



Parshas Vayechi 2018, wisdom that hinders

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Edward Ben Shaul. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

This week's Parsha Perspective is also in honor of Fayga Sarah bas Gittel, Sasson Betzalel ben Batya, and Sapir Bas Ariela. May they have a quick and complete recovery.

Our Parsha begins with Ya'akov Avinu asking Yosef to swear that he would bury him in the land of Israel. Ya'akov then blessed Yosef's two sons, Efraim and Menashe, elevating them to his own sons' status as tribes within the Jewish people.

Yaakov then calls his children together for the final time. Rashi explains that he wished to reveal to them when Moshiach would come. But Hashem removed his divine spirit so we would continue to work and yearn for the ultimate redemption every day. Subsequently, Ya'akov began to bless each son and gave them their roles and responsibilities in the Jewish nation.

At the age of 147 years old, Ya'akov Avinu passed away in the land of Egypt. A funeral procession consisting of his children, grandchildren, and Egyptian ministers accompanied Ya'akov to his final resting place in the Meoras HaMachpelah, where he was buried next to his parents and grandparents.

However, a question comes to mind: Why would Yaakov want to tell his children when the redemption would take place?

Yaakov knew that salvation would only come thousands of years later, so telling his children might motivate them to take action to hasten Moshiach's arrival. Now begs the question, why would G-d cause Yaakov to forget the date of the redemption if it was meant to motivate the Jewish people to do good deeds to quicken its coming?!

There is a very well-known cliché, "**knowledge is power,**" that if you know your opponent strategies before that board meeting, or you have the playbook of the opposing team before a game, you are setting yourself up for success, you will have the feeling of being in complete control, and the master of your own fate.

However, that's only up to a point; imagine you knew everything. Imagine you knew exactly when and how you would die and every twist and turn you would take throughout your life. Would you feel in control, or would you feel like a pawn in a chess game? Knowledge may bring power, but absolute knowledge will bring utter powerlessness.

Furthermore, the knowledge of the exact date of the coming of Moshiach would have the opposite effect on the Jewish people; instead of motivating them. It would allow them to glide by in life, impartial and indifferent to their actions. They know that no matter what they do, Moshiach will come at its written date, discouraging potential growth.

But this completely contradicts G-d's desire for humanity because according to the Torah, every action we do has ultimate significance to G-d. That we are given the ability to learn from our mistakes, change and grow.

G-d wants us to better ourselves and, through us, the world. We can take this world from a physical state to a spiritual one that is worthy of G-d's complete revelation.

G-d caused Yaakov to forget the redemption's exact date because our actions are not mechanical or robotic. So we know that every deed we do is of ultimate significance and contributes to our relationship with G-d.

To teach us that we have free will, not only to make mistakes but to learn. To see them for what they are and grow from them, and with that, we have the power to change the course of history.

In our daily life, we must realize that every action we do, whether spiritually or physically, has ultimate significance because the future is not entirely written. We cannot change fate; there's no prediction we can defy because we control our destiny. Through our choices and willpower, and our determination to succeed.

We are created in the image of G-d, meaning we have free choice. We have the freedom to choose to stay stagnant in our life or to learn from past experiences. To change, grow, and reach our full potential, more than anyone, even ourselves, could predict. We can write history, but only if we choose to do it.

***"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery,
but today is a gift of G-d, which is why we call it the present."***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*