning, destiny and eternity, then we fulfill the Creator's

original plan to bring heaven down to earth and build a home for G-d in the physical, often crass, world below.

And therein lies the connection of the beginning of the Book of Genesis with its ending. To be a good Jew in the Holy Land is one thing. To remain holy and heavenly in the fleshpots of Egypt is another. Egypt represented the epitome of decadence of in that time. For the Children of Israel to go there and still remain faithful to the G-dly way of life is bringing heaven down to earth big time. To live an upright, moral life in a morally degenerate society is to validate and justify the whole idea of creation and the Creator's decision to bring into existence mortal beings endowed with the freedom to choose how they will live their lives.

Perhaps this is the reason Jacob chose to bless the children of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, with the words, By you shall Israel bless (their children), saying May G-d make you like Ephraim and Manasseh. Indeed, this is the traditional blessing we give our children to this day, that they grow up to be like Ephraim and Manasseh. But why? Why should Jacob promise that for posterity Jews would bless their children to be like Joseph's children? Why not to be like his own children, the twelve tribes of Israel?

One answer is that of all the 70 children and grandchild of Jacob mention in the Torah, Ephraim and Manasseh were the only ones to have been born in Egypt and to have lived there all their lives. Jacob knew that in generations to come Jews would again be wandering through their own Egypts and exiles. He understood that Jewish history was destined to be filled with hostility and challenge. Thus, the role models for young Jews would need to be people like Ephraim and Manasseh who were born and bred in Egypt and yet remained faithful to the traditions of Jacob; who courted with the Pharaoh and still lived righteous Jewish lives.

iPod kids and even Generation X'ers need heroes they can relate to in order for them to be inspired by their example. Joseph's boys negotiated the tricky turf of Egyptian palace intrigue while never forgetting who they really were. When kids who are "Made in the USA" will still be spiritually connected to the Creator's heavenly way, then we will have made that dwelling place for G-d in the lower realms for which the whole world was created for in the first place. (Chabad.org)

Shul Group Gathering

This Sat. night
(Teves 14 - Jan. 11)

At the home of
Shlomo & Ester Hezghian
104 N. La Peer Dr.
8:00 PM

Topic: "Tanya, the
Chumash of Chassidus"

Pizza & Refreshments served
All Adults Welcome

Chabad of Beverly Hills

9145 Wilshire Blvd.

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Chabadofbeverlyhills.com

Rabbi Yosef Shusterman

Rabbi Mendel Shusterman

310-271-9063

PARSHA INSIGHTS

And he blessed Joseph, and he said, "G-d...bless the lads..." (Gen. 48:15,16) This verse opens by saying that Jacob blessed Joseph. Yet, we see from the next verse that Jacob blessed only Joseph's children! However, "G-d bless the lads" is really Joseph's blessing. For what greater blessing can one have then that one's children would be blessed?

I have given you one portion...which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow (Gen. 48:22) The great commentator, Rashi explains that Jacob's words "my sword and my bow" are referring to "my wisdom and my prayers." A war takes place in the soul of every person. The "Amorite" is the tendency toward evil which is strengthened through speaking - "Amira" in Hebrew - about non-holy matters and idle chatter. How does one overcome this "Amorite?" Through speaking words of Torah - my wisdom - and words of prayer - my prayer. (Torah Ohr) (L'Chaim #850)

For in their anger (literally "with their nose") they slew a man (Gen. 49:6) A great rabbi was once talking to someone when the name of certain individual came up in the conversation. The man immediately wrinkled his nose in distaste but said nothing. "What, you think you're allowed to speak lashon hara (slander) with your nose, as long as you don't move your lips?" the Rabbi admonished him. "The Torah states, 'For with their nose they slew a man' - with a wrinkle of the nose you can also murder someone's reputation!"

And when he saw that the resting place was good...he bent his shoulder to bear (Gen. 49:15)

Issachar recognized that although leisure is a good and pleasant thing, it can also be dangerous. In times of peace and tranquility the Evil Inclination intensifies its efforts to lead a person astray, which can lead to disaster. Issachar therefore "bent his shoulder to bear" the yoke of Torah, for Torah study is the antidote to this pitfall. (Likutei Diburim)(L'Chaim #1455)

Lchaimweekly.org

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Sunday 8:00 AM

**Gemara - Tractate Sanhedrin
(men)**

Monday 8:00 PM

Chumash (men and women)

Tuesday 8:00 PM

**Gemara B'Iyun
Tractate Kesuvos (men)**

Wednesday 8:00 PM

Halacha and Tanya (women)

Thursday 10:00 AM

Chassidus (women)

Daily

Chassidus 6:45 AM- 7:15 AM

**Halacha Between Mincha
and Maariv**

**There will be no class on Tues.
Jan.14.**

Daily Minyonim

**Weekday Shacharis:
6:00 AM & 7:30 AM**

**Sunday Shacharis:
7:00 AM & 9:00 AM**

**Mincha/Maariv:
5:00 PM**

**The Rebbe Rashab, Rabbi
Shalom Dovber, said:**

**"Even the greatest minds
must lay aside their intel-
lect and not be ruled by
reason and knowledge, for
they are susceptible to be-
ing misguided by their in-
tellect to the point that
their end may be a bitter
one.**

**"The essential thing in
these times of the
"footsteps of Moshiach" is
not to follow intellect and
reason, but to fulfill Torah
and mitzvot wholehearted-
ly, with simple faith in the
G-d of Israel."**

Story of the Week

The Simple Vintner of Slonim

By Asharon Baltazar

Reb Yehuda Leib stopped walking and listened. Mournful sobs drifted from the open synagogue window. Forgetting where he was headed, he rushed inside and was startled to find Ephraim, a sincere but unlearned man, standing in the center of the room, his face red as he recited Psalms with vigor, tears soaking the small book held in his hands.

