

FOUR-FOLD FAST

- Friday, December 17th is **Asara b'Tevet** this year.
- The fast begins at dawn, which is 5:15am in Jerusalem.
- We will be davening Mincha Gedola at 12:06pm at the Center this Friday.
- The fast ends at 5:07pm (Jerusalem), but we wait for Kiddush to end the fast.
- **Asara b'Tevet** is the only fast that can fall on Friday, which it does approx. 20% of the time. The last time was 10 years ago.
- **Asara b'Tevet** marks the beginning of the siege around Jerusalem by the Babylonians in the time of the first Beit HaMikdash.
- **Asara b'Tevet** also carries with it tragic events of the 8th and 9th of Tevet.
- On the 8th of Tevet, Jewish scholars were forced to translate the Torah into Greek. This is considered a black day in Jewish History - even though a miracle is recorded for this event, as black as the day of the Golden Calf.
- The 9th of Tevet is the Traditional yahrzeit date of Ezra, who not only brought Jews back to Eretz Yisrael after the Babylonian exile, but he also restored the Torah to the Jews who had become estranged from it.
- In our own time, **Asara b'Tevet** picked up an additional significance: It has been designated as YOM KADDISH K'LALI, to be observed as a yahrzeit of sorts for Jews who perished in the Holocaust, whose dates of death are unknown.
- The idea should not be lost that **Asara b'Tevet** follows so soon after Chanuka. Not in the same year, of course, but on our calendar - and this should speak to us.

cont. (and elaborated) on page 4

Jerusalem Shabbat in/out times for VAYCHI

4:02pm / 5:18pm (see page 3 for other zmanim)

Checked, double checked, and triple checked for Parshat Vaychi

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ParshaPix Explanations on p.35



Word of the Month With the stormy weather, B"H, it is worthwhile to repeat that waiting for Motza'ei Shabbat for Kiddush L'vana is often a risky "luxury" and people who have not yet said KL this month should take the first opportunity that presents itself. Friday night is not good for KL unless it is the last op in the given month. Last opportunity this month is MON Dec 20 until 3:40am (of Dec 21). Remember also that this time adjusts for your location. For example, in New York, the last opportunity for KL this month is 8:40pm on Monday night. That's 7 hours earlier on the clock, but it is really the same time.



<u>Candles</u>	VAYCHI	<u>Havdala</u>	<u>next week</u>
4:02pm	Yerushalayim	5:18pm	4:05 / 5:22
4:20pm	S'derot	5:21pm	4:23 / 5:25
4:17pm	Gush Etzion	5:19pm	4:21 / 5:22
4:17pm	Raanana	5:19pm	4:21 / 5:22
4:18pm	Beit Shemesh•RBS	5:19pm	4:21 / 5:23
4:17pm	Netanya	5:19pm	4:20 / 5:22
4:18pm	Rehovot	5:20pm	4:22 / 5:23
4:18pm	Be'er Sheva (& Otmiel)	5:21pm	4:21 / 5:24
4:17pm	Modi'in• Chashmona'im	5:19pm	4:21 / 5:22
4:02pm	Petach Tikva	5:19pm	4:05 / 5:22
4:02pm	Maale Adumim	5:18pm	4:05 / 5:21
4:16pm	Ginot Shomron	5:18pm	4:20 / 5:21
4:16pm	Gush Shiloh	5:17pm	4:19 / 5:21
4:18pm	K4 & Hevron	5:19pm	4:21 / 5:23
4:17pm	Giv'at Ze'ev	5:18pm	4:20 / 5:22
4:18pm	Yad Binyamin	5:20pm	4:22 / 5:23
4:20pm	Ashkelon	5:21pm	4:23 / 5:25
4:03pm	Tzfat	5:15pm	4:06 / 5:18
4:16pm	Zichron Yaakov	5:18pm	4:19 / 5:21

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - VAYCHI 5:56pm

**Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
8-17 Tevet • December 15-24**

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:37-5:42am
Sunrise	6:32-6:37am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:24-8:28am)	9:02-9:07am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:21-9:26am)	9:53-9:57am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	11:34-11:38½am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	12:05-12:09pm
Plag Mincha	3:33½-3:37¼pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 4:36-4:40pm)	4:42-4:46pm

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LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

To explain: Less than one week ago, we were wrapping up an 8-day celebration of the victory of the the Jewish people over the Greeks and their culture. And now we are mourning the forced translation of the Torah into Greek and all kinds of troubles for us that followed that fateful event. A week ago - a victory for the Torah; now, a serious setback. It give one pause to think. And that's exactly the point.

With this less-than-12-hour fast day, there is a whole agenda of thoughts that we must consider.

What happened that Nevuchadnetzar was able to do what he did to us? Why was the Beit HaMikdash destroyed (first and second)? Why has the Beit HaMikdash not yet been rebuilt? Why have so many fine, upstanding, Torah Jews in the Diaspora not yet seriously put Aliya on their life's agenda? What have I, we, you done towards influencing and inspiring greater mitzvot observance, Torah learning, commitment and practice of Jewish values - in ourselves, our families, our circle of friends... for Klal Yisrael?

Exactly when we are supposed to ponder these things on a short Erev Shabbat is a good question. The answer to that is Asara b'Tevet should serve to TRIGGER some of these thoughts; the actual thinking, pondering - and most importantly, the resolutions of each us towards action - should continue for the days (and weeks...) to come.

Yom HaSho'a, Tish'a b'Av, Yom Kaddish K'lali (Asara b'Tevet), the anniversary of Kristallnacht, a movie, a book, a story in

the media... all should have an effect on our thinking and doing concerning helping survivors, teaching our children, fighting anti-Semitism...

The four fasts related to the Churban, the Nine Days, the Three Weeks, the bare AMA-by-AMA piece of a wall in our homes, the various things that we do that are ZEICHER L'MIKDASH or ZEICHER L'CHURBAN... should all keep us actively thinking and seeking ways to bring about a "repair", a TIKUN, of those things that were among the causes of the Destruction and are still obstacles to the Geula.

Plenty to think about. Plenty to do. Plenty to accomplish.

Back to the actual fasting: Being a minor fast does NOT absolve a healthy person from fasting. The fast is not a custom, not a chumra... it is a requirement of Jewish Law. True, there are built-in leniencies. The fast is ONLY from dawn to stars-out, not from the night before as are Yom Kippur and Tish'a b'Av. True, only eating and drinking are forbidden, not the other restrictions of YK & 9Av. True, various people with difficulties fasting have an easier time getting a heter to eat. But an able-bodied Jew must fast.

Small thing: It has been suggested that Shalom Aleichem and Eishet Chayil might be held over as the opening Z'mirot after Kiddush and HaMotzi, to be able to break the fast earlier. Good idea.

May be merit the Geula Sh'leima soon in our time, AMEIN.

VAYCHI stats

12th of 54 sedras;
12 of 12 in B'reishit

Written on 148.33 lines in a Torah, ranks 45

12 parshiot, 7 open and 5 closed
In addition, the first part of the sedra is the end of the previous parsha from Vayigash.
Vaychi is the only sedra that does not begin at a parsha break.

85 p'sukim - ranks 44th (12th in B'reishit)

1158 words - ranks 44th (12th in B'reishit)

4448 letters - ranks 43rd (12th in B'reishit)

MITZVOT

None of the 613 mitzvot are found in Vaychi

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

The Book of B'reishit

12 of the 54 sedras in the Torah. That's one or two more than each of the other books.

1533 p'sukim of the 5846 in the Torah.

More than 26% of the Torah's p'sukim.

20,612 words of 79,976, almost 26%.

78,064 letters of 304,805 (25.6%).

3 of the 613 mitzvot. Less than 1/2%.

Kohen - First Aliya 13 p'sukim - 47:28-48:9

[47:28 (4) part of the parsha at the end of Vayigash] The sedra begins with Yaakov at age 147, having been in Mitzrayim for 17 years. (Remember that Yosef was 17 when the trouble started. Interesting, no?) The Torah tells us that Yaakov is near death and Yosef is called to his bedside. Yaakov asks Yosef that he (Yaakov) should not be buried in Egypt but rather in Me'arat HaMachpeila. Yosef agrees; Yaakov asks Yosef to swear to it.

SDT: Why would Yaakov insist that Yosef swear - didn't he trust him? Among other reasons, the oath might prove necessary in obtaining permission from Par'o for the funeral. Even if Par'o would have been inclined to say "no", he would respect an oath. This, according to Midrash, because Yosef had sworn not to divulge a particular secret about Par'o (that he, Yosef, knew more languages than Par'o - a fact that would not impress Par'o's subjects favorably). Par'o could not say to Yosef, "I don't care what promises you made", etc. There are commentaries who suggest another possible reason for making Yosef swear - Yosef might be upset about his mother's not having being buried in the "proper" place, and he might not be favorable to his father's request.

SDT: Yaakov asks Yosef for Chesed v'Emet, True Kindness. It is considered that tending to the burial of the dead is the purest form of kindness, because, among other reasons, it is the one

situation in which the recipient of your kindness cannot repay the favor himself. It is an act of kindness without recompense. However, commentators question this idea in Yosef's case. We are taught that Yosef merited having his remains taken out of Egypt as a reward for his attention to Yaakov's wishes. How can we refer to what he did for his father as Chesed shel Emet? One answer is that Yosef received reward in kind only by being taken out of Egypt and buried in the Land of Israel. His body spent a long time in Egypt. His act of True Kindness to his father was that Yaakov's body did not spend even a moment buried in Egypt. For this, Yosef was not paid back in kind; his action on behalf of Yaakov's funeral arrangements was indeed Chesed & Emet.

Another understanding of the concept of CHESED SHEL EMET is that when one does a favor for a living person, one never knows if things will actually turn out all right. It might look like a good thing to do, but things can turn out "don't do me any favors". An act of kindness to the dead is an unquestioned act of Chesed.

[P> 48:1 (22)] Sometime later, Yosef is informed (by Efrayim who regularly ministers to and



learns Torah with Yaakov) that Yaakov is sick ("at death's door"). Yosef brings his two sons with him to Yaakov (so that they can receive his blessing). Yaakov is strengthened by the news of Yosef's impending visit (Thus is the power of Bikur Cholim).

SDT: As to who told Yosef that his father was sick, it is Rashi who brings the opinion that it was Efrayim, who tended to Yaakov's needs in Goshen while Yosef was in Egypt proper. The Midrash says that it was A-s'nat, Yosef's wife, who told him.

Speaking of A-s'nat... The Midrash says that she was Dina's daughter, who was raised by Potifar in Egypt. The Midrash also says that when Potifar's wife accused Yosef of improper advances, it was A-s'nat who privately told Potifar the truth, thus saving Yosef's life.

Yaakov tells Yosef of G-d's promises to him and his descendants and of Rachel's death and burial. He then assures Yosef that his two sons, Efrayim and Menashe, will be equal to Yaakov's sons. (This in essence, is the double portion of inheritance that Yaakov is giving to "his heart's firstborn", the elder of his beloved Rachel's sons.) Then Yaakov takes notice of the boys

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on his 50th yahrzeit
The family

and asks Yosef to present them so that he can bless them.

Levi - Second Aliya 7 p'sukim - 48:10-16

Yaakov's eyesight fails him in his old age (as did Yitzchak's) and Yosef brings his sons and moves them towards Yaakov, who kisses and hugs them. Yosef then takes his sons off of Yaakov's lap, so that he can present them formally to Yaakov, for their brachot. After bowing before Yaakov, Yosef carefully and formally presents his sons to Yaakov with Menashe on his left and Efrayim on his right so that Yaakov's hands will rest on the appropriate heads for the blessings. Yaakov switches his hands, resting his right on Efrayim's head and his left on Menashe's. Then Yaakov blesses Yosef by blessing his (Yosef's) children with the famous HAMAL'ACH HA'GO'EL OTI...

