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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



LIVE FOREVER!

If there is one thing for certain in life, it is that everyone dies. Sounds depressing, but in actual fact we know that this world is but a corridor to the Real (Eternal) World – the world to come. Yet our Rabbis have noted that certain individuals did not die! We are told that “David Melech Yisrael Chai Vekayam” – “King David is alive and exists”. The Gemarah in Taanit (5) states that Yakov never died! Rabbi Yochanan notes that the Torah normally describes a person's death with the word “Vayamot”, as was with the case of Avraham's (Bereishit 25:8) and Yitzchak (35:29). Yet when it comes to Yakov, the Torah never uses the word “Vayamot”. Rabbi Yochanan states that this implies that Yakov never actually died. Rav Yitzchak questions the fact that Yakov never died, for the Torah explicitly states that he was eulogized, embalmed and buried? Rav Nachman responds: “It is written, ‘And you, my servant Yakov, fear not, says the L-rd, and do not tremble, O Israel. For behold, I shall save you from afar, and your descendants from the land of their captivity’ (Jeremiah 30:10). The verse equates Yakov with his descendants: just as his descendants are alive, he, too, is alive.” Thus we see that Yakov never died. How is it possible to never die? Surely this defies logic. Does that mean that Yakov is living with us today?

Let us take a closer look into the Parsha. When Yakov's days came close to the end, he called for his son Yosef and told him that he did not wish to be buried in Egypt; rather he wished to be buried in Israel. Yakov asks Yosef to swear that he will bury him in Israel. Yosef agrees saying – “Anochi Eseh Kidvarecha” – “I will do as you say.” On a deeper level, the Baalei Tosfot learn that Yosef was saying, “Father, I see that it is important for you to be buried in Israel, ‘Anochi Eseh Kidvarecha’ – I am also going to do like you and I will also ask to be buried in Israel.” This seems a little strange. We would expect Yosef just to agree with his father's dying demands. We would not expect him to add and say, “that's a great idea, I also wish to be buried in Israel.”

Even more strange is that later, when Yosef himself is dying, he approaches the brothers and asks them “VeHalitem Et Atsmtai” (50:25) – “When the time comes and Hashem takes

Am Yisrael out of Egypt, please take my bones up to Israel with your bones.” Yosef was inadvertently advising his brothers that they too should be buried in Israel. Of course it is a merit to be buried in Israel, but what gives Yosef the right to seemingly impose this stringency on others? The concept of death is utter separation of body from soul, each one returning to its element, making its Tikun (perfection) in its specific way. The essence of life is the ability to connect to Hashem (as it is “V'Atem Hadevekim...Chayim Kulechem Hayom”).

A Tsadik is connected to Hashem in this world, and remains connected even after death. On the other hand a Rasha, even when he is alive, has this intrinsic life force missing from him. His lack of connection to Hashem causes him to be “dead” even whilst alive. It is for this reason that the righteous are called alive even after they're dead, while the wicked are called dead even while they are alive (Gemara Brachot 18).

Our Rabbis taught: “There are three partners in man: The Holy One, Blessed Be He, the father and the mother. The father supplies the white substance, out of which are formed the child's bones, the sinews, the nails, the brain and the white of the eye. The mother supplies the red substance, out of which are formed the skin, flesh, hair, blood and the black of the eye. G-d provides the spirit, the soul, the beauty of the features, eyesight, the power of hearing, ability to speak and walk, understanding and intelligence.” (Gemara Nidda 30a).

Our Sages note that “Brah karah deavuh” – “A son is a physical extension of his father, and the son's soul has an effect on the father”. A son, who goes in the righteous ways of the father, continues his legacy and gives life to his father's name. In such a case it is as if the father never died, for his son continues his father's legacy, both spiritually and physically.

