

# תורת אביגדור

הגאון ר' אביגדור מיללער זצ"ל

SEFER BREISHIS - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

לע"נ ר' מנחם מענדל בן נחמן ע"ה ור' שלום בן שלמה הלוי ע"ה

## TORAS AVIGDOR

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

פרשת ויחי

*Becoming One People*

PARSHA SPONSOR:

לזכר נשמת

הרב ר' יצחק אהרן בן הרב ר' אליהו זינגער ז"ל

נתנדב ע"י בניו

ברוך, אליהו צבי הערש, נתן, יוסף, ישראל

זינגער



לע"נ הרב אביגדור הכהן מיללער זצ"ל | הרבנית חנה עטיל מיללער ע"ה | מאיר אבנר בן לאה ע"ה | פלורי בת אסתר ע"ה |  
הונא בן דוד ע"ה | רות בת יוסף אשר ע"ה | היים בן סוניה ע"ה | רחל בת ויקטוריה ע"ה | משה בן ליזא ע"ה | לינדא  
בת רינה ע"ה | שמואל בן רחל ע"ה | אליזבט בת לינדא ע"ה | שמטוב הלוי בן פלורי ע"ה | תנצב"ה לזכות אהובה בת מרים



SEFER BREISHIS

THE **CHOPP HOLDINGS** EDITON

לע"נ ר' מנחם מענדל בן נחמן ע"ה ר' שלום בן שלמה הלוי ע"ה

**Toras Avigdor booklets are available for free on the web:**

Torasavigdor.org | Ladaat.info | Yiddishevinkel.com | Parshasheets.com | Torasavigdor.app

**Via email:** [signup@torasavigdor.org](mailto:signup@torasavigdor.org) | **Whatsapp:** 347.494.0820 | **Telegram:** /torasavigdor

Listen to a narration on [TorasAvigdor.app](https://torasavigdor.app), across all podcast platforms and on the **Toras Avigdor app**

**Pick up a hard copy in the following cities:**

<b>Antwerp</b> .....047.658.3946	<b>Far Rockaway</b> .....718.954.1811	<b>Mountindale</b> ..845.554.6348
<b>Baltimore</b> .....410.908.3947	<b>Five Towns</b> .....516.417.8031	<b>New Square</b> .....845.354.5638
<b>Berlin</b> .....178.854.0868	<b>Flatbush</b> .....929.314.7911	<b>Passaic</b> .....Bagel Munch
<b>Boca Raton</b> .....914.830.2483	<b>Gateshead</b> .....0793.018.9637	.....200 Main Ave.
<b>Boro Park</b> .....646.315.4248	<b>Great Neck</b> .....516.695.7606	<b>Phoenix</b> .....602.730.4564
<b>Chicago</b> .....773.789.9870	<b>Johannesburg</b> .....82.446.1274	<b>Philadelphia</b> ...267.207.6002
<b>NEW Cedarhurst</b> 917-224-2224	<b>Kensington</b> .....718.683.6854	<b>Queens</b> .....917.608.5661
<b>Cincinnati</b> .....513.630.7000	<b>Lakewood</b> .....347.414.0304	<b>Seattle</b> .....206.722.2212
<b>Cleveland</b> .....216.965.4216	<b>NEW Linden</b> .....908-275-3251	<b>Staten Island</b> ..646.923.1290
<b>Connecticut</b> .....203.721.5405	<b>Los Angeles</b> .....323.370.5736	<b>Toronto</b> .....416.834.1444
<b>Deal</b> .....732.539.6715	<b>Melbourne</b> .....0418.314.071	<b>UK</b> .....0789.099.6936
<b>Detroit</b> .....248.224.7854	<b>Mexico City</b> .....552.572.0101	<i>Call for a complete listing of</i>
<b>Eretz Yisroel</b> ...072.222.3383	<b>Minneapolis</b> .....612.965.3608	<i>locations in the United Kingdom</i>
<i>Call for a complete listing of</i>	<b>Monroe</b> .....845.782.2438	<b>W. Hempstead</b> ...516.417.8031
<i>locations in Eretz Yisroel</i>	<b>Monsey</b> .....845.587.8343	<b>Williamsburg</b> .....917.627.2211
<b>Fallsburg</b> .....845.866.3701	<b>Montreal</b> .....514.991.0453	

**Or get a mail subscription,  
email [subs@torasavigdor.org](mailto:subs@torasavigdor.org) or call/text 862-800-7905**

**Enjoying these booklets? Let others be inspired too!**

**Quickpay/Zelle/Paypal** – [info@torasavigdor.org](mailto:info@torasavigdor.org) | **Cash App** – 732.844.3670  
**Credit Card donations** Call/text 732.844.3670 or email [info@torasavigdor.org](mailto:info@torasavigdor.org)

**Year 3 | Issue 12**

© Copyright 2019 by: [TorasAvigdor.org](https://torasavigdor.org)

**Email:** [info@torasavigdor.org](mailto:info@torasavigdor.org) | **Telephone:** 732.844.3670

**Address:** 5014 16th Avenue, Suite 488, Brooklyn NY 11204

# פרשת ויחי

WITH

# R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

## Becoming One People

### Contents:

Part I. One Nation - 3

Part II. Nation of Generations - 9

A Vort on the Parsha - 16

## Part I. One Nation

### Yaakov Avinu's Fear on His Deathbed

The *gemara* in *Pesachim* (56a) tells us that when Yaakov Avinu was lying on his deathbed with his sons surrounding him, he was very uneasy, very troubled. What was he worried about? Our *chachomim* tell us that as he looked around at his twelve children for the last time, he noticed again what he had been aware of all his life – that each child was strikingly different than the next. It's a remarkable thing how Hakodosh Boruch Hu made Yaakov's children so dissimilar one from the other.

