

TAL TorahActionLife

This week's edition is sponsored
Lehatslachat Shaul Yonatan Ben
Naomi Vechol Mishpachto

VAYECHI

14th Tevet 5776
Shabbat begins: 15:41
Shabbat ends: 16:51

COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
DIRECTOR, TAL

Share The Pain!

As we complete the first book of the Torah we are left with a subconscious message hinted throughout the Parasha. It all begins with the name of this week's Parasha - Vayechi.

In essence the Parasha relates Yaakov's last years and final blessing to his children. After passing away and a national mourning, Yaakov is taken up to Eretz Yisrael to be buried. Thereafter the children of Israel return to Egypt, where they continue to flourish. At the end of the Parasha we are told about Yosef gathering his brothers and asking them to ensure his remains will be taken up to Israel at the time of the exodus. They concur and we end the book of Bereishit with the passing of Yosef.

There are two Parshiot in the Torah that are called with reference to life. The first is Chayei Sarah – the life of Sarah, and the second is this week's Parasha – Vayechi (and he lived).

It seems strange that that the two Parshiot which seem to talk about death are the ones that are named with life? Is there a connection?

Our Sages teach that we should bless G-d one hundred times a day. (See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 46:4, 284:4, 290:1).

Unfortunately sometimes due to habit, we miss out on the beauty found within so many of our blessings.

The aim is to constantly recognise Hashem in everything we do.

As part of our blessings in the silent Amida there is a special blessing where we praise G-d for being Mechayeh Hametim – resurrecting the dead.

Have you ever noticed how many times within that blessing the words relating to life and death are mentioned?

Although we say this blessing three times a day, many people have not noticed the seemingly repetitive theme of Techiyat Hametim within the blessing. In total this is mentioned five times! (Mechaye Metim Ata, Mechayeh Metim Berachamim, Melech Memit Umechaye, Neeaman Ata Lehachayot Metim, Baruch.. Mechayeh Hametim)



Why the repetition?

The Gemara Avoda Zara 5a mentions that there are four types of people that although they are alive, nevertheless are considered dead.

The first is a poor man.

The Torah relates that Hashem told Moshe that all the people that wanted him harmed had died (Metu Kol ha'Anashim). Our Rabbis explain that this refers to Datan and Aviram, who although were still alive, because they had lost their wealth, were considered dead.

The second is a blind person. This is learnt from a Pasuk which compares a



1. (48:5) Yakov blesses Yosef two sons, Efrayim and Menashe, that they will be like Reuven and Shimon, namely counted as part of the twelve shevotim. How can this be when Yakov himself already had twelve shevotim?

2. (48:20) Yakov says that the Jews will bless their sons to be like Efrayim and Menashe. Why do we bless our children to be like them more than any of the other shevotim?

3. What date in the year did Yakov die on?

4. Yosef was in charge of organising Yakov's burial. How was he rewarded?

5. Who was the first person who was ill before he died?

6. Why was Yakov's burial slightly delayed?

7. Why did Paro agree to let Yakov be buried outside of Mitzrayim?

Answers On Page 3

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blind man to dead "b'Machashakim Hoshivani k'Metei Olam"; The third is a Metzora, one who has (spiritual) leprosy. After Miriam received Tsarat for speaking against her brother Moshe, Aharon defended her and asked "Al Na Tehi (Miryam) ka'Met"; Please don't let Miriam be like a dead person. The fourth category is a childless person. This is learnt from Rachel's request from Yaakov to have children "Havah Li Vanim v'Im Ayin Metah Anochi - grant me children otherwise I am (like) dead".

We all yearn for the Messianic era daily where eventually we will witness ultimate physical and spiritual bliss. All will be healed. The blind, the deaf and the dumb, the lame, whosoever has any blemish or disability, shall be healed from all their disabilities: "The eyes of the blind shall be clear-sighted, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened... the lame shall leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing..." (Isaiah 35:5-6). Death itself shall cease, as it is said, "Death shall be swallowed up forever and G-d shall wipe the tears from every face..." (Isaiah 25:8) There will be a life of ease. Our physical needs will be taken care of by others, as it is said, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks and aliens shall be your ploughmen and your vinedressers." (Isaiah 61:5)

The time will come when G-d resurrects the dead.