Yosef was Yakov's prodigy. From a young age, Yakov had invested all his Torah that he learnt in Shem VeEver into his son Yosef. Yakov saw in Yosef a future leader. He also noticed that there were many similarities between the two. Many years later when he finally got back together with Yosef, he was pleased to see how Yosef had kept up his spirituality and service of Hashem. Both Yakov and Yosef entered Galut, and both survived spiritually. When Yosef stated to his father that he wished to be buried in Israel just like Yakov, it was because Yosef viewed himself as an extension of Yakov. Any wish that Yakov conveyed was also a wish that Yosef desired to fulfil. Since Yosef wished to be Yakov's mirror image in the world, he too desired to be buried in Israel. When commanding his brothers to bury him in Israel, he specifically mentions that they bury his bones (Atsmtai). This was a hint to the fact that they fulfil their father's will by enacting it themselves. By burying their bones that emanate from their father, they show that they continue his legacy in the world. Yakov Avinu never died, because he passed on his entire essence to his children. All of his children were Tsadikim and carried on his legacy. ▶

13 TEVET 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:35 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 4:53 PM

> MAZAL TOV

Daniel & Sandy Tamman & Ronnie & Rachel Abraham
on the engagement of their children Sara and Nissim



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

“Don't cry because it's over,
smile because it happened.”

> UPCOMING EVENTS

For our upcoming events
check our website
www.torahactionlife.com

• 18th-20th JANUARY 2019

International weekend for Young Professionals

• 3rd-7th MARCH 2019

Young Professionals Ski Trip



DVAR TORAH

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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

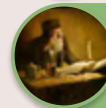
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HALACHOT

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Q&A & CARTOON

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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

Rabbi Shalom Schwadron told a story of two religious people who took a taxi ride in Israel a few years after the passing of the Chazon Ish – R' Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz zt"l (1878-1953). They were in the cab and mentioning to each other how Bnei Brak wasn't the same since the Chazon Ish had passed away. The cab driver, a non-observant Jew, hearing this, turned around and said, "Did you say that the Chazon Ish is gone? You're wrong – you don't know what you're talking about! The Chazon Ish is still around – and I can prove it!" The two people were a bit stunned, and they were all ears.

The cab driver began his story: "My daughter was going through complicated labour and the doctors had been dealing with her for many hours. She was in agony, yet the doctors seemed helpless, and told me there was nothing they could do. At some point an old nurse came over to me and said, 'Why don't you go to the Chazon Ish?' 'The who?' I asked. 'What is the Chazon Ish?' 'He is a great rabbi,' the nurse said. 'People go to him for advice, and to pray for them.' I asked her, 'Where does he live?' She told me, 'Just go to Bnei Brak. Once you get there, any child in the street will be able to direct you to his home.' I got into my cab and raced to Bnei Brak. In no time I was at the Chazon Ish's house. It was late at night, but he answered my knock himself. In a quiet and friendly

manner he asked how he could help me. I told him about my daughter's difficulties, and how the doctors were unable to help her. He looked at me, smiled, and said, 'You can go back to the hospital – the child was just born.' He shook my hand and wished me Mazel Tov. My heart leaped with joy, but I could not believe him. I dashed back to the hospital and when I got there, sure enough, the child had already been born, exactly as he said."

The cab driver continued. "Two years later my daughter was again expecting a child. Once again she had extreme difficulties in labour. And once again the doctors despaired of a healthy birth. This time I didn't wait for the old nurse. I got into my cab, rushed to Bnei Brak, and went to the Chazon Ish. I came to the corner where I thought I remembered he lived, and just to be sure I asked a passer-by, 'Is this the home of the Chazon Ish?' The man looked at me as if I had lost my mind. 'What's the matter with you? Don't you know that the Chazon Ish passed away last year?' My heart fell. I felt as if I had lost my best friend. Illogically, I began pleading with this total stranger. 'Please, I came to speak to him; it's an emergency. To whom should I go now?' 'People go to his kever (grave site) and pray there,' he told me. I queried as to its location, and the man pointed me in the right direction. I

ran there, fell on the grave and began crying uncontrollably. I begged the Chazon Ish to pray for my daughter. 'You saved my daughter once before,' I pleaded, 'please pray for her again.' I was there a short time. Suddenly, just as I sit here now, I saw his face with that same smile. I heard him say to me, 'Mazel tov! You can go back to the hospital; the child has been born.' Startled, I got up, ran to my cab, and rushed back to the hospital. When I got there, they told me that my second grandchild had indeed been born." Then the cab driver turned to his passengers and said, "nd you say the Chazon Ish is gone!"

When attending a Yeshiva, you often here Yeshiva students learning out loud. One asks the other, "What does Rashi say?" "Rashi is saying....." is the answer! Rashi is alive – it is as if he is with us today. Through his Torah and teachings, his life lives on.

Dying in Judaism is far from certain. People who leave children behind them, students that go in their righteous path, as well as positive actions, live forever.

