



January 11, 2020

יד טבת תש"פ

Parashat Vayechi ויחי Genesis 47:28 - 50:26
Stone – p 268 Hertz – p 180 Etz Hayim – p 293

חזק חזק ונתחזק!
Chazak chazak v-nit'cha'zek!
May we be strong and strengthen each other!

Haftarah First Kings מלכים א 2:1 - 12
Stone – p 1145 Hertz – p 191 Etz Hayim – p 313

Kiddush is sponsored by
Jean & Stanley Estrin
in honor of their 38th anniversary

Talmud Class—3:00 PM
Minchah – 4:15 PM
Seudah Sh'lishit
Shabbat Ends – 5:40 PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon – Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Rabbi Ephraim Zimand z"l, Emeritus

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director – tradcong@sbcglobal.net

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Shabbat—9:00 AM & 4:15 PM

Sunday—8:30 AM

Monday—Thursday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM

Friday—7:00 AM & 5:45 PM

Board of Directors:

Elaine Farkas, President

Paul Tesser, Executive Vice President

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

Marty Levy, Ritual Vice President

Florence Schachter, Education Vice President

Chris Brown, Membership Vice President

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Members at Large:

Steve Bell

Stanley Estrin

Shelah Feldman

Bill Gold

Gary Golden

Ari Levy

Carol Max

Justin Zeid

*Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know would like to receive membership information, please contact
Chris Brown, Membership VP, at 636-288-5356*

On This Week's Torah Portion – Vayechi

Parashat Vayechi is the shortest (by 20 verses) parashah in the Book of Genesis, but it's the most dense, and requires the most unpacking. The central part of the *parashah* is Ya'akov's blessings to his sons. These are more like Oracles, and must be interpreted, which the commentaries all do, from all different angles and with sometimes radically different approaches. Here is Or haChaim's commentary on the blessing of Yissachar (abridged).

First, some background information. After Leah had had four sons, and the two handmaids had had two each, Rachel was still barren. One day, Leah's eldest son, Reuven, brought home some *duda'im* (usually translated mandrakes), which were held to enhance fertility. Rachel asks Leah if she might have them, as Ya'akov was to sleep with her that night. Leah agrees, on condition that she get the night with Ya'akov. Rachel agrees, Leah "goes out" to meet Ya'akov as he's coming home from shepherding (having heard his donkey braying), and the result is Yissachar, from the root meaning "to hire." Both women are criticized for the transaction, even though each was acting "for the sake of heaven." Rachel was criticized for giving up the opportunity to have time with the righteous Ya'akov. The result, according to Rabbinic tradition, was that she was not buried with him in the Cave of Machpelah with Avraham and Sarah and with Yitzchak and Rivka.

More relevant to Yissachar's blessing, is that Leah is criticized for "going out" to meet Ya'akov. Throughout Jewish tradition, women represent, and are supposed to exemplify, the inner, transcendental value of life. It is not considered the place for the transcendent to "go out" into the world of change and relativity; rather it is our job to raise the world of change and relativity to a state of perfection, in which its transcendental basis is obvious even on the surface. Now, here is what Or haChaim has to say about Yissachar:

Yissachar is a hard-boned donkey; he rests between the boundaries. He saw contentment that it was good, and the land that it was pleasing, so he bent his shoulder to bear and he became a tribute as a servant (49:14-15).

[The Hebrew chamor garem / "hard-boned donkey" is translated as "caused by a donkey," taking garem from the Aramaic word "to cause."] The fact that his mother "went out" as a result of the braying of the donkey is the reason behind the fact that Yissachar "rests between the boundaries," i.e. is not permanently settled in its place. And this is why Torah scholars, who are offshoots of Yissachar, are moving about from city to city [to study Torah]. For an improper act produces similar results, and [by "going out"] Leah had done something that appeared to be a violation of proper behavior. ...

