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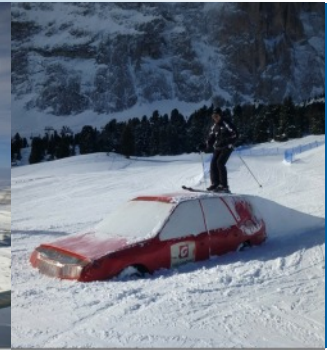
VAYECHI 5775

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Shabbat Begins 15:48 Shabbat Ends 16:58



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Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



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 Atsmotai” (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 p.t.o.

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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).

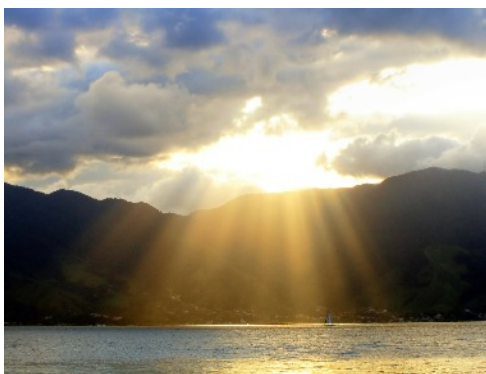
Our Sages note that "Brah karah deavuh" – "A son is a physical extension of his father, and the son's soul has an effect on the father". A son, who goes in the righteous ways of the father, continues his legacy and gives life to his father's name. In such a case it is as if the father never died, for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

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 hear 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!

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"Zevulun shall dwell by the seashores" (49:13).



Rabbi Yitschak Hakohen Tawil

The famous concept whereby a section of our people totally immerse themselves in Torah study whilst being financially supported by the other is an age-old practice, dating right back to Ya'akov Avinu, with the tribes of Yissachar and Zevulun! "Zevulun shall dwell by the seashores", engaged in business. There, Zevulun's ventures will be blessed, and Zevulun would generously support the tribe of Yissachar, who devoted their lives entirely in Torah study. By generously supporting Yissachar, thereby enabling Yissachar to focus full effort towards their Torah studies [without the burden of seeking after their essential physical needs], Zevulun gained a partnership and share in the great reward of Yissachar's Torah study. Zevulun's business transactions (carried out honestly, and with this great motivation of supporting Yissachar) also become sanctified, his profits blessed. Seforno points out that indeed, this is the very idea behind the Torah commandment to tithe our produce to be given to the tribe of Levi, which incorporated the Kohanim and the Levi'im. The Kohanim and Levi'im represented our Torah leaders and the Torah considered it important that they have their physical needs taken care of so that they are free to harness full strength in their Torah studies. Maimonides (Laws of Shmitta and Yovel [13:13]) explains that this idea is not limited to the tribe of Levi, but applies to any Jew in the world who has the spiritual upliftment and understanding to devote his life to serving G-d and diligently studying His Torah. Indeed, throughout the

generations right till the very present day, many businessmen proudly support our holy Yeshivah, earning for themselves a share in the great Mitzvah of Torah study, whose merit far outweighs all other Mitzvot!

"Yissachar...he saw leisure that it is good, and the earth that it is pleasant, and he bent his shoulders to carry the burden (of Torah) and he was (to his brethren) a leader" (49:14).

The famous Kabbalist MaHaRIL Ashlag [who compiled the famous Sulam commentary on the Zohar] was together with the renowned Chazon Ish one year during Parshat Vayechi. He offered to him the following interpretation to our verse, which the Chazon Ish highly cherished. In the world around us we see many people working long hours in order to have some spare money to spend at their leisure. The most valuable thing for them is those few periods of enjoyment and leisure for which they slave to secure. Yissachar looks around the world and identifies this most precious material asset – this he will offer up to G-d, immersing himself day and night in Torah study! Yissachar doesn't waste his time – for him, time is not money, but to the contrary, making spare money costs time, and time is precious! With time well spent we earn eternity, reward beyond anything that this finite physical world can possibly contain. Yissachar with his firmly committed approach

emerges a true spiritual leader for our people.

