



Parshat HaShavuah

VAYECHI

JAN 7, 2012

ויחי

י"ב טבת תשע"ב

A PUBLICATION OF



# Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting

5:25

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:48

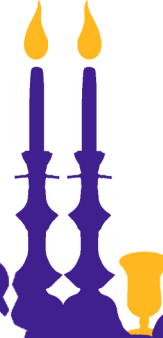
Sunset

5:44

Motzei

Shabbat

6:22



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

MRS. MICHAL ZISQUIT 1

NICOLE GREENBAUM ('14) 2

MATTHEW SILKIN ('14) 2

ZEVI LITWIN ('13) 3

GADI DREYFUSS ('14) 4

## SEEING THE FOREST FROM THE TREES MRS. MICHAL ZISQUIT

marks the end of יעקב אבינו's life. Before dying at the age of 147, he has his son יוסף promise to bury him in the family's burial plot, מערת המכפלה. When he dies, his family escorts his body from Egypt to ארץ ישראל. The גמרא סוטה נמרא supplements the פשט and tells us of the following incident.

As יעקב's burial procession arrives at מערת המכפלה עשו blocks everyone from entering. He tells them that there are only 8 burial plots in the cave, of which 7 are already used. עשו argues that he is the rightful owner of the 8th plot. After arguing for a while, the brothers decide to send נתנלי back to Egypt to retrieve the document that proved that יעקב was in fact entitled to this last plot.

Until נתנלי returns, the brothers have no choice but to wait to bury יעקב. In the back of the procession waits חושים, the deaf son of דן, who is not aware of why the family is waiting to bury the body. He asks why, and the brothers explain the situation. חושים then says, "And until he comes back, my grandfather will be disgraced?!" He takes matters into his own hands and kills the evil עשו who is yet again disgracing יעקב.

An obvious question on this גמרא is why is חושים the only person who is bothered by this?

The בעלי מוסר explain that often people tend to lose sight of the bigger picture and get caught up in the details. It takes someone who is slightly removed from the situation (in חושים's case because of his disability) to realize that the brothers are missing the point. Their mission is to bury יעקב because Judaism believes corpses should be buried as soon as possible so as not to disgrace them. However, because they allowed themselves to become sidetracked, they end up disgracing יעקב.

Continued page 4





## BEING SPENDING SAVY NICOLE GREENBAUM ('14)

Parshat Vayechi primarily focuses on Yaakov as he issues his forthcoming death and his last dying wishes. On his deathbed, Yaakov calls forward each of his sons to bless them individually. An important message can be found in the bracha given to Asher.

The Alshich interprets Yaakov's bracha to Asher as follows: "When it comes to his own welfare, Asher views his subsistence of plain bread as precious and rich." As stated by Yaakov, Asher is satisfied with what he has; however, when it comes to others, he gives delicacies. Though he may have a lower standard of living for himself, Asher will go above and beyond for others—always putting them before himself.

The Gemara Yerushalmi relates a story with a similar message. Rabbi Akiva and an associate were sent to collect tzedaka. They went to the house of a frequent donor. As they approached the door, they heard the man's son ask him what to buy in the market that day. The man told his son to buy an inexpensive vegetable and to choose one that was picked on the previous day so that it would be even cheaper. When they heard this discussion, they decided not to knock on the man's door for a donation, assuming he was no longer financially stable. After collecting tzedaka from other townspeople, Rabbi Akiva and his associate decided to return to the man's house. Upon their return, the man was curious as to why they came to him last, and Rabbi Akiva truthfully admitted to hearing the earlier conversation between the man and his son. The man replied that although he was penurious in his personal life, he was never thrifty when it came to tzedaka. The man directed Rabbi Akiva and his associate to his wife, telling them to collect coins from her. The man's wife asked the two men whether he told them to collect an abundant measurement or an exact measurement, and they told her he had not specified the measurement. Nevertheless, the man's wife continued to give an overflowing amount of coins. Had that not been her husband's intent, the woman was happy to donate her own money, from her *ketuvah*. When hearing his wife's actions, the man was overjoyed—so pleased he decided to double her *ketuvah*.

Like Asher, the man from this story understands the importance of putting others before himself, living a life without selfish motives. Living in a time with an unstable economy people must prioritize and know the difference between spending for personal pleasure and spending for important causes.

## TAKE A BREATHER MATTHEW SILKIN ('14)

There is a disease called post-traumatic stress disorder. One usually acquires PTSD after experiencing a particularly harrowing event, such as a car crash or a war. This psychological condition is extremely difficult to cure and most people who suffer from PTSD carry this unconscious burden with them for the rest of their lives. An example of where this could apply to Torah is seen in this week's parsha.

*Continued page 3*





*Silkin continued*

Between most parshiot in the Torah, there is a space between one parsha and the next. However, strangely enough, there is no separation between the parshiot of Vayigash and Vayeichi. The question that many commentators ask is, why?

The Torat Kohanim says that Hashem tells Moshe to insert these spaces so that people learning Torah in the future generations will have ample time to reflect on what they have just read and learn from each portion on an individual basis before looking at the parshiot on a grander scale. However, the death of Yaakov has such an impact on the people of the time that they are completely stunned and, thus, unable to process the news.

