

# Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Vayechi 5778 year 8 #320

פרשת ויחי תשע"ח שנת חזק

## *Purpose of life is to leave a good name*

ויחי יעקב בארץ מצרים שבע עשרה שנה: (מז כח)

“Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. (47:28) The sefer Talilei Oros brings an amazing thought from Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt”l: It is fascinating to note how the two parshos that deal with the deaths of Sarah Imeinu and Yaakov Avinu are named, respectively, “Chayei Sara” and “Vayechi”, words that highlight *life*. Rav Sorotzkin explains that it is precisely the *parshos* that tell us about their passing that are called this name, in order to emphasize and teach us that all tzaddikim never die. Their lives continue for all eternity. In order to bring out this very vital teaching the Torah speak about their death specifically with the term ‘life.’ This idea alludes to what the *Gemara* in *Taanis* (5b) teaches us that “Yaakov Avinu did not die.” Yaakov Avinu lived his life that even when he died, the living model that he left in this world continues to endure. Yaakov Avinu’s good deeds and wonderful name continue to live with him. His physical presence might not be here, but his life spirit will continue to live on for all time. The same was with Sarah Imeinu. Hence these parshos emphasize living, as continuing on the good name eternally. (Compiled by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

ויחי יעקב בארץ מצרים שבע עשרה שנה: (מז כח)

“Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. Did he only live seventeen years? Rather, these years were the only ones during which he enjoyed real life. Regarding his earlier years, he said, *ימי שגני מנוגרי שלשים ומאת שנה מעט ורעים היו ימי* שני חלי *“The days of the years of my sojourns have been a hundred and thirty years, few and bad.”* This is the meaning of the verse, *“And your beginning shall be small, but your end shall increase exceedingly.”* This is always true. Evildoers begin blissfully but end with endless pain. However, tzaddikim experience difficulties in the beginning – but, they are ultimately eternally happy. *“And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.”*

However we can go a step further: *Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.* Chazal say that these years that Yaakov lived in Egypt were the primary years of his life because he lived there in joy and tranquility. Egypt, a place of impurity, the lowest place on Earth, precisely there, Yaakov enjoyed the taste of joy and tranquility! There is a tremendous lesson here! A Jew can find life and happiness wherever he ends up. That is our test. We can draw joyfulness and vitality even in the most trying predicaments in which we involuntarily find ourselves. *“They shall achieve gladness and joy”.* (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

## *Why the brothers even needed Yosef's words of comfort.*

ויאמר אליהם יוסף אל-תיראו כי התחת אלהים אני ואתם השבתם עלי רעה אלהים השבה למען עשה ביום הזה להחיות עמ-רב: ועתה אל-תיראו אנכי אכלכל אתכם ואת-טפכם וינתם אותם וידבר על-לבם: (ו) *“But Yosef said to them, “Fear not, for am I instead of G-d? Although you intended to do me harm, G-d intended it for good; in order to accomplish - it is as clear as this day - that a vast people be kept alive. So now, fear not - I will sustain you and your young ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke to their heart.”* (50:19 -21) After the passing of Yaakov Aveinu, the brothers fear Yosef’s revenge now that their father is no longer alive. Yosef is now compelled to give words of comfort to his. On this pasuk Rashi brings a Gemara in Megilla [16b] that expands on exactly what those words of comfort were: “Thus he comforted them and spoke to their heart” Rebbi Binyamin Ben Yefes said in the name of Rebi Elazar: This teaches that he spoke to them words which would be acceptable to them [saying]: Just as ten candles could not extinguish one candle, how could it be that one candle would extinguish ten candles?”

The heilige Maharal of Prague in his sefer Gur Aryeh on Bereshis actually questions why chazal insisted in using the analogy of lights? He answers that Yosef was referring to the stars of the zodiac. Just as those twelve signs of the zodiac could not be changed or be tampered with, Yosef was unable to change the destiny of the twelve tribes.

## *Another insight to answer the question*

Why the brothers even needed Yosef’s words of comfort. The Netziv, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin Zt”l father of Rav Chaim Berlin Zt”l, explains that the brothers were dependent on Yosef for their sustenance -livelihood and food- and he makes reference to the following Gemara (Beitza 32a); “Rav Noson Bar Aba said in the name of Rav: All those who look to others for sustenance exist in a world of darkness, as it says (Iyov 15:23): “He wanders, looking for bread wherever [he can find it]; he knows that a darkened day is ready at hand.” Perhaps we can now understand the mashal of the candles in a new “light.” Dependent on their brother Yosef for sustenance, the brothers were living in a world of darkness. Yosef turns to them and says the following message; “We are all candles. There is no darkness here, only light. You might think that because you are dependent on me that your ability to shine has been extinguished. However, the reality is that Hashem was behind all the events of my sale and my salvation and my rise to Egypt, and He is the one who supports you and feeds you, not me. This was Yosef’s message to all: Hashem is behind all events in life. (Compiled by Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

## STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

\*\*\*\* *The Ratzferter Rebbe heals a sick boy by prescribing a strong dose of Emunah* \*\*\*\*

A young boy was diagnosed with an infectious wound on his heart. The doctor decided that he needed to operate, in order to open the wound and drain the pus. Without the surgery, the doctor gave the boy only 48 hours to live. And even with an operation there was only a 50% chance of recovery –according to the doctor. The doctor himself insisted on approval from a different expert in a different town. The father took his son to the other doctor who gave the same diagnosis, and gave his consent to operate.

