



SOUTH HEAD YOUTH PARASHA SHEET

PARASHAT VAYECHI



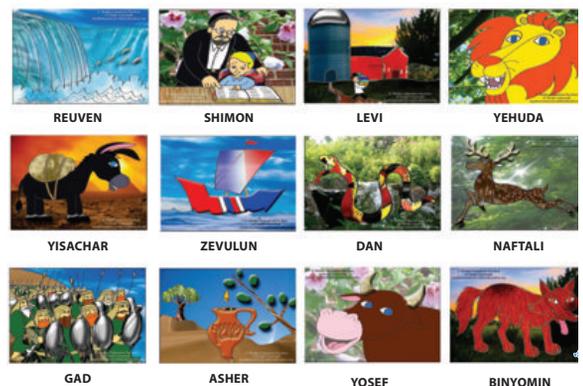
Yakov is finally able to live the life he has been waiting for! He merits to live the last 17 years of his life together with all of his children and many of his grandchildren. Yakov spends these years living in the city of Goshen in the land of Egypt. While Yakov's sons spend their time learning Torah and shepherding the sheep, Yosef continues his role as Viceroy of Egypt. King Pharaoh and the people of Egypt begin to honour him even more than before when they see what a holy family he descends from.



As Yakov's death nears, Yosef visits his father and promises him that he will travel back to Israel and bury him in the Cave of Machpelah together with Avraham, Sarah, Yitzchak, Rivka and Leah. Yakov is very happy about this and thanks Yosef profusely. Yosef also brings his two sons, Menashe and Efraim to visit his elderly father. Yakov is so sick that he is unable to recognise his own grandchildren and he has to ask Yosef who they are. Yakov then blesses his two grandsons. As Menashe is older, he stands before Yakov's right, the more powerful side, and Efraim stands on Yakov's left side. Nevertheless, when Yakov lift's his hands to bless the two grandsons, he crosses his hands so that his right hand is on Efraim's head and his left hand is on Menashe's head. This is quite strange because usually when one gives a blessing, one is supposed to put the right hand on the older child's head and the left hand on the younger child's head. Yosef thinks that old age is affecting his father's vision causing him to place the left hand onto the head of the older child so he tries to switch his father's hands. However, before he has a chance to do so, Yakov blesses his two grandsons. He blesses Menashe and Efraim that Hashem should always protect them with a guardian angel; that they should always remain true to their Jewish faith; and that Hashem should make their descendants a very strong and large nation. He also blesses the brothers that in the future, when people bless others, they will say, "May you be like Efraim and Menashe". This is why, until today, when parents bless their children, this is what they say!

When Yakov finishes blessing these two grandsons, Yosef questions his father as to why he put his right hand on Efraim's head instead of on Menashe's head. Yakov explains that he knows that Menashe is the older son. However, he placed his right hand on Efraim's head because he saw that although in the future both, Menashe and Efraim will have very holy descendants, Efraim's descendants will be much greater than Menashe's. After giving blessings to Efraim and Menashe, Yakov calls for all of his other children and grandchildren. He wants to bless all of his family members before he passes away. Yakov also tells his descendants that he is going to tell them the exact date of when Moshiach will come bringing the Final Redemption. However, he suddenly has a mental block and he is unable to tell his descendants when this significant event will occur. Thus, none of us, not even today know when Moshiach will arrive.

Although Yakov is quite upset about suddenly forgetting when this significant event will occur, he continues to bless all of his children. Before Blessing each child, Hashem shows Yakov the future events that will happen to each of his children. Yakov can see the successes and failures that each of his sons will have, as well as how each of his son's character traits will affect each of their descendants. With this in mind, Yakov gives each one of his sons their own



unique blessing, which will help them fulfill their life mission on this world. He compares each of his sons to an animal or an object. His words are both a blessing and an instruction to each of the tribes about what their role will be among the Jewish people. Even though Reuven was the firstborn son, he does not receive the rights of a firstborn because of a past mistake. Instead, Levi becomes the tribe of priests, Yehudah becomes the tribe of royalty and Yosef receives a double portion in the land of Israel. Yissachar is blessed to be great Torah scholars and Zevulun is blessed to support the tribe of Yissachar. This way the tribe of Zevulun will earn a share of the reward of Yissachar's Torah study. Shimon and Levi were responsible for nearly killing Yosef and for killing the city of Shechem and so Yakov curses their anger. Dan and Gad will be warriors. Asher and Naftali will have fruitful lands and Binyamin is compared to a wolf.

The tribes of Israel are quite significant. While a child's Jewishness depends on whether or not his mother is Jewish, a child's tribe depends on which tribe the father is from. When a girl gets married, she joins her husband's tribe. With the exception of the tribes of Levi, most people do not actually know what tribe they are from. This is because it has been more than 2000 years since we have strictly lived with our tribes. The Levites and Kohanim perform certain services which no one else is permitted to perform, which is why people still know today if they are from the tribe of Levi. If you are not a Kohen or a Levi, then you are a Yisrael, a member of the Jewish people. When Moshiach comes, we will find out which tribes we are all from.

After blessing all of his children, Yakov passes away. He is mourned in Egypt for forty days.



Yosef requests permission from King Pharaoh to bury his father in Israel. After permission is granted, Yosef, all his brothers and all of their families travel to Israel to the Cave of Machpelah in Chevron to bury Yakov. When they arrive, Esav is there waiting for them together with a big army. He tells Yosef that he owns the cave and he will not allow Yakov to be buried in it. Yosef insists that Esav sold the cave to Yakov many years beforehand and so they are allowed to bury Yakov in the cave. Esav will not listen to this. Finally, Naftali's son Chushim becomes frustrated with Esav and without hesitating, he takes a knife and chops off Esav's head! The family then goes on to bury Yakov in the Cave of Machpelah. The head of Esav rolls into the cave. After burying Yakov, his family mourns for him for another seven days.

With Yakov gone, the brothers once again begin to fear that Yosef will take revenge on them. Yosef assures his brothers that he loves them and he will not punish them for what they did to him. Yosef lives for another 54 years, passing away at age 110. Before his passing he gathers all his brothers and tells them that they are not to leave Egypt before they receive a sign from Hashem. He reminds them of Hashem's promise to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yakov that their descendants would one day return to the land of Israel. He also makes his brothers promise him that when they eventually do leave Israel, that they will take his body back to Israel and rebury him there. The words of Yosef, 'Hashem will surely remember you', will be a source of hope to the Jewish people when they are enslaved by Pharaoh. When Yosef dies, the Egyptians idolise him so much that they place his body into a metal coffin and sink the coffin in the Nile river. Since Yosef was such a holy man, they believe that if he's buried in the Nile, the Nile will always flow in abundance!

Mission of the week: Ask a friend to teach you something that you don't know!

**It was great seeing you in Shule!
We hope you enjoy reading this Parsha Sheet and quizzing your family!
Shabbat Shalom from Brookie and the South Head Youth Crew**

