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הַמִּזְרָחִי

HAMIZRACHI

PARSHA WEEKLY

YOUTH EDITION

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PARSHA SUMMARY

Yaakov, now 147, spends the last 17 years of his life in Egypt. Before he dies, he asks his son Yosef to promise that he will bury him in the land of Israel. Yaakov also blesses Yosef's two sons, Menasheh and Ephraim, making them as important as his own sons, and they become the founders of two tribes in Israel.

Yaakov then gives blessings to each of his sons, giving them their special roles in the future. Yehudah will have leaders, judges, and kings; Levi will have priests; Yissachar will have scholars; Zevulun will have sailors; Shimon will have teachers; Gad will have soldiers; Asher will have olive-growers, and so on. Reuven gets a warning for making a mistake with his father's wife, while Shimon and Levi are criticized for their violent actions against Shechem and their plan against Yosef. Naphtali is blessed with speed, Binyamin with strength, and Yosef with beauty and success.

A huge funeral procession, with Yaakov's family, Pharaoh's ministers, and many of Egypt's leaders and soldiers, travels with Yaakov's body to the Holy Land. There, Yaakov is buried in Ma'arat Hamachpelah, in Hebron.

Yosef also dies in Egypt at the age of 110. Before he dies, he asks that his bones be taken out of Egypt and buried in the Holy Land. This would happen many years later when the Jews leave Egypt. Yosef leaves a message of hope for the future, telling the Jews, "G-d will surely remember you and bring you back to the land He promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov."



MESSAGE FROM ISRAEL

Always Hope, Never Despair

Despair is the opposite of Judaism. Rabbi Sacks zt"l encapsulated the Jewish mission well in the title of one of his books – "The Politics of Hope." Indeed, there is always hope.

This week's parsha offers a striking example. The future of the tribe of Dan seemed despairing as he only had one child, Chushim, who was sadly deaf and mute according to the sagas. Dan could have easily been the smallest and most insignificant tribe, yet they became the second biggest tribe in the desert census and produced heroic leaders such as Shimshon.

Israel's anthem, Hatikva, meaning "hope" draws inspiration from Jewish destiny – there is darkness and difficulty, but never despair. We always believe in, work towards and aspire to a better and brighter tomorrow.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Doron Perez
Executive Chairman,
World Mizrachi



Dedicated by the Moshal family to the life and legacy of our family patriarch John Moshal – יוחנן הלל בן מרדכי ז"ל – a generous lifelong supporter of Jewish education.

QUESTIONS ON THE PARSHA

1. Where does Yaakov ask to be buried?
2. How does Yaakov bless his sons before his death?
3. What is the significance of Yaakov crossing his hands while blessing Ephraim and Menashe?
4. Why did Yaakov want Yosef to place his hand under his thigh?
5. How do Yosef's brothers reconcile with him after Yaakov's death?
6. What request does Yosef have following his death?
7. What is different about Reuven's bracha?
8. In what way is the time of Mashiach mentioned?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Special Blessings: Finding Your Unique Light

In this week's parsha, Vayechi, we read about Yaakov blessing each of his twelve sons. What's fascinating is that each son received a different blessing, perfectly matched to their unique qualities. The Torah emphasizes that "he blessed each according to his appropriate blessing." This teaches us something powerful – each person has their own special path and purpose.

Dilemma of the Week – The Science Fair Struggle: Dina sat at her desk, staring at her friend Rachel's first-place science fair trophy. While Rachel had created an amazing project about plant growth, Dina's art-focused project about color theory had placed third. "It's not fair," Dina thought to herself. "I worked just as hard as Rachel did." That evening, during dinner, Dina barely touched her food. Her older sister Sarah noticed something was wrong. "What's bothering you?" Sarah asked. "Rachel always wins everything in science. Maybe I should stop focusing on art and do what she does instead," Dina replied. Sarah paused, wondering how to help her sister see that her artistic talents were just as valuable as Rachel's scientific abilities.

Discussion Questions

Understanding Our Gifts: Why do you think Yaakov gave different blessings to each of his sons instead of the same blessing to everyone?

Personal Growth: How can comparing ourselves to others prevent us from discovering our own unique talents?

Community Perspective: In what ways do different talents contribute to making our school/community stronger?

Building Bridges: How could Dina and Rachel's different strengths actually complement each other? Can you think of a project where both science and art would be valuable?

SOLVE IT AND SEND IT!

