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Parshat Vayechi

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Cleveland Shabbaton This Week!!

THIS WEEK! Mini-Shabbaton with HaRav Bina Shlit"a on Shabbat Parshat Vayechi (December 17-18) in Cleveland, Ohio. Rav Bina will speak at a joint Bnei Akiva/NCSY Oneg Shabbat.

Alumni and their families are invited to join Rav Bina for Shabbat lunch at the home of Jeffrey (5749-50) and Adina Soclof. Motzaei Shabbat there will be a melave malka open house at the home of Dr. Jonathan (5748) and Adena Klineman for alumni as well as juniors and seniors of the Mizrachi school and their parents.

For more information contact jonklineman@gmail.com.

Visiting Alumni Shabbaton

The Shabbaton for alumni who come to learn in Yeshiva during their college break, will be Parshat Beshalach (January 15). If you are planning on coming during the break, please contact [Dina](#) ASAP. Dina can also answer any questions regarding how to make a donation in gratitude for the Yeshiva hosting your stay.

Netiv Wear!

Visting alumni over the college break will be able to pick

up their YNA apparel when they are in Israel. The last orders must be in no later than This Motzei Shabbat at 12:00 EST. Click [here](#) to place your order.



Video of Chanukat Habayit at the New Dormitory

Click [here](#) to watch



HaRav Nebenzahl affixing a mezuzah to the entrance

YU Happenings



Rabbi Dr. John Krug hosts a Chanukah Mesiba

Shabbat Davening Times- Rav Chaim Rosenblatt (and family) will be the staff rabbi for Shabbat

Mincha Gedolah	1:00 PM
Mincha in Beit Midrash	3:50 PM
Shachrit Vatikin	5:55 AM
Shachrit Bet	8:30 AM
Mincha	3:50 PM

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HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Vayechi

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

Printer Friendly Sicha



"Yisrael extended his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head though he was the younger and his left hand on Menashe's head ... 'I know, my son, I know; he too will become a people, and he too will become great; yet his younger brother shall become greater and he and his offspring's fames will fill the nations'" (Bereishit 48:14,19).

Yoseph was concerned that Yaakov did not realize that Menashe was the firstborn and therefore when blessing his two grandsons, Yaakov's right hand should have rightfully been placed on Menashe, rather than on Ephraim as Yaakov did. Rashi comments on the words "he too will become a people and he too will become great" that Menashe's greatness will be manifested in Gidon descending from him, through whom Hashem performed a miracle. However, Ephraim will be greater because Yehoshua bin Nun who will lead the Jewish nation into Eretz Yisrael and teach them Torah will descend from him. "His offspring's fame will fill the nations", says Rashi, refers to the entire world being affected by the miracle he performs when the sun stands still in Givon and the moon in the Ayalon Valley.

Ephraim being greater than Menashe refers not only to their descendants, but Yaakov was speaking in the present as well. Menashe had been in charge of Yosef's household and assisted his father in his capacity as viceroy. When the brothers went to Egypt, the Torah refers to "the man who was in charge of Yosef's house" (Bereishit 43:19). According to some commentaries this man was Menashe. Ephraim, on the other hand, had a greater dimension of Torah about him - he would learn Torah with his saintly grandfather Yaakov. By placing his right hand upon Ephraim, Yaakov was teaching Yosef, his children, and future generations that working in Torah takes precedence over working in kingship. Yosef had both elements - he was second to the king, but he also learned Torah with his father. Ephraim represented the continuance of Torah while Menashe represented the continuation of the kingship.

Although outwardly the *talmid chacham* must treat the king with honor and respect, this is only on an external level. In private, when not in front of others, the king must show honor and respect to the *talmid chacham*.

