

**The CSH Cookbook
Ekhol B'simcha / Eat in Joy
is in *and it's* selling
like ~~hotcakes~~ latkes !!!**

*What a timely gift to share family recipes with family and friends
while supporting CSH.*

**Cookbooks are \$20 each.
Prepay* and pick them up at the Chanukah/Shabbat Potluck Dinner
or have them mailed to you for an additional \$4 per book.**

(Cookbooks will not be sold at the Potluck dinner)
(Multiple book mailing rate does not apply / Drop shipping not available.)

*pay by paypal on the CSH website <http://www.synagoguehamptons.org/>
or mail a check to
CSH PO Box 1800, East Hampton, NY 11937

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**Menorah Lighting at the Windmill in Sag Harbor Village will be at  
4:30 PM every night of Hanukah, beginning Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.**

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**SAVE THE DATE!
CHANUKAH @ CSH Dec. 23 – 24
with Rabbi Jan Uhrbach & Aaron Weininger**

RSVP if you plan on joining us for Shabbat Dinner!

**Friday Night Services
followed by
Vegetarian/ Dairy Pot Luck Shabbat Dinner
@ Old Whalers
More details to follow**

**Shabbat Morning Services followed by Chanukah Kiddush
@ Old Whalers 9:30am**

**Havdalah / Chanukiah Lighting at Vered Gallery 6:00pm
LIGHTS OF CHANGE,
THIS TIME WITH "CHANGE"
with the East End Jewish Community**

**Please RSVP if you would like to help design / set up
the CSH "Coin-orah"
*all donations from this event will go to Magen David Adom, Israel***

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**NAHAR MINYAN** led by Rabbi Jan Uhrbach  
**Meets this Friday night, December 16**  
5:45 pm @ Excelsior Hotel, 45 W. 81st Street, 2nd floor  
All are welcome

**Jan Uhrbach's D'var Torah on Vayeshev can be found at the end of this update**

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Candle Lighting Friday, December 16th 4:05 pm (not even winter yet and the sun is setting later)

CSH Shabbat Service Schedule

December 17 - Temple Adas Israel 10:00 am

Services followed by Kiddush

Torah Study with Student Cantor Julia Katz;

a brief study of the *Parsha*, followed by

a gentle Yoga practice incorporating the teachings of the text

December 24 - CSH @ Old Whalers (Chanukah) 9:30am

December 31 - Temple Adas Israel

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**This week's parashat: Vayeshev**

Annual: Genesis 37:1-40:23 (Etz Hayim p. 226)

Triennial: Genesis 38:1-38:30 (Etz Hayim p. 233)

Haftarah: Amos 2:6 - 3:8 (Etz Hayim p. 247)

**Vayeshev Musings:** *When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying: 'By the man, whose these are, am I with child'; and she said: 'Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff.' And Judah acknowledged them, and said: 'She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah". Bereshit 38:25-26*

And so arrives the moment of epiphany for Judah, changing him forever as perhaps this week's parshah, Vayeshev, indicates.

It is often impossible to predict which are the experiences that will forever change us. The most important and life-altering experiences so often come "out of the blue", shocking us with their impact for months or years thereafter. We describe the life-altering event as unprecedented, seemingly unrelated and unpredictable, offering us a new perspective or freedom from our limited perspective.

In the beginning of Parshat Vayeshev, we meet a callous, jealous, conniving older brother whose plan to sell Joseph into slavery and then to lie of his demise to their father sets the entirety of the narrative ultimately resulting in the Israelite enslavement in Egypt into motion. By the end of this narrative, Judah defends his brother, Benjamin, refusing to allow him to be taken into custody for fear that this loss would destroy their father. This Judah understands responsibility, family, and knows that there can be dire, unforeseen consequences to impulsive decisions made in one's own self-interest.

Between these two vignettes concerning Judah and his brothers is a seemingly unrelated story, interrupting the flow of the narrative about Joseph. In this seeming aside, we read about Judah's

encounter with Tamar, his daughter-in-law twice widowed. Judah's two sons - both married to Tamar - have died. One of the greatest mitzvot of this time was to continue the familial line of one's deceased spouse so that his line might be carried forward. By this logic, Tamar should be allowed to marry the third son. Judah tells Tamar to go home to her father's house to wait for the third son. However, the text indicates that he has no intention of allowing them to marry, as he feared that the third son might also die if he were to marry Tamar. Time passes and Judah's wife, too, dies. Faced with no other options, Tamar dresses up as a harlot and seduces Judah so that she might become pregnant with a child carrying her deceased husbands' genes.

