



# TorahActionLife

## COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

This week's edition is sponsored  
Lirfua sheleima Penina bat Shifra  
Raizel Betoch Shaar Cholei Yisrael

### VAYECHI

15<sup>th</sup> TEVET 5777

Shabbat begins: 16:02

Shabbat ends: 17:11



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
DIRECTOR, TAL

Leap Second!

Anyone who was really focusing on their watches at midnight on the 31<sup>st</sup> December would have noticed something strange. If you were one of those people who couldn't wait for 2016 to be over, then unfortunately you would have had to wait a second longer!

Timekeepers at the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) introduced a "leap second" after 23:59:59 on December 31 – delaying midnight by a second.

This isn't the first time NPL has added a leap second to a year.

The extra seconds are introduced every two or three years. In fact, the last one was inserted just 18 months ago in June 2015. So what exactly is a leap second?

The adding of the leap second is to ensure that time based on the Earth's rotation does not lag behind time kept by atomic clocks.

Although the drift is small – taking around 1,000 years to accumulate a one-hour difference – if not corrected it would eventually result in clocks showing midday before sunrise!

And we thought in our day and age everything could be simplified. Timing is very important; we want to know when something starts and when it will finish. Yet it seems even our timing needs regular fixing.

In this week's Parasha Yaakov feels that the end of his life is near, he wishes to relate a special time to his children.

"And Yaakov called his sons and said: 'Gather, yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the end of days.'" (Bereishit 49:1)

He calls all his children together and wishes to portray an important message – the revelation of the 'end of days'. Rashi elaborates that Yaakov wished to reveal that which would happen at the end of days, but this knowledge departed from him and he then began speaking about other matters.

Instead, he turned to his children and blessed them, each one according to their individual characters and strengths.

Throughout history we have always wondered about the End of Days and when the final redemption will arrive.



Why did Yaakov wish to tell his children when this would be? And furthermore, why did Hashem prevent him from revealing this?

Imagine two people sitting in a jail.

Both look entrenched in sadness, depressed with each one sitting holding their head in between their hands.

One turns to the other and says: "Tell me what your story is?"

"I have just been sentenced and am in here..." he sighs, "for fifty years!"

The second person seems much more distressed. Surely he couldn't be worse?

"Well," he says to the first person, "look on the bright side; at least you know how long you are in prison for. I am yet to be sentenced, it could be fifty years, it could be seventy years, I just don't know."

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky Z'l writes that Yaakov had a terrible fear. His fear was that if the Jews would go down to Egypt and need to be there hundreds of years, they would give up hope. As the years and generations would go by, they would see their tough situation as slaves and lose hope.

When one gives up hope, one throws in the towel and ceases to maintain his/her Jewish identity. As someone once said, HOPE stands for Hold On, Pain Ends. Yaakov's mortal fear was that all he had worked to build up would eventually, without hope, evaporate in the long Galut. It is for this reason that before leaving Eretz Canaan, Yaakov chopped down cedar trees planted by his grandfather Avraham, and brought the wood with him to Egypt. Yaakov wanted his descendants to have – throughout the Egyptian exile – a tangible reminder of their country. Yaakov wanted them to have a solid artefact to remind them of their "old grandfather," that would serve as a constant source of hope. Knowing that those boards would one day house the holy Tabernacle, which would be a home for the Divine Presence in their midst, on their way back to the homeland would keep their faith strong.

Similarly, Yaakov's agenda in revealing to his children the whole of Jewish history was to give them encouragement not to give up hope in the darkest of times and to have faith that the end would be bright.

Being a prisoner in prison for fifty years is long but at least if you know one day you will go out, there is hope. Yaakov wanted to reveal the end, so that at least they would always know there *is* an end. The Almighty however intervened and suppressed Yaakov's prophetic knowledge of this information. Hashem told him that if his sons would learn the extent and severity of the Jewish exile, they would do the opposite – lose hope.



**elias**  
LONDON'S PREMIER DRY CLEANER  
www.eliascleaners.co.uk

**B.R.E.**  
BRAMPTON REAL ESTATE  
SALES - RENTALS - MANAGEMENT  
Tel: 020 7101 3737  
www.bramptonrealestate.co.uk  
Shommer Shabbat  
PROUD SPONSORS OF TAL

020 8806 2528 Proud Sponsors of TAL  
**SHALOM MOTORS**  
EST 1967  
TAKING CARE OF YOUR MOTORING NEEDS.  
Icons: car, motorcycle, truck, car wash, etc.

It is then that Yaakov took the initiative to bless his children. Twelve distinct tribes all working with different characters and strengths to serve G-d.

