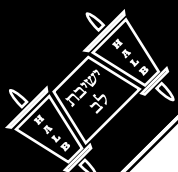


היוצאים

דברים

Volume XXIII - Issue 10

The DRS Weekly Torah Publication



Living With Focus and Joy

By Yoni Sheinman, 12th Grade

This week's parsha opens up with the words, "Vayechi Yaakov Bieretz Mitzrayim Shivah Esrai Shana Vayehi Yimai Yaakov Shnai Chayav Shevah Shanim Viarbaim Umiat Shana" which means, "Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; and the days of Jacob—the years of his life—were one hundred and forty-seven years." In the previous parsha, Vayigash, the pasuk says that Yaakov went down to the land of Egypt at the age of one hundred and thirty years old. If he went to Egypt when he was one hundred and thirty and he died when he was one hundred and forty-seven, it is obvious that he lived in the land for seventeen years. Why does the pasuk add this seemingly obvious knowledge? After all, the Torah never wastes words!

We can learn something from the words of the pasuk in Vayehi. The first two words, "Vayechi Yaakov," come to teach that Yaakov lived in a positive way. Although Yaakov did not live an easy life he still lived a good life. He may have had to leave his parents because of Esav, deal with Lavan's trickery, and lose his son, Yosef, for many years. However, Yaakov also had some good years. The gematria of the word Vayechi is thirty four. This number represents thirty four good years for Yaakov. These thirty four years were the seventeen years from the birth of Yosef until he was sold and the seventeen years after the reunion of Yaakov and Yosef in Egypt. Also, the gematria of the word tov, good, is seventeen. Out of the thirty four good years, the last seventeen were the best for Yaakov. He got to be

(Continued on page 6)

Take Your Seat

By Zachary Rosenberg, 12th Grade

In this week's parsha, there is a pasuk that says, "all these are the twelve tribes of Yisrael...every one according to his blessing he blessed them". The *Be'ar Mechokek* points out that we don't see a bracha given to Reuven, Shimon, or Levi. He explains that this is because the biggest bracha that you can give to a person is to tell them not just all of their strengths and qualities, but also their faults so that they can fix themselves and reach their full potential.

Yaakov told Reuven of his tremendous potential: "Reuven, you are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, and the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power." Then he added, "your defect is in your haste, that is holding you back from reaching your potential." We all have our job in this world and our strengths, but we also have faults. If we fix our faults, we can fulfill our potential.

Reuven lost his bracha because he was too hasty, even though the reason he was hasty was to protest what he considered an insult to his mother. In contrast, we find that Yosef did not act this way: Yaakov said to Yosef, "I know you have complaints against me for burying your mother on the roadside instead of in Bet Lechem, but you should know that it was done by word of Hashem so that Klal Yisrael could daven there on their way to exile.

(Continued on page 7)

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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)
10. Where is a bed mentioned in this parsha? (4 answers)

Answers

1. Parshas Vayeshet 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.
10. At the beginning of the parsha, Yaakov's bed is mentioned three times: Yaakov bows by the head of the bed (Genesis 47:31); Yaakov strengthens himself to sit up on the bed (Genesis 48:2); in that same verse, Yaakov gathers his legs to the bed before dying. The fourth time a bed is mentioned is in the blessing given to Reuven, in reference to his moving of Yaakov's bed after the death of Rachel (Genesis 49:4).

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



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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Shmuel Maltz

V'Sein Tal U'Matar in Southern Hemisphere: Part 2

The Halacha is that if one misses V'Sein Tal U'Matar L'Vracha, they have to repeat Shemoneh Esrei. What if someone in Germany or Spain (northern hemisphere) said V'Sein Tal after Pesach when we say V'Sein Bracha? Does he have to repeat Shemoneh Esrei? According to the Shulchan Aruch, they said something they weren't supposed to say, but according to the Rosh, what they said was fine, so they don't have to repeat it. The Mahari Habuav says that we pasken like the Rosh in this case that one does not need to repeat Shemoneh Esrei. What about the southern hemisphere? In the mid-19th century, there was a Rav in Melbourne, Australia who saw that the people there weren't saying V'Sein Tal in between Mar Cheshvan and Pesach. He thought that was wrong! He immediately sent letters to the leaders in Torah telling them that the opinion of the Toras Chaim that they followed, which said that the rain would be bad for us is wrong. It's not true! That's only true in places like Brazil, where rain in that season would be bad. In Australia, however, where the rain would be good, they should say V'Sein Tal when everyone else is saying it. Most people accept that opinion. Rav Vosner has a different approach, he says every topic in Shas was about the northern hemisphere. The southern hemisphere is totally different. For someone to ask for rain in their summer is like asking Hashem to change the climate. Everything should be changed. It turns out that Tefilas Tal and Tefilas Geshem all switch. It doesn't matter what happens in the northern hemisphere. Rav Shmuel Salant says that they should say Mashiv Haruach like the rest of the world, but flip V'Sein Tal should be from Nissan until Tishrei.

SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With
Ari Ivry*

The Context:

Yosef brought his sons to receive the blessings of his father, Yaakov, before his passing. Yosef positioned Menashe, his firstborn, on Yaakov's right side and Ephraim, his younger son, on Yaakov's left. Yaakov, however, switched his hands, placing his right hand on Ephraim and his left on Menashe. Yosef protested, but Yaakov assured him, "I know, my son, I know; he [Menashe] will also... become great; however his younger brother [Ephraim] shall become greater than he..."

The Question:

A "firstborn" expresses his father's deepest aspirations and is usually showered with his father's attention. What quality did Menashe possess as firstborn? And what quality did Ephraim possess that made him Yaakov's preferred child, more important than Yosef's actual firstborn?

The Preface to the Explanation:

Menashe and Ephraim represent two different approaches to surviving in galus. The name Menashe means, "G-d has made me leap away from forgetting... my father's home." Meaning, by finding himself in a hostile environment that threatened to extinguish any memory of his "father's home," Yosef was inspired to hold on tighter to those memories and remain tenaciously committed to his father's value. Ephraim, on the other hand, means, "G-d has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering." This refers to the possibility of thriving specifically in a hostile environment. Ephraim does not just cling to memory like Menashe, but he grows and develops from the experience of galus itself.

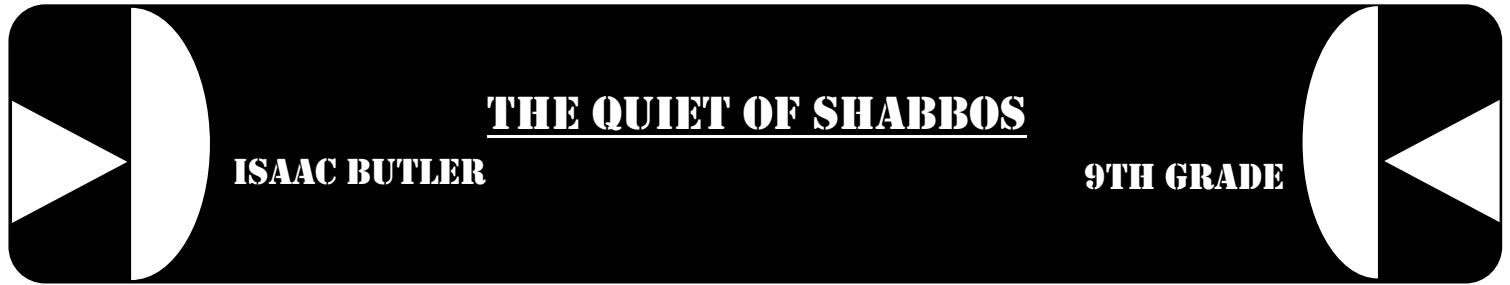
The Explanation:

Galus can elicit spiritual growth in three ways. These three levels correspond to Yaakov, Yosef, and Yosef's children.

1. When a person remains committed to G-d despite the pressure of Galus, his soul's strength is expressed more than it would have been in a time of tranquility. Yaakov is associated with "truth," which is consistent and unwavering in any context. Thus, the soul's strength to withstand and transcend galus' temptations relates to Yaakov.
- 2.
3. The soul's strength is further expressed when a person not only remains unaffected by galus but when he is able to influence his surroundings, lighting up the darkness of galus with the light of the soul. The name Yosef means to add. Thus, the ability of the soul to not only survive but to transform its darkness into light relates to Yosef. Yosef accomplishes this, however, due to his enduring connection to Yaakov. He does not truly experience the darkness of exile because he is always tethered to the light of Yaakov.
- 4.
5. But galus does not only elicit the soul's preexisting strength. By transforming the darkness of galus into light, the soul attains an even deeper achievement, revealing a light that can only be born out of darkness.

