

# The Answers:

1. The Midrash mentions a number of **super-Mitzvot**, that are most powerful to bring the end to all suffering, and the return of our people to our homeland. The first is the mitzva of **Emunah**- strong belief in Hashem; the second is the mitzva of **Teshuva**- repentance; the third one is **Learning Torah** for Hashem's sake- especially **Mishnayot**; the fourth is **Ahavat Yisroel**- loving each other; the fifth is **Tefillah**- real prayers; the sixth is **Tzedakah**- charity; and the seventh is **Shabbat!** Galut started in this parsha, as the Bnei Yisroel went down to Mitzraim. It's up to us to get out.
2. The Roshei HaShevatim, each had extraordinary qualities that made them unique and beloved. Their greatness is beyond the scope of our imagination, and each Shevet deserves a work by itself. But, we must observe some of the things they are known for, so we can emulate them as well. Reuven was a model Baal Teshuva sincerely repenting a misdeed; Shimon stood up and punished evil doers; Levi was devoted to the learning of Torah full time; Yehuda was a natural leader stepping fourth on behalf of his brother; Yissochar was always learning non-stop; Zevulun supported Yissochar to enable him to learn Torah without interruption; Dan was brave to fight against the wicked; Naftoli was always fast to do kibud av, running to do errands for Yaakov or his brothers whenever they requested; Gad (Eliyahu Hanavi is from Gad, who will soon bring the tiding of Moshiach's arrival); Asher was extra devoted to master Mishnayot; Yosef was able to stay holy even against odds. Binyomin wouldn't speak lashon horah to tell of Yosef's sale. Zechutim yagen alenu!
3. There are many experiences in the history of Shevet Yehuda where the Shevet showed a natural leadership. One of the most famous of these episodes took place when Nachshon ben Aminadav of Shevet Yehuda was the first to jump in the waters of the Yam-Suf, confident that Hashem will save us. This demonstration of faith showed that he was a natural leader, perfect for the Jewish people. Yehuda also spoke up to sell Yosef instead of killing him by throwing him into a pit, which was a show of caring when others didn't. Even more so when Binyamin was going to become a slave, Yehuda offered to become a slave instead. Such humility- offering to let himself be a slave so that his brother will live- is a compassionate trait fit for a king.
4. Ephraim and Menashe were so righteous even as the first Jews in Galut that they were ranked with the tzadikim of the previous generation. They became Shevatim! Every father's prayer is that his child could also be so righteous that could be ranked as the great Jews of the previous generation in which he lived. Additionally, they deserve such pride because they were not jealous of each other. Menashe the older did not feel bad that Ephraim went before him. Parent's wish that there should not be jealousy between their kids because it is the most common cause of sibling rivalry. Yakov knew that jealousy caused the galut, and not being jealous can get us out of galut!
5. Just like a bow an arrow you have to aim, so to by tefillah you need to aim your prayers towards Yerushalyim to the Beit Hamikdash above it in Heaven. Also as a bow and arrow the more effort you have in pulling the string toward you the further the arrow will go. So too the more you pull the words to your heart the further your prayers will accomplish.
6. Yaakov called his children together before he passed away, and he ordered them to be united as a group, and never fight. We must be one nation, and only then we can expect the Geulah. (Politics and strife between schools, shuls, neighborhood and different Jewish sects is not what Yaakov had in mind.)
7. Reuvein lost his birthright to Yosef, the kingship to Yehuda, and the priesthood to Levi. It was due to his anger that removed Bilha's bed and placed Leah's. This was chutzpa, for not consulting with Yaakov. Now those traits of anger and chutzpa cannot be with a king or a kohen, so he lost those great privileges.
8. Yaakov cursed the anger of Shimon and Levi that it should never be fruitful. They should realize on their own that it doesn't pay to be angry, and this way they will stop that bad habit.
9. Yaakov knew that the best way to fix a sin is by making a tikun- changing that bad action. Since Shimon was short tempered as he massacred the city of Shechem, becoming a schoolteacher would force him to be extra patient and that would be a tikun. The first of "The Ten Commandments of Being a Good Teacher" is to have lots of patience. The reason however it was good for Shimon to have a potential temper is that a teacher also needs to be able to discipline his students as Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi said to his son: "Zerok marah betalmidim"- "Be tough, but be fair".
10. Yaakov said that just as Hashem saved me from bad thoughts and helped me to stay holy, so too, you youths, who will be in an immoral society, may Hashem bless you to have clean thoughts and stay righteous. May you be fruitful in the land like fish. Just like fish are not curious to see what goes on outside of their waters, so too you, as Jews, should keep your eyes in the waters of Torah, and not be curious to look what's going on in the other world- the world of the gentiles. This is a great lesson for this coming week that starts the "Days of Shovavim" (Repentance on Thoughts).
11. There are no letters  $\phi$  or  $\psi$  in the names of the shevatim, which hints that they were entirely righteous without sin ( $\tau\psi\phi$ ). The pasuk in Shir Hashirim (4-7) refers to them: "My beloved is beautiful without any fault".
12. Yaakov saw with Ruach Hakodesh that the wicked Yeravam would come from Ephraim and at first was unable to compose himself to bless him. Yosef cried to Hashem, please don't embarrass me, and the Ruach Hakodesh returned to Yaakov to bless Yosef's sons.
