

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Vayigash
January 4, 2020 *** 7 Tevet, 5780

Kol Rina – An Independent Minyan, is a traditional egalitarian community. We are haimish (homey/folksy), friendly, participatory, warm and welcoming. We hold weekly services in South Orange as well as holiday services and celebrations which are completely lay led. We **welcome all** to our services and programs from non-Hebrew readers to Jewish communal and education professionals.

Today's Portions

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Vayigash in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3224/jewish/Vayigash-in-a-Nutshell.htm

Judah approaches Joseph to plead for the release of Benjamin, offering himself as a slave to the Egyptian ruler in Benjamin's stead. Upon witnessing his brothers' loyalty to one another, Joseph reveals his identity to them. "I am Joseph," he declares. "Is my father still alive?"

The brothers are overcome by shame and remorse, but Joseph comforts them. "It was not you who sent me here," he says to them, "but G-d. It has all been ordained from Above to save us, and the entire region, from famine."

The brothers rush back to Canaan with the news. Jacob comes to Egypt with his sons and their families—seventy souls in all—and is reunited with his beloved son after 22 years. On his way to Egypt he receives the divine promise: "Fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."

Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Pharaoh gives Jacob's family the fertile county of Goshen to settle, and the children of Israel prosper in their Egyptian exile.

Haftarah in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/610065/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's haftarah mentions the fusion of the kingdoms of Judah and Joseph during the Messianic Era, echoing the beginning of this week's Torah reading: "And Judah approached him [Joseph]."

The prophet Ezekiel shares a prophecy he received, in which G-d instructs him to take two sticks and to write one on, "For Judah and for the children of Israel his companions" and on the other, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions." After doing so he was told to put the two near each other, and G-d fused them into one stick.

G-d explains to Ezekiel that these sticks are symbolic of the House of Israel, that was divided into two (often warring) kingdoms: the Northern Kingdom that was established by Jeroboam, a member of the Tribe of Ephraim, and the Southern Kingdom, that remained under the reign of the Davidic (Judean) Dynasty. The fusing of the two sticks represented the merging of the kingdoms that will transpire during the Messianic Era — with the Messiah, a descendant of David, at the helm of this unified empire.

"So says the L-rd G-d: 'Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side, and I will bring them to

their land. And I will make them into one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be to them all as a king..."

The haftorah ends with G-d's assurance that "they shall dwell on the land that I have given to My servant, to Jacob, wherein your forefathers lived; and they shall dwell upon it, they and their children and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Future of the Past (Vayigash 5780) by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

<http://rabbisacks.org/vayigash-5780/>

In our parsha, Joseph does something unusual. Revealing himself to his brothers, fully aware that they will suffer shock and then guilt as they remember how it is that their brother is in Egypt, he reinterprets the past:

"I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no ploughing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt." (Gen. 45:4-8)

This is markedly different to the way Joseph described these events when he spoke to the chief butler in prison: "I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon" (Gen. 40:15). Then, it was a story of kidnap and injustice.

Now, it has become a story of Divine providence and redemption. It wasn't you, he tells his brothers, it was God. You didn't realise that you were part of a larger plan. And though it began badly, it has ended well. So don't hold yourselves guilty. And do not be afraid of any desire for revenge on my part. There is no such desire. I realise that we were all being directed by a force greater than ourselves, greater than we can fully understand. Joseph does the same in next week's parsha, when the brothers fear that he may take revenge after their father's death:

"Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Gen. 50:19-20)

Joseph is helping his brothers to revise their memory of the past. In doing so, he is challenging one of our most fundamental assumptions about time, namely its asymmetry. We can change the future. We cannot change the past. But is that entirely true? What Joseph is doing for his brothers is what he has clearly done for himself: events have changed his and their understanding of the past.

Which means: we cannot fully understand what is happening to us now until we can look back in retrospect and see how it all turned out. This means that we are not held captive by the past. Things can happen to us, not as dramatically as to Joseph perhaps, but nonetheless benign, that can completely alter the way we look back and remember. By action in the future, we can redeem the past.