Yaakov's reference to fish in his bracha for Efrayim and Menashe (and all Jewish children in perpetuity) is explained on at least two levels. Fish are prolific; Yaakov was blessing his descendants that they should become

*Mazal Tov to new grandparents
Miriam & Sammy Cubac
and family on the birth of
their granddaughter*

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a large nation. It is also known that the EYIN HARA has no hold over fish (which also had something to do with their survival during the MABUL without being taken into the Ark). And this too was part of his bracha. (The Yiddish name Fischel (fish) is often paired with Efrayim; obviously, this bracha is the source of that name-pair.)

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Shlishi - Third Aliya 6 p'sukim - 48:17-22

When Yosef realizes that Yaakov has switched hands (and has thus "favored" Efrayim over the first-born Menashe) he gets (understandably) very upset and tries to "correct" the positions of Yaakov's hands. Yaakov resists, explaining to Yosef that he is fully aware of what he is doing; and that Efrayim will indeed surpass his brother in greatness.

On this same day, Yaakov blesses them by saying that the traditional blessing for sons shall be: "May G-d make you like Efrayim and Menashe".

Think about this... Imagine the panic that Yosef must have felt when he witnessed the potential of "family history repeating itself". How can Yaakov do what he was doing when he was painfully aware of the consequences of favoring one son and of the jealousy that it creates (can create).

That's the point! It CAN create jealousy, but it need not. It depends upon the character of the people involved. A parent can "tiptoe" around just so long, making everything equal and even, in the hopes that jealousy will not emerge. But that kind of behavior just postpones the jealousy, it does not eliminate it. Parents have to help build the character of their children, so that they will develop good MIDOT, personality traits.

Perhaps Yaakov Avinu saw that his two grandsons possessed the qualities that "allowed" him to do what he did. Two major personality traits that a person should strive for (and that parents shall try to help develop in their children) are: not being boastful when in a superior position and not being jealous or resentful when in an inferior position. Efrayim was destined to become greater than his older brother Menashe. These two brothers were such that Efrayim did not lord himself over Menashe, nor was Menashe jealous of Efrayim's prominence. What greater blessing can a father give his sons than "May G-d make you like Efrayim and Menashe!"

Yaakov then tells Yosef that he is about to die; that G-d will be with the family-nation; that He will restore them to the Land of their ancestors; and that he (Yaakov) has provided Yosef with an additional portion of the Land.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 17 p'sukim - 49:1-17

[P> 49:1 (4)] Yaakov gathers his sons around him with intentions of revealing to them "the end of days" (knowing the future will ease the pain of the difficult times ahead) - but it is not to be!

Divrei HaYamim Alef 7:27
וְיָזַק בְּנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי:
is the only pasuk in Tanach that...

SDT: Rashi says that Yaakov wanted to reveal the "KEITZ" (end of time), but was not allowed to do so by G-d. The original prophecy concerning the exile in Egypt was given to Avraham in the "Covenant between the Pieces". There he was told that his descendants would be oppressed for 400 years. In fact, the people were enslaved for 210 years. (Actually, they were in Egypt for 210 years; actual enslavement which didn't begin until Yaakov and all his sons had died, was significantly less.) The additional 190 years is calculated from the birth of Yitzchak - once Avraham had his first descendant, the "clock of exile", so to speak, began ticking.

Egyptian exile would have been more tolerable, had our ancestors known about this 190 year "grace period". This is the KEITZ (KUF (100) + TZADI (90) = 190) that Yaakov wanted to reveal to his sons. But this he was not permitted to reveal it. (Of course, this is not the "regular" (P'shat) meaning of the pasuk, but it operates on a REMEZ level.)

(The blessings, often mixed with fatherly criticism, combine to become the brachot of the Tribes.)

Yaakov's words about Reuven speak of his unrealized potential

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to have been the leader and the indiscretion that lost him the position of leader.

[P> 49:5 (3)] Yaakov refers to the violence of Shimon and Levi. He curses their anger - not them.

Important lesson for us all from this point. Don't say to your son, "BAD BOY!" Say, "you did a bad thing". It might not seem to be so important, but it is. Especially, because we don't say these kind of things once, but rather countless times over many years.

[P> 49:8 (5)] Yehuda receives the brightest words - he is promised the leadership and respect of his brothers.

The Baal HaTurim points out that the initials of GUR ARYEI YEHUDA - Gimel+Aleph+Yud = 14, the numeric value of DAVID.

[P> 49:13 (1)] Zevulun is given the blessing of prosperity...

[P> 49:14 (2)] and Yissachar will carry the burden of Torah scholarship. (The image of a donkey indicates perseverance, strong will - qualities that are suitable for a scholar.)

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים
רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לחולים

יהושע משה בן ריסל
אנשל אשר בן שפרינצא
יהודה לייב בן הענא
נתנאל יוסף בן שמחה סימה
דוד יוסף בן פייגי פרל
רוני רבקה בת רחל
רבקה בת יעל
קיילא חיינא בת חנה פרומא
עדי בת ליבה איטה
יהודה יורם בן קרן אור
אילנה מיכל בת אלישבע מלכה
רחל שירה בת יפיה דבורה
אברהם ישעיהו בן אבינה
ציפורה בת חנה מנוחה
משה שלמה בן חנה לאה
יצחק קלמן בן זוטה
חנה רבקה בת רייזל
חיה מאירה מינדל בת חוה גאלדא
Menya Leba bat Yitta Chaya
Hinda Molly bat Zelda
Shoshana Abra bat Chaya Beila
Chedva bat Chaya
בתוך שאר חולי ישראל.

Together, these two tribes will form a partnership that will be mutually beneficial.

[S> 49:16 (3)] Dan will be the judge (and upholder of the honor, the one that will avenge Israel by fighting the P'lishtim) of the people. Rashi says that this is a prophecy about Shimshon, who was from the tribe of Dan.

This parsha and Aliya finish with the famous 3-word pasuk: **To Your salvation, I hope, HaShem.**

When a person sneezes, he is supposed to say LISHU'ATCHA KIVITI HASHEM. This is based on the fact that prior to Yaakov Avinu, there was no sickness before one died. Rather, the soul just left the body as it had been breathed in, through the nostrils, with a sneeze, so to speak. Yaakov acknowledged the "gift" of being sick before death, so that one can put his affairs in order. A sneeze is no longer a sign of death, but just a reminder of illness (sometimes a symptom and sometimes just a reminder). This is why people say ASUTA or LIVRIYUT, or something like that, to a person who sneezes. But the sneezer himself should quote the words of Yaakov Avinu. And even though people are more familiar with ASUTA (or whatever someone else says when someone sneezes), it is closer to a requirement for the sneezer himself to say LISHU'ATCHA KIVITI HASHEM.

Learned, a long long time ago, from
שליט"א רבי יהודה לייב גינסברג

More: One of the commentaries raises the following point: At the beginning of VAYCHI, Yosef is told, "Your father is sick". Proper etiquette (Jewish and maybe general) is not to be so blunt or direct when giving someone bad news. Yosef might have been told, "Your brothers are well", from which Yosef would infer that his father was sick. The answer to this is that because of what we've mentioned above, Yosef might have inferred that Yaakov was dead rather than sick, since there was no sickness associated with advanced age as a precursor to death. Hence, Yosef had to be told of his father's illness in a straightforward manner.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 8 p'sukim - 49:19-26

[S> 49:19 (1)] Gad will be blessed with good fortune (this is Malbim's interpretation which is by far the most optimistic of the various understandings of the pasuk).

[S> 49:20 (1)] Asher's blessing also seems to be that of prosperity (and/or eloquence).

[S> 49:21 (1)] Naftali is likened to a swift deer (or spreading tree, according to other opinions) and is blessed with eloquence (and probably, prosperity).

יום הולדת שמח
רוד החמוד

[S> 49:22 (5)] Yosef's blessing is extensive and shows Yaakov's special love for him. It is the bracha of Avraham to Yitzchak and of Yitzchak to Yaakov that Yaakov gives to Yosef, son of Rachel.

A fruitful son is Yosef.

BEN PORAT = 732. The Gimatriya of Efrayim and Menashe: 1+80+200+10+40 (Efrayim) + 6 (and) + 40+50+300+5 (Menashe) = 732

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 27 p'sukim - 49:27-50:20

[S> 49:27 (33)] Binyamin is blessed with success (sometimes qualified). Rashi mentions prophecies of Shaul and Mordechai & Esther.

These are Yaakov's words to his 12 sons and he blessed them.

Note that Reuven's bracha is in the same parsha as the "introduction" of Yaakov's parting words to his children. Binyamin's bracha is part of the parsha which concludes the sedra, and the Book of B'reishit. Furthermore, some of the sons have their blessing in a parsha p'tucha and some in s'tumot. These are just observations; no suggestion as to significance, if any.

Commentaries point out that Yaakov's words don't always seem to be blessings - but they do contain implied blessings and prophecies.

Yaakov tells his sons that he is about to die and wants to be buried in Me'arat HaMachpeila. (He does not make them swear as Yosef did, since they might not be in a position to fulfill an oath.)

Yaakov dies. The wording in the Torah is indirect - the words death or dying are not used - indicating the special "quality of life" (strange term to use here, but purposely chosen) even in the death of Yaakov Avinu.

The Torah next tells of the preparation for burial. Yosef tells Par'o of his oath and receives permission for the funeral procession to Canaan. The funeral and mourning for Yaakov is elaborate and extensive.

When they return to Egypt, the brothers are filled with guilt feelings and offer themselves to Yosef as slaves. Once again, Yosef assures the brothers that all that has happened is G-d's will and for the best.

Yosef cries because the brothers are falsely accusing him of planning to take revenge against them.

Interesting (and sad) that part of their original problem was based upon false accusations by Yosef against his brothers.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 6 p'sukim - 50:21-26

Yosef promises to support his brothers and families. Yosef lives to 110 (less than his brothers - punishment for hearing his father humiliated and not objecting - so say commentaries). Yosef has helped raise even his great-grandchildren. He tells his brothers that G-d will eventually take them out of Egypt, restore them to Eretz Yisrael, and he asks them to remember him and take his remains with them when they leave. Yosef (and the brothers) dies; thus B'reishit, the book of the Avot & Imahot, ends.

According to Seder HaDorot HaKatzar, the brothers died over a period of 22 years, in this order: Yosef, Shimon, Yehuda, Reuven, Binyamin, Yissachar, Asher, Zevulun, Gad, Dan, Naftali, Levi.

CHAZAK, CHAZAK, V'NITCHAZAK after Sh'vi'i (or Acharon). Chatzi Kaddish, then the final 4 p'sukim are repeated for the Maftir. (Some say that the person who gets the Chazak aliya should not say Chazak, Chazak...)

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Haftara 12 p'sukim Melachim Alef 2:1-12

Short Haftara for a short sedra. Just as the sedra tells us of the father on his deathbed giving instructions and blessings to his sons, and requesting an act of Chesed, so too do we find King David at death's door, instructing his son Shlomo concerning matters of Faith and State and Chesed.

Rabbi Julian G. Jacobs z"l, in A Haftara Companion, makes the following observation. In the sedra, the term used for Yaakov's passing on is "to sleep with his fathers", rather than the simpler, "to die". So too for David HaMelech in the haftara. In each case, the father had a worthy son to continue in his ways, and this is a form of "living on" that results in the absence of the verb, to die.

As there are similarities between the sedra and its haftara, so are there contrasts. Yaakov speaks to all his children, comforted by their having been reunited and confident in the fact that they all will continue with the way of life of Yaakov and Yitzchak and Avraham before him. David is speaking to only one of his sons and dies knowing of the treachery of other sons and people whom he thought to be friends.

