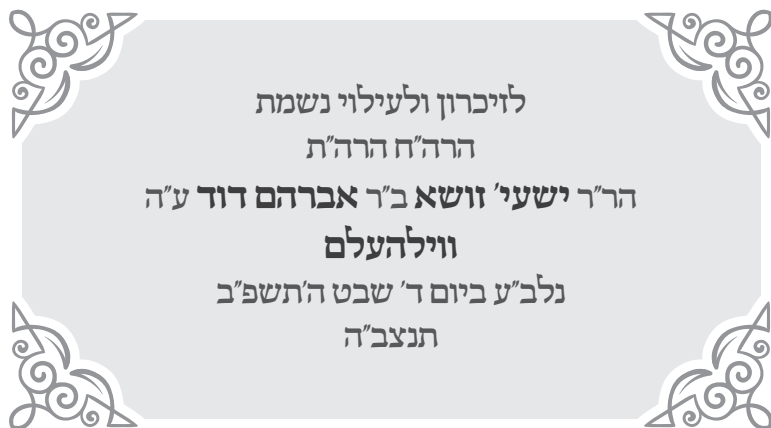


Vayechi

THE WEISS EDITION

# Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE  
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION



לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ח הרה"ת  
הר"ר ישעי' זושא ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה  
ווילהעלם  
נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב  
תנצב"ה

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# ויחי

## Vayechi

מח:ה | 48:5

וְעַתָּה שְׁנֵי בְנֵיךָ הַנּוֹלָדִים לְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד בָּאִי אֵלַיךָ  
מִצְרַיִמָּה לִי הֵם אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כְּרְאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ לִי

*Now, your two sons who were born to you in Egypt  
before I came to you, to the land of Egypt,  
shall be [considered] mine; Ephraim and Menasheh  
shall be to me like Reuven and Shimon.*

### Made in Egypt

Yaakov conferred upon two of his grandsons, Ephraim and Menasheh, the same status as his own sons—i.e., they would each father an independent tribe. When promising this to Yosef, however, instead of simply saying, “Your two sons Ephraim and Menasheh shall be to me like Reuven and Shimon,” he described them as, “Ephraim and Menasheh, your two sons who were born to you in Egypt before I came to you.”

This description not only excluded any future children that Yosef might have;<sup>1</sup> it also explained why, of all Yaakov’s

1. See Ramban, Bereishis 48:15.

grandchildren, only Ephraim and Menasheh merited this elite status.

Ephraim and Menasheh were raised in Egypt, where Yaakov's values and lifestyle were foreign and unpopular. In addition, they were born a number of years before Yaakov's arrival in Egypt—"before I came to you"—so their early education was not under his direct tutelage. Still, they conducted themselves in a manner befitting grandchildren of Yaakov.

Therefore, among all his grandchildren, Yaakov could confidently say of Ephraim and Menasheh, "They shall be considered mine," for they embodied the tried and tested continuity of Yaakov's path.<sup>2</sup> Their exemplary tribute to Yaakov's enduring legacy earned them a place among Yaakov's own sons.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 15, p. 435*

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**2.** Moreover, in this regard Ephraim and Menasheh exemplified the quality that was unique to Yaakov among all the patriarchs—his ability to ensure that all his children would remain righteous (see Rashi, Bereishis 47:31).

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 מזח:ז | 48:7
 

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וַאֲקַבְרָהָ שָׁם בְּדַרְוֹד אֶפְרַת הוּא בֵּית לָחֵם

*I buried her there along the road to Efras,  
which is Beis-Lechem.*

## *A Mother's Sacrifice*

Rachel's burial place should naturally have been in Me'aras Hamachpelah, alongside her husband. Instead, Yaakov buried her on the roadside near Beis-Lechem. Before his passing, Yaakov explained to Yosef that his mother's burial there would one day serve an important role in hastening her children's return from exile: When the Jewish people, hopeless and downtrodden, would pass her grave as they were led into exile, Rachel would emerge from her grave, weeping and begging G-d to show them mercy. And indeed, as the prophet Yirmiyahu later chronicled, "A voice is heard on high, lamentation, bitter weeping: Rachel is crying for her children." G-d replied, "There is reward for your work... and the children shall return to their own border."<sup>3</sup>

With this Yaakov consoled Yosef over his mother's seemingly second-rate burial place, for considering the comfort that her burial there would bring to her children, certainly Rachel would herself have chosen to be buried there.

The willingness to sacrifice for her children that Yaakov attributed to Rachel epitomizes the Jewish woman's unique role as the *akeres habayis*, the mainstay of the family.

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3. Yirmiyahu 31:14–16.