A classic example of this is the late Steve Jobs' 2005 commencement address at Stanford University, that has now been seen by more than 40 million people on YouTube. In it, he described three crushing blows in his life: dropping out of college, being fired by the company he had founded – Apple, and being diagnosed with cancer. Each one, he said, had led to something important and positive.

Dropping out of college, Jobs was able to audit any course he wished. He attended one on calligraphy and this inspired him to build into his first computers a range of proportionally spaced fonts, thus giving computer scripts an elegance that had previously been available only to professional printers. Getting fired from Apple led him to start a

new computer company, NeXT, that developed capabilities he would eventually bring back to Apple, as well as acquiring Pixar Animation, the most creative of computer-animated film studios. The diagnosis of cancer led him to a new focus in life. It made him realise: “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life.”

Jobs’ ability to construct these stories – what he called “connecting the dots” – was surely not unrelated to his ability to survive the blows he suffered in life.[1] Few could have recovered from the setback of being dismissed from his own company, and fewer still could have achieved the transformation he did at Apple when he returned, creating the iPod, iPhone and iPad. He did not believe in tragic inevitabilities. Though he would not have put it in these terms, he knew that by action in the future we can redeem the past. Professor Mordechai Rotenberg of the Hebrew University has argued that this kind of technique, of reinterpreting the past, could be used as a therapeutic technique in rehabilitating patients suffering from a crippling sense of guilt.[2] If we cannot change the past, then it is always there holding us back like a ball and chain around our legs. We cannot change the past, but we can reinterpret it by integrating it into a new and larger narrative. That is what Joseph was doing, and having used this technique to help him survive a personal life of unparalleled ups and downs, he now uses it to help his brothers live without overpowering guilt.

We find this in Judaism throughout its history. The Prophets reinterpreted biblical narrative for their day. Then came Midrash, which reinterpreted it more radically because the situation of Jews had changed more radically. Then came the great biblical commentators and mystics and philosophers. There has hardly been a generation in all of Jewish history when Jews did not reinterpret their texts in the light of the present tense experience. We are the people who tell stories, and then retell them repeatedly, each time with a slightly different emphasis, establishing a connection between then and now, rereading the past in the light of the present as best we can.

It is by telling stories that we make sense of our lives and the life of our people. And it is by allowing the present to reshape our understanding of the past that we redeem history and make it live as a positive force in our lives.

I gave one example when I spoke at the Kinus Shluchim of Chabad, the great gathering of some 5000 Chabad emissaries from around the world. I told them of how, in 1978, I visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe to ask his advice on which career I should follow. I did the usual thing: I sent him a note with the options, A, B or C, expecting him to indicate which one I should follow. The options were to become a barrister, or an economist, or an academic philosopher, either as a fellow of my college in Cambridge or as a professor somewhere else.

The Rebbe read out the list and said “No” to all three. My mission, he said, was to train Rabbis at Jews’ College (now the London School of Jewish Studies) and to become a congregational Rabbi myself. So, overnight, I found myself saying goodbye to all my aspirations, to everything for which I had been trained.

The strange thing is that ultimately I fulfilled all those ambitions despite walking in the opposite direction. I became an honorary barrister (Bencher) of the Inner Temple and delivered a law lecture in front of 600 barristers and the Lord Chief Justice. I delivered Britain’s two leading economics lectures, the Mais Lecture and the Hayek Lecture at the Institute of Economic Affairs. I became a fellow of my Cambridge college and a philosophy professor at several universities. I identified with the biblical Joseph because, so often, what I had dreamed of came to be at the very moment that I had given up hope. Only in retrospect did I discover that the Rebbe was not telling me to give up my career plans. He was simply charting a different route and a more beneficial one.

I believe that the way we write the next chapter in our lives affects all the others that have come before. By action in the future, we can redeem much of the pain of the past.

[1] However, he did delay surgery for his cancer, believing that he could achieve an alternative cure. In this, he was mistaken. [2] Mordechai Rotenberg, *Re-biographing and Deviance*, Praeger, 1987.