13. Yaakov told his children to honor Shevet Yehuda and Shevet Binyomin most. This is because the future kings will come from them. Namely, Shaul Hamelech, Ish Boshet Hamelech, Dovid Hamelech, Shlomo Hamelech etc. Both Rachel and Leah's descendants were the families of kings. Also the main tribes that most Jews today come from is from Shevet Yehuda and Binyomin. Levi would automatically earn respect since they were most devoted to learning Torah, which brings honor to those who study it. (The rest of the Shevatim are trapped behind the Sambatyon River.)
14. Shaul knew that Hashem promised that kings would come from Binyamin- the son of Rachel. Even though kings were promised to come from Yehuda, it seemed that now was the term of Binyamin's family's rulership, and anyone who would try to take that away was considered a mored bemalchut- a rebel to the king to be removed.
15. After Ephraim and Menashe sat learning Torah before Yaakov he was about to give them big berachot. Suddenly he saw in Ruach Hakodesh, Yeravam Ben Navat and Achav Ben Omri descending from Ephraim, that he froze as his Ruach Hakodesh departed. Yosef immediately prostrated himself on the floor and prayed to Hashem for mercy. The Ruach Hakodesh returned and he blessed them.
16. Binyomin was never involved in hatred (sinat hinam). He wasn't part of Yosef's sale to Mitzraim. So his property was most suited for the Bet Hamikdash which brought Shalom to the world.
17. "Modeh" means admit, and it also means thanks. Yehuda admitted a wrongdoing and that took power. Yaakov wanted that all Jews should have that quality to admit to Hashem we need him and thank Him. This therefore became our namesake as Yehudim.
18. Yaakov placed his right hand over the younger son Ephraim, to show that he was more special since he devoted more time and effort into Torah study. It was due to Ephraim running away from the lime light, that he got the lime light.
19. The Talmud tells us that Yaakov Avinu never really died. Now Yosef was punished for having him embalmed, that he died before his brothers, even though he was younger than them. [Maybe he allowed that, because that practice showed the importance of the deceased, since it was the way of the Pharos to mummify their great rulers.]
20. The Chevra Kadisha- which bury the dead, don't expect any benefit in return from the dead- and this is true kindness. (However, if they take a salary, perhaps that is a bit less than true kindness.)
21. A donkey has a special quality that it will carry its load for its master faithfully. It does not complain nor does it seek comfort when it crouches down. So too Yissaschar, the epitome of a Talmid Hachamim does not look for comforts in this world but rather looks to carry the heavy precious load of the Torah.
22. Zebulun was known as a supporter of Yissaschar's family so that Yissaschar could concentrate on his studies. As it says without "dough" there's no learning. So we give credit to the supporters of the Torah who made it possible for others to learn.
23. Once upon a time people were able to carry on a business and think of Torah while they worked and reach great achievements in the work place. But today with the drastic shortage of Talmidei Hachamim - of true Torah scholars - knowledgeable in all areas of Torah, we must turn to Yissaschar-Zevulun deals and Kollels to try as much as we can to develop the leaders of tomorrow.
24. The fruits of Zevulun's crop were so gigantic, in the merit of sponsoring Yissochar's learning, that everyone wanted to buy it. As a matter of fact many goyim were so impressed with the "secret" of Zevulun's success that they converted to Judaism!
25. In this world Talmide Hachamim don't have time to rest. They wake up early in the morning and they go to sleep late at night. In their pursuit of Torah excellence, they barely get to rest or take it easy. In the next world also they don't get to rest in one location because since they left writings and students in this world and children whose merit increases their merit they go higher and higher all the time in Gan Eden and don't get to rest in one spot.
26. Just like a snake has camouflage skin and sneaks upon its victim so too did Shimshon act as if he did not care for his people and lived amongst the Plishtim. In this way he was able to attack the enemy so much more cunningly.
27. Asher showed the greatest effort to study the Mishnayot. He was therefore selected to be present by the gateway of Gehinom to rescue those who studied Mishnayot diligently in their lifetime that they should be spared from that dreaded punishment.
28. Yaakov wished to inform his children of the final day of salvation for the Jewish people. But right then he blanked out and forgot the date. He worried that perhaps maybe his sons were not as righteous as he thought. Could they have sinned? They assured him of their faith to Hashem. "Shema Yisroel, Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad", "Listen Yisroel, Hashem our G-d is the only Power we serve". Yaakov felt so proud hearing their commitment, that he said, "Bless the name of Hashem's Honorable Kingdom forever and ever.
29. Yosef had good intentions in not inviting his brothers to dine with him, after the passing of Yaakov. He reasoned that in Yaakov's lifetime he placed Yosef at the head of the table, but now he didn't want to show himself more honor than Yehuda the official family of kings, nor did he want to make Reuven the oldest feel inferior, so he didn't invite them. But, they were paranoid assuming he hated them. For Shalom they lied and said "Yaakov, our father said not to hold a grudge against us".
30. Ephraim was always concentrating on his Torah learning, Whereas Menashe although learned as well was busy with the kingdom affairs. If a person wants outstanding sons they must see their father always working in his learning. So Ephraim produced a leader such as Yehoshua to take over Moshe quicker than Menashe produced Gideon.