Yaakov, through his blessings, showed them their strengths and weakness and gave them the G-dly spark that would help them through the difficult Galut. He encouraged them through his blessings, implying that through mastering their

strengths they would cause the exile to end and they would all merit the return to their land – Eretz Yisrael.

From his deathbed, Yaakov gave his sons the hope for such a destiny and the hope and aspiration that allowed them to survive the Egyptian exile.

Adding on an extra second to our time might go unnoticed, but not knowing when

the end of the exile is definitely remains with us. It is an essential part of our being. Yaakov wished so hard to tell us the end, but Hashem had other plans. Knowing the end of time gives us hope. But there is another way of keeping our aspirations high in this difficult exile. Recognise each other's strengths, work together in unity each one with our own special characteristics to create that end and ensure its eternal peace.



**RABBI YOSEF SOLOMON**  
**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,**  
**TIKUN**

### The Blessing Of Rebuke

The end of life somehow affords a clearer perspective than ever before, so a person's last words are arguably the most powerful they'll ever say. Accordingly, halacha gives great import to the words of a dying person, permitting certain financial acquisitions not usually accepted when said by someone healthy. Therefore, one cannot help but take notice of Yaakov Avinu's final words as he gathers his twelve sons around his deathbed. What's really perplexing is that although we refer to this section of the Torah as 'Yaakov's blessings', his actual words are anything but.

Take for example what he says to his firstborn Reuven: "water-like recklessness – you cannot be chief, because you mounted your father's bed",<sup>1</sup> punishing a mistake made decades ago and confiscating the right of leadership. Some blessing indeed.

And to Shimon and Levi, things seem even worse: "Into their conspiracy may my soul not enter; with their congregation do not join ... Cursed is their rage for it is fierce, and their wrath for it is harsh."<sup>2</sup> With blessings like these who needs curses!

It's possible to interpret all Yaakov's words as veiled criticism, prompting us to ask: Why depart this world with such harsh rebuke of his sons? And why do we refer to them as blessings?

To begin to answer, we must recognize that although there's no more caustic and destructive behaviour in any relationship than criticism, where constructive, it's actually a mitzvah - as it says: "You shall surely rebuke your fellow"<sup>3</sup>. This means that just like we should give tzedaka, say Shema and build a family, so too we must criticize someone who's doing something wrong.

Furthermore, King Solomon says: "Rebuke the wise man and he'll love you"<sup>4</sup>, teaching that a major faculty of wisdom is the love of criticism. As such, Pirkei Avos<sup>5</sup> lists this mindset as one of the 48 Ways to Wisdom. The reason is obvious: a wise person desires to know where they can improve.

Business managers and CEO's even pay big bucks for criticism. We just call it consulting. Likewise, there's been a meteoric rise in popularity of the newly invented occupation of life coach, which is really just a warmer friendlier approach, but criticism nonetheless.

But if rebuke is so healthy, vital and productive – why do we avoid it?

There are many reasons why people ignore reprimand but surely the most prominent of obstructions is that that we don't feel the person rebuking us knows us well enough or is even capable of judging us. After all, do they know who I am? And who do they think they are anyway?

A deeper understanding of the verse where Yaakov gathers his sons, addresses these points: "Assemble yourselves and listen, O sons of Yaakov; and listen to Yisrael your father."<sup>6</sup>

Replete with repetitions the responsible scholar must ask the following questions:

1. Why did Yaakov describe himself as their father if (a) its obvious and (b) he's already described them as his sons?
  2. Why use both of his names – Yaakov and Yisrael?
- Perhaps Yaakov went out his way to remind his sons that he was their father

and they were his children in order to communicate exactly this point: humble yourselves and heed my words, for there is none other who knows a person better than their parent.

This idea is strengthened by the use of his two different names: Yaakov was given at birth because he came out hanging on to his brother Eisav's heel. The mystics show how the name Yaakov shares a root with the word Eikev meaning heel; explaining that just as the heel is the lowest part of the body, so too the name Yaakov denotes humility.

Yet, on the other hand, the name Yisrael was given after his successful struggle against the angel and denotes spiritual greatness and strength, as the Torah says: "for you have striven with the Divine and have overcome".<sup>7</sup>

So in effect Yaakov was saying: be like the heel and humble yourselves so that you can hear wisdom from a higher source. In other words, I know you better than you know yourselves and I'm well equipped to rebuke you.

Finally, the concept of a blessing is incredibly specific: it defines an expansion of that which already exists in potential. Therefore, you cannot bless someone with something they cannot ever have e.g. that a man he should become pregnant. Rather your blessing must identify a latent potential and bring it into fruition and tangible expression.

