



## Opening Our Eyes

By Ari Ivry, 11th Grade

The Parsha starts off by saying “Vayechi Yakov”- Yakov lived. Rashi comments on this and gives two explanations. One of them is that Vayechi is a “closed” parsha, meaning that when Yakov died, the eyes and hearts of Bnei Yisroel were “closed” because of the misery of the slavery they were in. The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes about this, in his collection of Likutei Sichos, and says that in our times we are actively witnessing signs of redemption in the world.

However, its upsetting to see that Bnei Yisroel have their eyes “closed” and do not take note of what is occurring just like the Jews in Egypt. The Rebbe continues and says that these signs are changes in the way that world leaders are acting towards Bnei Yisroel and our values. The opposition to Jewish observance by a number of regimes has ended, most notably in the former Soviet Union where approximately one third of Jewish people have found themselves in a position to observe the Torah and its mitzvos for the first time in 70 years. The Rebbe stresses that nowadays we are in Messianic times because the manner in which non-Jews perceive Jewish observance is radically different. Before World War II, many Jews who were Shabbos observant, even in America, where unable to earn a living. However nowadays, Jews can proudly be Jewish in public with their beards and peyos out, and be respected by a broad cross-

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## The Beginning of Our Enslavement

By Jacob Frenkel, 9th Grade

At the beginning of this week’s Parsha, we see that there is a single letter space between the closing lines of Parashat Vayigash and the opening statements of Parashat Vayechi. Rashi is conflicted by this and wants to know why the pasuk is in this ‘closed’ format? He answers his own question and explains that once Yaakov Avinu passed away, the eyes and hearts of the Jewish nation began to ‘close’, and it was the beginning of their enslavement

Later on, we see the Pasuk, “And Yaakov brought to Mitzrayim all of his offspring” (46:6). The Pasuk then goes on to give a list of all of Yaakov’s children. The Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh is confused by this and asks: why do you have to say his offspring and then list of his children? The way in which the Pasuk was written seems to be in the opposite order?

To answer, we must realize that this is in fact the correct order. The Pasuk was simply written this way to teach us the three groups of people who came down to Egypt. Firstly, we have the men who accepted this willingly knowing it was Ratzon Hashem. And as a reward they were not enslaved until after the death of Yosef HaTzaddik. Secondly, the women who didn’t want to leave because of their tremendous love that they had for the land of Israel. Lastly, we have the group that had been forced down by Yaakov Avinu. However, this still leaves us with some confusion. What is Rashi trying to say by “their eyes and hearts started to close”?

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**Torah Teasers**

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

**Parshas Vayeichi  
Questions**

1. Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years. Where else in the book of Genesis is 17 years referred to?
2. What similar ailment occurs to both Yitzhak and to Yaakov?
3. Which two pairs of brothers are mentioned in the same verse?
4. Where in this parsha does one person place his hand upon the head of another? Where else in the Torah does it say explicitly that one person places his hand on another? (2 answers)
5. In what context are fish mentioned in this parsha?
6. Where in this parsha is the same person mentioned twice in a verse, but referred to by different names?
7. Which beverages are referred to in Yaakov's blessings to his sons? (3 answers)
8. What location appears in this parsha and is not mentioned anywhere else in Tanach?
9. Which people appear in this parsha who are not descendants of Avraham? (3 answers)

**Answers**

1. Parshas Vayeshev begins when Yosef is 17 years old (Genesis 37:2).
2. Both Yitzhak and Yaakov had trouble with their eyesight during old age (Genesis 27:1, 48:10).
3. Ephraim and Menashe, and Reuven and Shimon, are all mentioned in the same verse (Genesis 48:1).
4. Yaakov places his hands on the heads of Ephraim and Menashe when giving them a blessing (Genesis 48:14). In Leviticus 24:14, witnesses who heard someone curse Hashem place their hand on his head before executing him. In Numbers 27:23, Moshe rests his hands on Yehoshua to transfer the leadership.
5. In the blessing to Ephraim and Menashe, the verse states "And they should multiply like fish in the midst of the land" (Genesis 48:16).
6. In the same verse, Yaakov is referred to both by the name Yaakov and by the name Yisrael (Genesis 49:2).
7. Water is referred to in the blessing of Reuven (Genesis 49:4). Milk and wine are referred to in the blessing of Yehudah (Genesis 49:12).
8. The eulogy for Yaakov took place in Goren Ha'atad (Genesis 50:10-11). This place does not appear anywhere else in Tanach.
9. Efron (Genesis 49:29), Mamre (Genesis 49:30), and Pharaoh (Genesis 50:4) are mentioned in this parsha. They are not descendants of Avraham.

