

# Parsha Summaries

*for*

## Sefer Beraishis

*(excluding parshiyos Beraishis and Vayishlach)*

Slightly lighthearted summaries of the weekly parshiyos. Based on the classic Meforshim. Special thanks to Ohr.edu for the summary outlines and to OU.org for their 'Sidra Stats'.

## פרשת נח

- 2nd of the 54 sedras. 153 p'sukim, 1861 words, 6907 letters 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- Noach was the tenth generation since the creation of Adam. All of the people who populated the world made it corrupt. Even the animals became evil and vicious. The people did many Aveiros but they did not deserve destruction until they began stealing.
- The Torah tells us that Noach was a tzaddik, perfect in his generation.
- Hashem told Noach that he would bring a flood, which will destroy all the people on earth except for the righteous Noach, his family and sufficient animals to repopulate the earth. Hashem instructed Noach to build a Teivah with three floors for (1) people (and some animals), (2) animals, (3) garbage. There was also a small window to let light into the Teivah. Noach spent one hundred and twenty years building the Teivah. As he built people would ask him why he was building a boat in the middle of the dry land. Noach would tell them that Hashem was going to punish them for their evil ways and that they should do Teshuva. Unfortunately, the people convinced themselves that they were not really so bad and they just laughed. After the Teivah was completed Noach brought two of each animal onto the Teivah: One male and one female. He also brought fourteen of each species of kosher animals onto the Teivah so that he would be able to use them as Korbanos after he survived.
- Next Noach sent a dove to see if the waters had gone down. The dove returned empty-handed. A week later Noach sent the dove again, and he returned that evening with an olive leaf in its beak. This meant that the flood was over and trees were

growing. After another seven days Noach sent the dove once more; the dove did not return. Noach understood that he had been able to find a place to live.

- Noach and his family were still stuck in the Teiva and were afraid to leave. Finally, Hashem told Noach and his family to leave the Teivah.
- There were Eight people in the Teivah: Noach and his wife Naama; Sheim and Simantabo; Cham and Machaltivon; Yefes and Ketantenabu. According to the Medrash, Og was also saved by holding on to the back of the Teivah.
- While on the Teivah, Noach and his sons were very busy feeding all of the animals. This was very hard because each of the animals needed to eat their own special foods at specific times.
- Noach brought Korbanos to Hashem from the animals which were carried in the Teivah for this purpose. Hashem- promised never again to flood the entire world and designates the rainbow as a sign of this covenant. When we see a real rainbow, it is a reminder of Hashem's promise.
- Noach and his descendants were allowed for the first time to slaughter and eat meat (after all, if it wasn't for them the animals wouldn't be alive to begin with).
- Hashem- commands the Seven Laws of all Bnei Noach (basically, everyone):
  - No idol worship
  - No marrying close relatives
  - No stealing
  - No cursing Hashem, ו"ן

- No Murder
  - No אבר מן החי - eating meat torn from a live animal
  - The obligation to set up a court system.
- Noach planted a vineyard and became very drunk from the wine. Cham acted inappropriately and embarrassed his father while he was drunk. Shem and Yafes, however, managed to cover their father without shaming him, by walking backwards. For this incident, Cham's son Canaan (who helped) was cursed to be a slave.
  - Many years later when there were more people in the world, every one got together with King Nimrod and built a tower. They wanted to climb up on it and fight Hashem, thinking that this could prevent another Mabul. At that time everyone in the world spoke the same language so they were able to communicate and work together. Hashem put a stop to the building of the tower by making the people split in seventy different nations who spoke seventy different languages. The people could not understand each other. One man would ask for a shovel and would wait as his friend spent days climbing all the way up the tower with a.... hammer. There were big fights and the tower project could not be built.

## פרשת לך לך

- 3rd of the 54 sedras. 126 p'sukim, 1686 words, 6336 letters 1 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- At the end of last week's Parsha we learned that even after the Mabul (when we would have thought that people learned their lesson), people continued to rebel against Hashem. By the time Avram Avinu was born in the year 1948, ten generations had passed since the Noach. The people were bowing to the sun and the stars and all sorts of idols and icons. By observing the world and examining the worthlessness of the idols, Avram came to believe in and recognize Hashem. In this Zechus, Hashem appeared to him.
- Hashem told Avram to leave his land, his birthplace and his father's house and travel to the land that Hashem will show him. Hashem promised to make him a great nation and gave him a special bracha: "I will bless those who bless you, and if someone curses you I will curse them".
- If someone is very happy and has a lot of food and a good life, and he wants to give someone a ברכה (blessing) He will bless him to be at least as happy and healthy as he is. That is why HaShem made sure to bless people before they blessed Avraham, so that they would give a really good blessing. On the other hand, when a poor man curses he will hope that the person he hates will be even poorer than him. That is why HaShem did not make people cursed until after they cursed Avraham!!