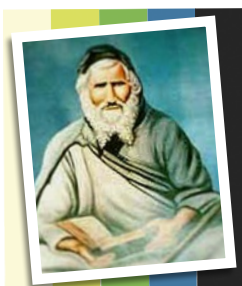
By identifying where his sons had gone wrong, more than criticizing their actions, Yaakov was creating a pathway for them to redirect and express their innate strengths in positive ways. Real rebuke doesn't destroy, it builds.

Now that's a blessing.

1. Breishis 49:3
2. Breishis 49:5-7
3. Vayikra 19:17
4. Mishlei 9:8
5. Mishna 6:6
6. Breishis 49:2
7. Breishis 32:29

Please Pray For  
Refuah Shelaima of:

Mordechai Ben Musha Yeta | Aharon ben Leah | Pinchas ben Tamar | Rivkah bat Sarah | Pesach Simcha ben Feigle  
Yona bat Esther | Shira Ilana bat Susan Shoshana Farha | Naomi bat Mazal | Sarah Chaya bat Blima Freida Myriam  
Leah bat Sarah | Rafael ben Rachel | Sarah Bat Rachel | Elisha Ben Ayala



**STORIES OF CHACHAMIM**  
Rabbi Yaakov Abihssira

Our saintly and venerated teacher Rabbi Yaakov Abihssira, may his memory be blessed, was born in Tafilalet, Morocco in the year 5567 (1807).

At the time he was born, a great brightness illuminated his room, and his father Rabbi Messod and the entire community were joyous. They knew that a child prodigy had just been born.

In growing up, Rabbi Yaakov showed a particular interest, and a seldom-seen aptitude, for Torah study. His father initiated him in the different disciplines and the young man showed a great ability for understanding.

Rabbi Yaakov soon grew to adulthood and his love for Torah increased ever more. He quickly became a Kabbalist and saintly man renown for his great piety. He slept very little and would spend the entire week, night and day, in the Beth Hamidrash devoting himself to the study of our Holy Torah.

He would leave only on the eve of Shabbat to go home. When necessary, he would journey from city to city to collect funds for the destitute and sick.

Even when bothered in the middle of the night, he would never complain.

He was a generous man and his home was open to all who visited.

People came from everywhere to consult with him, and he was ever careful to ensure that peace reigned between the members of his community.

He had a sharp sense of justice, even if his decisions appeared at times surprising. Thus a rabbi who was staying with him for an entire year had the impression that Rabbi Yaakov was judging cases in ways

that hardly conformed to the Din (Jewish Law), and this greatly surprised him. Yet in every case, the truth suddenly dawned upon him and it turned out that Rabbi Yaakov had correctly judged from the outset. It is said that the truth was shown to him from Heaven, and that G-d had steered him clear of the least trouble.

Rabbi Yaakov Abihssira was infused with Ruach Hakodesh (the Holy Spirit) and had the power to perform miracles. Examples of such are numerous and are illustrated by authentic accounts that have been transmitted across time.

His body, people say, was connected to the earth, but his spirit sailed about in the upper worlds.

Rabbi Yaakov Abihssira authored twelve books. Some find an allusion to these works in the verse that states, "The sons of Jacob [Yaakov] were twelve" (Gen 35:22). Among his books are commentaries on the Torah: Pituhe Hotam, Mahsof Halavan, and Levona Zacca; Responsum: Yoru Michpatcha Layaakov; a collection of Drashot: Doresh Tov; and works on Kabbalah: Bigde Haaserad and Guinze Hamalech. All of these were printed after the death of the Tzaddik.

One day his son, Rabbi Messod, asked his father for permission to publish his works. Rabbi Yaakov replied, "My son, you will not print them until after I join the next world. There I will see if they have G-d's consent, and I will let you know in a dream." In fact, after the death of the Tzaddik, Rabbi Messod saw his father in a dream, at which point his father asked him to publish his works, for he then knew that they had been approved by G-d.

His love for the Holy Land ran deep. On several occasions he expressed the desire to leave everything and go there, but the community never wanted to separate from the Tzaddik. When he had reached an advanced age, he informed his entourage that the time had come for him to move. He felt compelled as by an overwhelming force, yet wasn't sure that he could realize his dream. He managed to travel all the way to Egypt, to the city of Damanhour (near Alexandria). This place would be the last step of his long journey. Once, at the outset of Shabbat, while he was preparing to recite Kiddush, a candle suddenly went

out without apparent reason. He then said, "Fine! May the soul return from where it came and may the body go to where it should." Those who heard these remarks were perplexed.