**ALIYAH SUMMARY**

**First Aliyah:** Jacob lived his last seventeen years in Egypt. When Jacob sensed that his days were numbered he summoned Joseph and asked him to promise that he would bury him in Israel. Joseph acceded to the request. When Jacob then fell ill, Joseph visited him, accompanied by his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob conferred upon Ephraim and Manasseh the status of shvatim, a status enjoyed only by Jacob's sons till this point. Joseph asked his father to bless Ephraim and Manasseh.

**Second Aliyah:** Joseph presents his two sons, placing Manasseh, the firstborn, to Jacob's right, and Ephraim to Jacob's left. Jacob, who was nearly blind at this point, crossed his hands, placing his right – more prestigious – hand on Ephraim's head. He blessed them: "May the angel who redeemed me from all harm bless the youths, and may they be called by my name and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and may they multiply abundantly like fish, in the midst of the land."

**Third Aliyah:** Joseph was disturbed that Jacob placed his right hand on Ephraim, and he attempted to adjust his father's hands. "I know, my son, I know," Jacob responded, explaining that the "younger brother will be greater, and his children[s fame] will fill the nations." Jacob blessed the two boys further, saying that all of Israel will bless each other by saying: "May G-d make you like Ephraim and Manasseh."

**Fourth Aliyah:** Jacob summoned all his sons, and delivered to each a poetic, and sometimes cryptic, parting message. Reuben was rebuked for his rashness and for "ascending upon his father's bed." Shimon and Levi were rebuked for their anger, which expressed itself in the killing of the Shechemites and the attempted execution of Joseph. Judah was blessed with monarchy, success in waging battle, and an abundance of wine and milk in his portion. Zebulun was blessed with success in his sea-trade endeavors. Jacob likened Issachar to a thick-boned donkey who finds both rest and ample work. Dan was blessed with the tenacity of a serpent and the ability to judge.

**Fifth Aliyah:** Gad was blessed with bravery in battle. Asher's blessing: an abundance of olive oil. Naphtali was blessed with the speed of a deer. Joseph was recognized for his charm, suffering, and righteousness, and was showered with a variety of blessings.

**Sixth Aliyah:** Benjamin was likened to a devouring wolf. Jacob then repeated his request to be buried in Israel, in the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron, and he passed away at the age of 147. After an extended national mourning period, Joseph received Pharaoh's permission to carry Jacob's body up to Israel. A huge funeral procession consisting of all the elders of Egypt as well as Jacob's family went and buried Jacob. After returning to Egypt, Joseph's brothers feared that now, after Jacob had passed away, Joseph would exact revenge from them for selling him into slavery. Joseph reassured them that he harbored no ill feelings towards them.

**Seventh Aliyah:** Joseph lived until the age of 110. Before passing away he told his brothers that G-d would eventually take them out of Egypt and return them to the Promised Land. Joseph asked his brothers to promise that when that time arrived they would carry his remains with them, and inter him in Israel.

Adapted from Chabad.org

“If you want to shine like the sun,  
first you want to burn like it.”

- David Nisanov,  
DRS GO President



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# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Avi Ash

## Opening Amazon Packages on Shabbos

### Three questions

1. Q: Are you allowed to make an order delivered on Shabbos? A: Probably yes, since it is uncertain whether they deliver.
2. Q: Is it Muktzeh- the package itself and the item inside?
3. Q: If you are scared someone might steal it, can you move it?