The lesson of Yissachar and Zevulun, a technique applied throughout the generations of our history, is Halachically brought down in Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De'ah, Laws of Talmud Torah). There, we are taught of the great significance of Torah study, and it's absolute necessity for the upkeep of the universe. There, **every single Jew is instructed to set aside at least some fixed time daily to study Torah**, each man according to his ability. Of course, not everybody is cut out to spend the entire day solely engrossed in intensive Torah study – such an individual is a Zevulun, and by generously supporting our Yeshivah, filled with committed Torah students (the Yissachars), he too enjoys a share in the great Mitzvah and merit of their Torah study.

"And he bent his shoulders to carry the burden (of Torah)" (49:14).

R. Bachye teaches us from here that in order to truly succeed in our Torah study we must bend ourselves down; we must humble ourselves eradicating any self-pride. "And he was a leader", serving all Israel, demonstrating to them the true Torah viewpoint and approach in every situation, wisely advising them, teaching them the Halacha, and computing out the calendar!

Halachot Of Shemita

Rabbi Dov Levy



Yes, every produce with Shemita holiness, even when permissible to be consumed under the conditioned mentioned in previous weeks, is also subject to Z'man Biur.

What's Z'man Biur?

Shemita produce can only be consumed whilst it can be found naturally in the fields, available to be

eaten by animals. Once that time has passed it can no longer be eaten and must be removed from the house.

How do I know when that is for any given fruit?

The Batei Din in Israel issue timings for each individual fruit throughout the year, so if you did end up with Shemita produce you must check when the latest time to consume it is.

Shemita produce has special holiness and must be treated accordingly.

You mentioned the way Shemita produce has to be treated. Are there any other points to take into account if I bought Shemita produce?

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- Why is kindness towards the dead called "chesed shel emet" — kindness of truth?
47:29 - Because the giver expects no reward from the recipient.
- Give three reasons Yaakov didn't want to be buried in Egypt.
47:29 - a) Egypt's ground was to be plagued with lice; b) At the time of the resurrection, those buried outside Israel will suffer; c) So the Egyptians wouldn't make him into an idol.
- How do you treat a "fox in his time" (i.e., a commoner who rules)?
47:31 - Bow to him.
- "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?
48:7 - Yaakov thought Yosef harbored resentment since Yaakov had not buried Yosef's mother, Rachel, in the Ma'arat HaMachpela.
- Initially, why was Yaakov unable to bless Efraim and Menashe?
48:8 - The Shechina departed from him.
- What does *pillalti* mean?
48:11 - "I thought."
- What does "Shechem" mean as used in this week's parsha? (two answers)
48:22 - a) The actual city of Shechem; b) A portion.
- Which individual is called "the Emori"? Why? Give two reasons.
48:22 - Esav. a) He acted like an Emorite; b) He trapped his father with words (imrei pi).
- What did Yaakov want to tell his sons but was unable to?
49:1 - When mashiach will come.
- What privileges did Reuven lose due to his rash actions?
49:3 - Priesthood and Kingship.



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Our Chachamim



A secular Jew's son, a commander of a Tank Artillery division, had become vehemently anti-religious. He even went so far as to complain about a photograph of his grandfather that hung on the wall in his father's house. The photograph of the grandfather, in traditional Chassidic garb with peyot and a long beard, was particularly offensive to the young soldier. "That man is a barbarian! Take the picture down!" he would shriek. One day, the soldier became religious! What happened? It was June 1967, the Six Day War, in the Sinai Desert. The tanks were all spread out. If attacked, they would have to regroup and fight together. Suddenly, Egyptian tanks approached. The commander turned his tank around and raced back to the platoon. The fastest way was straight across an open stretch. Suddenly, he saw an old man davening, enwrapped in tallit and Tefilin, right in his path. "Doesn't the fool have any place better to pray than in the middle of the desert?" he screamed. "I'm going to run him over!" But at the last minute, he swerved to avoid the old man. The Egyptian tank in hot pursuit behind him didn't have any such tinge of sympathy. As it ran over the old Jew, it exploded into a fiery inferno as it tripped a landmine underneath. When the soldier visited his father after the war, the photo was still on the wall. Although he had seen it hundreds of times before, the face was familiar in a strange way. He recognized the face of the old Jew who was praying in the desert. "I realized that he was praying for me that I should live", explained the newly religious soldier, "And I want to be like him."



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