

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT VAYECHI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

PARSHAT VAYECHI

How long did Yaakov live?

As the book of Bereishit draws to a close we read about the life and years of Yaakov.

The Torah relates that Yaakov lived the last 17 years of his life in Egypt.

He passed away at the age of 147. Younger than his father Yitzchak (180) and Grandfather Avraham (175). Nevertheless, the Torah tells us that he lived a fulfilled life.

When looking back at his life we can split his life into four stages.

The first 77 years of his life were spent in the Holy Land of Israel, secluded in "the tents of study" and sheltered from the entanglements of material life.

These were followed by 20 years in Haran, in the employ of Lavan, during which Yaakov married, fathered 12 of his 13 children, and amassed much material wealth. He then spent two years coming back to Israel.

Following was a further period in the Holy Land, in which Yosef was taken down to Egypt and Yaakov remained inconsolable.

The final stage of his life, Yaakov "descended" to Egypt, was reunited with his son Yosef and – Vayechi Yaakov – he lived for the last 17 years of his life.

The years that Yaakov dwelled in the Holy Land were years of tranquil perfection—years in which nothing alien to his soul intruded upon his life of Torah study, prayer, and service of

G-d.

In contrast, Yaakov's sojourn in Haran was characterized by challenge and struggle. In Haran, Yaakov locked horns with "Lavan the Deceiver" and bested him at his own game. To marry and support his family, he worked to exhaustion, as "heat consumed me by day, and frost at night; and sleep was banished from my eyes" (Bereishit 31:40). In the words of Esav's angel to Yaakov upon Yaakov's return from Haran, "You have struggled with G-d and with men and have prevailed" (ibid. 32:29).

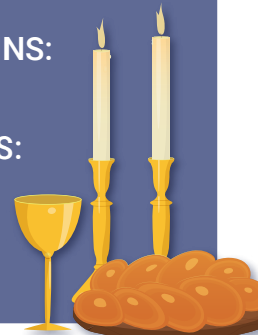
These, however, were struggles in which Yaakov held his own, and in which he eventually triumphed. But in the 17 years he lived in Egypt, Yaakov experienced, for the first time in his life, a state of true Galut—subjugation to an alien environment. In Egypt, Yaakov was compelled to pay homage to Pharaoh, the arch-idol and demigod of the land (Bereishit 47:7–10). Upon Yaakov's passing in Egypt, his body was for 40 days in the possession of the Egyptian "physicians," who embalmed it after their custom. Indeed, one of the reasons Yaakov commanded Yosef to bury him in the Holy Land (a feat which required much manoeuvring and manipulation to secure Pharaoh's consent) was that he feared that, in Egypt, his body and gravesite would become an object of idolatry.

After a lifetime in which he either inhabited his own place of holiness or struggled against adversity, Yaakov's Egyptian years were a time of subjugation to a society which the Torah calls "the depravity of the earth." And yet, the

14TH TEVET 5783

SHABBAT BEGINS:
15:53pm

SHABBAT ENDS:
17:02pm



DVAR TORAH
Parshat Vayechi
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



DVAR TORAH
Parsha Insights
By Rabbi David Baadani



DVAR TORAH
Parshat Vayechi
By Rabbi Danny Fisher



OUR CHAHAMIM
Rabbi Yosef Chaim
Sonnenfeld



HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour



KIDS ZONE
Quiz and Comic



This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

THE ORIGINAL COMMUNAL PARASHA SHEET, SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 11 YEARS!

Torah regards these 17 years as the very best years of Yaakov's life! The Baal Haturim explains that the Gematria (numerical value) of the word "Vayechi" (וַיַּחֲיֶה) – "And he lived" – is 34. Yaakov was in this world a total of 147 years. Of these, "he lived" and enjoyed most 34 years: the 17 years from the birth of Yosef till the time he was sold to Egypt, and another 17 years when he was in Egypt reunited with his cherished son Yosef.

Yet there is a further reason why these 17 years were the years Yaakov "lived".

Yaakov knew to exploit his Galut in Egypt to drive the strivings of his soul and further its aims. Indeed, it was in Egypt, under the rule and subsequent enslavement of Pharaoh, that Yaakov's descendants were forged into the people of Israel.