- Avram and his wife Sarai and their servants, left Charan. They were joined by their followers along with his nephew (her cousin) Lot. When they reach the land of Canaan, G-d appeared to Avram and told him that this is the land that He will give to his descendants.
- Before long, there was a famine and Avram was forced to relocate to Mitzrayim to find food. This was one of the ten tests that Hashem gave to Avram.
- Avram was scared. The Egyptian's were very careful not to marry someone who was already married but they didn't mind killing people. Realizing that the Egyptian's would try to kill him and kidnap Sarai, Avram asked Sarai to say that she was his sister. This was partly true because their Sarai's father was Avram's brother. Sure enough, Sarai was taken to Pharaoh, but Hashem afflicted Pharaoh and his people with a severe and unusual illness. Sarai was released unharmed. Avram returned to Eretz Yisrael (Canaan) with much wealth given to him by the Egyptians.
- Avram's nephew Lot knew that Hashem would one day give Eretz Yisroel to the family of Avram. Since he was the only family Avram had, he assumed that the land would be his and he acted like he owned it already. Avram was very careful not to let his sheep graze in private property but Lot thought he owned the place and let his sheep graze wherever they desired. During an argument over grazing rights between their shepherds, Avram decided to part ways with his nephew Lot. Avram said, "It is a Chillul Hashem for me to remain with you, but I will always be nearby in case you need help".

- Lot chose to live in the rich but corrupt city of Sodom in the fertile plain of the Jordan. A war broke out between the kings of the region and Sodom was defeated. Lot was taken captive. Together with a handful of his students (some say that it was just אליעזר), Avram rescued Lot, miraculously overpowering vastly superior forces with dirt that became arrows when thrown. Avram refused to accept any of the spoils of the battle, not even a string or a shoelace.
- Hashem revealed to Avram that his descendants would be exiled to a strange land where they will be oppressed for 400 years, after which they will leave with great wealth and return to Eretz Yisrael, their inheritance.
- Sarai was an עקרה and gave Hagar, her Egyptian שפחה, to Avram in the hope that she will provide them with a child. Hagar became arrogant when she discovered that she was expecting a child. Sarai dealt harshly with her, and Hagar ran away. On the instruction of a מלאך, Hagar returned to Avram, and gave birth to Yishmael.
- The parsha concludes with Hashem commanding Avram to give a Bris to himself and to his descendants throughout the generations. Hashem changed Avram's name to Avraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. Hashem promised Avraham a son, Yitzchak, despite Avraham being ninety-nine years old and Sarah ninety. On that day, Avraham circumcised himself, Yishmael and his whole household.

- 4th of the 54 sidros 147 p'sukim, 2085 words, 7862 letters 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh. Vayeira is the longest Parsha in the Torah.
- Three days after performing a bris mila on himself, Avraham was sitting outside of his tent hoping for guests. He was visited by Hashem who came to visit him because he was sick and also to tell him about Sodom. While he was speaking with Hashem three malachim appeared in human form (One looked like a desert nomad, the other like a grain merchant and the third like a sailor). Avraham stopped talking to Hashem and rushed to be מְכַנִּים אֹרְחָיִם by bringing them into his tent. All this even though it was the third day is the most painful time after the operation.
- One of the Malachim said that Sara would have a child within the next year and Sara laughed. Hashem told Avraham that it was wrong of Sara to laugh - Hashem can do anything.
- Hashem revealed to Avraham that He was going to destroy Sodom and Avraham pleaded for Sodom to be spared. Even though Avraham was trying to teach the whole world about Hashem and the people of Sodom were his worst enemies, he still stuck up for them.
- Hashem "agreed" that if there are fifty Tzadikim in Sodom, He will not destroy it, but not even ten could be found. Avraham tried to "bargain" with Hashem but he only succeeded in sparing Lot and his family.
- Avraham went to Lot with two Malachim and they were invited to Lot's house. This was illegal, and soon there was an angry mob at the door. Nobody stuck up for the guests and Lot. The Malachim struck everyone with blindness and confusion and escaped with Lot, his wife and two daughters just before sulfur

and fire began to rain down on Sodom and the neighboring cities. Lot's son in laws could have come too, but they just laughed. The malachim warned everyone not to look back, but Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. Even today the Sodom area is very salty, and the Yam Hamelach is the saltiest sea in the world. Some people say that they know where the pillar of salt is, and there is a special Bracha to say when you see it.

- Lot did not want to live with Avraham so he escaped to a tiny cave near Sodom. Lot's daughters were afraid that now that everything was destroyed they would not have anyone to marry. They decided to get their father drunk and marry him. The older daughter, had a son Moav, and the younger one had a son, Ammon.
- Avraham moved to Gerar where Avimelech kidnapped Sara, thinking that she was Avraham's sister. Everyone in his palace was afflicted with a strange illness. Hashem came to Avimelech in a dream, and told him that Sarah was married to Avraham. Avimelech released Sara and begged Avraham for forgiveness. Avraham forgave Avimelech and davened for him to be healed. Avimelech gave Avraham many gifts.
- As promised, a son, Yitzchak, was born to Sara and Avraham. On the eighth day after the birth, Avraham gave him a bris as Hashem had commanded him. Avraham made a big feast the day Yitzchak turned three.
- In the meantime, Yishmael was doing all sorts of violent and despicable Aveiros. Whenever Sara complained he said, "It was just a game". Sara told Avraham to send away Hagar and her son Yishmael because she saw that he was a bad influence for

Yitzchak. Avraham was upset about this, but Hashem told him to listen to whatever Sara tells him to do.

- In the desert, Yishmael nearly died of thirst and fever, but was rescued by a Malach. Hashem promised that he would be the father of a mighty nation.
- Avimelech entered into a partnership with Avraham when he saw that Hashem was always with him.
- In the tenth and final test Hashem instructed Avraham to take Yitzchak, who was 37, and to bring him as a Korban. Avraham did this, even though it meant that he would have no Jewish nation. At the last second, Hashem sent a malach to stop Avraham. Because of Avraham's unquestioning obedience, Hashem promised him that even if the Jewish People do Aveiros, they would never be completely destroyed by their enemies.

