

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Vayeshev
December 17, 2022 *** 23 Kislev, 5783

Vayeshev in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3202/jewish/Vayeshev-in-a-Nutshell.htm

Jacob settles in Hebron with his twelve sons. His favorite is seventeen-year-old Joseph, whose brothers are jealous of the preferential treatment he receives from his father, such as a precious many-colored coat that Jacob makes for Joseph. Joseph relates to his brothers two of his dreams which foretell that he is destined to rule over them, increasing their envy and hatred towards him. Simeon and Levi plot to kill him, but Reuben suggests that they throw him into a pit instead, intending to come back later and save him. While Joseph is in the pit, Judah has him sold to a band of passing Ishmaelites. The brothers dip Joseph's special coat in the blood of a goat and show it to their father, leading him to believe that his most beloved son was devoured by a wild beast.

Judah marries and has three children. The eldest, Er, dies young and childless, and his wife, Tamar, is given in levirate marriage to the second son, Onan. Onan sins by spilling his seed, and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, Peretz (an ancestor of King David) and Zerach.

Joseph is taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, the minister in charge of Pharaoh's slaughterhouses. G-d blesses everything he does, and soon he is made overseer of all his master's property. Potiphar's wife desires the handsome and charismatic lad; when Joseph rejects her advances, she tells her husband that the Hebrew slave tried to force himself on her, and has him thrown into prison. Joseph gains the trust and admiration of his jailers, who appoint him to a position of authority in the prison administration.

In prison, Joseph meets Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, both incarcerated for offending their royal master. Both have disturbing dreams, which Joseph interprets; in three days, he tells them, the butler will be released and the baker hanged. Joseph asks the butler to intercede on his behalf with Pharaoh. Joseph's predictions are fulfilled, but the butler forgets all about Joseph and does nothing for him.

Haftarah in a Nutshell: Amos 2:6-3:8

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1019527/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's *haftorah* contains an allusion to the sale of Joseph by his brothers, an incident discussed in this week's Torah reading.

Amos opens with a rebuke to the Jewish People. G-d had been patient with them notwithstanding their transgression of the three cardinal sins — sexual impropriety, idolatry and murder. Their fourth sin, however, crossed the line — the mistreatment of the innocent, widows, orphans and the poor.

G-d reminds the Jewish people how He lovingly took them out of Egypt and led them through the desert for forty years and settled them in the Holy Land. There, He bestowed the gift of prophecy on some and inspired others to become Nazirites. Yet the Jewish people did not respond appropriately, giving wine to the Nazirites and instructing the prophets not to prophesy. Amos then goes on to describe G-d's punishment for the errant behavior: "And the stout-hearted among the mighty shall flee naked on that day, says the L-rd."

The *haftorah* ends with an admonition from G-d, one that also recalls His eternal love for His people: "Hearken to this word which the Lord spoke about you, O children of Israel, concerning the entire nation that I brought up from the land of Egypt. 'Only you did I love above all the families of the earth; therefore, I will visit upon you all your iniquities...'" As opposed to other nations to whom G-d does not pay close attention, G-d's love for His nation causes Him to punish them for their misdeeds, to cleanse them and prod them back onto the path of the just.

[How to Change the World – Vayeshev by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l](https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/vayeshev/how-to-change-the-world/)

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In his *Hilchot Teshuvah* (Laws of Repentance), Moses Maimonides makes one of the most empowering statements in religious literature. Having explained that we, and the world, are judged by the majority of our deeds, he continues:

Therefore we should see ourselves throughout the year as if our deeds and those of the world are evenly poised between good and bad, so that our next act may change both the balance of our lives and that of the world.[1]

We can make a difference, and it is potentially immense. That should be our mindset, always.

Few statements are more at odds with the way the world seems to us most of the time. Each of us knows that there is only one of us, and that there are seven billion others in the world today. What conceivable difference can we make? We are no more than a wave in the ocean, a grain of sand on the seashore, dust on the surface of infinity. Is it conceivable that with one act we could change the trajectory of our life, let alone that of humanity as a whole? Our parsha tells us that yes, it is. As the story of Jacob's children unfolds, there is a rapid rise of tension among his children that threatens to spill over into violence. Joseph, eleventh of the twelve, is Jacob's favourite son. He was, says the Torah, the child of Jacob's old age. More

significantly, he was the first child of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel. Jacob "loved Joseph more than all his other sons" (Gen. 37:3), and they knew it and resented it. They were jealous of their father's love. They were provoked by Joseph's dreams of greatness. The sight of the multi-coloured robe Jacob had given him as a token of his love provoked them to anger.

