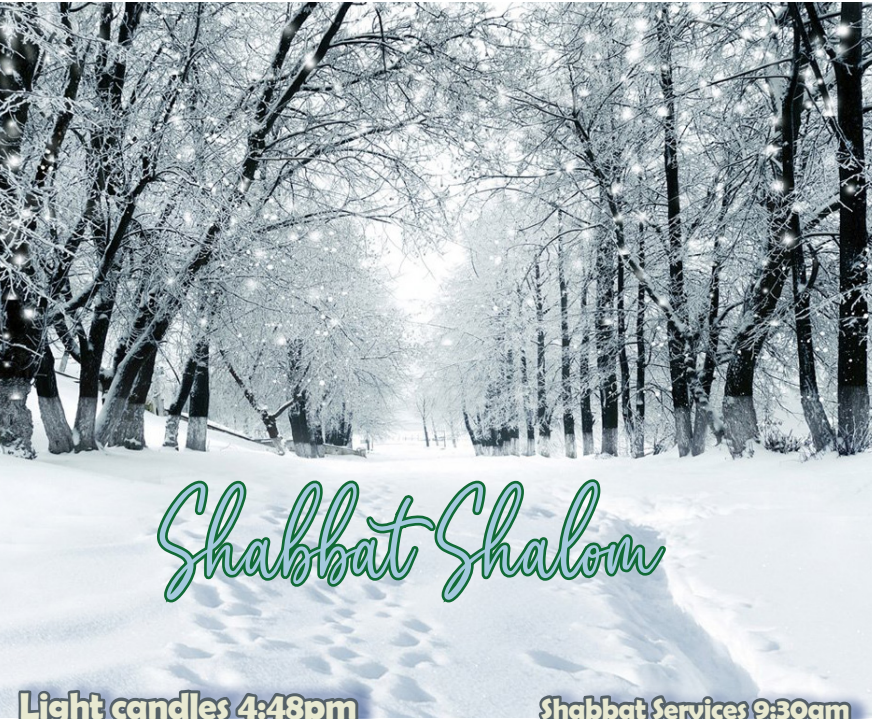




Carnegie Shul Chatter

November 24, 2022



Shabbat Shalom

Light candles 4:48pm

Shabbat Services 9:30am

Shabbat Services

The Carnegie Shul continues to offer hybrid Shabbat services. Please join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19. Masks are optional. To attend virtually, watch for a Zoom link in your email. If you don't receive it, contact Rosalyn Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com. The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found on line at https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2492504/jewish/Toldot-Torah-Reading.htm

Giving Thanks

My favorite prayer of thanksgiving comes from the daily Amidah, "We ever thank thee who art the Lord our God and the God of our fathers. Thou art the strength of our lives and our saving shield. In every generation we will thank thee and recount thy praise – for our lives which are in thy charge, for our souls which are in thy care, and for thy miracles that are daily with us, and for thy continuous wonders and favors- evening, morning, and noon. Beneficent one whose mercies never fail, Merciful one whose kindnesses never cease, Thou hast always been our hope."

Happy Thanksgiving one and all, and never forget that the Lord God is One, his majesty rules over all the earth.

Toldot in a Nutshell

Genesis 25:19–28:9

From Chabad.org

Isaac and Rebecca endure twenty childless years, until their prayers are answered and Rebecca conceives. She experiences a difficult pregnancy as the “children struggle inside her”; G-d tells her that “there are two nations in your womb,” and that the younger will prevail over the elder.

Esau emerges first; Jacob is born clutching Esau’s heel. Esau grows up to be “a cunning hunter, a man of the field”; Jacob is “a wholesome man,” a dweller in the tents of learning. Isaac favors Esau; Rebecca loves Jacob. Returning exhausted and hungry from the hunt one day, Esau sells his birthright (his rights as the firstborn) to Jacob for a pot of red lentil stew.

In Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, Isaac presents Rebecca as his sister, out of fear that he will be killed by someone coveting her beauty. He farms the land, reopens the wells dug by his father Abraham, and digs a series of his own wells: over the first two there is strife with the Philistines, but the waters of the third well are enjoyed in tranquility.

Esau marries two Hittite women. Isaac grows old and blind, and expresses his desire to bless Esau before he dies. While Esau goes off to hunt for his father’s favorite food, Rebecca dresses Jacob in Esau’s clothes, covers his arms and neck with goatskins to simulate the feel of his hairier brother, prepares a similar dish, and sends Jacob to his father. Jacob receives his father’s blessings for “the dew of the heaven and the fat of the land” and mastery over his brother. When Esau returns and the deception is revealed, all Isaac can do for his weeping son is to predict that he will live by his sword, and that when Jacob falters, the younger brother will forfeit his supremacy over the elder.

Jacob leaves home for Charan to flee Esau’s wrath and to find a wife in the family of his mother’s brother, Laban. Esau marries a third wife—Machalath, the daughter of Ishmael.



Haftorah in a Nutshell

Malachi 1:1-2:7

This week’s haftorah opens with a mention of the tremendous love G-d harbors for the children of Jacob, and the retribution He will visit upon the children of Esau who persecuted their cousins. This follows the theme of this week’s Torah reading, whose two protagonists are Jacob and Esau.

The prophet Malachi then rebukes the kohanim (priests) who offer blemished and emaciated animals on G-d's altar: "Were you to offer it to your governor, would he be pleased or would he favor you? . . . O that there were even one among you that would close the doors [of the Temple] and that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain!"



The haftorah ends with a strong enjoiner to the kohanim to return to the original covenant that G-d had made with their ancestor, Aaron the High Priest. "True teaching was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. In peace and equity he went with Me, and he brought back many from iniquity."

Haftorah Commentary

Parshas Toldos

By Rabbi Dovid Siegel

Malachi 1:1 – 2:7

This week's haftorah warns the Jewish people to cherish their relationship with Hashem and never to take advantage of it. Although we enjoy a special closeness with Hashem, we are reminded to approach Him with reverence at all times. The prophet Malachi addresses the Jewish people shortly after their return from their Babylonian exile and admonishes them for their lack of respect in the Bais Hamikdash. Malachi says in the name of Hashem, "I love you... but if I am your father where is My honor? The kohanim disgrace My name by referring to My altar with disrespect." (1:2,6) Rashi (ad loc.) explains that the kohanim failed to appreciate their privilege of sacrifice in Hashem's sanctuary. Although the Jews had only recently merited their return to Eretz Yisroel and the Bais Hamikdash it didn't take long for them to forget this. They became so accustomed to the daily service of sacrifice that they began viewing their sacred sacrificial portions like ordinary meals. If, due to the abundance of kohanim, small portions were distributed to each kohain, their response was one of great disrespect. Even the order of sacrifice was treated lightly and at times they would offer lame or sick animals on Hashem's altar, demonstrating tremendous insensitivity towards their sacred privilege.

The prophet Malachi reprimanded them for their inexcusable behavior and reminded them of the illustrious era of the first Bais Hamikdash, only years before. The kohanim in those generations did have the proper attitude towards the service of Hashem and conducted themselves with true reverence. Hashem says about the kohain of those days, "My treaty of life and peace was with him, and I gave him (reason for) reverence. He revered Me and before My name he was humbled." (2:5) In particular, these passages refer to Aharon, the earliest Kohain Gadol to serve in the Sanctuary. They speak of a man so sacred that he was granted permission to enter the Holy of Holies. And yet he always maintained a true sense of humility and displayed proper reverence whenever he entered Hashem's private quarters. The Gaon

of Vilna reveals to us that Aharon's relationship was so unique that it extended far beyond that of any other Kohain Gadol. In fact, Aharon was the only person in history who was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies at any point in the year, given certain sacrificial conditions. Yet, this special closeness never affected Aharon Hakohain. He never became overly comfortable with Hashem and always maintained the proper reverence.