The explanation [of the second verse] is that lofty [spiritual] contentment is good. If a person observes and contemplates any of the sensory delights of this world, such as food and drink, the pleasure from the object is not really from the object itself, rather it is from the body, which is like an empty vessel waiting to be filled, for the Creator instilled us with a natural instinct so that it cannot remain empty under any circumstances. That is why, when a person is full, ... the same food that his soul had desperately desired at that very time ... will be disgusting as one is disgusted by something bad. ...

Therefore Ya'akov said: He saw contentment that it was good, meaning that the [Upper] World, which is referred to as "Contentment," is good, in contrast to the illusory good of this world ...

The first part of the verse displays the principle that the universe reacts to individual action. Sometimes the reaction can turn up in unpredictable places. Leah's "going out," which only appeared to be improper, led to Yissachar's "wandering," which itself is for a very good cause. Incidentally, the Rabbis associate Leah's "going out" with her daughter Dinah's "going out" in *parashat Vayishlach*, which had a much more negative outcome.

Or haChaim's second comment gives us a profound insight into the workings of the mind and the path to spiritual growth. It is a commonplace that the mind is always wandering, but this wandering isn't random. The mind wanders because it is seeking fulfillment. Permanent fulfillment is not possible in the impermanent, physical world, because that world is the world of change. In the example Or haChaim gives, food, which at one moment was desired to the point of craving, is found to be disgusting once one is satiated. As our Sages say, *he who has one hundred desires two hundred*. A person never dies with even half their desires fulfilled. The realm of the finite, one can always have more. It's like an addiction, as we see in modern society. The mind "rests between the boundaries" – it is never permanently settled in the world of finite boundaries.

The solution is *He saw contentment that it was good*, "meaning that the [Upper] World, which is referred to as "Contentment," is good. The infinite, transcendental realm is silent, boundless, pure existence and pure happiness. When the mind reaches that state, it is fulfilled and automatically ceases wandering – it is *content*. And the way to get there is to stop projecting the mind in the outer direction, and instead let it *see Contentment*. Once the mind is not being directed away from the transcendent, it will go *towards* the transcendent as naturally as a diver goes towards the water. And it is direct experience of the transcendent that changes our lives and our outlook all for the better.

Shabbat Shalom!
Rafi Rabinoff

Everyone—doctors, nurses and those with no medical training—is encouraged to attend and learn how to save lives. You never know when YOU may be in a situation to help someone in need. Please register ASAP by calling Marian, 314-576-5230 or Marty Bell, 314-570-2370.

SUNDAY

**January 19, 2020
10:00 AM**



FREE Life-Saving Training!!

**DO YOU KNOW HOW TO STOP
SOMEONE FROM **BLEEDING**?
JOIN TRAUMA NURSE EDUCATOR
GINNA SIBURT
AND LEARN HOW TO SAVE A LIFE**

**This training is suggested for all adults,
both with medical training and without**

**No charge, but advance registration required. RSVP to
Marian, 314-576-5230 or tradcong@sbcglobal.net
or Marty Bell, 314-570-2370 or bronxwasus@charter.net**

Light refreshments provided



**Traditional Congregation
12437 Ladue Rd, St Louis MO 63141
www.traditional-congregation.org**





**SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020
5:30 - 7:00 PM**

A TASTE OF SOUP

**ALL YOU CAN EAT
SOUP BUFFET!
MEAT &
VEGETARIAN
BREAD FOR
DUNKING
& DESSERT**

\$12/person in advance (\$14/walk-ins)

Kids under 5 are free!