Then came the moment of opportunity. The brothers were away far from home tending the flocks when Joseph appeared in the distance, sent by Jacob to see how they were doing. Their envy and anger reached boiling point, and they resolved to take violent revenge.

"Here comes the dreamer!" they said to one other. "Now let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits – we can say that a wild animal devoured him – then we shall see what comes of his dreams!"

Gen. 37:19–20

Only one of the brothers disagreed: Reuben. He knew that what they were proposing was very wrong, and he protested. At this point the Torah does something extraordinary. It makes a statement that cannot be literally true, and we, reading the story, know this. The text says:

"When Reuben heard this, he saved him [Joseph] from them"

Gen. 37:21

We know this cannot be true because of what happens next. Reuben, realising that he is only one against many, devises a stratagem. He says, Let us not kill him. Let us throw him alive into this pit in the desert, and let him die. That way, we will not be directly guilty of murder. His intention was to come back to the cistern later, when the others were elsewhere, and rescue Joseph. When the Torah says, Reuben heard this and saved him from them, it is using the principle that "God accounts a good intention as a deed." [2] Reuben wanted to save Joseph and intended to do so, but in fact he failed. The moment passed, and by the time he acted, it was already too late. Returning to the cistern, he found Joseph already gone, sold as a slave.

On this, a Midrash says:

Had Reuben known that the Holy One blessed be He would write about him, "When Reuben heard this, he saved him," he would have lifted Joseph bodily onto his shoulders and taken him back to his father. [3]

What does this mean?

Consider what would have happened had Reuben actually acted at that moment. Joseph would not have been sold as a slave. He would not have been taken to Egypt. He would not have worked in Potiphar's house. He would not have attracted Potiphar's wife. He would not have been thrown into prison on a false charge. He would not have interpreted the dreams of the butler and baker, nor would he have done the same two years later for Pharaoh. He would not have been made viceroy of Egypt. He would not have brought his family to stay there.

To be sure, God had already told Abraham, many years earlier:

“Know with certainty that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and there they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years.”

Gen. 15:13

The Israelites would have become slaves, come what may. But at least they would not have had this happen as a result of their own family dysfunctions. An entire chapter of Jewish guilt and shame might have been avoided.

If only Reuben had known what we know. If only he had been able to read the book. But we never can read the book that tells of the long-term consequences of our acts. We never know how much we affect the lives of others.

There is a story I find very moving, about how in 1966 an eleven-year-old African-American boy moved with his family to a hitherto white neighbourhood in Washington.[4] Sitting with his brothers and sisters on the front step of the house, he waited to see how they would be greeted. They were not. Passers-by turned to look at them, but no-one gave them a smile or even a glance of recognition. All the fearful stories he had heard about how whites treated Blacks seemed to be coming true. Years later, writing about those first days in their new home, he says, “I knew we were not welcome here. I knew we would not be liked here. I knew we would have no friends here. I knew we should not have moved here.”

As he was thinking those thoughts, a woman passed by on the other side of the road. She turned to the children and with a broad smile said, “Welcome!” Disappearing into the house, she emerged minutes later with a tray laden with drinks and cream cheese and jam sandwiches which she brought over to the children, making them feel at home. That moment – the young man later wrote – changed his life. It gave him a sense of belonging where there was none before. It made him realise, at a time when race relations in the United States were still fraught, that a Black family could feel at home in a white area and that there could be relationships that were colourblind. Over the years, he learned to admire much about the woman across the street, but it was that first spontaneous act of greeting that became, for him, a definitive memory. It broke down a wall of separation and turned strangers into friends.

The young man, Stephen Carter, eventually became a law professor at Yale and wrote a book about what he learned that day. He called it *Civility*. The name of the woman, he tells us, was Sara Kestenbaum, and she died all too young. He adds that it was no coincidence that she was a religious Jew. “In the Jewish tradition,” he notes, such civility is called “chessed – the doing of acts of kindness – which is in turn derived from the understanding that human beings are made in the image of God.”

“Civility,” he continues, “itself may be seen as part of chessed: it does indeed require kindnesses toward our fellow citizens, including the ones who are

strangers, and even when it is hard.”

