

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Vayishlach
December 2, 2023 *** 19 Kislev, 5784

[Vayishlach in a Nutshell](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3197/jewish/Vayishlach-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

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The name of the Parshah, "Vayishlach," means "And he sent" and it is found in Genesis 32:4.

Jacob returns to the Holy Land after a 20-year stay in Charan, and sends angel-emissaries to Esau in hope of a reconciliation, but his messengers report that his brother is on the warpath with 400 armed men. Jacob prepares for war, prays, and sends Esau a large gift (consisting of hundreds of heads of livestock) to appease him.

That night, Jacob ferries his family and possessions across the Jabbok River; he, however, remains behind and encounters the angel that embodies the spirit of Esau, with whom he wrestles until daybreak. Jacob suffers a dislocated hip but vanquishes the supernal creature, who bestows on him the name Israel, which means "he who prevails over the divine."

Jacob and Esau meet, embrace and kiss, but part ways. Jacob purchases a plot of land near Shechem, whose crown prince—also called Shechem—abducts and rapes Jacob's daughter Dinah. Dinah's brothers Simeon and Levi avenge the deed by killing all male inhabitants of the city, after rendering them vulnerable by convincing them to circumcise themselves.

Jacob journeys on. Rachel dies while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin, and is buried in a roadside grave near Bethlehem. Reuben loses the birthright because he interferes with his father's marital life. Jacob arrives in Hebron, to his father Isaac, who later dies at age 180. (Rebecca has passed away before Jacob's arrival.)

Our Parshah concludes with a detailed account of Esau's wives, children and grandchildren; the family histories of the people of Seir, among whom Esau settled; and a list of the eight kings who ruled Edom, the land of Esau's and Seir's descendants.

[Haftarah in a Nutshell: Obadiah 1:1-21](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/596328/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/596328/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's haftorah mentions the punishment of Edom, the descendents of Esau, whose conflict with Jacob is chronicled in this week's Torah reading.

The prophet Obadiah, himself an Edomian convert to Judaism, describes the punishment destined for the nation of Edom. The Edomites did not come to Judea's aid when she was being destroyed by the Babylonians, and even joined in the carnage. Many years later the Edomites (the Roman Empire) themselves destroyed the Second Temple and mercilessly killed and enslaved their Jewish cousins.

Though the Roman Empire was one of the mightiest to ever inhabit the earth, the prophet forewarns: "If you go up high like an eagle, and if you place your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the Lord. . . And the house of Jacob shall be fire and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau shall become stubble, and they shall ignite them and consume them, and the house of Esau shall have no survivors, for the Lord has spoken."

After describing the division of Esau's lands amongst the returning Judean exiles, the haftorah concludes with the well known phrase: "And saviors shall ascend Mt. Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the Lord shall have the kingdom."

Food For Thought

Collective Responsibility: Vayishlach by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

<https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/vayishlach/collective-responsibility/>

By any standards it was a shocking episode. Jacob had settled on the outskirts of the town of Shechem, ruled by Hamor. Dina, Jacob's daughter, goes out to see the town. Shechem, Hamor's son, sees her, abducts and rapes her, and then falls in love with her and wants to marry her. He begs his father, "Take this girl as a wife for me" (Gen. 34:4).

Jacob hears about this and keeps quiet, but his sons are furious. She must be rescued, and the people must be punished. Hamor and his son come to visit the family and ask them to give consent to the marriage. Jacob's sons pretend to take the offer seriously. We will settle among you, they say, and intermarry, on condition that all your males are circumcised. Hamor and Shechem bring back the proposal to the people of the town, who agree.

On the third day after the circumcision, when the pain is at its height and the men incapacitated, Simon and Levi, Dina's brothers, enter the town and kill every single male (Gen. 34:26).

