

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Parshas Vayechi 5779

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שבת חזק

פרשת ויחי תשע"ט

He is either Yaakov or Yisrael!

ויחי יעקב בארץ מצרים שבע עשרה שנה: (מז:כח)

And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years (47:28) – In very close proximity, the holy Torah employs two different appellations for the Patriarch. In the next posuk וַיִּקְרָב לָמוּת When the time drew near for Yisrael to die... The Ksav Sofer, son of the holy Chasam Sofer explains the change in name from יַעֲקֹב, from pasuk 48 to posuk 49. The Gemara (Bava Basra 116:a) says that when a person dies and leaves behind a son who is of equal stature, the term "מיתה", death, is not used. However, if that is not the case, the term "מיתה" may be used to refer to his passing. The names Yaakov and Yisroel connote two different levels attained by Yaakov Avinu, with Yisroel referring to a higher level than Yaakov. Embodying the level of Yaakov, we have an equal: Yosef, to whom Yaakov transmitted everything that that he learned in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever (see Rashi on 37:3). However, on the higher level of Yisroel, he had no equal. In pasuk 48, in which the Torah tells us וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב that Yaakov lived, it is because he left behind a Yosef - one who shared his exalted level. In pasuk 49 the Torah speaks of Yisroel, for whom there was no survivor on the level represented by that name; hence, to report the demise of "Yisroel", the term מִיתָה was appropriate (Ksav Sofer – כתב סופר)

Why didn't Yaakov demand Yosef to bury him in Eretz Yisrael?

אם לא מצאתי חן בעיניך וגו' אל-נא תקברני במצרים: (מ"ז:כט)

If I have found favor in your eyes..do not bury me in Egypt. (47:29) Yaakov was requesting of Yosef to bury him in Eretz Yisroel. Now it seems that Yaakov was simply requesting that Yosef not bury him in Egypt, as the Posuk implies: If I have found favor in your eyes. The question is, why didn't Yaakov simply request this as a mitzvah of Kibud Av, which Yosef would be required to fulfil? The Rav of Brisk, Harav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, answers: The Talmud, Shavuos 27a (שבועות כ"ז) states: in order for an oath / שבועה to be valid, it must be an oath to do something voluntarily, but if someone swears to do a mitzvah, the oath is null and void. Yaakov wanted Yosef to swear that he would bury him in Eretz Yisroel. In order that the oath be valid and binding upon Yosef, Yaakov had to request from Yosef to do it voluntarily, and not to demand it from him. That is why Yaakov said "אם לא מצאתי חן בעיניך" If I found favor; then the oath would be valid. (מהר"ל דיסקין – ר' יהושע ליב דיסקין)

Why didn't Yosef request his children to bury him in Eretz Yisrael?

וַיִּשָּׁבַע יוֹסֵף אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהַעֲלֵתֶם אֶת עַצְמוֹתַי מִצֵּי: (נ"ב:כ"ה)

Yosef adjured his brothers saying, "Hashem will surely remember you, and you should bring my bones up from here." (50:25) The Ba'al Haturim on this posuk asks: why did Yosef make his brothers swear to take his bones out of Egypt and bury him in Eretz Yisroel, and not his own children? He answers: Yosef wanted his brothers to know that by doing so they would attain forgiveness for their sin against him. Since they had sold him and had removed him from Shechem, he made them promise that they would return him to Shechem. The act of returning him to Shechem would rectify their sin. Another answer can be: The Gemara (Sanhedrin 92b) says that during the three days of the plague of Darkness, many of the children of Tribe Ephraim (Yosef's grandchildren) were killed while trying to escape from Egypt. Yosef felt that if he entrusted his bones to his offspring, he could not be sure that they (his bones) would reach burial in Eretz Yisroel. Yosef saw through Ruach Hakodesh that in this case he needed to accord preferential treatment to his brothers over his children.

(בית ישראל, ר' ישראל טויסיג ממאטטערסדארף)

Why was Yaakov's passing cause for a mourning only for Egypt and not for Canaan?

וַיֵּרָא יוֹשֵׁב הָאֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֶת הָאֵבֶל בְּגֵרָן הָאֵתָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵבֶל כְּבֹד יָהּ לַמִּצְרִיִּם: (נ"ב:י"א)

The Canaanites saw the mourning at Goren HaAtad and they said, "This is an intense mourning for the Egyptians." (50:11) The Torah relates that the Canaanites said it is a mourning for the Egyptians. The question is: Why was it only a mourning for the Egyptians that Yaakov died, and not for the Canaanites too? The answer is given by Harav Eliezer David Grunwald in his sefer Keren LeDovid: Chazal teach us that as soon as Yaakov descended to Egypt, the hunger ceased and in its place a tremendous blessing came to the land of Egypt. Likewise, when Yaakov left the land of Canaan, the blessing left them and they began to feel hunger. Therefore, now that Yaakov was leaving Egypt to be buried in Me'aras Hamachpela in the land of Canaan, the Canaanites were happy to have Yaakov back in their land, hoping the blessing of food abundance would return in his merit. However, the Egyptians were now feeling Yaakov's absence and the concomitant loss of the blessing. Hence, there was mourning among the Egyptians but not among the Canaanites. (קרן לדוד, ר' אליעזר דוד גרינוואלד)

STORY OF THE WEEK

(By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

The Rebbe kept his promise from the Heavenly world

The First Viznitzer Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel, the Rebbe of Kossov, passed away on the 17th of Cheshvan, 1020 / 5681. He was known for supporting many talmidei chachamim. The

following story was told by the chassid Reb Yehoshua Leib Landman on the day of the Kossover Rebbe's Yahrtzeit, to the Rebbe's grandson Reb Menachem Mendel, the Rebbe of

Viznitz, the Tzemach Tzaddik. He witnessed the story as it unfolded:

In Viznitz there lived a chasid by the name of Reb Shmuel, a talmid chacham who sat all day in shul serving Hashem with Torah and Avodah. The Kossover Rebbe sent him money every Erev Shabbos in order to help him survive.

