



Parshas Vayechi 2022, our greatest blessing

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of Eden Hemo's birthday. May Hashem bless her and her family with health, happiness, and success.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Shaul Ben Berta, and Lior Gabay Ben Michal.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Ya'akov living the best seventeen years of his life in Egypt. As he began to get ill, he called for Yosef to visit him. When Yosef arrived, Ya'akov asked him to swear he would bury him with his parents in Israel. After he swore, Ya'akov then blessed Yosef's two sons, Efraim and Menasha. He elevates them to the status of his sons and as tribes among the Jewish people.

As his days numbered, Ya'akov called his sons together one final time. He blesses each son and assigns them their role as a tribe amongst the Jewish nation. At 147 years old, Ya'akov Avinu passed away peacefully in Egypt.

Yosef receives permission from Pharoah to bury his father in Israel. Many senior Egyptian ministers accompanied Yosef and his brothers as they took their father to his final resting place. He is buried in Chevron, in the Meoras HaMachpelah, next to his parents and grandparents.

However, a question comes to mind: When Ya'akov had Yosef swear that he would be buried in Israel, he also blessed Yosef. The Pasuk writes (48:15), *"Ya'akov blessed Yosef and said, the G-d that my fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak followed. The G-d that has been my shepherd from my birth until today. The angel who has saved me from all harm **bless the children and let them be called in my name, the name of fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak. And may they grow and multiply upon the earth.**"* But Ya'akov seemingly blesses Efraim and Menasha, Yosef's two sons, and **not** Yosef. Where is Ya'akov's blessing to Yosef in this conversation?!

The Malbim (*Rav Meir Leib Wisser, a 19th-century Torah commentary focused on the unique meaning of each word*) gives an interesting explanation. He writes that Ya'akov begins the blessing by gifting Yosef his protector and guardian angel. But then stops to bless Yosef's children Efraim and Menasha; he elevates them to the status of his sons and tribes within the Jewish nation.

The Malbim explains that after Ya'akov blesses Yosef's children, he concludes Yosef's blessing a few Pasukim later. The Torah recounts (48:22-23) *"And Ya'akov told Yosef," I am about to pass away, but G-d will be with you and bring you to your ancestor's land. And I give you the city of Shechem, which I won from the Amorites with my sword and bow. It is yours and will be your extra portion of the land."*

However, the Ramban (*Rav Moshe Ben Nachman, a leading scholar, philosopher, and Kabbalist from the 13th century*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation.

He writes that Ya'akov's blessings to Efraim and Menasha were also Yosef's blessings. As the Talmud states, blessing the fruit before we eat is blessing its source, the tree itself.

The Ramban explains that Yosef is blessed with Ya'akov's blessings to Efraim and Menasha. There is no greater pleasure for parents than seeing their children succeed, prosper, and flourish. Since their blessing was "***grow and multiply***," Yosef was, in fact, being blessed.

The Ramban continues that the highest blessings Yosef as a parent can receive are his sons obtaining his stature and prestige. Given that Ya'akov blessed Efraim and Menasha and elevated their status to his sons, Yosef is being truly blessed.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we realize that our greatest accomplishment would be the continuation of our families, convictions, and beliefs. Our biggest source of pleasure will be our children following in our footsteps with trust and faith in G-d.

Our highest achievement will not be the money in our account or the house we live in but the unity it creates. A family of unique and special people bound together by tradition, purpose, and belief. There is no greater blessing than our children not falling far from our tree, the G-dly tree of life.

"Children grow to fill the space we create for them, and if it's big, they'll walk tall. Ideals are big; but material possessions are small."

-Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*