It was a terrible retribution. Jacob rebukes his sons:

“You have brought trouble on me – you have made me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and Perizzites. I am few in number, and if they join forces and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed.” Gen. 34:30

But Simon and Levi reply:

“Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?” Gen. 34:31

There is a hint in the text that Simon and Levi were justified in what they did. Unusually the Torah adds, three times, an authorial comment on the moral gravity of the situation:

Jacob’s sons, having heard what had happened, came back from the field. They were shocked and furious, for Shechem had committed an outrage in Israel by sleeping with Jacob’s daughter. Such a thing cannot be done! Gen. 34:7

The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. Gen. 34:27

Yet Jacob condemns their action, and although he says no more at the time, it remains burningly in his mind. Many years and fifteen chapters later, on his death-bed, he curses the two brothers for their behaviour:

Simon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence their wares. Let me never join their council, nor my honour be of their assembly. For in their anger they killed men; at their whim they hamstringed oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is most fierce, and their fury, for it is most cruel. I will divide them up in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. Gen. 49:5-7

Who was right in this argument? Maimonides vindicates the brothers. In his law code, the Mishneh Torah, he explains that the establishment of justice and the rule of law is one of the seven Laws of Noah, binding on all humanity:

And how are the Gentiles commanded to establish law courts? They are required to establish judges and officers in every area of habitation to rule in accordance with the enforcement of the other six commands, to warn the citizenry concerning these laws and to punish any transgressor with death by the sword. And it is on this basis that all the people of Shechem were guilty of death (at the hands of Simon and Levi, sons of Jacob): because Shechem (their Prince) stole (and raped) Dina, which

they saw and knew about, but did not bring him to justice...

Maimonides, Laws of Kings, 9, 14

According to Maimonides, there is a principle of collective responsibility. The inhabitants of Shechem, knowing that their prince had committed a crime and failing to bring him to court, were collectively guilty of injustice.

Nachmanides disagrees. The Noahide command to institute justice is a positive obligation to establish laws, courts and judges, but there is no principle of collective responsibility, nor is there liability to death for failure to implement the command. Nor could there be, for if Simon and Levi were justified, as Maimonides argues, why did Jacob criticise them at the time and later curse them on his death bed?

The argument between them is unresolved, just as it was between Jacob and his sons. We know that there is a principle of collective responsibility in Jewish law: *Kol Yisrael arevin zeh bazeh*, "All Jews are sureties for one another." But is this specific to Judaism? Is it because of the peculiar nature of Jewish law, namely that it flows from a covenant between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, at which the people pledged themselves individually and collectively to keep the law and to ensure that it was kept?

Maimonides, unlike Nachmanides, seems to be saying that collective responsibility is a feature of all societies. We are responsible not only for our own conduct but for those around us, amongst whom we live. Or perhaps this flows not from the concept of society but simply from the nature of moral obligation. If X is wrong, then not only must I not do it. I must, if I can, stop others from doing it, and if I fail to do so, then I share in the guilt. We would call this nowadays the guilt of the bystander. Here is how the Talmud puts it:

Rav and R. Chanina, R. Yochanan and R. Habiba taught [the following]: Whoever can forbid his household [to commit a sin] but does not, is seized for [the sins of] his household; [if he can forbid] his fellow citizens, he is seized for [the sins of] his fellow citizens; if the whole world, he is seized for [the sins of] the whole world. *Shabbat 54b*

Clearly, however, the issue is a complex one that needs nuance. There is a difference between a perpetrator and a bystander. It is one thing to commit a crime, another to witness someone committing a crime and failing to prevent it. We might hold a bystander guilty, but not in the same degree. The Talmud uses the phrase "is seized." This may mean that he is morally guilty. He can be called to account. He may be punished by "the heavenly court" in this world or the

next. It does not mean that he can be summoned to court and sentenced for criminal negligence.

The issue famously arose in connection with the German people and the Holocaust. The philosopher Karl Jaspers made a distinction between the moral guilt of the perpetrators and what he called the metaphysical guilt of the bystanders:

There exists a solidarity among men as human beings that makes each co-responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world, especially if a crime is committed in his presence or with his knowledge. If I fail to do whatever I can to prevent them, I too am guilty. If I was present at the murder of others without risking my life to prevent it, I feel guilty in a way not adequately conceivable either legally, politically, or morally. That I live after such a thing has happened weighs upon me as indelible guilt.[1]

So there is real guilt, but, says Jaspers, it cannot be reduced to legal categories. Simon and Levi may have been right in thinking that the men of Shechem were guilty of doing nothing when their prince abducted and assaulted Dina, but that does not mean that they were entitled to execute summary justice by killing all the males. Jacob was right in seeing this as a brutal assault. In this case, Nachmanides' position seems more compelling than that of Maimonides.

