



SHABBAT ZEST

Parshat Vayechi 16th Tevet 5777

Torah Reading / Haftara:

Artscroll – p.268/1145

Living Torah – p.240/1090

SHABBAT TIMES:

Candle Lighting:
3:58pm

Kabbalat Shabbat
Davening: 6:30pm

Shabbat Morning
Davening: 9:15am

Mincha: After Kiddush

Shabbat Ends 5:15pm

NEXT SHABBAT
SHEMOS

CANDLE LIGHTING
@ 4:09 PM

This week the
Haftorah will be
read by

...

Mazel Tov to
Dawn and Jimmy
Allen on the birth
of a Grandson

Parsha In a Nutshell

Genesis 47:28-50:26

Jacob lives the final 17 years of his life in Egypt. Before his passing, he asks Joseph to take an oath that he will bury him in the Holy Land. He blesses Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, elevating them to the status of his own sons as progenitors of tribes within the nation of Israel. The patriarch desires to reveal the end of days to his children, but is prevented from doing so.

Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to each his role as a tribe: Judah will produce leaders, legislators and kings; priests will come from Levi, scholars from Issachar, seafarers from Zebulun, schoolteachers from Simeon, soldiers from Gad, judges from Dan, olive-growers from Asher, and so on. Reuben is rebuked for "confusing his father's marriage bed"; Simeon and Levi, for the massacre of Shechem and the plot against Joseph. Naphtali is granted the swiftness of a deer, Benjamin the ferociousness of a wolf, and Joseph is blessed with beauty and fertility.

A large funeral procession consisting of Jacob's descendants, Pharaoh's ministers, the leading citizens of Egypt and the Egyptian cavalry accompanies Jacob on his final journey to the Holy Land, where he is buried in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron.

Joseph, too, dies in Egypt, at the age of 110. He, too, instructs that his bones be taken out of Egypt and buried in the Holy Land, but this would come to pass only with the Israelites' exodus from Egypt many years later. Before his passing, Joseph conveys to the Children of Israel the testament from which they will draw their hope and faith in the difficult years to come: "G-d will surely remember you, and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Haftorah

I Kings 2:1-12

In this week's Haftorah, King David delivers his deathbed message to his son and successor, Solomon, echoing this week's Torah reading that discusses at length Jacob's parting words and instructions to his sons.

King David encourages Solomon to be strong and to remain steadfast in his belief in G-d. This will ensure his success in all his endeavours as well as the continuation of the Davidic Dynasty. David then goes on to give his son some tactical instructions pertaining to various people who deserved punishment or reward for their actions during his reign.

The Haftorah concludes with David's death and his burial in the City of David. King Solomon takes his father's place and his sovereignty is firmly established.

UPCOMING EVENTS

29th January 2017 - The return of Shir. The fabulous klezmer band are coming back for an encore. Reserve Tickets with the Office now.

8th February: Israel Advocacy Evening. Talk given by David Olesker founder and Director of JCCAT. £5 per ticket. Book through Shul Office

11th May: AGM

Recurring Events

Cheder OPEN

Mummy and Me Running

Yahrzeits for the coming week 16th – 22nd Tevet:

- 17. Karen Levy – Mother
- 17. Suzanne Shine – Father
- 17. Ricky Tobias – Mother
- 20. Stanley Perry – Father
- 20. Colin Wolfryd – Father
- 21. Bettina Benjamin – Father
- 21. Rosanne Hoffman – Mother
- 21. Leonard Lieberman – Father
- 21. David Sanders – Mother

A Little Deeper – Hi'ney Ma Tov U'ma Na'im...

We have all heard it said that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it (Santayana). I would like to suggest the consistent lesson to be learned from history is that people don't learn. The paradox is clear, we can only learn from history because people don't learn from it, they will do in the future what they have done in the past! If people did learn from history then the past would hold none of its lessons to what the future will bring.

If you ask someone what was the most meaningful invention of the 20th century, they may struggle to give you an answer. The 20th century saw more inventions per minute than any other time since the wheel. But which one was the best?

Most people answer penicillin, the telephone, the computer, etc. But none of these made life more meaningful, they only made it faster, more instantaneous. They allowed us to do the things we had done before, but faster, cheaper, easier. My question is, which invention completely turned human history on its head? The clue? A few poppies! Let us look at the First World War. It wasn't the First until the Second came along. It was called The Great War. It was supposed to be the war to end all wars. After WW1, mankind pondered, what can we learn so that we don't do this again? Yet WW2 proved they didn't quite learn hard enough.

So just why is it so difficult to learn from history? Simply put, the first step to learning from history is not to blame the other guy. If we aren't willing to accept responsibility for what happened, then we will surely repeat it. The reason the Cuban Missile Crises was not WW3 is not because people "got it," but rather technology, or I should say, G-d came to the rescue.

The Atom Bomb should have been, by all accounts of history, the last thing man invented. Mankind always, always, used its most potent weapons. No country ever developed a better gun or missile just for show. But "The Bomb" changed the course of history. It is the reason western man has enjoyed the longest period of sustained peace in its history. That's meaningful. It not only changed the way we do business, war business that is, but it changed our whole way of thinking about the other person in the 'argument'. We had to consider his opinion. I personally believe it was this that sparked all kinds of social reflections: the Civil Rights movement, the Equal Rights Movement, etc. From asking ourselves "How do the Russians see it?" a new way of thinking was ushered in.

This the story of Genesis. Instead of what should have been, according to the flow of history, another battle of brothers, Ephraim and Menashe figured it out. The story goes like this, Jacob, before he dies, blesses his grandsons, Ephraim and Menashe (Genesis 48:12-20). In the process, he deliberately gives the younger son the greater honour. This is something that in previous generations would have started another sibling battle. This time, however, it ends, as we are finding in our own time, with a greater blessing to mankind.

As Rabbi Noach Wienberg explains, that is why we bless our sons that they should be like Ephraim and Menashe rather than like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (our Patriarchs). More than we want our children to be great, we want them to find peace. Remember this message as you educate your children and push them to "be all they can be." It was not for a lack of very clever and well accomplished people that mankind continually fought with each other. Not genius, but the spirit of peace has achieved much more than anyone could ever imagine.

Being great is good, but living together in peace is better. It doesn't matter how intellectual or successful you are, living together in peace will achieve much more. Or, put another way, if you want your children to succeed in life, teach them how to get along. As King David wrote in Tehillim:-

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity." (Psalms 133:1)

Wishing you all a restful and peaceful Shabbos.