

A Thought for Shabbat

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Shabbat Shalom

Friday, January 6, 2012

11 Tevet 5772



In this last Torah portion of the Book of Genesis, *Vayechi*, (Gen: 47:28-50:26), we read of the death of Jacob and Joseph.

The Book of Genesis is replete with the creation of the world, the flood and the family story of Abraham and Sarah. It contains within it the birth of the Jewish people and their relationship with their God. Now at the end of the Book of Genesis, the book of beginnings, are we to view it as the beginning of the end or just the end of the beginning?

Many often pine for the good old times recalling their youth as if everything that followed was no comparison at all. We yearn for the carefree days of yesteryear. We celebrate our beginnings with vigor and lament that those days are gone.

The genesis of our lives is a beginning, a prelude, to everything that comes after it. "Genesis" is defined as "the time or circumstances of something's coming into being." As young people we are just coming into our truest selves and so when we finish that chapter, it is really just the end of the beginning not the beginning of the end. There are only beginnings. Every day offers us a new possibility for growth. This last Torah portion of Genesis is entitled "Vayechi—And he lived." Even though the book ends, the people live. That is what we ought to do—take the experiences of our lives, celebrate them fully and realize they are the essential piece of what defines us. So even on our last day of life we are still coming into being. Shabbat is the time to reflect on our beings and to ensure we are still growing.