The *gemara* (*ibid.* 4a) says that. **ההוא דהנה קא אָזיל וְאָמַר** – There was a man who used to go around and say **אֶבֶף יִמָּא אָסִיסְנִי בִּירְאָתָא** – “I want to live along the coast.” He loved the seashore and he spoke about it all the time: “One day, when I retire I’m going to build a home by the sea and live there.” **בְּרַקוּ אֲחֵרֵיו** – So they began to investigate; why does he talk so much about the seashore? And they found out he came from Zevulun. **זְבוּלֻן לְחוּף יָמִים יִשְׁבֵּן** – Hakodosh Boruch Hu put into Zevulun a

love for the oceans, and therefore they were a seafaring nation. Other *shevatim* however not so much. They didn't like the smell of the salty sea and they got seasick too - they preferred walking on land.

The *gemara* there says that another man used to go around saying: *הונו דיני* - "Judge my *din*." It means that whenever there was some disagreement between him and someone else, he didn't want to arbitrate; he wasn't interested in *pesharah*. "No; let's go to the judge and let's hear what he says."

Now, he said it so many times *הונו דיני, הונו דיני* - "Judge my case," "Judge my case," that people thought it was suspicious. *בְּרָקוֹ אַחֲרָיו* - They searched after his pedigree, and they found that he came from Dan. *דָּן יָרִין עִמּוֹ* - Dan was rigid; he liked to follow the strict line of the law. There are people like that who are very strict with rules; they don't like to deviate at all. Even little children sometimes are born that way; it's their nature to follow rules. Others, not so - they're more flexible; they're not such sticklers for *din*.

### **Parents Are Like Book Covers**

The children of Yaakov were very different, and the truth is that it's like that in every family. Let's say you visit your cousins - it's surprising how different the children are from each other. Here you have one brother; he's handsome and he's graceful too. He looks like a real Lord Fauntleroy - a beautiful boy. Only that he's a bit sleepy, a little lazy. Next to him is his brother, not as good looking, but full of energy, a ball of fire. It's a remarkable fact; Two brothers from the same parents but they're not alike at all. Maybe you'll find some resemblance in their noses, but otherwise they're entirely different. Sisters also; they're very different one girl from the next.

Now, as long as Yaakov was alive he wasn't so concerned - parents are like the covers of a book that keep all the pages together. But once the covers start falling off, the pages start separating. So the *medrash* tells us that Yaakov looked over his sons who were gathered around his deathbed and he said: "What's going to happen after I leave this world? What's going to be when I'm not here anymore? Who will keep the holy nation together? *לִישׁוּעָתֶךָ קוּיֵתִי הַשֵּׁם* - Hashem, we need a big *yeshua*, a big salvation."

### **The Shofar of Redemption**

The truth is that we're still facing that same problem today; and it's not going away - it's one of the great problems that will nag us even when Moshiach comes. Every day we say in our *tefillos*, *הִקְעֵ בְּשׁוֹפָר גְּדוֹל*

לְהַרְוֵנוּ – *Sound the great shofar for our freedom.* We're asking Hakodosh Boruch Hu to blow that great blast that will proclaim to the nations to liberate the *Am Yisroel* from their subjugation. Now, exactly how that sound will be is not important – it would be interesting to know maybe, but whatever it is, it's going to be a sound that will wake up the world. It's a warning blast to the nations that the truth of *Hashem Elokei Yisroel* is on the march forward.

And when that shofar is blown, all the nations of the world will be frightened into action – the entire world will begin to cooperate in the plan of לְהַרְוֵנוּ – *to give us our full independence.* There'll be great conferences in countries all over the world and the nations will come together to see what can be done to help facilitate the reestablishment of the *Am Yisroel* as a nation on its own land. It will be a big job – entire communities will have to be transplanted to *Eretz Yisroel*. And you have to have *parnasah* in *Eretz Yisroel* too – in *Moshiach's* time you still have to make a living. “The world will follow its accustomed nature” (Rambam *Hilchos Teshuva* 9:2), and everybody will need a profession. We'll need homes too – nobody wants to live on the streets. It will be complicated and all of that is included in the word וְקִבְּצֵנוּ – *Gather us.* It's a big request!

### **The Bigger Request**

But we ask *Hashem* for even more than that; we add an extra word in that *tefilah* and we say וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד – *Gather us yachad, together.* Although וְקִבְּצֵנוּ, *gather us,* already implies “together,” yet the word *yachad* is added because as difficult as it will be to gather us in from everywhere in the world, the bigger problem will be that it's going to be from אַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ, we're going to be arriving from the four corners of the world. And therefore we ask You *Hashem* that it should be *yachad*, with a feeling of togetherness and camaraderie.