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Parshat Vaychi belies somewhat its name, which translates as, "And he [Yaakov] lived". For while it is true that the parsha tells us that Yaakov sojourned in Egypt for 17 years - and we may assume in relative tranquility, following the reunion with all his children - the parsha, nevertheless, seems more concerned with his death.

One senses that the narrative of the Torah is reaching a crossroads, a pivotal turning point in the fortunes of Bnei Yisrael. With the passing of Yaakov, a light will be diminished that cannot be replaced. For even though there is an axiom that, "Yaakov our father is not dead" (Ta'anit 5), the Torah proclaims that it was the time for Yisrael to die" (B'reishit 47:29). That is to say that even if the legacy of Yaakov

Diarei Menachem

continued, the superior spiritual state that Yaakov achieved as Yisrael was about to fade from history.

Preceding his blessing of Yosef's sons, Yaakov adds a seemingly irrelevant remark that G-d had blessed him in Luz (renamed Bet-El, "The House of G-d"). However, the parallel is that just as a pagan Canaanite city was transformed to a holy place, so could Yosef's Egyptian-born offspring now "become mine", in Yaakov's words (Harav Kirschbloom).

Yes! That most elevated spiritual state "Yisrael" may remain but a cherished dream. But certainly every one of us, however tainted, might yet be an Efrayim or a Menashe who could attain the distinguished status of a "Yaakov".

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *I will be making Sheva B'rachot [=7B] on the Shabbat that follows the fast of Asara b'Tevet (which falls on Friday). I am considering to, instead of going from Kiddush straight into the meal, first have cake and drinks and have the meal later. Does this raise any halachic issues?*

ANSWER: The short answer is that your idea is permitted. Kiddush must be done at the place of a meal (P'sachim 101a). Yet we rule that it is sufficient for this meal to be a light one (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 273:5 – see there what is included). Although this is common specifically at the daytime Kiddush, which is in some ways a lighter obligation than that of the night, the halacha is cited in regard to the night (see Sh'mirat Shabbat K'hilchata 54:22). Thus, the type of snack you suggest, which includes cake, should suffice for Kiddush to take effect.

Yet, you asked about any halachic issues, and we will address some minor ones:

1) While the aforementioned Kiddush is valid, and one can eat after it, it is not unanimously held that this Kiddush is sufficient. Rav M. Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, OC IV 63) says that the Kiddush before a snack is valid enough to allow one to eat but that one needs another Kiddush before eating the full meal. His opinion is not

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Cherry tomato salad	6
Sun-dried tomato pasta salad	5
Quinoa/wheat salad	6

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Honey mustard turkey	18
Corned beef	28
Brisket Italian Style	25
BBQ chicken	14
Chicken in fruit sauce	14
Shnitzel	12

Side dishes

Sweet noodle kugel	5
Potato kugel	5
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Rice with mushrooms & onions	5
Herbal garlic potatoes	5
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the accepted one, but people often make Kiddush a second time as a stringency (see Sh'mirat Shabbat K'hilchata 52:16, who sees it as something nice but not necessary). Kiddush can be repeated in the daytime, when all one needs is to recite a few p'sukim and make a b'racha of Borei P'ri HaGefen. At night, where there is a b'racha of M'kadeish HaShabbat, one has to take sides, as there is halachic risk for both omission (insufficient Kiddush) and commission (b'racha l'vatala). Actually, Sh'mirat Shabbat K'hilchata (54:(76)), while not certain whether Rav Feinstein would require to repeat at night, himself says that one should not. (If you eat the second meal soon after the snack, even the repetition of the Borei P'ri Hagefen is problematic.)

2) One is not supposed to eat, right before a bread-based meal, the type of food that would not require a b'racha during the meal because that is an unnecessary b'racha (see Mishna B'rura 176:2). However, you are doing it because you feel that people will appreciate this snack to break their fast, and that should be enough of a reason (at least for the great majority of your participants) to justify the b'racha before the meal.

3) There is significant and complex halachic discussion about what one is supposed to do regarding a b'racha acharona on a snack he eats directly before a bread meal (see the Mishna B'rura (ibid.) and V'Zot HaB'racha, ch. 9 for more detail). To make a long story short, the rule is that you should

make a b'racha acharona, but the following are cases when one does not or perhaps does not make a b'racha acharona: a) the food is one that increases one's appetite for the meal in a significant way; b) the food requires a b'racha even during the meal; c) one will be eating the same food during the meal in a manner that makes it considered a continuous eating; d) the food falls under the general broad category of bread-like foods (including most cakes). There is a machloket regarding drinks one has both before and during the meal, due to which Ashkenazim refrain from a b'racha out of doubt (see V'zot HaB'racha, ibid.). It is likely that you would have to choose between having many people make b'racha mistakes and having some type of explanations or joint b'rachot, which some may view as tacky and cumbersome and is halachically not ideal (see Mishna B'rura 193:2).

If you feel there is a real gain, you may choose to do the Kiddush as you suggest despite the issues, which are surmountable. The easiest way to obviate most of the complication is to wait around 15 minutes between the end of the first installment and the beginning of the proper meal (see V'zot HaB'racha, ibid.), assuming

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people realize that they should then make b'rachot acharonot as they would at a "shul Kiddush".

Ask the Rabbi Q&A is part of Hemdat Yamim, the weekly parsha sheet by Eretz Hemdah. You can receive it by sending an email to info@eretzemdah.org with the message: Subscribe/English or Subscribe/Hebrew - leave subject blank. Ask the Vebbe Rebbe is partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The existence of a corporate veil separating the individual shareholders, the directors and even the employees from a separate legal entity called the corporation, can also become a release for them from their moral and halakhic obligations. It seems, however, that whilst recognizing the limited liability flowing from the nature of the corporation, our Jewish sources do not allow for a corporate veil in this respect. It must be borne in mind that buying shares does not only entitle one to share in the profits of the corporation but gives one a legal share in the assets of the corporation; Halakhically therefore, shareholding is an act of ownership with all the resultant benefits and obligations. So we find rulings in many different areas requiring the corporation to adhere to the same behavior as the individual does in matters flowing from ownership of wealth.

A few examples will suffice to make this clear:

1. Corporations with a majority of Jewish shareholders are not allowed to own chametz during Pesach but have to follow the same procedure of mechirat chametz as ordinary people [Elef L'Shlomo 238]. So, for example, it would be forbidden to buy chametz after Pesach from a chain store owned by a Jewish corporation.

2. People are considered to always be responsible for damage caused directly by their own efforts, those of their assets or even when operating through an agent. Conceivably therefore, the

"ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE CORPORATION [2]"

A "Challenges of Money" article by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

private assets of shareholders could be subject to claims in lieu of damages suffered through pollution or neglect, where corporate equity is insufficient for the claims.

3. A corporation with Jewish shareholders is not permitted to allow its assets to work for it on Shabbat even indirectly (Panim Meiros 1:38). We have, perhaps an extreme case of a wholly owned corporation whose shareholders were told to divest themselves of a subsidiary that operated as their agent but operated also on Shabbat. This was because of marit ayin, since the fact that the majority of its employees were self-employed non-Jews was not public knowledge (Igrot Moshe, Orech Chayim 1:62).

4. Since a corporation is not really a person, ribit, defined as being between two Jewish people, may seem to be permissible. Nevertheless, a Jewish corporation requires a heter iska (Minchat Yitschak).

These and similar rulings restrict the concept of the separate entity solely to the rights of the creditors to the equity of the corporation, without recourse to the private assets of the shareholders; there is no place for a corporate veil

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regarding the obligations of Judaism regarding money. This means that corporate officers of Jewish owned corporations, in addition to usual considerations of profit and risk have to factor in halakhot of Shabbat, kashrut, ribit, damages, environment and all the implications of geneiva, gezel and doing that which is good and correct. So too, investors have to investigate their proposed investment in such a corporation, according to its behavior in this respect.

How do directors and officers conduct their affairs according to such demands and how are investors and shareholders able to ascertain and rank their behavior? For this purpose, many Israeli corporations have adopted ethical codes and employ ethics officers both to oversee its application and guide employees in their behavior.

A particularly innovative and interesting suggestion is investment in an index of shares on the stock exchange. It is maintained that this would solve

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the question of Shabbat, kashrut etc. since the participant does not acquire any ownership and share in its profits but only participates in the rise or decline of the index's market price. This is acceptable from a halakhic point but raises the issue of such investment as being m'sachek b'kuviya, considered to be gambling.

Alternatively, one can invest in corporations quoted on a stock exchange abroad where we can assume non-Jewish ownership [providing Jews don't have a substantial or controlling share of equity]. Here there would be no question of Shabbat, kashrut etc. However there still remains a religious and moral issue to be considered. All non-Jews are required by Jewish law to observe the 7 Noachide laws, and Jews are forbidden to assist them in avoiding this obligation and transgress lifnei iver if they do so.

No matter how involved or difficult it may be to have an investment policy based on religion, it is possible, as all our other activities are. After all, there are some 350 ethical-investment funds on the New York stock exchange, operating according to the ethical-faith based value system of the participants. Can Jews really invest without reference to their Judaism? □

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Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

VAYCHI

Each One is One of a Kind

I was very embarrassed by her sharp rebuke. But looking back, I realize that the lesson I learned from her brief criticism was more valuable than most of my other training experiences.

It happened about forty years ago. I had the good fortune to attend an intensive workshop which was designed to teach young mental health professionals the basic skills of the method known as psychodrama. The workshop leader was a world famous psychodramatist, expert in both the complexities of the human psyche and the art of improvisational theater.

Psychodrama is a technique whereby a person's inner emotional conflicts are acted out in dramatic fashion under the direction of a skilled clinician. It is similar, but much more powerful, than what is known as role-playing.

Early on the second day of the workshop, I volunteered to play the therapist for another member of the group, let's call him Charles, who played the patient. Charles told of the challenges he was facing with certain key persons in his life. I suggested that he act out one of these conflicts in a particular fashion. I, of course, was convinced that my suggested strategy was brilliant and insightful, until, only about two or three minutes into the exercise, the workshop leader thundered: "That's your psychodrama! That's not Charles' psychodrama!"

At that precise moment, I learned to appreciate that what was going on inside of me was based upon who I was, and was very different from

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what was going on within Charles's mind. Those words of rebuke taught me a lesson to remember forever: I am different from you, and you are different from me. We are all very different from each other, exquisitely and irrevocably different.

This lesson was well understood by our forefather Jacob. In this week's Torah portion, Vaychi, just before Jacob dies, he blesses all of his sons and two of his grandsons. He

bestows these blessings upon them separately, fully aware that no one blessing fits them all.

The Torah sums up the entire deathbed drama with these words: "...their father spoke unto them and blessed them; every one according to his blessing, he blessed them." (B'reishit 49:28). No two blessings were alike.

I have often thought that the greatest blessing that they each received was the message: "You are special. You are not the same as your brother. You have different personalities, different strengths, different talents, and therefore you each have a different destiny."

When I read this week's Torah portion, I am struck with wonder by the dazzling array of metaphors which Yaakov uses: "unstable as water... weapons of violence... a lion's whelp... a colt bound to a tree... the blood of grapes... the shore of the sea... a large boned donkey... a hind let loose... a bowed shoulder... a judge... a serpent on the road... a troop upon their heel... fat bread." Diversity, uniqueness, complexity, individuality. That's the message.

Every parent and every teacher must learn this basic lesson. Teachers and parents must treat each child individually, and must assure that each child comes to know his or her specialness.

