

## CSH Shabbat Service Schedule

December 4 | Miketz  
December 18 | Vayehi

### Reminder

**Machzor Lev Shalem on sale until December 15, 2010**

[https://secure.uscj.org/bookservice/BookDetail.asp?item\\_id=682](https://secure.uscj.org/bookservice/BookDetail.asp?item_id=682).

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Communitywide CANorah Event – Next Weekend

**Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00PM** Guild Hall

Menorah display. Chanukah activities. Music . Latkes. Sufganiot .  
The lighting of a large menorah outdoors in front of Guild Hall

This year the Canorah contest is expanded to be more than just canned food, making it more exciting and creative. It can be a candy menorah, a toy menorah or wherever our creativity takes us!

We need your help, both creatively and financially. Let us know asap (Chanukah is right around the corner.)

**Please help by making a donation that will help CSH help others. Send a check to CSH, earmarking it for the Canorah event.**

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**Candle Lighting Friday, November 26 4:07 pm**

**This week's parashat: Vayeishev**

Annual: Genesis 37:1-40:23 (Etz Hayim, p. 226; Hertz p. 141)

Triennial: Genesis 37:1-37:36 (Etz Hayim, p. 226; Hertz p. 141)

Haftarah: Amos 2:6 - 3:8 (Etz Hayim, p. 247; Hertz p. 152)

### Musings on Vayeishev: You are the Man!

**When he reached Shechem, <sup>15</sup> a man came upon him wandering in the fields. The man asked him, "What are you looking for?" <sup>16</sup> He answered, "I am looking for my brothers. Could you tell me where they are pasturing?" <sup>17</sup> The man said, "They have gone from here, for I heard them say: Let us go to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers and found them at Dothan. *Genesis 37:15 - 17***  
*This translation was taken from the JPS Tanakh*

Joseph is out looking for his brothers, and he meets an unnamed man in the fields. The Torah spends three whole verses (quite a lot for such a minor incident) informing us that the man asked Joseph what he was looking for, Joseph said "my brothers," and the man pointed him in the right direction. It is a curious little vignette, and we have to ask ourselves what it's doing here. And once we stop to think about it, we realize that were it not for this stranger Joseph would never find his brothers, get sent to Egypt, bring his family down there, which leads to slavery, and ultimately brings us to the Exodus and the redemption of the entire Israelite nation. All of a sudden, the story seems a heck of a lot more interesting!

The commentators wonder why the man remains unnamed. And what is a lone stranger doing hanging out in the fields? Is this just some guy, or is it really an angel in disguise, sent to point Joseph towards his destiny? Perhaps. But it's also possible that this is meant to teach us that we rarely know significant moments when they are happening. Joseph unsuspectingly tries his hardest to find his brothers, not knowing that in doing so he is sealing his own fate. Where would all of us be today if Joseph had given up his search and gone home? Or if the stranger had discouraged him in his pursuit?

How often in life do we get to a crossroads, a milestone or major event, and not realize that we are there? So much of life is spent doing everyday tasks the same way we'd always been doing them, and all of a sudden something - or someone - changes our lives forever (whether good or bad), and we cannot imagine what life was like before it. Afterward, we certainly knew how significant it was, but beforehand, or even sometimes in the moment, did we acknowledge the weight of it? Often not.

[http://takeontorah.blogspot.com/2009\\_12\\_01\\_archive.html](http://takeontorah.blogspot.com/2009_12_01_archive.html)

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The Joseph novella, the last thirteen chapters of the book of Genesis, may be the first modern piece of literature. Nowhere in it does God say or do anything. Through Joseph's awful descent into Egyptian slavery and his equally dizzying ascent to the Egyptian throne, God apparently does nothing. Br'er Rabbit, he lay low. All the characters in the saga remain convinced that they are controlling their own destinies, busily going about their own business, completing what they believe are their own agendas. But we who have read the story countless times know better. We understand that the whole thing is just one big setup to get the Jewish people living (what they think will be) happily ever after in Egypt at the end of Genesis (blissfully) unaware of the advent of some evil pharaoh who won't remember Joseph and his brothers. But evidence of divine (albeit anonymous) manipulation abounds. Perhaps one of the most compelling examples is the unnamed stranger who meets Joseph and tells him where his brothers (and destiny) await.

"I just coincidentally overheard them say they were headed toward Dothan," he says. Now if we were to be given such a line in modern literature, we would balk at the whole thing. "Artificial, clumsy plot contrivance," we'd complain. Surely the author can come up with a better way to get Joseph to his conniving brothers without resorting to some anonymous tip.

Why not just send him to Dothan in the first place? What possible literary value could there be in this irrelevant side trip to the field of Shechem? Nothing at all except, perhaps, getting the reader to wonder about why there are seemingly irrelevant side trips occasionally populated by unnamed strangers whose words change everything. **DM**

How does the man know Joseph's identity? How in the world does he know who Joseph's brothers might be? Joseph does not name himself, nor does he describe his brothers. Neither does he ask, "Do you know where they might be?" He says, "Have the goodness to tell me where they are."

To whom is he speaking?

Traditional interpretation would say an angel or messenger; psychoanalytic thought might say "an aspect of himself" (i.e., he externalizes the ability to recognize the difficult: that his brothers are gone from him). In each case, whether through the "messenger," (an extension of God to the self) or through the unconscious, as an extension of the self toward "wholeness" (i.e., God), a bridge is made—a bridge to the spiritual. Joseph's problems were beyond his understanding (how to be at peace with his brothers), and were not cured nor addressed by, his understanding. They were solved by religion.

Five Cities of Refuge: Weekly Reflections on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, by Lawrence Kushner and David Mamet (Aug 26, 2003)

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***"Who is the ish" (literally, the man)? The "ish is a hafetz hayim" – a pursuer of life. The ish is one who 'turns from evil and does good.' The ish is one who "seeks peace and pursues it."***

The ultimate question asked above in Psalm 34 - who is the *ish* – is “what kind of history are we creating?” The answer the Psalmist gives us is that the *ish* is a seeker of life and of dreams. A creator of history who loves good – who turns from evil. The one, who just like the *ish* in this week’s Torah portion says some simple words (what are you looking for - i.e., how can I help?) which create our destiny and set the tone for Jewish living and Jewish loving for all eternity.

This nameless *ish* is one of my heroes and would certainly occupy one of the seats at my fantasy Jewish personalities dinner. It is my hope that we all merit this anonymous appellation. That we constantly and consistently help others create their own Jewish history by simply asking, just like our *ish*, “how can I help?”

[http://www.hillel.org/jewish/archives/bereshit/vayeshev/2006\\_vayeshev.htm](http://www.hillel.org/jewish/archives/bereshit/vayeshev/2006_vayeshev.htm)



### **Quote of the Week**

**Dorothy:** Now which way do we go?

**Scarecrow:** Pardon me, this way is a very nice way.

**Dorothy:** Who said that?

[*Toto barks at scarecrow*]

**Dorothy:** Don't be silly, Toto. Scarecrows don't talk.

**Scarecrow:** [*points other way*] It's pleasant down that way, too.

**Dorothy:** That's funny. Wasn't he pointing the other way?

**Scarecrow:** [*points both ways*] Of course, some people do go both ways.

**Happy Thanksgiving.**

**Shabbat Shalom.**

Stacy