*Yachad!* Ooh wah, that's a big request! All the various communities in exile will all come marching back. From the Far Eastern countries they'll come. They'll come from South Africa and from Russia and from England. They'll come from Williamsburg and from Baltimore and from Alaska. They'll come from places we didn't even know there were Jews.

And when they come, they'll come with different dialects and different languages. They'll come with different clothing and different faces. They'll come with different *minhagim*, customs and mannerisms. Even *minhagei Torah* are different – *minhagim* of *Teiman* are very different than the *minhagim* of Jews in Lithuania. And the *minhagim* of the Lithuanian Jews are different than the *chassidische minhagim*.

## **Turbans, Beketches and Bend-downs**

So now the *Teimanim* will come with their robes and their turbans, and some Jews, let's say, from Canada will come with black hats. The *chassidim* will come with their *shtreimelech* and their *kapotes*. Some will come with top hats yet – some people still wear top hats on *yontif*. So one man wearing a top silk hat, another man wearing a turban, and a third man wearing only a *yarmulkeh* – they might look at each other like they're from different peoples.

That's not *yachad*! It's necessary for everyone to amalgamate into one nation – a **גוי אֶחָד**. *Echad* means everybody is together – brothers to be together, husbands and wives to be together, families should be together, communities to be together. The *Teimanim* should be together with the *Sefardim*. And the *Sefardim* with the *Ashkenazim*, and the *Williamsburgers* with the *Lakewooders*. We want everybody within those communities to get along with each other.

### **The Shevatim Have the Solution**

Now, maybe some people are hoping that such a thing will just come by fiat, by a command of Hashem. It'll just happen by itself, you think. Well, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it won't be that way - somehow the differences will have to be overcome. And therefore, we're bothered by the same worry that bothered Yaakov Avinu: "What's going to be?" we say. **לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוּיָתִי ה'שָׁם** – We need something that will guide us to the togetherness that is required of the Am Yisroel."

So at that time, when Yaakov Avinu cried out to Hashem, the brothers said to him: *Shema Yisroel* – "Listen, Yisroel our father; it's true – we're very different one from each other. But we have something that unites us. *Hashem Elokeinu* – Hashem is our G-d; we're all *avdei Hashem*. *Hashem echad* – There's one Hashem who we're all serving and that's going to keep us together despite the differences in our nature. Whatever differences you see, they are overwhelmed by the *yachad*, the togetherness that comes from of our serving the One Hashem.

### **The Secret to Shalom Bayis**

I'll give you a *mashal*; it's a *mashal* but it's true for itself as well. A husband is very different from his wife. Don't ever expect when you get married that your wife will be like you. Whatever dreams you might have, you will always discover that after all she is a woman and you are a man. **נָשִׁים עַם בְּפָנֵי עַצְמָן**, women are a different nation, the *gemara* says. Your natures are entirely different. You don't like to talk, maybe,

and she does – she loves to talk. You like *fleishigs* and she likes *milchigs*. He wants this color couch she wants a different color. What's going to be?!

And the answer is that by nature they *are different*, but when they come together under the *chuppah*, and they understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is there too, so the differences are overshadowed by *Hashem Echad*. Who cares if they're different? It makes no difference, because both together are united in the great ideal of serving Hakadosh Boruch Hu. They both aspire towards building a Jewish tabernacle of *avodas Hashem*, bringing up a family of *avdei Hashem* – who cares if they're different?! **הַשֵּׁם אֶלְקֵינוּ הַשֵּׁם אֶחָד** and therefore what difference does it make if your wife has certain interests and you have different interests; you're both united in your hearts to build a home for *Hashem Echad*!

And that's what the brothers said to their father: **אֵין בְּלִבֵּנוּ אֶלָּא אֶחָד** – We only have one Hashem *and therefore* we'll remain one people forever, united around Him. And when Yaakov heard that, so the *gemara* says he was consoled. He said, **בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלִכוּתוֹ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד** – “The glory of Hashem's kingdom will continue forever.” If you will continue to be united in *avodas Hashem* despite the differences between you, then each one will make the *kvod Shamayim* even greater by contributing his uniqueness and dedicating his qualities to the service of Hashem.

### **Hashem Makes Us A Nation**

What we're saying now is that the binding of the book that keeps the pages from falling out is that we all identify with each other in the essential ideal of **שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשֵּׁם אֶלְקֵינוּ הַשֵּׁם אֶחָד**. Whatever differences there may be that seem to pull us in different directions, they're all overcome by the glue of *avodas Hashem*. We're all connected to each other in the bond of serving *Hashem Echad* – it's Hashem that makes us one people.

That's an important lesson that we learn from a *Mechilta*. In *Az Yashir* we praise Hashem and we say to Him: **וַיַּרְבֵּב גְּאוּנְךָ תִּהְרַס קִמְיָךְ** – *In Your great majesty, You overthrew those who rose up against You*. So the *Mechilta* asks as follows: What does it mean, “Who rose up against You?” Did the Egyptians rise up against Hashem? They rose up against *Bnei Yisrael*, that's all.