The Ramban (in his commentary on Bereishit) writes that "Everything that happened to the Patriarchs, is a signpost for their children." This is why the Torah elaborates its account of their journeys, their well-digging and the other events [of their lives]...

these all come as an instruction for the future: for when something happens to one of the three Patriarchs, one understands from it what is decreed to occur to his

descendants."

We are in the longest Galut and we can learn from Yaakov. During this Galut there will be times where we will be in a state of sovereignty, struggle, and subjugation.

There will be times when we will have the blessing to run the land of Israel and live in peace, advancing our Torah knowledge and service of Hashem. And there will be times when we will struggle with the outside world, be placed in Ghetos, labelled, and segregated, finding it difficult to work for a living.

There will be even worse times when we will not be given any option but rather be placed under subjugation.

Yaakov taught us that even in those times – a Jew can live! Yaakov's Egyptian period teaches us how to deal with those situations in which we feel overpowered by forces beyond our control. It teaches us that these times, too, are part and parcel of our lives: that these times, too, can be negotiated with wisdom, dignity, and integrity. That these times, too, can be realized as vital and productive seasons of our lives.

How can we fair under subjugation – how was Yaakov able to keep these years as the best in his life even though he was in Egypt?

When the Tzemach Tzedek (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the 3rd Lubavitcher Rebbe) was a young boy, his teacher taught him the first Pasuk in this week's Parasha. He explained it to mean that the best years in Yaakov's life were the 17 years he lived in Egypt. (The word "טוב" (tov) means good and has the numerical value of 17.)

When he came home, he asked his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi), "How can we say that Yaakov's best years were the years he lived in the sinful land of Egypt?" The Alter Rebbe explained: Before Yaakov arrived in Egypt, he sent Yehuda to build a Yeshivah so that the children of Yaakov would have a place to devote themselves to Torah study.

When a Jew learns Torah, he comes closer to Hashem. Therefore, since the family of Yaakov learned Torah, even in the sinful land of Egypt, "Vayechi Yaakov" – Yaakov's life was vibrantly 'alive,' full and rewarding.

No matter which period we are in our lives, if we have the Torah and cherish it, if we value G-d's word and understand that He is always with us – then we are alive!

Shabbat Shalom



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT VAYECHI

Before the death of our ancestor Jacob, Joseph took his sons Menashe and Ephraim and went to visit his father who was ill. When Jacob asked to bless his grandchildren, Joseph placed the eldest, Menashe, to the right of Jacob and the younger, Ephraim, to the left of Jacob. Jacob knew that although Menashe was the older one, the descendants of Ephraim would be great leaders of

the people of Israel.

Therefore, שָׁכַל אֶת-יָדָיו he crossed his hands so that his right hand would be on the head of Ephraim and his left hand would be on the head of Menashe. The words אֶת-יָדָיו, Rashi explains, that it is understood as the Targum renders it: אֶחָבִימִינוּן meaning בְּהַשְׁכֵּל וְחָכְמָה he put wisdom into his hands, (and he did it) designedly and wisely.

Why was it considered a wise deed to cross his hands? Wouldn't it be simpler to ask his grandchildren to

change their location? What does our ancestor Jacob want to teach us through this act?

Jacob saw the situation differently from others. He foresaw the future. He had information that Joseph did not have. According to this information it was clear to Jacob that a change had to be made. Any other person would have asked Menashe and Ephraim to change their location, however Jacob acted wisely by telling himself I will not try to move others. Therefore, crossing his hands.

Jacob teaches us that it is not enough to want change, we also need the will and courage to change ourselves. True, it seems that the simplest way

would be to ask others to change. But this is not considered an act of wisdom. Let's learn from our ancestor Jacob.

Let's act wisely, and let's be the change we want to see in the world.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

פרשת ויחי

As יעקב gives the ברכות over to the שבטים in this weeks פרשה we find something very interesting. The מדרש רבה explains that the ברכות of the ברכות, the actual ability to give the ברכה over was handed down from אברהם to יצחק, יצחק to יעקב and now יעקב was handing it over to יוסף.

Before יעקב leaves this world he calls in יוסף to give the ברכות to him. The brocha he gives is "המלאך" "הגואל", in it he says "הנערים" which says it actually refers to

מנשה and אפרים.

The שו"ת asks, why does יוסף miss out and instead give a brocha to אפרים and מנשה?