May we all merit to live forever! ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI MASHIACH KELATY - RABBI OF STANMORE SEPHARDI COMMUNITY



KEEP IT SIMPLE

"Vayechi Yaakov b'Eretz Mitzrayim [And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt] for seventeen years. And the years of Yaakov's life were one hundred and forty seven years.[47:28-29]"

The parsha of "Vayechi Yaakov [And Yaakov lived]" paradoxically deals with Yaakov's preparations for his death. It's interesting to note that the two parshiot which contain the word 'life' in their title (Chayai Sarah - The life of Sarah and Vayechi - And he lived) deal with death. The Torah's clear demonstration that true 'life' encompasses far more and extends far beyond our definition of that term. Yaakov summoned his sons in order to bless them before his death. "Yehudah, atah yoducha a'checha [49:8]," literally meaning, "Yehudah, your brothers will admit to you." The Kli Yakar explains as follows. Because you put aside your embarrassment and admitted to having relations with Tamar, commensurately, your brothers will put aside their embarrassment and will admit and confirm that you alone are worthy to be the king.

The Medrash relates the extent of Yehudah's kingdom. Hashem said to Yehudah, "You saved Tamar and her two sons from being burnt to death and you saved Yosef from the pit he'd been thrown into, you will reign in both this world and the next."

Rav Sholom Schwadron zt"l asks why such a big deal is being made out of Yehudah's admission that Tamar was pregnant from him. Did he really have any other choice but to admit?

Tamar, disguised herself and had relations with Yehudah without him realizing that it was her. She was thereby fulfilling the mitzva of 'yibbum' (levirate marriage)-- lending continuity to her late husband, Yehudah's son. The Yehudah-led court, unaware that Tamar was pregnant from Yehudah, sentenced her to death by burning for her seeming infidelity. As Tamar was being led to her death she sent them Yehudah's signet ring, cloak and walking stick. "I am pregnant from the man that these belong to!"

What alternative did Yehudah have when he recognized his articles? Could he have murderously stood idly by while his daughter-in-law, pregnant with two babies fathered by him, would be burnt to death?! The reward he received reveals the difficulty of the test. What was the test? What could he have done?

Rav Sholom explains that Yehudah could have rationalized...

'True, if I don't admit, innocent people will die. However, if I do admit won't it be a chilul Hashem (a desecration of Hashem's name)? What will happen to the honour of the courts and the judges? Won't it reap scorn onto the Kingdom of Israel that I will head? No! No! I can't admit... It will be a transgression for me to admit...

'How about the murder of innocent people? I'll work things out... As the leader of the beis-din I'll announce that in light of the new development, the arrival of a ring, cloak and staff, the court has decided to hold further deliberations. I'll then find ample doubts to indefinitely postpone the actual death sentence. No one gets killed and the honour of Hashem, the courts and the kingdom remains intact.'

Yet, Yehudah didn't allow himself to get sucked into such calculations. He ignored the enormity of the humiliation he was about to suffer. There he was, the leader of the court. Who else sat with Yehudah on this court? His grandfather, Yitzchok Avinu and Shem, the son of Noach. Such leaders were surely surrounded by their disciples, soaking up their every word and nuance. Undoubtedly, there were also many onlookers, interested in following the developments of this rather sensational case and wanting to get a glimpse of their generations greatest and holiest leaders.

And then, the climactic moment... Tamar is being led to her death. All eyes are glued. Absolute silence. Yehudah sees the items. He recognizes them. No rationalizations are made. He shouts, "She is righteous! It was me!" Every single eye turns toward Yehudah as a collective gasp is heard. You?! Our judge?! The tzaddik?! It was you?!?!?

Who can imagine the stomach-dropping humiliation of that moment? What gave him the strength to do it? Honesty... No rationalizing. No misleading. Nothing less than the pure and brutal truth. Immediately! No hesitation! Any delaying would have prolonged a misunderstanding. It would have prolonged falsehood. It wasn't an option.

The question: 'Who's a Jew?' is one that often finds its way into the headlines. The name Yehudi comes from the name Yehudah. It means to acknowledge, to admit. Why was his name chosen to be the banner-carrier of the entire nation, even of those who in fact descended from his eleven brothers? Targum Yonasan ben Uziel writes: "Yehudah, you admitted to the incident with Tamar, as a result the nation will be called by your name, Yehudim [49:8]." Honesty. Pure, unadulterated, not from concentrate honesty. That's "Who's a Jew". That's how we got our name. If we're not following in the path of Yehudah then we're not deserving of his name.