Whereas both men and women must serve G-d with every aspect of their lives, only men are obligated in mitzvos that are time-sensitive and in the constant mitzvah to study Torah.<sup>4</sup> Women are exempt from time-specific and constant obligations because they are constantly tending to the needs of their families and homes. In this sense, the Jewish woman “sacrifices” the satisfaction and spiritual experience that comes with the observance of those mitzvos, serving G-d instead by nurturing her family.

This explains why among Yaakov’s wives it was specifically Rachel who was buried on the roadside, for as Rashi states elsewhere, Rachel was the *akeres habayis* of Yaakov’s household.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, just as she personified the “woman’s sacrifice” in her lifetime, in her passing too, her “compromised” place of burial allowed her to implore G-d on her children’s behalf and to guarantee their return home.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, pp. 239–240*

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4. See Talmud, Kiddushin 29a–b.

5. Bereishis 31:4.

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 מט:א | 49:1
 

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וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל בְּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֶסְפוּ וְאֶגִּידָה לָכֶם  
אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא אֶתְכֶם בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים

*Yaakov called for his sons and said,  
“Gather, and I will tell you what will happen  
to you at the end of days.”*

## *Insider Information*

The Talmud<sup>6</sup> explains that Yaakov wanted to reveal the end of the days (i.e., the time of the ultimate redemption) to his sons, but the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, withdrew from him, rendering him unable to do so.

What did Yaakov want to achieve by revealing this information to his children, and why did G-d disapprove? According to one explanation, Yaakov foresaw that the redemption from Egyptian bondage could potentially be the complete and ultimate redemption, after which the Jewish people would never again be exiled.<sup>7</sup> He desired to reveal this to Bnei Yisrael (who knew that the Egyptian exile would not be longer than 400 years<sup>8</sup>), in the hope that it would motivate them to maintain their righteousness and indeed merit the complete redemption at that time. Moreover, he hoped that their knowledge that the final redemption was potentially imminent would cause them to increase their good deeds and bring about that complete redemption even sooner.

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6. Pesachim 56a.

7. See Zohar 3:221a.

8. As stated in Bereishis 15:13-14.

G-d restrained Yaakov from revealing this information, however, for the highest form of Divine worship is to serve G-d of one's own initiative, when one's drive to be righteous comes from within. To some degree, this would be lost if Bnei Yisrael's motivation to increase their good deeds was based on prophetic information regarding the potential of their deeds to bring about the ultimate redemption by a given date. Their righteousness would not be regarded as "their own," as it had been motivated by outside sources of inspiration, and their merit would therefore not be complete.

Whereas Yaakov preferred to bring about the final redemption sooner, G-d preferred to give Bnei Yisrael the opportunity to merit the redemption of their own accord, making it the most perfect and complete redemption possible.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 20, pp. 228–232*



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 מט:ו-ז | 49:6-7
 

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בְּסֵדֶם אֶל תִּבְא נַפְשֵׁי בְּקִהְלָם אֶל תִּחַד כְּבֹדִי כִּי בְּאַפָּם  
 הָרְגוּ אִישׁ... אָרוּר אַפָּם כִּי עָז וְעִבְרָתָם כִּי קָשָׁתָהּ

*Let my soul not enter their conspiracy, let my honor  
 have no part in their assembly; for in their wrath  
 they killed a man... Cursed be their rage, for it is fierce,  
 and their fury, for it is harsh.*

## *If You Can Beat Them*

Before his passing, Yaakov rebuked Shimon and Levi and cursed their rage, “for in their wrath they killed a man...” The Midrash<sup>9</sup> explains that the “man” that Shimon and Levi are said to have killed actually refers to quite a few men: the entire adult male population of Shechem! Yaakov refers to all of them as “a man,” because to defeat all of Shechem was as simple for them as defeating one man.

Why, while rebuking them for their actions, did Yaakov pay tribute to the ease with which Shimon and Levi—endowed by G-d with extraordinary strength—decimated the population of Shechem?

Evidently, this unnatural strength was part of the reason Yaakov was so displeased with Shimon’s and Levi’s rage-driven actions.

In theory, Yaakov agreed with Shimon and Levi that punishment of the people of Shechem was justified.<sup>10</sup> He was critical only of their deceitful method. They promised the

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9. Cited by Rashi ad loc.

10. See Ohr Hachaim, Bereishis 34:25; Ramban, Bereishis 34:13; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Melachim 9:14.

people of Shechem peace if the entire male population would circumcise themselves, but then they exploited their weakness and pain, and attacked them in violation of their agreement. Such deceitfulness disgraced Yaakov and the belief system for which he stood.

Yaakov therefore rebuked Shimon and Levi, pointing out that considering their ability to wipe out the entire city with the ease of killing one man, they had no need to resort to deception. They could have confronted the people of Shechem directly and made them suffer the consequences of their behavior. “Cursed be their rage!” said Yaakov, for it blinded them from recognizing their ability to carry out judgment without resorting to trickery.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 5, pp. 151-152*



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