



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL פרשת ויחי

י"ח טבת תשפ"ה 11.12.5

1 This week's parsha is Parshat Vayechi, the final parsha in the Book of Bereshit (Genesis). After 12 parashot, the first book of the Torah comes to an end.

Try to remember what we learned together: We began with the creation of the world, the Garden of Eden, read about the flood and Noah's ark, and then about the first Jew - Avraham our forefather. Since then, we've been learning about his family, which is our family, from Avraham and Sarah to Yitzchak and Rivka, and then to

2 Yaakov and his 12 children. In recent weeks, we learned about the relationship between Yosef and his brothers, and saw how they eventually manage to reconcile.

3 This week - our forefather Yaakov passes away. He gathers all his children around him, blesses them, and bids them farewell. At the beginning of Bereshit, not all children continued their father's path. But now, 12 children say "Shema Yisrael" around Yaakov's bed, and they all continue his path, the path of the people of Israel.

Yaakov blesses each child with a unique and special blessing. Each one has a different mission in the world. The son Yissachar, for example, receives a blessing of peace and tranquility: "and he saw that rest was good."

4 This week, the Fast of the Tenth of Tevet will occur, commemorating the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem and serving as the General Kaddish Day in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust.

A STORY FOR SHABBAT

When the Bus Waits for You

The annual field trip for sixth-grade students was approaching. Students were very excited. They planned out who they would sit next to on the bus, which snacks they would bring, and what music they would listen to. The girls told Noa that they didn't want to sit next to her and said it was a shame she was coming on the trip. It was very hurtful. Noa had heard about cases of social exclusion but never believed it would happen to her. Why were her friends behaving this way? She went home and didn't tell her parents anything. Only the next morning, instead of leaving for school, she began crying and told her mom that with such friends - she didn't want to go on the trip... Her mother was upset when she heard what happened. She tried to convince her to go on the trip anyway but wasn't successful. Noa's mother called the teacher and sadly told her that Noa would stay home, and asked them not to wait for her. The teacher listened and decided to take action. Everyone was already seated on the bus, but she asked the driver to wait a few minutes and approached Noa's friends to understand what happened. During the conversation, the girls realized how much they had hurt Noa's feelings and understood the power of words. They regretted hurting her and that their friend would miss the annual trip. They wanted to make amends, but what could be done now? It was already too late; the bus was about to leave. Then, the teacher Shira told the driver that instead of heading on the planned route, she requested to first stop by Noa's house. Shortly after, the bus parked at the entrance to her house. Meanwhile, the friends decided to save Noa a seat next to one of them, took out snacks to share with her, and decided to treat her like they used to. "Tell Noa to come outside," the teacher, Shira, called Noa's mother. "We're not going on the trip without her." Noa saw the bus from her house window, with the whole class, waiting for her outside. She was surprised, embarrassed, but deep down - she was very happy. She wiped away her tears, quickly packed a bag, and ran outside. Shortly after, she was already sitting in the place they saved for her on the bus, immersed in chatter with her friends...

(From the "Ligdol" book series)

Matière à réflexion

Words like boycott and shaming are heard more and more often, and many children are getting their feelings hurt. The classroom atmosphere and relationships between friends are among the most important issues today. The destruction of the Temple, which effectively began with the siege on the Tenth of Tevet, started because of baseless hatred. We can choose whether our words will build or destroy. The Fast of the Tenth of Tevet reminds us that it's never too late to make amends, and that anyone can turn a situation of division into unity.





FROM THE DIARY OF A CHEMED STUDENT

Strength Through Connection: Building Bonds with Holocaust Survivors

We are 11th-grade students who have been participating in a special project for the past three years at Yeshivat Amit Amichai in Rehovot. Every month, we visit Holocaust survivors in their homes to bring them joy. We celebrate their birthdays with them and make them feel special. This project is a collaboration between our yeshiva and the Holocaust Survivors Care Unit of the Department for Senior Citizen Welfare of the Rehovot Municipality. The Holocaust survivors say they are happy when we visit them because it gives them strength after everything they went through and helps them enjoy life. For us, as students, we feel very connected to the survivors. We understand that if they hadn't fought to stay alive, many of us wouldn't be here today. They inspire us to continue sharing their stories with children who won't get the chance to meet them in the future. Every time we go to visit Holocaust survivors, we not only give them strength, but we get strength in return. They teach us to appreciate life and to find meaning in it.

11th Grade Amit Amichai Rehovot



Around the Shabbat Table

- Yaakov blesses each son individually but emphasizes the importance of unity. How can we maintain each person's uniqueness while still operating in unity as a group?
- Asaf talks about healing the heart through the support he received. Think about a time when you experienced support from your class, family, or group of friends. Share what the situation was and how it affected you.
- How can things that appear "broken" (like the damaged book) turn into something positive?
- How do you think we can help someone "heal their heart"?



FROM THE HERMON TO NEW JERSEY

"My name is Asaf, I'm a paramedic in the Paratroopers reserves. About a month ago, at a post in northern Israel, we woke up early in the morning to the sound of sirens and rushed to enter the shelter. Moments later, we heard a massive explosion. A Hezbollah drone directly hit the post's synagogue, which was empty. The synagogue was almost completely destroyed, and everything inside was hit by shrapnel, but thank God no one was hurt. When we went to check the damage, I found a booklet on the floor that had been hit by shrapnel. It was your booklet, 'To Be a Jew,' (the Hebrew version is called Healing the Heart) which you wrote about Rabbi Sacks and the current state of the Jewish people. I saw that the shrapnel had hit exactly between the words 'heal' and 'heart.' At that moment, I knew this book had meaning, and I took it with me. Last week, I flew with a delegation of friends from the army to the US for a 'Liberation Journey.' This is a journey designed to help soldiers process the experiences they went through during their reserve service. Each pair of soldiers stayed with a Jewish family from the local community, and we met at the synagogue for treatment sessions throughout the week. We stayed at the 'Rinat Israel' community in Teaneck, New Jersey. On the last day, during the emotional closing conversation with the community, I decided to bring the book and tell its story. I told them how it was hit at the post and how it made it here. I told them that the book's message - 'healing the heart' - is exactly what each of the soldiers did here during the week. We all went through a certain process of healing our hearts thanks to the support of the community that hosted us and cared for us. At the end of my speech, I gave it as a gift to the community rabbi and the synagogue. It stays there - from northern Israel to the United States. The rabbi said he would frame the book and hang it in the synagogue. On the book's cover, there is a drawing of a plant growing anew from the ruins. This is exactly what happened to us and what I hope will happen to all of Israel - growth and healing of the heart." Want to receive the booklet for your class? Search Google for "How to be a Jew- Sivan Rahav-Meir" or contact us and the booklet will be sent to you.



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
ונטמת החיילים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואייל טויטו הי"ד



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