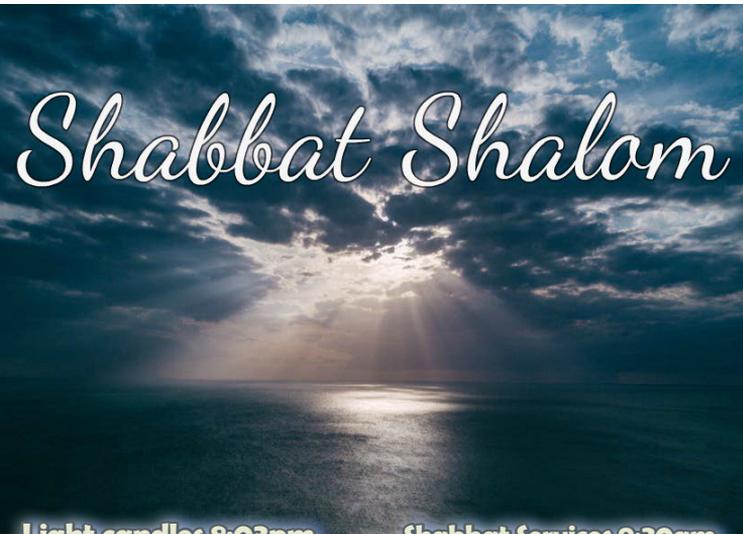




Carnegie Shul Chatter

August 11, 2022



Light candles 8:03pm

Shabbat Services 9:30am

Carnegie Shul Back on Zoom for Shabbat Services

With Allegheny County having gone back to a red alert for Covid, the Carnegie Shul has returned to weekly Shabbat services over Zoom. **Services begin at 10am** and last between 60 and 90 minutes.

Services will remain on Zoom until further notice.

A link will be emailed to Carnegie Shul members later in the week. If you don't receive it, contact Roz Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com.

The Lord is One

Our Shul lost a most valued member of its family with the recent passing of Dr. Evan Dreyer. The Pittsburgh Medical community also lost a most valued member of its community with Dr. Dreyer's passing.

All who knew him, and especially his family, are deeply grieved by Dr. Dreyer's passing.

It was too soon. He was too young. We are shocked and saddened and we ask of God, "Why? Why did you take this fine man, this beloved husband and father, this faithful Jew, and this friend from us all too soon?"

And we don't have a satisfactory answer.

In this week's parshah commentary by Rabbi Fine, he writes, "the Torah is teaching us here that we will generally fail to complete everything that we set out to do in life. This is the great frustration of mortality. There will always be more things to do than can be done. Our lives will end when they do, and there is nothing that we can do about that."

And I guess that is something that we just have to accept as a matter of faith. Only Hashem knows when he will call our souls back to him. Perhaps he has

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a greater task for our souls to complete. We do not know, but we do know that we never get a chance to do everything we might want to do in our lives. But when someone that we care for leaves us, there are still things that we can do to help fulfill their legacy, to help complete their journey.

We can carry out their work in our Shul, or in their livelihood, or in supporting their family. We can contribute to their favorite charity. And, if nothing else, we can keep them alive in our memories. We can help to make certain that their memory truly is for a blessing.



Va'etchanan in a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 3:23–7:11

Moses tells the people of Israel how he implored G-d to allow him to enter the Land of Israel, but G-d refused, instructing him instead to ascend a mountain and see the Promised Land.

Continuing his “review of the Torah,” Moses describes Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, declaring them unprecedented events in human history. “Has there ever occurred this great thing, or has the likes of it ever been heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire . . . and live? . . . You were shown, to know, that the L-rd is G-d . . . there is none else beside Him.”



Moses predicts that in future generations the people will turn away from G-d, worship idols, and be exiled from their land and scattered amongst the nations; but from there they will seek G-d, and return to obey His commandments.

Our Parshah also includes a repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the verses of the Shema, which declare the fundamentals of the Jewish faith: the unity of G-d (“Hear O Israel: the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one”); the mitzvot to love G d, to study His Torah, and to bind “these words” as tefillin on our arms and heads, and inscribe them in the mezuzot affixed on the doorposts of our homes.

Va'etchanan

Va'etchanan is an incredible parshah. I must agree with the Rabbi Fine, whose commentary from *The Jewish Standard* I have included below, that it is probably my favorite parshah in the entire Torah. There is just so much here – the Shema, the repetition of the Ten Commandments, Moses’ prediction, which sadly came true, that the people would turn from

God and be exiled from the Holy Land, but that they would return to obey his commandments. There is just so much.

And, as Dr. Fine discusses, there is again the issue of Moses not being permitted to cross the Jordan and enter the Holy Land. We featured a commentary about this by Rabbi Sacks previously, but I also like Dr. Fine's perspective on this that, "The Torah is teaching us here that we will generally fail to complete everything that we set out to do in life. This is the great frustration of mortality. There will always be more things to do than can be done. Our lives will end when they do, and there is nothing that we can do about that."

Parashat Va'etchanan

By Rabbi David J. Fine July 31, 2009, 12:55 pm

Va'etchanan is my favorite parashah in the Torah. The inclusion of both the Shema and the Ten Commandments in the same portion provides the basic text material for any study of the essentials of Judaism. For me, though, I remain stuck on the first paragraph. Moses pleads with God to allow him to enter the promised land, and his entreaty is denied. "Enough! Never speak to Me again of this matter!" God replies. By relaying this personal discussion with God to the people in the most public of ways, a major address before the whole people assembled, and preserved forever in the very text of the Torah, Moses has clearly not dropped the issue. And how could he have?