One of Israel's most profound moralists, the late Yeshayahu Leibowitz (1903-1994), wrote that though there may have been an ethical justification for what Simon and Levi did, "there is also an ethical postulate which is not itself a matter of rationalisation and which calls forth a curse upon all these justified and valid considerations." [2] There may, he says, be actions which can be vindicated but are nevertheless accursed. That is what Jacob meant when he cursed his sons.

Collective responsibility is one thing. Collective punishment is another.

[1] Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, Trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Fordham University Press 2000, p. 26. [2] Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *After Kibiyeh: Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State* 1953-4, <http://www.leibowitz.co.il/leibarticles.asp?id=85>.

Vayishlach: We Need Stories to Counter the Narrative of Endless War
by Rabbi Josh Breindel

https://truah.org/resources/josh-breindel-vayishlach-moraltorah_2023/

I love stories. They're an echo of the act of creation. Since our world was created through speech, storytelling is an act of re-creation, transforming reality just a little. A story in this week's portion, *Vayishlach*, guides us in bringing a hint of

change to our troubled times.

In a touching scene between estranged brothers, Jacob and Esau finally reunite: "Esau ran to greet him – he embraced [Jacob] and, falling on his neck, he kissed him, and they wept." (Genesis 33:4) In the Torah, this passage is written with an unusual feature. The word *vayishakeihu*, "he kissed him," has a dot above each letter. Rabbis and readers for centuries have wondered why.

Classic answers often stem from a deep suspicion of Esau. He was the progenitor of the Edomites (Genesis 36:8), who would later war with the Israelites. The rabbis mapped Esau to represent Rome and other oppressive rulers. The rabbinic phrase "Esau hates Jacob" would become an aphorism for antisemitism. It's no surprise that one of the most famous rabbinic explanations for the "dotted kiss" is also one of the most problematic:

[The dots] teach that [Esau] did not come *linashko* / to kiss him, but rather *linashcho* / to bite him! But Jacob's neck became marble and the teeth of the wicked one were blunted. So what does scripture indicate by saying, "And they wept?" It's that the one wept on account of his neck and the other wept on account of his teeth. (Bereshit Rabbah 78:9)

I was horrified when I first read this midrash. Imagining Esau as untrustworthy and murderously violent leads only to mistrust and division. What benefit is there for us in reading that into the text?

Writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie offers us superb advice in countering this kind of narrative. Her TED talk "The danger of a single story", teaches that we can open ourselves to redemptive truths by finding more than "a single story" about other people or cultures:

"The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story... It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult."

In the aftermath of Hamas's attack on Oct. 7, we must ensure that their single story of permanent war against Israel is not the only story told. We need a counter to the narrative that the cycle of violence between Jacob and Esau (or, going back a generation, between Isaac and Ishmael) can never be broken.

Fortunately, we have more than a single story to tell. For example, *Yalkut Shimoni 722*, a midrashic collection from approximately the 13th century, recounts, "It is well-known that Esau hates Jacob, but in that moment he turned to compassion and kissed him with all his heart." Here, the text suggests that hate, as an ongoing state, can be transformed into compassion. Similarly, *Ibn*

Ezra (12th century) redirects our attention to the text's plain meaning, where Esau clearly intended no harm to Jacob.

One tool for us to help encourage peace among the children of Abraham is amplifying stories of peace among them. Even more than in their brotherly kiss, I find a promise of future peace through Jacob and Esau's tears. As the 19th century Eastern European commentator *Ha'amek Davar* writes:

"...In that moment, love for Esau was roused in Jacob. And so on through the generations: Whenever the descendants of Esau are roused by a pure spirit to recognize the descendants of Israel and their status, then we too are roused to recognize Esau, for he is our brother."

After Hamas's attack, I initially struggled to find compassion for anyone but the Israelis. The suffering in Gaza failed to reach me; I numbed myself to their pain. However, holding only to that "single story" of Palestinian aggression "makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult." It blocks empathy, which prevents us from achieving peace.

