



Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades

שבת פרשת ויחי

Shabbat Parashat Vayechi

December 30, 2017 | Tevet 12, 5778

TORAH STUDY

This Week: Shabbat Parashat Vayechi B'reishit 47.28-50.26, pages 293-311

FIRST ALIYAH: The parashah opens by telling us Yaakov lived for 147 years. Avraham lived for 175 years, and Yitzchak 180. What ties these ages together, and what does that signify?

FOURTH ALIYAH: Commentators see Yaakov's testament as prophecy. Critical scholars say Yaakov appears prophetic only because a later author put words describing the reality of a later age into Yaakov's mouth. Who is correct?

The haftarah, M'lachim Alef 2.1-12, begins on Page 313.

Next Week: Shabbat Parashat Sh'mot Sh'mot 1.1-6,1, pages 317-341

FIRST ALIYAH: In verse 1.9, Pharaoh says Israel "is much too numerous for us." What, then, is the point he is trying to make in verse 1.10, about not letting Israel increase further, if it already is "too numerous for us"?

FIFTH ALIYAH: This aliyah opens with a repeat of the instruction God just gave to Moshe in the previous verse. Why does God need to repeat Himself?

The haftarah, Yirmiyahu 1.1-2.3, begins on Page 347.

For haftarot, we follow S'fardi custom.

We're Choosing a Whole New Board in June; Help Us Find Qualified Candidates for Each Post

Time flies! Believe it or not, we are coming up on the third anniversary of the creation of Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades.

One key aspect of that milestone is that at our June 2018 membership meeting, per our bylaws, we will be voting in an entirely new and restructured board to better reflect our existence as a single entity, rather than the combination of two separate congregations we were three years ago. Yes, you read that correctly; every seat on the board will be up for election this year.

Also, reaching the end of the three-year transition means we will only be electing a single president and a single treasurer. The makeup of the administration will be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and six non-officer trustees.

The first step in that election process is the establishment of an Election Committee chaired by our past president, David Warner, and including three other individuals. David has already agreed to continue his role as committee chair, which he has done for elections the past two years (and which we greatly appreciate).

We are seeking volunteers for the other three positions on the committee. Below are the responsibilities of the Election Committee. As you will see, they will not require a significant time commitment.

This is an extremely important committee, especially this year, and we ask that anyone interested in joining the committee contact David, or any member of the current Board of Trustees no later than Friday, January 12. At that time, the committee will be established so it can begin its important work, and be ready for the election in June.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

The Board of Trustees

Election Committee Responsibilities

- The Election Committee is responsible for all aspects of the electoral process, including:
- Actively seeking out multiple qualified candidates to run for each of the positions to be elected
- Preparing and mailing all informational materials
- Conducting candidate forums
- Preparing ballots
- Counting the votes
- Certifying the results, and
- Any other activity necessary related to the electoral process.

MAZAL TOV

[If we don't know about it,
we can't print it;
if we can't print it,
we can't wish it.]

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Today	Rabbi Mark Kiel
Sunday	Alexandra Hess
Wednesday	Roselyn Rauch, Judith Barzilay
Thursday	Ruth Hammer

*Did we miss a birthday, anniversary, or other simchah?
Let us know. We can't print what we don't know.*

THE IMAHOT:

*Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee
for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and
those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:*

ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹרָהּ וְשָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְרַבֵּקָה, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, רַחֵם
וְלֵאדָּה. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל
חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַפֶּלַל, וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא
גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Recite this only between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מְלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים, וְכִתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים,
לְמַעַן אֱ-לֹהִים חַיִּים.

מְלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱדֹנָי, מְגֵן אֲבֹרָהּ
וְעִזְרַת שָׂרָה.

This week's Shabbat Booklet
is being sponsored by

LIBBY HENIK

to mark the yahrzeit this past Thursday of
her late father,

HARRY ADELMAN, ז"ל

may his memory be for a blessing

Присоединяйтесь к нам для
освящения и обед
This week's kiddush and luncheon
are sponsored by

[YOUR NAME GOES HERE]

*Why not join the Kiddush Club?
It's only \$136 per person per year.*

PHOTO OF THE WEEK: And a one, and a two—the keys and Errol Kaget



Errol Kaget did some entertaining last weekend, and we don't mean he just had over a few friends. He also pulled out his accordion and serenaded everyone. (Photo courtesy Nadia Massuda)

YOSEF'S PLAN AND HOW YAAKOV THWARTED IT

The last deeds of Yaakov occur on his deathbed. In the first episode (chapter 48), Yaakov adopts Yosef's two sons and, in blessing them, corrects Yosef's preference for who will be designated as Yosef's firstborn. In the second episode (chapter 49), Yaakov addresses all his sons together, bestowing his final blessings and charges. Taken together, these final deeds reveal Yaakov's final judgment of Yosef and his brothers, as well as his assessment of his likely legacy. They constitute a refounding of the family in anticipation of its growth into a nation and a people.

