

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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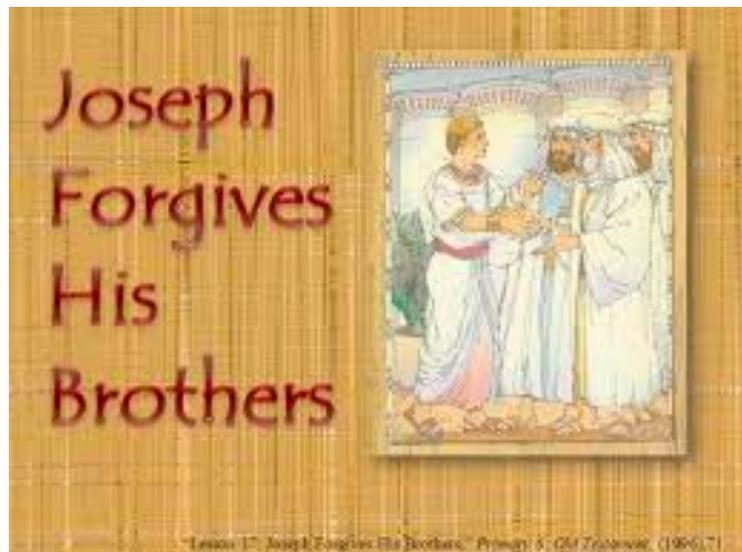
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From the Bimah: Our Rabbi's Message

Dennis Jones, Student Rabbi

Now, *This Is How A Patriarch Should Act!!*



The story of Joseph unfolds in the Torah over the course of three portions, *Vayeshev*, *Mikeitz*, and *Vayigash*, Genesis 37:1-47:27. Because of their positions as the ninth, tenth, and eleventh readings of the Torah cycle, the Joseph readings fall every year in the weeks leading up to the holiday of Hanukkah. It is interesting that we read this story in conjunction with the “Feast of Dedication,” because, as you will see, Joseph, more than any other patriarch with the possible exception of Moses, models a deep awareness of God in both his speech and behavior. (Rabbi Ari Kahn, “Echoes of Eden,” <http://echoesofeden.rabbiarikahn.com/>)

You will recall that Jacob, whose name by this point had been changed to Israel (Gen. 32:28), had acquired two wives, Rachel and her older sister Leah, during his sojourn in the area of Syria. The Torah is very explicit in stating that “Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.” (Gen. 29:30) Scripture goes on to say, however, that as a result of Leah’s unloved status, she was granted the first four sons born to Jacob: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Torah portion *Vayetzay* goes on to describe the birth of Jacob’s twelve sons and one daughter, Dinah, to his two wives, Rachel and Leah, and their two handmaidens, Bilhah and Zilpah. Jacob had already sired ten sons and one daughter, when Rachel finally conceived and gave birth to Joseph. It is obvious from the Torah text that Jacob considered the birth of Joseph special, because it was at that time that he informed Laban that he would be leaving the region of Syria and heading south to the land promised to Abraham, the land of Israel. (Gen. 30:25)

Torah portion, *Vayeshev*, opens with Joseph as a youth of seventeen years. Unfortunately, perhaps due to the passion he felt for Rachel, the Torah makes it clear that Jacob did not hide his love and favoritism for Joseph: “Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a multicolored tunic. And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.” (Gen. 37:3-4) To make matters worse, Joseph had a set of back-to-back dreams foretelling his rise to position of leadership. In the first he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field. Joseph states, “My sheaf rose up and also stood erect, and behold your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.” In the second dream Joseph relates, “The sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” (Gen. 37:5-9) The telling of these dreams only increased his brothers’ hatred for him all the more. Even his father seemed a bit roiled at the report of the second dream. He rebuked him, saying, “What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?” (v. 10)

When Israel sent Joseph to check on his brothers who were pasturing their flocks in Shechem, the brothers saw it as an opportunity to punish Joseph. They debated killing him or just leaving him in a pit, but ultimately sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants who happened to pass by. The merchants, of course, took Joseph down to Egypt. Joseph’s brothers took his multicolored tunic, dipped it in the blood of a goat, and gave it to their father, Jacob, leading him to believe that Joseph had been killed by wild beasts. Jacob was beside himself with grief. The Torah reports, “Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, ‘Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.’ So his father wept for him.” (Gen. 37:35)

The Ishmaelite merchants sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s bodyguard. Even in his servitude it must have been very evident that God was present with, and blessing Joseph. Potiphar noticed it: “Now his master saw that the LORD was with him, and how the

LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.” (Gen. 39:3) Potiphar was so impressed with Joseph that he made him his personal steward and put him in charge of all the affairs of his household. That proved to be a wise decision on Potiphar’s part because the Torah tells us, “The LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD’s blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.” (v. 5)

Perhaps the hardships he suffered gave Joseph a greater consciousness of the Divine. We begin to see evidence of that when he was confronted with the temptation of Potiphar’s wife. She was obviously enamored with Joseph and approached him boldly requesting intimacy with him. He rebuffed her with the statement, “How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?” (v. 9) According to the biblical account, that did not stop her. She continued to pursue Joseph. Once when they were alone she “caught him by his garment.” He fled leaving his garment with her. Potiphar’s wife used the incident to concoct a false accusation against Joseph landing him in prison.

