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- **Russian Website:** <http://www.boruh.info/> This website is in Russian, many articles and the parasha are posted on it every week.



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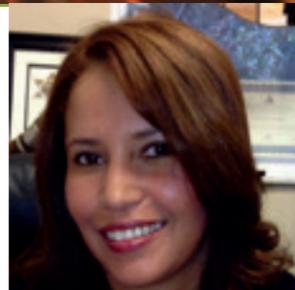
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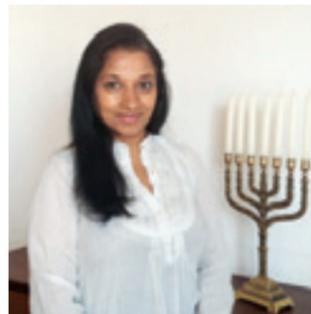
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Weekly  
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We pray every week for leaders of the Jewish Ministry, According to our list of prayer for 2015, I suggest that our partners pray from December 27, 2015 to January 2, 2016, for the Office of Adventist Mission General Conference and its leaders, Gary Krause and Rick McEdward. Let's pray for their ministry.



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**NEWS**

**IMMERSION IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA**

\* One of the most recent Jewish Adventist congregation is the one who meet in Caracas, Venezuela.



The leader of this congregation is Jorge Perez, a Jew who is very motivated for this ministry, running a congregation, giving public lectures, teaching Hebrew class and helping his fellow Adventists brethren to understand this Jewish Adventist Ministry. In one of the last

email we received from Jorge, he announced us the immersion of one of his contacts.

**GLOBAL MISSION MEETING**

\* The Global Mission meeting was held in Manaus (Brazil) on December 9 to 12 following the GM Director meeting, in order to hear Global Mission reports, to point out some challenges we meet in mission, and to prepare the agenda of the General Conference Issues Committee which will be held in April 2016 at the headquarter of the General Conference, in Silver Spring (MD). The organization of this meeting, prepared by Rick McEdward, Reinaldo Sequeira and Richard Elofer contributed to his success. On the following picture we see the members of this committee from the GC and Andrews University.



## Parasha Overview: VAYECHI

After 17 years in Egypt, Yaakov senses his days drawing to a close and summons Yosef. He has Yosef swear to bury him in the Machpela Cave, the burial place of Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka.

Yaakov falls ill and Yosef brings to him his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe. Yaakov elevates Ephraim and Menashe to the status of his own sons, thus giving Yosef a double portion that removes the status of firstborn from Reuven.

As Yaakov is blind from old age, Yosef leads his sons close to their grandfather. Yaakov kisses and hugs them.

He had not thought to see his son Yosef again, let alone Yosef's children. Yaakov begins to bless them, giving precedence to Ephraim, the younger, but Yosef interrupts him and indicates that Menashe is the elder. Yaakov explains that he intends 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 summons the rest of his sons in order



### SERACH, THE DAUGHTER OF ASHER

As we are closing the book of Genesis, it is interesting to speak a little about Serach, the daughter of Asher one of the sons of Yaakov. I have read a fascinating comment and story under the pen of Mendy Kaminker, (chabad.org). When Israel came to Egypt to meet his son Yosef, he came with all his family or people, among them is named the daughter of Asher, Serach, **“The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, with Serach their sister.”** (Genesis 46:17). Some commentators say that Serach was in fact Asher's grand-daughter, “Asher's son married, and fathered Serach.” According to the Midrash Serach had a special destiny because she was the one who was chosen by the sons of Yisrael to announce to him that Yosef was still alive and living in Egypt. Wendy Kaminker says: “For many years, Jacob mourned for his beloved son Joseph, who he was convinced had been killed by wild animals.

Many years after Joseph was last seen by his family, his brothers encountered him in Egypt, where he had risen in power to become second to the king. Joseph asked his brothers to hurry home and bring their elderly father back to Egypt, sending wagons with them to make it easier to transport their father and their families.

The brothers were afraid. Would the shock of the announcement that Joseph was still alive be too much for Jacob? They tried to think of a way to break it to him gently, and decided to ask Jacob's granddaughter Serach to tell him in a way that would not be shocking.

