

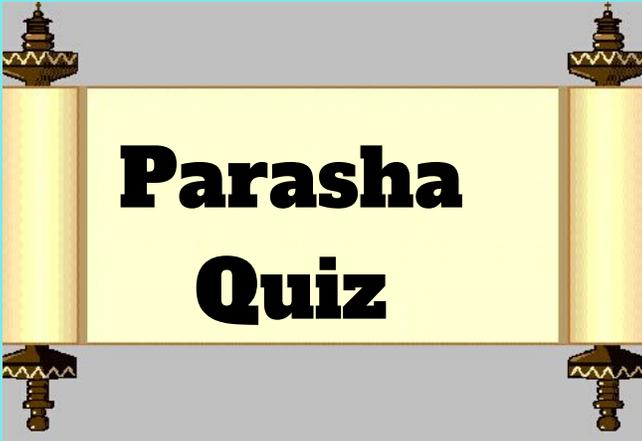


KMS Family Parasha

LEARN ABOUT THE PARASHA WITH THE KMS YOUTH DEPARTMENT

VaYechi: וַיְחִי

1.11.20



Elementary:

- 1) What did Yaakov make Yosef promise him before he died?
- 2) What famous Jewish song comes from the words of Yaakov right before he blesses Ephraim and Menashe (48:16)?
- 3) According to Rashi (48:16) why did Yaakov bless Ephraim and Menashe to be like fish?
- 4) What was strange about the way Yaakov blessed his grandchildren Ephraim and Menashe?
- 5) Why wasn't Yosef buried in Maarat HaMachpela like Yaakov?

Middle/High School:

- 1) According to Rashi (47:29) why is caring for the dead called Chesed Shel Emet?
- 2) According to Rashi what 2 famous descendants would come from Ephraim and Menashe (48:19)? Which infamous descendants would come from them (48:8)?
- 3) According to Rashi (49:1) what happened when Yaakov wanted to reveal to his sons what would happen in the end of days?
- 4) What surprising thing does Rashi (49:33) tell us about Yaakov's death?
- 5) According to Rashi (50:16) what lie did the brothers tell Yosef after their father's death and why did they tell it?

What would you do?

Discussion starter for your Shabbat table..

If you could give someone you love a Bracha what would you wish for them?

Did You Know?

In this week's parasha we see Yosef and his brothers perform the mitzvah of burying their father in Maarat HaMachpeila. Nowadays, the task of preparing the deceased for burial falls to the Chevra Kadisha. Literally "sacred society," the Chevra Kadisha is the volunteer group that performs the final rites for the Jewish deceased. This process, called Tahara (purification), involves the ritual cleaning of the body, by men for males and by women for females. The volunteers of the Chevra Kadisha perform the Tahara or ritual of purification. The body is thoroughly cleansed and then it is ritually purified by immersion in or by a continuous flow of water over the entire body. Following Tahara, the body is dressed in Tachrihim (shrouds of white muslin or linen). Once the body is dressed, it is placed in a casket and the casket is closed. A Shomer (watcher) guards the body from the time of death until burial. This is all based on the concept of Kavod Ha'met (honor for the deceased). According a Jew with a proper Jewish burial is considered a sacred duty and a great kindness, and it is an honor to be included in this group of dedicated volunteers.



Why do we bless our sons on Friday night to be like Ephraim and Menashe? Why not bless them to be like Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Yosef the way we belss our daughters to be like Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah?

Rabbi Shraga Simmons (Aish.com) explains: Ephraim and Menashe were the first set of Jewish brothers who did not fight. Abraham's two sons – Isaac and Ishmael – could not get along, and their disagreement forms the basis of the Arab-Israeli conflict until today. The next generation – Isaac's twin sons, Jacob and Esav – were so contentious that Esav repeatedly sought to kill Jacob and instructed his descendants to do the same. The next generation was contentious as well: Jacob's sons sold Joseph into slavery. Ephraim and Menashe represent a break from this pattern. This explains why Jacob purposely switched his hands, blessing the younger Ephraim before the older Menashe. Jacob wished to emphasize the point that with these siblings, there is no rivalry. (see Genesis 48:13-14) Indeed, there is no greater blessing than peace among siblings. The words of King David ring true: "How good and pleasant is it for brothers to sit peacefully together" – Hiney ma tov u'ma'nayim, shevet achim gam yachad (Psalms 133:1).

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (19th century Germany) offers another explanation of why Jewish boys throughout the ages have received the blessing of Ephraim and Menashe. The first generations of Jews – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – raised their children primarily in the Land of Israel. But due to famine, Jacob and his family moved to Egypt. The next generation would grow up surrounded by pagan immorality. The challenge was if Judaism would survive amidst all the distractions of diaspora life. What was the outcome with Ephraim and Menashe? Despite great odds, they grew up in Egypt and maintained adherence to Torah ideals and practice. Which is why we bless our sons to be like them, expressing our hope for proud Jewish children – and grandchildren.