What is the meaning behind the five branch Menorah?

Send the answer to hamizrachiyouth@mizrachi.org to be entered into our monthly raffle!

PARSHA WORD SCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble these parsha related words?

SNOS
RHBATOEC
PRIEHMA
TVESEH
SEEIGONVFRS
NMHAASES
IRBLUA
GTYPE
NIEB SRIAYLE



Take a moment to write down a unique quality or talent that makes you special. How could you use this gift to help others this week?



WORD OF THE WEEK

בְּרָכָה – Beracha – Blessing

(Bereishit 48:15) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל

The Hebrew word “בְּרָכָה” (beracha) means “blessing” and appears throughout Parshat Vayechi as Yaakov gives blessings to his sons and grandchildren. The root of the word is ב-ר-ך (Bet-Resh-Kaf). The Hebrew word בְּרִיךְ (berech), meaning “knee”, shares the same root. This connection reminds us of the act of kneeling in humility during prayer or what was once customary: when receiving a blessing, one would kneel before the person giving the blessing.



THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

16 Tevet 5398 (1638)

Salvation of Baghdad Jewry

On this date, Murad IV, sultan of the Ottoman Empire, recaptured Baghdad from the Persian Shah after a forty-day siege. The Jews of Baghdad, who had suffered under the Shah's tenure, celebrated this day each year to praise Hashem for rescuing them from Persian rule. According to legend, the Jews assisted in the capture by secretly conveying a message to the Sultan about a breach in the wall through which his forces could enter the city.



MEET OUR READERS!



NAME: YEHUDIT GOLDIN

AGE: 12

LOCATION: SHAALVIM, ISRAEL

WHERE I'D LIKE TO TRAVEL IN ISRAEL: The Kinneret because the view from there is beautiful.

IF I COULD HAVE DINNER WITH SOMEONE FROM THE TANACH IT WOULD BE: Esther from the Megillah. I would ask her how she had the gevura to go to Achashveirosh and save the Jews.

FAVORITE PARSHA: Bereishit because it means we are beginning the Torah again.

FAVORITE JEWISH FOOD: Falafel



WANT TO BE FEATURED IN A FUTURE EDITION?

If you'd like to be featured in an upcoming Youth Edition, and have a chance to win a prize, fill out the form at mizrachi.org/youthfeature or scan the QR code!



PARSHA ANSWERS

1. Ma'arat HaMachpelah.
2. Yaakov gives each of his sons an individual blessing, that provides insight into their character and their future role within Bnei Yisrael.
3. By crossing his hands and placing his right hand on Ephraim, Yaakov intentionally gives Ephraim, the younger son, a greater bracha.
4. As a symbolic gesture of loyalty and commitment to fulfilling his request to bury him in Canaan.
5. The brothers express their father's desire for forgiveness and offer to become Yosef's slaves.
6. Yosef requests that his bones be carried out of Egypt and that he be buried in Canaan once Hashem brings Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt.
7. Reuven does not receive a normal bracha but rather a critique for his impulsive behavior.
8. Yaakov refers to the times of Mashiach when he gets a prophecy about the future of the shvatim.

JOURNEY THROUGH ISRAEL



PHOTO: HANAY/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Yehudiya

Yehudiya (יהודיה) is an ancient village and archaeological site in the central Golan Heights, about 5 kilometers south of Katzrin. The basalt houses are perched near a cliff above the Yehudiya River. Archaeological evidence, including a five-branched menorah etched on a stone and a carved oil jar from a lintel, suggests it was a Jewish settlement during the Roman-Byzantine period. The village was surrounded by a fortified wall with remnants of towers and defense structures still visible. Some identify Yehudiya as Sugane, one of the cities fortified by Yosef ben Matityahu (Josephus) during the Great Revolt. Later, it was resettled by Arab farmers, and its Jewish roots were obscured until modern archaeological findings. Today, the site lies within the Yehudiya Forest Nature Reserve, a beautiful area for hiking and exploring Israel's rich history.

The natural fortress-like position of Yehudiya made it an ideal defensive location in ancient times. The steep cliffs above the Yehudiya River created a natural barrier that, combined with the man-made walls, made the settlement extremely difficult to attack.

קום התהלך בארץ

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you find 10 differences between these two parsha pictures?



This illustration was taken from the book 'בדרכה של תורה' on the Parsha.

Special thanks to Ori Lerman (illustrations), Rabbi Weitz, and the Har Bracha Institution for their permission.