

# the SHABBAT Talk

## MAKE A NOTE OF IT

**Shabbat 21st January**  
 Harry Green and Jamie  
 Scott's Bar Mitzvahs

**Wednesday Evening**  
**25th January**  
 Holocaust Day showing of  
 paperclips film See Ad.

**Shabbat 28th January**  
 Alexander Reuben's Aufruf

**Tuesday Night 7th**  
**February**  
**Tu b'Shvat Fruit & Shiur**  
**@ 3 Alderton Mews 8pm**

**Sunday 12th February**  
 Jazz Evening - see advert

**Shabbat 25th February**  
 Ben Sanders' Bar Mitzvah

**There is Cheder**  
**this week**

## Shabbat Times

**Shabbat Begins:**  
**3:53 p.m.**  
**Shabbat Ends:**  
**5:02 p.m.**

**Next Week:**  
**Shabbat Begins: 4:02 p.m.**  
**Shabbat Ends: 5:11 p.m.**

PARSHAT "VAYECHI"  
 12 TEVET 5772 - 7 JANUARY 2012  
 FRIDAY EVENING: 7:00PM - SHABBAT MORNING: 9:00AM

**THIS WEEK'S SEDRAH**  
 Soncino Chumash: p296 Hertz Chumash: p180 Living Torah: p240 ArtScroll: p268  
**Haftorah:**  
 Soncino Chumash: p315 Hertz Chumash: p191 Living Torah: p1091 ArtScroll: p1145

**Vayechi:** Ya'akov lives in Egypt for 17 years, to the age of 147. Before he dies he summons Yosef and makes him swear that he will bury him in the land of Israel. A short while later Yosef is told that his father is sick. He takes his two sons to Ya'akov for a blessing. Ya'akov blesses Yosef that his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, will be considered tribes in their own right. He then blesses the boys, but places his right hand on Ephraim's head, though he is the younger. Yosef tries to correct his father, but Ya'akov explains that the younger son will become greater than the elder. Ya'akov gives Yosef an additional portion in the land of Israel, the city of Shechem.

Ya'akov summons all of his sons and blesses them, each with their own unique strengths and weaknesses. He once again instructs all of them to bury him in the land of Israel, in the cave of Machpela. As he concludes his instructions to his sons, he draws his feet into the bed, breaths his last and is gathered unto his people. Yosef instructs the court physicians to embalm Ya'akov, and all of Egypt mourns him for 70 days. He then requests permission from Pharaoh to go and bury his father. Pharaoh allows him to go, and he and his brothers, accompanied by all of the palace courtiers, go to bury Ya'akov.

Upon returning to Egypt the brothers fear that Yosef still bears a grudge against them. They therefore send a message to Yosef that their father had instructed him to forgive them. They present themselves to Yosef, and he reassures them that he will provide for them, and that they have nothing to fear.

Yosef lives to the age of 110, and lives to see his great grandsons. Before he dies, he makes his family swear that they will eventually bring him to the land of Israel for burial. When he dies he is embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

**Summary of this week's Haftorah** - The Talmud in Bava Matzia 87a tells us that Ya'akov Avinu [Jacob] was the first person to "get weak" prior to



dying. In fact, he asked Hashem for this "gift" so that he would have the time to put his affairs in order. This week's Haftorah is from Kings I Chap. 2 which relates Dovid Hamelech's [King David] final instructions to Shlomo prior to his death. Just as Yakov arranged his final affairs with his children, so too Dovid finalised his personal affairs with his son.

Dovid's unfinished business dealt with situations of personal loyalty and treachery. In order for the succession of the throne to be secure and peaceful, Dovid identifies two key individuals who had betrayed him during his 40 years as King - King David's General, Yoav ben Tzeruah, and Shlomo's own Rebi, the great scholar Shimi ben Gera. In addition, he set apart the family of Barzillai the Gileadite for special royal consideration and reward.

Dovid Hamelech was not interested in revenge. Dovid, the father of Mashiach, was not consumed with anger. Dovid, the sensitive poet and magnificent singer, was interested in justice and the future well being of his nation. It was essential that he teach the young Shlomo the meaning of strong leadership and how to care for a problem, before it becomes a crisis.

Undoubtedly, it would have been easy for Dovid Hamelech to forgive those who had betrayed him, especially at the very end of his life; but that isn't the quality of leadership, which brings eventual redemption, and the building of the Bais Hamikdash. As the King, Dovid and Shlomo had to be devoted to Hashem's Torah, social justice, and the eternity of the nation.

## We Try Harder When We Have Taken An Oath by Rabbi Yissacher Frand

The last request the patriarch Yaakov makes from Yosef is "Bury me in the Land of Israel." Yosef responds, "I will do according to your words". Yaakov requests that Yosef take an oath to that effect and Yosef swore accordingly.