Our sages throughout history have imparted this lesson to us. For example, Rambam, in his fascinat-

ing review of the early life of Avraham, writes: "...and he reasoned with each and every person according to that person's intelligence, until he convinced him of the truth" (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avoda Zara, 1:3). Again, when instructing us of our duties at the Pesach Seder, he tells us that it is a mitzva to relate the story of the Exodus to each child according to his or her intellectual ability. A very young child must be told stories; one with limited mental capacity must be given concrete examples; older and wiser children can be taught in a more abstract fashion. "Everything must be done according to the particular intelligence of the child." (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chametz U'Matza, 7:2)

Among my favorite essays on the subject of education was the one written by the late Rabbi Elimelech Bar Shaul, once the Rabbi of Rehovot. He wrote, "If we give more to one who is only capable of receiving less, then we have given him nothing. And if we give less to one who can receive more, we have failed our mission, and worse - the student may come to think that there is no more, or that there is no more

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for him."

Giving too much to one with a lesser capacity can frustrate him irremediably. Giving too little to one with a greater capacity shortchanges him and cheats him, and worse - may alienate him forever.

Jewish mystics see human differences as but part of the Almighty's cosmic design. Thus, Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap, a mystic in the tradition of his master, Rav Kook, writes: "There is no duplication in the universe. Just as no two people are perfectly alike, so there are no two things, in all of universe, that are alike. Each person, like the grains of sand on the seashore, has a special quality and a special novelty.

Mystic or realist, appreciating our differences is our vital task as Jews, as human beings, and as residents of the Almighty's cosmos. □

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VAYCHI Adapted from
Unlocking the Torah Text
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Menashe and Efrayim: Tying up Loose Ends

Context: Upon hearing that Yaakov has fallen ill, Yosef gathers his sons, Menashe and Efrayim, and rushes to his father's bedside.

During the ensuing conversation Yaakov takes two dramatic steps that carry powerful practical implications for the future.

1. Yaakov proclaims that Menashe and Efrayim will be considered on par with his own children in the determination of his legacy. Through this statement, Yaakov creates the tribes of Efrayim and Menashe in place of the single tribe of Yosef.

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2. The patriarch blesses his grandchildren as follows: "Through you will Israel bless, by saying: 'May God make you like Efrayim and like Menashe...'" To this day, Jewish parents bless their sons with the formula "May God make you like Efrayim and like Menashe," while daughters are blessed with the prayer "May God make you like Sara, Rivka, Rachel and Leah."

Questions: Why are Efrayim and Menashe counted among the tribes of Israel? No other grandchild of Yaakov is accorded this singular honor.

Why are Efrayim and Menashe chosen as the paradigms for our sons to emulate rather than the patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov? Do the oldest sons of Yosef possess specific character traits that we wish upon our own children or are we arbitrarily fulfilling Yaakov's prophetic prediction: "Through you [Efrayim and Menashe] will Israel bless...?"

Approaches:

A. The tribal legacy: Yosef's reward.

We will see that Reuven, Yaakov's eldest son, loses the firstborn's leadership role

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as a result of his personal failings. In his place, Yehuda earns and assumes those responsibilities of leadership.

There are two other privileges of the birthright, however, which Reuven loses, as well. The honor of religious stewardship is reassigned to Levi while the double inheritance normally accorded to the firstborn is transferred to Yosef.

The creation of the tribes of Efrayim and Menashe can thus be attributed to Yosef's merit. As a reward for his righteousness and in acknowledgment of his achievements, Yosef receives his "double portion" as the progenitor of these two tribes.

B. Emphasizing Yosef's aloneness.

While the creation of two tribes bearing the names of Yosef's sons can certainly be seen as a reward for Yosef's righteousness, this same phenomenon, in ironic fashion, underscores a tragic dimension of his life. Yosef's name does not appear in the list of tribes along with his brothers. Yosef's lonely position as the ultimate outsider is thus cemented and preserved for posterity.

Yosef never succeeds in becoming part of any society in which he finds himself. Although wildly successful in Egypt, he never earns the full trust of the Egyptians. Even more significantly, he is never fully accepted into the company of his brothers, who do not have confidence in his intentions right through the end.

A delicate balance, mirroring Yosef's complex life, is thus struck in the tribal system. Yosef's material success will be reflected in the double portion he receives through his sons. His isolation, however, is also mirrored in Yosef's own conspicuous and now eternal absence from the company of his brothers.

C. Reaching across the generations.

Yaakov is the first personality in the Torah and the only patriarch to openly relate not only to his children, but to his grandchildren, as well.

The last patriarch, however, goes a major step further. He concretizes his relationship with Efrayim and Menashe through the creation of tribes bearing their names, thereby ensuring that the tribal system of Israel will span the generations. With great foresight, he consciously weaves the concepts of the extended family and of intergenerational relationships into the very fabric of our national structure. (Note that building upon this phenomenon, Yaakov's son Yosef is the first individual in the Torah to interact with his great-grandchildren.) These relationships will remain indispensable to the transmission and development of Jewish tradition across the ages.

D. The blessing: sibling harmony.

Efrayim and Menashe succeed in reversing a tragic trend which characterizes sibling relationships from the time of Kayin and Hevel through the patriarchal period. They are the first major set of brothers, recorded in the Torah, whose relationship is not marked by jealousy, rivalry and strife. The love between Efrayim and Menashe apparently endures even when Efrayim is given precedence by Yaakov over his older brother, Menashe.

E. A world apart.

Yaakov reacts with wonder when he reflects upon meeting his grandchildren towards the end of his life. This reaction mirrors the unexpected nature of Efrayim and Menashe's success. These two children grew up in exile, separated from their

extended family since birth, yet remained identifying members of their family.

The patriarch, therefore, selects his two grandchildren as the paradigm for blessings across the ages. Their selection sends a powerful message across the turbulent history of our often scattered people.

"May God make you like Efrayim and Menashe," we bless our sons. May you always be spiritually connected to your family and people, no matter where you live, no matter how physically distant you may be. ☺

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נִפְלְאוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, מִפִּתּוּ
וּמִשְׁפְּטֵי פִיהוּ.

Meaning: translation...

Search out Hashem and His might, seek His Presence always. **Remember His wonders that He wrought, His marvels** and the judgments of His mouth...

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

The Tool Of Gratitude

Remembering Hashem's wonders and marvels allows us to deal with His judgments.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Building Our Trust In Hashem

A hint at the Force behind nature is found in the word for nature itself – HaTEVA.

The gematria (numerical equivalent) of

the word is the same as that of the word for G-d, ELOKIM (Sefer Pri Tzadik, on Chanuka 14, p.82). What this reveals is that nature is in reality just an earthly manifestation of Hashem, and that miracles are embedded in every aspect of creation. For instance, it seems “natural” to a person that he can take a breath, wag his tongue in a certain way and produce sounds capable of expressing profound ideas. It's natural, but miraculous indeed.

The amazing precision and creativity that goes into every aspect of this world is a source of tremendous spiritual inspiration when one sets his mind to thinking about it. Attaining this inspiration, however, requires active thought. If someone turns on a computer and presses some buttons, he might be impressed by what a powerful new computer can do. But if he makes the effort to understand the intricate circuitry and programming that went into the design, his awe is much greater. “The designer must have been a genius!” he might declare (see “My Father My King” (ArtScroll) by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin).

The mission of the V'Ani Tefillah Foundation is to increase awareness of the importance and power of tefillah and to provide education, inspiration, and tools for more sincere, powerful, and effective tefillah. (www.prayingwithfire.org)

Not only does Hashem's design of the world testify to His wisdom, but it testifies to His kindness as well. He is like the perfect host who sees to his guest's every need, providing not just the necessities, but continual sources of pleasure and delight.

Human nature is such, however, that whatever one becomes accustomed to seems “natural”. For example, the generation of Jews born in the desert saw Manna - bread from heaven - as a natural phenomenon, just as we perceive our “water from heaven” as natural. Therefore, the Meshech Chochma explains (Vayikra 26:4), Hashem performs open miracles from time to time, reminding us that nature bends to His will.

Appreciating G-d's perfection is a necessary step toward being able to accept His judgments as well. This explains the connection between the beginning of the verse, “Remember His wonders that he wrought”, and the second part of it, “His marvels and the judgments of His mouth.” Only by understanding Hashem's perfection can a person comprehend that goodness is the final outcome of all the “judgments” - the troubles and injustices one sees in the world.

Trusting in their parents' love, children can accept the pain their parents sometimes must put them through. Likewise, by absorbing into our hearts the evidence of G-d's love that is all around us, we can trust that His judgment, too, comes from love.

Refu'ah Sh'leima, Richard L.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

Enjoy Your Stay!

You have recently gotten married, and you are going to spend your first Shabbat at your new in-laws' home. When you arrive, you are led into a guest room adorned with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Every detail has clearly been prepared with you in mind. There is a small refrigerator filled with your favorite snacks and beverages, and your favorite book has been left on your night table. They've even supplied you with a fresh tube of your hard-to-find organic toothpaste. Every meal features your favorite foods, followed by one of your favorite desserts.

You might pass through the entire Shabbat not noticing the special attention paid to your needs. Accustomed to all the amenities your in-laws have provided, you might take it all for granted. But if you did that, you would miss the message of bountiful love they are trying to send.

Word to the Wise:

Meaning within the meaning

NIFL'OTAV, “His Wonders” are G-d's “hidden miracles” (Malbim, T'hilim 9:2); the remarkable forces of nature that enable life and the world to exist.

MOFTAV refers to things that occur in the world, which are out of the natural order. (*Vilna Gaon on Divrei Hayamim*)

Try this: when you say ZICHRU NIFL'OTAV, think of something visible - natural or manmade - that arouses in you a sense of amazement. Picture it, and feel the full sense of amazement it arouses.

Portion from the Portion

WE WILL BE YOUR SLAVES

The brothers have just buried their father Yaakov in Eretz Yisrael. They return to Egypt and the brothers begin to worry. In all families as long as the elder parents are alive there is a force that holds all the siblings together. Even amongst the best of children there can be small differences between them, but as long as either of the parents is still alive there is something that binds them together. They may meet for holidays at the parents' home, for example. But often after the death of the parents, the bond holding the children together becomes loosened - they might not meet as often and siblings may become estranged from one another. Even more so in the family of Yaakov, where there had been conflicts between the brothers in the past. After Yaakov's death, the brothers worry that maybe Yosef still harbors a hidden grudge against them and he would take out revenge against them (B'reishit 50:15).

So the brothers gave an order to say to Yosef in their father's name – SA NA PESHA ACHECHA V'CHATATAM KI RA'A G'MALUCHA... forgive the iniquity of your brothers and their sin though they did evil to you (50:17). The brothers also add on their own request: SA NA L'FESHA AVDEI

ELOKEI AVICHA - forgive the iniquity of the servants of the G-d of your father. They also fell down in front of him and gave themselves over to Yosef as slaves (50:90).

We can ask a few questions on these verses. First of all, we never heard Yaakov say these words? Secondly, if the brothers say that their father instructed Yosef to forgive them why are they giving themselves over to him as slaves? Don't they seem to be contradicting themselves?

Rabbi David Holzer www.holzerseforim.com in his book on the insights of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Rav Thinking Aloud on the Parsha", brings his own insight into these questions. The brothers weren't worried about Yosef's forgiveness for their own sake but for a greater cause. They wanted to be sure that they did a full T'SHUVA and got a full KAPARA for their sins. It was not enough for the brothers to get Yosef's forgiveness – they also wanted a KAPARA - so the sin should be totally wiped out.

As it says in the Talmud (Yoma 75:), There are some sins that one gets KAPARA immediately when they do T'shuva, but there are other sins that require more than just T'shuva - such as T'shuva and Yom Kippur. Then there are other sins that require T'shuva, Yom Kippur and difficulties (yisurim). And for the sin of Chilul Hashem, one only gets KAPARA after one's death.