Hashem commanded Moshe to appoint Yehoshua as his successor who will lead the Jewish nation into *Eretz Yisrael*. It is interesting to note that in the beginning of Parshat Vayelech we find "Moshe summoned Yehoshua and said to him before the eyes of all Israel: 'be strong and courageous, for you shall come (*tavo*) with this people to the Land'" (Devarim 31:7-8), while towards the end of Parshat Vayelech we find: "He commanded Yehoshua bin Nun and said: 'be strong and courageous, for you shall bring (*tavi*) the Children of Israel to the Land'" (ibid. 23). Why did Moshe Rabenu change the verb used to describe Yehoshua's leadership? Was he correcting himself? I would assume not. Moshe presented us with two facets of Yehoshua's leadership. As chief of the Sanhedrin he would have to work alongside his fellow *chachamim*. Should a debate ensue between Yehoshua and Elazar regarding a specific *halachic* issue, the final *halachic* ruling would follow the majority - if the majority supports Yehoshua's view then the Sanhedrin would issue a ruling in accordance with Yehoshua's understanding. If, on the other hand, the majority of the Sanhedrin were to support Elazar's view, then the ruling issued would follow the opinion of Elazar. He would have to always bear in mind that he was not working alone and therefore Moshe told him: "you shall come with this people."

On the other hand, Yehoshua was to be the leader, the highest commander. In this respect he did work alone. Moshe alluded to this by commanding him: "be strong and courageous for you shall bring ..."

The *talmid chacham* is a person of higher stature than even the king. If, G-d forbid, they were both taken prisoner and only one could be freed then the *talmid chacham* would take precedence. This is because every Jew can learn to become a king, but not everyone is willing to work hard and do what it takes to become a *talmid chacham*. This was the lesson Yaakov Avinu was trying to teach Yosef and his descendants.

Yehoshua was to be leader as well as head of the Sanhedrin. With regard to Menashe, Gidon was to descend from him, a judge whom people asked if he would be their king - an offer which he refused.

Unfortunately, a later descendant of Ephraim was king but ruled in a way which was contrary to Yaakov's teaching. His name was Yeravam ben Nevat. The Gemara explains why Yeravam merited the kingship and why he subsequently had to forfeit it: The *pasuk* states: "And it was this matter that he (Yeravam ben Nevat) raised a hand against the king: Shlomo had built up the Millo and closed up the breach of the City of David his father." (Melachim I 11:27). Chazal elaborate: "Your father David made breaches in the wall so that Israel might come up to Yerushalayim for the festivals and enter the city with ease. You, on the other hand, closed up the breaches in order to levy a toll for Pharaoh's daughter." (Sanhedrin 101b). Chazal add: "Why did Yeravam merit kingship? Because he rebuked Shlomo HaMelech. Why was he subsequently punished? Because he rebuked in public." It was one and the same action which merited him the kingship and lost it for him.

One of the terrible things Yeravam did was to construct two calves - one was to remain in Beit Kel and the other in Dan and he asked that the Jewish people serve them as an alternative sight to the Beit HaMikdash. Yeravam feared that should they travel to the Beit HaMikdash they would accept Rechavam as king. This is an example of someone who was willing to disobey a dictate of the Torah making Yerushalayim and the Beit HaMikdash the center of Jewish life in order to save his kingship. Unlike the lesson Yaakov Avinu taught us, Yeravam placed greater value on his kingship than on the Torah. This marked the beginning of the split within the Jewish nation. Later on things got worse, for Achav also from the tribe of Ephraim introduced real *avoda zara* (according to many authorities, Yeravam's calves did not have the status of *avoda zara*). The situation in Yehuda began to deteriorate as well eventually leading up to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. It all began with Yeravam placing greater value on his being king than on the people observing the Torah. Yeravam in fact had no reason to fear losing his kingdom, for the prophet Achia appointed him as king. The lesson here is that Torah takes precedence over the kingdom.

We know there is a *halacha* referred to as *dina demalchuta dina* - the law of the land is law. Many years ago the king was viewed, even by the other nations in their own way, as the representative of G-d. The human king's power base stems from Hashem - he is not necessarily a *posek* in *halacha* but he does have the power to levy taxes, decide on individual rights, etc. What would be if the king does not accept Hashem's rule, would there still be a concept of *dina demalchuta dina*? Let us try to understand this by comparing this to England. When the parliament appoints a government, it is under the rule of his (today her) majesty. The government has ministers who are granted authority to enact laws in their specific department. What would be if the government appointed Mr. Jones as the government's representative in Liverpool but Mr. Jones made pronouncements in his own name and did not accept the authority of her majesty? His power would be baseless, for he is a representative of the kingdom. By the same token, a human king who does not represent the King of kings has no power base. Perhaps in Soviet Russia where they denied the existence of G-d, the idea of kingship has no meaning.