### Process

- There are two kinds of sellers: third party and amazon, but most orders go through the warehouses.
- They then route the order to the fulfillment centers and it gets shipped out.
- Beitzah 24b: Mishnah- If a non-Jew brings food to a Jew on Yom Tov and it's something fresh, you have to assume it was picked on Shabbos, but if it's not fresh, you could use it if it came within your tachum, but not outside your tachum. However, your neighbor can use it.
- Rashi- Why can your neighbor use it? Since it's a derabanan, we're only machmir on the designated person.
- Rashba- It is assur because you might ask him in the future to bring things on shabbos. If brought from outside the tachum, you can't move it more than four amos if there is no eruv.
- Mishnah Berurah- This only applies if you know the delivery guy.
- Ran -Ramban- Tachum is relative; therefore, if one person can't use it, it might make sense someone else can.

Q: Who else can use it?

A: Family cannot.

- Beis Yosef- Guests are like your neighbor and they can use it.
- Mishnah Berurah in Siman 307 Sif 56 paskens that the fact that it came from outside the tachum does not make it muktzeh, since only the person it is brought for is forbidden to use it.
- The Shulchan Aruch paskens like this.
- If it's delivered on Friday night, you know that it was in your tachum when Shabbos started.
- However, on Shabbos day it is unclear where it was when Shabbos started.
- Tosfos- A suffak for tachum is permissible.
- Poskim say that if you are aware that a package is coming on Shabbos and want the object then you can even use the object.
- If you weren't thinking about it, there is room to be lenient but it is unclear.
- If you are worried about it getting damaged, then you cannot move it normally. The question of if you can use your foot/indirect movement is a machlokes between the Chazon Ish and the Mishnah Berurah.
- Mishnah Berurah in 311 Sif Katan 30- You are allowed to use your foot.
- Chazon Ish interprets a Rosh in the 3rd perek in shabbos that says you can only move indirectly with your body, not hands or feet. Any clear, overt motion is going to be forbidden, but a natural motion is allowed.
- We hold like the Mishnah Berurah.

### Practical Applications

- If you know what is inside a package on a Friday night and it is not muktzeh, you are allowed to open and use the item.
- If it's muktzeh, you can probably kick it inside but it is unclear.
- There is room to be stricter in both questions, and one should probably be safe unless they really need the object.

# SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Max  
Blumenthal*

The pasuk in the beginning of this week's parsha says, "And the time drew near that Yisrael must die, and he called his son Yosef and said to him: 'If now I have found favor in your eyes, please put your hand under my thigh and do with me kindness and truth: Please do not bury me in Egypt.' (47:29)."

The Navi in Divrei Hayamim equates our days on this earth to a shadow. The Yismach Moshe, Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Ujhey zt"l, asks on this: How can it be that our days are compared to a shadow of a bird, like the Medrash in this week's parsha explains, who doesn't stay in the same place for a long time? After all, our days still have a degree of permanence even though they are numbered. So if we were compared to shadows, like the Navi says, we shouldn't be compared to birds!

The Yismach Moshe writes that if you were to ask someone how long they will live, he would probably take the number of the years he has already lived, add on to them an estimate of how long he figures he will still live, and give you a rough total. If you were to ask me, however, writes the Yismach Moshe, I would answer you, "One second." After all, what has already passed is of no consequence. And as far as the future, "How am I to know if I will even live to see tomorrow? What I do know is that this very moment, I am being given the gift of life. This moment is all I have. So, right now, this is my whole life."

This, he says, is a huge mussar haskell for us in our lives. Were a person to really value each moment, to realize that all he has in life is this very moment, which fools would fill their lives with meaningless distractions? But if one appreciates every second, his life becomes a collection of meaningful moments.

A poor person once approached a caring merchant who had a reputation for lending money. "I know that you lend money using the heter iska (a halachic vehicle whereby one may, under certain circumstances, receive compensation for lending money). I desperately need a hundred dinars, and I am prepared to repay you with 12 percent interest. However, I will not be able to repay the loan all at once; I will repay you one dinar at a time until the loan is paid in full." The merchant considered the request for a moment. "Twelve percent is indeed a suitable return. Nevertheless, I do not lend money to people who repay in small amounts. I am sorry, my friend, but I cannot help you." The poor man was forced to leave empty handed and discouraged. The merchant's friend, who stood nearby, questioned him, "Twelve percent was an excellent deal. Very few borrowers pay that amount. Why did you turn down the loan?"