Midrash ha-Gadol says that Serach waited until Jacob began to pray. Then she stood in front of him and asked him questions: “Is Joseph in Egypt? Did he have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim?” Jacob heard her questions, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent, he understood that Joseph was alive.

Sefer ha-Yashar tells this story more vividly. It writes that Serach played a harp (or some other stringed instrument) and sang, “Joseph is

still alive, and he's a king in Egypt.” Because of her gentle way of breaking the news, Jacob gave Serach a blessing to live forever. And the fact is that Serach was mentioned in the book of Numbers as coming out of Egypt during the Exodus (Numbers 26:46), that means she could be at least 250 years-old when she left Egypt with Moshe and the people of Israel.

### END OF GENESIS

This week's Parasha, Vayechi, is the last Parasha of the Book of Bereishit (Genesis). Bereishit begins with creation and ends with the life of Yaakov. Yaakov's coming to Egypt began the 210 years of exile in Egypt for the children of Israel.

The Torah states: **“And Jacob lived (Vayechi) in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years.”** (Genesis 47:28). According to the sages of Israel, these Yaakov's seventeen years in Egypt were the years which he truly “lived”—they were the best years of his life. Seeing his two grandsons who were born and raised in

## PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

### Vayechi

וַיְחִי

Genesis 47:28 - 50:26



**“And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasse, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn).”**  
(Genesis 48:14)

Egypt, brought the greatest pleasure to him. As a result, Yaakov gave a special blessing to these two grandchildren, Ephraim and Manasse.

### YAAKOV WAS THE FIRST “SICK” IN HISTORY

The first time that the Torah mentions sickness is in this week's Parasha. In the beginning of the Parasha, the Torah tells us that Joseph is told **“Behold your father is sick.”** (Gen 48:1) Hearing this, Joseph took his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim and went to visit his father, Yaakov in Goshen. When Yaakov learns that Joseph has arrived, **“he strengthened himself and sat upon the bed.”** (Gen 48:2)

Rabbi Zalmen Marozov asks the question: Why is Yaakov the first one to be mentioned in the Torah that he became ill? He answers that the Midrash says that before Yaakov, people would not become sick but would pass away without any warning. Yaakov prayed that G-d let him know when his death was near so that he could pass along his last will and testament to

his children and bless them before his passing. Thus, Yaakov was the first person to become sick before passing away.

### YAAKOV EMOTION TO SEE YOSEF'S KIDS

When Joseph brought his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, to be blessed by their grandfather, Yaakov kissed and embraced them, and said to Joseph, “I didn't think I would see your face and now, G-d let me see also your children.” (Gen 48:11) Yaakov's fondness and admiration for these two grandchildren is clearly seen in the Parasha. In addition to giving Menashe and Ephraim special blessings, Yaakov appoints each as the head of a tribe in Israel. Menashe and Ephraim are Yaakov's only grandchildren to merit becoming heads of tribes.

Rabbi Zalmen Marozov ask this question: What was special about Ephrayim and Menashe? And give this interesting answer (interesting for every parent). Our sages explain that Yaakov's other children and grandchildren were raised under Yaakov's guidance. This naturally in-

stilled in them the spiritual heritage and love of G-d. However, his son Joseph was sold into slavery at the age of seventeen and his grandson's (Joseph's children), Ephraim and Menashe were born and raised in Egypt, away from their grandfather. Yet they conducted their lives as befitting a grandchild of Yaakov. Menashe and Ephraim proved to Yaakov that the education he gave his son Joseph, during his youth remained with him and enabled him to transmit the same values to his children even in such an alien environment. Our sages translate the first verse of the Parasha, And Yaakov lived (Vayechi) in the land of Egypt seventeen years, that Yaakov's seventeen years in Egypt were the years which he truly “lived” - they were the best years of his life. Seeing his two grandsons who were born and raised in

Egypt, brought the greatest pleasure to him. As a result, Yaakov gave a special blessing to these two grandchildren. “By you shall Israel bless, saying, ‘May G-d make you as Menashe and Ephraim,’ is Yaakov's blessing to all generations that no matter what the conditions, we should have the will and strength to be connected to our heritage.

to bless them as well. Yaakov's blessing reflects the unique character and ability of each tribe, directing each one in its unique mission in serving G-d.