The brothers had done T'shuva and Yosef had forgiven them, but they offered themselves as slaves as a means of getting full KAPARA. They did not want future generations of

Jews to have to suffer in Egypt or for the ASARA HARUGEI MALCHUT to die as a means of getting KAPARA for their sins. They tried to prevent centuries of Jewish suffering.

But Yosef tells them that he couldn't help them HATACHAT ELOKIM ANI (50:19), KAPARA - wiping the slate clean, is only in G-d's hands.

SINCE THE BROTHERS offered themselves as slaves, here is a recipe for a food eaten by the slaves in America - grits made from coarsely ground corn. If you can't find grits you can substitute polenta (the Italian equivalent) or cream of wheat (made from wheat instead of corn), or corn meal (not as coarse). Grits themselves don't have much taste - they need a lot of help.

GRITS

3 cups water

1 cup grits (coarsely ground corn) if you use instant adjust cooking time

1 Tbsp salt

1 Tbsp oil

Heat the water to boiling in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the salt and oil. Pour in the grits very gradually, stirring the whole time to prevent lumps. Reduce the heat to low (one or two bubbles should rise to the top at a time), and cook, stirring constantly, until tender. Grits should be as thick as oatmeal, not runny or stiff. If the grits get too thick toward the end of the cooking time, stir in a little hot water. Serve hot.

If you want a fancier recipe with grits, prepare the basic grits, then stir in ¼ cup soy milk, 4 Tbsp brown sugar, ¼ cup pineapple juice. Pour into a greased baking dish. Sprinkle top with shredded coconut, crushed macadamia nuts and ginger. Bake at 180°C for about 30 minutes.

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CHIZUK AND IDUD

Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim

"Increase in the Land"

Yaakov blesses his grandchildren Efrayim and Menashe: "Let them carry my name, along with the name of my fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak. May they increase in the Land like fish".

A cursory glance at the censuses taken in the Wilderness, and again in the Plains of Moav, reveals that the number of the two tribes did not exceed that of the other tribes. If so, when and where was Yaakov's blessing realized?

The answer, says the Gaon of Vilna, may be found in the Book of Yehoshua, even before the Land was divided amongst the tribes. "The Josephites said to Joshua: 'Why have you given me a single lot, a single strip of land, as an inheritance? Why, I have a huge population, since God has blessed me so greatly'" (Yehoshua 17:14). In the relatively short span of time since entering the Land, the

children of Yoesf experienced a population explosion and required a greater portion of territory. Yehoshua responds: "If your population is so great, go to the forest and clear the land for yourselves there in the territory of the Perizzites and the Refa'im, seeing that you are cramped in the hill country of Efrayim" (ibid. 15). The Gemara sees in Yehoshua's words an acknowledgement of their great number: "Go hide yourselves in the forests so that the Evil Eye will have no power over you" (Bava Batra 118a).

Yaakov's words were, indeed, fulfilled, "May they increase in the Land". Only in the Land of Israel will their numbers multiply like that of the fish.


Thanks to a burgeoning population, Israel today contains the largest Jewish population of any country in the world. Natural increase and immigration have raised the Jewish population to more than five and a half million.

May we continue to see the fulfillment of Yaakov's blessing upon all of Israel- "May they increase in the Land like fish".

Rabbi Reuven Grodner, Kfar Adumim

**YOM HOLEDET
SAMEI'ACH**

FIVE 5

 We assume from childhood that certain fields of study are closed to us, and it never occurs to us in adulthood to see whether they might not have opened up for us in the interim.

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From the First Aliyah to the "Irgun"

Join us for an Exciting Day
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Daniel Spielman

Tuesday, Jan. 4th • 8:00am to 6:00pm

Khan Hadera: The first house in
Hadera 1891- today a museum which
tells us about the "messirut nefesh" of
the settlers that suffered from the huge
swamps; the famous Dr. Hillel Yaffe;
the Yemenites that joined in the
beginning of the century and the
"Ma'abarot" of the fifties.

Atlit: We will board the "Galina" ship
which arrived in Atlit less than 2 years
ago, where we will hear and see the
experiences the "Ma'apilim" went
through trying to get into Eretz Yisrael.

Ramat HaNadiv: In the new visitors
pavilion we will learn about the Baron
Rothchild who has built most of the
neighboring settlements, and also
about the special designing of the
building which blends into the natural
surroundings.

The Shuni Fortress: An Ottoman
fortress which stands on a former
Crusaders fortress which was built on
a Byzantine structure near a beautiful
Roman theatre, used again as a training
camp "hachshara" for Beitar settler
groups and later becomes the main
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Tuesday, Jan. 11th • 8:00am to 6:00pm

This tour will visit three unusual places:

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can change our
lives and
countries. Models are displayed, and
those who bring valid drivers licenses
can test drive them.
- Museum of Terror** is a two room
museum, where we will see how
many Arab children are indoctrinated
to hate Jews from the time they can
speak. On display are a variety of
explosive devices that terrorists
easily make and use, as well as many
other astounding items for our
awareness
- Carnivorous Plant Park** - our last
stop will be a most
unusual park with rare
and unique plants. We
will be introduced to
various exotic animals
with rare abilities. Our
guide will show us how us
how she feeds her plants as well as
her little animals.

**Chances are you have never been
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Herzl Museum

Wednesday, December 22 • 9:00am to 1:30pm

A state-of-the-art experiential Center, an audio visual encounter with Theodore Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl - learn about his outlook on the connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and the character of the Jewish State.

Followed by a visit to **Yad Sarah**, the the world famous center for lending all types of medical equipment, which may be borrowed rather than purchased by anyone. A section of the building is set up as an apartment, where the rooms enable people with various limitations to function with the aid of many clever and helpful gadgets and items, which allow people to continue living at home. Dignitaries from all over the world have come to visit Yad Sarah to learn how to emulate this amazing organization, which is staffed almost completely by volunteers in its branches all over Israel.

The visit includes a **dairy mehadrin lunch**
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which is 82 meters long and 60 meters wide and contains a large variety of the most exciting natural formations in the shape of famous people, religious objects of Judaica, fruits and vegetables, sheets of cloth, sites and locations and the rest we leave to your great imagination. Stalagmites and Stalactites range from a few millimeters to a few meters in diameter. They continue to grow.

Thursday, December 30th • 1:30- 4:30pm

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Thursday, Tu BiShvat, January 20th • 11:00am

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ParshaPix explanations

Note to parents, grandparents, and hosts of Shabbat guests: On page 2 you will find a classic, crowded ParshaPix with loads of sedra starting points for you and your family and Shabbat guests. Some are straightforward and suitable for younger children and guests with beginners' background. Other elements of the PP are trickier (play-on-words, riddle-type clues, etc.) and are suitable for older children and adults with more background. You who are reading this will be able to guide the discussion of Parshat HaShavua at your Shabbat tables in the best way.

- Lock and chain in upper left is for the "super-closed" nature of the beginning of VAYCHI (see Sedra Summary for details).
- The bed is mentioned more than once at the beginning of the sedra.
- The crossed hands are Yaakov's, as he put his right hand on Efrayim's head and his left on Menashe's. It should not escape our attention that the Book of B'reishit is FILLED with firstborn-second child issues. Kayin and Hevel. Yishmael and Yitzchak, Yaakov and Eisav, Yosef and his brothers. Reuven on the one hand and Levi, Yehuda, and Yosef on the other. Peretz and Zerach. Efrayim and Menashe.
- The crowned lion is for Yehuda, as

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is the lion cub. Yehuda's bracha refers to him as a GUR (cub), ARYEI and LAVI (lions at different stages of their lives). Yehuda Leib is a common name-pair based on this bracha. And his kingship is symbolized by the crown, of course.

- The wolf is Binyamin. Binyamin Ze'ev Volf is also a common combination of names.
- The faucet is for Reuven (based on what Yaakov said to him).
- The Israel Postal Authority emblem is for Naftali. Naftali Tzvi Hirsh, or two of those three names often come together.
- The snake is for Dan.

- The donkey is for Yissachar
- The ship is for Zevulun
- The bread is Asher
- The math-like statement stands for Efrayim and Menashe are like (approx. equal to) Reuven and Shimon. Numerically, this is so too. E&M = 732 and R&S = 731.
- There is a Davka graphic of a father blessing his son (the words of the bracha come from Vaychi... and from where else?)
- The Pyramids in the hot desert sun remind us where the sedra takes place and where the end of B'reishit finds us. In Mitzrayim.
- Chazak is for the conclusion of the book of B'reishit.
- The photo between the donkey's nose and the boy being blessed is a picture of Kever David and refers to the haftara.
- So too, in the lower-right is the opening of Yoav's tunnel in the City of David - IR DAVID, mentioned in the haftara as where David was buried.
- The cluster of grapes and Eeyore, Winnie the Pooh's donkey friend are for part of Yehuda's bracha (49:11) - OSRI LAGEFEN IRO... "He loads down his donkey with a [single] grapevine..." Eeyore even sounds like the word in the pasuk for donkey.
- There is a branch with two leaves

on it and two eyes (the CBS logo) on the leaves. In Yaakov's words to Yosef, we find: BEIN PORAT YOSEF, BEIN PORAT ALEI AYIN... A charming son is Yosef, a charming son to the eye. Or from a very different translation: Yosef is a fruitful son, [like] a fruitful vine by the fountain... In TTriddlese, ALEI AYIN are leaves of eyes.

- Surrounding the fingers of Yaakov's crossed-over hands, as if emanating from them, are many of the symbol for the Zodiac sign of Pisces, the fish. In Yaakov's bracha to Yosef is his blessings to Efrayim and Menashe. ...May He bless the lads, and let them carry my name, along with the names of my fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak. May they increase in the land like fish."
- Logo of the Los Angeles Angels baseball team. A traffic light showing green. A whale. and the letters (in Old English - purposely) OT. From this we get HAMAL-ACH (the Angel) (ha)GO-WHALE (say it quickly and not so carefully and it comes out GO'EIL), then OT. As in HaMalach ha-go'eil oti (mikol ra)... An Old English T looks a lot like a C, so we also get HaMal-ach HaGo'el OSI (as in the Ashkenazic pronunciation.
- Along the right side are ME'ARAT HAMACHPEILA, KEVER RACHEL, SHILOH (all from the sedra in one way or another), gavel for DAN, and a parchment of... what & why?

Was Yosef Punished for Embalming Yaakov's Body?

Guest article by **Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher** Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

B'reishit 50:2 "And Yosef commanded the physicians to embalm his father."

Rabbi Meir Leibush (the "Malbim" 1809-1879) cannot comprehend Yosef's command that his father's body be embalmed, and declares that, "the purpose of the burial ceremony is to enable the dead person's body to turn to dust."

Jewish burial rites reflect the immense difference between the body and the soul. Kohelet (12:7) describes our release from the body's chains when we pass away: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto G-d who gave it." According to Kabala, only when the body returns to dust naturally, can the soul return to G-d. And mortality is first mentioned in G-d's words to Adam: "for dust you are and unto dust shall you return" (B'reishit 3:19).

Dust is suitable for describing the nature of the human body, which consists of dry bones and flesh. As Rabbi David Kimchi (the "Radak", 1160-1235), writes in his commentary on B'reishit: "Most of the human body's components and our bones, which keep the body upright, are cold, dry materials, like dust."

Whereas burial releases the spirit from the body, allowing it to ascend and take its place in heaven, embalming perpetuates the body's physicality.

Regarding the embalming of Yaakov, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), a contemporary of the Malbim, observes, "Here we see an interesting contrast between the Egyptian view, which expresses itself in the embalming of the dead, and the Jewish view. The Egyptians embalmed the dead, so that the body would retain its uniqueness; however, they did not consider the soul unique. However, according to Judaism's view, the soul is eternal and the body has no permanent place. Our mortal body turns to dust and experiences many material incarnations."