And what the *Mechilta* says there is like this: **כָּל מִי שֶׁקָּם בְּנֶגְדַּי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵאֱלֹהֵי קָם בְּנֶגְדִי הַקֹּב"ה** – *Anybody who rises up against Yisroel, he's actually ising up against Hashem*. Because what is the *Am Yisroel* after all? Are we a nation like the Polish nation? Like the Irish or the Italians? *Chas*

v'shalom! The only thing that makes us a nation is that we serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu. אֵין אֲמַתְנֵנוּ אִמָּה אֶלָּא בְּתוֹרָה – Our nation is only a nation because of the Torah (Rav Saadia Gaon, *Emunos Vdei'os* 3:7). Hashem gave us the Torah and that's what made us His people. Who are the *Am Yisroel*? Only those who keep the Torah to this day. The *frum* Jews keep the Torah – we are a Torah-nation. That's the cause of our existence and that's the only thing that binds our nation together.

### **We're Not Strangers**

And that's why we identify with all observant Jews, whether they're Jews in Teiman or Lakewood or Lubavitch or Bnei Brak or in Boro Park or Baltimore. Wherever they are, we identify with them because we're one with them. Whether they're Sephardi Jews, whether they're Syrian Jews, whether they're Egyptian Jews. All the Jews who are loyal to the Torah, that's our people. That's the *Am Echad* of the *Hashem Echad* and we have to identify with them – you can't feel like he's an outsider. A Galicianer can't think, "I'm a stranger to a Hungarian Jew." No, we're not strangers to anybody if they're loyal Jews.

Ohhh, now we're talking! Because even though we all have our differences and our own lives, there always remains this glue of service of Hashem that binds us together in this kinship of brotherhood. It's much more than a blood line; it's a real bond, a bond of the mind that actually ties us together. We're not merely connected to each other by blood, by DNA. A fellow Jew is a brother who is עֵמִיתִךָ, he's עֵמֶד בְּתוֹרָה, וגִּבּוֹרֵי חַיִּים. *Chazal* tell us that אָחִיךָ means בְּמִצְוֹת, "your brother in mitzvos."

### **I Love My People, Yisroel**

So if you walk in the streets and you see Jewish boys with yarmulkes and black hats coming out of the *yeshivos* or buses carrying children to *yeshivos*, your heart should overflow with happiness. You have to feel a great respect for your fellow *ovdei Hashem*. You're looking at *your* people! If you see a group of *frum* girls dressed *b'tznius* coming out of the *Beis Yaakov* schools, walking with decency, and wearing long skirts, your heart should be full of happiness. Those girls are *your* people!

You walk through blocks and blocks and you see fathers with children going to the *beis hakeneses* and you love to see it. Your heart swells with pride and happiness. Hashem wants that! Some people are so happy when they see Jews. They just weep with joy when they see the Jewish people.

That's why it does you very good to walk through Boro Park. Big *mezuzos* one after the other. Blocks and blocks of Jewish houses. Whenever I come to Boro Park, I feel a reverence. It's the truth – I rarely go, but when I turn off Ocean Parkway down Eighteenth Avenue and I start approaching Boro Park, I feel a *yiras hakavod*. I'm thinking, "It's such a great happiness to be a part of a nation of *tzadikim*."

That's what you should be thinking as you walk: "I'm walking among my people. It's my people and I love them. I don't care what hat he wears or what group he belongs to; it's all my people! These are the people in this world whom I identify with."

## Part II. Nation of Generations

---

### Identifying With Our History

Now, when we say that we want to be together with the *Am Yisroel*, we have to have two ideas in mind. One is what we've been saying now, that we have to be together, *yachad*, with the *Am Yisroel* of today. We identify with all of the *frum* Jews and we see the good points in everybody – we realize that each *kehillah* has something to offer because we're all bound up together in the goal of *Hashem Echad*. It doesn't mean that we have to give up our individual ways of serving Hashem, but we have to appreciate what others do too; we're all together saying **הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַשֵּׁם אֶחָד**. That's very important. We should never neglect appreciating the *Am Yisroel* of today – that goes without saying.

But besides for being *yachad* with all the *kehillos* of *frum* Jews today, it's just as important to be together with the *Am Yisroel* of all the past generations. We have to always remember that we are members of the *Am Hashem* in its totality from the beginning down till today. We must be part and parcel of our whole history – not only those who are here today. We have to live with the *avar*, with our past. That's called being a member of the *Am Yisroel*.

### Count the Generations

Because who is the *Am Yisroel*? All of them! Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Sarah, Rivkah and Rochel. The *shevatim* and the *dor hamidbar*. Everyone! Moshe Rabbeinu and his generation, Yehoshua and his generation, all the *Shoftim*, and Shmuel HaNavi and his generation. Shaul and Dovid and after that Shlomo HaMelech. Yeshayah

and Yirmiyeh and Yechezkel and then Shimon HaTzaddik and then all the *Tana'im* and *Amora'im*, all the *Rishonim* and *Achronim*. We are one with our nation from its inception and with all the generations down until today and we should feel a part of them.

