

Parshas Vayechi

This week's parsha is the final parsha of Chumash Bereishis. The parsha is "closed" meaning, there is no distinct break between the last parsha, and Rashi explains this is for 2 reasons. 1) Once the Yakov passed away, the hearts and minds of the Jews were closed because of the suffering of the slavery, 2) because Yakov wanted to tell his children about the future end, but he was closed off from the prophecy. This is significant because we know that Yakov, as the forefather for whom our nation is named (Bnei Yisrael). Yakov wanted to make sure there was continuity and sustainability of the nation, regardless of their journey to slavery.

We see this "control of outcomes" when Yakov went to bless Yosef's sons, he said "Mi eileh", (because of the future where there was a possibility of murky outcomes). Yet Yosef got Yakv to bless them, "Bonai Heim" they are my children, meaning while you, Yakov, may see negativity ahead, right now they are righteous, but more so, there is a chance that destiny could be rewritten.

Yakov makes Yosef swear about being buried in the land of his forefathers, (Canaan, Maras Hamachpeila), and one can ask why this extreme measure of a shavua was taken. Rashi explains because, Yakov didn't want to suffer from the lice (future plague), he didn't want his body to roll underground in the future (techias hameisim), and because he didn't want to be turned into a pagan god.

Yakov again, makes sure, as Rashi states on 'chesed v'emes' (kindness and truth 47:29) that Yakov wanted to make sure Yosef followed his instructions to bury Yakov in Canaan, where there is no reciprocation. Meaning once the person passes there is no way for the passed on to repay the burial. Yakov relied on Yosef specifically (not any of

the other brothers) to carry out the act of burying Yakov in Canaan. This request is far deeper than just relying on a proper burial. It meant, leaving the land of Egypt (albeit temporarily), but that was not supposed to happen as a nation until after exodus. Furthermore, it meant delaying the burial of Yakov, until they traveled to Canaan, which would contravene the Halachik obligation of the family to bury the body as expeditiously as possible. As well it could be understood that Yakov was potentially going to be stuck in Egypt had he not made Yosef swear (based on Rashi's explanation), which would open the possibility for Esav or another to take Yakov's place in being buried in Maras Hamachpeila. According to the mepharshim, Esav's head was severed on the day Yakov was laid to rest (and was buried in the cave as a merit for some of his good deeds). Yakov needed to make sure that to solidify his place as a forefather, and our father, he needed to be buried in Canaan.

This can be linked to Yakov's trying to tell his children about the end of days. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that Yakov's request for quick exit models our aspiration to get out of golus quickly. We cannot be content in golus. This is a sign for us about our time, which is to beg to get out of golus, even if we are comfortable and content (which Yakov arguably was, as it is explained, Yakov lived his best years in Egypt and was content).

This is a fitting end to the book of Bereishis. We are laid the foundations of the universe, world, and our history to directly link us to our past, and what is to arrive in the future. The giving of the Torah in Chumash Shemos, is our guidebook, and concretization of our place as servants of Hashem, and children of Yakov, who remain steadfast on our mission to welcome Mashiach speedily in our days.

Good Shabbos.