The fact that Yaakov is a great tzadik may be the reason why the Jewish people are so shocked to hear of his passing. He has been their leader, and they are deeply saddened by the thought of him no longer being there to lead them. Although Bnei Yisrael has an excuse to basically shut down for a few moments and take a moment to feel sadness, Moshe does not insert a break here to prove to the people that they should not allow events to swoop them into a state shock and bewilderment.

Rather, we must process what we have just read or experienced, try to learn and understand the events, and use that information to help better ourselves for the future.

## THE POWER OF UNITY

ZEVI LITWIN ('13)

At the end of this week's parsha, Yaakov blesses all his children before his death. As we know, he does not bless Yosef, but rather gives a special blessing to both of Yosef's sons, Ephraim and Menashe, for they are the ones intended to inherit Yosef's portion of land in Eretz Yisrael. The blessing that Yaakov gives to them is the following:

"By you shall Israel bless [its children] saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.'"

Of all his progeny, why does Yaakov specifically choose these two grandchildren as models for future generations? What is so special about Ephraim and Menashe that they merit this unique blessing?

Many commentators explain that even though Yaakov foresees the evil descendants of both Ephraim (Yerovam and Achav) and Menashe (Yehu), he blesses them nonetheless. Even after Yaakov "sets Ephraim before Menashe," when switching his hand, putting his right hand, the stronger one, on the head of the younger son, while placing his left hand, the weaker one, on the head of the older brother, the older brother shows no jealousy! As opposed to all the enmity among Yaakov's own children, these brothers exhibit the harmony and love that Jews must feel for one another. This model of *ahavat yisrael* is the prime example of the greatness of Ephraim and Menashe, and this is why they receive the special blessing.

Both of these aspects of Ephraim and Menashe explain why they deserve this prized blessing. Knowing that his descendants are destined to suffer many centuries in *galut*, exile, Yaakov prays that they, just like Ephraim and Menashe, will be able to stand together with *ahavat yisrael* in order to maintain their Judaism and their faith in Hashem.



## **DAN LEKAF Z'CHUT** **GADI DREYFUSS ('14)**

In this week's parsha, Yaakov recalls how Rachel passed away on the road back to Yerushalayim. Instead of having a formal burial for her in Me'arat Hamachpela, the grave in which the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are buried in until this point, Yaakov buried his wife on the side of the road, in what is known today as Kever Rachel.

Before Yaakov passes away, when he is lying on his deathbed, he asks that Yosef bury him in Me'arat Hamachpaila with his fathers, and not in Egypt where he is now. Now, one might ask how Yaakov could do this. How could he request something of his son that he does not even grant his own wife?

Before we judge Yaakov erroneously, we must think—would Yaakov, a man of honesty and integrity, bury his wife on the side of the road without a good reason? Most definitely not!

When Rachel dies, Yaakov received *Ruach HaKodesh* from Hashem in which he was told that the Jewish people will travel by Rachel's grave years later on their way into exile. He buried his wife along the road so that Rachel will be able to pray for Bnei Yisrael in the future and, consequently, they will be able to eventually return to Israel.

From here we can learn an invaluable lesson—to be “*dan lekaf z'chut*,” to give someone the benefit of the doubt. In any given situation, no matter how bad it looks, we must judge everyone favorably, and not jump to conclusions. We must consider both sides of the story, for only Hashem, the ultimate Judge, can really know the entire truth.

*Zisquit continued*

This is a particularly important lesson for this time of year. We just finished the fast of עשרה בטבת which commemorates the Babylonian siege of ירושלים. Historically, although the siege began on the 10th of טבת, there was minimal damage and no one was killed on that day. This is the day we fast because we understand that the siege was a message that ה' was giving the Jewish people—a warning that if they do not fix their problems, things will only get worse. As we know, the siege was just the beginning, and it culminated with the destruction of the בית המקדש. We should have learned our lesson from חושים and applied it 2,500 years ago, not to worry about the siege, but rather to better ourselves in order prevent the destruction of the בית המקדש.

With that in mind, we should endeavor to see the bigger picture in life in order to serve ה'.

### **Editor-in-Chief**

Eliana Feldan ('13)

### **Final Editor**

Leora Litwin ('12)

### **Editing**

Hannah Baum ('13)

Cori Dennis ('13)

Elana Gelman ('12)

Zevi Litwin ('13)

## **Staff**

Chaim Bitterman ('13)

Evan Dolgow ('13)

Seth Fisher ('13)

Daniel Geller ('13)

Nechamie Saxon ('13)

Mathew Silkin ('14)

Gabriella Sobol ('13)

Sagiv Zehavi ('12)

### **Layout**

Danielle Sobol ('13)

### **Proofreader**

Saige Rosenberg ('13)

### **Senior Editor**

Eram Zaghi ('12)

### **Faculty Advisor**

Rabbi Avi Hochman

Interested in sponsoring Ashreinu?  
Contact Rabbi Hochman at  
RAVH@WYHS.NET

This publication contains Torah matters  
Please treat it with respect



7902 Montoya Circle  
Boca Raton, FL 33433  
Phone: 561-417-7422  
Fax: 561-417-7028  
www.wyhs.net