But which 'dead' will be resurrected. Our daily blessing of Mechayeh Hametim is teaching us that all these four categories of 'dead' people will be resurrected. Those that are childless will bear children, there will be no poverty, no lepers and all will be able to see. The fifth and final reference to resurrecting the dead refers to the real dead that have passed away being resurrected. Thus what we think is the end is only a transition period. We are born, we live and pass on, but one day we have faith we will be resurrected.

For the righteous we have a stress on life particularly in the place that death is mentioned.

Sarah lived a fulfilled life, she passed away and the Torah relates, "Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and li'vkotah/to cry for her." (23:2)

In the Torah, the word "li'vkotah" is written with a small letter "kaf". In this way, the Torah tells us that Avraham did not cry or mourn excessively for his wife Sarah.

R' Ovadiah Yosef Z'l explained that our patriarch Avraham was a prophet. When Sarah died, Avraham knew that she was in Gan Eden with other righteous people who had died. Since the sages teach, "One hour in Olam Haba is more worthwhile than all life in This World/Olam Ha'zeh," Avraham had no reason to cry. Thus his mourning was not excessive.

Then why did he cry at all? Only because of "what people would say." In reality, though,

we all should recognize that the deceased is in a better place. This is why we comfort mourners with the words: "Hamakom ye'nachem etchem . . ."/"May Hashem (who we refer to as "Makom" because He is everywhere) comfort you . . ." The word "makom" literally means "The Place" - thus we are saying, "May your knowledge that the deceased is in a good place comfort you."

Sarah was the first mother of our nation and taught us this important message.

Hence Chayei Sarah - the life of Sarah teaches us that although she passed away, she lives on.

Perhaps it was taught yet again with Yaakov as he lived a life full of trials and tribulations and represented the Jew in exile. He saw beyond the pain, perceived beyond the troubles, because his life source was Hashem. Yaakov's inextricable bond to the Almighty was an enduring quality, which he infused in his descendants throughout the generations. Vayechi Yaakov B'erez Mitzrayim is the catchphrase for Jewish transcendence in the diaspora, for the almost daily confrontation with adversity and pain. This emotion comprises our generative force that keeps us strong and committed despite the overwhelming challenges which confront us at every turn.

Remember everything will be ok in the end, if it's not, it's not the end!

Shabbat Shalom



RABBI AVRAHAM CITRON

YOLO & Ya'akov

Some YOLO's eat, drink and make merry, for, after all, tomorrow they may die. But is that *real* life? In the words of my rebbi, 'Are you alive because you are alive or because a bus has not run you over?'

We can learn a lot about what true life means from Yaakov Avinu. In the portion of Vayechi, 'And Yaakov lived', which ironically speaks about his death, we find an amazing teaching of the Baal Haturim. The numerical

value of the word Vayechi is 34. Yaakov's only good years were the 17 years when he dwelled in Egypt plus the first 17 years of Yosef's life (prior to his being sold), totalling 34. Imagine! His 17 best years (TOV [good] has the numerical value of 17) were in Egypt, known as the most depraved society, 'the abomination of the earth'.

Real life, quality life comes not *despite* life's challenges, but *be* cause of them.

Furthermore, it says, 'And it was (Vayehi) the days of Yaakov's life...' It should have been written in the plural (Vayehiyu—and they were). This teaches, says the Tosfot, that he only *truly* lived for 31 years, the numerical value of Vayehi: 17 years in Egypt

and 14 years of study in the academy of Ever, totalling 31. How can one compare the two experiences, one surrounded by holiness and the other surrounded by anything but?

When G-D completed the world "He saw that it was very good". 'Good,' says the midrash, refers to the Yetzer Tov / Goodness / Gan Eden / the Angel of Life while 'very good' refers to the Yetzer Hara / Evil/ Gehinom / the Angel of Death.

R kusieli liepler...

Real life, quality life, comes not *despite* life's challenges, but *because* of them. Overcoming the temptations of modern society brings out one's innate qualities and reveals one's true self. Living where G-D put you - because it is G-D who put you there - you can truly live.

YOLO, so let's give it all you've got!