The Ramba"n is bothered by a very obvious question. Did Yaakov Avinu not trust his beloved son Yosef? Why was it necessary for him to make Yosef take an oath? It seems insulting on Yaakov's part to have asked Yosef to swear when Yosef already told Yaakov that he would fulfil his last request.

The Ramba"n emphasises that Yaakov did not request an oath to force Yosef's hand because he suspected that his trusted and beloved son would be negligent in carrying out his father's final request. The Ramba"n suggests that Yaakov insisted upon imposing the oath on Yosef to impress Pharaoh (Yosef's boss) of the gravity of the matter. Yaakov feared that Pharaoh would turn down Yosef's request for an exit visa and a leave of absence so that he Yosef would not be able to travel back to the Land of Canaan to bury his father. In fact, until Yosef mentioned to Pharaoh that he swore to his father that he would carry out this request, Pharaoh did not want to let him go. Yaakov had foresight into this matter.

However, the Ramba"n also throws out the following idea: "And Yosef as well would be more diligent in the matter because of the fact that he swore to it." According to this second explanation, Yosef himself, Yaakov felt, would do more than he would have done otherwise by virtue of the fact that he buttressed his initial acquiescence to Yaakov's request with an oath.

What does this mean? The Ramban is in effect saying that without the oath, Yosef haTzadik would do less for his father. As we asked originally, does Yosef need a Shavua [oath] to do more?

The same question may be asked in parshas Chayei Sarah by the incident involving Eliezer, the trusted servant of Avraham Avinu. Avraham trusted Eliezer with all of his possessions and yet when he sent him on a mission to find a wife for his son Yitzchak he insisted "put your hand under my thigh and swear to me that you won't take a wife for my son Yitzchak from the Canaanite daughters in whose midst I dwell." Why did Avraham make Eliezer swear?

The answer again is as the Ramban indicates -- because of the oath under which he was operating he was obliged to make a more diligent effort than he would have otherwise have made. A shavua adds an element of intensity to the actions of even a most trusted and devoted son or servant. What exactly does a shavua add?

The Sefer Imrei Shefer addresses this issue. He suggests that if Reuven pledges to Shimon that he will do something for him, but then runs into difficulty carrying out his intended mission, there may come a point where Reuven says to himself: "I gave it my best effort, but circumstances beyond my control emerged. It is out of my control. (I'm an anus.)"

Had Yosef merely pledged to Yaakov that he would bring him to Canaan for burial and Pharaoh had objected, preventing Yosef from carrying out his promise to his father, Yosef could have rationalised: "I did my best. That's all my father could have expected of me." However, when a person realises that there is something greater at stake than merely his "word", then a person has the ability to dig down deeper and to tap strengths that he never even knew he had. This is the difference between Yosef's WORD and Yosef's SHAVUA. When something greater is at stake, one does not so readily bring forth the excuse "I tried!" The

severity of the sin of violating one's oath brings fear and trembling to a person that far exceeds the emotions one feels he is not able to accomplish what he merely "promised" to accomplish. When we have taken an oath, we try harder because more is at stake.

Such is human nature. People make an effort but when it really counts, they dig down deeper and tap into unknown personality strengths. When speaking about such serious things, I am hesitant to bring in sports analogies but rightly or wrongly, we can all relate to this. We see this in the sports world. I am not that much of a football fan because there was not an NFL team in my hometown when I grew up there so I was not infected with the "girs d'yankesa" [childhood lessons], but I do have a passing interest. We see a phenomenon that for three quarters of the game, they may accomplish nothing. Then in the fourth quarter, they wake up. Even more acutely - in the last two minutes. For 58 minutes, nothing happens. Then, all of a sudden, they come to life.

What is the meaning of this human dynamic? The interpretation is that in those last two minutes, they see what is on the line. They know that there is no tomorrow. Then they act and play in a way that they did not really know they could because there is more at stake. For some people, that motivating factor is a game, a playoff, or a championship series. For us, it is something else. When Yosef realised that a shavua to G-d was at stake, it motivated him to act greater and to do things that he did not even know he could.

The lesson we should take away from this is that if we sometimes try to tell ourselves what is at stake, we act differently. When we truly appreciate the value of Tefillah B'Tzibur, we are motivated to make it to minyan even when we have many valid excuses for davening without a prayer quorum.

The glory of sports victory motivates those on the gridiron. To Eliezer and to Yosef, the awesome seriousness of an Oath to the Almighty motivated them to dig down into the deepest recesses of their personalities to uncover strengths that they would not otherwise demonstrate. We are all motivated by what is important in our lives.