The שו"ת explains that in fact מידה was slit into 2 parts, one אפרים and the other מנשה, which is something that we don't find with any other שבט.

סור represents the aspect "מרע ועשה" and אפרים represents "טוב". As יוסף brought in his 2 children יעקב asks "מי אלה", the letters "מי אלה" can be written out to read "אלוקים". The aspect of אלוהים represents the middah of "ירא" – "fear". It appears that יעקב realized that אפרים and מנשה were serving Hashem out of "ירא"

instead of "אהבה" – love, even though serving Hashem out of "אהבה" would be on a greater level. יוסף answers יעקב question by stating "אשר נתן לי ה'", that Hashem has given them to me here in Mitzrayim. The fact that they were born here in Mitzrayim, in a place saturated with tumah means that "ירא" is needed in order to serve Hashem. It is the ירא that will get us through Mitzrayim and will enable us to hold onto our morale and ideals.

Says יעקב back to יוסף one needs the love of תורה more than ירא in order to serve ה' and survive the גלות

Good Shabbos



OUR CHAHAMIM

Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld – The Rosh Av Beit Din of Jerusalem

The gaon Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld Zatzal was born to the tzaddik Rabbi Avraham Shlomo in the Slovakian town of Worboy in 5609. At the age of four he lost his father, and starting from the age of eight he began to demonstrate exceptional abilities in the holy Torah. He went to study in the yeshiva of the gaon Rabbi Tzvi Manheim Zatzal, and at the age of 13 he was given Smicha and received the title of Moreinu ("our teacher").

He also learned Torah from the gaon Rabbi Avraham Shemuel Sofer Zatzal, the author of Ketav

Sofer, and the gaon Rabbi Avraham Shag Zatzal, the Rav and Av Beit Din of Kobelsdorf. Rabbi Yosef Chaim's reputation quickly began to spread, and when his teacher Rabbi Avraham Shag left for Eretz Israel, he accompanied him there and was treasured by all the Torah greats of Israel. Rabbi Yosef Chaim aided his teacher in strengthening Jewish observance in Israel, and with his help the districts of Mea Shearim, Beit Israel, and Beit Ungarin were built in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yosef Chaim was also among the founders of the great Diskin orphanage, and later he was unanimously appointed as the Rosh Av Beit Din of Jerusalem. He

was effective in vigorously and boldly working for the holiness of Jerusalem, and he was also active in Jewish institutions connected to the government. His humility was legendary, and in his will he stated that his casket was not to be brought into his Beit Midrash. Rather, people should only say of him: "We mourn an old Jew of Eretz Israel who has passed away." Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld's soul ascended to Heaven on Adar 19, 5692, and his body was laid to rest on the Mount of Olives as all the inhabitants of Jerusalem mourned his passing. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Does Boreh Nefashot Cancel Out a Shehakol if One Wants To Continue Drinking?

The Poskim discuss whether reciting a Beracha Aharona of Boreh Nefashot cancels the original Beracha. This applies to a case where one explicitly intended to continue eating over an extended period, and he recited the Boreh Nefashot not to signify the end of his eating, but to avoid an interval of 90 minutes since he last ate, which revokes his ability to recite it. This is a common occurrence when people snack throughout the night while learning, such as on Shabuot and Hoshana Rabbah. When they make the original Beracha, they intend to eat and drink continuously, yet they may have