Ephraim was considered a master vintner in the town of Slonim. Well known in the area, his wine—produced only in small batches and shared privately—was a favorite among Chassidim. Perhaps he could have earned more if he were to apply for a license and sell large quantities, but Ephraim was a simple man, and he had no idea how to apply for a license or how to set up a commercial enterprise.

This was the first time Reb Yehuda Leib had seen His wine was a favorite among Chassidim Ephraim pray with such fervor. Upon reaching the verse "My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You," his voice cracked, the words stuck in his throat. His body trembled with emotion and tears flowed unrestrained. Scrunching his face with concentration, Ephraim enunciated each word again and again. He appeared to be begging for his life.

"G-d Almighty!" he suddenly yelled. "Don't let my family be hurt ... Please, I beg of you!"

Rooted to the spot, Reb Yehuda Leib watched in bewildered silence. And though it took some time, he waited till Ephraim's crying subsided to sniffles before addressing him.

"Can you tell me what's wrong?"

Ephraim sighed weakly. "Less than an hour ago, I heard banging on my door and opened to a government official. Police, he told me, were on their way to raid my house. They'd received an anonymous tip alleging I run an illegal wine business, and would arrest me if they found any evidence at all."

"Who do you think told them?"

asked Reb Yehuda Leib.

"I suspect it's the man who used to kindle my ovens," Ephraim said, expression sour. "We fought over something not long ago. I ended up sending him out of my house. He swore revenge, and considering it an empty threat, I dismissed his words and forgot about the whole thing. It makes sense now, him being the snitch, since he knew my house pretty well and would certainly be able to make it look as if I have a whole wine business going.

"I recovered somewhat from the initial shock and managed to tell my wife the horrible news before running to the Rebbe's house to seek his advice and blessing. I felt a second punch to the gut when they told me he wasn't home. Apparently, he's out of town. My head swirled. Without his prayers, what was left for me to do? So, I rushed to the synagogue to beg for G-d's mercy. And if I am to go to jail, at least He should spare my wife and children. A jail sentence for a crime like this would be a very long one, indeed..."

As this took place, the police had been marching along to Ephraim's house.

Meanwhile, after he had slammed the door and disappeared in a panic, his wife hastily improvised a countermeasure of some sort. She brought in armfuls of straw from the yard and flung them down the steps leading to the tiny basement winery, sprinkling some around the door as well. Once everything was covered with straw, she bolted the basement door shut.

Moments after she had finished, she looked up to see the oven kindler leading the police almost pompously. All they had to do was follow the direction of his pointing finger and discover the wine. The direness of the situation, together with sheer terror, crashed down on her, and she felt overpowered. She hunkered in a dark corner of the house, muttering a prayer and hoping for the best.

The officers, their eyes scrutinizing the walls, trooped inside through the house and fanned out in a search. The oven kindler kept silent and watched the police comb the house fruitlessly. With childlike impatience,

he gestured toward the cellar door.

"Look over there! The wine's just down that door," he panted, eyes glinting maliciously.

The chief steeled his jaw, peeved at the interruption. "Quiet. Let the police do their job."

The oven kindler's shoulders sagged, his "Quiet. Let the police do their job." frustration mounting as he watched the officers overturning the house, steadily eliminating the potential hiding places, yet still failing to uncover traces of illicit wine manufacturing. House completely swept, nothing was left for them to do other than leave. When the oven kindler saw the officers turn towards the door, he once again failed to contain himself.

"The Jew is hiding his wine behind that door! I swear to you!"

The chief shot the oven kindler another smoldering look. He walked over to the door and opened it. At the sight of the straw strewn down the stairs, he erupted furiously.

"Don't you know that straw interferes with fermentation?" the chief roared at the oven kindler, who winced with every word. "I've had enough of your lies. Do you seriously think the Jew would ruin his entire inventory of wine with straw?!"

When Reb Yehuda Leib would retell this story, he emphasized, "Look how this simple Jew from Slonim instinctively reacted. When confronted with disaster, it never occurred to him to hire a lawyer or approach a public official. For him, it was either the Rebbe or the synagogue!" (Adapted from Shichat Hashavua #615) - chabad.org

HaYom Yom Teves 14

**The Shpola Zeideh
("Grandfather of Shpola"), a
disciple of the Maggid of
Mezritch, was a man of intense
fervor, far more than any of his
colleagues - the Maggid's other
disciples. When he visited the
Alter Rebbe in Liadi in 5569 or
5570 (1809 or 1810) he related
that when he was a child of
three he saw the Baal Shem Tov.
"He placed his holy hand on my
heart and ever since I have felt
warm."**

**A gesture of a tzadik, certainly
seeing him and hearing his voice,
must make an impression never
to be forgotten.**