One small but important step toward breaking free of this cycle of violence and fear is a willingness to see our "equal humanity." Our stories can help us to find clarity when our vision is obscured by tears.

I imagine that Jacob's and Esau's tears began by grieving their lost opportunities to create loving memories. As those tears flowed, they turned to tears of relief that they had faced their fears and finally dared to embrace one another.

Let's find courage together by sharing our stories about the world we wish to create; the world we want our children to inherit. As Herzl famously said about the State of Israel, "If you wish it, it is no myth." It's similar for crafting a world of peace: By telling our stories, they become no myth; our words become an act of redemptive creation. (*Rabbi Josh Breindel serves as the rabbi of Congregation Beth El (Sudbury, MA). As "The Rabbi on the Radio", he offers weekly reflections and music on Chagigah (WERS). As "The Sci-Fi Rabbi", he blends ancient Jewish thought with modern speculative fiction in sermons, articles, and an open monthly book group.*)

Vayishlach: Small Vessels by Rabbi Yonatan Neril

Updated and Edited by Shoshi Ehrenreich (Grow Torah)

<https://www.growtorah.org/breisheit/2021/11/17-parshat-vayishlach-small-vessels>

Before Yaakov's epic encounter with Eisav in which he reunites with his brother after decades of estrangement, Yaakov brings his family and possessions across a stream. He then returns at night to the other side of the stream, and the Torah narrates that "Yaakov remained alone." The rabbis see the word "alone" (levado)

as superfluous, and understand it as related to the similar sounding lecado, "for his vessel," yielding, "Yaakov remained for his vessel." That is, say the rabbis, he re-crossed the stream at night to recover a few small vessels that he forgot to bring across.[1] But why would Yaakov, facing an imminent confrontation with Eisav and his 400-man militia, leave his family alone and vulnerable at night to recover a few forgotten flasks?

This perplexing midrash can be understood as an expression of a deeper worldview: since everything in his possession comes from Hashem, each vessel has a specific purpose and must be used to its full potential. As one rabbinic commentary explains, each material item that a righteous person uses is a means toward spiritual repair in the world.[2] Yaakov went back for the vessels to ensure they were used in the optimal way. Had he not, their full potential would not have been realized.

The righteous recognize the value of their G-d-given possessions and are very careful with them, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant they are. While they are not overly attached to material things, the righteous do not dispose of objects prematurely or use them inappropriately. Indeed, the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, on his deathbed, made sure to instruct his students to remove the vessels from his room to prevent them from becoming contaminated by his corpse and, thereby, unusable.[3]

The Sefer HaChinuch[4] offers insight into the spiritual root of Yaakov's action. He writes regarding the commandment not to wastefully destroy anything (bal tashchit):

The root reason for the precept is known: for it is in order to train our spirits to love what is good and beneficial and to cling to it; and as a result, good fortune will cling to us, and we will move well away from every evil thing and from every matter of destructiveness...They will not destroy even a mustard seed in the world, and they are distressed at every ruination and spoilage that they see; and if they are able to do any rescuing, they will save anything from destruction, with all their power.

The Sefer HaChinuch helps explain what motivated Yaakov's exceptional effort to save a few vessels: an impulse to love and cling to what is good in the world, and to avoid waste to any degree.

In this vein, Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains that the commandment "do not destroy," is "the most comprehensive warning to human beings not to misuse the position that Hashem has given them as masters of the world and its matter to capricious, passionate, or merely thoughtless wasteful destruction of anything

on earth.”[5] He elaborates on this in his book Horeb by means of a hypothetical statement from Hashem:

Only if you use the things around you for wise human purposes, sanctified by the word of My [God’s] teaching, only then are you a mensch and have the right over them which I have given you as a human...However, if you destroy, if you ruin, at that moment you are not a human...and have no right to the things around you. I lent them to you for wise use only; never forget that I lent them to you. As soon as you use them unwisely, be it the greatest or the smallest, you commit treachery against my world, you commit murder and robbery against my property, you sin against Me![6]

For us, living in a world of abundance where it is so easy to throw things away, Yaakov’s example presents a particular challenge. Already in 1955, the retailing analyst Victor Lebow highlighted a trend in consumer society away from greater mindfulness regarding possessions and toward a more short-term view.

