



# Family & Friends

## Parshas Vayeishev

December 19 2024 - Kislev 18 5785



Celebrating at the Solash  
Siyum.

PARSHAS VAYEISHEV  
RABBI MORDCHE GURWITZ

Our parsha begins with Yaakov returning from exile to his ancestral home. Although he petitions a tranquil life with himself and his neighbors, the calamity of Yosef and his brothers rapidly descends upon him.

There is no bitterer pill that a family can swallow, then that of a family quarrel. Complex dynamics of family life often times create flammable situations among siblings. This week's parsha serves as a paradigm for domestic acrimonious disagreements that can turn the best of families into a destructive conflagration.

וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶחָיו כִּי אֵתוּ אָהֵב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל אֶחָיו  
וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם  
“And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, so they hated him, and they could not speak with him peacefully.” (37:4)

The Baal HaTurim explains that the brother's hatred was rooted in the fact that Yaakov Avinu chose to disclose classified Torah secrets exclusively to Yosef. Though all of

the brothers in this drama are to be held accountable for their actions, their underlying motive was a direct result of lofty aspirations. The Baal HaTurim is swift to explain that the punishment for this misplaced hatred is alluded to from the fact that the last word

of the verse לְשָׁלֵם is missing a letter vuv. By omitting this letter, the numerical equation (gematria) of the remaining letters equals 400. This number refers to the 400 years of exile in which the Jewish nation was subjugated to Egyptian bondage. In other words, the Baal HaTurim explains that the hatred generated from the 10 brothers, which appears to be a machlokes lshem shamayim, resulted in thousands of their Jewish descendants being exiled from Eretz Yisrael and enslaved by the Egyptians over a span of four centuries!

As we ponder this powerful opinion and meditate on the cause and effect that the Baal HaTurim has explained, I would like to share one more divergent thought.

Many parents strive to assemble their children's lives so that they will never experience problems or difficulties. They delude themselves and go to a ridiculous extremes in the hope that their children will never have to face challenges or difficulties throughout life.

Problems are interwoven into the very fabric of life. More important than avoiding obstacles and promoting a life of leisure, are the tools to cope with problems that



Mazel Tov

Heartfelt Mazel Tov wishes to:

Mr. & Mrs. Benny Fine on their recent marriage.

Tzvi Lieberman on his recent engagement.

Ari Purec on his recent engagement.

Yosef Miller on his recent engagement.

arise. Life will have its challenges that can be met. Enabling children to meet these challenges produces mentally healthy and responsible adults that are prepared to triumph and grow from whatever surprises life has in store.

Yaakov wished to spend the rest of his days in peace and serenity, enjoying his family and pursuing his spiritual growth. Hashem Yisbarach had other plans in mind. Only siyata dishmaya and realism can protect us from our own errors.



Celebrating at the Fine  
wedding.



## The Rosh HaYeshiva shlit"א in America.

### A CHANUKAH REFLECTION - THE POWER OF SMALL LIGHTS

Chanukah teaches us a profound and eternal truth: even the smallest amount of light has the power to dispel great darkness. The small, seemingly insignificant, actions of one person can spark a cascade of kedusha – holiness, that reverberates far beyond their immediate surroundings, sanctifying Hashem's name on a global stage.

On July 24, 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a bipartisan audience during a joint session of the U.S. Congress. The address focused on the longevity and closeness of the U.S.- Israel relationship and his broader vision for a Middle East.

Political pundits took to the task of dissecting the shortcomings of this speech. One American politician, went so far as to describe this address as, "by far the worst presentation of any foreign dignitary invited and honored with the privilege of addressing the Congress of the United States."

With all of the partisan critique of Mr. Netanyahu's speech, there was

one Jewish American citizen who was also troubled by this speech – but not for political reasons. He reasoned as follows. The opportunity for anyone to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress is a unique and powerful platform. When a world leader uses his platform to mention Hashem Yisbarach before Congress, it is more than a ceremonial nod to tradition. It becomes a moment of spiritual resonance – a chance to elevate the discourse, inspire unity, promote moral integrity, and remind the nation's leaders of their higher calling to serve both their people and a divine purpose. In a world often driven by power and pragmatism, such a reminder is both a rare and invaluable gift.

The most glaring shortfall of Mr. Netanyahu's speech was, the fact that throughout his entire address, he failed to make mention, even once, of Hashem Yisbarach! This failure represents a glaring shortfall on multiple levels, given both the nature of the occasion and his role.

A Jewish speaker in such a high-profile setting represents not only his country but also the Jewish faith as a whole. By omitting Hashem, the speaker is seen as distancing the speech from the religious and cultural values that define Judaism. In this case, failing to mention Hashem is viewed as a lack of representation of the Jewish tradition's deep connection to the divine, which is a gross disappointment for religious Jews. Not acknowledging Hashem was a missed opportunity on many levels.

In an effort to right this wrong, this Jewish American citizen, wrote a letter to Mr. Netanyahu expressing his disappointment. Low and behold, a short while later he received a reply stating

that on September 27, 2024, Mr. Netanyahu would have the world stage at the UN General Assembly in New York. During this upcoming speech, he would capitalize on the opportunity to make mention of Hashem Yisbarach.

True to his word, Mr. Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly made mention of three biblical themes of which, he concluded his speech from Devraim (31:6), "Be strong and courageous! Neither fear, nor be dismayed of them, for the L-rd, your G-d He is the One Who goes with you. He will neither fail you, nor forsake you."

The story of Chanukah is not merely about military victory against overwhelming odds or how a single day's worth of oil, miraculously burned for eight days. These miracles illustrate that divine blessing often manifests through human courage and action, no matter how small or humble those efforts may seem.

This timeless lesson finds expression even in our generation. When one person performs an act of kindness, speaks words of Torah, or stands up for truth, it is akin to kindling a flame in a darkened room. Chanukah calls us to be the bearers of light in a dark world. The Menorah's flames are a reminder to us that no matter how daunting the darkness may seem, even the smallest light can shine brighter than we ever imagined.

For all e-Newsletter related issues and sign-up requests:

[newsletter@torahore.org](mailto:newsletter@torahore.org)

For all other Yeshiva related issues:

[office@torahore.org](mailto:office@torahore.org) /

718-434-5185