When he realizes that he (the original deceiver) has now been deceived, Judah realizes that Tamar's wisdom exceeds his own and acknowledges that her actions were more righteous than were his. Through the encounter with Tamar, who not only intervenes, but also acts as a mirror to Judah, that he is able to see and admit his shortcomings, allowing him to learn about the importance of fulfilling obligations to one's family, the cost of deception, and how to be a responsible adult, even in the most trying of circumstances.

After this encounter, Judah is transformed, re-dedicating himself to the lineage of his future family with Tamar and healing the chasm in his family, setting a new course for the Children of Israel.

To read this commentary in its entirety, go to: <http://www.jsipot.org/diary/2074/>

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The story of Judah and Tamar is told in Genesis 38, directly after Judah and his brothers sell Joseph into slavery (Gen. 37) and before the history of Joseph in Egypt (Ch. 39). The story begins with the statement that about that time, Judah went down from his brothers and camped near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah (38:1). We are not told why he left his family at just this time. Only two verses before this, Judah and his brothers had falsely told Jacob that Joseph was dead, presumably killed by a wild beast, and the grief-stricken father had cried "I shall go down to Sheol [the underworld] mourning my son (37:35). Now Judah "goes down," not to Sheol but to dwell among strangers. Was he, perhaps, moved by feelings of guilt? Did he, perhaps, separate himself from his brothers because they did not seem to share his feelings of guilt? Or alternatively did his brothers blame him for having suggested that Joseph be told (Rashi on 38:1)? Could Judah have convinced his brothers to return Joseph?

The placement of this story within the Joseph cycle is to recognize that there is a connection between Joseph and Judah. Is it intended as a coincidence that Judah and Joseph went down 'yarad' (37:32) to a place where a Hebrew did not belong. When Tamar asks Judah 'Haker na ha'hotemet' (is this your seal) (38:25) did he remember that his father was asked 'Haker na ha'kutonet' (is this your tunic) (37:32)?

In his new milieu, Judah saw and married a woman identified as the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua. (Isaac and Jacob had taken their wives from among Abraham's kindred in Haran. Esau, to the distress of his parents, had married a Canaanite woman.) By this marriage, Judah had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. The last son was born in a place called Ke'ziv (38:5), which can mean "deceitful or disappoint," and be taken as a sign of things to come.

To read this commentary in its entirety, go to: http://www.moshereiss.org/articles/30_tamar.htm

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So, why does this odd tale deserve to break into the Joseph story, a story so tender it's hard to read it without brushing away a tear? First, it helps to ask who is Judah and who is Tamar outside and inside this story.

Judah is Leah's fourth son and the ringleader in selling Joseph into slavery. When he next appears in the Joseph story, Judah will have become a strong and compassionate leader, careful of his father's feelings and repentant for his bad actions toward Joseph. Of Tamar, we know nothing more than we have in this chapter. It may be there was more, for King David had a daughter named Tamar. But, in truth, all we can know must be found within this story.

Judah, unknown to himself, tried to lose his role in history as the ancestor of King David. Joseph wandered into his place in history because "a man" intervened to tell him that his brothers had gone to Dothan. But Tamar actively gives herself a role in history when she stands alone and disguised in the road. She plays the role of a kedeishah - sacred prostitute - and, in fact, she has a sacred role to perform. When all is revealed, Judah's eyes are opened, and he says: "Tzadakah mimeini." - "She is correct - it (the child) is from me" or, perhaps, "She is more righteous than I am."

Tamar's intervention also seems to have been critical in changing Judah from a man with no moral compass, as evidenced by his treatment of Joseph, Tamar, and Er, into one who is eloquent, self-sacrificing, and compassionate when we next see him. Tamar's actions and Judah's reactions to them turned Judah to a right path as he became the man who recognized: Tzadakah mimeini - she is more righteous than I.

To read this commentary in its entirety, go to: <http://www2.jrf.org/recon-dt/dt.php?id=29>

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Ellen Frankel, in her work entitled, *The Five Books of Miriam - A Woman's Commentary on the Torah*, gives commentary through the voices of the women of our tradition. She writes,

Our Daughters Ask: Does Judah finally redeem himself?

