

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



January 7, 2012

יב טבת תשע"ב

Parashat Vayechi - Genesis 47:28 - 50:26 (ויחי)

Hertz – p 180

Stone – p 268

חזק חזק ונתחזק!

Chazak chazak v-nit'cha'zek!

May we be strong and strengthen each other!

Haftarah – First Kings 2:1 - 12 (מלכים א')

Hertz – p 191

Stone – p 1145

Kiddush sponsored by Sisterhood

Talmud Class with Rabbi Gordon - 3:00 PM

Minchah - 4:15 PM

Shabbat Ends – 5:36 PM

On This Week's Torah Portion - וַיְהִי

Following the blessings of his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob tells Joseph that he is about to die. Since Jacob is the last of our patriarchs to die, we cling to his final words. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob form the cornerstone of Judaism for all future generations. Jacob promised Joseph that G-d will not abandon him and that G-d will bring Joseph to Canaan, the land of his fathers. This belief permeates all of Judaism. We believe that G-d will not leave us, that He is with us in the Diaspora and in Israel.

Jacob addresses all of his sons immediately before his death, "And Jacob called his sons and said, "Come together that I may tell you what is to befall you in days to come." (49.2) But when the text continues, Jacob does not tell his sons what the future will bring. Instead, he speaks personally to each of his sons. (Rashi's interpretation regarding why Jacob did not tell of "the end of days" is that the Divine Presence, or the Shechinah, was removed from Jacob so that he could not pass on such information.)

This portion of text is still puzzling. As we know, the Torah is complete and every word is intentional. According to the Zohar, the foundation of Jewish mystical works, there are three kinds of speech: Speaking, Saying and Relating. "Speaking" is the most general and is defined as a verbal act. "Saying" is also a verbal act but the words come from the heart. "Relating" differs from the first two in that it is the voice of the soul. This differentiation can help us to understand Jacob's words.

According to the Aggadah, the classical rabbinic writings, Jacob wished to relate deeply and soulfully to his sons on his deathbed. In poetic form, Jacob gave each son an honest appraisal of his life's accomplishments. The words Jacob uttered to his sons, the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel, were of heightened value because they came from the voice of his soul. Each son still had his life ahead of him, tasks to complete and obstacles to overcome. Jacob was a righteous man and the poetic blessings he gave his sons would help them create the nation of Israel.

How often do we get an honest appraisal of our own lives like Jacob gave to his sons? Like Jacob's sons, we are each on a unique journey. We need loving words, objective criticism and guidance in order to succeed.

The lesson we can take from this part of Vayechi is to place a higher value upon "relating" than "speaking" or "saying". Our conversations should be meaningful and sincere with children and adults alike. "Relating" is an expression of empathetic honesty, the opposite of sarcasm and platitude. Emulating our forefather Jacob in this way pushes us to share our true thoughts and feelings. Our goal becomes to look for and point out the value in others. Although it takes no extra time to speak from our heart and soul, it requires thoughtfulness, courage and compassion. I cannot think of a more worthwhile tool that each of us can use on our own personal journey.

Shabbat shalom, Laura Lieber

UPCOMING EVENTS

Motzei Shabbat, Jan 7 **Family Game Night**, 7:30 PM. Bring your family, your friends, your board games; play games, schmooze & nosh, plus annual ping-pong tournament. \$5/person

Sunday, January 8 **Stitch & Schmooze**, 10:00 AM

Shabbat, January 14 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Steve & Sandy Bell** in honor of Steve's 70th birthday.

Sunday, January 15 **2nd Annual Anna's Soup Kitchen**, 5:30-7:00 PM. Soups 'n sides, \$12/person, \$48 family max (kids under 5 eat free). Carry-out available, \$3 additional /person. *Advance reservations required by Fri. Jan 6, after that \$1 more/person.*

Monday, January 16 **Deadline for submission of articles, etc. for February Newsletter**. Please email to Marian at tradcong@sbcglobal.net.

Shabbat, January 21 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Sid & Barbara Levin** in honor of Sid's 60th birthday.

Tuesday, January 24 Brodsky Library Night at the Movies, debut screening of "The Debt" starring Helen Mirren. Kopolow Building, \$4/person. RSVP required 314-442-3720.

Shabbat, January 28 **Kiddush Luncheon and Tish with Rabbi Gordon**.

Do you have... A box at the Fox? A condo in the Ozarks? Tix to the Cardinals, Blues or Rams? A case of kosher wine? A service you can provide? We need your donation of items or services for our **Silent Auction** which will be held in conjunction with our fabulous **Casino Night on February 11th**. Get creative! Call Jennifer Tobias at 636-532-6621 and let her know what you can contribute to our Silent Auction.

Mazal Tov to... John & Barbie Perlmutter on the birth of a grandson, Joshua, born to JJ and Melissa Perlmutter in Atlanta.

Refuah Sh'leimah to... Ken Chapel

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday morning – 9:00 AM

Monday-Friday mornings – 7:00 AM

Monday-Thursday evenings – 6:30 PM

Friday evening – 5:45 PM