He adds:

To this day, I can close my eyes and feel on my tongue the smooth, slick sweetness of the cream cheese and jelly sandwiches that I gobbled on that summer afternoon when I discovered how a single act of genuine and unassuming civility can change a life forever.

A single life, says the Mishnah, is like a universe.[5] Change a life, and you begin to change the universe. That is how we make a difference: one life at a time, one day at a time, one act at a time. We never know in advance what effect a single act may have. Sometimes we never know it at all. Sara Kestenbaum, like Reuben, never did have the chance to read the book that told the story of the long-term consequences of that moment. But she acted. She did not hesitate. Neither, said Maimonides, should we. Our next act might tilt the balance of someone else’s life as well as our own.

We are not inconsequential. We can make a difference to our world. When we do so, we become God’s partners in the work of redemption, bringing the world that is a little closer to the world that ought to be. [1] Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuva 3:4. [2] Tosefta, Pe’ah 1:4. [3] Tanchuma, Vayeshev, p. 13. [4] Stephen Carter, *Civility* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), pp. 61–75. [5] Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5 (original manuscript text).

The Poser of Tamar by Aaron Leven

<https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/the-power-of-tamar/>

Parashat Vayeshev begins our four-week journey through the story of Yosef. Yosef’s narrative, perhaps the most developed and detailed character arc outside of Moshe’s, is one of growth, reconciliation, and redemption. And yet, in the very middle of our parashah, we confront the deeply problematic story of Yehudah and Tamar. For many readers, this is a challenging story. Why is it placed in the middle of the parashah? How are we supposed to feel about the characters? Does the story have anything to teach us?

To recap, Yehudah, Yosef’s older brother, leaves his family and marries the daughter of Shua, a Canaanite. Together they have three sons Er, Onan, and Shelah. Yehudah finds a wife for his eldest son, Er, but God deems that Er is “displeasing” and takes his life. In accordance with the biblical law known as levirate marriage Yehudah’s next oldest son is obligated to marry Tamar, and their children will be considered Er’s, thus redeeming his legacy. However, Onan purposely spills his seed to avoid having a child that would not be considered his. God finds this displeasing as well and takes his life. Tamar is now entitled to marry Shelah, but Yehudah misleads Tamar. Instead of arranging their marriage he casts her away, leaving her in limbo.

While on its face deeply troubling, levirate marriage could be interpreted as a mechanism to protect a woman from being alone in the event of losing a husband.

However, instead of looking out for Tamar's needs, Yehudah scapegoats her for the loss of his two sons. Later, after Yehudah has lost his own wife, he encounters a veiled Tamar and mistakes her for a sex worker. Tamar, who has still not been wed to an unmarried Shelah, sees an opportunity. She agrees to sleep with Yehudah but requests he leave his seal, cord, and staff as a pledge that he will eventually send a payment. When Yehudah's friend seeks her out to redeem his belongings, she is nowhere to be found.

Three months later, when Tamar reappears visibly pregnant, Yehudah is enraged assuming that she has had a child outside of his family. Oblivious to his own hypocrisy, he calls for her death. As she is being brought to her punishment, she understatedly reports to Yehudah that she is having a child by the man who owns this seal, cord, and staff. In this moment, recognizing his belongings, Yehudah understands what has taken place: Tamar is pregnant with his child. He declares that Tamar is more in the right than he is himself, and she is not to be punished. The chapter concludes with a report that Tamar gives birth to twins, Peretz and Zerah.

When learning this text with my teacher Dr. Amy Kalmanofsky she asked me the following questions:

Who looks good?

Who looks powerful?

Whose interests are being served?

In my initial reading my answer was something along the lines of, "I'm not sure anyone looks good, and Yehudah is holding all the power in service of his own interests." However, an evaluation of this chapter in the context of the rest of the parashah and of the Tanakh at large allows us to explore drastically different answers to these questions.

While this narrative interrupts the Yosef story, it is also the middle of Yehudah's own story. Yehudah has just led the charge among his brothers in selling Yosef into slavery. Next week in Parashat Vayiggash we will witness the fullness of Yehudah's teshuvah and growth when he offers himself as a slave in place of his brother Binyamin.