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Tevilat Keillim

Electrical Appliances

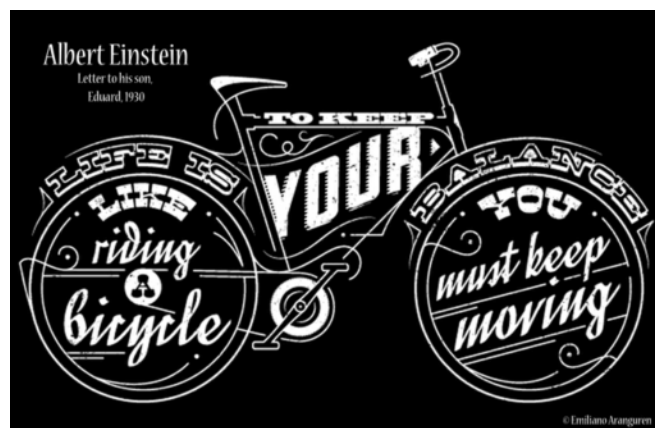
Do I need to immerse an urn, kettle and toaster?

Yes, electrical devices need to be immersed before use with food. There is an opinion which holds that any device plugged into the mains is considered attached to the ground and therefore exempt from tevillah. This is not generally accepted but is sometimes relied upon.

Won't the water ruin the electrical device?

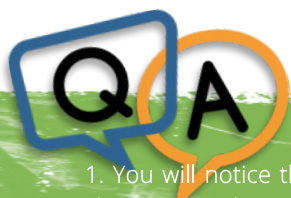
Electrical appliances can be dried by applying direct heat to the circuitry. If not possible they will dry out well if left for a few days in a warm cupboard. If done carefully there isn't too much to worry about. In some cases there are other options which will be discussed next week.

QUICK QUOTE...



Mazal Tov!

- Shmuel and Jessica Khomsa Ahouva Hannah Aramaon the birth of a baby boy
- Neil Mannsoor and Chana Rivka Da Costa on their engagement
- Andrew and Aidy Nessim on the birth of A baby boy



...Hmmm

1. You will notice that when the twelve shevotim are counted, it is done in one of two ways. Either it counts the twelve shevotim as the twelve sons of Yakov. A second way is where Yosef and Levi are not counted and instead Efrayim and Menashe are. An example of this in by the Degolim, the camps of the Jews in the desert.
2. We are Jews living in exile amongst the negative influences of the other nations. Efrayim and Menashe were the first Jews born in exile, in Mitzrayim, and they turned out strong in their Jewish faith. We therefore want to bless our children to turn out the same finding ourselves also in exile.
3. The Gemora (Rosh Hashana 10b) brings two opinions when Avrohom and Yakov died - either in Nissan or in Tishrei. The Bnei Yisoscher brings that (according to the opinion in Tishrei) it was on the 15th of Tishrei, the first day of Sukkos.
4. The Mishna in Sota (1:9) brings about the principle, *Midda Keneged Midda*. On the good side where the reward is more it brings that the reward for Yosef burying Yakov was that Moshe, the leader of the generation, was involved in starting the process of his burial.
5. The Gemora (Bava Metzia 87a) brings that Yakov was the first one to be ill in the world and Tosfas (Bava Basra 16b) adds this means to die from an illness. The Pirkei DeReb Eliezer (Chapter 52) brings that before this people would just sneeze and then die until Yakov davened to become ill and thereby know he was about to die and have time to leave his last blessings and will to his descendents.
6. The Gemora (Sota 13a) brings how Esav blocked the burial by claiming that the last remaining burial space in Meoras Hamachpela was his since Yitzchok had two sons and Yakov had given his burial plot to Leah leaving the last one for Esav Naftoli was sent to get the signed document that Esav had sold his plot to Esav. Meantime, Chushim Ben Don, was deaf and was annoyed at all the delay and he struck Esav and killed him, allowing the proceedings to continue.
7. Rashi (50:6) brings that it was only because Paro was scared that Yosef would break his promise to him not to reveal that he knew more than Paro that Paro allowed him. Otherwise, Paro would have wanted to have Yakov buried in Mitzrayim to become a shrine. (see Rashi 47:29)

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LOTS GOING ON FOR OUR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AT TAL!!



We had a fabulous Chanukah Party for our Young Professionals, with doughnuts and prizes to go round!



We also recently hosted a superb Chanukah Banquet Friday night dinner at The Avenue in Finchley, catered by Reich!



**We look forward to seeing you
at our next event!**



**Big or small, get
snack time covered.**



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