The merchant responded brilliantly: "The days of man are finite, whether they be seventy or eighty years," (Tehillim 90:10). However, our days and years are not given to us all at once. "Our days are as a shadow upon the earth," but not as the shadow of a tree which stands tall. Rather, our days are as the shadow of a bird which flies overhead, producing a new silhouette each moment, as the previous one disappears as quickly as it formed.

Man receives his moments one at a time. "The past is gone, the future is yet to be, and the present is as quick as the blink of an eye." The nature of man is to underestimate the significance of a minute. What is a minute, anyway? Many people seem to feel that a minute is not so terrible a thing to waste. Yet, as life "flies" by, these are the minutes that must be utilized. They are our life, and using them properly and constructively is all we have to show for ourselves. Once we internalize this message of how our time in this world needs to be utilized just like time is always running out, we should be zoche to be able to accomplish more in our lives. (Mashal quoted from the Yismach Moshe)

*(Jacob Frenkel- Continued from page 1)*

The Rambam explains that initially, the Shevatim told Pharaoh that they had no intention of staying in Egypt at all, and the moment they had the chance to go back, they were going to go back. This is because while their father was still alive, the Shevatim felt as though this was not their home and that they were foreigners here. However, after the death of their father this feeling completely changed. With Yakov's death, came them becoming more accustomed to Egyptian practices. They became friendly with their neighbors and started buying houses. This shows that their eyes and hearts began to close at the idea of leaving. Because of this, they became mentally enslaved to Egyptian culture way before ever being set to work. Yakov was the key to which position his sons would stand by and be accustomed to. The second he was gone, the hearts of the Shevatim completely closed to the point where they even wanted to stay in Egypt. Their father was the key to their hearts.

DANI ROSNER

10TH GRDE

## THE RIGHT-HANDED BRACHA

“And Yosef saw that his father was placing his right hand on Ephraim's head, and it displeased him. So he held up his father's hand to remove it from upon Ephraim's head [to place it] on Menasheh's head. And Yosef said to his father, ‘Not so, Father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.’ But his father refused, and he said, ‘I know, my son, I know.’ (Bereishis 48:17-19)”

When Yosef brought Ephraim and Menasheh to Yakkov to receive their blessings, he positioned them so that Yaakov's right hand would rest on Menasheh and his left hand on Ephraim. Yaakov, however, guided his hands so that the left would rest on Menasheh and the right on Ephraim. Yosef then attempted to change his father's hands around, but was resisted. The Midrash Rabbah says that when Yosef held his father's right hand to remove it from the head of Ephraim, Yaakov said to him, “I want you to know that I am very strong and I conquered an angel. Therefore, do not attempt to move my hands.” Now, this entire episode seems pretty strange. First of all, why did Yaakov insist that his right hand be on Ephraim? And secondly, why did he have to prove his strength from the fact that he conquered an angel?

Rashi begins his answer by noting that in Egypt, Ephraim was occupied primarily with the study of Torah. In fact, Yosef was notified of Yaakov's illness by Ephraim, who frequently visited Yaakov's home to study. On the other hand, though Menasheh studied Torah, he also had the side job of serving Yosef and his household. He also acted as an interpreter between Yosef and his brothers. Thus, Menasheh can be credited with the performance of the Mitzvah of Kibud Av. Yosef, therefore, thought that Menasheh should receive the “right-handed” berachah. Anticipating Yosef's thought process, Yaakov said, “The question in your mind is similar to an issue which took place many years ago and which was resolved. While I was the prototype of one who dwelled in the tent of Torah, my brother Eisav excelled in the mitzvah of Kibud Av. As well as you know, my father Yitzchak gave the berachot to me. The angel who fought with me was the angel of Eisav. He endeavored to defeat me for taking away the berachot, but I was victorious, and he eventually conceded that the berachot belonged to me. This proves that Torah surpasses all. Your son Ephraim is totally immersed in Torah study. Therefore, he deserves the “right-handed” berachah.”