If someone is lacking that, then he's lacking identification with the *Klal Yisroel*, because the *Am Yisroel* means its totality, all of the *doros*. You're together not only with the Jews of your generation – you're together with all those who went before! All the generations of *shlomei emunei Yisroel* that came before us should be part of your personality.

### **Table Talk in Williamsburg**

Now how do we do that? The first thing is that if you don't know about them, you're not identifying with them. If you know about a baseball player, or a movie star or a politician, more than you know about Avraham Avinu, it means you don't identify with the *Am Yisroel*. And so, it's only the person who is constantly learning – he learns *chumash* and he's repeating all the time the stories of the *Avos*, and he's telling himself and his children stories about the *Imahos*; he sees a friend on the street and he's talking about Moshe Rabeinu in the *parsha* – that person is living with the *Am Yisroel*.

That's how Jews were always. In ancient times, about a hundred years ago, what did Jews talk about? They didn't have any newspapers. Jews didn't have any newspapers in the small towns. Even in the big towns, it was a rarity. When the Jew spoke, he spoke about the *parshas hashavua*. When I was a boy, I used to eat Shabbos at a relative's table in Williamsburg. They just came over from Europe. They talked at the table of the *parshas hashavua* – that's all they talked about. They weren't *lamdanim* but they had nothing else to talk about! *Parshas hashavua* – that was their people, their history.

They lived with Avraham Avinu! If you are part of *kol Yisroel* you're thinking of Avraham Avinu. **זוֹכֵר תְּקֵרֵי אֲבוֹת** – *Hashem remembers the greatness of our forefathers*. You're asking Him to remember? How about you remembering? And so we have to admire our forefathers. Avraham Avinu – start admiring him. Identify with him. He's my grandfather! I'm so proud of him. Hashem is proud of him – we surely should be proud.

### **Experience Our Proud Past**

I remember when people would come together Shabbos afternoon and *rabbonim* would say *drashos* on the *sedrah* of the week. Not for one hour; long *drashos* they gave! And people listened because that's what

interested them – they were hearing about their people, the people they identified with most. In the *Bialystocker shul*, I remember the old rav was there, Rabbi Wilskowsky, *alav hashalom*. He was talking about the *chasunah* of Yitzchok and Rivkah and he was shouting “*Mazel tov, mazel tov*,” to the people. Everybody was listening as he was describing the wedding of Yitzchok and Rivkah as if it was taking place right now. That’s how they lived. They lived in the *chumash* and they were reminded every year as the *ba’al koreh* read it over and over again. They felt that they were part of it all.

They lived with all of the experience of Moshe Rabbeinu in the *midbar*. It was in their blood. Children sat in the *cheder* all day long and learned these things. The Jewish nation learned *mikra* and *mishnah* and *gemara*, and the stories of the Torah and the Talmud were on their tongues all the time. That was their history. And the teachers of Torah constantly repeated it. That was the talk of the day. That’s how it was – people identified with the *Klal Yisroel* of the past – with the *dor hamidbar*, with the *Am Yisroel* who stood at the foot of *Har Sinai*, and with all of their descendants after that. We come from them. If you’re a loyal Jew, you’re happy to claim your heritage that was passed on to you from those who received the Torah at *Har Sinai*.

And that’s why when you open a *chumash* or a *gemara* it pays to add the following thought. You’re not only learning a *possuk* or a *mesichta*; you’re learning the same words that Rav Ashi learned. The same words that the Rambam pored over. The Ramban, Rashba, Ran, Ritva and the Rambam, Rashi, Tosefos – they all spent their days and nights studying the *sugya* that you’re studying. They did it of course on a much higher level; we’re only understanding a few drops of what their great minds were thinking. But just the fact that we’re learning the same words means that we’re identifying with these great men, and with the *Am Yisroel* who have been doing the same since time immemorial.

### **Our Great Grandmothers**

We have to be proud of our great grandmothers who had more *da’as*, more *emunah*, than many *gedolim* of today. Who said that? Rabbi Yeruchum Levovitz, the Mirrer *mashgiach*. He said, “We are not able to comprehend the greatness of our great grandmothers” – that’s how great they were. Rebbe Yerucham *zichrono livracha* said that seventy years ago. He said: *Mir kennen nit farshtein unzere elter-bubbes*. This great man said it’s impossible for him to understand the greatness of our great-grandmothers. Now, he didn’t say the greatness of our

grandfathers. He was referring to the simple, unlearned grandmothers! And the further back, greater and greater. A hundred years ago, two hundred years ago, three hundred years – better and better. You're identifying with all of the *pshutei am*, the loyal frum Jews of our past and that's of the utmost importance.

I want to tell you a little scene from our history. Josephus describes the *churban Beis Hamikdash* when the masses of Jews, plain Jews, were captured by the Romans and taken for torture in public hippodromes. Titus Harasha, as he was traveling home, he took along with him tens of thousands of captives. And he marched with them from city to city and in each place he made hippodromes – big theaters, stadiums, where people came and watched as the Jews were put there to torture. They were supposed to say, "We don't believe in our Torah anymore," to save their lives. But the Jews refused to say that – I'm not talking about *gedolim* or *rabbonim*; plain Jews! Plain Jews refused to say, "We don't believe in our Torah," and they were tortured to death with every kind of cruel death because they all refused!