Tamar Answers: When Judah accused me of harlotry and ordered me burned, I trumped him with the pledge he'd left with me. "I am with child by the man to whom these belong" (Genesis 38:25). To his credit, Judah immediately acknowledged them as his and admitted to his guilt. As it is written: "She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah" (Genesis 38:26). By owning up to what he'd done, he finally did redeem his primary pledge.

Miriam the Prophet Remarks: Judah did not realize at the time how much he owed to Tamar: for had she not tricked him into sleeping with her, he would have lost the privilege of founding the Davidic line and giving his name to an entire people.

<http://www.kolel.org/pages/5764/vayeshev.html>

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## **Chanukah Musings:**

Chanukah occurs at the darkest time of the year -- new moon on the shortest day (in our hemisphere). The time of many other celebrations in other religions and for pagan rituals as well. Simon was consciously bringing Jews back to Jewish practices, just as we in America, particularly, need to help ourselves and our children focus on our Jewishness amidst other non-Jewish festivities. And there is something to wanting a little celebration in the cold and the dark -- a little candle light to help us remember that the Divine is just a flick of an eyelash, a glimmer of light away -- at any time.

Much of what we know about Chanukah comes to us from the tractate in Talmud called Shabbat. The Rabbis diverge from a discussion about candles into Chanukah and different aspects of it. It is

from this source, and this source only, that we hear about the one bottle of oil lasting for the eight days. It is introduced by "And our Rabbis taught". While the holiday is mentioned and the eight days detailed in Maccabees, the oil is not mentioned there, only in Talmud as a subset of Shabbat.

A final note -- the book of Maccabees (I and II) are not part of the Tanach and we do not have the Hebrew in which I Maccabees was written any more. II Maccabees is believed to have been originally written in the Greek we now have. These books were not accepted by the Rabbis. They are part of what is sometimes called Intertestamental or Apocryphal books. They were not canonized into Tanach and not into the New Testament -- but thanks to some early Christians who considered them Jewish, they have survived at least in their Greek form. All in all, an interesting holiday. A Feast of Lights. And things round.

<http://rabbishafir.homestead.com/RCSdvayeyshv.html>

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*The vastness of night, like a great ocean, surrounds you now
while your soul whispers the name of God,*

HaKodesh

One Who's set apart...

*HaKodesh, You Who foster all life,
I stand in the dim of the waning moon, at the darkest time of year.
I've journeyed far and wide and am weary now.*

*I've struggled and claimed my traditions.
I've wrestled with forces greater than I.
The road has been long, the battles lengthy.*

*Holy One, You Who illuminate my being,
aid me summon up courage and stubbornness, persistence and hope.*

*You Who restore all souls, hold me now, embrace me,
bathe me and cleanse me, wash away the impurities of my travel.*

*Help me emerge clear and fresh again, my inner courtyards shining again,
ready for the sacred ceremonies.*

*You Who kiss each life awake,
help me find my hidden vessel of sacred oil.*

*Fill my lamp.
Pour Your pure rich golden oil, the first press of olives, over me,
that I might soften and heal.*

Fill me. Fill my containers up.

*HaKodesh, You Who treasure all creation,
aid me re-consecrate myself.*

*You Who I am but a particle of,
renew my life force,
kindle my flames.*

*And each night,
one by one,
increase my light.*

That I might ever shine
and sing Your song
in this darkest of nights.

Holy One,
walk with me
and light my way.

As I light this candle,
so may You kindle my seven inner flames,
and the eighth,
that I may know wholeness.

I rededicate myself this night
to that which You wish of me.

May I walk in the path of Your light.

http://www.vickihollander.com/vh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=47

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Thank you

Esther Schleifer for your donation in honor of David Brous

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End Quote

Frustrate the hopes of all those who malign us. Let all evil soon disappear; let all Your enemies soon be destroyed. May You quickly uproot and crush the arrogant; may You subdue and humble them in our time. Praised are You Adonai, who humbles the arrogant.

Shabbat Shalom.

Stacy

DECEMBER 16, 2011 — PARASHAT VAYESHEV (Gen. 37:1-40:23)

“A man came upon him — he was wandering in the field! –
and asked him, ‘What do you seek?’
He answered, ‘I am looking for my brothers . . .’”
(Gen. 37:15-16).