Yaakov passes from this world at age 147. A tremendous procession accompanies his funeral cortege up from Egypt to his resting place in the Cave of Machpela in Hebron.

After Yaakov's passing, the brothers are concerned that Yosef will now take revenge on them. Yosef reassures them, even promising to support them and their families.

Yosef lives out the rest of his years in Egypt, seeing Ephraim's great-grandchildren. Before his death, Yosef foretells to his brothers that G-d will redeem them from Egypt.

He makes them swear to bring his bones out of Egypt with them at that time.

Yosef passes away at the age of 110 and is embalmed.

Thus ends Sefer Bereshit, the first of the five Books of the Torah.

## Haftara Overview

### 1Kings 2: 1-12

**Y**aakov is dying in our last parasha of the book of Genesis. He gives his last instructions to Yosef and other sons: [Yaakov] blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my ancestors Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude on the earth." (Gen. 48:15-16).

The Jewish tradition has made a parallel between Yaakov dying and King David dying and giving instruction to Solomon his son in the Haftarah for this week: "When David's time to die drew near, he charged his son Solomon, saying: "I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, be courageous, and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn. Then the LORD will establish his word that he spoke concerning me: 'If your

## SONS OF JACOB GENESIS 49



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### LIKE EPHRAIM AND MENASHE

**T**he Torah states: "So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying..." (Genesis 48:20), through this action of blessing his children and grandchildren, Yaakov become an example to follow for the Jewish people, that is why there is a very old Jewish tradition for parents to bless their children on shabbat and at special occasions. Many bless the children before lighting the Shabbat candles in placing their hands on their head and recite the blessing of Yaakov. The traditional blessings comes from this parasha. Indeed, when Yosef brought his two children to Yaakov, Yaakov placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim and his left on the head of Menashe. Although Menashe is older, Yaakov deliberately places his right hand on Ephraim, because Joshua, who will lead the Jewish people into Israel, will be a descendant of Ephraim. He blesses them that they serve as a model for all Jewish parents, who would bless their sons in Hebrew: *Yesimcha Elo-him K'Ephrayim V'kimmasha*— "God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh." (Genesis 48:20). Similarly the blessing to girls is, *Yesimaich Elo-him K'Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, V'Leah*—"May G-d make

"Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come. "Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father." (Genesis 49:1-2)

you like Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah."

### SWORD AND BOW

**Y**aakov tells his son Yosef, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and bring you back unto the land of your fathers. And I have given to you [the city of] Shchem which I took from the hands of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." (Gen 48:21-22) Yaakov gave Yosef the city of Shchem as a reward for promising that after his passing he will take him out of Egypt to be buried in Israel.

The "sword and bow," with which Yaakov says he has taken the city of Shchem, refers to his prayers which protected his sons Shimon and Levi when they conquered Shchem. The Jewish tradition asked: Why does Yaakov compare "prayer" to a "sword and bow?"

Our sages explain that prayer is like a battle. During prayers a person wants to connect to G-d and must fight to overcome the earthly inclinations of the body. In this sense, prayer represents a battle of spirituality over physical and light over darkness.

Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk explained more specifically why Yaakov compared prayer to the bow and arrow saying: "In order for the bow to shoot the arrow, the archer has to pull the string of the bow toward himself. The more he will pull the bow to himself, the further the arrow will travel. So too it is with prayer." For prayers to be effective, one must "pull" it toward themselves. Prayer has to affect the person to the depth of one's heart.

The closer one pulls the string of the bow, i.e. the more intention (kavana) they put into their prayer, the "higher" it flies, and the greater the effect of the prayer will be.

### YAAKOV DID NOT DIE!

**U**nlike Abraham and Yitzchak, the Torah doesn't use the word "death" to describe Yaakov's passing. As a result, our sages say, "Yaakov did not die!" The Talmud explains the above concept as follows: Abraham's son Yishmael and his descendants departed from Abraham's ways. Similarly, Yitzchak's son Esau and his descendants strayed from the teachings of Yitzchak. Yaakov was the only one of the patriarchs whose children all followed in their father's tradition.

