

א ביסל תורה!

January 2, 2026

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

י"ג טבת תשפ"ז · ייחי

A Jew's Connection to Israel

By Amalya Fischer '26

In **פרשת ויהי**, we encounter יעקב's death and the subsequent preparations for his burial. While יעקב does not make many demands for how his burial service should be carried out, he is adamant on one point: that he should be buried in Israel rather than Egypt. In fact, during a meeting with his son, יעקב makes יוסף swear to him that he will transport יעקב's body to Israel for burial. Through demanding language, expressed in the two words "זשׁבַעַת לְיִ" "swear to me" (בראשית מז:לא), יעקב places immense pressure on his son. Why would יעקב require יוסף to follow through on such a challenging demand? The trek back and forth between Israel and Egypt is not a walk in the park. In addition, פרעה will likely be opposed to letting יוסף leave with his father's body for an extended period of time. Furthermore, why did יעקב make his son explicitly swear that he would carry out this goal? Did he not trust his son's word that he would carry out his wishes? And why was it important to יעקב to be buried in Israel?

To answer this question, we must look earlier in **בראשית**, at אברם's purchase of מערת המכפלה. אבן עזרא comments (בראשית כג:יט) that the explicit mention of the **תורה** of such a purchase operates to show the superiority of the land of Israel - both for the living and for the dead. This commentary clearly shows the spiritual value of Israel: burial in Israel irrevocably connects the dead to the land, as well as to the Jewish nation.

Due to this attribute of spiritual connection, אברם wanted to purchase and dedicate a place in the Holy Land for his departed wife. So too, יעקב saw similar importance lying in his own burial in the land of Israel. As an important member of the Jewish nation and a relative of יוסף, an influential figure in Egypt's political system, יעקב knew of the vital role he played in the future of the Jewish nation. Although Jewish life in ארץ גoshen was then lucrative, accepting, and surprisingly successful, it would not always remain that way. יעקב knew that the relationship between the Jewish nation and Israel would become vital in the future, and it was up to him to establish such a link. Thus, he commands יוסף to bury him in Israel, placing him under oath to make sure his son was aware of the deep importance lying in such a task.

Today, in a world of terrifying antisemitism and anti-zionism, our connection to the land of Israel has become all the more important. Thus, we must do all we can to draw on the spiritual aspect of the Holy Land, thus connecting ourselves to our homeland and ancestral history. יעקב's insistence to be buried in Israel demonstrates the initiative we must take in bringing out such connections and strengthening our identification with our history and land, through life and death.

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אפרים ומנשה? Blessing Our Children to be Like

By Anna Szalat '28

In this week's **ברכה ברכות יעקב**, gathers all his sons giving each of them unique and interesting words. Each **ברכה** is given in poetic words. **מנשה** brings his two sons **יוסף** and **עקב**. **אפרים** blesses them by saying that all of the future generations of **ישראל** will bless their children to be like **מנשה** and **אפרים**. A question one can ask is why should we bless our children to be like them and not like other **צדיקים** like **אברהם** and **יצחק**?

ר' שלמה אריאלי gives an amazing answer, saying that there is a famous line in **תנ"א דבי אליהו** that says that each person should ask himself: "מתי יגיעו מעשי למשוער" "when will my actions equal the actions of my ancestors **יצחק**, **אברהם**, and **יעקב**" (פרק כה). He says that each person should always challenge himself to reach the same level of **קדושה** as our **אבותה**. Always try to make the effort to try and get on the same level as our **אבותה**. Always try to make the effort to try and get on the level of **אברהם**, **יצחק**, and **יעקב**. This seems obvious since we pray three times a day to Hashem so that our level of spirituality can get stronger and stronger. So why does the blessing that parents bless their children with use the names of **אפרים** and **מנשה**?

In this moment of history if we would make a family tree we would see that **מנשה** and **אפרים** are the farthest away from **יעקב**. They are his grandchildren and not only that, they did not have the opportunity to grow up beside **יעקב**. They grew up in **מצרים** surrounded only by idol worship and non-jewish

influences, yet they still managed to reach a very high level of spirituality, almost as high as **אברהם**. This is why until today, parents bless their children to be like **מנשה** and **אפרים** because we learn from them to try our best to reach the level of holiness like our **אבותה**. They teach us that even in our darkest times living in exile we must not get swayed in the wrong direction of our influences and always try to improve and strive to be on a higher level of holiness. **ישראל קדושה**. May all of us reach the highest level of holiness soon.



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A BISL TORAH
is published weekly
at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts

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