

In this week's *Parashah*, Yaakov Avinu blesses his children before he passes away. The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 56a) relates that Yaakov wanted to reveal the "End"--the time of the ultimate redemption--to his sons, but the *Shechinah* departed from him. Yaakov worried that this happened because, G-d forbid, one of his sons was unworthy. His sons responded: "*Shema Yisrael, Hashem is our Elokim, Hashem is One*"--just as you believe, so do we. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Why did Yaakov's inability to reveal the "End" make him worry that his sons were unworthy, and how did their recitation of *Shema* assuage him? Also, our Sages say that Yaakov did not hug Yosef at their reunion because he was reciting *Shema* at that moment (see *Rashi z"l* to *Bereishit* 46:29). Why did Yaakov do that?

R' David Cohen *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the Chevron Yeshiva in Yerushalayim) explains: The ultimate purpose of the Patriarchs' Divine service was to bring *Hashem's* Presence into the world and to reveal that *Hashem* is One. This is a process that will be completed only at the "End," but to which every generation contributes. After Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov did their part as individuals, it was time for this service to be taken over by *Klal Yisrael* / the Jewish nation, beginning with Yaakov's sons. There was significance to there being twelve sons, just as there are twelve months, constellations, and hours in a day. Also, the *Gematria* of the word "*Echad*" / "One" is 13, *i.e.*, the 12 Tribes plus Yaakov. This is why Yaakov mourned so deeply when he thought one of his 12 sons (Yosef) had died: he thought his mission was now doomed to fail. Thereafter, his *Shema*, his declaration of G-d's Oneness, would forever be incomplete.

When Yaakov was reunited with Yosef, he was able to recite *Shema* "completely" for the first time since Yosef's disappearance, and he did. But, when the *Shechinah* left him before his death, he thought that, again, his mission was in jeopardy. No, said his sons, *Shema* can still be recited. (*Mizmor L'David*, Vol. I, *Ma'amar* 5)

Shabbat

R' Elimelech Gross *shlita* (rabbi and rabbinical judge in the *Machazikei Ha'da'as*/Belz community in Yerushalayim) writes: It is said of R' Avraham Brandwein z"l (1805-1865; *Strettiner Rebbe* in Galicia) that he did not sleep at all on *Shabbat*, not even on Friday night. When he was asked the reason for this practice, he responded, "The *Gemara* (*Eruvin* 65a) states that nighttime was created for Torah study."

He was then asked, "Does not the very same page of *Gemara* also say that nighttime was created for sleeping?"

The *Strettiner Rebbe* answered, "That refers to the rest of the week. However, we say in the *Shabbat Zemirot*, 'It is a holy day, from its arrival until its departure.' This indicates that all of *Shabbat*, including the nighttime, should be treated as daytime." In support of this idea, R' Mordechai Rokeach of Bilgorai z"l (died 1948; father of the current *Belzer Rebbe*) cites a *Midrash* saying that there was no darkness on the first *Shabbat* in history; therefore, the Torah does not say about the seventh day, "There was evening and there was morning."

R' Gross continues: Others offer a different explanation for the custom of some *Tzaddikim* not to sleep on *Shabbat*. One who observes the Sabbath is said to be "*Shomer Shabbat*"--literally, "Guarding the Sabbath." Does a *Shomer* have the right to sleep on the job?

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10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-775-9623

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*The editors of Hamaayan mourn the passing of Rabbi Herzl Kranz
(Harav Chaim Herzl Ben Baruch Aryeh Leib z"l).
His appreciation of, and encouragement for, our work will be missed.*

“Dan Yadin / will avenge his people, the tribes of Yisrael will be united as one.” (49:16)

Rashi z”l explains: Dan will take vengeance from the Plishtim on behalf of his people--“Yadin” having the same meaning as in the verse (*Devarim* 32:36), “For Hashem Yadin / will avenge his people.”

R’ Moshe ben Nachman z”l (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) elaborates: Many leaders were unsuccessful in taking vengeance against the Plishtim--until Shimshon, who was from the tribe of Dan. Yaakov’s choice of the word “Yadin,” which can also mean, “He will judge,” alludes to the fact that Shimshon served as a *Shofeit* / Judge to the Jewish People, writes *Ramban*.

