



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### Rov's Gemoro Shiur

The Rov's Gemoro Shiur will be starting Meseches Megilla on Wednesday at 8.15pm. New and former members are welcome to attend.

### Lost, But Not Found

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Ya'akov lived in the land of Egypt for 17 years, and Ya'akov's days, the years of his life, were 147 years. (Bereishis 47:28)

IT HAS ONLY been a couple of weeks since the loss of Rabbi Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman, zt"l. True, he was 104 years old at the time he left this world, and his health had been failing, but it does not minimize the loss to the Jewish people and the world in general. His time may have come, but that does not lessen the impact of the loss of a Gadol HaDor.

What is that loss? We can only imagine. Who knows what affects what in Heaven, and how much? There may have already been major consequences resulting from the loss of this Torah giant, but we would never know. It takes a prophet to reveal such things, and we have none today. Besides, the Torah world is busy trying to fill the gap as best as possible, and life must go on, and does, b"H.

The Torah does give us a glimpse somewhat of what it means to lose a Gadol HaDor in this week's parsha:

Ya'akov lived in the land of Egypt for 17 years, and Ya'akov's days, the years of his life, were 147 years. (Bereishis 47:28)

Why is this section [completely] closed? Because, as soon as our father Ya'akov passed away, the eyes and the heart of the Jewish people were "closed," (i.e., it became "dark" for them) because of the misery of the slavery, for they started to subjugate them. (Rashi)

Normally a parsha begins on a new line, just as a new paragraph does. This is called an "open parsha." A "closed parsha" is when the new parsha begins on the same line that the previous parsha ended. The end of the previous parsha and the beginning of the new parsha enclose a space between them.

It doesn't usually happen, and certainly not without reason. This is what prompted the Midrash to provide an explanation for it, which Rashi quotes. The "closed" parsha alludes to the "closing" of the eyes of the Jewish nation that Ya'akov Avinu left behind. Though the actual enslavement of the Jewish people did not begin until the death of Levi 78 years later, it was in motion since the death of Ya'akov Avinu.

Because Ya'akov Avinu died the people were enslaved? As a punishment? No, as a consequence.

As long as Ya'akov Avinu was alive, no one moved out of Goshen, the Jewish community in Egypt. Yosef had worked hard to set his family up there, and Ya'akov had worked hard to keep them spiritually strong there. He commanded that no one leave, with few exceptions. But, after Ya'akov died, Jews started to move out and "up" into Egyptian society until they had become neighbors with them.

Thus, the holiday that celebrates the redemption is called "Passover," since God had to skip over Jewish houses to kill the Egyptians during the Plague of the Firstborn. It took 78 years, but what Ya'akov and Yosef had built had come undone enough to warrant God allowing the Egyptians to enslave, torture, and even murder His people.

## לעלוי נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

### Kiddush

The cup of Kiddush should be rinsed on the inside and outside before being used if it isn't already completely clean.

One should eat a meal in the place where one made Kiddush. This means that one must eat at least a kezayis of bread there.

The Kiddush cup itself must contain the volume of at least a revi'is in order to be valid. A revi'is is 150 ml, 137 ml or 86 ml. The cup should be full. To fulfil the obligation of Kiddush, ideally one should drink a cheekful of the wine.

Probably by the time that happened, no one associated their plight with the loss of Ya'akov Avinu. It had happened so long ago, and many of those who suffered had never known him. They probably looked for more immediate causes of their suffering, or just stopped looking altogether.

Since the generation that lost Ya'akov Avinu wasn't immediately enslaved, they had no idea what his death really meant. If they had, they may have taken more measures to try and counteract Ya'akov death, to save themselves and future generations from hardship. As the Talmud says, the wise person is someone who sees what is happening now, and what it could lead to (Tamid 32a).

It's not just the presence of a great Torah scholar that makes the difference. It's not just that he can be accessed, and that his words and Torah wisdom can be published and disseminated throughout the Torah world. That is certainly a large part of what helps a generation to stay the course, but there is a lot more as well.