Why Everyone Should Cry in Public - Vayigash by Sarah Wolf
<http://www.jtsa.edu/why-everyone-should-cry-in-public>

Vayiggash brings us to the culmination of the drama between Joseph and his brothers that began in Parashat Miketz. Ten of Joseph's brothers—all but Benjamin—had travelled to Egypt to buy food during a famine. Joseph, newly in command in Egypt, had disguised himself and, perhaps in retaliation for the way they had treated him earlier, forced his brothers to go through various ordeals and humiliating situations. One of Joseph's demands was that his brothers bring their youngest brother Benjamin when they returned to Egypt, with which they now comply, despite their father Jacob's resistance to putting his youngest and beloved son in danger. When they finally arrive in Egypt with Benjamin, Joseph frames all the brothers for theft of money and Benjamin for theft of a silver goblet. Joseph confronts the brothers and they find the goblet in Benjamin's bag. Judah begs Joseph to imprison him in Benjamin's place, explaining that if Joseph detains Benjamin instead, their father Jacob will die of grief.

After hearing Judah's words, Joseph is overcome and finally makes himself known to his brothers:

“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before everyone who stood by him, and he cried: ‘Get everyone away from me.’ No one was standing with Joseph when he revealed his identity to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said to his brothers: ‘I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?’” (Gen. 45:1-3)

In these powerful verses, Joseph expresses a need both for concealment and for self-expression. He is about to tell the truth to his brothers, but he also demands that the others around him leave. If he is about to make public an identity that is no secret from those around him, what then is motivating Joseph's demand to be alone with his family? Rashi tells us that by making sure that only family is left in the room, Joseph is acting out of a desire to protect his family from any further humiliation: he does not want the Egyptians to see his brothers put to shame when they realize who he is. According to this read, Joseph's need to expel the Egyptians demonstrates that he is beginning to express compassion for his brothers.

But perhaps Joseph's need for privacy at that moment has less to do with Joseph's feelings towards his brothers and more to do with Joseph's awareness, even self-consciousness, of his own emotional reactions. In his explanation of this verse, Rashbam focuses on the fact that we are told that Joseph “could not restrain himself,” and calls our attention to the appearance of Joseph's self-restraint two chapters earlier, when Joseph first sees Benjamin in Egypt. Immediately after he recognizes his brother, the Torah tells us:

“Joseph hurried out, for he was growing warm and tender toward his brother and was on the verge of tears; he went to a room and wept there. Then he washed his face, reappeared, and restrained himself, and he said, ‘Set out the bread.’” (43:30-31)

Joseph notices that his emotions are welling up and he is about to cry. He immediately leaves the room and cries in private. When he emerges, his face is washed clean of tears and his true feelings of compassion and warmth towards his brother are hidden under a veneer of restraint.

Rashbam explains that from that point until the moment he decides to reveal himself to his brothers, Joseph “was able to do everything he did”—that is, continuing to carry out his deceit towards his brothers—“because he was restraining himself in his heart.” In other words, his ability to suppress his own emotions is what enabled his cruel manipulation of his family. Now that he is no longer able to restrain himself, however, he cannot maintain the deception, and he is overcome by weeping and his own desire to make amends.

When read alongside Joseph's earlier reaction to his own weeping, then, it seems as

though Joseph's demand to be left alone may come from a place of not wanting his emotionally vulnerable side to be publicly revealed. Joseph is a political ruler, after all; perhaps his weeping could be seen as a sign of weakness by his subjects. Yet ironically, Joseph's request for privacy is revealed to be completely ineffective: this time, when he cries, he is so loud that he is audible to everyone in the building.

Whereas earlier Joseph wept in secret, now Joseph is unable to hide the intensity of his emotion, not just from his family but from the people who are likely essentially his courtiers. Even though his powerful role may have served as a barrier to his ability to express vulnerability, he is unable to maintain his grip on himself any longer, and he reveals his full self. And it is in this moment of complete self-disclosure, of not only the outer trappings of his identity but his inner emotional life, that he is able to make amends with his brothers. If Joseph's earlier self-restraint enabled his cruelty, his release now enables his compassion.