He adds: The second half of the verse can, alternatively, be translated, “Like the unique one among the tribes of Yisrael”--thus equating Dan and Yehuda. (*Commentary on the Torah*)

In a *Hesped* for R’ Herzl Kranz z”l (rabbi of Silver Spring Jewish Center/Ahavat Yisrael), R’ Ahron Lopiansky *shlita* (*Rosh Hayeshiva* of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington-Tiferes Gedaliah) asked: Yaakov appears to be identifying the tribe of Dan as leaders of the Jewish People. We understand that the tribe of Yehuda included leaders: In the desert, its members traveled first, King David and his dynasty descended from it, etc. But the tribe of Dan traveled last! What leadership qualities did it demonstrate?

R’ Lopiansky answered: The Torah describes the tribe of Dan as (*Bemidbar* 10:25), “The rear guard [literally, ‘the collector’] of all the camps.” The *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Eruvin* 5:1) explains that, as the tribe that traveled last, Dan would collect lost objects and return them to their owners in other tribes. According to an alternative version of the *Yerushalmi*, R’ Lopiansky said, the tribe of Dan collected “lost souls,” *i.e.*, people who had left their tribes and fallen behind (see *Rashi* to *Devarim* 25:18). This, too, is leadership, albeit of a different kind.

If this is what Yaakov meant, R’ Lopiansky asked further, why does our verse describe Dan as “judging,” rather than as performing *Chessed* / kindness? He answered: *Chessed* involves giving a person something to which he is not entitled. In contrast, when one returns a lost object, he is not doing an act of kindness; he giving the owner something that is rightfully his. Likewise, when one collects “lost souls,” he is returning to them both the privileges and the obligations that are rightfully theirs. Thus, he is appropriately likened to a judge.

(Heard from R’ Lopiansky, 14 *Tevet* 5784)

“Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years . . . The time approached for Yisrael to die, so he called for his son, for Yosef, and said to him, ‘Please--if I have found favor in your eyes . . . please do not bury me in Egypt.’” (47:28-29)

Why does the Torah switch between calling the Patriarch “Yaakov” and “Yisrael”?

R’ Moshe Bleicher *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Shavei Chevron in Chevron, Israel) explains: The name “Yaakov” refers to the third Patriarch as the father of a family, while “Yisrael” refers to him as the father of a nation. Yaakov, the person, lived in Egypt for 17 years, finally reunited with his beloved son Yosef--as the first verse above indicates. However, his request to be buried in *Eretz Yisrael* and not in Egypt--the subject of the second verse--was not a personal request. Rather, he saw that his descendants were beginning to feel at home in Egypt, as described in the final verse of last week’s *Parashah*, so he asked to be buried in *Eretz Yisrael* to make a statement: *Eretz Yisrael* is our only home!

R’ Bleicher continues: We read later in the *Parashah* that the Patriarch wanted to bless his children, so he called to them (49:2), “Gather yourselves and listen, sons of Yaakov, and listen to Yisrael your father.” Both names are used because the blessings included two facets: As Yaakov, the father of a family, he knew the strengths and weaknesses of his twelve sons. As Yisrael, the father of a nation, he could say prophetically how those attributes would manifest themselves in the life of the future nation. (*Le’mahalach Ha’parshiyot: Bereishit* p.279)

“Accursed is their rage for it is intense, and their wrath for it is harsh.” (49:7)

Rashi z”l comments: Even when Yaakov rebuked his sons, he cursed their anger, not them.

R’ Shlomo Wolbe z”l (1914-2005; a leading teacher of mussar) writes: R’ Yerucham Levovitz z”l (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Mir Yeshiva; died 1936) was asked whether one is permitted to hate a Jew who acts in a way that is contrary to the Torah. R’ Levovitz answered that it is forbidden, saying that [we may not even hate the evil-doer’s deeds since] the ordinary person is incapable of distinguishing between hatred for the deeds and hatred for the person. Yaakov Avinu was able to make that distinction.

R’ Wolbe continues: R’ Levovitz used to say that a Jew with bad character traits is like a crate full of diamonds, with one moldy potato mixed in. Would one think for even a second of discarding that entire crate? After all, it is full of valuable diamonds! (*Shiurei Chumash*)

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Others explain: On *Shabbat*, every Jew is a king. How could one sleep through his brief reign as a king? Indeed, it is related that the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef slept as little as possible each night, saying, “When I am awake, I am the king. When I sleep, I am not the king.” (Others attribute this statement to Napoleon.) (*Parashat Mordechai* p.27)