Even in prison God’s blessing upon Joseph was so pronounced that that it was noticed by others. “The LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. And the chief jailer committed to Joseph’s charge all the prisoners who were in the jail.” (Gen. 39:21-22) It was in prison that Joseph first displayed his unique ability to interpret dreams. He accurately interpreted the dreams of the Pharaoh’s chief cupbearer and baker. Joseph, however, did not take credit for the interpretation for himself, but rather explained, “Do not interpretations belong to God?” (Gen. 40:8) It was this ability to interpret dreams that brought Joseph to Pharaoh’s court. Pharaoh had had a recurring dream and no one was able to interpret it. It was then that the chief cupbearer remembered that Joseph’s interpretation of his dream while in prison, had in fact come true.

Joseph’s awareness of and devotion to God are clearly evident in his words to Pharaoh, who at that time would have considered *himself* a god. When Pharaoh tells Joseph that he has had a dream and that no one is able to interpret it he states, “I have heard it said about you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Joseph humbly replies, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” (Gen. 41:16) Upon hearing of Pharaoh’s dreams of the seven plump cows grazing along the Nile who are eaten by seven gaunt cows and seven full years of grain which were eaten up by seven withered ears, Joseph tells Pharaoh, “God has told Pharaoh what God is about to do.” (v. 25) Joseph then informs Pharaoh that the dreams indicate that there will be seven years of plenty in Egypt followed by seven years of famine. The fact that the dream was repeated twice “means that the matter is determined by God and God will quickly bring it about.” (v. 32) Joseph’s interpretation must have resonated strongly with Pharaoh. Pharaoh tells his servants, “Can we find a man like this in whom is a spirit of God?” And, Pharaoh tells Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you

are.” (vv. 38-39) Pharaoh, of course, goes on to appoint Joseph as the ruler of all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself.

Joseph’s abiding consciousness of God can be seen in the naming of his sons. He names his firstborn Manasseh, making to forget, saying, “God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” He names his second-born Ephraim, fruitfulness, saying, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.” (vv.51-52) But, Joseph’s devotion to the Almighty is most pronounced in the graciousness with which he deals with his brothers’ wrong toward him. You recall that the sons of Jacob had to go down to Egypt to get grain because there was no food in Canaan. The brothers deal with Joseph not knowing that it is, in fact, their lost brother. He however recognizes them. Once he reveals his identity to them they are quite fearful. Joseph tells them not to be angry or grieved insisting that it was God’s plan for him to be where he was. Joseph makes multiple statements to that effect, for example, “God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God.” (Gen. 45:7-8)

The completeness of Joseph’s devotion to God and forgiveness of his brothers’ wrong is summed up in a statement that Joseph makes just after their father’s death. With the passing of their father the brothers are once again fearful that Joseph will be angry with them and retaliate against them. The Torah records, “And Joseph wept when they spoke to him... Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid for am I in God’s place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.’” (Gen. 50:17-19) This is the connection that the sages make between the Joseph story and the story of Hanukkah. At the time of the Maccabees many had drifted away from Torah and into Hellenism, but at the call of Mattityahu and his sons, large numbers repented and turned their hearts completely back to the God of Israel and God’s Torah. The people’s relationship with God was fully restored because they emulated the Divine attributes. (Talmud, *Shabbat* 133b) This parallels the Joseph story in that Joseph did not merely forgive his brothers while harboring resentment for the wrongs they had done to him. Rather, he loved them and cared for them unconditionally, preserving their lives as if they had never wronged him, thus demonstrating the true meaning of forgiveness and complete reconciliation. (Rashi, Genesis 45:12) With the kindling of this year’s Hanukkah lights, may we also explore ways to make God’s presence more manifest in our own lives and in our own relationships. *Ken yehi ratzon*, may this be God’s will!

The President’s Message

Temple Beth Shalom would like to invite all members and guests to our annual Chanukah celebration with our Sunday School children and families of TBS. The children have really had in-depth

discussions this year about the meaning of Chanukah and its traditions. Our older children are sharing their experiences with our Christian friends and embracing our holiday.