Thus, our sages say, "Yaakov didn't die. For as long as his children are alive [continuing his ways] he too is alive." In other words, true life is not measured by the length of one's days. It is measured by the values one lives and the ability to transmit these values to future generations. Since Yaakov's children, grandchildren and great grandchildren continued in his footsteps, Yaakov is always considered alive even though he is waiting for the resurrection on the last day.

### LIFE OF THE TWELVE

**T**he Parasha ends with the passing of all of Yaakov's children. Joseph lived the shortest of his brothers. He passed away at the age of 110. Levi lived the longest and passed away at the age of 137.

## APOSTOLIC WRITINGS — MARK 13:32 - 14:9

**A**t the close of the first book of the Bible we meet Yaakov sick and dying: "Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers." (Genesis 48:21). In parallel to this story, we have in the besorah an allusion to the death of Yeshua. We know that Yeshua will die on this feast of Pesach, the text of Mark affirms: "It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him" (Mark 14:1).

Even though Yaakov was in communion with G-d, like everyone of us he did not know the exact time of his death. He was sick, almost blind, "Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, and he could not see well." (Genesis 48:10), that is why he knew that the day of his death would come soon.

In this portion of the Besorah, Yeshua continues his speech about the future of G-d's people and the end of time. The first affirmation in this part of his sermon is a prophecy given to the twelve apostles saying that he does not know the exact day of the end and nobody will know it: "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come." (Mark 13:32-33). In the same way, just before dying, Yaakov gave

some prophecies about the future of God's people to his twelve sons.

Both of them speak to their respective twelve using parables and metaphors. Yaakov starts his speech saying: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come. 'Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father.'" (Genesis 49:1-3), in his speech he compares each tribe of Israel to a symbolic representation: Reuven is "Unstable as water"... Simeon and Levi: weapons of violence are their swords... Judah is a lion's cub... Zebulun becomes a haven for ships... Issachar is a strong donkey... Dan a serpent in the way... Gad will be raiders... Asher is represented by food and delicacies... Naphtali is a doe... Joseph is a fruitful bough... and Benjamin is a ravenous wolf..." (Genesis 49:4-27). Yeshua does the same, he gives his prophecy in a form of metaphor: "It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake." (Mark 13: 34-37). After his death and resurrection Yeshua will ascend to heaven, he is the "man

going on a journey" of the parable. He gave to his twelve all responsibilities on his movement and his people, but one day the "man" who went to a journey will come back to take his people home. However, this "man", does not say when he is coming back. The workers have to be alert all the time to welcome the master when he will come back. Yeshua is coming back very soon, we are his workers who have to be alert in order to be ready to welcome him when he will come back.

There is another parallel in the parasha and the besorah of Mark, In Genesis Yosef demonstrated kindness to his brothers even after the death of his father, and in the besorah of Mark there is a woman who demonstrates kindness to Yeshua before he dies: "And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head." (Mark 14:3). Her name was Myriam, living in Bethany a small village near Yerushalaim, her love for the master was so big that yeshua wanted to give her example while he was speaking about his workers waiting for him. While we are waiting for the return of our master, we are encouraged to perform acts of kindness towards others, even towards the most insignificant people, in this way we will demonstrate that we love the Lord and follow his example of love.

heirs take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a successor on the throne of Israel.' "Moreover you know also what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me, how he dealt with the two commanders of the armies of Israel, Abner son of Ner, and Amasa son of Jether, whom he murdered, retaliating in time of peace for blood that had been shed in war, and putting the blood of war on the belt around his waist, and on the sandals on his feet. Act therefore according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to Sheol in peace. Deal loyally, however, with the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table; for with such loyalty they met me when I fled from your brother Absalom. ... I swore to him by the LORD, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' Therefore do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man; you will know what you ought to do to him, and you must bring his gray head down with blood to Sheol." Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David." (1 Kings 2:1-10).

## STORIES AND TRADITIONS

### LEFT HAND AND HEART

Rebbe Leib of Shpoleh, was a man of intense fervor. He said, "When I was a child of three, I saw the Baal Shem Tov and he placed his holy hand on my heart and since then I always felt warm."

Indeed the hand and heart are closely related. The Tefillin are placed on the left arm near the heart, in order to bind our heart (our love) and hand (mitzvot).