Understanding the ways that Yehudah will evolve, we can evaluate chapter 38 with a fresh set of eyes. In verse one Yehudah "goes down" to Canaan. Dr. Kalmanofsky asks, will Tamar play a role in lifting him up? At first glance, it appears that in donning a veil, Tamar, perhaps justifiably, deceives her father-in-law. However, perhaps Tamar in fact wants to be seen! Not only does she speak to Yehudah directly, but she does so while standing at Petah Einaim "the entrance of Enaim" a phrase that literally means "opening of the eyes." Tamar merely wants Yehudah to do right by her, to see her, but he is still too weak to understand how to take care of his own family.

When Tamar presents Yehudah's belongings, forcing him to confront his actions,

she does not do so in a way that exposes or embarrasses him. Instead Yehudah “recognizes” his belongings (Gen. 38:26). This is the same language as when Jacob “recognizes” the tunic that Yehudah and his brothers have bloodied to deceive their father into believing that Yosef has been killed. The intertextuality demonstrates that Yehudah is finally recognizing his own sin and is in a position to take accountability. At this moment Tamar looks good, Tamar looks powerful. She holds Yehuda accountable in a way that does not pit her interests against his but rather serves both of their interests.

That Tamar’s act is one that is recognized as righteous and holy is evidenced later in the book of Ruth. Ruth, another woman who takes her fate into her own hands by manipulating the rites of levirate marriage, gives birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David. David’s lineage on his mother’s side traces all the way back to Peretz, the son of Tamar. In her commentary on the book of Ruth the biblical scholar Irmtraud Fischer writes that, “two women, Naomi and Ruth, built up the House of David . . . the book of Ruth composes [our] people’s history as women’s history!” In commenting on Tamar, Dr. Kalmanofsky argues that the story of Tamar can be read as David’s birth narrative, though admittedly several generations removed.

Tamar’s story is undoubtedly challenging. She is objectified, cast off, and nearly sentenced to death. However, she also is intentional and powerful. Her persistence is rewarded in the eyes of our tradition by linking her to arguably one of Tanakh’s most central characters: King David. While Bereishit 38 serves as an all too familiar reminder of toxic patriarchy found in both our sacred texts and our contemporary world, Tamar’s story can also be inspiring, and a reminder that feminist Bible scholarship can bring deep, meaningful, and theological healing. *(Aaron Leven is a student at the Rabbinical School of JTS – Class of 2023)*

[A Hero of Biblical Proportions? By Cantor Sara Geffen Geller](https://truah.org/resources/cantor-sara-geffen-geller-parshat-vayeshev/)

<https://truah.org/resources/cantor-sara-geffen-geller-parshat-vayeshev/>

We usually think of Joseph as the “hero of biblical proportions” whose story takes up most of this week’s portion, Vayeshev. We follow Joseph’s story from precocious younger brother to the bottom of a pit, to slave and prisoner, to Pharaoh’s dream analyst and thence to the second highest office in the land.

Joseph organizes the entire kingdom to avert famine.

Joseph acquires the power to save the entire population from hunger. He is truly a “hero of biblical proportions.” I admire his tenacity and vision, yet I struggle to see how I might emulate him. How might I acquire enough power to help society endure?

Another part of the Torah portion offers us an alternate path to contributing to a better society. This less-discussed story, Genesis 38, centers on Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah. Tamar was married to Judah’s first two sons, who each

died. According to levirate tradihelah will also die, so he sends Tamar back to her family home. tion, Tamar should next marry the third son, Shelah. However, Judah fears that S

Here is a parallel to Joseph's story: Tamar has also been cast into an abyss, for as long as Shelah is available to marry her, Tamar is in limbo. She can neither separate from Judah's family nor can she marry anyone else.

While Joseph has God's support and the skill of dream interpretation, Tamar exercises her only "power" — the ability to become pregnant and give birth. There seems to be no "hero of Biblical proportions" to help Tamar.

To paraphrase Psalm 121: "From where will her help come?" From her neighbors. This inspiring interpretation of the rest of the story is given by Professor Judith Hauptman at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Professor Hauptman shows three times when Tamar's local community supported her: First, in verse 13, Tamar is told by other people that her father-in-law would be passing through. This intelligence allows her to put a plan in motion. Next, in verse 21, when Judah sends the goat he had promised Tamar and seeks to recover the collateral he had left with her, the "locals" or "town council" say there had been no prostitute in the area when Judah had been with a woman. They cover for her and throw him off the trail. Lastly, in verse 24, people tell Judah that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, is pregnant — which leads to the public revelation that Tamar has been impregnated by Judah himself and the resolution of her limbo status. Professor Hauptman writes: "The role played by the townspeople in this episode, like that of a Greek chorus, is significant. They, and not the male characters, move the story along."