On Saturday, December 16th, we will have a Chanukah luncheon following Rabbi Dennis' spiritual service. Our newly renovated synagogue will be a perfect environment to share this special time together. We will be preparing traditional latkes, holiday favorites, Chanukah music, and of course play bingo. Please bring your favorite Chanukah dish and come have fun with our temple children and families. Together we are creating lasting memories for our future families and sharing our Jewish traditions.

TBS Sunday School Program

Kathy Jones, Sunday School Program Coordinator



The Sunday School students have been busy learning Hebrew and the history behind our upcoming Chanukah holiday. They are also in the process of decorating "Chanukah Hoodies" to wear to the annual TBS Chanukah party. We hope everyone has made plans to join us for services and the party on Saturday, December 16th! There will be great food, music, bingo with prizes, and a Chanukah Photo Booth. Don't forget to dress as festive as you can to be in the "Most Festive Attire" contest!

TBS Sisterhood

Lin Gentry, Sisterhood President

Sisterhood had a great meeting at Mary Lee Tosky's house last month—thank you, Mary Lee, for Barbara Kallman's minestrone soup and sandwiches!

We decided that since we had fun at the last Movie Night, we will have another one on Saturday, January 27th, 7:30pm, at the temple. Save the date.

Thank you to those who came and helped at our Hanukkah fair on Sunday. We had fun and enjoyed shopping to help out Charlotte Temple Beth El's religious school.

We have the details on our meeting next week. We'll meet on Wednesday, December 13th, 6:30pm, at Kingston on Hwy 127, across the street from the Catholic Church and just down from Panera Bread.

We'll have pizza and cookies. BYOB—bring your own beverage. Please let me know if you're coming so I know how much pizza to get.

At the meeting, we'll talk about a date for sisterhood to lead a Friday night Shabbat service that's in between the regularly scheduled rabbi weekends. Maybe February 16th? Don't forget that we'll have services on the 15th and 16th. Hope to see you at both events.

Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund



The Harriet Sederholm Scholarship Fund was established by a long-standing Temple member, Burt Sederholm, to honor his wife Harriet, who died shortly after her retirement after 25 years with the Catawba County Department of Social Services. Mr. Sederholm's efforts provided the initial funding from

generous family members and friends and it has been added to over the years. The scholarship is available to students. Temple members are looked upon favorably, but one does not need to be a temple member nor Jewish to apply. The scholarship fund dividends are used to provide scholarship awards. Candidates may submit an essay to any one of the committee members. The essay will explain who the candidate is, what they are doing currently, what their plans are for the future, how the scholarship funds will be used and, if applicable, what the connection may be to Jewish life.

Interested students should submit their essay by April 30th. The scholarship season runs from May 1-April 30. All applicants will be notified in writing if their application has been approved or declined by May 15th. Awards should be mailed to recipients by May 31st.

The essay should be emailed to any of the committee members: Lin Gentry, Karen Ferguson, or Sandy Guttler.

Naturally, the committee encourages everyone to make a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund at any time.

Temple Board

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6th at 7pm. Board meetings are open to all temple members. Please join us and become a part of our TBS family.

TBS Board members are:

Student Rabbi:

Dennis Jones

Officers:

Marsue Davidson, President
 Barbara Laufer, Vice-President
 Susan Rieder, Treasurer
 Tiffany Hull, Secretary

Members at Large:

Liz Correll
 Marion DuBow
 Debra Engelmann
 Lin Gentry
 Sandy Guttler
 Pam Jones
 Linda Greenfield
 Mary Lee Tosky
 Karen Ferguson



“... you shall keep My sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations...” Exodus 31:13

One of the very special things about our Shabbat evenings together is the Oneg that follows the Service. We are looking for volunteers for January, April, May, and June to participate in the host duties that make Shabbat so special.

Please contact any Board member if you would like to volunteer to help the Temple. It’s easy and there’s usually an experienced board member to help out. Thanks!!





Looking for a way to give tzedakah?

Jaimi Jones, daughter of Dennis and Kathy Jones, and School Social Worker for Alexander County Schools, is trying to collect hygiene/cleaning supplies for families of Hiddenite Elementary School students. It is the poorest school in the district and has a high rate of families living in poverty. She has already had calls from parents seeking help to be able to

send their children to school with clean bodies and clean clothing. If anyone is willing to help her with this mitzvah by donating some of these supplies, please bring them to the next service at the Temple. **A box will be in the TBS foyer for the collection.**

They are in need of the following items for Kindergarten through 5th graders:

Shampoo Conditioner Children's and Adult Toothpaste and Toothbrushes Body Wash
 Bar Soap Boy's and Girl's Deodorants Shaving Cream Safety Razors Ultra Thin Kotex
 Toilet Paper Laundry Detergent Dish Soap Lysol Wipes

TBS Message Board

If you wish to post a message to acknowledge a special event or achievement, condolence, or send a get well message, give or send your message and a \$5 donation to Marion DuBow at 2752 Brittany Dr., Lenoir, NC 28645. A greeting card will be sent acknowledging your donation and your message will appear here in the next issue of the TBS Bulletin.