"Some time afterward, Yosef was told, 'Your father is ill.' So he took with him his two sons, Menasheh and Efrayim. When Yaakov was told, 'Your son Yosef has come to see you,' Yisrael summoned his strength and sat up in bed."

An anonymous "someone" informs Yosef his father is ailing. A (different?) "someone" informs Yaakov his son Yosef has come. The text subtly contrasts Yosef's and Yaakov's responses to the news. Rightly believing his father to be near death, and very likely eager to get Yaakov's final blessing of preeminence for his sons, Yosef, entirely on his own initiative, brings his boys with him, first Menasheh, the firstborn, then his younger brother, Efrayim. Yaakov, although lying on his deathbed, still knows who he is and what he is about. Acting as Yisrael, Israel, he gathers his strength and sits up for the meeting.

While the text does not tell us Yosef brought his sons to receive a final blessing from their grandfather, it seems likely. Yosef surely would wish that Yaakov, with final words, would ratify his preeminence in the line of descent, a primacy he no doubt thinks he deserves. At the same time, Yosef certainly would be aware of the gulf between himself and his brethren, with whom his father has been living in Goshen these 17 years. And he might have heard, in Yaakov's recent plea for a non-Egyptian burial, something of a criticism of Yosef's own Egyptian ways.

Yosef has every reason for arranging things so his father should, at the end of his life, anoint him and his sons alone as the proper heirs apparent to the divine covenant.

Yaakov has no intention of doing so. He has another plan in mind. Seated upright as Israel and clearheaded about his intentions, he begins his address to Yosef by reminding him of El Shaddai:

"El Shaddai appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and He blessed me; and He said unto me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you and make you a company of peoples, and I will give this land to your seed after you for an everlasting possession [achuzat olam].'"

"And now your two sons..., Efrayim and Menasheh, like Reuven and Shimon, shall be mine. And your children born to you after them shall be yours; by their brothers' names they shall be called in their inheritance. And I, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died unto me in the land of Canaan in

the way when there was still some way to come unto Efrat; and I buried her there in the way to Efrat—the same is Beit Lechem." (48.3-7)

El Shaddai stands as the source of Yaakov's self-understanding, and His blessing is the premise of the action he is about to take. Informing Yosef of his divinely sent dream at Beit El (Luz is the local Canaanite name for the place; see 28.19), Yaakov (Israel) summarizes God's two-part blessing: multitudinous progeny and possession of the Promised Land. Yosef, we recall, had given Yaakov and his sons a possession [achuzah] of land in the land of Egypt; but as Yaakov pointedly informs Yosef, God promised to Yaakov's seed the entire land of Canaan for an everlasting possession [achuzat olam]. Yosef is a benefactor, but only a temporary one and one inferior to God; in Egypt, Yosef may give and take away, but contrary to appearances, Egypt is not the Promised Land.

The more important point in the present encounter, however, concerns progeny.

God's promise to multiply Yaakov's seed serves, somehow, as the justification for Yaakov's declaration that Efrayim and Menasheh, the sons born to Yosef in Egypt before Yaakov came to Egypt, are not Yosef's but his. Any future sons Yosef may claim as his own, but these first two—we notice that Yaakov, no doubt with conscious intent, names the younger, Efrayim, first—belong to Israel: Yosef comes seeking a blessing on his Egyptian-born sons. Instead, he is told they are no longer his and, by implication, no longer Egyptian. Yaakov has no doubt long been pondering and planning this capture or adoption of Yosef's sons for the tribe of Israel. He makes them his own even before he knows they are present.

Most readers see in this double adoption Yaakov's honoring his favorite son. Yosef, through his two sons, gets a double portion of Yaakov's inheritance. And, by indirectly being the father of two Israelite tribes, Yosef is again elevated above his brethren. Careful reading, however, shows this to be, at best, only part of the truth. "Yes, your sons, Yosef, are now my sons," Yaakov essentially says; "but they will be to me like the less favored Reuven and Shimon—not like you, my once favored Yosef. Yes, there will be tribes of Efrayim and Menasheh, but there will be no tribe of Yosef. Even if you have more sons, they will not be called after your name, but after the name of these two who are now mine."