He wrote, “Our enormously productive economy...demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption...We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever-increasing rate.”[7]

The trend he describes has only become more pronounced in the time since Lebow wrote these words. Although zero-waste advocates are able to minimize packaging and anything disposable, our consumer system is not particularly friendly to this effort. We are expected to throw away usable items because they are a few years old or outdated by new products; we discard clothing and appliances and buy new ones instead of repairing them; and disposable packaging is frequently unavoidable. Globally we produce over 400 million tons of plastic waste a year, and that is only a fraction of the total waste we produce. [8]

Our relationship with the resources we consume has significant consequences for the planet. Most of the big things that happen in the world are really just the consequences of a lot of small things put together. Human actions are changing the climate balance on earth, with more intense storms and floods, shifting disease vectors, and sea level rise threatening hundreds of millions of people in low-lying areas.[9]

Yet how is it possible that human beings could cause such widespread imbalance? In many ways, it comes down to the small vessels – mining aluminum for one can, trucking one glass bottle to a faraway dump, as well as

countless other small acts – multiplied by 250 years of industrial society and billions of people.

Today's global environmental crises cannot be pinned on one group of people or nation and solving them will require the participation of billions of individuals. It is on this individual level that Yaakov's actions can speak so profoundly.

Yaakov's going back for two or three vessels teaches us that little things matter. In our consumer age, the message has only become more relevant. We all have the potential to be truly righteous. *May we learn from Yaakov's example and come to live in a more Divine-aware and sustainable way. (Rabbi Yonatan Neril is an interfaith environmental advocate, NGO director, and rabbi. He is the founder and current director of the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (ICSD), a non-profit organization based in Jerusalem. Shoshi Ehrenreich is the Program Coordinator at Grow Torah.)*

[1] Bereisheit 32:25. Babylonian Talmud, Chulin, 91a. Midrash Agada – Buber on 32:25. Rashi on 32:25. The Gur Aryeh (Maharal of Prague) on 32:24 says these were two or three very small vessels. Baalei Tosafot on 32:25 understood levado as hinting at lecado, 'for his vessels'. [2] Orchot Tzaddikim on Bereisheit 32:24. Medieval. Anonymous rabbinic Torah Commentator [3] Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 28b [4] Sefer HaChinuch: The Book of [Mitzvah] Education, evidently by Rabbi Pinhas haLevi of Barcelona, 16th century, translated by Charles Wengrov. Feldheim: Jerusalem, vol. 5 p. 145, on Mitzva 529—Bal Tashchit. [5] Comment to Devarim 19:20, in The Pentateuch, Translated and Explained by Samson Raphael Hirsch, vol. 5 Deuteronomy, rendered into English by Isaac Levy. Judaica Press: Gateshead, England, 1982. p. 395 [6] Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances, by Samson Raphael Hirsch, translated by Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld, Soncino Press: London, 1962, vol. 2, p. 279 [7] "The Journal of Retailing," Spring 1955, p. 7 [8] See [Our World in Data's report on plastic waste](#). [9] See reports of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#).

[Parshat Vayishlach: Fear and Concern by Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander](#)

<https://ots.org.il/parshat-vayishlach-fear-and-concern/>

Throughout the world there are heated conversations about the war activities in Gaza. Knowing that world Jewry is supportive of our righteous actions to defend Israel, hundreds of thousands of Jews and non-Jews in North America and the United Kingdom have rallied on behalf of Israel to show support for our *chayalim* and for the freeing of our hostages. We will be victorious because we have no choice and because we are united throughout the world to achieve this just goal.

Yet it is not only our cause that is righteous, but the way we are waging the war, too, with concern for the needs of civilians in Gaza, a population that lies somewhere between guilt and innocence, a factor in military decision making.

This is true even as Hamas has taken over their hospitals and kindergartens, with “civilian” homes used for storing munitions caches and disguising hidden tunnels built underneath their domiciles, and with long and short range missiles nestled in the orchards. The question of how to think about this civilian population is anything but straightforward.

