



The Daily Launch Pad

Dear Parents,

Parashas Vayechi discusses at length numerous details involved with the burial of *Yaakov Avinu*. Accordingly, the *Shabbos* of *Parashas Vayechi* has traditionally been the time of the year when *Rabbonim* took the opportunity to speak and teach about end-of-life issues with their *Kehillos*, including *Halachic*, spiritual and practical issues. In recent years, *NASCK* - the *National Association of Chevra Kadisha* has spearheaded the effort to reach out to *Rabbonim* and *Kehillos* to speak about these crucial issues. *NASCK's* theme this year is to promote and deepen the understanding of *Modeh Ani*, which is both meaningful to adults and relevant to our youngest students.

From the earliest days of our *Yeshiva*, there has been a unique connection between our institution and the *Chevra Kadisha*. The pioneers who established our *mosad* of *Torah chinuch* in our community many decades ago, were the same individuals who began volunteering to do *Taharos* for the greater South Florida community, with the proceeds going to advancing the work of the *Chevra Kadisha* and to support the *Yeshiva*. Many of our *Rebbeim*, *Moros* and parents have been inspired to continue in that holy work until this day

It is therefore fitting to make mention of the current *Shabbos Vayechi* project that speaks to all of us, both to our children and families and the special *mitzvah* of *chesed shel emes*, which refers to all aspects of care of the deceased.

Preparation of human remains for their eternal journey is the primary task of the *Chevra Kadisha*. Preparing our own *Neshamos* for a life of eternity, is everyone's task. It does not begin at the end-of-life, it is an ever-present mission, every day of our life. Each day starts with the short *tefilla* of *Modeh Ani*. These first words we utter every morning are particularly poignant and powerful, propelling us in the dawn of a new day, with a message to live a life that is eternal. This is what we should focus on, starting with this *Shabbos, Parashas Vayechi*.

Paraphrasing from the *Shabbos Vayechi* website (ShabbosVayechi.org) the words of *Modeh Ani* contain the following message:

מודה = we begin each day with **gratitude**; Thank you (*Hashem*)

אני - for the many blessings especially **tailor-made for me**

לפניך - we delight to be in *Hashem's* presence and realize that **He is our constant companion**

מלך - we recognize we are before **the King, who can do anything**

חי - *Hashem* is the energizing life force that **sustains all living things**.

וקיים = *Hashem* is eternal, and therefore, our *Neshama* is **eternal**

ישיבתך - returning my soul **each day is an incomparable gift**. No matter my circumstances, *Hashem* has trust in me that I deserve to have another day in which to serve Him.

בהמלה - we can feel the embrace of **Hashem's unconditional giving and loving**

רבה אמונתך - **each morning Hashem shows unwavering confidence in us**, so too do we strengthen our confidence in His ultimately returning our souls to life after the coming of *Moshiach* - *Techiyas haMeisim*.

These uplifting messages contained in the words of *Modeh Ani* should be shared with our children, on their level. Many of our beautiful *Tefillos* are lengthy, complex and beyond the reach of our children. The 12 words of *Modeh Ani* are short and very sweet, and the gateway to a meaningful life of eternal value. As we ponder the meaning of life and harness our energies to attain life in the hereafter, let's help our children begin each day with the sweet and comforting thought that *Hashem* trusts them and is their constant companion.

Best wishes for an inspiring *Shabbos* and a taste of eternity,



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