Yeravam's rule resulted in the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. The second Beit HaMikdash was also destroyed on Tisha B'Av. The day the enemy breached the walls of Yerushalayim leading to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash was on the 9th day of Tammuz, while with regard to the second Beit HaMikdash this took place on the 17th day Tammuz. The fast was instituted on the 17th day of Tammuz because the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash is more relevant to us.

If so, why do we mark the tenth day of Tevet (this Friday) as the day the enemy laid siege on Jerusalem? After all, this was the day Nebuchadnezzar laid the siege leading to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. Should we not rather mark the corresponding day when the enemy laid siege on Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash? Perhaps there is special significance to the Tenth of Tevet, as we find in the way Hashem commanded Yechezkel to record this date: "The word of Hashem came to me

in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month saying: 'Son of Man, write for yourself the name of this day - this very day, the king of Bavel has reached Jerusalem on this very day'" (Yechezkel 24:1-2).

It is interesting to note that Abudraham gave such significance to this prophecy referring to "this very day", that he is of the opinion that should Asara B'Tevet fall on Shabbat (which it cannot given our fixed calendar) then we would fast on Shabbat, as is the case with Yom Kippur. With regard to the other fasts - Tisha B'Av, 17 Tammuz, Tzom Gedaliah, and Taanit Esther should they fall no Shabbat, the fast would be observed on a different day. The Rambam differs and rules that we would not observe the fast of the Tenth of Tevet on Shabbat. R' Chaim explains the Avudraham's view by pointing out that the fasts are referred to in the prophets as "the fast of the fourth month (17 Tammuz) the fast of the fifth (Tisha B'Av), the fast of the seventh (Tzom Gedaliah), and the fast of the tenth (10 Tevet)" (Zechariah 8:19) - if unable to observe it on the designated day it could be fulfilled any day during the corresponding month. The fast of 10 Tevet, however, in addition to being "the fast of the tenth" is also emphasized as having to take place on "this very day" - it is so significant that it even takes place on Shabbat. As we mentioned above, this is not an issue in our fixed calendar.

The prophet states: "the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast fo the seventh, and the fast of the tenth will be to the House of Yehuda for joy and for gladness and for happy festivals, only love truth and peace" (Zecharia 8:19). There are 613 mitzvos, why does the prophet emphasize loving truth and peace? Perhaps we can offer an explanation based on the Messilat Yesharim:

The Messilat Yesharim in fact devotes the entire chapter 20 to "Piety Must not be Misplaced". In that chapter he explains what type of piety is acceptable and what is not. The first example of one whose misplaced piety had a tragic outcome was Gedaliah ben Achikam. He was warned by Yochanan ben Kare-ach and the soldiers that Yishmael ben Netanya was planning to kill him (see Yirmiyahu 40:13-14). Although, one should not automatically accept another's *loshon hara* "one should nevertheless take note of it" (Nidda 61a), and take the required cautionary measures. Gedaliah elected to be extra *machmir*, insisting that their "*loshon hara*" was a pack of lies (see Yirmiyahu 40:16). The end result was that Yishmael ben Netania did kill Gedaliah and many other Jews. In fact the *pasuk* refers to these other people as "the people whom he (Yishmael ben Netania) had smitten by the hand of Gedaliah" (Yirmiyahu 41:9), Chazal comment: "but was it Gedaliah that killed them? Was it not in fact Yishmael that killed them? But owing to the fact that he should have taken note of the advice of Yochanan the son of Kare-ach and did not do so, Scripture regards him as though he killed them"" (Nidda 61a). Gedaliah was known to be a tremendous *tzaddik*, in fact it is regarding the institution of the Tzom Gedaliah that Chazal tell us: "the death of the righteous is equivalent to the burning of the house of our G-d" (Rosh Hashana 18b). Regarding this point, however, he was gravely mistaken. Piety is not what was called for, he overemphasized the idea of "keeping the peace" and as a result tens of Jews were killed and the remnants who had been left in Yehuda were exiled. It is for this reason that to this day we observe the fast of Tzom Gedaliah.