פרשת חיי שרה

- 5th of the 54 sidros<sup>105</sup> p'sukim (same as Devarim), 1402 words, 5314 letters, 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- Sarah Imeinu was niftar at the age 127, after hearing that Avraham was going to shecht Yitzchak. All of her years were equally good.
- Avraham returned to where he and Sara had been living. After mourning and eulogizing her, Avraham wanted to bury her in Me'aras HaMachpela - "The Double Cave". (When Avraham was serving the Malachim who came to visit him, one of the calves ran away, he chased after it and found it in near Mearas Hamachpela. When he arrived he could actually see Adam and Chava there and immediately decided that that was where he would bury Sara).
- Avraham asked the people of the city to introduce him to the owner of the property, Efron. As it "happened", Efron had just become the leader of the city. Efron made a very loud announcement that he would give Avraham the field at no charge. When Avraham insisted on paying, Efron realized that he could get rich and charged a ridiculous amount of money. Efron did not have the Mida of אמור מעט ועשה הרבה. Avraham paid Efron the full amount and from then on no one could ever claim that Me'aras Hamachpeila does not belong to the family of Avraham.
- Yitzchak was already 40 years old and had almost been killed. Avraham realized that it was time to make sure that Yitzchak had children while he was still alive. He sent his faithful servant Eliezer to find a suitable wife for his son. Before he left he made him swear to choose a wife only from among Avraham's family.

This was particularly important because Eliezer wanted Yitzchak to marry his own daughter.

- Eliezer traveled with many camels loaded with silks and precious jewels. He also had a document stating that all of Avraham's fortune would be given as a gift to Avraham. Eliezer arrived at the well in Aram Naharaim and davened for Hashem to give him a sign: If he would ask a girl for water and she would offer water to both him and his camels he would know that she belonged in the house of Avraham, which was full of Chesed. A miracle happened and Rivka appeared at the well to draw water. When she came close to the well the waters rose up to so that Rivka would not have to bend down to far. Eliezer realized that there was something special about Rivka and he asked her for water. Not only did she give him water, but she drew water for all 10 of his thirsty camels (about 140 gallons!). Eliezer knew that she was the right wife for Yitzchak and a suitable Mother for the Jewish People.
- Eliezer was so sure that he had found the right person that he gave her jewelry and gifts (two bracelets and a "nose-ring") right away without even asking if she was from Avraham's family.
- Eliezer asked, "Who is your father, and does your family have room for us to stay?" Rivka answered the questions in the order that they were asked: "I am a daughter of Besuel who is the son of Milkah who was born to Nachor (Avraham's brother), and yes we have lots of hay and a place for you to sleep". Eliezer bowed in thanks to Hashem.
- They arrived at Besuel's house and Eliezer introduced himself and told the story of how he found Rivka. He did switch around one detail and said that he asked Rivka to identify herself before

he gave her the Jewelry. Otherwise, her family would not have believed the story

- Besuel's and his rude son Lavan agreed to allow Rivka to marry. Eliezer gave Rivka an engagement present of silver, gold and clothes. He also threw a party with fruits from Eretz Yisrael.
- The next day Rivka's mother and brother tried to get Rivka to stay a little bit longer. They asked Rivka what she wanted to do and she said, "I will go". Rivka's family gave her a bracha that she would become a great nation. Even today this Bracha is given to every Kallah by her family.
- On the way home Eliezer and Rivka bumped into Yitzchak as he was davening mincha in Be'er Lachai Ro'i . They were not ready to meet each other yet so Rivka toppled herself off the camel.
- Yitzchak brought Rivka to his mother Sarah's tent and married her. This was a comfort for the loss of Sara.
- Avraham also got married to Ketura who was really Hagar. They had six children. Avraham gave them gifts, and sent them to the East.
- Avraham was niftar at the age of 175 and is buried next to Sarah in the Me'aras HaMachpela.



## פרשת תולדות

- 6th of the 54 sidros106 p'sukim (same as Vayigash & Bo), 1432 words, 5426 letters, 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- After being married for 20 years Yitzchak (now 60 years old) and Rivka (now 23 years old), davened to Hashem for a child. They each davened separately, and soon Yitzchak's Tefilos were answered and Rivka was expecting a child. During the nine months before the birth some very strange things began happening: There was an unusual amount of jumping and running inside of Rivka and she did not know what was going on. Also, every time she would walk by a shul or a holy place the baby would begin jumping trying to go in, but then when she would walk by a place of Avodah Zara he would do the same thing.
- Rivka decide to go and ask Hashem what was going on and she went to the Navi נביא. Hashem revealed to Rivka (through the navi) that there were actually two children inside of her and that the jumping and fighting that she was feeling was really just a sample of the long and tough disagreement that will exist between the two great nations that will descend from these twins: the Romans and Bnai Yisrael. They were fighting over who would get a portion of the two worlds: עולם הבא and עולם הזה.
- Esav was born, and then Yaakov, holding onto Esav's heel. The name Esav comes from the word עָשָׂו - fully created - because he had as much hair as a grown man. Yaakov comes from the word עָקַב - heel - because he was holding on to Esav's heel, trying to prevent him from being born first.
- For the first thirteen years of their lives Yaakov and Eisav were not very different. People were not sure which was a tzadik and

which was a rasha. After Bar Mitzva they began to change. Esav began spending most of his time hunting (for both animals and people!), while Yaakov sat in the tents of Torah becoming a tzadik.