Incidentally, there is a Midrash that quotes that Gideon was not really a high caliber Tzadik or Talmid Hacham, but he merited being the savior of the Jewish people of his time due to his devotion to honor his father to show Kibud Av' Vem. It was a mitzva of honoring his father that somehow paralleled Menashes helping his father that actually made him a leader also.

31. Yaakov was scared that if a person would die suddenly without ever being sick, he would never have a chance to do teshuva before he left this world, and he would also never get the chance to warn his family or tell them his last wishes. So when a person gets sick in his or her old age, it is really a benefit for everyone. Yaakov also wanted to be sure he would bless his children one more time before he passed away.
32. Yaakov knew he could trust Yosef to do his will, but he was concerned that Paroh might resist this permission. So by forcing Yosef to swear to his father Paroh would not be able to object a son who wanted to keep his father's promise
33. Since Yaakov uttered a curse to the one who stole Lavan's crazy idols and a Jew none other than his own wife suffered the fate of that curse, he lost out. Because if someone causes another Jew suffering they do not get let off the hook either. It's for that reason Yaakov didn't live as long as his father Yitzchak did.
34. Yosef was very careful his eyes should not "see" tamei things therefore Shiloh which was his property was blessed that anyone who could "see" Shiloh could still eat the Masser Sheni and the Kodshim Kalim and that area was pronounced holy whereas in Yerushalayim you could only eat these things in the city proper itself.
35. Dan was placed in the back of the Jewish people. They were therefore in the situation to find many more things that the Jewish travelers left behind. Obviously they got to do this Mitzvah or returning lost items more than anyone else did.
36. Thirty-six crowns. This is to symbolize that Talmidei Chachamim are the true princes, because when all of the kings of the land heard of Yaakov's arrival, they put their crowns on top of his coffin. This was very appropriate because Hashem calls the Jewish people "His children", and since Hashem is the King of Kings, then we are the "princes of princes"!
37. The message of the true Mashiach of Klal Yisroel is Pakod Yifkod, "Hashem has surely remembered to save you". The reason the words are repeated is because there are two types of redemptions that we need. Our physical needs must be taken care of and so too our spiritual needs. Only then is it considered the real Geula.
38. Yinon, Tzemach, Menachem, Peleh, Yoetz, Kal, Gibor, Abi-Ad and Shalom.
39. The three moadim (Pesach, Shavuot and Sukot) are in honor of the Avot. The twelve Roshei Hodesh are in honor of the 12 Shevatim.
40. Yosef wished to say the Bracha one must say when a miracle happens to him. He therefore went passed the pit which he was thrown into in order to thank Hashem for the miracle of saving him in that very place.
41. Yaakov asked Yosef to bury him in Israel to which Yosef agreed. So too Yosef was given the merit that Bnei Yisroel carried his coffin throughout the dessert all those years back to Israel. When you respect the will of others - especially your parents - you'll be surprised how much respect you'll get back in the future.
42. Some want to suggest that the reason the Arabs burned Yosef's stone monument this year was a message that just like Yosef suffered from hatred so too we must stop the hatred burning around us in order to end the terrible arab crisis.
43. Yaakov said that Yosef deserved Shechem more than its previous inhabitants. They were perverse and corrupt, he was clean and pure.
44. The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month is when the moon is complete and brightest, and so too the 15<sup>th</sup> generation from Avrohom Avinu was King Solomon, whose kingdom was greatest. After that, the kingdom of Klal Yisrael became smaller, until disappearing after the 29<sup>th</sup> generation. But we must be encouraged that it is only temporary. Just as the moon renews itself, so too will be the renewal of the kingdom of Yehuda very soon
45. The Egyptians wanted Yosef's coffin to stay there by the Nile so that this way in his merit the waters would flow well. So it seems he didn't have a choice.
46. Don't show off! A person should frequently say "Beli Ayin Hara" whenever he merits something extra special. One should also not show off things that he has extra than anyone else. It seems that controlling ones eyes from seeing things that he shouldn't is also a segulah not to be harmed by the Ayin Hara. We find that Yosef was blessed with this great security since he always controlled his eyes not giving in to temptation. Yosef did not let his eyes feast on the illusions of the Satan.
47. Its much more comfortable by Tehiat Hametim to come out of the ground in Israel than anywhere else because in other lands one must roll in tunnels which doesn't sound so comfortable. Also the land of Israel atones for ones sins and probably the ones there will be the first ones to be reborn.
48. Kollal affords young and old men the best of both worlds. It lets them amass great wealth of Torah knowledge and at the same time their needs for their families to be taken care of. One who learns in Kollal is really like a Cohen of the Bet Hamikdash. How fortunate is his lot.
49. Yosef demonstrated the greatest amount of self-control. Just like a Nazir controls himself from drinking wine (representing the pleasures of life) and guards himself not to become tamei, so too Yosef earned the title Nazir which also means crown because of his holiness.
50. The Rabbis curse one who announces the date of Mashiach's coming. Because if he doesn't come the predictor is going to do more harm than good by discouraging people's hopes. Even though many dates were announced of Mashiachs coming, it just