In short: the name of Yosef will no longer live in Israel. Yaakov here in effect "sacrifices" Yosef as his son in Israel, seeing as Yosef is already lost to Egypt, but he recovers two of his own to take Yosef's place. Having adopted the Egyptian way of combating change and mortality through technology and rational administration, Yosef, master of events, does not see himself as a mortal link in the

covenantal chain. Yaakov, therefore, elects to go directly to his sons, circumventing Yosef and reestablishing the continuity of the generations, and tacitly reaffirming Israel's own response to the transience of life, the perpetuation of the way of the covenant. Unlike Noach, who once cursed his grandson Canaan (a brother of Egypt) for the impious ways of his son Kham, Yaakov does not allow Yosef's sons to be abandoned to false gods despite Yosef's waywardness from the path of Israel.

Yaakov's last remark, about Rachel, is surely puzzling, especially as part of a speech adopting Yosef's sons. Perhaps Yaakov is reminding himself—and Yosef—that Yosef is now lost to him, in the same way his mother, Rachel, was lost to him long before. Yaakov's emphasis on the place of Rachel's burial suggests, as well, that Yaakov may now understand the symbolic meaning of his decision not to bury Rachel with the other patriarchs and matriarchs (although she died not far from the cave at Machpelah). Rachel's burial "in the way to Efrat" had left her on the outside of the new way. Now her preeminent son has chosen to assimilate himself to outside ways. Rachel had clung to her father's idols; Yosef now clings to the land of the idolaters. Yaakov, who has only recently insisted on being buried with "his fathers" (please note: not with his beloved Rachel), sees that—like mother, like son—the beautiful Rachel and her beautiful Yosef are both detours on the way to the promise El Shaddai has made to him. Yaakov revives and purifies the memory of Rachel, reclaiming her grandsons for himself, even as he recognizes that she and her son are both lost to the way of Israel. Efrayim and Menasheh are replacements for both Yosef and Rachel.

Having adopted Yosef's sons without even noticing their presence, Yaakov (as Israel) suddenly sees them and asks, "Who are these?" (48.8). Yosef tells him they are his sons, whom God has given him there. Yaakov asks that they be brought forward for his blessing.

"Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age so he could not see. And he [Yosef] brought them near unto him, and he [Israel] kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said unto Yosef, 'I had not thought to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your seed also.' And Yosef brought them out from between his knees and he fell down on his face to the earth." (48.9-12)

A generation earlier, Yaakov's father, Isaac, was old and dim of sight when he was tricked into giving his blessing to Yaakov instead of Esau, his firstborn. Yaakov, although also unable to see, will not be fooled, for he has his wits fully about him. In bestowing his own blessing on his now adopted sons, he will once again overturn the natural preference for the firstborn.

Yosef places Menasheh, the firstborn, before Yaakov's right hand, the hand that symbolizes power, action, and authority. Yaakov knowingly extends those right-handed gifts to Efrayim, the younger—why, we shall discuss in a moment—and, in what the text calls his blessing of Yosef,

Yaakov bestows the patriarchal and covenantal blessing upon Yosef's sons. Lest the point be lost on Yosef (or the reader) Yaakov asks divine help so his name and the names of the patriarchs Avraham and Yitzchak may be carried on in the names of Yosef's sons, not of Yosef himself.

Yosef has reason to be unhappy with what he sees and hears, and he attempts to interfere. Yaakov corrects him. Of Menasheh, he says, "he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying: 'By you shall Israel bless, saying, 'God make you as Efrayim and Menasheh.' And he set Efrayim before Menasheh. (48.17-20)

