

**Parsha Plug: Parshat Vayechi**

<p><b>Bereshit 49:33, 50:1-14</b></p>	<p><b>בראשית מט:לג, נא-יד</b></p>
<p><b>33</b> And Yaakov concluded commanding his sons, and he drew his legs [up] into the bed, and expired and was brought in to his people. <b>1</b> Yosef fell on his father's face, and he wept over him and kissed him. <b>2</b> And Yosef commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father, and the physicians embalmed Israel. <b>3</b> And forty days were completed for him for so are the days of embalming completed and the Egyptians wept over him for seventy days. <b>4</b> When the days of his weeping had passed, Yosef spoke to Pharaoh's household, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak now in Pharaoh's ears, saying, <b>5</b> 'My father adjured me, saying, "Behold, I am going to die. In my grave, which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." So now, please let me go up and bury my father and return.' " <b>6</b> And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father as he adjured you." <b>7</b> So Yosef went up to bury his father, and all Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt went up with him, <b>8</b> and Yosef's entire household and his brothers and his father's household; only their young children and their flocks and cattle did they leave in the land of Goshen. <b>9</b> And chariots and horsemen also went up with him, and the camp was very numerous. <b>10</b> And they came to the threshing floor of the thornbushes, which is on the other side of the Jordan, and there they conducted a very great and impressive eulogy, and he made for his father a mourning of seven days. <b>11</b> The Canaanite[s], the inhabitant[s] of the land, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of the thornbushes, and they said, "This is an intense mourning for the Egyptians." Therefore, they named it Abel Mizraim (Egypt mourns), which is on the other side of the Jordan. <b>12</b> And his sons did to him just as he had commanded them. <b>13</b> And his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and they buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which field Abraham had bought for burial property from Ephron the Hittite before Mamre. <b>14</b> And Yosef returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.</p>	<p>לג וַיִּכַּל יַעֲקֹב לְצוֹת אֶת-בָּנָיו, וַיֹּאסֶף רַגְלָיו אֶל-הַמֶּטֶה; וַיָּגוּעַ, וַיֹּאסֶף אֶל-עַמּוּיוֹ. א וַיִּפֹּל יוֹסֵף, עַל-פְּנֵי אָבִיו; וַיִּבְדַּח עָלָיו, וַיִּשְׁק-לוֹ. ב וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת-עַבְדָּיו אֶת-הַרְפָּאִים, לְחַנֵּט אֶת-אָבִיו; וַיַּחְנְטוּ הַרְפָּאִים, אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל. ג וַיִּמְלְאוּ-לוֹ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם, כִּי כֵן יִמְלְאוּ יְמֵי הַחַנְטִים; וַיִּבְכּוּ אֹתוֹ מִצְרַיִם, שִׁבְעִים יוֹם. ד וַיַּעֲבְרוּ, יְמֵי בְכִיתוֹ, וַיְדַבֵּר יוֹסֵף, אֶל-בֵּית פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר: אִם-נָא מְצֵאתִי חֵן, בְּעֵינֵיכֶם--דַּבְּרוּ-נָא, בְּאָזְנֵי פַרְעֹה לֵאמֹר. ה אָבִי הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי לֵאמֹר, הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מֵת--בְּקִבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר פָּרִיתִי לִי בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, שָׁמָּה תִקְבְּרֵנִי; וְעַתָּה, אֲעֵלֶה-נָּא וְאֶקְבְּרָה אֶת-אָבִי--וְאָשׁוּבָה. ו וַיֹּאמֶר, פַּרְעֹה: עֲלֵה וְקַבֵּר אֶת-אָבִיךָ, כְּאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁבִּיעַךָ. ז וַיַּעַל יוֹסֵף, לְקַבֵּר אֶת-אָבִיו; וַיַּעֲלוּ אִתּוֹ כָּל-עַבְדֵי פַרְעֹה, זַקְנֵי בֵיתוֹ, וְכָל, זַקְנֵי אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם. ח וְכָל בֵּית יוֹסֵף, וְאֶחָיו וּבֵית אָבִיו: רַק, טַפָּם וְצֹאֲנָם וּבָקָרָם--עֲזָבוּ, בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן. ט וַיַּעַל עִמּוֹ, גַּם-רֶכֶב גַּם-פָּרָשִׁים; וַיְהִי הַמַּחְנֶה, כְּבֹד מְאֹד. י וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-גֵּרֶן הָאֵטָד, אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן, וַיִּסְפְּדוּ-שָׁם, מִסְפַּד גָּדוֹל וְכֹבֵד מְאֹד; וַיַּעַשׂ לְאָבִיו אֲבֵל, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים. יא וַיֵּרָא יוֹשֵׁב הָאֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֶת-הָאֲבֵל, בְּגֵרֶן הָאֵטָד, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, אֲבֵל-כְּבֹד זֶה לְמִצְרַיִם; עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ, אֲבֵל מִצְרַיִם, אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן. יב וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בָנָיו, לוֹ--כֵּן, כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּם. יג וַיֵּשְׂאוּ אֹתוֹ בָּנָיו, אֶרֶצָה כְּנַעַן, וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ, בְּמַעְרַת שְׂדֵה הַמַּכְפֵּלָה: אֲשֶׁר קָנָה אַבְרָהָם אֶת-הַשְּׂדֵה לְאַחֲזַת-קֶבֶר, מֵאֵת עֶפְרָן הַחִתִּי--עַל-פְּנֵי מַמְרֵא. יד וַיָּשָׁב יוֹסֵף מִצְרַיִמָּה הוּא וְאֶחָיו, וְכָל-הָעֲלִים אִתּוֹ לְקַבֵּר אֶת-אָבִיו, אַחֲרָי, קִבְּרוּ אֶת-אָבִיו.</p>