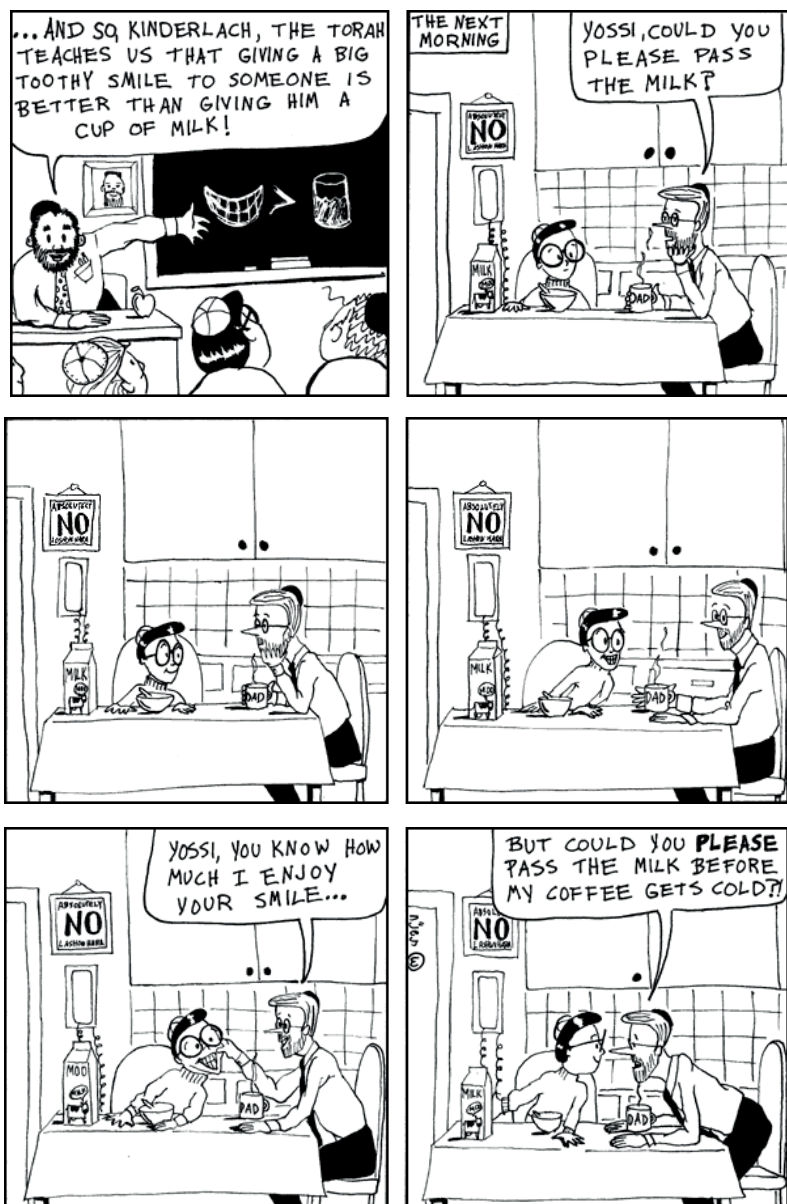
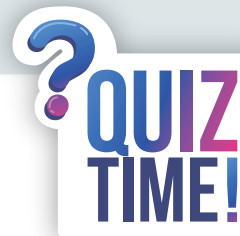
to make a Boreh Nefashot in the middle. The question is whether a new Beracha must be recited when he continues eating.

The Meoreh Ohr says a tremendous Hidush: The Boreh Nefashot does not cancel the original Beracha, and he may continue eating or drinking without a new Beracha. The problem with his position is that he does not bring any source or proof for his ruling. On the contrary, the Poskim rebut his position with a proof from the Be'ur Halacha (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933) in Hilchot Pesach. There, the Hafetz Haim explains that the reason one should eat less than a

Kezayit of Karpas is to avoid having to make a Boreh Nefashot afterward, which would force him to make a new Beracha of Ha'adamah on the Maror. Thus, it is apparent that the Boreh Nefashot does cancel out the original Beracha. This is the opinion of Hacham Ovadia.

SUMMARY

Even if one made a Beracha with intent to continue eating, he must make a Boreh Nefashot before 90 minutes elapse from his last sip, and that cancels the original Beracha, forcing him to make new Berachot before he continues eating.



1

Why is kindness towards the dead called "chesed shel emet" - kindness of truth?

47:29 - Because the giver expects no reward from the recipient.

2

Give three reasons Yaakov didn't want to be buried in Egypt.

47:29 - a) Egypt's ground was to be plagued with lice; b) At the time of the resurrection, those buried outside Israel will suffer; c) So the Egyptians wouldn't make him into an idol.

3

How do you treat a "fox in his time" (i.e., a commoner who rules)?

47:31 - Bow to him.

4

"When I was coming from Padan, Rachel died on me... I buried her there on the way to Efrat..." Why did Yaakov say all this to Yosef?

48:7 - Yaakov thought Yosef harbored resentment since Yaakov had not buried Yosef's mother, Rachel, in the Maarat HaMachpela.

5

Initially, why was Yaakov unable to bless Efraim and Menashe?

48:8 - The Shechina departed from him.