

Knesset Israel

Your Beverlywood Shul

Facebook.com/TheShulOnRobertson | 2364 South Robertson Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90034 | TheShulOnRobertson@gmail.com

Parshat Vayechi

By Rabbi Avraham Schefres

*Dvar Torah Dedicated to Dr. Alex
Schutzman in Honor of his Birthday!*

Words are perhaps the most powerful tools on earth. This week we read Parashat Vayechi, which is the last parsha in the first book of the Torah, Berashit. The parsha is the final chapter in the lives of our forefathers and the creation of the Jewish nation - it ends with words - the blessings that Yaakov gives his children. This book also begins with words as Hashem uses words to create the world and all that is in it. Is this simply a coincidence? The good Jewish answer is - of course not. What is the message?

There is great emphasis in our culture on lashon harah (speaking ill of people, etc.). In fact, a very famous book, Shmirat Halashon (Guard Your Tongue), written by the Chafetz Chaim, includes detailed ways of how we need to be careful with words. This book is needed, important, and can guide us in the use of words. However, we may want to learn another significant concept about the use of words from the book of Berashit. The concept is the positive use of words or, if you will, Lashon Tov (good speech), because those words cause good things to happen. Words in Berashit are used to help the world propel forward. A few of those ways are creating (in creation), naming and giving meaning (Adam naming creations), communicating and fact finding between Hashem and people and among people (Adam with the apple, Kain with the death Hevel, etc.), creating languages/cultures (Tower of Babel), praying (for children by our forefathers and matriarchs), re-creating realities (Yaakov and the first born status), and blessing (Hashem blessing forefathers/matriarchs and the blessings of children). We can see that words are used to design and produce the needs of the world.

If we had a choice of which to learn first Lashon Harah or Lashon Tov, which would we pick? In raising children, we first tell them what we want them to say, which is positive words. We hope that our children's first words and the words thereafter will consist of 'good' words. In the same fashion we may want to concentrate on what we can use words for. That is the message of Berashit.

How often do we say 'I love you' to our loved ones? How often do we give words of support, encouragement, and hope to our loved ones and to people around us? When was the last time we told someone what they are doing right and how great that is? This is what Berashit is telling us that we need to be doing.

Berashit begins with Hashem's words of creation to teach us that we can use our words to create positive realities. The book ends with words of blessings to encourage us to use our words as blessings to others, bringing good feelings, inspiration, and hope. Creation and blessing is the product of Lashon Tov for ourselves and others. All we need to do is apply this concept to our lives and commit to live by it. We may even find the practice of Lashon Tov as invigorating. Positive use of words is refreshing. In the words of Shlomo Hamelech in the book of Mishlay, Proverbs, 16:24, "Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." May we all be successful in our use of positive words.

Thank You!

A huge thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Josef and Bnaya Leah Schefres for their generous donation to cover the entire amount needed to fix the sefer Torah. The Sefer Torah is being repaired in Honor of Mendel Dawidowicz, מנדל. Mendel was a very devoted member of Knesset Israel, not only coming to davening every time, but served on the Board of the shul. He was the Levi in the shul and a soft spoken, quick witted, generous gentleman. May his soul have an aliyah as a result of the chesed that is being done in his name.

The shul is still accepting funds to help us fix two other sifrei Torah. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Shabbat Times

Erev Shabbat Dec 25, 2015 / 13 Tevet, 5776

Candle Lighting.....3:49 pm to 4:32 pm
Mincha.....4:35 pm

Shabbat Day Dec 26, 2015 / 14 Tevet, 5776

Shacharit.....9:00 am
Kiddush.....11:40 am
Mincha.....4:30 pm
Havdalah / Shabbat Ends.....5:34 pm

Mazal Tov!

Happy Anniversary Charlie & Helen Brill! (Dec 29)
Happy Birthday Judith Goldberg! (Dec 28)
Happy Birthday Noam Goldberg! (Dec 28)
Happy Birthday Alex Schutzman! (Dec 29)

Sefer Torah Repair Project