- On the day of their grandfather Avraham's funeral, Yaakov was cooking lentils, (which is the minhag for an אָבִיבֵל). Esav rushed in, ravenous from a hard day of hunting and killing. He bellowed to Yaakov "Please pour some of that really red stuff into my mouth". Yaakov realized that this was a good time to prove that Eisav was not interested in anything holy and did not deserve to represent Hashem in this world. He told Eisav I will only give you cholent if you give me your בכורה. Eisav asked "what is this Bechorah all about anyway?". Yaakov replied " It means that you can bring korbanos to Hashem in the Beis Hamikdosh, BUT you need to deserve this privelege. If you go to the Beis Hamikdosh while you are drunk or Tamei - you will die." Predictably, Eisav was not interested in working hard for anything holy and he said "I am going to die; why do I need the Bechorah". Right then and there he sold his rights to Yaakov. Eisav ingested the lentil soup (without a Bracha), drank a little bit (but didn't bench), got up (without a kipa), and left (without even kissing the mezuzah). Eisav proved that he did not care about or deserve the Bechorah.
- Once again there was a famine in Canaan. Yitzchak prepared to escape to Mitzrayim just as his parents had done. Hashem appeared to Yitzchak and told him that since he was prepared and sanctified as a sacrifice, he was holy and must remain in the "Holy Land" for his entire life.
- Yitzchak moved to Gerar in the land of the Plishtim, where, to protect Rivka, he has to say she is his sister. The plishtim

became jealous of Yitzchak when he earned massive amounts of money, and Avimelech the king asked him to leave, for his own safety.

- Yitzchak re-dug three wells that were dug by his Avraham. He called them by the same names that Avraham had called them.
- Avimelech saw that Yitzchak was blessed by Hashem and he made a treaty with him and his children and his children's children. On that day the servants of Yitzchak found a well and Yitzchak named it באר שבע after the שבועה that he and Avimelech had made.
- When Yitzchak turned 123 he realized that he was within five years of the age his mother had been when she was nifteres. He summoned Esav to give him his Brachos, but told him to first find him some food for the Pesach seder that night.
- Rivka, who knew from the Navi that the brachos must go to Yaakov, arranged for Yaakov to impersonate Esav and receive the brachos.
- When Esav returned he got very upset and in his frustration revealed to his father that Yaakov had actually bought the Bechora. Yitzchak realized that the Bechora has been correctly given to Yaakov and confirmed the brachos he had given Yaakov. He gave a different much smaller bracha to Eisav.
- Esav said he would kill Yaakov as soon as Yitzchak was niftar, so Rivka sent Yaakov to her brother Lavan. Yitzchak told him to find a suitable wife while he was there.

## פרשת ויצא

- 7th of the 54 sidros, 148 p'sukim, 2021 words, 7512 letters, 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and set out for Charan, the home of his mother's family. Rivka had told him to leave home for a while in order to escape Eisav. They told Yitzchak that he was going to find a wife from his mother's family. Rivka told him not to stay for too long.
- As soon as Eisav heard that Yaakov had left town he sent his son Elifaz to run after Yaakov and kill him. Fortunately, Elifaz was very close with Yitzchak; he knew that Yaakov was a tzadik and did not deserve to be killed. Elifaz apprehended Yaakov and asked him a sh'eila: I have a Mitzva of Kibud Av but I do not want to do the aveira of Retzicha, what should I do? Yaakov said that Elifaz should take all of his money. He had learnt that somebody who has no money at all is considered dead.
- Yaakov knew that it would not be so easy to keep the Torah when he was in the house of Lavan. Until now he had spent most of his time in his tent studying Torah and he would not be able to continue in the house of Lavan. Yaakov realized that the only way to remain a Tzadik would be if he became very strong in his Yiddishkeit. He did this in two ways: 1. He spent fourteen years studying Torah day and night in the yeshiva of Shem and Eiver. 2. He made sure to daven in the same place that his father and grandfather had davened on Har Hamoriah.
- Yaakov was exhausted after spending so many years fighting sleep while learning Torah and he fell asleep on Har Hamoriah. Before lying down, he gathered twelve stones and put them around and under his head. While he was sleeping the stones

“fought”; each one felt that the reason he or she had been created was to help out this holy man. Finally Hashem made a miracle and they all became on big stone.