As Robert Sacks points out, Israel's decision has nothing to do with merit; he had decided to reverse the birth order even before he had met the boys. Neither is it tied to an irrational lifelong prejudice that Yaakov, the second-born, has against all elder brothers. Rather, it reflects Yaakov's sense that the stable and final condition of his people has yet to be achieved. When a society is well established and running smoothly, preferences are usually given to the actual firstborn, for the firstborn is the one who, naturally, guarantees a next generation; in arranging for perpetuation, custom follows and ratifies the natural order of succession. The automatic preference for firstborn sons, or primogeniture, bespeaks a community confident of its ways, which are regarded as permanent and steady as the ways of nature. Yosef, who has his own reasons for believing the way of his native clan is now secure, sees himself as the last of the founding fathers, and wants that way to be conserved through primogeniture. Yaakov corrects Yosef's tacit belief that everything is now fully established and ripe for perpetuation in Egypt. Looking ahead, Yaakov prophesies that the nation of Israel shall bless by Efrayim and Menasheh, as in fact Jews continue to do to this day, memorializing in such a blessing Yaakov's inversion of the birth order, a deed that symbolizes Israel's rejection of both Yosef's offer to Egyptianize, and his complacent belief that the new way was finally secure.

Having crossed Yosef on the matter of his sons, Yaakov concludes the private interview with some comforting and encouraging—if also puzzling—words:

And Israel said unto Yosef, "Behold, I die; but God will be with you and bring you back unto the land of your fathers. And I, I have given to you one shechem [the exact meaning alludes us] above your brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." (48.21-22) [For more on this, see Page 2.]

Israel expresses his wish for Yosef's return to the land and ways of his ancestors, even though he knows he will not live to see it and can do nothing to bring it about. He places Yosef in God's hands, assuring him of providential assistance in his eventual return to the Promised Land.

—Adapted from the writings Leon Kass

May He who blessed | מי שברך

May He who blessed our ancestors bless and heal all those whose names are listed here, those whose names will be called out, and those whose names we do not know because either we are unaware of their illness or they are.

We pray He mercifully quickly restore them to health and vigor. May He grant physical and spiritual well-being to all who are ill. אמן

Sydelle Klein	Rifkah bat Chanah	Avraham Yitzhak ben Masha
Bonnie Pritzker Appelbaum	Sarah bat Malka	Aharon Hakohen ben Oodel
Deenah bat Sarah Leah	Sarah Rifka bat Sarah	Chaim ben Golda
Rut bat Esther	Shimona bat Flora	Ezra ben Luli
Miriam Zelda bat Gittel D'vorah	Sura Osnat bat Alta Chayah	Gil Nechemiah ben Yisraela
Miriam Chanah Sarah bat Liba	Tziporah bat Yaffa	Mordechai ben Almah
Miriam Rachel bat Chanah	Yospeh Perel bat Michlah	Moshe ben Shimon
Harav Mordechai Volff ben Liba Miryam	Michelle Blatteis	Harav R'fael Eliyahu ben Esther Malkah
Simchah bat Zelda	Diane Fowler	Harab Shamshon David ben Liba Perel
Adina bat Freidel	Goldy Hess	Harav Shimon Shlomo ben Taube v' Avraham
Baila bat D'vorah	Fay Johnson	Schmuel Alta ben Chaya Ruchel
Chavah bat Sarah	Micki Kuttler	Yisrael Yitzhak ben Shayndel
Chayah bat Flora	Katie Kim	Yitzchak ben Tzivia
D'vora Yocheved bat Yehudit	Elaine Laikin	Yosef ben Flora
Esther bat D'vorah	Mira Levy	Zalman Avraham ben Golda
HaRav Ilana Chaya bat Rachel Esther	Robin Levy	Larry Carlin
Liba Ruchel bat Michlah	Lani Lipis	Harry Ikenson
Masha bat Etl	Karen Lipsy	Shannon Johnson
Masha bat Rochel	Kathleen McCarty	Itzik Khmishman
Matel bat Frimah	Gail Schenker	Adam Messing
Mindel bat D'vorah	Linda State	Gabriel Neri
Ninette bat Aziza	Mary Thompson	Jeff Nicol
Pinyuh bat Surah	Michelle Lazar	Mark Alan Tunick
Rachel Leah bat Malkah	Norma Sugerman	
Rita bat Flora	Avraham Akivah bat Chanah Sarah	

We pray for their safe return...

May He who blessed our ancestors bless, preserve, and protect the captive and missing soldiers of Tzahal—Ron Arad, Zecharia Baumel, Guy Chever, Zvi Feldman, Yekutiel Katz, and Zeev Rotshik— as well as those U.S. and allied soldiers, and the civilians working with them and around them, still missing in Afghanistan and Iraq, and all other areas of conflict, past and present.

