



# SHABBAT ZEST

Parshat Vayeishev 24<sup>th</sup> Kislev 5777

Torah Reading / Haftara:

Artscroll – p.198/1142

Living Torah – p.182/1082

## SHABBAT TIMES:

Candle Lighting:  
3:35pm

Kabbalat Shabbat  
Davening: 3:30pm

Shabbat Morning  
Davening: 9:15am

Mincha: After Kiddush

Shabbat Ends 4:53pm

NEXT SHABBAT  
MIKEITZ

CANDLE LIGHTING  
@ 3:40 PM

This week the  
Haftorah will be  
read by

...

## Parsha In a Nutshell

Genesis 37:1-40:23

Jacob settles in Hebron with his twelve sons. His favourite is seventeen-year-old Joseph, whose brothers are jealous of the preferential treatment he receives from his father, such as a precious multi-coloured coat that Jacob makes for Joseph. Joseph relates to his brothers two of his dreams which foretell that he is destined to rule over them, increasing their envy and hatred towards him.

Simeon and Levi plot to kill him, but Reuben suggests that they throw him into a pit instead, intending to come back later and save him. While Joseph is in the pit, Judah has him sold to a band of passing Ishmaelites. The brothers dip Joseph's special coat in the blood of a goat and show it to their father, leading him to believe that his most beloved son was devoured by a wild beast.

Judah marries and has three children. The eldest, Er, dies young and childless, and his wife, Tamar, is given in levirate marriage to the second son, Onan. Onan sins by spilling his seed, and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, Peretz (an ancestor of King David) and Zerach.

Joseph is taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, the minister in charge of Pharaoh's slaughterhouses. G-d blesses everything he does, and soon he is made the main supervisor of all his master's property. Potiphar's wife desires the handsome and charismatic lad; when Joseph rejects her advances, she tells her husband that the Hebrew slave tried to force himself on her, and has him thrown into prison. Joseph gains the trust and admiration of his jailers, who appoint him to a position of authority in the prison administration.

In prison, Joseph meets Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, both incarcerated for offending their royal master. Both have disturbing dreams, which Joseph interprets; in three days, he tells them, the butler will be released and the baker hanged. Joseph asks the butler to intercede on his behalf with Pharaoh. Joseph's predictions are fulfilled, but the butler forgets all about Joseph and does nothing for him.

## Haftorah

Amos 2:6-3:8

This week's Haftorah contains an allusion to the sale of Joseph by his brothers, an incident discussed in this week's Torah reading. Amos opens with a rebuke to the Jewish People. G-d had been patient with them notwithstanding their transgression of the three cardinal sins -- sexual impropriety, idolatry and murder. Their fourth sin, however, crossed the line -- the mistreatment of the innocent, widows, orphans and the poor.

G-d reminds the Jewish people how He lovingly took them out of Egypt and led them through the desert for forty years and settled them in the Holy Land. There, He bestowed the gift of prophecy on some and inspired others to become Nazirites. Yet the Jewish people did not respond appropriately, giving wine to the Nazirites and instructing the prophets not to prophesy. Amos then goes on to describe G-d's punishment for the errant behaviour: "And the stout-hearted among the mighty shall flee naked on that day, says the L-rd."

The Haftorah ends with an admonition from G-d, one that also recalls His eternal love for His people: "Hearken to this word which the Lord spoke about you, O children of Israel, concerning the entire nation that I brought up from the land of Egypt. 'Only you did I love above all the families of the earth; therefore, I will visit upon you all your iniquities...'" As opposed to other nations to whom G-d does not pay close attention, G-d's love for His nation causes Him to punish them for their misdeeds, to cleanse them and prod them back onto the path of the just.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**December – Chanukah****Lightings – all 6.30pm**

Doughnuts, hot drinks music and entertainment:

24<sup>th</sup>: Chigwell Green

25<sup>th</sup>: Buckhurst Hill, Queens Rd

26<sup>th</sup>: Loughton

28<sup>th</sup>: Fullwell Cross

Roundabout

29<sup>th</sup>: Bell Hotel, Epping

31<sup>st</sup>: Gants Hill Roundabout

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

**Recurring Events**

**Cheder CLOSED**

**Mummy and Me CLOSED**

**Yahrzeits for the coming week 24<sup>th</sup> Kislev – 1<sup>st</sup> Tevet:**

26. Alison Green – Mother

28. Sandra Peters – Mother

28. Maurice Selwyn – Mother

29. Millicent Newman – Mother

29. Jeffrey Witzenfeld – Father

# A Little Deeper – Favouritism

For a parent to be fair and give different children equal treatment is one of the basic fundamentals of successful parenting. Yet not every parent finds it so easy to feel and display the same love and connection equally when they have more than one child. A family I know in North West London had 6 boys and were expecting a seventh child! It was as many as had been predicting; the little girl they had been waiting for some time. I have seen the pure delight in her father's eyes when he holds her - that little girl there is no doubt will be treated somewhat differently than her 6 brothers.

It reminds me of this week's Torah portion, Vayeshev. The Midrash says that from the moment of Joseph's birth, it was clear to his father Jacob that Joseph was very special. To begin with, his facial appearance was remarkably similar to his father. Moreover, Joseph possessed a great deal of "chein" - spiritual charm. Joseph was also the first child born, after many years of waiting, to Jacob's beloved wife Rachel. In short, various realities were conspiring to make Joseph the "special son."

Given all these factors, it is not surprising that Jacob showed favouritism toward Joseph. Of course, the Bible tells of Jacob giving Joseph a small multi-coloured armband. (The Hebrew word kutonet, which has often been translated as a "coat," can just as correctly be understood to mean "armband.") This show of favouritism was just one example; there were undoubtedly other factors, which caused the rest of the brothers to feel that Jacob loved Joseph the most.

While one can perhaps understand Jacob's behaviour, the Talmud roundly condemns his actions, ascribing Jacob's favouritism as the direct cause of the brothers' hatred for Joseph. This hatred in turn led them to sell Joseph as a slave down in Egypt.

Interestingly, it was Joseph's prominence there that ultimately caused the whole family to relocate in the Kingdom of the Nile. Thus, the Sages observe, if Jacob had treated all his children equally, it is entirely possible that the Jews never would have gone down to Egypt in the first place - and the whole period of slavery in Egypt might have been avoided. In a famous pithy phrase, the Sages say: "A small armband caused our people to be enslaved in Egypt."

While we can understand Jacob's plight, the reality is that Judaism demands that we treat all children equally. This is not just because it is good practical advice, but rather because the Torah teaches that everyone has their own unique role to play in this world. Greatness is not determined by what gifts and talents we have, but rather by what we do with those gifts.

Thus, in G-d's eyes, the average person who has applied his limited skills to the utmost, is greater than the "success" who has coasted with his G-d-given skills. With such an outlook, there is no place for showing favouritism to one child just because he may have more innate talent than another. It's a vital lesson every parent should learn.

Wishing you all a Good Shabbos