Josephus writes that. He says there that the nations were amazed at what they saw. But that's how great the *hamon*, the ordinary people, were. I'm not talking now about becoming *apikorsim* or not bowing down to idols. No! Just to avoid saying something against the Torah – even one word against their Torah they wouldn't say! And for that they were willing to suffer terrible tortures. That's how great our nation was in the days of old.

And once we identify with our past, we're connected with the *Am Yisroel* in its totality. You're identifying with Moshe Rabeinu and all the *nevi'im*. And with Rav Akiva Eiger and everything he put into our nation. We're connected now with all of the great *tzadikim* – the Vilna Gaon, the Ba'al Shem Tov – all the *gedolei Yisroel* and the *hamon am* of all the generations back till Avraham Avinu.

### **Ask Yourself Some Questions**

It's something that should be on your mind always because by means of that you become a member of the historic *Klal Yisroel*. You should spend some time thinking about. Are you connected to *Yisroel*? Are you connected with all the *frum* Jews who are alive today? Are you connected with all the *ovdei Hashem* in the previous generations? Do you feel loyalty and affection to our *Avos* and to all of our great men of the past? How much does your way of life approximate the way of life of our forefathers of even a hundred year ago? Is a woman in the home like her great grandmother in the home? Is her great ambition to be a

homemaker and to bring up a large family in the ways of Hashem? Is she loyal to her household duties or does she think of a profession as her most important pursuit in life? If she's a career woman then she's not imitating Sarah and Rivkah and Rochel and Leah and none of those who followed them.

We have to identify with our grandmothers and grandfathers. And once we do that a great deal of simplicity will result, a great deal of frivolity will be cut out, and a lot of money wasting will be cut out. Even our amusements identify who we are. Now, there's nothing wrong with going bowling. Bowling is exercising; but going to bowl among gentiles, what kind of business is that for Jews? Jews live their lives among Jews and only among *frum* Jews - even in the *gashmiyus* of our lives, we have to emulate and identify to live together with the *frumme*, to be together with them physically.

Now, I don't want to start enumerating a lot of things because you'll say I'm a killjoy. I'll take away a lot of things from you, a lot of enjoyment, but in general our mode of life has to emulate our forefathers. There are many, many things. You'll have to supply the details yourselves, but the principle is to live in a way that the Am Yisroel has always lived.

### **Enjoying Life**

Now, our ancestors had homes and they ate good meals and they wore nice clothing - they dressed decently. They raised their children properly. They enjoyed life. They lived *gashmius'dige* lives of happiness. They weren't less happy than anybody today! But they emulated their forefathers in whatever ways that they could learn from the Torah, *nevi'im*, *kesuvim* and the *divrei Torah sheba'al peh*. The ways that our forefathers found amusement were the ways of the Am Yisroel of past. Shabbos was their amusement. Purim was a day of amusement. Even Chanukah had a certain amount of joy - although Chanukah is only for *halel*, *lehodos ul'halel*, not for *seudas* - but still they enjoyed even Chanukah. *Chamisha asar b'shvat*, they enjoyed. They took *peiros* together and they made *brachos* on the *peiros* and they thanked Hashem for the *peiros*.

The Jewish nation lived happy occasions all the time. *Simchas Torah* was a great day! And *Shavuos* was even greater! By the way, *Shavuos* was even bigger than *Simchas Torah* in the olden days. The whole Jewish calendar was studded with joyous occasions. And therefore, nobody ever thought of Thanksgiving - it didn't even enter their minds. Nothing of the gentile world penetrated into the Jewish

heart because the Jew identified with his people; he knew that the *Shechina* rested on the *Klal Yisroel* and in order to be part of the *Shechina* he wanted to be bound up *only* with the *Am Yisroel*.

And so we're learning now that the solution to all of our differences is the overriding truth that we're all one people – we are the *Am Echad* serving the *Hashem Echad*. And it's not enough to just say it; it's something you should actually feel in your heart; you should feel attached to the *olam shomrei Torah* – all of them – with all of our hearts.

### **Get Busy Planting Seeds**

Now don't just say, "I know all this already," – because you *don't* know it. It takes work to achieve such a perfection of character. You have to plant these seeds in your mind whenever you see a fellow Jew who is different than you. He dresses differently than you do. He talks differently. He davens differently. He's from a different *shevet* altogether. So you have to get to work planting thoughts in your head that will overcome those differences – it won't happen by itself.

Here's a man who walks into shul; he's going to daven *mincha* – very good, very good. But he can accomplish much more than just *mincha*. When you see the *Am Yisroel* gathering to *daven* to Hashem, you should put your mind to work: "Why are all these different people here? They just gathered here by accident?! No; we're all here for one purpose – to serve Hashem! This is my nation! My brothers! And we all share the common goal of serving Hashem." Look around and think about that; he's a *shomer mitzvos* like me, and he and he and he. They're all my brothers in arms fighting together with me for *Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*.