\$48/household max (\$60/walk-ins)

\$3 additional per carry-out container

Register by Jan. 15 at:

<https://www.traditional-congregation.org/events>

or send payment with names attending to:

Traditional Congregation

12437 Ladue Rd St Louis MO 63141

314-576-5230 tradcong@sbcglobal.net



Jewish Community Winter Outreach Needs:

**Underwear, socks, boots, coats, hats,
gloves, blankets, pillows, towels,
washcloths, toiletries**

Drop Off Locations

Central Reform
Congregation
5020 Waterman
Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63108

Congregation B'nai
Amoona
324 South Mason
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

JCRC
12 Millstone Campus Dr
St. Louis, MO 63146

Mirowitz Jewish Community
School
348 S Mason Rd
St. Louis, MO 63141

Shaare Emeth
11645 Ladue Road
St. Louis, MO 63141

Temple Israel
1 Rabbi Alvin D Rubin Dr
St. Louis, MO 63141

Traditional Congregation
12437 Ladue Rd
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

United Hebrew
Congregation
13788 Conway Road
St. Louis, MO 63141

For More Information or to volunteer please contact Jack Seigel - jseigel@jcrctl.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 19 **Stop the Bleed Training, 10:00 AM** Conducted by a trauma nurse from Mercy, participants will learn techniques of managing hemorrhage from injuries, particularly from gun shot trauma. This program was developed by the American College of Surgeons in response to the plague of gun violence affecting our country. It is known that the number of fatalities from gunshot injuries could be reduced if uninjured persons were present who could manage and prevent ongoing hemorrhage, particularly from extremities, until professional responders arrive. The class will last approximately one hour and will include hands-on instruction. Open to all 18 and older—medical professionals as well as those with no prior medical training are encouraged to attend. Lights refreshments will be provided. No charge, but registration is required—RSVP to Marian, 314-576-5230 or tradcong@sbcglobal.net, or Security Chairperson Marty Bell, 314-570-2370 or bronxwasus@charter.net.

Sunday, January 26 **A Taste of Soup!** Everyone's favorite annual dinner! Meat soups, veggie soups, bread for dunking and dessert—come warm up with us! \$12pp, under 5 are free, \$48 household max. Walk-ins \$14pp. Send payment with names to Marian or register online at <https://www.traditional-congregation.org/events>

Winter Clothing Drive for the Homeless Please help those in need by donating warm clothing, socks, underwear, coats/hats/gloves, blankets/pillows/linens, personal care items. There is a donation bin in our lobby. For more info, contact Jack Seigel, jseigel@jrcrstl.org

Save the Date—February 21-23, 2020—**Scholar in Residence with Rabbanit Bonita Sussman, Rabbi Jerry Sussman and Rabbi Funnye Capers** of Kulanu will discuss their work with emerging and returning Jewish communities around the world. Watch for details!

Save the Date—**Rededication Shabbat** on March 7, 2020. This year's honorees are our adult women members who have read *Haftarot* and *Megillot* for our congregation. We want to make sure that all eligible women are included, so if you are 21 or older and have read *haftarah* or *megilla* for us, please let Marian know. Thank you!

We're looking for...YOU—to sponsor a Kiddush! Call Marian, 314-576-5230 to reserve your date. Not ready to sponsor but would like to help offset our Kiddush costs? It's easy—mail your donation to Traditional (note: Kiddush Fund in memo) or donate online at <https://www.traditional-congregation.org/donate> and select Kiddush Fund Donation. Thank you!

<https://www.traditional-congregation.org>

PRAYER

Reverence for God is the root of the wisdom,
And the branches of wisdom are long life.

*Flee from sin as from a serpent,
For it will bite you when you come near it.*

As water will quench a blazing fire,
So kindness will atone for sin.

*My child, do not defend the poor of their living;
Do not make the eyes of the needy wait long.*

Do not pain a hungry heart;
Do not anger a person in distress.

*Listen to what a poor person has to say,
And return a peaceful and gentle answer.*

Do not be known as a whisperer;
Do not set an ambush with your tongue.

*Do not indulge in too much luxury,
And do not be tied to its expense.*

Do not put off turning to God;
Do not postpone it from day to day.

*Forgive others their wrong doings,
Then your sins will be forgiven when you pray.*

From the Wisdom of Ben Sira

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Life is not lost by dying; life is lost minute by minute, day by dragging day,
in all the thousand small uncaring ways.

Stephen Vincent Benet