Parenthetically, Malachi draws special attention to the stark contrast between our relationship with Hashem and that of the other nations. Their relationship with the Creator is defined as one of formal respect and reverence. Malachi says in the name of Hashem, "From the east to the west My name is exalted amongst the nations....But you (the Jewish people) profane it by saying that the altar of Hashem is a disgrace." (1:12) The Radak (ad loc.) explains that Hashem's name is exalted by all nations because they do recognize a supreme being which they respectfully call the G-d of the gods.

They afford the Creator the highest title and honor and never bring any disgrace to His name. This is because they always direct their energies towards smaller powers and false deities and never approach Hashem directly. This relationship with Hashem results in one of perfect formal respect and reverence and allows Hashem to remain exalted in their eyes. The upshot of this is that their relationship with Him is a distant one which leaves no room for familiarity and disgrace.

The Jewish people, on the other hand, enjoy a very close relationship with Hashem. They are privileged to be identified as Hashem's sons and are the focus of Hashem's love and favor. They are granted permission to enter Hashem's holy chamber and sense the warmth of Hashem inside His sacred abode. This special relationship leaves room for familiarity and, at times, can even be the cause of insensitivity and disrespect. In the second Bais Hamikdash this special feeling of closeness was so tangible that the kohanim lost sight of the true reverence and respect they owed Hashem. Hashem therefore says, "I love you but where is your reverence?" The Jewish people are entitled to a special close relationship but they must never abuse this privilege. Special care must always be given to maintain their proper respect and reverence for the Master of the universe.

This vast difference between the Jews and the nations in their approach to respect finds its origins in the relationships of their predecessors, Yaakov and Eisav. The Midrash (Breishis Rabba 65:12) quotes the great Tanna, Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel saying that he never served his father with nearly the same degree of respect that Eisav served his father, Yitzchok. Rabban Shimon continued and explained, "Because Eisav wore his kingly robes even when doing menial household chores for his father, but I perform these chores in my ordinary garments." This displays Eisav's tremendous sense of respect and reverence for his father. However, we find that this very same approach produced a cold and distant association between Eisav and his father. This can be deduced from the Torah's narrative about the service of Eisav to



his father while receiving Yitzchok's blessing. The Torah quotes Eisav addressing his father in the following manner, "Let my father rise and eat from the provisions of his son." (Breishis 27:31) Eisav always addressed his father like a king in the cold and distant albeit respectful third person. Yaakov, on the other hand is not credited to have served his father with the extraordinary reverence of Eisav. Yet, even when attempting to impersonate Eisav, Yaakov couldn't help but speak to his father in a warm and loving tone, "Please rise..." (27:19) (see R' Avrohom ben HaRambam ad loc.)

We the Jewish people follow the footsteps of our forefather Yaakov, hence the Jewish approach to respect and honor is one of warmth and closeness, not coldness and distance. True, Yaakov never reached ultimate levels of reverence, but his relationship with his father was always one of love and warmth, of inner feelings and true appreciation. And with this same approach we relate to our Heavenly Father, with warmth and love, yet with respect and reverence. The nations, however maintain the approach of their predecessor Eisav. Therefore their association with the Creator is one of coldness and distance, albeit with great respect and reverence.

In truth this difference in approach finds its expression in our attitude towards our miniature Bais Hamikdash, today's synagogue. Although a synagogue is dedicated as the home of Hashem, wherein His sacred presence can be found, a sense of warmth and love permeates its atmosphere. We the Jewish people are privileged to feel very close to Hashem and enjoy His warmth and acceptance. But we must always harken to the stern warning of Malachi, "Hashem says, 'I love you like a father does his son, but if I am your father where is My reverence?'" We do enjoy a very close relationship with Hashem but we must take great care never to abuse it. We, like Yaakov must maintain the proper balance when relating to our Heavenly father, yes a relationship of warmth and love, yet one of respect and reverence.