The identities of the various townspeople remain unknown. But the consequence of their actions is monumental. One of Tamar's (and Judah's) children is Peretz, an ancestor of King David (yes, another hero of biblical proportions). By forcing Judah himself to acknowledge that he has in effect "performed" the levirate marriage, these anonymous folks lift Tamar out of her pit.

I recently moved to a new community, and for the first time in my life, I attended some meetings (Zoom and in-person) of a local political group. We learned about the qualifications of various candidates. We were updated on the progress of door-to-door canvassing, voter registration events, and postcard campaigns. The goal of the group was not to convince anyone to change their political affiliation. The goal was simply to encourage people to register and to vote. The efforts certainly did not change the outcome of every election this time, but then again, records show that only about half of the eligible voters in my district voted this year. So there is still a lot of work to do, and maybe next year... ‘

I see the possibilities and I hope to get more involved. Empowering people to vote lifts them out of a sort of pit.

I will never be a "hero of biblical proportions" like Joseph, saving an entire country

through my individual actions. But if I work on it, I think I can be part of the anonymous group of people, one of many heroes, that helps our democracy endure. We all can. *(Cantor Sara Geffen Geller has served Conservative congregations for 30 years. She has completed the Clergy Leadership Program of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality. Cantor Geller sits on the Cantors Assembly Executive Council and the Rabbinical Assembly/Conservative Masorti Movement Subcommittee on Racial Justice.)*

[Parshat Vayeishev: Shepherd-Consciousness and Post-Industrial Jew by Fivel Yedidya Glasser with contributions from Rabbi Chanan Morrison](https://www.growtorah.org/breisheit/2021/11/24-parshat-vayeishev-shepherd-consciousness-and-the-post-industrial-jew)
<https://www.growtorah.org/breisheit/2021/11/24-parshat-vayeishev-shepherd-consciousness-and-the-post-industrial-jew>

Our ancestors were shepherds. The Torah tells us that our forefathers, as well as Moshe Rabbeinu, Rachel Immeinu, and David Hamelech, all herded goats and sheep. In Parshat Vayeishev, we see that Yosef also worked as a shepherd alongside his brothers.[1] The greatest of our early Jewish leaders chose this profession, a livelihood scorned by surrounding cultures. Years after Yosef's exile to Mitzrayim and rise to viceroy of Mitzrayim, his brothers came to him in exile and Yosef presented them to Par'oh. The question that interested Par'oh was, "What is your occupation?" "We are shepherds," they replied to Par'oh, "like our fathers before us." [2] Shepherding was not a respected occupation in Mitzrayim, and Par'oh relegated Yosef's family to the far-off land of Goshen.

Why did so many of the original leaders of the Jewish people choose to become shepherds? Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief rabbi of pre-state Israel, explains that the advantage of shepherding may be found in the secluded lifestyle of the shepherd.[3] While engaged with flocks, ambling through the hills and valleys, the shepherd is cut off from the noisy distractions of society, thus enabling ample time for inner reflection.

Additionally, the labor is not intensive. Unlike farming, shepherding does not require one to exert a great deal of energy in mundane matters. Nevertheless, the shepherd is concerned with the actual physical needs of the flock. A shepherd does not live in an ivory tower, immersed in artificial philosophies detached from life. Rather, the shepherd is constantly engaged with the real world, seeking water, shade and good fodder for the animals. The thoughts and musings of the shepherd may be sublime and lofty, but they cannot take the shepherd away from the task at hand.

This explanation, however, requires further examination, especially for Rav Kook, who emphasizes the importance of the individual's connection and contribution to society throughout his writings. What is the value of seclusion and solitude? Is the desire for solitude a positive trait? How do we balance reclusive behavior with the greater ideals of refining humanity and elevating the universe? In other words: Is the ideal to connect to the world, or to disconnect?