There is the "invisible" aspect as well. Physically, Rabbi Shteinman was quite small, and looked malnourished. He barely ate anything, and foods we eat without second thought were luxuries to him that he tried to avoid. On a scale, he would not have counter-balanced much at all. Spiritually, Rav Shteinman was a giant. His soul was HUGE. If souls could

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת ויחי

Candle Lighting	3.42pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.47pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.07pm
2nd Mincha	3.37pm
Shalosh Seudas	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	4.57pm
Ovos uBonim	5.57pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon	7.10am / 8.10am / 9.30am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.50pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

be weighed, it could have taken millions to counterbalance his. Taking him of that scale, so-to-speak, would have sent the other side crashing down. We may yet see the historical effects of that in our lifetime, even soon.

Taking a Gadol from the world is not like removing a kidney or a piece of a person's liver. It is like taking a major part of the heart. How is a patient supposed to survive then, without a major miracle? What if he doesn't get the miracle? What if he does, but doesn't deserve it? Either way, it's not a good thing. We may yet find out.

Part of the problem with learning Torah is that so much of the story is left out. It is bare bones. If all the details of every major event was included then each incident could be a book on its own. Tanach would be HUGE, much bigger than it is today.

Instead, God told Moshe Rabbeinu, and later the prophets, exactly what to write, and what to leave out. It makes Tanach kind of a cause-and-effect account: The person sinned, it angered God, and they were punished. The nation strayed, they angered God, they were attacked by the enemy, they did teshuvah, and God saved them again. It's as if the impact always immediately and clearly followed the cause.

But it didn't. In Sha'ar HaGilgulim, it is revealed how God can punish a person in their next reincarnation for a sin performed in a previous one. Without a prophet to explain this to them, how were they supposed to know why they were suffering?

They don't have to. It is enough that they know they are suffering. It is enough that they understand that nothing is by coincidence, and that God is always just. No matter how innocent they think they are, or how justified they are in how they live, God knows better. He knows BEST. Only he can work out all the details of cause-and-effect for the betterment of a person or the entire world.

Likewise, when Ya'akov Avinu died, it was hard to know what the gaping spiritual "hole" would allow in or out. The Jewish people of his time didn't know what it would eventually lead to in advance, only after the fact.

They didn't have to know. It was enough to know what they lost, and what he meant to the nation. The loss of Ya'akov Avinu, the last of three four fathers was huge and dramatic. The response of the nation needed to be huge and dramatic, to avoid the need for God to eventually to do something huge and dramatic, to get Ya'akov's descendants back on track.

It is the same for us as well. We do not know how the loss of Rav Shteinman, zt"l, will impact our history. We just know that it will, and that should be enough to push us to do the best we can to make up for what we lost. The alternative has never been pleasant for the Jewish people.

## Sword and Bow?

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week's parsha, Vayechi, deals with the last years of Yaakov's life. "And Yaakov lived in the land of Mitzrayim for seventeen years. And the days of Yaakov's life were one hundred and forty seven years. [47:28]" Yosef, told that his father Yaakov was ill, brought his two sons to see him. Yaakov blessed Yosef's sons and then turned to Yosef. "And behold I have given you (the city of) Shchem as one (portion) over your brothers, that which I took from the Emori with my sword and my bow. [48:22]"

What does the Torah mean that Yaakov took it with his sword and bow? Rashi explains that, when Shimon and Levi killed out the inhabitants of Shchem for violating Dina, all of the neighboring villages came to fight against them. Yaakov, girded with his weaponry, stood up against them. The Ramban explains that this is actually referring to a time much later in our history. When Bnei Yisroel entered Eretz Yisroel they fought against the Emori for control of the land. Why then does it say that Yaakov took it with his sword and bow? The Ramban explains that it was the merit of Yaakov's mitzvos and good deeds that powered the later battles to victory. The true sword and bow of Bnei Yisroel is the merit of our service to Hashem. (The Medrash Rabbah in fact defines sword and bow to mean mitzvos and good deeds.) The passuk is teaching us that it was Yaakov's 'sword and bow' that brought us the victory generations later. He actually conquered.