A powerful male political leader is perhaps an unusual role model for emotional honesty and vulnerability—but he also may serve as a role model precisely for those of us who, for reasons of gender, profession, or general personality, spend most of the time with a tight rein on our emotional self-expression. It is all the more striking that despite his ability to control himself most of the time, Joseph also lets go when he needs to, and it is only at this moment that he is able to become his best self and heal wounds that were created by long-ago interactions and family dynamics. If only we all could learn, as Joseph did over these few chapters, how to display our soft underbellies when we need to, and to allow our raw and tender emotions to show us how to be kind. (*Sarah Wolf is Assistant Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS*)

[Intimate Accountability by Liza Bernstein](http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1102506082947&ca=083556ea-1f-409a-a7c5-f746dcdd895c)

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Last week's parashah, Miketz, abruptly ended in the middle of a conversation between Yosef and Yehudah. After framing Binyamin for stealing a goblet, Yosef declared that he would imprison Binyamin, and Yehudah passionately began pleading with Yosef to take himself as a slave instead of his youngest brother. Our parashah, Vayigash, resumes with Yehudah stating his final pleas. By the end of Yosef's encounter with Yehudah, Yosef erupts into tears and reveals himself as Yosef, their lost brother. Up until this point, Yosef has remained in complete silence over his identity. Even when he excused himself to cry after seeing Binyamin, Yosef chose to remain silent. Why, then, is it Yehudah's speech that finally causes Yosef's revelation? Why now?

The answer to our question may be found in the name of the parashah itself - vayigash. Our parashah begins with "ויגש אליו יהודה" - Yehudah went up to him. The word vayigash means to approach or come near someone. The first time this word appears in the Torah is in the eighteenth chapter of Bereishit. After Avraham overhears God threatening to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Avraham approaches God - ויגש אורחם - and demands justice - האף תספה צדיק עם רשע? Will you sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?

When Avraham approaches - vayigash - God, an intense intimacy takes place between them. Avraham is not just talking to God; he is holding God accountable. Avraham is declaring the very essence of God and asking, will you not live up to yourself? Or are you not the God I thought you were? In this conversation, vayigash connotes a powerful physical and emotional proximity. Avraham is not just talking - vayedaber - with God - he is approaching him, and in that approach, Avraham is demanding that God be God's best self.

With this context, we can re-read the beginning of our own parashah. Up until this parashah, Yosef exists in a bifurcated world. Yosef is both Egyptian and a child of Yaakov, bnei Yisrael. Until Yosef forgives his brothers, he cannot fully merge his past with his present. When Yehudah approaches Yosef, Yehudah not only offers Yosef a means of reconciling his past, but more importantly, he obligates him. Yehudah's radical proximity

to Yosef forces Yosef to live up to the ethical standards of forgiveness and openness, of merging worlds, and of being both an Egyptian and a stranger.

Yehudah and Yosef's interaction is all the more poignant due to the fact that it is Yehudah out of all the brothers who approaches and pleads with Yosef for Binyamin's life. The same Yehudah who, only seven chapters earlier, crafts the idea of selling Yosef. When Yosef looks at Yehudah, he is not only confronted by his brother, but he is also confronted with the prospect of teshuvah. And once Yosef is faced with teshuvah, he cannot look away. In many ways, Yosef's overflowing of emotion represents the two aspects of teshuva. On the one hand, he is accepting and forgiving Yehudah; and on the other, he is asking for teshuva for himself.

Yosef could have lived the rest of his life without ever telling his family he was alive. In today's world, we also often find it easier to hide from those we disagree with or those who have caused us pain. We'd rather retreat into our enclaves, where we know and agree with all those around us. However, Yosef and Yehudah's interaction teaches us that this is neither sustainable nor the goal of human interaction. Peak humanity is an intimate and loving encounter between two people; it is a dialogue of accountability and openness. Just as Yehudah had the courage to approach Yosef and Yosef had the courage to forgive him, we too should strive to be the people who both approach and forgive. (*Liza Bernstien is the Conservative Yeshiva Advanced Lishmah Fellow 2019-20*)

D'var Haftarah: Nostalgia & Renewal by Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1102506082947&ca=083556ea-ea1f-409a-a7c5-f746dcdd895c>

Ezekiel yearns for a time when the northern kingdom, Israel, will again be joined together with the southern kingdom, Judea, as one united nation under a Davidic king. To understand this prophecy, one needs a little historical perspective on who Ezekiel was and the events which affected his thinking. He lived during the destruction of the First Temple and the fall of Judea in 586 BCE. All of these "events" he experienced after having been exiled to Babylonian some thirty years earlier. This together with the tragic fall of the northern kingdom of Israel some 150 years earlier haunted him and shaped his thinking about the restoration the "Jewish" world which had been lost.