And when you're shopping in the *kosher* supermarket and it's crowded, and the lines are long – those are precious moments! Get busy planting! You're looking down the aisles and all you can see are your "brothers and sisters". There's a reason they're here and not at the *goyishe* store down the road. Women, men, children, all buying *kosher* food. Now, that's a nation! יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין לָהֶם אֶלָּא לֵב אֶחָד לְאַבְיֵיהֶם שֶׁבְּשָׁמַיִם – "The whole *Am Yisroel* has but one heart devoted to their Father in Heaven" (Sukkah 45b).

### **Join the Army of Hashem**

It's not just poetry; that's actually the greatness of the *Am Yisroel* that binds us together as one people. We're all fighting together to maintain the *Am Yisroel*. We have a big army against us, enemies all around us. The irreligious Jews hate us very much. גְּדוּלָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר שְׁשׁוּנָאִים

עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַתְּלַמִּידֵי הַחֲכָמִים יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שְׂשׂוֹנְאִים אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, “The irreligious people hate the frum Jews more than the gentiles hate the Jews” (Pesachim 49b). It’s a fact. And בְּכָל יוֹר וְיֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ and therefore we have to be the best of friends among ourselves – we should feel that we’re all marching together in the same regiment for the same cause.

And the truth is that as much as you try on your own to come close to Hashem – to a certain extent it’s a worthy endeavor – but you must know that you’ll never succeed, unless it’s בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. Your intention must always be that you’re joining in together with the *Am Hashem*, the nation that serves Hashem. Anything you do has to be in the name of כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. If you’re doing it as individuals, of course you get reward for the mitzvah, but you’re not *zocheh*, you’re not worthy to have the *Shechina* on your side. That’s one of the great purposes of a mitzvah. Every mitzvah must be בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל – you’re joining together with the *Am Yisroel* when you do a mitzvah.

It says וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא! It doesn’t say we’re going to have individual *Olam Habo*. It’s only because of *Yisroel*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not going to give *Olam Habo* because of your good deeds – it’s only because you’re a member of *Yisroel*. Your rewards in the next world depends on your loyalty to the *Klal Yisroel*, on how much you identify with Hashem’s people.

And therefore, when a Jew identifies with the *Klal Yisroel* – that means with the Torah community – in as many ways as he can, he now belongs to Hashem by means of the holy nation. And therefore, our criteria of success should be בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – are we in the midst of the *Bnei Yisroel*. Everything we do should be בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. And who are the *Bnei Yisroel*? The *Bnei Yisroel* that are *avdei Hashem*. And if we’re together with them, then we’re together with the whole history of the *Am Yisroel*. And that means we’ll be together with them in the World To Come, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, forever and ever.

### Have A Wonderful Shabbos

— This week's booklet is based on tapes: —

720 - Shemone Esrei 20 | 870 - Beloved Diversity of Israel

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures

# A VORT ON THE PARSHA

## Vayechi

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָבִיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לִי אֱלֹקִים בְּזֶה

*And Yosef said to his father:*

*“They are my sons that Hashem gave to me here.”*

We note that Yosef didn't merely say, “they are my sons,” but he added: “that Hashem gave to me.” This form of speech which constantly attributes all events to Hashem was not a formality – it was an expression of their actual way of thinking. The fathers of our people lived for Hashem and with Hashem and it found expression in every aspect of their lives.

הָאֱלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְכּוּ אֲבֹתַי לִפְנֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם וַיִּצְחָק

To “walk before Hashem” means to live a life that is filled with awareness of Hashem – wherever you go, you are standing in front of Hashem. This is explained in Micha (6:8): “And to walk secretly with your Hashem”; which means that even in private circumstances where no one is looking, the righteous behave with perfect righteousness because no matter how alone they may be, they are always aware that Hashem is present and sees all. “The Avos walked before Hashem” means that whatever they did, and wherever they went, they were always aware that Hashem was looking at them and they therefore sought to find favor in His sight.

This expression is found as a description of great men's lives (Bereishis 5:22, 6:9 and 24:40), because that is how the great men became great - by fulfilling the command of Hashem: “Walk before Me and be perfect” (ibid. 17:1). By training oneself to be aware of Hashem, one “walks before Hashem” and becomes perfect.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו אֲנֹכִי מֵת וְאֱלֹקִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם מִן  
הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

**And Yosef said to his brothers: “I am dying, but Hashem will surely remember you and bring you up from this land to the land which He swore to Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov.”**

Nowhere do we find that Hashem spoke to Yosef or to anyone after Yaakov, until the days of Moshe Rabeinu, and therefore we must say that Yosef is here merely repeating the prophecy made to his father: “And I shall bring you up” (46:4). Although it’s certain that the entire family knew this prophecy, now that Yosef, the one who had led the family for more than seventy years, was dying, the family saw that the last human hope of deliverance from Egypt was slipping out of their hands. They were now fully subjected to the Egyptians and their only prestige, the presence of Yosef, was now going lost.