The next morning Rabbi Yaakov fell ill. His condition became worse during the entire week that followed, to the point that he found himself on death's door by Thursday. His host, Mr. Saroussi, had a doctor come by, a pious man, who announced that, unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done for the Rabbi and he would certainly pass away that night. When the doctor left, Rabbi Yaakov got up and asked his host what he had said. Mr. Saroussi, however, didn't want to reveal the doctor's remarks to him, but on the Rabbi's insistence he eventually did. "I must still live until just after Shabbat," Rabbi Yaakov said in correcting the doctor's prognosis, "and I have certain things to do."

Friday morning, when the doctor returned to confirm the death (for he was convinced that the Rabbi was already dead), he was stunned to see the Rabbi (clearly better) with a Torah book in his hand.

Sunday morning, numerous merchants in the city came to see him for a blessing. He told them, "Today you will not go to work, for the time has come for me to leave this world." Then he looked at them one by one and called out two Rabbis among them, asking them if they were prepared to take care of his body after his death. He warned them, however, that it wouldn't be long before he died. The two learned men agreed.

And so Rabbi Yaakov began to recite the Song of Songs, Vidui, and other prayers to ask forgiveness for his sins. He was then asked if he wished to be buried in Damanhour, and he agreed on condition that it be in a Jewish cemetery.

Finally, he recited the Shema and entrusted his soul to G-d.

He passed away on Sunday, Tevet 20, 5640 (January 4, 1880).

**Golders Green**

**PHONE CITY**

Proud sponsors of TAL

90 Golders Green Road, London NW11 8LN

**020 8381 4080**

**www.mypita.co.uk**

**PITA**

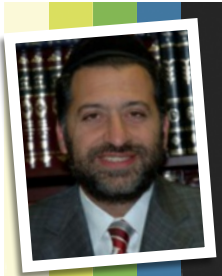
HUMOUSFALAFEL

98 Golders Green Rd London NW11 8HB

KF

f i g+ e





HALACHA  
RABBI ELI MANSOOR

### Moving Newly Purchased Candlesticks That Have Not Been Used for Lighting

The question arose concerning a woman who purchased silver candlesticks but had not yet used them for Shabbat candle lighting. During Shabbat, she

decided to bring the new candlesticks to the Shabbat table for decorative purposes, to adorn the table. Is this permissible on Shabbat?

Generally speaking, of course, candlesticks have the status of "Mukse" and may therefore not be handled on Shabbat. In this case, however, since the candlesticks have yet to be used for lighting, we might not assign to them the status of "Mukse." Indeed, the Gemara explicitly establishes in Masechet Shabbat (44), "Metaltelin Ner Hadash" – a new candlestick may be moved on Shabbat, since it has not yet been used for lighting candles.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, in Hazon Ovadia (261), codifies this Halacha, adding that it applies even if the candlesticks are very costly. Normally, expensive articles are assigned the status of "Mukse Me'hamat Hisaron Kis" and may not be handled on

Shabbat. However, Hacham Ovadia writes that this applies only to articles that are primarily used for an activity forbidden on Shabbat, such as tools and the like. Candlesticks that have not yet been used for lighting would thus not be included under the category of "Mukse Me'hamat Hisaron Kis." Hacham Ovadia adds that this would apply to other expensive articles that are used for permissible purposes, such as an oil painting, other precious artwork, or an expensive clock. If such an item should fall on Shabbat, one is allowed to move it to a safe place, as these articles do not have the status of "Mukse" on Shabbat.

**Summary:** Candlesticks that have not yet been used for lighting candles are not considered "Mukse" and may be moved on Shabbat



Torah Action Life

בס"ד

REFLECTION  
SIMULATION  
CONNECTION  
INSPIRATION  
PERCEPTION  
ENLIGHTENMENT

**MEN DINNER & LEARNING PROGRAM**

MONDAYS AT 8.30PM IN GOLDERS GREEN

**GET THE PARASHA FEELING**

info@torahactionlife.com  
www.torahactionlife.com



Torah Action Life

בס"ד

**LADIES DINNER & LEARNING EVENING**

MONDAYS AT 7.30PM

**DEEP IN THE SHABBAT WORLD**

DISCOVER THE 39 MELACHOT WITH RABBI TAWIL

AGE: 19-33  
INFO@TORAHACTIONLIFE.COM  
WWW.TORAHACTIONLIFE.COM



**KINGS REMOVALS**  
SHIPPING TO ISRAEL  
020 8338 3999  
www.kingsremovals.com

**WHITE HOUSE**  
express  
**ISOLA BELLA**  
CAFÉ - RESTAURANT

Proud sponsors of TAL

**סופר סת"ם**  
כתיבה בריקה תיקון  
Certified Scribe  
020 8455 7700  
3 Russell Parade  
Golders Green Road, NW11  
benarroch@soferstam.co.uk  
www.sofertam.co.uk