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## STORIES OF GREATNESS

### TOLD OVER BY: YOSEF SCHAFLER

A woman from the Chabad-Lubavitch Community in Brooklyn was pulled over by a N.Y.C. traffic cop for some traffic violation. Standing outside her open car window and watching her search for her license and registration papers, the police officer caught sight of a picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in her open purse.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he asked, "are you one of the followers of this Rabbi?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Well, in that case, I'm not giving you a ticket." He closed his ticket book and continued, "Do you know why? Because this Rabbi," he pointed to the picture she was now holding in her hand, "Did a very big miracle for me."

"Well," said the grateful woman, "since you aren't giving me the ticket, I have time to hear the story."

The policeman smiled and said, "It's my favorite story, but I haven't told it to many Jewish people, in fact, I think that you are the first." The cars were whizzing by behind him and he had to raise his voice slightly. "The story goes like this: I used to be in the police escort that once a week escorted the Rabbi to the Montefiore Cemetery (where the Rebbe's father-in-law and predecessor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, is interred). I got to know some of the young men who accompanied the Rebbe, and I learned a lot of things. They are very friendly people, which you probably already know, and we talked a lot while the Rabbi was inside praying.

"Well, one day I saw that all the fellows there were talking excitedly to each other so I asked them what happened. So they told me that the Rabbi does a lot of miracles for people, but today he did a miracle that was really something. I didn't even ask what was the miracle that they were talking about, I just asked them if the Rabbi helps non-Jews also.

"'Sure,' they said, 'The Rebbe helps anyone who asks. Why? Do you need something?' So I told him, this young fellow, that me and my wife had been married nine years with no children, and a week ago the doctors told us that we had no chance. We had spent a lot of money on treatments, seen all sorts of big profes-

sors, we were running around like crazy for the last six or seven years, and now they told us that they tried everything and there is no chance. You can't imagine how broken we were. My wife cried all the time and I started crying myself.

"So this young man tells me, 'Listen, the next time that you escort the Rebbe to the cemetery stand near the door of his car and when he gets out ask him for a blessing.' So that is just what I did. The next time I was in the escort I stood by his door and when he got out I said to him: 'Excuse me, Rabbi, do you only bless Jewish people or non-Jews too?'

"So the Rabbi looked at me like a good friend, it was really amazing, and said that he tries to help anyone he can. So I told him what the doctors said, and he said I should write down on a piece of paper my name and my father's name together with my wife's and her father's names and that he would pray for us. So I did it, my hands were shaking so much I almost couldn't write, but I did it and you know what? My wife became pregnant and nine months later she gave birth to a baby boy! The doctors went crazy, they couldn't figure it out, and when I told them that it was all the Rabbi's blessing they just scratched their heads and — Wow! I felt like the champion of the world!

"But here comes the good part. Do you know what we called him? What name we gave our baby boy? Just guess! We called him Mendel after the Rabbi. At first my wife didn't like the name because it's not an American name, but I said, No! We're calling him Mendel! Each time we say his name we'll remember that if it weren't for the Rabbi this boy would not be here.

"But when our parents heard the name they really objected. They said, 'With a name like that, all the kids will think he's a Jew or something and they will call him names and be cruel to him. Why make the kid suffer for no reason?' 'That's just what I want,' I said to them. 'When he comes home and says that the other kids called him names and beat him up because he has a Jewish name, I'll tell him that I want him to learn from those other kids how not to behave. They hate the Jews for no reason, but you should love the Jews, you should help the Jews. You just tell them that without that Jewish Rabbi called Mendel you wouldn't be here at all, and then maybe they'll start thinking differently too!'

Adapted from Chabad.org

(Ari Ivry- Continued from page 1)

section of society. But, nowadays we have taken all of this for granted and fail to recognize that these are unprecedented changes of Messianic proportions because redemption is not an unrealistic dream anymore, we merely have to "open our eyes" to see that the redemption is here.

The lesson of this week's parsha is that we should be Zoche to open our eyes and see the redemption taking place right now in our lives.