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l, the renowned mashgiach of the Ponevezher Yeshiva had a grandson in America who was critically ill, r'l. One Friday night, the child passed away. After Shabbat, the family sent a telegram to Rav Nachum Pertzovitz zt"l of the Mirrer Yeshiva informing him of the sad news and asking him to gently break it to Rav Chatzkel.

Rav Nachum went to Rav Chatzkel and quietly said, "We received information from America."

"I know already," Rav Chatzkel replied. "Friday night I had a dream that my late father and another man buried the child wrapped in the cover of a Sefer Torah."

The two had spoken for a few minutes when there was a knock on the door. That day was the thirtieth day since the passing of Rav Isaac Sher, zt"l, the Slobodka Rosh Yeshiva. Eulogies were scheduled to be given and Rav Chatzkel was slated as one of the speakers. "When does the Mashgiach wish to go to the eulogy?" asked the young man who had entered.

"I can't speak there today," Rav Chatzkel replied softly. "I know that if I'll speak about Rav Isaac it will awaken in me a sadness that I feel about my grandson. I'll be moved to tears. Those attending will think that I'm crying for Rav Isaac but I'll know that I'm really crying for my grandson. I do not want to shed false, misleading tears..."

I recently heard an amazing story. A woman called a certain chevra kadisha asking them to come and tend to her husband. Although she was not a member of that community, she explained that she and her husband had not been affiliated with any community. When they arrived they found her alone with her late husband. Explaining that they had no relatives or friends who would take her to the cemetery, she asked for a moment to say good-bye before they'd take him to his burial.

One of the members of the chevra kadisha overheard as she bent down to her husband. "Itchik, you're going to the World of Truth. Tell them not to be upset with us that we had no children. Explain to them that it wasn't our fault. We wanted to have children but what could we do. We lived in Russia. And for seventeen years there was no mikveh. By then it was too late.

Explain it to them Itchik..."

Honest people. Rav Chatzkel—one of the greatest of his generation—refused to mislead anyone with false tears. Itchik and his wife—simple Russian immigrants—with super-human resolve refused to rationalize and go against the little that they knew. Honest people. The true answer to the question "Who's a Jew?".

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI YEHIA LAHLO

About 400 years ago, Rabbi Yehia Lahlo was an emissary to Morocco from Israel. He settled in the village of Ktsar-el-Souk, and there he taught Torah and ethics to children, developed teachers and shochatim (ritual slaughterers), and was preoccupied with improving the material and spiritual lives of Jews in the region. The name of Rabbi Yehia became famous as a great Tzaddik and benefactor, and his home was the center of attraction for numerous crowds. If a resident was suffering from any illness, the first thing that he did was to go see Rabbi Yehia, for he had the conviction that because of the Tzaddik's prayers, which moved the heavens, his recovery would not delay.

Rabbi Yehia passed away on the day of Purim and was laid to rest where he had lived, in Ktsar-el-Souk. Since then, the Jews of Morocco celebrate the Hilloula of Rabbi Yehia on Shushan Purim.

One day, a Jew from Marrakech went to pay a visit to his relatives who lived in the vicinity of Tefilalet. On the way he was attacked by thieves, who tied up his hands and feet and dragged him along to their secret hideout near Ktsar-el-Souk. In the middle of the night, the poor Jew murmured a last prayer of penitence, for he was convinced that his final hour had come.

The thieves travelled on the route by which Rabbi Yehia Lahlo had been laid to rest, and when the Jew noticed the tomb of the saint, he raised his eyes towards the sky and said, "Master of the world, by the merit of the Tzaddik Rabbi Yehia, deliver me from the hands of these thieves!" He also vowed to make a Seuda for the poor at the gravesite of the saint if he managed to escape.

Several hours later, in the middle of the night, a company of French soldiers suddenly appeared. When the thieves noticed the soldiers, they saved themselves and thus abandoned the Jew, hands and feet tied up. Because they could not see well in the dark, during their escape the thieves fell into a ravine that was in their path.