On the train ride home, the father encountered the Gabbai of Harav Hatzadik Reb Shulem Eliezer from Ratzfert, the son of the heilige Sanzer Rav, the Divrei Chaim. He asked if he could deliver a message to the Rebbe, to pray for his son. The Gabbai said, “The Rebbe just happens to be here on the train; let me take you to him.” The father told the Rebbe the whole situation, ending with the dire 48-hour prognosis. The Rebbe asked, “How sure are they that the operation will be successful?” The father answered: “They’re giving a 50 % chance of success.” The Rebbe thought for a while and answered: “I say that they should not make the operation; the boy will recover without one.” The father became hysterical and frantically repeated the doctors’ findings. The Rebbe calmed him down and said to him, “You told me that even with the operation there is no guarantee of recovery. Take my words seriously and everything will be fine; trust me! I am the Sanzer Rav’s son and I am not less than Yaakov, am I?”

When the father heard these strong words from the Rebbe he calmed down. But he did ask, “Who is this Yaakov, and what does he have to do with all this?” The Rebbe told him that in Sanz there was a very good doctor by the name of Yaakov. Whoever my father, the Sanzer Rav, sent to him, he did his utmost to heal, and the outcome was usually good. In Sanz also had a successful farmer named Chazkel who brought chickens and eggs every week to the Rebbe, which the Rebbe used for his sparse meals. One time Chazkel became very ill and his condition was grave. His wife came to the Sanzer Rav and cried bitterly, begging that the Rebbe should promise her husband a Refuah Shelema. The Rebbe asked, Do you have Emunah, faith and trust in what I will tell you to do?” When she answered “of course!”, the Rebbe told her to go find “Yaakov” and ask him to go with you to your husband and heal him. She left the Rebbe and had Emunah that Yaakov – whoever he was -- would be the right agent to heal her husband.

She didn’t know who this Yaakov was or where he lived, so she went to shul and asked the shamash if he knew who

Yaakov was. He answered: “Look no further! I am Yaakov!” She said, “The Rebbe asked that you come with me to my sick husband and heal him”. Yaakov asked her if she would pay him for his trouble. She answered: “Whatever amount you ask, I’ll give.” When a price was agreed upon, Yaakov the Shamash –not Yaakov the doctor! -- went along with her to visit our poor Chazkel to try to heal him. He sat next to Chazkel and started to say Tehilim and cried bitterly to Hashem that Chazkel should have a complete recovery. When Yaakov finished saying the whole Tehilim, Chazkel said he was beginning to feel a bit better. When Yaakov saw that there was a change for the better, he decided to say the whole Tehillim again. When Yaakov finished his second recitation, Chazkel said, “I feel fine, in fact, almost back to normal.” Yaakov the Shamash collected his fee and Chazkel recovered completely from his crisis.

The Ratzferter Rebbe continued to the father of the sick boy and said “So you see, if you have Emunah in my words then surely I am not less capable than that Yaakov was. I will also pray to Hashem that your son should be well without an operation.” The father sighed a breath of relief and humbly took his leave of the Rebbe.

When he came home, the doctor was waiting, prepared to perform the operation. The father told the doctor that the Ratzferter Rebbe advised him not to go through with it. The doctor flew into a rage and shouted indignantly, “What does this so-called Rabbi know about surgery? Any doctor in the world would agree that this boy is in grave danger in his present condition. I warn you: if anything happens bad to your son because of not having the surgery, I will report you to the authorities for child abuse. However, if your son gets better on his own, I will become a G-d fearing Jew.”

The father said he was relying on Hashem as the true rofeh cholim, with Rebbe as his messenger. Soon afterward, the young boy’s chest began to itch strongly; he started scratching until he felt some kind of liquid dripping inside his chest. The father was alarmed and ran to the doctor. When the doctor examined the boy he exclaimed: “I don’t believe my eyes and my stethoscope! Without an operation, the wound has opened by itself and the infection has dripped out. Now with the right medicine, everything will be fine. I’m going to write up this case for a medical journal, but I doubt they’ll accept it. What happened is outside the bounds of medical science”. In a few days the boy was completely healthy. The doctor kept his promise and became a Baal Teshuva. Tzaddikim do many interesting things in order to bring a Yid to teshuva.

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