Another example of one whose misplaced piety led to great tragedy cited by the Messilat Yesharim was R' Zechariah ben Abkulas. When Bar Kamtza delivered the offering of the Caesar (which he invalidated on the way), R' Zechariah refused to allow it to be offered. Did he not realize the great danger this would place the residents of Yehuda in? R' Zechariah reasoned: "people will then say that blemished animals may be offered on the Altar" (Gittin 56a). Given that Bar Kamtza would inform the Caesar that the Jewish people refused to accept his offering, an alternative course of action should have been to kill Bar Kamtza. After all, the *halacha* states that one may kill a *rodef* who will otherwise kill you, and Bar Kamtza clearly fit that category. R' Zechariah refused to do that, fearing that people will misinterpret the incident and claim that Bar Kamtza was killed for having placed a blemish on an offering (an offense generally not punishable by death). The end result was that Bar Kamtza did inform the Caesar of the Jewish people's refusal to offer his animal upon the Altar leading to the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash. Chazal comment: "the tolerance of R' Zecharia ben Abkolus in refusing to have Bar Kamtza put to death, destroyed our Temple" (Gittin 56a). The destruction of the Beit Hamikdash came as a result of misplaced piety, emphasizing truth over peace.

The first destruction came about due to peace being emphasized over truth, while the second destruction resulted from truth being emphasized over peace. The prophet is telling us that it is only when both are taken into account that these fast days can be transformed into days of "joy and gladness and happy festivals" speedily in our day. Amen.

Staff Dvar Torah by Rabbi Mark Mays

BOUND TO HAPPEN-ADVICE FOR THE END OF DAYS

In this week's Parasha, we learn that Yaakov Avinu gathered his children around him, and declared that he would reveal to them what would happen at the 'End of Days'. The *pasuk* reads: "Then Yaakov called for his sons and said: 'assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days'" (Bereishit 49:1). Yaakov then goes on to bless each of his children and these are the last words that Yaakov says before his death. This leaves us with the question of where exactly Yaakov describes the 'End of Days' as he seems to have set out to do?



Rashi on this *pasuk* refers us to the Gemara (Pesachim 56a) and the Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 98b) which states that Yaakov sought to reveal to his sons the End of Days, whereupon the Shechina departed him, and he (instead) began to speak other words (namely he continued to bless his children). This would seem to explain why we don't find an obvious reference to Yaakov's describing the End of Days - as he in fact did not!

The Rebbe of Slonim in his work Netivot Shalom cites a passage in the Zohar which seems to challenge the aforementioned Gemara and Midrash. The Zohar questions why the Torah would record a definite statement of Yaakov - namely that he WOULD reveal what would

happen in the future - if, in fact, he ultimately did NOT. The premise is that the Torah reflects things which are actually true, and so if there is a definite statement recorded in the Torah, it must - on some level - be accurate. The Zohar concludes that the words of the Torah are to be taken literally, and that Yaakov DID reveal the End of Days to his children in part, whilst leaving the remainder concealed.

The question we now have reverts back to our original one. If we are to understand that Yaakov did reveal the future to his children, where is this recorded? The Rebbe of Slonim offers an answer to this question and in so doing provides us with an essential lesson. He explains that the word in the *pasuk* "*ve-agida*" "(assemble yourselves and) I will tell you..." is derived from the word *egged* which means to be bound, whilst the word *yikra*" "(what will) befall" is related to the word *yakar* which means precious.

With this new depth, the *pasuk* now reads: "assemble yourselves and bind yourselves to each other, for this will be valuable to you at the End of Days". As the time of Mashiach draws closer, and in many ways the spiritual times we live in get increasingly dark, we are provided with the ultimate 'precious' tool for ensuring that we are able to hasten his arrival; 'assemble yourselves and bind yourselves to each other'. If we are to correct the major reason for why the last Beit Hamikdash was destroyed - *sinat chinam* - baseless hatred, we must work on loving and tolerating the people around us, so that as a people we may become unified. When this happens, we will arrive at the End of Days - perhaps this is the most 'precious' advice we could use.

Shabbat Shalom

Student Dvar Torah by Isser Sprei, Shana Bet, Yeshiva Nesivos Chaim, Brooklyn

WHAT KIND OF A BRACHA IS THIS?!

Yaakov's bracha to Shimon and Levi appears to be rebuke for what they did to the people of Shechem and their role in the sale of Yosef. The bracha concludes with the words "*va'afitzem beYisrael*" "I will disperse them in Israel." Rashi explains that this refers to Levi not owning land in Eretz Yisrael. Shevet Levi did not own land because they were the spiritual mentors and teachers of Torah.