Moses has devoted his life, at the cost of so much personal happiness, to the service of his people and his God, to bring the people to the promised land. Now, at the end of the journey, he asks only to cross over the river so that he may briefly enjoy the fruit of his labors before he dies. Why does God refuse to grant his wish?

The commentaries have addressed this question through the generations. The standard understanding is that Moses is not permitted to complete the journey because of an earlier incident where he failed to invoke God's name before drawing water from a rock. The people were rebelling when there was no water, and Moses called upon the rock to bring forth water. God provided – if not Moses would have been stoned to death – but was not pleased with Moses' action. Moses should have called upon God to bring water from the rock rather than directly commanding the rock, as if Moses himself were the source of power. While strongly rooted in textual tradition, this solution has never satisfied me. Although Moses was wrong in not invoking God's name at that incident, why would God not be forgiving of Moses? Certainly we have all acted in certain ways in stressful situations that we later regret. And when have we been accosted by an angry mob? And what of all the merit that Moses had earned, why cannot all his good work counterbalance this one mistake?



Why is God not more understanding? Is not God supposed to be a model for us in how to treat others? That is, if we were God in that situation, shouldn't we forgive Moses?

There are other explanations for why Moses cannot enter the land, some pointing to other mistakes or sins he committed. He killed an Egyptian. He did not want to accept God's mission. The midrash contains dozens of reasons for God's refusal to Moses. The very existence of so many explanations reveals not a heavy indictment against Moses' worthiness, but rather desperation on the part of the commentators to explain what is so inexplicable, why Moses could not enter the land.



In the Torah itself, God's refusal of Moses is stark and abrupt, and is meant to be so. Any list of reasons misses the point. A way to understand God's refusal to allow Moses to fulfill his life's work is to see it as a demonstration of human nature, as pedagogic rather than vindictive. Rather than God punishing Moses, the story is a metaphor about the frustration of not fulfilling all our dreams. The Torah is teaching us here that we will generally fail to complete everything that we set out to do in life. This is the great frustration of mortality. There will always be more things to do than can be done. Our lives will end when they do, and there is nothing that we can do about that. I am reminded of the sage Rabbi Tarfon's teaching in Pirkei Avot: "It is not upon you to complete the task, but neither are you free to neglect it." Even Moses could not complete the task that he set out to perform, to bring the Israelites from slavery to freedom in the promised land. If Moses had to die with unfinished business on the table, then so can we. There will always be unfinished business, as we know from all stages of life. The lesson for us is to fulfill mitzvot, to

do what must be done, and take solace not always in the job completed but in the job well done to the best of our abilities. There are always unrealized dreams. What is important is that we dream our dreams and follow them in the right directions. Moses worked hard for God and the people. He should have felt good about his labors. That solace was his promised land. It is a land of milk and honey available to us all.

*you are not obligated
to finish the work;
neither are you free
to desist from it.*

pirkei Avot 2:21

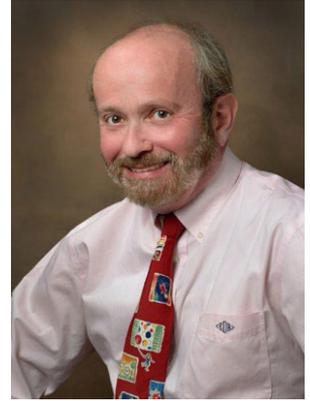
Of Blessed Memory

Dr. Evan Dreyer

It is with the greatest sadness that we report the sudden, untimely passing on August 2 of Dr. Evan Dreyer, a most beloved member of our congregational family.

During the past several months, while Dr. Larry Block has been recuperating from illness, Dr. Dreyer has stepped forward and led the davening at many of our Sabbath services.

Dr. Dreyer began his association with Ahavath Achim in 2013 when his son Jonathan became bar mitzvah at our shul, and he has been valued member of our congregation ever since.



Dr. Dreyer was born in the Netherlands, grew up in the New York City area and attended Columbia College where he graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. He holds a medical degree from Harvard Medical School and completed his internship in Internal Medicine at New York University /Bellevue Hospital in 1985. Dr. Dreyer's residency in ophthalmology and glaucoma fellowship training was performed at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, where he became Director of Glaucoma Services 1991. He relocated to Scheie Eye Institute in Philadelphia, PA, as Associate Professor Ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1997..

Dr. Dreyer is a sub-specialist in the diagnosis and medical/surgical management of glaucoma, a field in which he has authored over 150 articles. He is best known for initiating the concept of neuro-protection in glaucoma the idea that glaucoma control can be directed specifically at the optic nerve and not simply at intra-ocular pressure.

Dr. Dreyer holds several patents in the field, sits on the review boards for over 25 journals, and serves as an advisor for several prominent pharmaceutical companies.

Dr. Dreyer joined Glaucoma-Cataract Consultants in 2001 as Director of Glaucoma Services. He provides expert glaucoma subspecialty care to our patients in western Pennsylvania.

Dr. Dreyer is survived by his wife, Melissa, son Justin, and daughters Samantha and Rebecca.

May Dr. Dreyer's memory be for a blessing, and may Hashem comfort them among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Caroline Brunner

Saul S. Lipman

Joseph Stern

Laura Mae Elikan

Ida Match

Kerry Joel Perlman

May their memories be for a blessing.