The Ozneyim l'Torah shows that the order of the passuk clearly indicates that the battle described here is of a spiritual, not physical, nature. He

writes that in a physical battle, one first uses the bow when the enemy is at a distance. As the enemy draws closer, one draws the sword to fight a close proximity battle. As such, were it a physical battle, the order of the passuk should have been that Yaakov took it first with his bow and then his sword. However, in the struggle against sin and temptation, one must first push the enemy away from the immediate area in order to create an environment conducive to mitzvos and good deeds. Such a battle is represented by the sword. Once that has been done, the challenge is to prevent any incursions from the enemy into that purified territory. That is represented by the bow. Yaakov who first used the sword and then the bow was clearly involved in a spiritual battle. Once that had been won, the outcome of the physical battle was a foregone conclusion.

The Torah is called Toras Chayim—instructions for life. We must remember what the true weaponry of Bnei Yisroel is. It is our service to Hashem that powers our military hardware. In the difficult times we are presently living through, we must keep our focus.

Arab riots are not a new phenomenon. When Arab riots broke out in 1919-20, Jews who ventured out of their doorways were putting their lives in danger. The book Guardian of Jerusalem relates that on the day before the outbreak, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenefeld, the venerable Rav of Jerusalem, had agreed to perform a bris in the new city. (At that time, majority of the Jews lived in the Old City while a few lived in the new neighborhoods outside the Old City walls.) The pleadings of his family that he remain at home fell on deaf ears. Wrapped in his tallis and tfillin Rav Chaim walked alone through the most dangerous areas to the Damascus Gate and from there to the bris.

When asked why he had chosen to go through the most dangerous gate, he replied, "Shall we relinquish our claim on the quarter near the Damascus Gate? If we refrain from traveling that street out of fear, they will think that they have indeed succeeded in driving us out of that quarter. No! It is forbidden to relinquish any quarter or corner of Yerushalayim out of fear!"

A similar incident took place nine years later. On the bitter Friday of the seventeenth of Av, 1929, the fury of Arab rioters burst on the land. The murder and destruction reached its climax with the cruel massacre of fifty-nine Jews in Hebron.

With the conclusion of the Friday prayers at the Dome of the Rock, thousands of Arabs, incited by the Mufti, y'mach shmo, descended on Yerushalayim yielding swords and clubs. Considering the ferocity of the rioters, Jewish casualties were miraculously low with seventeen Jews killed and thirty-eight wounded.

The following day was Shabbos and, with tensions still at their peak, Rav Chaim had once again agreed to perform a bris in the new city neighborhood of Meah Shearim. He made Kiddush and ate a short meal. He then donned his caftan and, to his family's utter amazement, announced that he was going to perform the bris. As Rav Chaim was nearly eighty years old, several people offered to accompany him. Upon reaching the end of the Jewish Quarter, Rav Chaim saw that they were terribly frightened and ordered them to return home. He then turned to proceed out of the Damascus Gate, through an extremely hostile Arab neighborhood that was dangerous even in normal times. On the same road that thousands of bloodthirsty rioters had surged just one day before, the awe-inspiring, tallis-clad figure of Rav Chaim now walked with confident steps to enlist another Jewish child in the covenant of Abraham.

After the bris, Rav Chaim visited his son who lived in that neighborhood and then began to return home. Against the protests of his family, Rav Chaim calmly explained that no harm befalls those who are doing a mitzvah, not on the way there and not on the way back.

Later Rav Chaim was asked why he went through the Damascus gate when the Jaffa Gate was much safer. "I chose to specifically use the Damascus Gate to inform the Arabs that they have not succeeded in frightening Jews out of even one section of the Holy City," was his emphatic reply.

As Rav Chaim's weaponry was his mitzvos and good deeds he had nothing to fear. Though imitating his actions without having his merits would be foolhardy, we must focus on our true weaponry in the face of a similar situation eighty years later.