If Levi was being rebuked, should he not have been punished? Why was he rewarded with his descendants being the teachers of Klal Yisrael? After mentioning some of the negative acts of Levi, why was he blessed with honor and responsibility?

To answer this question we must first examine what Yaakov hoped to accomplish with these final blessings he gave to his children. Yaakov was pointing out the strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness of each of his sons. A person can use the special talents and traits Hashem gave him for good or in a destructive manner. Yaakov was pointing the special talents of

each of his sons to allow them to use them in a productive manner.

Rav Kamenetzky explains as follows: Yaakov was telling Shimon and Levi that they were blessed with the trait of passion and always being available to take care of what needed to be done. There were many obstacles on the road that Shimon and Levi experienced when using these gifts from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, such as the incidents of Shechem and Mechiras Yosef. Yaakov, however, continued that they have the ability to rise to greatness and accomplish great things with these gifts. They can use their passion to teach Torah and the ways of Hashem to others.

May we all merit fulfilling our potential with the gifts given us from the One Above.
Shabbat Shalom.

Talk about talking (in shul)

We are introducing a new feature to the newsletter. Given that the subject of talking in Shul is a subject which is very close to the heart of our Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a, we have decided to bring you excerpts of our translation to the Sefer "*Morah Mikdash*". The Sefer is a collection of citations on the subject from many *sefarim* including the Zohar and Shulchan Aruch first printed in the year 5542 (229 years ago) and reprinted in 5743 (28 years ago).



1) *The following will enlighten the reader and awaken the hearts of Hashem's people to fear the One Who warned against violating the sanctity of the "mikdash me-at" with idle speech in a Beit HaKenesset or Beit Midrash, as Chazal have elaborated on the punishment for those who speak in Beit HaKenesset and Beit Midrash.*

The *Aseret HaDibrot* open with "*anochi Hashem Elokecha*" "I am Hashem your G-d" (Shmot 20:2). A person who wishes to fulfill this mitzvah and to accept upon Himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven should refrain from talking in Shul.

"Whoever speaks in Shul, woe is to him, for he separates all worlds, he has no share in the G-d of Israel ..., even though he claims to believe in Hashem, he does not believe that He (Hashem) is in Shul, and he interrupts the praises of Hashem to carry on with his own conversations" (See Zohar Parshat Trumah 131b)

Dedications, Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Visitors

The following people visited/learned in the Yeshiva:



- Immanuel Hass (5769-70)
- Donny Finkel (5768)
- Daniel Levy (5764)

Mazal Tov's

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh would like to wish a mazal tov to:

- [Naftali](#) Gidon (5768-69) on his engagement to Mia Goldsmith.

Tehillim List

Printer Friendly Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ● Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah | ● Ada Bat Miriam |
| ● Rachel bat Chana | ● Reuven ben Tova Chaya |
| ● Yehuda Pinchas ben Asna | ● Aharon ben Simah |
| ● Sagit bat Esther | ● Shayna bat Chava |
| ● Fruma bat Ita | ● Zev eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel |
| ● Chaya bat Grunia | ● Avram Gershon ben Tzipa |
| ● Tamara Nechama bat Karmela | ● Freydil Tzivya Bas Rochel |
| ● Ester bat Chaya | ● Ari ben Rivka |
| ● Binyamin Yonatan ben Leikah | ● Yosef ben Golda |
| ● Chaya Chana bat Alta Rivkah | ● Esther bat Brana |
| ● Yosef ben Hilda | ● Miriam bat Shulamit |
| ● Maron ben Hadas Esther | ● Rivka Chava bat Rachel |
| ● Chaya Meira Mindel bat Chava Golda | ● Margalit Chaya bat Rachel |
| ● Chinoam Rina bat Avital Hoday-ya | ● David ben Leah |
| ● Ditzza bat Vardit Tali bat Devorah Bina | ● Elizabeth bat Annette |
| ● Akiva ben Gittel | ● Edmund Ben Nazira |
| ● Marcel Ben Pninah | ● Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa |
| ● Evelyn Bat Dina | ● Alyza Sarah Bat Yehudit |

- Mordechai Eliezer Hacoheh ben Esther Miriam

- Inbal bat Nelya



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?**- [let us know](#)! We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Bina,
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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