On Thanksgiving

In honor of the Thanksgiving Holiday, here is an interesting lesson about the Modeh Ani prayer which is said upon awakening in the mornig. The source is Rabbi Arnie Singer at jewishwisdom.co

Modeh Ani – The Jewish prayer of thanks first thing in the morning

The first prayer in the Jewish siddur is recited when we wake up in the morning, while we're still in bed. Here is my translation of the prayer, from the original Hebrew:

Thank you, oh living and eternal God, for mercifully returning my soul to me, great is your faithfulness.

Let's break down the prayer and dive a bit deeper into its meaning.

The first words of the prayer, and therefore the first words that are supposed to come out of our mouth to start our new day, are "thank you." What a beautiful and meaningful way to start our day! We don't start off by asking God for something — and there is so much for us to ask for. We don't cry out to him, or complain, or kvetch. Instead, we acknowledge the awesome gift of life that He has given us and say Thank You.

What a powerful life lesson: to see the gifts that we have been blessed with and express our gratitude to the giver of those gifts.

Our first thanks are directed to God, the giver of life. But think of all the other people we owe thanks to — our parents, spouse, children, friends, and even random people we interact with who show us kindness. If we direct our awareness to the kindness that others are showing us, then we will be motivated to express our thanks to them. The Modeh Ani prayer is training us to do just that. To be aware of the gifts we receive and then to thank the giver for those gifts.

In the prayer we thank God “for mercifully returning my soul to me.” This refers to the Jewish teaching that our soul leaves our body when we sleep at night, and is returned to us in the morning. In fact, the Talmud refers to sleep as 1/60 of death. We can leave the science of it aside and just focus on the idea that when we wake up from a night's sleep, it's as if we are being reborn. We are given the opportunity to look at the world with fresh eyes and a fresh outlook. A person who can achieve this state of being, where every day is a brand new opportunity, is truly blessed, and the God who provides him or her with that blessing is truly merciful.

Another powerful lesson: to wake up in the morning and view each day as a new opportunity to achieve our goals.

The final part of the Modeh Ani prayer is a bit enigmatic — “great is your faithfulness.” At first glance the words seem to say that God is faithful or, in simple words, dependable. We can rely on God to be there for us. While this is true, it doesn't quite fit into the original Hebrew text that reads, “Rabah Enumatecha” or “Great is your faith”. Hmm...are we saying that God has great faith? In Himself? No, that can't be right.

So whom does God have faith in? He has faith in us.[1]

God has faith in us, that we will live another day in a positive manner, by doing good deeds and following His commandments. Like a parent who lets a young child carry a tray of glasses across the room for the first time. The parent knows that the child might fail and that the glasses might all come crashing down, but he also knows that in order for the child to learn he must give the child the opportunity to succeed and show the child that he believes in his ability to succeed. The parent will continue to closely monitor the child to make sure he doesn't get hurt, but he will give the child the opportunity to succeed or fail, because he believes in the child's potential to succeed.

God believes in our potential to succeed.

He has faith in us, and for that we are forever grateful — and we thank Him for believing in our potential every day we open our eyes.

The Lessons we learn from Modeh Ani:

- ◆ Be aware of the gifts you get and say Thank You to the one giving them.
- ◆ View each new day as a brand new opportunity to accomplish your goals and to make it meaningful.
- ◆ God believes in our potential to succeed in leading a good, kind and meaningful life. Let's not let Him down.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Louis Coffee

Joseph Hoffman

Louise Isaacs

Jacob Speizer

Bella Klee

Arthur Speizer

May their memories be for a blessing.

Donations

In Memory

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Annette Steinberger, Jacob Stienberger,

Bernard William Steinberger, Mollie

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