These feelings were only natural. As Gershom Scholem, the prominent Israeli historian, has noted, redemption in the Jewish tradition was never simply a spiritual matter, it always involved national restoration on the stage of history. For Ezekiel, who experienced what he did, this entailed an idealization of the past projected onto the future. Why do I say idealization? A brief look at the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah show us that unity and harmony were a rare commodity. Only one king, David, managed to hold the "whole" nation together and, even during his reign, the life of the nation was anything but simple. We idealize David on account of his abilities, but, in retrospect, we must remember that what we glorify was not always as pretty as we remember it.

Ezekiel's vision seems to have been a mix of this nostalgia along with a desire for renewal: "And I will make them a single nation in the land... and single king shall be their king and they shall be no more two nations... and I will cleanse them and they shall be My people and I will be their God. And My servant David shall be king over them and they shall all have a single shepherd. And by My laws they shall go, and My statutes they shall keep and do them" (verses 22-24)

Was Ezekiel prophesying the miraculous return of the historical David who would restore the past or a leader in his mold? It is unclear to us today how far Ezekiel took his nostalgia. Later sages, though, debated this point: "Said Rabbi Yehuda said Rav: In the future the Holy One Blessed be He will bring about a 'new' David... Said Rav Papa to Abaye: But isn't it written: And David My servant will reign over them forever? (abridged from Sanhedrin 98b)

The bottom line for us is that we should be inspired by the past and even the idealized picture it inspires, but try to build the best present and future we can. (*Rabbi Silverstein is a faculty member at the Conservative Yeshiva*)

The Keys to Understanding American Anti-Semitism – and Fighting Back by Rabbi Sacks

<https://www.jta.org/2020/01/02/opinion/rabbi-lord-jonathan-sacks-the-keys-to-understanding-american-anti-semitism-and-fighting-back>

LONDON (JTA) January 2 — The last two festivals to be added to the Jewish calendar prior to modern times — Purim and Hanukkah — are both about anti-Semitism. There is one obvious difference between them: Haman, of the Purim story, wanted to kill Jews. Antiochus, of the Hanukkah story, wanted to kill Judaism. It was the difference between Nazi Germany and Soviet Communism.

But there is another difference that has renewed salience after the horrifying knife attack in Monsey, N.Y. What saved Jews on Purim was behind-the-scenes influence: Esther's influence in the royal court. But the danger of anti-Semitism remained. What if hatred returned and this time there was no Esther around to save the Jews? That is one reason, according to the Talmud, why we do not say Hallel on Purim.

On Hanukkah, by contrast, Jews fought back and won. The Maccabees became a symbol of Jewish activism, of refusing to live in fear. As a symbol of this, the original custom was to light Hanukkah lights outside the front door of the house, or at least in a window facing the street, to publicize the miracle. Today, we see the lighting of giant menorahs in the most prominent public face of cities throughout the world.

Hanukkah tells us not to curse the darkness, but instead to bring light to the world. It tells us to fight back and not to be afraid.

The shocking events in Monsey, together with those in Jersey City, Poway, Pittsburgh and elsewhere, are proof that the darkness has returned. It has returned likewise to virtually every country in Europe. That this should have happened within living memory of the Holocaust, after the most systematic attempt ever made by a civilization to find a cure for the virus of the world's longest hate — more than half a century of Holocaust education and anti-racist legislation — is almost unbelievable. It is particularly traumatic that this has happened in the United States, the country where Jews felt more at home than anywhere else in the Diaspora. Why is it happening now? First, because of everything associated with the internet, smartphones, viral videos and above all, social media. These have what is called a "disinhibition effect." People are far more hateful when communicating electronically than when speaking face-to-face. Cyberspace has proved to be the most effective incubator of resentment, rancor and conspiracy theories ever invented. Anti-Semitism thrives on conspiracy theories, versions of the Blood Libel and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, updated for the twenty-first century.