It should be pointed out that the Hebrew word CHANITA, embalming is also used in connection with agriculture: CHANITAT ILANOT or CHANITAT PEIROT, to mean the ripening of the fruit on the tree. Whereas, according to the first usage, an illusion exists because embalming aims to preserve dead people as if they were alive, the use of the word to mean ripening of fruit refers to a process that is very real - to a life force that awakens in the tree after it has emerged from hibernation.

We are mystified by Yosef's request to embalm his father's body; after all, before he died, Yaakov instructed Yosef to bury him in the tomb of the patriarchs and matriarchs in Hebron. However, Rabbi Haim Ben Attar (the

"Ohr Hachaim", 1696-1743) states that, "Yosef shows great respect for his father because the embalming procedure is reserved for honorable citizens and for pharaohs. Or perhaps Yosef fears the Egyptians might misunderstand a refusal to embalm Yaakov's body - that they might think he is not dead or that his corpse does not need embalming because it emits no odor? In any case, there is the distinct danger that the Egyptians might decide to worship Yaakov as a god."

In the view of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi (135-219 CE), editor of the Mishna, however, Yosef sins when he instructs the Egyptians to embalm his father's body: "Why does Yosef die before his brothers? Because he has embalmed his father, which is against Halacha. G-d tells him: Did you not think I was capable of preserving your father, this righteous person who has served me so well? After all, I said to him, "Fear not, you worm Yaakov" (Yeshayahu 41:14), which should be read, "Fear not the worm, O Yaakov."

According to Rabbi Yehuda, Yosef tries to fight the normal biological process we undergo of returning to dust as our bodies decompose. Unable to part from his father, Yosef thus adopts the Egyptian custom of embalming the dead.

When people whom we hold dear are dying, we too try to thwart the Angel of Death's plans. Indeed, a very moving story appears in the Babylonian Talmud (Ketuvot) concerning Rabbi Yehuda's last moments

on earth. Seeing their master dying, his disciples declare a public fast day. They pray for G-d's compassion and proclaim, "Anyone who says that Rabbi Yehuda is dying will be pierced with a sword."

The rabbi's maidservant climbs to the roof of his home and prays, "Heaven wants Rabbi Yehuda and so does earth. May it be your will, O G-d, that the heaven will succumb to earth's will". When she observes how Rabbi Yehuda is suffering and in pain, she prays, "May it be your will O G-d that the earth will succumb to heaven's will." Seeing that the disciples are continuing to pray for the rabbi's recovery she takes a clay pitcher and hurls it to the ground below. The sound of the crash causes the scholars to stop praying – and just then, Rabbi Yehuda finally departs from this world. The students ask Bar Kapara to see whether their master has, in fact, died. When Bar Kapara discovers that Rabbi Yehuda is gone, he declares: "Angels and humans struggled over the Holy Ark. The angels overcame the humans, and the Holy Ark has been captured!" In Bar Kapara's eyes, therefore, Rabbi Yehuda is like the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed: Everyone wanted to hold on to him.

Death closes the chapter of physical life, and the living must carry on despite their grief. When Yaakov dies, the responsibility for safeguarding G-d's blessing to the patriarchs is placed in the hands of his descendants, who bid farewell to his body but preserve his spirit.

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A Better Marker for Fertility Levels

We have been discussing the level of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) in the blood and how it may be used as an indicator of fertility. It would seem that the higher the FSH levels, the lower the fertility potential. Yet we saw that reducing FSH levels does not necessarily result in a pregnancy.

There has been much activity in the medical community lately, attempting to find a better indicator of fertility potential. In recent years attention has been focused on the anti-Mullerian hormone (AMH), named after the German physiologist Johannes Peter Muller. AMH is produced in specific cells in the ovary and controls the formation of primary follicles by blocking FSH. It is this interaction between AMH and FSH that is an indication of healthy ovarian activity.

AMH is linked to ovarian reserve - the number of eggs in the ovary. When a girl is born she has little or no detectable AMH in her blood stream. The level increases from a few months of age and continues to rise until it reaches its peak at around 25 years of age; then it begins a slow but steady decline. As the number of

eggs remaining in the ovary declines, so does the level of AMH.

Therefore, AMH levels are a good indicator of ovarian reserve and fertility potential: The higher the number, the greater the likelihood of a woman becoming pregnant; the lower the number, the lower the fertility. [As of today, there is no known method to elevate AMH levels.]

While the above is a slight over-simplification and still a matter of some debate, checking AMH and FSH levels together can give us a good indication of fertility, especially for older women.

In light of this, it is important for women who are concerned that they may face fertility issues because of their advanced age to undergo hormonal blood tests, in order to check their FSH and AMH levels. This test would give them a good indication of their fertility potential and a clearer picture as to their treatment options. A woman with high FSH and low AMH levels may well choose not to pursue fertility treatment since the chances of success would be low.

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Puah offers free counseling in five languages, halachic supervision, and educational programs. Offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles and Paris. Contact: (02) 651-5050 (Isr) • 718-336-0603 (US). www.puahonline.org

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Last issue's (**VAYIGASH**) TTriddles:

[1] No farmer, she plowed backwards

LACHAROSH, to plow. Root: CHET-REISH-SHIN. Backwards is S(H)IN-REISH-CHET which spells SERACH, daughter of Asher.

[2] Naftali's Jiminy Cricket

Jiminy Cricket is the Walt Disney version of "The Talking Cricket", a fictional character created by Carlo Collodi for his classic novel Pinocchio, which was adapted into an animated film by Walt Disney in 1940. Originally an unnamed, minor character in Collodi's novel, he was translated in the Disney version into a comical and

wise partner who accompanies Pinocchio on his adventures, having been appointed by the Blue Fairy to serve as the official conscience for Pinocchio. Since his debut in Pinocchio, he has become a recurring iconic Disney character and has appeared in numerous other instances. Conscience, in modern Hebrew is MATZPUN, but YEITZER - as in YEITZER HATOV, can also be described thusly. Naftali had a son named YEITZER.

[3] David and his great... grandmother

David HaMelech reigned for 40 years, seven of which were in Chevron, the rest in Jerusalem. That is, he reigned in Yerushalayim for 33 years. The other person in Tanach associated with the number 33 is Leah lmeinu, whose offspring numbered 33 of the 70 souls of Yaakov's family... who went down into Mitzrayim.

[4] Luna, Yaakov, Binyamin

KATAN (KATON). The little one. Luna, a.k.a. the Moon, is called the MA'OR HAKATAN, the lesser luminary. Yaakov is called Rivka's small

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(younger) son. Binyamin is repeatedly referred to as the little brother of "the brothers". (One other person in B'reishit is called a KATAN son, but we left him out of this TTriddle on purpose. (CHAM, son of No'ach.)

[5] Tied for first with another;
beat 17 fivers

What is the longest run of words in Tanach, each of which starting with an ALEF? There are 17 different sequences (not counting the two with 6, which technically give is 4 more) of 5 ALEF words in a row. The best known is in AZ YASHIR - AMAR OYEIV ERDOF ASIG ACHALEIK shalal... In Vayigash, we find a 6-word sequence when the brothers are talking among themselves about what they had done - vayomer ISH EL ACHIV, AVAL ASHEIMIM ANACH-NU... The other "sixer" is in Sh'mot, at the S'NEH (burning bush), where G-d "identifies Himself to Moshe: vayomer ANOCHI ELOKEI AVICHA ELOKEI AVRAHAM ELOKEI yitzchak... (BTW - that's "by the way", Divrei HaYmim Bet 31:13 begins with a run of 10 words beginning with a VAV. In Shacharit, right after the Sh'ma, we have a run of 15 VAV-words.)

[6] He from mercy; he from anger

VAYIT-APAK, and he controlled or refrained himself. The word occurs only twice in Tanach. Yosef was overwhelmed with feelings of mercy, RACHMANUT, for his brothers, but

Hands and letters interchanged
produce the same result

he washed his face and controlled himself (for a little longer) until he was no longer able to L'HIT-APEIK and he revealed himself to his brothers. Haman was filled with anger and fury against Mordechai, but he refrained himself and held counsel with his wife and loved ones about what to do with Mordechai.

[7] Now, please

This issue is not restricted to Vayigash, but we find an example in that sedra (in addition to many other places in the Torah). What does the word NA (NUN-ALEF) mean? Some say it means PLEASE. Others (Onkelus, specifically) say it means NOW. Most often, either meaning will fit the situation. For example, Yosef says to his brothers - G'SHU NA EILAI. Please come close to me -or- Approach me now. When the brothers meet with Par'o, they say - VATA (and now), YEISHVU NA AVADECHA B'ERETZ GOSHEN. Please allow your (humble) servants to live in Goshen. PLEASE, seems to be the meaning of NA, especially following V'ATA, which covers the NOW, and the fact that the brothers are addressing the king of Egypt. Onkelus still goes with K'AN (now). Many et ceteras.

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[8] Rather than writing NMN, he could write SAME

Yaakov Avinu is one of the few individuals in the Torah to be addressed (so to speak) as YAAKOV YAAKOV. (So too Avraham Avraham and Moshe Moshe.) So when filling out a form which asks for his name, instead of writing NMN (no middle name) in the space for middle name, Yaakov Avinu can write SAME, referring back to his first name, YAAKOV.

[9] You mean like phalanges

Phalanges are the bones of the fingers and toes. Each toe and finger contains three bones, except the great toe (hallux) and thumb (pollex) which have two bones each. The name of one of Gad's sons sounds like it can describe a finger-bone, ETZBON.

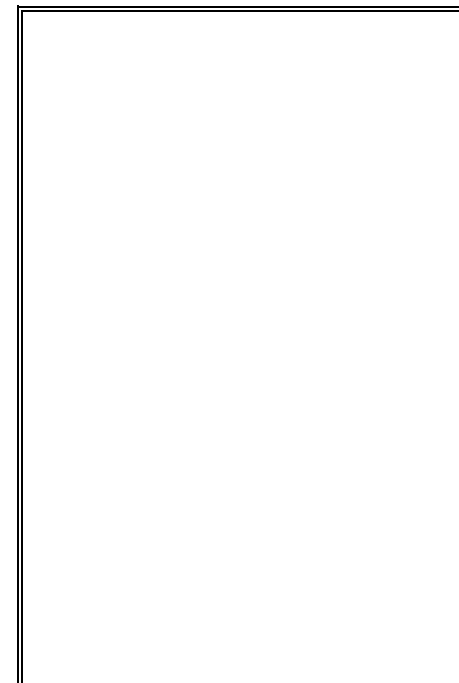
[10] Thirty-five @ 25; thirteen @ 50;
five @ 100. How much is Vayigash?

Do any of you TTreaders remember playing Chumash as a kid? On your turn, you opened a Chumash and points were scored with the endings of the sedras. If you opened to a page that had a sedra-ending, you got the points immediately. If not, you called out a number and flipped that many pages to the left or right (back or forward) in the hope of finding a sedra-ending. PEI-PEI-PEI was worth 25 points, SAMACH-SAMACH-SAMACH was 50 points, and CHAZAK was 100 points. The end of

He did it twice; his son, once

VAYIGASH, which has none of those endings, scored 1000 points. Upside down NUNs (which are really backwards NUNs) was worth 500 points. There were variations to the game - if any TTreaders have these memories, please email tt@ou.org with them. The wording of the TTriddle is the numbers of each type of sedra ending and their score.

[11] And them there were the bullets of the ParshaPix explanations. They were popsicles (ice lollies, to some). They consisted of two sticks fused together (by the ice) and representing the description of the two sticks which Yechezkeil was commanded to take, one labeled Yehuda and one labeled Efrayim (for Yosef). They too were to become one in his hands.