The Jew stayed this way all night, hands and feet tied up, for the French soldiers had not seen him. It was only in the early morning that some Jews who were passing by freed him from his bonds. He arrived at the village of Ktsar-el-Souk and made a great meal for the poor as a sign of thanks. His mouth did not cease thanking and praising the Holy One, blessed be He, for having delivered him by the merit of Rabbi Yehia Lahlo. ■

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HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

APPLYING GEL TO A CHILD'S SKIN OR GUMS ON SHABBAT

The Rama (Rav Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1530-1572) establishes (in Orah Haim 328:17) that a child has the status of a "Holeh She'en Bo Sakana" (an ill patient whose condition is not dangerous) with respect to the laws of Shabbat. This means that whereas adults may not take medication on Shabbat unless they are ill to the point where they need to lie down, children are considered "ill" and may be given any medication that they need, under any circumstances. This applies to all forms of medication - syrups, eyedrops, eardrops, tablets or capsules. Even if the child did not begin taking medication before Shabbat, he may be given any medication he needs on Shabbat, without any restrictions. Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (1924-1998) writes in his Or Le'Sion that this refers to all children who have yet to reach the age of Bar-Misva.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef was asked whether this Halacha applies also to gels, such as gel applied to the gums of infants who are teething and experience considerable pain. Although children are not included in the prohibition of Refu'a (medication) on Shabbat, there is a separate prohibition of Memare'ah, which forbids smoothening out a substance on Shabbat. Is there room to allow applying gel in the case of a child suffering from teething pain?

Hacham Ovadia ruled leniently, based on a discussion of the Magen Abraham (Rav Abraham Gombiner, 1633-1683) concerning the parameters of Memare'ah. If somebody had expectorated on the ground, and he wishes to rub it into the earth with his feet, this is forbidden, because in the process he might end up filling holes in the ground with earth, which would violate the prohibition of plowing on Shabbat. If, however, this happened not on the ground, but on a solid surface, one may rub the spit into the ground, because there is obviously no concern of filling holes with earth. The Magen Abraham raises the question of why this is not forbidden by virtue of the fact that the substance is being smoothened, seemingly in violation of Memare'ah. To answer this question, the Magen Abraham establishes a very important principle, stating that Memare'ah does not apply when the substance which is being smoothened is absorbed into the surface. This prohibition forbids smoothening out a substance on a surface, but not smoothening it such that it is absorbed into a surface.

Hacham Ovadia ruled that we may rely on this leniency of the Magen Abraham in cases of a child, and we may therefore allow applying gel to a child's gums to alleviate teething pain. By the same token, Hacham Ovadia allows applying cream to a rash on an infant's skin. Although the Hazon Ish (Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, 1878-1953), in one place in his writings, rules that cream may be dabbed onto an infant's skin, but not smeared, Hacham Ovadia noted a different source where the Hazon Ish ruled leniently in this regard, and allowed smearing cream. Hacham Ovadia likewise permitted those suffering from very painful backaches to apply creams to the skin to alleviate the pain, in accordance with the lenient position of the Magen Abraham.

Summary: Children below the age of Bar-Misva may be given any medication they require on Shabbat, under any circumstances, without any restrictions. This applies even to applying gel to aching gums and cream to rashes. Although in most cases smearing gels and creams on skin is forbidden on Shabbat, in the case of a child (or in the case of an adult experiencing significant pain) this is allowed. ■

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Shommer Shabbat

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1-2-1 UCL LEARNING PROGRAM

TAL's 1-2-1 learning program at UCL this past term has truly been amazing! Having a learning program that covers contemporary Torah issues in depth was truly enjoyable, especially as it was able to include so many people. Can't wait to next term!

By Udi Ibgui, Mechanical Engineering University College London

KidsTime



YOSHI & Co.



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why is kindness towards the dead called “chesed shel emet” kindness of truth?
- ❷ Give three reasons Yaakov didn't want to be buried in Egypt.
- ❸ How do you treat a “fox in his time” (i.e., a commoner who rules)?
- ❹ “When I was coming from Padan, Rachel died on me... I buried her there on the way to Efrat...” Why did Yaakov say all this to Yosef?
- ❺ Initially, why was Yaakov unable to bless Efraim and Menashe?

❶ 47:29 - Because the giver expects no reward from the recipient. ❷ 47:31 - Bow to him. ❸ 48:7 - Yaakov thought Yosef harbored resentment since an idol. ❹ 48:8 - The Shechina departed from him. ❺ Yaakov had not buried Yosef's mother, Rachel, in the Ma'arat HaMachpela.

Answer