- In his dream Yaakov saw a tall ladder reaching up to the heavens. The ladder was on a slant and under the ladder he could see almost the entire Eretz Yisrael. Wherever a person goes, he or she is always accompanied by malachim. Yaakov saw the malachim of Eretz Yisrael climbing up the ladder while the new ‘Chutz Laaretz’ malachim came down to escort him. At the top of the ladder Yaakov could see the “throne” of Hashem. On the throne were pictures of Avraham, Yitzchak, and (to his astonishment) YAAKOV. When Yaakov awoke he had learnt that he was in a very holy place and that he himself was expected to become a very holy person like Avraham and Yitzchak. Yaakov took the stone and made it into a monument. He also promised to return and build a Mizbeach. Before resuming his journey Yaakov promised Hashem that he would give away a tenth of any food or clothing that Hashem sent his way
- Yaakov arrived at a well outside Charan and found a gang of shepherds hanging around, shooting the breeze. He asked them “My brothers, where are you from?” they answered “We are from Charan”. He asked “Do you know Lavan ben Nachor”, they said “We do know him, and, in fact, there’s his daughter Rachel coming with the sheep”. Yaakov saw Rachel, and with Herculean strength removed the massive stone that was on the well. He then gave water to Rachel and her sheep.
- Yaakov cried and said to Rachel: “I would like to marry you”. Rachel agreed but warned him that her father was a cheater. Yaakov replied “Don’t worry, I’m a brother of Eisav, I’m used to

dealing with cheaters.” When they arrived at Lavan’s house, Lavan was very disappointed that Yaakov had not brought any cash with him but allowed him to stay anyway. Of course, he put Yaakov to work minding the sheep. After a month, Lavan offered to actually pay Yaakov for his labor. Yaakov offered to work seven years for “Rochel his youngest daughter”. Lavan didn’t really agree, he just said “I’d rather she marry you than anyone else”.

- Rachel and Yaakov suspected that Lavan would try to pull a mean trick so they learnt about mitzvos like Hadlokas Neiros and Challah. This way Yaakov could easily test the Kallah to see if she was who she claimed to be. On the night of the wedding Lavan made a really big party for everyone in town, everybody celebrated and kept the secret. Little did they know that Lavan would eventually make them pay for the meal. A few minutes before the Chupa, just as it was getting dark, Lavan came to Rachel and told her to change out of her wedding gown and give it to Leah. Rachel realized that Leah would be very embarrassed if Yaakov discovered who she was, so Rachel did what Yaakov would have done: She taught Leah all of the things that Yaakov had taught her.
- The next day Yaakov asked Lavan: “Why did you cheat me?”. Lavan didn’t even feel bad. He just said “We don’t marry the youngest before the oldest around here”. Yaakov committed himself to working another seven years in order to also marry Rachel (which he did as soon as the Sheva Brachos was over).
- Leah had four sons: Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehuda, the first Shvatim. Rachel was an ‘Akarah’. Like Sarah , she gave her maid Bilhah to Yaakov as a wife. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naftali.

Leah also gave Yaakov her servant Zilpah, who gave birth to Gad and Asher. Leah then gave birth to Yissachar, Zevulun, and a daughter, Dina. Then, Hashem blessed Rachel with a son, Yosef

- One day Reuvain was in the fields and he found some Dudaim, which he brought home for his mother Leah. Rachel knew that Dudaim could cure someone who was an Akarah and she begged Leah to allow her to eat them. Leah said that this was not reasonable, and eventually they agreed that that evening Yaakov would eat supper in Leah's tent instead of Rachel's (they took turns). Rachel was later punished for this by not being buried with Yaakov.
- Yaakov decided to leave Lavan, but Lavan, aware of the loads of riches Yaakov had made for him, was reluctant to let him go. Yaakov needed to get home because he had promised his mother that he would return home as soon as possible. They made a deal that Yaakov would keep all of the spotted sheep that were born. Hashem made a miracle and even though Lavan gave Yaakov all white sheep, the offspring were all spotted. Lavan was not happy about this. He said (typically) "did I say spotted? Uh, I meant striped". This happened ten times. Lavan tried to swindle Yaakov, but Yaakov became extremely wealthy.
- After six years later, Yaakov, realized that Lavan was just a lousy swindler and fled with his family. Before they left Yaakov brought Rachel and Leah out to the field and told them two things: 1. Lavan ran after them but was warned by Hashem in a dream not to harm them. Lavan accused Yaakov of stealing his ... idols, but Yaakov cursed anyone who had done so and allowed Lavan to search his tents. Yaakov did not know that Rachel had actually stolen them. Rachel was not caught, but the curse came

true. Yaakov and Lavan agreed to a peace treaty and Lavan returned home. Yaakov continued on his way to face his brother Esav.

## פרשת וישב

- 9th of the 54 sidros. 112 p'sukim (same as Matos), 1558 words (same as Vayakhel), 5972 letters (same as Devarim), 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- Yaakov settled in the land of Canaan together with his father Yitzchak. Yaakov hoped that this would be the end of all his troubles and he would just be able to relax and study Torah in the holy land that Hashem had given to him and Avraham and Yitzchak. The truth is that there is no guarantee that anyone will have a life with no problems. Problems are נסיונות and Yaakov needed to have more נסיונות so that he could become an even bigger tzaddik.
- Yaakov had a favorite son, Yosef. Yosef looked exactly like Yaakov and he was going to have a life very similar to Yaakov's. Also Yaakov taught Yosef all of the Torah which he had learned in Yeshivas Sheim and Eiver. Yaakov made Yosef a fine tunic of multi-colored woolen strips: a כתונת פסים. The word פסים also stands for four things that would happen to Yosef in this week's Parsha: פוטיפר, סוחרים, ישמעאלים, מדינים.
- Yosef would bring him Yaakov critical reports about his brothers. He did this because he thought that they were doing Aveiros and wanted them to mend their ways. Chazal tell us that they were actually arguing about very deep sugyos in halacha. Some of the things that Yosef was upset about were אבר מן החי and לשון הרע.
- Yosef made his brothers more upset by telling prophetic dreams of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him, signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The Shvatim thought that Yosef was trying to get rid of them just like Yishmael and Eisav lost their portions among the

Jewish people. They knew that this couldn't be right because each one of them had something very special and unique to give to the Jewish people.