<p><b>Yerushalmi Masechet Moed Katan 82:3</b></p>	<p><b>ירושלמי (ונציה) מועד קטן פב טור ג/ה"ה</b></p>
<p>How do we know that mourning is from the Torah for seven days? ‘And he made a mourning for his father seven days’. We learn this from an incident that happened before Revelation. Rebbe Yaakov bar Acha said in the same of Rebbe Zeura, ‘We learn it from here: ‘At the opening of the tent of meeting you shall sit day and night for seven days and keep the observance of the Lord’. Just as God ‘observed’ His world for seven days, so too you ‘observe’ for your brethren seven’. From where do we</p>	<p>מניין לאבל מן התורה שבעה? ויעש לאביו אבל שבעת ימים (ברא' נ:י) ולמידין דבר קודם למתן תורה! רבי יעקב בר אהא בשם רבי זעורה שמע לה מן הדא ופתח אוהל מועד תשבו יומם ולילה שבעת ימים ושמרתם את משמרת משכן יי' (ויקרא ח:לה) כשם ש'שמר' הקב"ה על עולמו שבעה כך אתם 'שמרו' על אחיכם שבעה. ומניין</p>

<p>learn that God observed His world for seven days? ‘And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth’. Are we meant to then mourn before the deceased dies?! Rather, for a person who is flesh and blood and does not know what will be, he does not mourn until after the deceased dies. But for God Who knows what will be, He observes for His world before.</p>	<p>ששימר הקב"ה על עולמו שבעה? ויהי לשבעת הימים ומי המבול היו על הארץ (ברא' ז:י) ומתאבלין קודם שימות המת אלא בשר ודם שאינו יודע מה עתיד להיות אינו מתאבל עד שימות המת אבל הקב"ה שהוא יודע מה עתיד להיות שימר על עולמו תחילה.</p>
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<p><b>Pesikta Zutarta Lekach Tov on Bereshit 50:10</b></p>	<p><b>פסיקתא זוטרית בראשית נ:י</b></p>
<p>‘He made mourning for his father seven days’: Why is mourning seven days? In order to correspond to the seven days of feasting. Alternatively, in order to correspond to the seven days of creation.</p>	<p>ויעש לאביו אבל שבעת ימים. מפני מה האבל שבעת ימים? כנגד ז' ימי המשתה. ד"א כנגד שבעת ימי בראשית.</p>

<p><b>Rashi on Bereshit 49:33</b></p>	<p><b>רש"י על בראשית מט:לג</b></p>
<p>‘And he expired and was brought in’: But no mention is made of death, and our Rabbis of blessed memory said, ‘Our father Yaakov did not die’ (Taanit 5b).</p>	<p>ויגוע ויאסף: ומיתה לא נאמרה בו, ואמרו רבותינו ז"ל יעקב אבינו לא מת:</p>

<p><b>Ramban on Bereshit 49:33</b></p>	<p><b>רמב"ן על בראשית מט:לג</b></p>
<p>The notion [that Yaakov Avinu did not die] is connected to the idea that the souls of the righteous are bound in the bind of life and this covers the soul all day, wearing a scarlet garment so that it is not naked, like Yaakov, or that [the soul] wears at certain occasions. This matter will be understood in the light of what is told in Shabbat 152b and Ketubot 103a.</p>	<p>וענין המדרש הזה כי נפשות הצדיקים צרורות בצרור החיים, וזו תחופף עליו כל היום, לובשת לבושה השני שלא יפשטנה ערומה, כיעקב, או תתלבש לעתים מזומנות. ויובן הענין הזה במסכת שבת (קנב ב) ובמסכת כתובות (קג א):</p>

<p><b>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, <i>Jewish Time (Vayechi 5777)</i></b></p>
<p>Remember that the story of the people of the covenant begins with God’s call to Abraham to leave his land, birthplace and father’s house and travel “to a land which I will show you”. Yet no sooner does he arrive than he is forced by famine to go to Egypt. That is the fate repeated by Jacob and his children. Genesis ends not with life in Israel but with a death in Egypt. Again, a hope not yet realised, a journey not yet ended, a destination just beyond the horizon...Many ancient cultures believed in cyclical time, in which all things return to their beginning. The Greeks developed a sense of tragic time, in which the ship of dreams is destined to founder on the hard rocks of reality. Europe of the Enlightenment introduced the idea of linear time, with its close cousin, progress. Judaism believes in covenantal time, well described by Harold Fisch: “The covenant is a condition of our existence in time...We cooperate with its purposes never quite knowing where it will take us, for ‘the readiness is all’”. In a lovely phrase, he speaks of the Jewish imagination as shaped by “the unappeased memory of a future still to be fulfilled”. Tragedy gives rise to pessimism. Cyclical time leads to acceptance. Linear time begets optimism. Covenantal time gives birth to hope. These are not just different emotions. They are radically different ways of</p>

relating to life and the universe. They are expressed in the different kinds of story people tell. Jewish time always faces an open future. The last chapter is not yet written. The Messiah has not yet come. Until then, the story continues – and we, together with God, are the co-authors of the next chapter.