6. Menashe and Ephraim were both born into the darkness of galus and confronted it in their own ways. They represent the ability of the soul to reach deeper than its own preexisting strength and transform the darkness of galus itself. We can now understand why Yosef is closely associated with Menashe and Yaakov with Ephraim. Yosef's ability to withstand galus and transform it came from his connection to his father's home.

(Continued on page 7)



In this week's Parsha, Yosef buried his father Yaakov. Masechet Sota speaks about how Essav persuasively appealed that the last burial plot right next to Leah, who was at one time considered to be his intended or destined soulmate, belonged to him.

The children of Yaakov, of course, claimed that he had effectively forfeited his plot when he sold the birthright to his brother Yaakov all those years ago. Essav contended that he still was deserving of this part of his inheritance. The children of Yaakov claimed to be in possession of proof that the plot belonged to their family, but the papers were in Egypt. So they sent speedy Naftali who was titled in this week's Parsha as, "a gazelle – like a messenger, he delivers pleasant sayings." While Naftali was running back to Egypt to retrieve the documentation, Yaakov remained unburied.

Chushim Ben Dan was observing all that was going on with clear eyes, unclouded by all of the arguments from Essav. All he saw was that his holy and well-respected grandfather was being openly denigrated while Essav was holding sway over his listening audience with his theatrics. Chushim was not influenced by Essav's words and trickery. He saw the truth in all its raw reality, and therefore he took action. The Gemara tells us that he picked up a club and killed Essav. How was Chushim able to cut through all the words of Essav? What was his special talent? The answer is plain and obvious. He was deaf!

Today a web of words are woven to cover-up and gain permission for the worst behavior. Many bad things happen because they are "justifiable". Many people can be stuck in the confusion of conversation while the clouds of chaos seem too thick to cut, while an innocent child can see right through the scheme taking place before their eyes.

On Shabbos, we can step away from the world and in doing so, we make ourselves like Chushim. On Shabbos we can see things for what they really are. In one of the Zemiros that we sing on Friday night, it says, "All who thoroughly enjoy Shabbos will merit great happiness and will be rescued from the birth pangs of Moshiach." What are these birth pangs? What does the pleasure of Shabbos do to alleviate that ordeal? It could be that the biggest possible pain is the feeling of panic that comes from a lack of clarity, and so too the clearest form of relief is found in the quiet of Shabbos.

Adapted from Torah.com



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YOEL HORWITZ

“The voice of sweet hope that accompanies us twice a year — on the holy eve of Passover, and the conclusion of Yom Kippur — this is the voice of our nation’s soul, as it articulates the depths of its yearning, longings and anticipation: ‘Next year in Jerusalem!’” (Mo’adei HaRe’iyah p. 463). It is in these times of utter desperation that you appreciate how amazing some things really are. Zalman Shazar (Israel’s third president, 1889-1974) described an encounter he witnessed as a young boy in the Belarus town of Stowbtsy — an experience that made a lifelong impression on him:

In 1899, the rabbi of the nearby town of Mir, Rabbi Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim, was invited to serve as chief rabbi of Jerusalem under the aging Rabbi Shmuel Salant.

Rabbi Rabinowitz-Teomim, known by his acronym ‘Aderet’, agreed to take the prestigious position. He left the town of Mir accompanied by an entourage of rabbis, including his son-in-law, Rav Kook. (Rav Kook at that time was Rabbi of Bauska; five years later he would join his father-in-law in Eretz Yisrael, when he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Jaffa).

Their journey took them to the town of Stowbtsy, where the train made a stop. Out of courtesy to the local rabbi, the travelers paid a visit to the rabbi’s home. When the news spread that eminent rabbinical scholars were visiting the town, community leaders and townspeople gathered to greet the important guests. The rabbi of Stowbtsy offered refreshments to the crowd. Lifting his glass, he toasted the health of Rabbi Rabinowitz-Teomim: “To the Rabbi of Mir!”

Those assembled were surprised to see one of the rabbis objecting to the toast. Rav Kook sprang to his feet, eyes blazing with zealous pride. “What, the Rabbi of Mir? To the Rabbi of Jerusalem!” Rav Kook said “Jerusalem” with such awe and reverence, such fervor and love, that the entire assembly was deeply moved. Many years later, Zalman Shazar testified: “That childhood encounter — hearing Rav Kook’s passionate outburst of ‘Jerusalem!’, full of reverence and love for the holy city — that was my first Eretz-Yisrael experience...”

