

## WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

This week, we hear about the end of **Yaakov**'s life. As the last of the forefathers dies, we also finish **Bereishis**, the first of the 5 books of the Torah. When Yaakov realizes that his life is coming to a close, he first summons **Yosef** with his two sons, **Menashe** and **Efraim**, to receive a special blessing. **Yaakov** then calls the rest of his 12 sons, and blesses them in age order. Each brother receives a unique blessing based on their character, and many of the brothers are compared to animals that symbolize their strengths. **Yaakov** passes away and is enbalmed by the Egyptian's at Yosef's request. After the period of mourning ended, Yosef and his brothers go to bury Yaakov in **Israel**, in **Ma'aras Hamachpela**. When they returned to Egypt, the brothers once again ask Yosef for **forgiveness**, and he reassures them that he is not angry with them. At the end of the Parsha, **Yosef dies** and is buried in a coffin in Egypt.

DID YOU KNOW? We just learned that when **Yosef** passed away, he was buried in a coffin in Egypt. However, he asked his children to bring his bones to **Israel** when they left Egypt. In **Shemos 13:19**, **Moshe** carries Yosef's bones when the Jews leave Egypt, and in **Yehoshua 24:32**, the Jews bury Yosef in **Shechem**. The **Midrash** explains that the sea split because of **Yosef's Bones**, and the Hebrew word for bone, **Uxe** is the same as the word for **essence**. We learn from this that the essence of Yosef and his commitment to his Judaism and G-d in a foreign land, through many obstacles, ultimately helped the Jews leave Egypt.

## THE CLOSED PARSHA

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In most of the Torah, there is a **gap** between one parsha and another of either a few spaces or a line. However, look at this week's parsha: **There's no gap!** What do you think this means? How does this connect with the contents of our Parsha? הֵיְהֶה לְפַּרְעָה: וַיָּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם בְּאֶרֶץ





Rashi (1040-1105, France) teaches that the closed Parsha symbolizes the death of Yaakov, which closed the period of the אבות, patriarchs, and ended an era of the Jewish people. Rabbi Ari Kahn asks: Why were there 3 patriarchs? He explains that Avraham embodied the characteristic of חסד, kindness and Yitzchak embodied הפארת, strength. Yaakov embodied הפארת, synthesis and balance. (Maharal (1520-1609, Europe) teaches that 3 is the minimum for balance! Like a 3legged chair...) Thus, the balance of the patriarchs set the Jewish people up for one of the goals of the Torah: bringing balance to all of the various forces in the world.

## THINK ABOUT IT...

The book of **Bereishis** has many stories of **sibling rivalry**, starting with the first brothers in the world, **Kayin** and **Hevel**. After reuniting with **Yosef**, his brothers tried to mend their relationship and fix this issue, but it is ultimately achieved by Yosef's sons: **Efraim** and **Menashe**. When Yaakov blessed the two brothers, he put his **right hand** on **Efraim**'s head, even though he was younger, and his **left hand** on **Menashe**'s head. Yosef, who was very aware of the dangers of sibling rivalry, tried to correct his father. However, Yaakov insisted, knowing that these boys would create a new pattern of sibling relationships. Today, **Jewish parents** bless their sons to be like **Efraim** and **Menashe**. The next siblings in the Torah, **Moshe** and **Aharon**, are famous for their love for each other and lack of jealously, truly overcoming this challenge.



Jealously is a natural emotion, often occurring among siblings or close friends. Think about your close relationships: do you ever find yourself feeling jealous of someone else? How can you overcome your jealousy?