And therefore, Yosef reminded them that they should never lose hope because Hakodosh Boruch Hu would surely fulfill His word. After a long career of leading the Bnei Yisroel, Yosef made sure to leave them with words of encouragement that would ring in their ears always. We can be sure that even in the midst of their bitter bondage, the Bnei Yisroel spoke to each other to raise their courage: “*Pakod Yifkod!* Don’t forget what Yosef said - “Hashem will surely remember.”

*Pakod Yifkod* are not the words that Hashem had said to Yaakov; they are the words that Yosef said to encourage his family. Yet it was these words of Yosef that were later said by Hashem to Moshe Rabeinu to proclaim to the elders of the nation: “*Pakod Pakaditi*” (Shemos 3:16), in order to convince them that Yosef’s long ago foretold promise *which the Bnei Yisroel had constantly repeated*, was now to come true.

---

**Make A Difference!**

**Get Toras Avigdor delivered to friends and family.**

Email [subs@torasavigdor.org](mailto:subs@torasavigdor.org) or call/text 862-800-7905

## OUR SPONSORS

**Sefer Bamidbar - 5779**

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN HONOR OF OUR  
CHOPP AND STERN GRANDPARENTS

**Sefer Devarim - 5779**

THE PENSON FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF  
REBBITZEN ESTHER JUNGREIS

**Sefer Bereishis - 5780**

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN HONOR OF OUR CHOPP AND STERN GRANDPARENTS

**Sefer Shemos - 5780**

THE PENSON FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF  
REBBITZEN ESTHER JUNGREIS

**Sefer Vayikra - 5780**

- Available -

**עץ חיים הוא למחזיקים בה - נדיבי עם המתנדבים בקביעות**

לזכות רפואת חיה מלכה בת-שבע

לזכות שושנה רייזא בת חיה מלכה

*Available*

לזכות גאלדא בת דבורה, משה בן דבורה, שושנה רייזא בת דבורה

In honor of my father and his "Rebbe's Mussar Stories" ([mussarstories.com](http://mussarstories.com))

לע"נ פסח בן גרשון ושרה בת משה

לזכות שאול בן חיה עלא

לזכות יוחנן בן שרה חיה ורחל בת מרים



IN APPRECIATION  
OF OUR PAST AND CURRENT PARSHA SPONSORS

**ראה**

לע"נ ר' חיים נפתלי שטרנבוך  
בן ר' אליהו ע"ה

**עקב**

The  
Safdeye  
Family

**ואתחנן**

Dr. Baruch  
and Chanie  
Wolhendler

**כי תבא**

יצחק בן חיים הירש ע"ה  
מרים בת לואיס ע"ה  
צבי הירש בן יוסף ע"ה  
פנינה בת לוי ע"ה

**כי תצא**

לעילוי נשמת  
פיגא רבקה בת אריה לייביש

**שופטים**

Mind Management  
*System*  
732.430.5339

**סוכות**

הרוצה בעילום שמו  
לעילוי נשמת אביו ע"ה

**וילך**

The  
Wahba Family

**נצבים**

Mel and Raquel  
Urbach

**לך לך**

Yeshivat  
Ohel Torah

**נח**

The  
Shama Family

**בראשית**

The  
Rosenberg Family

**תולדות**

Avraham Ben-Ishay  
& Family

**חיי שרה**

The  
Shama Family

**וירא**

The  
Braha Family

**וישב**

לע"נ חיה רחל ריילא  
בת ר' יצחק משה ע"ה

**וישלח**

The  
Pollack Family

**ויצא**

  
**LEW PIPING**

**ויחי**

לז"נ הרב ר' יצחק אהרן  
בן הרב ר' אליהו ז"ל

**ויגש**

Moishy and Ornella  
Wolhendler

**מקץ**

The  
Rahmani Family

**בא**

Available

**וארא**

Available

**שמות**

Available

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך ויקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

**What advice should I give to a boy who is of age to get married but doesn't feel ready for it?**

A:

You have to tell him that he's never going to feel ready for it, so he might as well plunge in. It's like a man has to go to the *mikveh* on *erev Yom Kippur* and it's freezing cold. Some *mikvehs* are hot but let's say in the country, the *mikveh* is cold and he's standing on the brink contemplating what to do. So give him a little friendly push on the back. Once he's inside, he'll enjoy it. And marriage too; it doesn't pay to contemplate – you just have to dive in.

Once there was a *rosh yeshiva* who said marriage is like a pill in a capsule; a tasteless capsule. But inside, it's a very bitter medicine. So if you swallow the capsule, it will be good; but if you start opening up the capsule and tasting what's inside, you'll spit it out and never swallow. And so don't examine it too closely. Don't examine the institution of marriage too closely and don't examine the *kallah* too closely. If she comes from a *frum* family and she's a *frum* girl, and she's healthy, and she means business – she wants to have a lot of children, and she wants to be a housewife, not a career girl, and she wants to be *frum* and she shares your ideals, so dive in and Hakodosh Boruch Hu will help you. Once you start examining too much, if her nose is the right length, then you'll never find anyone who will suit you.

TAPE # 427

Sign up and get a new Q&A every day:  
[signup@torasavigdor.org](mailto:signup@torasavigdor.org)

This week's Q&A sponsored by:

5 minute daily shiur in Kedushas Einayim. Call 718-450-9990