A man came to the doctor complaining that he wasn't feeling well. The doctor took the man's hand to check his pulse.

"It's my heart that's aching, not my hand," protested the patient.

"Let me enlighten you," replied the doctor. "The best way to know the state of a man's heart is through his hands!"

### G-D IS OUR PROVIDER

Rebbeinu Bechaya writes: "If a person puts his trust in G-d, then G-d takes care of all his needs. But when a person puts his trust in people, then G-d makes them dependent on those people."

The Talmud (Ketubot 67) tells: A poor man, who was once very wealthy, approached the sage, Rava, and begged for food. "What are you used to eating?" Rava asked. "I'm used to eating a plump chicken and aged wine," the man replied.

Rava was upset. "How can you request to be provided with such expensive food?" he demanded.

"Am I asking people to give me what belongs to them? My food comes from G-d and He gives everyone according to their needs. This is what I'm used to and if G-d wants, He will find a way to provide it!" The Talmud continues that Rava had a sister whom he hadn't seen for thirteen years. As Rava and the poor man were talking, Rava's sister arrived at her brother's

house. She brought him a gift: a plump chicken and vintage wine! When Rava saw this, he turned to the poor man and exclaimed, "Now I see that you are right. G-d does provide each person according to his or her needs. Sit down and eat what my sister brought. G-d intended it for you!"

### A HEAVENLY DECREE

Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai's students went to visit him on his death bed, he began to cry. His students asked him why he was weeping. He answered that if he were brought before a mortal king who could be appeased or bribed, and whose decrees extended only as far as the grave, he would wail. How much more so now that he was soon to face the judgment of God, Who cannot be appeased or bribed and Whose punishment is eternal. Did Rebbe ben Zakkai really entertain the possibility that he was deserving of eternal death, the punishment reserved for heretics of the worst type? When Rebbe ben Zakkai went out to meet the Roman general Vespasian during the siege of Jerusalem, he was allowed to make certain requests. He asked: (1) that the Sanhedrin be permitted to continue in Yavneh, (2) that Rabban Gamliel be spared and the line of the Nesi'im thereby preserved, and (3) that a doctor be provided to heal Rabbi Tzaddok, who had fasted 40 years to avert the destruction of the Temple. Many years later, the Sages discussed whether Rebbe ben Zakkai acted correctly. Some thought he should have instead asked that the Temple and Jerusalem be spared. Others argued that had he asked for too much, he might have ended up with nothing. The Talmud concludes that he erred. He should have asked

