

HASHKAMA WEEKLY

פרשת ו'יחי
יג' טבת תשפ"א
JANUARY 2, 2026
VOL 5786 ISSUE 16



חכמה ב-AI תאמין?

By Reb Gemini

Consider the following "Torah" thought, generated by Gemini: Did the AI get it right? Do you find it to be accurate? Or did the technology miss the boat?

Rabbosai, as we close the Heilige Sefer Bereishis, we find ourselves standing at the bedside of Yaakov Avinu. The passuk says that Yaakov gathered his sons and wished to reveal to them the Keitz HaYomim—the final redemption. However, the Gemara in Pesachim (56a), brought down by Rashi, tells us that the Shechinah departed from him, and he was silenced. We must ask: Why would Hashem hold back this comfort? Would it not have given the Shevatim strength during the bitter slavery in Mitzrayim to know exactly when their suffering would end? The depth of this, as explained by many Baalei Mussar, is that Hashem wanted Klal Yisrael to survive the darkness of Galus (exile) not through calculation, but through Emunah (faith). If we knew the date, our service would be transactional—waiting out the clock. By hiding the Keitz, Yaakov taught us that we must serve Hashem with consistency even when the "End" is hidden from our eyes, finding light even when the outcome is obscured. This brings us to the profound connection with the earlier episode in the Parsha, where Yaakov blesses Ephraim and Menashe. If Yaakov could not give his children the "When" of the redemption, he gave them the "How." Note that Ephraim and Menashe were the first generation of Jews born and raised entirely in the spiritual impurity of Mitzrayim, yet they grew into tzaddikim worthy of being Shevatim. When Yaakov blessed them, he famously crossed his hands, placing his right hand on Ephraim, the younger son engrossed in Torah study, rather than Menashe, who was involved in the workings of the state (Bereishis 48:14). Yaakov was teaching us the secret to surviving the undefined Galus he couldn't reveal: prioritizing Torah learning and spiritual identity above all else. He showed us that even deep in Egypt, without a known end date to the exile, Jewish continuity is guaranteed if we prioritize the spirit (Ephraim) over the material.

Practical Takeaway: We often find ourselves in personal "exiles"—situations where the solution is hidden, and we don't know when our challenges will end. This week, when you face uncertainty in your parnassa (livelihood) or health, do not wait for the "end date" to improve your spiritual state. Instead, channel the strength of Ephraim: add five extra minutes of Torah study or Tehillim into your day right now. We cannot control when the challenge ends, but we can control who we are while we endure it.

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With Cholent, Kugel, and Short Shuir

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לעילוי נשמה לאה בת רפאל חיין





Shabbus Zmanim

1:30 pm	מנחה
4:21 pm	הדלקה
--- pm	מנחה - קבלת שבת
4:39 pm	שകיעת
5:53/6:09 am (16.1/72)	עלות השחר (16.1/72)
7:21:31 am	וצ' החמה
7:15 am	שחרית
Hot kiddush & Shiur after davening	
9:05/9:41 am	ס"ז קראת שמע
10:03/10:27 am	ס"ז תפילה
12:00:32 pm	חצאת היום
12:30:32 pm (30)	מנחה גדולה (גרא"א)
2:43:47 pm	מנחה קטנה (גרא"א)
3:41:59 pm	פלג המנחה (גרא"א)
--- pm	מנחה
4:40 pm	שקיעת
5:26/5:30 pm (8.5/50)	צה"כ ר' משה (52)
5:32 pm (52)	עריב (52)
5:40/5:52 pm (60/72)	צה"כ (60/72)



Next Week's Zmanim

1:30 pm	מנחה
4:28 pm	הדלקה
4:46 pm	שקיעת
7:15 am	שחרית
4:47 pm	שקיעת
5:39 pm (52)	עריב (52)

This Week's Riddle

Riddle: What similar ailment occurs to both Yitzhak and to Yaakov?

Answer: Both Yitzhak and Yaakov had trouble with their eyesight during old age (Bereshis 27:1, 48:10).



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משל ונמשל ב-א' תאמיין!

By Reb Gemini

Mashal: Imagine a legendary sofer (scribe), a master of his craft, known throughout the region for the unique "crowns" he placed on the letters of the Torah scroll. His work was known to carry a fire, a palpable kedusha (holiness) that could melt a heart of stone. For decades, he teaches this distinct style to his only son, training his hand day and night to replicate the precise curvature of every tag. When the old sofer eventually passes away, the town laments, crying out, "The fire has gone out! The ink is dry! Who will write for us now?" But then, the son sits at the desk. He picks up the quill. He dips it in the inkwell. He forms the letter Aleph with the exact same trembling reverence and precision as his father. A local Talmid Chacham (scholar) enters the room, sees the fresh parchment, and exclaims in shock, "I thought the master was gone, but looking at this Aleph, I see he is standing right here." The physical body of the father is in the ground, but the unique kav (line) of service remains unbroken. The father has not truly left the room; he has simply transferred the quill to a new hand.

Nimshal: Rabbosai, this is the deep pshat (explanation) in the famous Gemara in Maseches Taanis (5a) regarding our Parsha. The Gemara makes a startling assertion: Yaakov Avinu lo meis—our Father Yaakov did not die. The Gemara immediately challenges this: "Did the eulogizers eulogize for nothing? Did the embalmers embalm in vain? The pasuk says he was buried!" The answer given is the foundation of our entire existence: Mah zar'o bayim, af hu bayim—just as his seed is alive, so too he is alive. In the Torah view, "life" is not merely biological function; it is a connection to the Mekor HaChaim, the Source of Life. Yaakov Avinu represents the Midas HaEmes (Attribute of Truth) and the pillar of Torah study. When a Yid sits in a shul in America today and learns the same Blatt Gemara that was learned in Volozhin, he is not just remembering Yaakov; he is manifesting him. We are not a memorial to the past; we are the living, breathing presence of the Avos (Patriarchs). As long as the "voice is the voice of Yaakov" echoing in our Batei Medrash, Yaakov Avinu is as alive today as he was in Mitzrayim.

Practical Takeaway: What does this demand of us lema'aseh (practically)? It means we must stop viewing ourselves as isolated individuals and realize we are the carriers of this eternal flame. When you are tired at night and you push yourself to open a Sefer for ten minutes, you are verifying the life of Yaakov Avinu. This week, I challenge everyone to choose one specific mitzvah that defines the "legacy" of your home—perhaps it is the loud singing of Zemiros at the Shabbos table or the strict avoidance of Lashon Hara (gossip). Commit to it with the intensity of that sofer holding the quill. Say to yourself, "By doing this, I am proving that my father, and his father, and Yaakov Avinu are still here." Let us ensure that when Hashem looks down at this Kehilla, He sees that zar'o bayim—His children are alive—and therefore, our forefathers live on through us.

GOOD SHABBUS!