TBS Member Business Directory

Dr. Ron DuBow
Internist, Geriatric Specialist
(elderly care) Pediatrician
2651 Morganton Blvd SW
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-757-8950

Dr. Laura Faruque of
A Womans View
915 Tate Blvd SE
Suite170
Hickory, NC 28602
828-345-0800

Dr. Mark Faruque of
Bethlehem Family Practice
174 Bolick Lane Suite 202
Taylorsville NC 28681
828-495-8226

Marsue Davidson, RN DCS
Epic Health Services
805 W 25th Street
Newton. NC 28269
828-464-0244
www.marsue.davidson@epichealthservice.com

Local and Regional Events

Catawba Valley Interfaith Council (CVIC)

Human Rights Day 2017

Celebration

Guest Speaker: T. Anthony Spearman

Sunday, December 10, 2017

2:30 - 4:00 pm

First United Methodist Church

311 3rd Ave NE, Hickory, NC

The annual Human Rights Day celebration in Hickory is hosted by the Catawba Valley Interfaith Council (CVIC) and commemorates the day in 1948 on which the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights following World War II. As they have done the last three years now, CVIC will ask the Hickory City Council to issue a proclamation recognizing Human Rights Day and the need to defend human rights for everyone. This year's speaker, T. Anthony Spearman declared when he ran for President of the North Carolina NAACP, "I'm woke and I ain't skerd!" Spearman, who served as a member of the Hickory Public Schools board from 2011 until 2014, believes that courage is the foundation to acts of civil disobedience and has been involved in community activism for the past 46 years.

Member Business Directory

Alice Guy
The Hickory Wine Shoppe
238 Union Square NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-334-4441
Info@HickoryWine.com

Karen Ferguson, MAIT
Certified Professional in Learning
and Performance
KB Learning Designs
kblearningdesigns.com
karen.sederholm@gmail.com

Scott and Julie Owens
Taste Full Beans Coffeehouse
29 2nd St NW
Hickory, NC 28601
828-325-0108
www.tastefullbeans.com

Michelle Oxenberg Jordon
Managing Director of Design
3166 Main Ave. S.E.
Hickory, North Carolina 28602
828.322.3480 Ext. 271
michelle@robertabbey.com

Dr David Peltzer
Newton Family Physicians
767 West First Street
Newton, NC 28658
828 465-3928
www.newtonfamilyphysicians.com



Temple Beth Shalom Life Cycle November Events

Birthdays

Nick Weatherly 12/3	Ginny Sobotkin 12/18
Roberta Atkins 12/3	Aviella Ogilvie 12/17
Kathy Jones 12/5	Eva Reed 12/28
Pete Sobotkin 12/6	Andrew Weatherly 12/29
Herman Garrick 12/12	Donnie Powell 12/30
Pam Axler 12/12	Sarah Peltzer 12/31
Hannah Davidson 12/13	Ben Setser 12/21
Barry Sobotkin 12/16	

Anniversaries

Aaron Richards 12/17
Barbara and Larry Laufer 12/28

Yahrzeits

Joseph Brisbane 12/5
Ruth Morewitz 12/7
Herman Davis 12/9
Helene Tiber 12/16
Arnold Simons 12/30

Schedule for Rabbi Services and Sunday School 2017-2018

Date	Event/Time	Bulletin Deadline
December	3 Sunday School 10:00 AM	December 2
	15-16 Services Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM Hanukah Party Dec. 16 (Saturday) 12:00 PM	
	21 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
January	5-7 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM	December 23
	21 Sunday School	
February	2-4 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	January 20
	18 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
March	2-4 Services Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM Purim (Megillah Reading/Festivities as part of Friday night service) Regular Sunday School on March 4	February 17
	18 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
	31 Passover Community Seder (Saturday) 6:00 PM	
April	6-8 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/ Sunday School 10:00 AM	March 24
	22 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
May	4-6 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/Sunday School 10:00 AM	April 21
	19 Erev Shavuot Service 7:30 PM (Saturday)	
	20 Sunday School 10:00 AM	
June	1-3 Services/Friday 7:30 PM/Saturday 10:00 AM/ Sunday School End of Year Party 10:00 AM	May 19

Want to contribute to the TBS Bulletin? Send entries to Karen Ferguson at karen.sederholm@gmail.com. All entries are reviewed by the TBS Board before publication.



Jewish Holiday Calendar