really meant that it was a special time, which merits could very likely bring it. We must therefore not proclaim a specific date, we must just say" he is on the way"!

51. Yaakov thought Shimshon from Shevet Dan was Mashiach.
52. After you sneeze it is a good custom to say "I hope You will save me Hashem". When a person sneezes, hopefully the body extracts germs and undesired elements. Therefore, a person should make a prayer to Hashem that he should be healthy. This custom can be more appreciated if you recall the olden days. When someone sneezed his neshoma would leave and he would die. That's why when someone sneezes you're supposed to bless him "Chaim tovim", "Gezundheit" or "G-d bless you", which are all wishes that he stay healthy.
53. Mattatron was the angel that went before Yaakov to protect him. Wherever that angel appeared so did Hashem. Yaakov blessed them that that angel be with them as well, and ultimately Hashem Himself would protect us.
54. The only time you can get angry is if you see someone making a Hillul Hashem, To defend Hashem's honor you may get angry but one should never get angry over physical needs. Even in spiritual needs one should not bring himself to anger. (When rebuking a sinner, anger is often not effective. You can accomplish more with honey than with vinegar.)
55. Shimon was the poorest tribe. Since they did not get the blessing of Yaakov due to their anger, nor the blessing Moshe (Devarim) since he was upset about the shameful incident when 24,000 of Shevet Shimon sinned after Billam's temptation. Shevet Binyomin did not only lose out materially by not getting the blessing of the gedolim, but even spiritually they lost out. No Shofet (judge) descended from them to lead the Bnei Yisroel.
56. The heavenly angel warned Maran Rabbi Yosef Kairo, that one should never get angry because it damages their soul.
57. Shlomo Hamelech married too many wives. Many were converts and they continued their Avoda Zara practices. Since he didn't protest this enough, the kingdom was torn away and given to Yeravam.
58. In Pirkei Avot we are told, a Hacham is somebody that learns from everyone, and someone who can perceive the ramifications of everything. However to be properly titled the affectionate name of Hacham, one must know at least three sedarim of the six sedarim of Shas.
59. Mordechai HaYehudi the famous member of the Sanhedrin, and his beautiful wife Esther saved the Jewish people from the Amalek of their time.
60. It's not certain if Yaakov ever found out that Yosef was sold.
61. Menashe's descendant Gideon also became a great leader. Yaakov prophesized that Hashem would make a miracle through him as his 300 innocent soldiers defeated the 135,000 of the Midianite army as if they were one person.

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