While international law would allow us to destroy locations that have been turned into factories of warfare, our military tries to differentiate between terrorists and those civilians who are not proactively engaged in warfare against Israel. This is why the IDF has been careful entering hospitals which were used as terrorist headquarters, places through which hostages were tunneled to other parts of Gaza. We have been risking our soldiers’ lives instead of carpet bombing areas with these tunnels and arms caches. We have been providing safe passage out of the North of Gaza, allowing for humanitarian convoys, and announcing to civilians in multiple ways to leave the area, in order to limit casualties.

Yaakov Avinu, like us in Israel and our men and women in the IDF, found himself approaching a hostile enemy. With four hundred men in tow, Eisav approaches Yaakov, who is accompanied by his family and his flock. Unsure of the upshot of meeting with his brother Eisav, who years earlier had committed to killing him, Yaakov is concerned. The Torah describes these emotions using somewhat redundant language – *Vayira Yaakov meod vayetzer lo*, ‘And Yaakov was fearful and concerned.’ Why the use of the dual terminology of fear (*vayira*) and concern (*vayetzer*)?

Rashi, citing Breishit Raba, suggests that Yaakov has, in fact, two different concerns regarding the encounter that lies ahead of him. ‘And Yaakov was fearful – lest he or members of his family be murdered; and he was concerned – lest he kill others.’ With a potential battle on the horizon, Yaakov is not only fearful for his own life and that of his family; he is, in that very moment, deeply concerned about the prospect of killing others.

This concern for killing others, however, is puzzling, as Yaakov has a halakhic responsibility to protect himself and his family. As the Talmud states ‘if one approaches to kill you, you shall preempt them and kill them.’ In fact, that is why the current war in Gaza is classified as a *milchemet mitzvah*, an obligatory war, because like in Jacob’s situation it is about defending our lives. The Maharal, in his supercommentary on Rashi entitled *Gur Aryeh*, explains that Yaakov thought that perhaps some of Eisav’s entourage was forced to join the posse against Jacob and his family without any interest in harming Yaakov. If the

members of Eisav's clan were intent on attacking Yaakov and his family, then it would be not only appropriate, but even required to destroy them. But if they had no intention of attacking Yaakov and his family, then Yaakov was concerned about the possibility of killing them – even though, as part of a group of enemy combatants, their lives could morally be a form of collateral damage.

Yaakov's concern is based on our moral compass striving to do what is right and just. We wage war based on our values. We are not like the terrorists, who have only brought death and destruction to their own citizens, to us in Israel, and to all of human society. We believe in life and in goodness. That is why Yaakov feels pulled by his concern that even in war we need to be just – even if the consequence of such a paradigm puts ourselves at greater risk. We are not just concerned with protecting our own lives, but in doing our very best to make sure we protect the lives of those not involved with the conflict. After all, we are Jacob's children.

To root out Hamas, to ensure both national and global security, let alone some modicum of justice, is certainly justified. But we have all heard from soldiers and commanders on the front lines as they navigate the war strategy for Gaza, sharing their concerns of how to exercise the right dosage of restraint, so as not to sacrifice either our soldiers' safety or other Jewish values. How do we maintain our humanity, as we carefully respect the humanity of others yet unflinchingly take out those who deny our humanity and have debased their own? It is this caution and thoughtfulness with which the Jewish people wage war, in a manner that many militaries could never imagine. It is in the spirit of Yaakov that we carry our banner, attuned to the complex calculations of warfare. But this time we are faced with a cruel enemy, one of the cruelest we have ever faced, and against Hamas we have no moral or halakhic choice but to destroy them, even at the cost of innocents whom Hamas dragged into the conflict. We are fully prepared to go to war, and b'Ezrat Hashem we will win. *(Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander is President and Rosh HaYeshiva of Ohr Torah Stone)*

Yahrtzeits

Ken Kraus remembers his father David Kraus on Sat. December 2nd

Ilisia Kissner remembers her husband Steve Kissner on Sun. Dec. 3rd.

Amy Cooper remembers her aunt Charlotte Stieglitz on Tues. Dec. 5th

Russett Feldman and Nikki Pusin remembers their father Max Nathaniel Pusin on Wed. Dec. 6th