When the time came for Reb Shmuel to arrange a shidduch for his daughter, he came to the Rebbe for advice. It seems a fine shidduch was proposed, but he had no means of paying a dowry. The Rebbe advised him to finalize the shidduch anyway, and promised to help him with the dowry. Reb Shmuel thanked the Rebbe and returned to his Gemara. A date was set for the wedding. Reb Shmuel had emunah in the Rebbe that everything would fall into place. The wedding date was fast approaching, yet the mechuten hadn't heard anything from Reb Shmuel and sent a letter demanding the dowry and the other customary gifts for the chasan. Reb Shmuel didn't respond to the letter just then, confident that he would have the dowry in time for the wedding.

But shortly thereafter, the Kossover Rebbe was suddenly niftar. Even at the levaya / funeral, Shmuel's faith in his Rebbe's promise was unshaken, even though the Rebbe was in the World of Truth. When he returned home, he found his wife and daughter shedding bitter tears; they were holding a new letter from the mechuten, with an ultimatum to either deliver the dowry in two weeks or else see the shidduch canceled. Reb Shmuel tried to comfort them, but to no avail. But Shmuel's emunas chachomim was part of his fiber, and his emunah in the late Rebbe remained steadfast.

The Rebbe of Kossov used to come once a year to Viznitz to visit his chassidim. The Chassidim streamed from far and wide to the Rebbe for brachos. The Rebbe dispensed large sums of tzedaka to his followers at that time. A very wealthy man called Reb Avraham lived in Viznitz, and the Rebbe would customarily visit him and join him in a meal. Reb Avraham invited his many friends to join him for the occasion, and for the honor of hosting the Rebbe, Reb Avraham gave the Rebbe the huge sum of 100 rubles. This took place every year in the winter. However, the year 5681 was different, the Kossover Rebbe had been niftar.

Meanwhile, Reb Avraham came home, burdened with his business affairs, just at supertime. He sat down to eat, and suddenly dozed off at the table. He dreamed that the Rebbe came to his house, as he did annually. The table was full of guests, with all eyes on the Rebbe as he washed for Hamotzie.

The waiters brought lavish food to the tables, and the meal began. Everyone was enjoying the meal, except for Reb Avraham. He noticed that the Rebbe was in a different

world, not in his dining room, and didn't touch his food. In the dream, he asked the Rebbe why he was not eating. The Rebbe gave him a stern look and said: "How can I eat at the table of someone with a heart of stone? All my years I exhorted my Chassidim to show Ahavas Yisrael for their brother Jews!" "But Rebbe, I don't understand. What is the Rebbe referring to?" The Rebbe focused sharply on Avraham and said, "There is a Yid called Shmuel the Batlan, who sits day and night in shul, immersed in Torah and Avodah. You've seen him, I'm sure. Did you ever once inquire about his welfare? Where is your rachmanus? A daughter of his is a Kallah, and there is a real danger of the shidduch falling apart, because he cannot afford to pay the dowry!" Reb Avraham replied: "Of course, I will do teshuva for having ignored the Yid and I will follow the Rebbe's wishes to a 'T'."

"Fine," answered the Rebbe. "Go to shul and find this Reb Shmuel. Ask how much he needs to marry off this daughter, and give him what he says, to the last ruble." Reb Avraham promised to do as the rebbe requested. Then, and only then, did the Rebbe turn to eat the meal. Reb Avraham woke up from this dream in a hyper-agitated state, shaken to his very core. He stepped outside to get some air and in order to take a stroll and calm down. While sunken in thought, he didn't realize that his feet had led him to the neighborhood shul. He entered, and asked where Reb Shmuel the Batlan would usually sit. There in a corner, sat Reb Shmuel, immersed as usual in his learning. With the Rebbe's words at the forefront of his mind, Reb Avraham engaged him in a personal discussion: "How do you manage financially?" "People bring me money every week." "Do you have any children to marry off?" "Yes, I have a daughter who is a Kallah, at home" "And how do you expect to pay for the dowry?" Avraham then heard these astonishing words: "The Rebbe of Kossov came to me in a vision a few minutes ago, and told me that he came to *you* in a dream and that you promised to help me fund the wedding!" Reb Avraham blanched when he realized he was witnessing a marvelously great "mofes". He lost no time in delivering the entire amount Shmuel was lacking in order to bring his daughter to the Chupah. The wedding took place exactly on time, thanks to the intervention of the Kossover Rebbe.

The Tzemach Tzaddik commented on this story: We see how great the Zaidea was. Even though he could have elevated himself to the highest heavenly worlds, he remained close to us here below, continuing to help his beloved Jews, as he did all the years when he was alive. "*Zechuso yagen aleinu*".

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