In this week’s parashah, our focus shifts from Jacob to Joseph — the youngest (and favorite!) child, the visionary whose careless retelling of his dreams alienates him from his 10 older brothers. The brothers have gone off to pasture the flocks, and, inexplicably, Jacob sends Joseph after them. We the reader sense the danger — the movie version would surely have ominous music playing in the background! And our anxiety proves correct: Joseph does find his brothers, who promptly strip him of his garish tunic, and throw him into a pit, whence he is sold (by some passing Midianite traders, or by his own brothers — the text is unclear) into slavery in Egypt.

But before all that happens, we find Joseph “wandering in the field” (in Hebrew, to’eh — gone astray, lost, errant), when suddenly an unnamed man (an *ish*), perhaps an angel, finds him. “*Mah t’vakesh* – what do you seek,” he asks.

On the surface, it is a straightforward question with a straightforward answer: “*et achai anokhi avakesh* – I seek my brothers. Could you tell me where they are pasturing,” Joseph responds. But Menahem Mendl of Kotzk, the 18th century Kotzker rebbe, reads it differently:

The angel taught Yosef always to say and remember, “what do you seek.” This was to be no small descent, but by means of remembering what it is he is seeking in the world, he would endure, and return to his earlier level.

“What do you seek?” According to the Kotzker, the man/angel was really prompting Joseph to clarify his values, his life goals, and moreover, to develop a practice of asking himself that question all the time. By remembering that question and its answer, the Kotzker writes, one can resist temptations and moral trials, endure painful experiences, and find our way when we are confused, lost, wandering in the field.

And Joseph responds: “*et achai anokhi avakesh* – I seek my brothers.” Of course he seeks them physically — “where are they pasturing?” But he also seeks them emotionally. Beneath his youthful narcissism and arrogance, Joseph wants (consciously or not) to know and be known, to love and be loved. He seeks relationship, closeness; but his brothers cannot even speak to him peaceably (Gen. 27:4), they see him only *merahok*, from a distance (Gen. 27:18).

“*Mah t’vakesh* – what do you seek?” How often we are like like Joseph — *to’eh basadeh* — wandering, blundering, unable to make the connections for which we yearn, perhaps not even aware of our own desires. In pursuing all sorts of things (control, affirmation, admiration, safety, stability), we so easily to lose sight of our desires for connection and love.

And of course this question – *mah t’vakesh* – is not only about relationships. It’s about all of life. The man/angel teaches Joseph the importance of mission-based living, of asking one’s self all the time: what are my core values and goals? What do I really want out of life? We are all wanderers in the field, easily lost — forgetting our goals and our way, forgetting the essential questions. We may even actively avoid asking the question, fearful that we may never find what we really seek, or that if we acknowledge our deeper desires, they may either demand too much from us.

Nor is it so easy to answer the question even when we remember to ask it. *Mah t’vakesh?* Sometimes the act of consciously asking ourselves the question helps us remember or clarify what we know. Or we may come to a self-realization simply by listening carefully to the deeper meaning of our own response. Other times, we may uncomfortably discover that we really don’t know, and that we would be wise to do some internal work to clarify our own aspirations and goals. Or we may continue to tell ourselves that meeting some trivial, surface want or need will satisfy us, when in reality we seek something so much deeper.

Moreover, the question, “*mah t’vakesh* - what do you seek,” challenges us not only to discern our true desires, but to consciously shape them. Desires, goals and values are neither inevitable nor immutable. What we seek is influenced by a myriad of factors, both external (e.g., our upbringing and education, the overall culture in which we live, the media and advertising) and internal (e.g., our biology, our psychological makeup, our natural tendencies and inclinations). At a deeper level, the man/angel challenges Joseph and us to ask ourselves not only what it is we want, but what our higher selves want us to want.

Indeed, perhaps what we seek most is meaningful guidance in what to seek. We all need “angels” along the way — people who will ask us, at the right time and in a way we can hear it, “what do you seek?” We need help pushing past our surface pleasures to identify deeper, more authentic yearnings. And we need to be challenged to raise our sights, to elevate our desires, to learn to seek nobler more fulfilling lives.

This is one of the primary functions of Jewish life. Prayer, Torah study, being part of a depth-based community, living in the rhythm of Shabbat and holy days, ethical and ritual observance — all of it is

there to help us figure out not only what we seek, but what we might aspire to seek. Indeed, the essence of a religious life lies less in answers than in posing eternal questions:

“*Ayeka* – where are you?”

“*Ei Hevel achikha* – where is your brother?”

“*Mah t'vakesh* – what do you seek?”