- The brothers went to graze their father's sheep along with their own sheep. While there, they decided that they needed to judge Yosef in a din Torah and give him the punishment that he deserved. They judged Yosef as a רודף - someone who was trying to get them killed, and resolved to execute him. Meanwhile, Yaakov asked Yosef to go check on the brothers and see how they were doing. Yosef did this even though he knew that it might cost him his life. (Later, the Medrash says that Yaakov missed Yosef even more when he remembered how he had risked his life for a mitzvah).
- When Yosef came to Shechem, the brothers saw him from a distance and said, "Here comes the בעל החלומות".
- Reuvein begged them not to kill him but rather to throw him into a pit, the brothers agreed. Reuven's intent was to save Yosef.
- When a group of Arabs came by, Yehuda suggested that the brothers take Yosef out of the pit and sell him to the caravan of Yishmaelim. (Reuven was not there for one of two reasons: either he was doing Teshuva, or it was his turn to take care of his father, Yaakov)
- Reuven returned to find the pit empty and tore his clothes in mourning. Since he was the oldest it was his responsibility to make sure that Yosef got home safely.
- Although the brothers felt they had done the right thing, they were frightened to tell Yaakov the truth. They soaked Yosef's tunic in goat's blood and showed it to Yaakov. Yaakov assumed that a wild beast had devoured Yosef. Yaakov was inconsolable.

- Meanwhile, in Mitzrayim, Yosef had been sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's Chamberlain of the Butchers, the שר הטבחים. Yosef rose to power and was an איש מצליח. Pretty soon, Yosef was running Potiphar's entire household. Mrs. Potiphar wanted to marry Yosef. The Medrash says that she knew that their descendants would be great people. Mrs. Potiphar, like all bad people, made one mistake: Yosef wasn't going to marry her; he was going to marry her daughter. One day when everyone was out at an Avoda Zara fest Mrs. P. asked Yosef to marry her. Yosef saw a vision of his father's face and knew that his father would not approve. He ran out of the house so quickly that he did not even turn around to grab the coat which Mrs P. had grabbed from him. Enraged, Mrs. Potiphar accused Yosef of attacking her, and he was imprisoned.
- In jail, Yosef was just as מצליח as he had been in the palace of שר הטבחים. Soon, the warden took an extended vacation and Yosef was the president, boss, and number one man in the jail. Even though he was going through tough times, Yosef had בטחון and was always happy. His joy was infectious and the jail all of the prisoners enjoyed a constant state of jubilation and good cheer.
- One morning, Yosef walked into a room and was shocked to find two prisoners sad. Of course, he immediately tried to solve their problems. Turns out, that both the Butler and the Baker had had some disturbing dreams. Yosef successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Pharaoh's wine steward, who was reinstated; and the dream of Pharaoh's baker, who was hanged. All of this happened at פרעה's birthday party three days later.
- In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgot to help Yosef, and Yosef languished in jail for an additional two years.

## פרשת מקץ

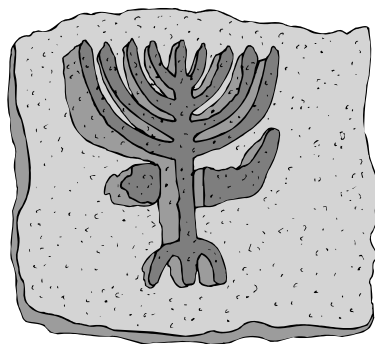
- 10th of the 54 sidros, 146 p'sukim (same as Breishis), 2022 words, 7914 letters, 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- Two years passed after the end of last weeks Parsha when Yosef correctly interpreted the dreams of the Butler and the Baker. Paraoh had a dream. Actually he had two dreams, because he went right back to sleep after he had the first one.
- In his first dream he saw seven fat cows grazing together, suddenly seven skinny cows rose up from the Nile river (the יאור) and ate the seven fat ones. Strangely, the skinny cows did not get any less skinny. In his second dream, Paraoh saw seven skinny, wimpy stalks of wheat swallow seven fat, plump stalks of wheat.
- Paraoh called all of his advisors and stargazers to interpret the dream. They all came up with very imaginative explanations but he did not like any of them. He especially did not like the one about seven daughters that would be born to him and then die. Paraoh knew in his heart that there was an explanation to the dream and this was not it. Finally Pharaoh's wine guy remembered that Yosef accurately interpreted his dream while in prison. He went to Paraoh and said: "את חטאי אני מזכיר היום". Which means "I hate to bring up my recalcitrant past, but – "
- Yosef was quickly released from prison, given a bath and a haircut and brought before Pharaoh. He told Paraoh that only Hashem can guarantee answers but he was willing to try. He explained that very soon (That's why it was dreamed twice!) there would be seven years of abundance followed by seven years of severe famine. The years of famine would be so bad

that they would not even remember the years of plenty. He told Paraoh to appoint a wise and pensive person to store grain in preparation for the רעב. Paraoh realized that Yosef was the best man for the job and he appointed him as משנה למלך and overseer of the project. Paraoh gave Yosef his ring to show that he would be in charge of everyone in the kingdom with the exception of the king himself.