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Lesson # 543 (part one)

Sale of Things not in one's Possession

Recently, a group of us were sitting
around the Israel Center waiting for
Mincha to start when one of the men
asked if anyone present wanted to buy
the Brooklyn Bridge? One of the men
said, but the Brooklyn Bridge was
owned by the city of New York and so
the person who made the offer to sell
could not sell it.

How does halacha look at such an
attempted sale?

In halacha, a seller cannot sell a thing
not in his lawful control and posses-
sion, although the thing is in existence.
For example, Reuven sells to Shimon
"this cow, when I acquire it" or this
"this house, when I acquire it", or "this
cow when I inherit it from my father",
or "the fish I will catch in the lake
today". Although the seller and buyer
agree to the sale, it is a nullity and
neither party is bound

next page

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and the seller must return the purchase money to the buyer.

In the case of the sale of the fish that are yet to be caught, this hold true only insofar as the proceeds of the sale are not required for food for the fisherman for the day, but not otherwise.

In the case of a son who is the sole heir of his father, selling something that he hopes to inherit from his father, there is an opinion that it is not binding if he sells all that he will inherit from his father, but if he sells something specific that he will inherit, such as "this field that I will inherit" the sale is binding. The theory being that the son will ultimately inherit and the heir to be, having selected a specific item, it therefore leaves the category of being a thing not in his possession.

There is another exception - when, for example, if he states "That which I will inherit from my father today is sold to you" and the father is about to die, the sale is effective, so long as it is limited to a few items so that the son can pay for the father's funeral. The number of items sold is limited so that the proceeds of the sale will approximate the amount of money necessary for the funeral costs. Even if the sale brings in a little more than the actual costs - the sale, it is valid. This applies only if the son is poor and must have the money for the funeral and cannot

wait for assets of the estate to be turned over to him. If all of the funeral objects, such as shroud and burial plot have been prepared and paid for, the exception does not apply.

Decrees of the Rabbis provided for the foregoing so in order that the dead will not be embarrassed in the event that even though the deceased left enough money for the funeral, the heir could not sell any of the assets in anticipation of the father's death. If the son dies before the father the sale to the third party is not effective and the son's son may sue the buyer to get the sold property back. (IYH, to be continued)

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Parsha Points to Ponder • Vaychi

- 1) Why does the Torah tell us that Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years (47:28)? Isn't this obvious once we know that Yaakov was 130 when he came to Egypt (47:9) and the Torah now relating that he was 147?
- 2) The Torah relates that Yaakov bowed after Yosef promised to bury him in the Land of Israel (47:31). Who did Yaakov bow to and why doesn't the Torah tell us that information?
- 3) Why does the Torah relate that Yaakov had trouble seeing right before describing that he kissed his grandchildren (48:10)? This is seemingly irrelevant to the kiss and, therefore, would seem to have been better placed before Yaakov did not recognize his grandchildren (48:8)?

Parsha Points to Ponder by Rabbi Dov Lipman

teacher at Reishit Yerushalayim and Machon Maayan in Beit Shemesh; author of "DISCOVER: Answers for Teenagers (and Adults) to Questions about the Jewish Faith" (Feldheim); "TIMEOUT: Sports Stories as a Game Plan for Spiritual Success" (Devora); "SEDER SAWY" (Targum)
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Answers are elsewhere in this issue

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Maharal on the Sedra

How Rachel Saved the Jewish People Twice

B'reishit 48:7 - But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died on me in the land of Kenaan, ...and I buried her there on the road to Efrat.

Rashi: And I did not even bring her to Bet Lechem into the land [town] and I know you have feelings in your heart against me. But you should know I buried her there by Hashem's decree so that she should be of aid to her children when Nevuzaradan would exile them. When they would pass there, Rachel would go out on to her grave and weep and seek mercy for them, as it says [Yirmiyahu 35: 15-16]: "A voice is heard in the heights, Rachel crying for

her children...", and Hashem answers her, "There is a reward for your act, and the children will return to their borders."

Gur Arye: Why did Rachel cry more than the other matriarchs? The answer is found in Midrash Eicha Rabbati [P'sikta 24]: Rachel speaks to the Holy One, blessed be He: What did my children do that You brought such punishment upon them? If it is idolatry and You are jealous of a "co-wife", did I not love my husband Yaakov, and did he not work seven years to marry me [29:20], and in the end my father gave him my sister to marry [29:26]. What

did I do? I gave over our pre-arranged secret signs to my sister. I am flesh and blood, and You are the Merciful King, all the more reason to be merciful to them. Hashem answers, "There is a reward for your act, and your children will return from the land of the enemy."

Rachel understood that it was proper for Yaakov to have two wives. This world, as opposed to the World to Come, is a world of division and separation, and to confront this world, Yaakov's seed had to be diverse. Israel needed to be divided into two kingdoms, Yehuda and Efrayim, only to join together in the days of Mashiach, and this could not happen if all of Yaakov's twelve sons came from one wife. The diversity of Israel would help

What's the key to the "40 day - 6 month" question?

it survive a tumultuous history on its Land and a long, dangerous exile. Rachel saw this and loved him all the more, and accepted her sister as a co-wife. That same reasoning made it appropriate that Hashem be merciful to Israel, for the very existence of idolatry in this world is a consequence of a lack of unity in this world. "Hashem, our God, Hashem is One" is explained by Rashi [D'varim 6:4] to mean Hashem, who is our God now in this world, and not recognized as Hashem by the nations, will become the one God for all the nations in the World to Come, as it says [Zefanya 3:9], "Then I will switch the nations to a clear language, for all of them to call in the name of Hashem," and [Zechariya 14:9], "on that day, Hashem will be One and His name One." This is all discussed in Netzach

Yisrael [34].

The Congregation of Israel is named after Rachel because she is the AKERET HABAYIT [essence of the home] and the others were secondary to her. She was the reason Yaakov married Lavan's daughters. On her account the nation of Israel will return to its borders and connect with Hashem. She has the power to reverse the separation of her children from Hashem and their dispersion throughout the lands. She should not be buried in the Cave of the Patriarchs but, rather, out there on the road with her children. She was indeed rewarded for her act - she saved her children, the Jewish People, from God's wrath, and assured the ultimate redemption.

MDK: Rachel first saved the Children of Israel by giving over the secret signs to her sister Leah, which assured the diversity and discord evident throughout Jewish history, not to mention today. This diversity resulted in the honing of survival skills required for the exile. The selflessness of that act, allowing a rival wife in her home, influenced Hashem's decision to eventually end the exile.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr

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A virtual tour of unusual, interesting and unique synagogues of the world and some of the halachic history of their Jewish iconography
Speakers: **Rabbi Dr. Ari Zivotofsky & Dr. Ari Greenspan**
Wednesday, December 29th • 7:00pm • further details in next TT (052-734-6327)

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) Daat Zekainim MiBaalei HaTosfot says that the Torah emphasizes that Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years to direct our attention to this number which is equal to the number of years Yosef lived in Yaakov's home before he was sold as a slave. This teaches that G-D gave Yosef the chance to pay his father back. Yaakov sustained Yosef for 17 years as a child and now Yosef provided for his father for 17 years when he was an older man.

2) Ibn Ezra understands that Yaakov bowed to G-D out of thanks for His enabling his wish for burial in Israel to come true. Had Yaakov bowed to a person, such as Par'o, the Torah would have identified that person as it does when Avraham bowed in 23:7. The implication is that any bow without identifying the recipient of the bow refers to a bow to G-D.

3) The Ohr HaChaim teaches that these introductory words are very relevant to Yaakov's kisses. The Torah relates that Yaakov kissed and hugged LAHEM (TO THEM)

instead of OTAM (them). Yaakov's eyesight was so bad that he could not even see where to hug and kiss his grandchildren - he hugged and kissed towards them but not them, themselves, the way one normally would. Thus, the Torah waited for the greatest manifestation of his poor eyesight to report that he was blind.

The Avrom Silver Jerusalem College for Adults and OU Israel's Project YEDID are the educational components of the Seymour J. Abrams Orthodox Union Jerusalem World Center and include the classes & lectures of the OU Israel Center
Rabbi Sholom Gold, Dean • **Phil Chernofsky**, Educational director

935

"Regular" classes & lectures - 25₪ members, 30₪ non-members, 5₪ maintenance fee for life members. Special rates for mornings with two or more shiurim: 40₪ members, 50₪ non-members. 10₪ for life members.
 No one will be turned away for inability to pay.
 Yearly membership 360₪ couple, 275₪ single. Life membership, call us.
 Programs of the Center are partially funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel

Yom R'vi'i • 8 Tevet • WED December 15th

- 9:00am *Sefer Bamidbar* **Dr. Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg**
- 9:20am **Contemporary Halachic Issues** *Rabbi Macy Gordon*
- 9:45am **Parshat Vaychi** with **Reuven Wolfeld**
- 10:45am **PARSHAT HASHAVUA R' Yosef Wolicki**
- 12:30pm Dr. Maurice E. Joseph Jewish Video Resource Center presents...
Rabbi Zev Leff- "G-d Should Make You Like Ephraim and Menashe"
- various **MINI-SHIUR/DIVREI TORAH WHILE YOU FOLD**
- 12:45pm **TAICHI FOR HEALTH** with **Avi Hirsch**
- 1:30pm **MEDICAL CHI KONG** with **Avi Hirsch** 050-7671-722
- 2:15pm **Women's Beit Midrash - Pearl Borow**
First hour: the **KUZARI**; Second hour on Chumash with Rashi

WED, December 15th • 7:00pm Critical Financial Issues
3rd session of the Financial Resource Network series

Investing opportunities in uncertain times • Why most olim should invest a large part of their portfolio in Israel. Israel may be the best place in the Western World for holding savings, without using the banks! Where internationally are the best opportunities for long term growth. Learn how to effectively manage your international investments in Israel.
 Featuring: Baruch Labinsky, Financial Planner and Investment Manager
 The Israel Center is not responsible for the content or any outcome of these seminars

7:30pm **RABBI CHAIM EISEN'S SHIUR**

OU Israel Center TT 935 🐾 BackPage A 📌 VAYCHI 5771

More Wednesday...

Layla Learning program for women: Sun. morning, Tue. & Wed. evenings

See page 54 for details

Yom Chamishi • 9 Tevet • THU December 16th

Exercise Class for Women Thursdays, 9:00-10:00am
 Focus on balance, correct posture, back and abdominal strengthening

Given by **DR TOVA GOLDFINE** Chiropractor/Rehabilitation
 FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES AND EXERCISE FITNESS LEVEL
 Contact Dr Tova 052-420-1201 chirodivine@gmail.com

Lecture series on Thursday mornings, 10:00am

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

will be exploring the world of Rabbinic Responsa with a special focus on the halachic decisions and practices of **HaRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l**

This week: **HIGH RISK MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

Folders are invited to the shiur - a table will be provided for your continued folding
 Attendees are invited to join the Torah Tidbits folders before and/or after Rabbi Ziegler's shiur

10:30am (to 12:30) Midrash Hashavua - **Dr. Hayim Abramson**

various **MINI-SHIUR/DIVREI TORAH WHILE YOU FOLD**

1:30pm **Verna's knitting group in the Library**

WOW! THE WONDERS OF HASHEM'S WORLD!

A fun WOW! series to help children appreciate the wonderful world we live in!
 For English-speaking kids, ages 5 to 9

Join us for any or all remaining meetings in this intriguing series on **Thursday, Dec. 16 from 4:30-5:30pm** (other sessions on Dec. 23 & 30)

Call us for the "easy drop-off" option • 25₪ per child for each meeting • Sibling discounts available.

