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Q1: The Talmud suggests that Jacob was the first person ever to fall ill before dying, so he could gather his family around him in his final moments. Why is it so important that Jacob have a final chance to address his sons?

Q2: What does it mean for Jacob to take Joseph's two eldest sons as his own? Why does Jacob mention the death and burial of Rachel in the process?

Q3: What is the significance of the firstborn switch that Jacob does with Ephraim and Manasseh? Is placing them on his lap symbolic? Can you detect any other indications that Jacob or Joseph is infantilizing them?

Q4: Who is Jacob's redeeming angel? Has he shown up before?

Q5: Why does Jacob conclude his life with blessings for his sons? What power and significance do they have? How do they compare to other examples of fathers blessing sons? How do they compare to Moses's blessings for Israel near the end of his life?

Q6: Why did Joseph need Pharaoh's permission to bury his father?

Q7: Why does Jacob want to be buried in the land? Does it matter where you are buried? Why?

Q8: Why was Jacob embalmed? Why was the procession accompanied by the military with chariots and horses? Are there symbolic or thematic meanings to the details of Jacob's funeral?

Q9: Why are the brothers again afraid of Joseph after Jacob dies? What reasons does Joseph have for forgiving them? Do you think Joseph ever did plan revenge against his brothers? What would that look like?

Q10: Can you detect any extent to which Israel has started adopting Egyptian customs by the end of Genesis?

Q11: Think about how the of the story of the book of Genesis develops. What changes about the world? What changes about the style of narrative? Can these two things be distinguished?

Q12: What intrigues you about this parsha? What intrigues you about the book of Genesis?