- Pharaoh gave Yosef an Egyptian name, פַּעֲנֹחַ, The Revealer of Secrets and selected Osnas, Yosef's ex-master's daughter, as Yosef's wife. According to the Medrash, During Yosef's big parade, somebody threw a necklace at him. There was a metal plate on the necklace that said "I am the daughter of Dina Bas Yaakov". Yosef found Dina's daughter and got permission from Paraoh to marry her.
- As planned, Yosef gathered wheat and other grains for seven years until there was too much to count, for there was no number. Once the years of hunger began, Mitzrayim became the main source of grain for the entire world. During these two years Yosef had two sons, Menashe and Ephraim.
- Yaakov sent his sons to Mitzrayim to buy food. The ten brothers entered the city through ten different gates so as not to cause an Ayin Hara. Yosef commanded his men to grab his brothers as soon as they came into town. They came before Yosef and bowed to him (fulfilling Yosef's dream). Yosef recognized them but they did not recognize him because he had grown a beard over the years. Remembering his dreams, Yosef acted like a regular Egyptian overlord and was very mean to the brothers accusing them of being spies. Yosef sold them food, but kept Shimon as a hostage until they would bring their brother

Binyamin to him as proof that they were telling the truth about their family. Yosef commanded his servants to replace their money in their sacks.

- On the return journey, they discovered the money and their hearts sank. They returned to Yaakov and retold everything. Yaakov refused to let Binyamin go to Egypt, but when the \_\_\_\_\_ grew unbearable, he agreed. Yehuda guaranteed Binyamin's safety, and the brothers went to Mitzrayim. Yosef welcomed the brothers lavishly as honored guests. When he saw Binyamin he rushed from the room and wept. Yosef instructed his servants to replace the money in the sacks, and to put his goblet inside Binyamin's sack. When the goblet was discovered, Yosef demanded that Binyamin become his slave as punishment. Yehuda offered himself instead, but Yosef refused .....



## פרשת ויגש

- 11th of the 54 sidros 106 p'sukim (same as Toldos and Bo), 1480 words, 5680 letters, 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- *At the end of last week's parsha, Menashe discovered Yosef's goblet in Binyamin's sack. The confused brothers returned to Mitzrayim when Yosef threatened to take Binyamin as a slave.*
- Yehuda, the king of the brothers, stepped forward. At first he intended to have a war against Yosef. Blood came out of his eyes and even his hair broke through five layers of clothes. He took pieces of metal and ground them up in his mouth. He wanted to scare Yosef and show that he could kill him. Yosef motioned to Menashe who gave a little kick to one of the pillars. The entire palace shook and Yehuda was mystified and thought to himself "only our family has that type of strength". Even though Yehuda now realized that he might die in battle, he was willing to do so to protect Binyamin. Yehuda sent Naftali out to count the neighborhoods in Mitzrayim. Naftali counted twelve neighborhoods whereupon Yehuda said "I will take three of them and the rest of you conquer one each". He told Yosef: "I am going to kill all of Mitzrayim beginning with you and Paroh. The rest of the Shvatim also moved forward and made cracks in the stone floor of the castle. Yehuda tried to draw his sword, but it would not come out.
- Yehuda realized that Hashem must be helping this strange king and he gave up the idea of killing him. Also, the other brothers pointed out that if Mitzrayim was destroyed they would have no food. Instead Yehuda began pleading with Yosef and begging him to be reasonable. He called Yosef a liar because he had asked to see Binyamin and now he was trying to hold him captive. He eloquently and firmly petitioned Yosef

for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead. At the same time, Yehuda davened to Hashem to help him and to forgive him for selling Yosef.

- As a result of this act of total selflessness, and willingness to defend Binyamin, Yosef was convinced and satisfied that his brothers had done Teshuva and changed their ways since throwing him into the pit. Yosef did not want to embarrass his brothers so he asked everyone to leave the room. This was very risky because the brothers could have killed him, but it is better to risk your life than cause someone to be embarrassed.
- When everyone left Yosef made an announcement. "I have found your missing brother". He started calling softly "Yosef Ben Yaakov, Yosef Ben Yaakov". The brothers looked around them but saw nobody. Yosef gently revealed to them that he is none other than their brother. The brothers almost died from shame, but Yosef comforted them and told them that everything had been part of Hashem's plan. Whenever someone hurts us, we need to remember that whether the other person was right or wrong – it was all part of Hashem's plan. Yosef and his brothers spoke together peacefully, something that they had not been able to do in the days that led up to Yosef being sold.
- Yosef kissed Binyamin and cried on his necks.
- The entire Mitzrayim was talking about the arrival of Yosef's brothers.
- Yosef sent them back to their father Yaakov with a message to come and live in the land of Goshen. This way only Yosef would need to deal with the Egyptians and everyone else

could keep to themselves in their own city. Yosef and Paroh sent wagons and chariots to pick up the rest of the family. The wagons were full of grain and other foods. Yosef also sent some old wine for his father and a wagon. This was to show Yaakov that he had been reviewing the last Mitzvah that they had learnt together: **צַדִּיק אֵלֶּיךָ שׁוֹבֵה**.