(Adapted from: The Gutnick Chumash, Likutei Sichos of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

*By Joseph Abittan, 11th Grade*

## *It's Not About the Money*

In this week's Parsha, we see an interesting Pasuk that says, "From Asher, his bread will be rich with oil, and he will provide kingly delicacies" (49:20). From Yaakov's deathbed, he blessed all of his sons, and this is the blessing that he bestowed upon his son Asher. Rashi explains that the food given to Shevet Asher from the land of Israel will be rich and fatty because of the plethora of olive trees there to get oil from. It is understood that Asher would achieve material wealth as a result of having a lot of food on his land. It is interesting to note that the second part of the pasuk, "And he will provide kingly delicacies" is written with the word "Yitain", from the word Natan, to give. If the Torah only intended to tell us that good food will come from the land of Shevet Asher, it could have said "From Asher...and he will have kingly delicacies." Why does the Pasuk have to say that he will provide those delicacies?

The basic explanation is that the Shevet of Asher provided the oil to the Beit Hamikdash. The Kli Yakar also explains that Asher would become a Ba'al Tzedakah, a giver of charity, and Yaakov Avinu was teaching him that when one gives charity he must give from the best of the best that he has. Charity given from the leftovers is not true charity. Rav Eliyahu further expands this point to bring out an important lesson from this story. A man and his wife married off their daughter, and in celebration the wife prepared special meats for her husband. When the wife served her husband he told her "I don't need those fancy foods, I am okay with just some fresh bread and some olive oil to dip it into." A few hours later, a poor person knocked on the door and asked if they could spare him some food. The wife immediately offered him fresh bread and oil that she had finished preparing for her husband. Her husband stopped her and told her to instead bring the poor man the special meats that she made earlier. She was confused by this because just before, the husband had told her that the fresh bread is a better food that even you prefer! The husband explained yes, for me the bread and oil is a better food because it is all I need. But certainly the special meats are better food and that is what we should offer the poor person. The Ben Ishhai explains: "Me' Asher Shemen Lachmo"- for you, you should learn to feel satisfied with just some bread and oil, but you should give others kingly delicacies, the best of the best. From this we see why the Torah uses the word "Yitain", to give. The delicacies should be given to others; what you keep for yourself should be sufficient and you shouldn't need excess in order to be satiated in life. Shevet Asher was destined for material wealth but Yaakov Avinu was teaching him an important lesson to guide him in his wealth. When someone uses the material wealth and success that God blessed him with for himself, he won't be happy and he will feel emptiness. However, if someone learns to be content with basic things, and uses his abundance of wealth to provide the finest things to others in need, he will be blessed with true happiness.

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# Blessings and Family

By Ariel Rogoff, 9th Grade

At the end of Parshas Vayechi, three main events occur. Firstly, Yaakov blesses his grandchildren: Ephraim and Menashe. This is the blessing that some have the custom to bless their kids with every Friday night. Many people ask the following questions: What is so important about this blessing? Why not any of the other blessings from the Torah? One answer is that this blessing isn't from father to son; rather, it's from grandparent to grandson. So, why does it matter if it's from grandparent to grandson? One can answer that it matters because sometimes a father-son relationship can be a little shaky. A grandparent-grandson relationship, however, is usually pure love.

The second main event at the end of Parshas Vayechi occurs when Yaakov blesses all twelve of his sons. We see, however, that Yaakov's blessing to Reuvan, Shimon, and Levi are more like curses than blessings. Why would Yaakov want to curse his own children? Rather, Yaakov was really saying that they

will be cursed for all of the sins they did in the past. Another important event we see is that despite their hatred towards Yosef, all the brothers were in the same room together.

The third main event is when Yaakov dies. After Yaakov's death, the brothers ask Yosef for forgiveness and he forgives them. Yosef thought they were gonna take revenge because Yaakov died. When someone important dies people tend to take advantage. The Egyptians mourned the death of Yaakov and accompanied Yaakov's family before the burial.

The Torah is showing an important message here: life begins from family. We see in Parshas Vayechi how the brothers ask for forgiveness from Yosef and how the brothers united after Yaakov died. We also see that the Egyptians comforted Yosef and the brothers after the death of Yaakov. We see here that family teaches you to care and love. May we learn from this message and be zoche to see the coming of Mashiach.

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