Second, because of the way people encounter these phenomena: often alone, in the privacy of their own home. This allows them to be radicalized without anyone realizing it is happening. Time and again, we read of people carrying out horrific attacks, while those who knew them recall not having seen any warning signs that they were intent on committing evil attacks.

The most dangerous phenomenon of our time is the "lone wolf" attack, because it is so hard to predict. The internet is particularly dangerous for loners, people in whom the normal process of socialization — learning to live with others who are not like us — has broken down.

Historically though, the most important factor in the rise of anti-Semitism is the sense among a group that the world as it is now is not the way it used to be, or ought to be. The far left has not recovered from the global collapse of communism and socialism as ideologies. Hence the assault on Jews as capitalists and libertarians.

The far right feels threatened by the changing composition of Western societies, because of immigration on an unprecedented scale and low birth rates among the native population. Hence white supremacists.

Many radical Islamists are troubled by dysfunctions in the Muslim world. Hence the emergence of anti-Zionism as the new anti-Semitism.

These concerns do not, in and of themselves, lead to anti-Semitism. One other factor must be added.

When bad things happen, good people ask, "What did I do wrong?" They put their house in order. But bad people ask, "Who did this to me?" They cast themselves as victims and search for scapegoats to blame.

The scapegoat of choice has long been the Jews. They were the archetypal outsiders. For a thousand years, they were the most prominent non-Christian minority in Europe. Today, the state of Israel is the most significant non-Muslim presence in the Middle East. It is easy to blame Jews because they are conspicuous, because they are a minority and because they are there.

Anti-Semitism has little to do with Jews — they are its object, not its cause — and everything to do with dysfunction in the communities that harbor it.

Anti-Semitism, or any hate, becomes dangerous in any society when three things happen: when it moves from the fringes of politics to a mainstream party and its leadership; when the party sees that its popularity with the general public is not harmed thereby; and when those who stand up and protest are vilified and abused for doing so. All three factors exist in Britain now. The same must not be allowed to happen in America.

What, then, must we do? The first priority must be to strengthen security in Jewish venues, to intensify police patrols and to develop habits of vigilance. The British Jewish community has a fine example in its Community Security Trust which, with the support of government grants, monitors risks, enlists thousands of volunteers to stand security duty and works closely with the government and local police forces. "Lone wolves" tend to seek soft targets, and the Jewish community must ensure as far as possible that there are no soft targets.

Next, we must recognize that while we have enemies, we also have friends — and they are many and strong. In Britain, as we faced a leader of the opposition who many of us felt has made his party a safe haven for anti-Zionists and anti-Semites, it was enormously important that non-Jews from all walks of life came out in our support. It made us feel we were not alone.

Many surveys in the United States have shown that Jews are the most admired of all minorities. We cannot fight anti-Semitism alone. The victim cannot cure the crime. We need to make friends who will stand with us and help lead the fight. This is best done by explaining how antisemitism endangers everyone, because the hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews.

Lastly, we must never forget the message of Hanukkah: Fight back. Never be afraid. Whatever the threats, be proud to be Jewish and share this pride with others.

At times our history has been written in tears, yet we have outlived every empire and every civilization that sought to destroy us. Our spirit, symbolized by the Hanukkah candles, is indomitable. Where others spread darkness, let us bring light.

Yahrtzeits

Francine Nelson remembers her sister Sara Rapaport Amoni (Sara bat Yehudah Leib haCohen v'Idel) on Wednesday January 1st (Tevet 4) and she remembers her aunt Esther Miller (Esther Zissel bat Hershel haCohen v Gittel Malka) on Thursday January 2nd (Tevet 5).

Anita and Craig Miller remember their daughter Audrey Miller (Leora bat Hannah va Alta) on Sunday January 5th (Tevet 8).

Melita Peckman remembers her husband, and Cornelia and Francesca Peckman remember their father, Albert Abram Peckman (Avram ben Moshe) on Wednesday January 8th (Tevet 11).