Let us first examine through the teachings of Rav Kook what occurs when one engages in the inner-reflection that exemplifies “shepherd consciousness”:
“The greater the soul, the more it must struggle in order to find itself; the more the depths of the human soul are hidden from the conscious mind. One must have extended solitude and hitbodedut (self-reflective prayer), examining ideas, deepening thoughts, and expanding the mind, until finally the soul will truly reveal itself, unveiling some of the splendor of its brilliant inner light.”[4]

In order to cultivate one’s own greatness, it is necessary to develop a deep soul-awareness. This is best accomplished through silence and isolation. When one truly engages in such a practice, it will inevitably have a positive influence both in one’s own life and also on one’s surroundings. The intent of this withdrawal is to ultimately have a positive impact on the larger world, and not merely to attain personal spiritual fulfillment.

The goal is not to engage in a personal spiritual path that is disassociated from the rest of the world. Rather, the aspiration is the opposite—the solitude of the shepherd ultimately enables him to reconnect and even provide for the larger world on a spiritual level.

The silence of the shepherd is not just the absence of speech. It is a sublime language of silence, flowing from an outpouring of the soul, a vehicle of ru’ach hakodesh (Divine inspiration). The depths of the soul demand silence. Silence is full of life, revealing treasures from the beauty of wisdom.

Yet today’s hi-tech, wi-fi-connected world does not leave enough space for an individual to hear silence. With this constant “connection,” are we able to access the inner recesses of our own being?

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov teaches that a Jew should spend one hour a day in hitbodedut.[5] This means that every Jewish person should set aside a significant period of time to simply be with Hashem. Not to pray formally, study, or engage in mitzvot; rather, to simply be. It can include mundane conversation with Hashem or soul-wrenching self-analysis. In this sacred time we can come to taste the Divine encounter that our forefathers taught us through their example as shepherds. This one hour of being with Hashem, of simply being, will come to inform how we are and what we do in the world.

When we are too caught up in experiencing the world without “shepherd consciousness” we tend to make decisions from our own narrow, “get-ahead” reality. When we focus too much on “doing,” without communing with the Divine, we automatically make decisions that transform the earth in negative ways. This is the source of many of the environmental problems we face today. A society that is driven by consumption and industrial development can overlook deforesting the rainforests or irrevocably and negatively impacting the climate. It is precisely the accessing of our inner selves that enables us to encounter the larger picture of our own reality.

Much of today's environmental crisis stems from laziness, detachment and simply cutting corners, not malicious destruction. If everyone, from the average consumer to the corporate CEO, dedicated time each day to rekindle their own inner-potential as vehicles for Hashem in the world, their use of the natural world would be informed by their relationship with the Creator of the natural world. It does not really matter if one is controlling a multinational corporation or running a household—the reality is that mindfulness of the bigger picture is essential for any individual who cares about the world in which we live.

We do not each need to become shepherds to learn the lesson of “shepherd consciousness.” A simple commitment to withdraw from the world for a brief period and engage the more spiritual realms will provide us with a broader perspective on our own lives and the decisions we make. Simply, we need to focus on being human beings, not human doings. If we are to stand a chance of returning to ecological balance, we need to regain the inner spiritual balance and clarity of vision of our ancestors. *(Rabbi Fivel Yedidya Glasser is one of the Directors of Youth Programming at Keshet Educational Journeys. He is the former Executive Director of The Nesiya Institute, a non-profit educational program fostering meaningful dialogue and relationships between Jews from all walks of life. Rabbi Chanan Morrison runs ravkooktorah.org.)*

[1] Bereisheit 37:2 [2] Bereisheit 47:3 [3] The following ideas are based on and adapted from Rabbi Kook's Ein Eyah, vol. 4, pp. 144-145 and Orot HaKodesh vol. 3, pp. 267,269-274 ; vol. 2, pp. 439-41 (Mosad HaRav Kook Publishers, Jerusalem). [4] Orot HaKodesh, vol. 3, pp. 270 [5] Likutei Moharan, second half, Torah 25

Yahrtzeits

Russett Feldman and Nikki Pusin remember their father Max Nathaniel Pusin on Sat. Dec. 17 (Kislev 23).

Blossom Primer remembers her husband Irwin's mother Sarah Primer on Thurs. Dec. 22 (Kislev 28).

Stuart Sender remembers his father Jack Sender on Thurs. Dec. 22(Kislev 28).

Harriet Hessdorf remembers her father Herbert Achtentuch on Fri. Dec. 23 (Kislev 29)