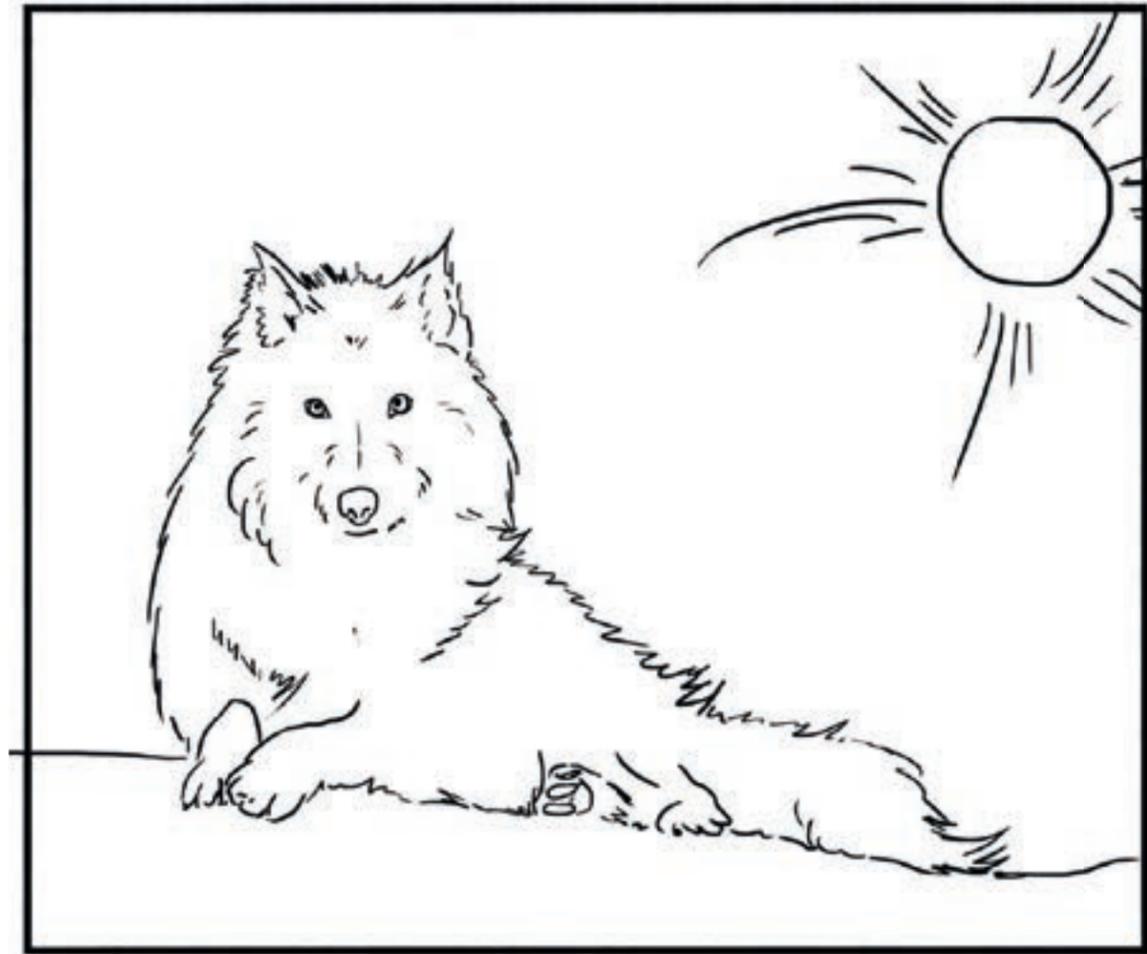
that the Temple be spared, but it was in fact the Divine Will that he err, since God had decreed that the Temple be destroyed.

Before his death, Rebbe ben Zakkai was also beset with doubts as to whether he had acted properly. In his rigorous self-scrutiny, another explanation of why he erred came to him. He had opposed the zealots, who led the rebellion against Rome. But the zealots had ignored his opinion and forced the issue by burning all Jerusalem's food supplies. The destruction of the Temple and exile of the Jewish people was an apparent vindication of Rebbe ben Zakkai's stance, since the zealots could hardly claim a Divine sanction for a policy that failed so miserably. On his deathbed, Rebbe ben Zakkai worried that perhaps subconsciously he had not asked that the Temple be spared out of a fear that there would then be no clear proof that he had been right. And he suspected that his own honor might have influenced his request. If that were true, and as a consequence the Temple were destroyed, would he not have merited eternal death?

The Talmud tells us that Rebbe ben Zakkai's suspicions were unfounded; he was innocent; the Temple was destroyed by a Heavenly decree. Yet we can learn from Rebbe Yochanan's concern as to the power of subtle traces of honor, desire and jealousy in distorting one's decisions. It is our duty to learn from the sale of Yosef the devastating effect of jealousy and hatred, even in its subtlest forms and even in the greatest of people, so that we can strive to conduct ourselves in a manner that will cause us to merit seeing the ultimate reunion of Yosef and his brothers, when Mashiach ben Yosef will be sent as a harbinger of Mashiach ben David.

## KIDS PARASHA VAYECHI

וַיְחִי



### Genesis 47:28 - 50:26

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall. The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely, yet his bow remained unmoved; his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), by the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents, up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers. Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil." (Genesis 49:22-27)

<http://www.bnai-tikkun.org.nz>

### Inspirational Corner

❖ Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His experience testifies to the power of importunate prayer. It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer. (Pr. 125)

### Inspirational Corner

❖ Jacob was humbled, and required his family to humble themselves, and to lay off all their ornaments, for he was to make an atonement for their sins, by offering a sacrifice unto God, that he might be entreated for them, and not leave them to be destroyed by other nations. God accepted the efforts of Jacob to remove the wrong from his family, and appeared unto him, and blessed him, and renewed that promise made to him, because his fear was before him." (1SP 126)