The challenge we all face is to contemplate what is truly important in life and to keep those priorities in our consciousness when we are tempted to make excuses and believe we have "done all we could". Once we recognise these priorities, we will be motivated to do the right thing and will find the inner resources to do so.

Something to think about.... Shabbat Shalom

**LOUGHTON LOUNGE PRESENTS  
AN EVENING OF JAZZ**

**DIGBY FAIRWEATHER  
+ FULL JAZZ BAND**

**FEBRUARY 12 2012 • 7:00PM** LOUGHTON SYNAGOGUE HALL, BORDERS LANE, IG10 3JE

**THREE COURSE GOURMET MEAL WITH WINE £35 P.P.**

Selection of breads / Sweet potato and lemongrass soup with beetroot essence / Herb roasted chicken, Rich tomato jus  
Bowls of mint olive oil new potatoes / Roasted winter vegetables sprinkled with toasted cumin seeds  
Vegetarian: Jewelled Cous Cous - saffron grains mixed with bell peppers, red onions, radishes and Seville oranges  
Garden salad  
Apple and berry crumble, vanilla custard and chocolate dipped physalis

Entry will strictly be by ticket only for this event. Tickets will be limited and will be on a first come first served basis.  
R.S.V.P. Lesley Adams 020 8508 7337 OR lesley@diamondpersonnel.co.uk  
Or Loughton Synagogue Office 020 8508 0303 OR admin@loughtonsynagogue.com

Proceeds to: chai cancer care

**THOSE OBSERVING YAHRZEIT IN THE COMING WEEK:**

14 Tevet [9 January] Mr Bernard Irwin for his mother ה"ע Bashki bas Baruch  
17 Tevet [12 January] Mr Ricky Tobias for his mother ה"ע Esther Bas Noocham  
Mrs Karen Levy for her mother ה"ע Simcha bat Mordecai  
Mrs Suzi Shine for her father ה"ע David Chaim



PLEASE HELP PERPETUATE AND RESPECT THE MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES BY ENSURING THAT KADDISH IS SAID FOR THEM ON THE APPROPRIATE DATE AND ON THE SHABBAT PRECEDING THE YAHRZEIT.

Join us for an **in depth parsha shiur**  
Every Thursday evening at 8:pm Rabbi Aronovitz will give an interactive, contemporary and in-depth study on the week's parsha.  
3 Alderton Mews  
**No experience necessary! Commencing 12 January 2012**

**Paper Clips**  
It began as a lesson about prejudice... What happened next was a **MIRACLE**  
Lest we forget ... to mark  
**Holocaust Day - an amazing movie!**  
Loughton Synagogue  
**Wednesday 25th January 8pm**  
**£3—Refreshments will be served**  
Reserve tickets at 0208 508 0303 or  
Email: [shirlylane@yahoo.com](mailto:shirlylane@yahoo.com)

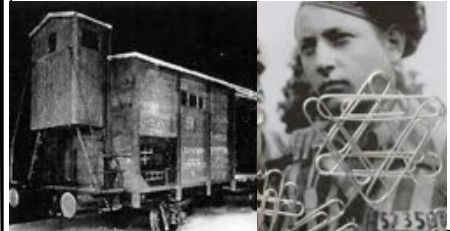
**Birthdays in the coming week:**  
Jan 7 - Carly White  
Jan 10 - Robyn Schaffer  
Jan 10 - Jasper Herbert  
Jan 11 - Rebecca Klein  
Jan 14 - Lynsey Sugarman  
**Anniversary in the coming week:**  
Jan 12 - Sarah & Terry Matthews  
**Mazel Tov!**

**Security Rota:**  
**Friday 6th Jan**  
Doug Adams  
Brett Adams  
**Saturday 7th Jan**  
Ian Levene  
Gary Lewis

**Shiurim**  
**Discuss - Learn - Grow**  
**@ 8 p.m.**  
@ Dennis & Shelley Posner 67 Church Lane

How are Rabbis trained - what really happens in Yeshiva?  
**16 January 2012**  
The Written Word & The Jewish Library - Torah, Mishna, Talmud, Medrash and Shulchan Aruch - What are they?  
**14 February 2012**  
Zionism and the rabbis why were some pro and others anti?  
**28 February 2012**

See you there **BRING A FRIEND**



**Children's Service @ Loughton!**  
Starting Shabbat 8 January, and subsequently on the first Shabbat of each month, there will be a children's service on Shabbat Morning  
**10:30am - 11:30am.**  
Followed by a sweets kiddush (and cholent for the adults!)

**KIDDIES DAVENING - FUN - GAMES - ACTIVITIES**