(Adapted from Melachim Kvnei Adam by Simcha Raz, pp. 217-218)

(Yoni Sheinman- Continued from page 1)

with his children and grandchildren. These years for Yaakov were years of true joy.

But this idea is paradoxical. How is it possible that Yaakov’s best years were spent in Egypt, Galus, and not in Eretz Yisroel? To solve this paradox, we must realize that when a person has a goal or a mission, it does not matter where they complete it; rather, it matters if they complete it. Although it is better to be in our homeland, Eretz Yisroel, it is still good to do things and to live a positive life in other lands. We should try to be in Eretz Yisroel, but if we can’t be there, we should still do what we can wherever we are. Yaakov knew that his children and grandchildren were in Egypt, and he wanted to make sure that his descendants were continuing on a good path. People must prioritize in life so that they know what to focus on. Time and place become less relevant. Even though Yaakov was in Egypt, he had a mission, so it did not matter where he was. His years in Galus still managed to be the best years of his life.

Adapted from Chabad.org, By J. Immanuel Schochet

(Zachary Rosenberg- Continued from page 1)

Why did Yaakov assume that Yosef would have complaints against him? The meforshim say that it did seem strange that Yaakov buried Rachelle by the roadside, so it is normal that Yosef wouldn't understand why he did it. However, Yaakov had *Ruach Hakodesh and saw things differently. Even though Yosef might not have understood, he didn't worry about what Yaakov did. Conversely, Reuven did act against what he saw as wrong and that is why he was punished.*

We see an important lesson to remember for life: when a Gadol does something, you shouldn't think that they are wrong even if you don't understand their reasoning, and you certainly shouldn't take any action against what they did.

Adapted from HaRav Yosef Stern ZT"l

(Sparks of Chasidus- Continued from page 4)

Menashe, who represents the soul's ability to remain connected to its source even when in galus, is thus a reflection of Yosef's spiritual work. Yaakov, however, ultimately desires that the darkness of galus itself becomes a source of inspiration and light. Ephraim, who represents the soul's ability to be productive and fruitful within the "land of my suffering," is thus a reflection of Yaakov's ambition to transform galus itself.

The Lesson:

In the end, Menashe is the "firstborn" because the initial focus a person must have in galus is ensuring that he is connected to his roots, preserving his identity in the face of persuasive cultural influences. Once this connection is secure, the task becomes to prosper and grow through galus itself, as alluded to in the name of the second son, Ephraim.

Adapted from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Likkutei Sichos

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LIVING B'SIMCHA

By Baer Boczko, 11th Grade

Rashi tells us that Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal to his children the exact moment that Mashiach would come, but Hashem removed his nevuah from him before he could do it. Though it may have been true that Hashem didn't want Yaakov to reveal the moment of Mashiachs coming, there was no reason to remove Yaakov's nevuah. Hashem could have simply kept the date from Yaakov. So then why did Hashem remove Yaakov's nevuah?

The *Radomsker Rebbe z'l explains that Hashem didn't really revoke Yaakov's nevuah at all. On the contrary, Yaakov saw too clearly what the future looked like, both physically and spiritually: Yaakov saw the terrible events that Bnei Yisroel would go through before Mashiach came; the destruction of both Batei Mikdash and the near destruction of all European Jews, and its ensuing tragedies. This nevuah saddened Yaakov to such an extent that Yaakov lost an essential prerequisite for receiving a nevuah.*

He lost the attribute of simcha, joy. Chazal tell us in Shabbos 32b that the Shechinah rests only on a person who is b'simcha. The absence of simcha negates Ruach HaKodesh, Divine Inspiration.

The message is clear: We must learn to triumph over adversity, or we may lose what Ruach HaKodesh is still within us. In a way, we have an advantage over Yaakov Avinu. We actually experienced the horrors he merely viewed through nevuah, and we survived, endured and continued on. We searched for strength, reached for inspiration, found it, and kept going. We lost six million kedoshim, an entire Jewish culture and lifestyle, yeshivos, and gedolei Yisroel and their Talmidim. Yet, we preserved and rebuilt. We had the advantage of learning from Yaakov, our ancestor, that if we allow adversity to crush us, we may lose whatever Ruach HaKodesh we possess, and without the Divine—the inspiration is worth very little.

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