And may He bless the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Tzahal, and those who serve the United States and Israel in foreign lands in whatever capacity, official or unofficial, members of our community or related to members, and their colleagues and companions. Guide them in peace and return them speedily to their families alive and unharmed. אמן

**HONOR YOUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES
WITH A PLAQUE ON OUR
VIRTUAL MEMORIAL BOARD.
CALL THE OFFICE TO ADD THEIR NAMES
TO OUR MEMORIAL BOARD.**

Yahrzeits for Today Through Next Friday

זכרונם לברכה — May their memories be for a blessing!

30 Yosef Barsano, *Ray Kaplan's brother-in-law*

Harry Malakoff*

Nathan Schapiro*

Bessie Kaplan Wolkowitz*

31 Betty Thaler*, *mother of Jean Thaler*

Goldie Gittleman, *Ed Sodosky's aunt*

Max Schwack*

Bessie Feinstein*

Hyman Wittman*

Sarah Rebecca Sokolofsky*

1 Maureen Rothstein*, *Dr. Albert Ades' cousin*

Isaac Davidson*

Walter Udelsman*

Harry Shyman*

2 Sadie Abrahams*

Richard Schlanger *

Minnie Ginsburg*

Sofia Smuts*

3 Evelyn Chernow, *Elaine Laikin's aunt*

Herman Finger*

Joseph F. Halpern*

Harry Ross*

4 Josef Mendel Schwartz*

Bette Ruth Greenberg

Fannie Gorman*

Esther Tannenbaum*

Louis Feigelis*, *Larry Kaget's grandfather*

Celia Goldman*

Abram Reines*

5 Benjamin Levy*, *Ros Lobel's father*

Fannie Neckowitz*

Samuel Bush*

Philip Gottlieb*

Harry Kohl*

Ray Liberman*

* A plaque in this person's name is on our memorial board.

Kaddish list

Rebecca Kaplan

Haviva Khedouri

Judith Lorbeer

Francine Feder

Nancy Friedlander

Norman Harry Riederman

Blanche Friedman

David Rosenthal

Jay Greenspan

David Shandalow

Jeanette Shandolow Herman

Paul Singman

Harvey Jaffe

Randolph Tolck

Are we in your will?

Shouldn't we be?

When people prepare their wills, they usually look to leave a mark beyond the confines of their families. Thus it is that general gifts are left to hospitals, and other charitable organizations.

All too often ignored, however, is the synagogue, even though its role in our lives often begins at birth, and continues even beyond death. We come here on Yom Kippur and other days, after all, to say Yizkor, the prayer in memory of our loved ones.

Our Virtual Memorial Plaques remind everyone of who our loved ones were, and why we recall them. All of us join in saying the Kaddish on their yahrzeits.

Considering this, it is so unfortunate that, in our final act, we ignore the one institution in Jewish life that is so much a part of us.

The synagogue is here for us because those who came before us understood its importance and prepared for its preservation. By remembering it in our wills, we will do our part to assure that the synagogue will be there for future generations, as well.

Think about it. We have always been here for anyone who needed us in the past. Do not those who need us in the future have the same right to our help?

Of course they do. Do not delay! Act today! Help secure the future of your communal home.

Is there a yahrzeit
we should know about?

Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades
ק"ק בית ישראל של הפליסד
207 Edgewater Road, Cliffside Park, NJ 07010-2201

Shammai Engelmayer, Rabbi
Nadia Massuda, Co-President
Craig H. Bassett, Co-President
Judy Golub, Vice-President
Errol Kaget, Secretary
Al Glick, Co-Treasurer
Garrison D. Miller, Co-Treasurer

rabbi@cbiotp.org
nadia@cbiotp.org
craigbassett@cbiotp.org
judygolub@cbiotp.org
membership@cbiotp.org
alglick@cbiotp.org
garymiller@cbiotp.org

207 Edgewater Road
Cliffside Park, NJ 07010-2201
Office: 201-945-7310;
Fax: 201-945-0863
website: www.cbiotp.org
general e-mail: shul@cbiotp.org

Alex Glickman does it.

Dan Rappoport does it.

Alan Kaminsky is doing it again.

Joe Massuda just did it four weeks ago.

Matt Koenig just did it three weeks ago.

Eric Weis does it.

You can do it, too!

YOU CAN READ A HAFTARAH.

Talk to the Ritual chairs.

Attention ALL Vets!
If you're not yet a member of
JWV Post 76,
YOU SHOULD BE!
For more information, call
201-869-6218

Shabbat ends Saturday night with havdalah at 5:23 p.m. EST