- Nobody wanted to shock Yaakov, so Serach Bas Asher played a song on her harp about Yosef being alive. At first, Yaakov could not accept the news, but when he recognized the hidden signs in the present, which positively identified the sender as his son Yosef; he was convinced and very happy. He also had Ruach Hakodesh once again. Yaakov together with all his family and possessions set out for Goshen.
- Hashem came with Yaakov in a nevuah at night. He told him not to fear going down to Mitzrayim and its impurity, immorality and corruption. It is there that Hashem will establish the Bnai Yisroel as a great nation.
- The Torah lists Yaakov's family. Seventy descendants of Yaakov descended into Mitzrayim (including Yocheved, the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu, who was born between the walls). Yehuda went ahead of everyone to get organized and start a Yeshiva.
- Yosef reunited with his father after 22 years of separation. He embraced his father and wept, overflowing with joy. Yaakov did not cry because he was in the middle of saying Shema.
- Yosef arranged the settlement of his family in Goshen, saying that his family was shepherds and since the Egyptians hate Shepherds they should live in their own city. Paroh agreed asking only that Yosef recommend some good shepherds for his own sheep.

- Yosef took his father Yaakov and five of the weakest of his brothers to be presented to Pharaoh, and Yaakov blessed Pharaoh. Paroh asked Yaakov how old he was and Yaakov said that he had lived long but had a very hard life.
- Earlier in the story the Egyptian people ran out of money to pay for grain. Yosef instructed that, in return for grain, all the people of Mitzrayim must give everything to Pharaoh, including their land and themselves as his slaves. The people could keep 4/5 of whatever they earned and needed to give a 1/5 tax to Paroh. Yosef then moved everyone around to live in different places. This way his brothers and father would not be embarrassed that they were new in the neighborhood. The only exceptions to this rule were the Egyptian priests who were directly supported by Paroh and did not need any money. Yosef arranged this as a "Thank You" to the priests who stuck up for him when he was accused by Potifar's wife. Bnai Israel settled, and they became a very large nation.

## פרשת ויחי

- 12th of the 54 sedras, 85 p'sukim, 1158 words, 4448 letters (smallest in Sefer Bereishis) 0 Mitzvos Aseh and 0 Mitzvos Lo Saseh.
- After 17 years in Mitzrayim, Yaakov sensed his days drawing to a close and summoned Yosef. Yosef was summoned in an emergency by his son Efrayim and rushed over with Menashe straight from the palace. This is possibly the only time that Yaakov saw his grandchildren in their Egyptian royal clothes.
- Yaakov sat up when Yosef came in out of respect for royalty (even though Yosef was his son). Yaakov asked Yosef to swear that he will not allow him to be buried in Mitzrayim (but rather in the Me'aras haMachpela cave. There were three reasons for this:
  - Yaakov did not want to become an Avodah Zara like the other mummies in the pyramids
  - Yaakov did not want his body to be infested with lice during the Makka of Kinnim.
  - Yaakov wanted to avoid tunnel traffic. At the time of Techiyas Hameisim all dead people will roll in tunnels to Eretz Yisroel.
- Yaakov then bowed toward the head of his bed. This was a way of thanking Yosef because he was the only one capable of the favor that he needed. This was the fulfillment of Yosef's dream and we learn from here that even someone "lower" than us can sometimes be more important in certain ways.
- Yosef stood his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe before Yaakov. The rule is that the first born always gets a portion equal to twice the portion of the other sons. Yaakov elevated Ephraim and Menashe to the status of his own sons, thus giving Yosef a

double portion of shvatim and taking away the status of Bechor from Reuven.

- Since Yaakov was very old, Yosef led his sons close to their grandfather. Yaakov kissed and hugged them. He told Yosef that he had not thought that he would ever see his son Yosef again, let alone Yosef's children. Yaakov began to give them a bracha, but put his strong hand on Ephraim, the younger son. Yosef interrupted him and tried to switch Yaakov's hands hinting that Menashe was the elder son. Yaakov explained that he intended to bless Ephraim with his strong hand because Yehoshua will descend from him, and Yehoshua will be both the conqueror of *Eretz Yisrael* and the teacher of Torah to the Jewish People.
- Yaakov summoned the rest of his sons in order to bless them as well. Usually we think of a Bracha as "good wishes" but Yaakov's brachos reflected the unique character and ability of each tribe, directing each one in its unique mission in serving Hashem. Sometimes Yaakov's bracha sounded more like a criticism, but that was also a bracha because he was showing them how they could become even bigger tzadikim.
- Yaakov was niftar at the age of 147. A tremendous procession, a Levaya, accompanied his funeral up from Mitzrayim to his resting place in Me'aras Hamachpeila in Chevron. At the funeral there was a big fight between Eisav and the Bnai Yisrael. There was only one spot left and Eisav (getting old) seemed to have forgotten selling the spot to Yaakov. During the argument Chushim Ben Dan, who was hard of hearing, asked what was holding up the funeral. When he was told that Eisav was causing trouble, he drew his sword and removed Eisav's head, which

rolled into the cave. We see from here that Eisav's head was actually good - he just didn't use it very often.

- After Yaakov was niftar, the brothers were concerned that Yosef would take revenge on them. Yosef reassured them, even promising to support them and their families. He never did actually tell them that they were forgiven and the grandchildren of the shvatim have suffered because of it.
- Yosef lived out the rest of his years in Mitzrayim, and even saw Efraim's great-grandchildren. Before he was niftar, Yosef told to his brothers that Hashem would redeem them from Egypt. He made them swear to bring his bones out of Mitzrayim with them at that time. Yosef passed away at the age of 110 and was mummified.

**חֲזַק חֲזַק וְיִתְחַזַּק!!**