UNDER THE SEA and WATER WATER EVERYWHERE

Kids love **WOW!** with **Mrs. Fonda Weiss!** • **Pre-Registration required**
 To guarantee space and supplies for your child, call 054-7566532 or peak4kids@gmail.com

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More Thursday...

THU Dec 16, eve of Asara b'Tevet • Yom Kaddish K'lali • 8:00pm

Special talk by **Rena Quint:**

Child's Eye View of the Holocaust and an Adult's Retrospect

Yom Shishi • Asara b'Tevet • FRI December 17th

8:30am (to 9:45am) **Kollel Yom Shishi**

an in-depth shiur B'iyun in Masechet Makkot
by HaRav Eliav Silverman, Shoel U'meishiv of the RIETS Israel Kollel
Friday mornings • Coffee and cake will be served

9:00am **RABBI EISEN** Shiur on Aggada

11:00am **RCA Daf Yomi**

FRI Dec 17, Asara b'Tevet • Yom Kaddish K'lali

MINCHA at 12:06pm

Shabbat Parshat VAYCHI • December 18th

3:00pm **Shiur - Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Poupko**
Yaakov: From Role Reversal to Repentance

4:00pm **Mincha** Even if you can't come to the shiur, please join us for Mincha...

Motza"Sh Parshat VAYCHI • December 18th

Saturday night, December 18th - 8:00pm • AMIT Women

Tribute to Blossom Reutlinger נ"ע

Guest speaker: **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**



Talbieh 4 rooms, large, furnished • 6000₪/month

DWELL - Jerusalem **052-763-4974**

Sun-Thu in the *Ganchrow Beis Medrash* (first floor)

10:00am	SUN/TUE/THU Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld - Brachot - 4th perek
11:15am	RCA Daf Yomi by Rotation (and Fri. at 11:00am)
1:20pm	Mincha (this time stays the same throughout the year)
3:15pm	NEW TOPIC: Basar b'Chalav - Rabbi Chaim Sendic Tu/W
4:30pm	Gemara Kesuvos with Rabbi Hillel Ruvell not TUE
5:30pm	Maariv following Rabbi Ruvell's shiur. Cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, Sh'vat

Yom Rishon 12 Tevet • SUN December 19th

L'ayla Learning program for women: Sun. morning, Tue. & Wed. evenings
See page 54

9:30am *Let's Study Chumash* - **Tonia Frohwein** (for women)

10:30am 'While on my journey I told a story'... Rabbi Nachman's Stories
New series with **Golda Warhaftig** women

12:00pm **Hebrew for Beginners** Learn to read and converse in Hebrew
Hebrew and feel more comfortable when you daven. **Starting anew**
Given by **Haya Graus** with **Cecily Davis** 10₪ per session

12:30pm **Life: A fantastic adventure** - Alan Romm

Sundays 1-2pm • NEW! Dr Tova's Exercise Class

Weight bearing exercises to prevent osteoporosis (using small hand weights)
Lower back/abdominal strengthening (using a mat on the floor)
Call or email Dr Tova: 052-420-1201 • chirodivine@gmail.com

2:00pm **Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher** (December 19th)

Why did Yosef embalm Yaakov's body?
(Why Judaism prohibits embalming the dead)

5:20pm *Pri Chadash Women's Writing Workshop* (2 hrs)
Contact: Ruth Fogelman (628-7359) and Judy Caspi (054-569-0410)

More Sunday...

- 7:30pm **Rabbi Eisen** - Ramban's Torah Commentary
- 7:30pm The Book of Nechemya
no charge - **Rabbi Mordechai Machlis**
- 8:30pm Shiur by **Rabbi Dr. Joseph C. Klausner/Yedidyahu**
no charge on the Book of Sh'muel, focus: Avigail, the ideal queen?

TORAH VIDEO	Exploring Jewish Values and Concepts using Trigger Videos, source sheets, discussion... with
	Rabbi Nachum Amsel
regular fee	Sunday, December 19th • 8:00pm Saving a Life - At what cost? featuring a video clip from Chicago Hope

Yom Sheini • 13 Tevet • MON December 20th

N'SHEI LIBRARY: 10:00-12:30

MOMMY & BABY MUSIC CLASSES with Jackie Mondays at the Israel Center • 9:30am for 6-18 months • 10:30am for 1-3 year olds Call Jackie to register for classes: 999-5524 / 054-533-9305
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- 9:15am **EXCURSIONS INTO THE BOOK OF SHOFTIM** Pearl Borow
- 10:30am **Pirkei Avot** - Rabbi Zev Leff
- 11:35am **FIT FOREVER: LOOK & FEEL YOUR BEST!**
Exercise for women of all ages • Call Sura Faecher 993-2524
- 11:35am Monday, Dec. 20th • **"Who's Who & What's What"**
70 faces of the Chassidic world: Some Ashkenazi communities became chassidic after WW2. Why? The story and history of Erlau, Dushinsky, Makava, Vien, Nitra, Kashau, Tzhelem • Interactive lecture with pictures • **Gabriella Licsko** researcher

OU Israel Center TT 935 🐾 BackPage E 📌 VAYCHI 5771

More Monday...

- 12:30pm Dr. Maurice E. Joseph Jewish Video Resource Center presents...
VIDEO in the LIBRARY: "Chabad Double Feature"
"Embers" - The history of Jewish defiance under Soviet rule and its renaissance after the fall of the Iron Curtain... the Rebbes of Lubavitch risked their lives to keep Yiddishkeit alive in the former Soviet Union.
"Pioneers" - The story of Chabad settlement in Palestine and the broad frontiers of the today's Chabad... This film is a journey from the 1700s to the 21st Century, showing the tragedies and triumphs. (total time: 1 hr)

Women's Beit Midrash

- 2:00pm **"BRING ON THE BLESSINGS"** - Pearl Borow
- 3:00pm **Mishna, Mitzvot, and More** - Phil Chernofsky
- 7:30pm **NEW CLASS** with Rabbi Francis Nataf:
Lesser studied Tanach personalities • This week: **Avigail**
(Special deal for both Rabbi Nataf's and Rabbi Assis's classes: 35/40m)
- 8:30pm **Rabbi Dr. Elie Assis**, a senior lecturer of Tanach at Bar Ilan:
Book of Melachim (in Heb.) [Sam Finkel 052-469-1263, finkels2@zahav.net.il]

MASK - J'lem Chapter at the Israel Center • maskjerusalem.cjb.net • 050-754-2717
NEXT MEETING: **Monday, Dec 20, 7:30-9:30pm** with **Dr. Judy Belsky**

Yom Sh'lishi • 14 Tevet • TUE December 14th

The Israel Center and the Old City Free Loan Association 21st year • well over 5500 loans granted Gemach - Free Loan Society to provide interest-free loans for people in financial distress (living in the Jerusalem area). Interviews at the Center on Tuesdays from 10:00-12:00 and 19:00-20:30 • Please bring ID

- 9:00am **Phil Chernofsky** - THE Ultimate Dilemma
Based on the new Tuesday night series by Yitzchak Fund (highly recommended - PC) What would you do if...?
- 10:15am **Rabbi Sholom Gold** - Parshat HaShavua
- 11:20am **Esther Sutton's** inspirational series for women
Becoming Non-Mechanical Jews

OU Israel Center TT 935 🐾 BackPage F 📌 VAYCHI 5771

More Tuesday...

- 11:30am **Jewish History, 2nd Temple Period - Dr. Henry Goldblum Rabbi Akiva and Trajan... at the start of the 2nd cent. CE**
- 12:30pm Dr. Maurice E. Joseph Jewish Video Resource Center presents...
VIDEO in the LIBRARY: "One Day in September"
Powerful, highly acclaimed documentary on the terrorist attack at the 1972 Munich Olympics which left 11 Israeli athletes dead... Includes an interview with the surviving terrorist. Narrated by Michael Douglas. (1½ hrs)
- 1:00pm **Writing as self-discovery** (women only)
Exploring the stories of your life - Esther Sutton

NEW SERIES • Tuesday, December 21st at 8:00pm

Killing One to Save Many

Probing Moral Dilemma, using - among other sources - an episode in Tanach as a focus for this topic: the Case of Sheva ben Bichri

with **Yitzchak Fund**

Personal recommendation: The first session was well-presented, interesting, and utterly thought-provoking. - Phil

L'Ayla Learning program for women • see page 54

Yom R'vi'i • 15 Tevet • WED December 22nd

- 9:20am **Contemporary Halachic Issues** *Rabbi Macy Gordon*
- 9:45am **Parshat Sh'mot** with **Reuven Wolfeld**
- 10:45am **PARSHAT HASHAVUA R' Yosef Wolicki**
The shiur is dedicated by the Chazon, Silberg and Abraham families on the first yearzeit of **Irene Chazon nee Silberg ע"ה** חיה רחל בת מרדכי ע"ה
- 12:00pm WED, Dec. 22 • **Exploring Israeli culture, history and society:** Aliyah and Absorbition then and now. The most famous community aliyot: Moroccan, Yemenite, Ethiopian, Russian etc.
New interactive lecture series with **Gabriella Licisko**

More Wednesday...

- 12:30pm Dr. Maurice E. Joseph Jewish Video Resource Center presents...
VIDEO in the LIBRARY: Rabbi Natan Lopes Cardozo, Ph.D. "The Major Difference between Judaism and Christianity"
- various **MINI-SHIUR/DIVREI TORAH WHILE YOU FOLD**
- 12:45pm **TAICHI FOR HEALTH** with **Avi Hirsch**
- 1:30pm **MEDICAL CHI KONG** with **Avi Hirsch** 050-7671-722
- 2:15pm **Women's Beit Midrash - Pearl Borow**
First hour: the **KUZARI**; Second hour on Chumash with Rashi

Friends and relatives of singles! Members of shidduch committees and matchmakers! People who want to make a difference in another's life!

The Art of Being a Dating Mentor

with Tips on How to Make Better Matches

Wednesday, December 22nd • 6:45 to 10:00pm • at the Israel Center

Admission 80₪ - includes materials and ongoing "technical support"

featuring **Rosie Einhorn**, L.C.S.W. and **Sherry Zimmerman**, Esq., authors of **Talking Tachlis** and **In The Beginning**, dating advice columnists and founders of **Sasson V'Simcha**, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Jewish singles marry • info@jewishdatingandmarriage.com

7:30pm **RABBI CHAIM EISEN'S SHIUR**

L'Ayla Learning program for women • see page 54

Why should the governments of the US, EU, Canada, and Scandinavia continue to fund a UN policy that confines Arab refugees and their descendants to refugee camps for more than 60 years... fueling flames of middle east conflict for another generation.

David Bedein, Director of the Israel Resource News Agency and The Center for Near East Policy Research [www.IsraelBehindTheNews.com] AudioVisual presentation plus new report on UN initiatives

WEDNESDAY, December 22nd • 8:00pm

Dan is blessed/described by his father Yaakov as judge, avenger, and unifier of the people. He also describes him as NACHASH (snake) and SH'FIFON (viper). Most commentaries see the description of Dan as that of Shimshon, from the tribe of Dan, who single-handedly protected and fought for the People of Israel.

Few snakes also have horns like this venomous Field's Horned Viper. It can be found in the deserts of Middle East from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel. Be careful in dealing with this species because once bitten, there is no available antivenom.

TERROR VICTIMS SUPPORT CENTER

Liora Tedgi, a mother of ten, was injured in a suicide bomb attack. Since 2002 she has dedicated herself to helping other victims of terror. Your donation is desperately needed to help her buy food for the needy.

**Help us give a victim of terror a
Shabbat Basket**

Choose from our three sizes: 100₪ 🥗 180₪ 🥗🥗 250₪ 🥗🥗🥗

Mail donations (see address below; Donations followed by a tax receipt)
or go to our website www.terror-victims.org.il

Give an hour of your time!

**Pack food parcels for
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