THE WEISS EDITION

וַיְחִי

Vayechi



A Mother's Sacrifice

Insider Information

If You Can Beat Them

Bearers of the Aron

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

ויחי
Vayechi

48:7 | מח:ז

וָאֶקְבְּרָה שָׁם בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרָת הִוא בֵּית לָחֶם

I buried her there along the road to Efras,
which is Beis-Lechem.

A Mother's Sacrifice

Rachel's burial place should naturally have been in Me'aras Hamachpelah, alongside her husband. Instead, Yaakov buried her on the roadside near Beis-Lechem. Before his passing, Yaakov explained to Yosef that his mother's burial there would one day serve an important role in hastening her children's return from exile: When the Jewish people, hopeless and downtrodden, would pass her grave as they were led into exile, Rachel would emerge from her grave, weeping and begging G-d to show them mercy. And indeed, as the prophet Yirmiyahu later chronicled, "A voice is heard on high, lamentation, bitter weeping: Rachel is crying for her children." G-d replied,

"There is reward for your work… and the children shall return to their own border."[1]

With this Yaakov consoled Yosef over his mother's seemingly second-rate burial place, for considering the comfort that her burial there would bring to her children, certainly Rachel would herself have chosen to be buried there.

The willingness to sacrifice for her children that Yaakov attributed to Rachel epitomizes the Jewish woman's unique role as the *akeres habayis*, the mainstay of the family.

Whereas both men and women must serve G-d with every aspect of their lives, only men are obligated in mitzvos that are time-sensitive and in the constant mitzvah to study Torah.[2] Women are exempt from time-specific and constant obligations because they are constantly tending to the needs of their families and homes. In this sense, the Jewish woman "sacrifices" the satisfaction and spiritual experience that comes with the observance of those mitzvos, serving G-d instead by nurturing her family.

This explains why among Yaakov's wives it was specifically Rachel who was buried on the roadside, for as Rashi states elsewhere, Rachel was the *akeres habayis* of Yaakov's household.[3] Therefore, just as she personified the "woman's sacrifice" in her lifetime, in her passing too, her "compromised" place of burial allowed her to implore G-d on her children's behalf and to guarantee their return home.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, pp. 239–240

---

1. Yirmiyahu 31:14–16.

2. See Talmud, Kiddushin 29a–b.

3. Bereishis 31:4.

49:1 | מט:א

וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל בָּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֵאָסְפוּ וְאַגִּידָה לָכֶם
אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא אֶתְכֶם בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים

Yaakov called for his sons and said,
"Gather, and I will tell you what will happen
to you at the end of days."

Insider Information

The Talmud[4] explains that Yaakov wanted to reveal the end of the days (i.e., the time of the ultimate redemption) to his sons, but the Shechinah, the Divine Presence, withdrew from him, rendering him unable to do so.

What did Yaakov want to achieve by revealing this information to his children, and why did G-d disapprove? According to one explanation, Yaakov foresaw that the redemption from Egyptian bondage could potentially be the complete and ultimate redemption, after which the Jewish people would never again be exiled.[5] He desired to reveal this to Bnei Yisrael (who knew that the Egyptian exile would not be longer than 400 years[6]), in the hope that it would motivate them to maintain their righteousness and indeed merit the complete redemption at that time. Moreover, he hoped that their knowledge that the final redemption was potentially imminent would cause them to increase their good deeds and bring about that complete redemption even sooner.

G-d restrained Yaakov from revealing this information,

4. Pesachim 56a.

5. See Zohar 3:221a.

6. As stated in Bereishis 15:13–14.

however, for the highest form of Divine worship is to serve G-d of one's own initiative, when one's drive to be righteous comes from within. To some degree, this would be lost if Bnei Yisrael's motivation to increase their good deeds was based on prophetic information regarding the potential of their deeds to bring about the ultimate redemption by a given date. Their righteousness would not be regarded as "their own," as it had been motivated by outside sources of inspiration, and their merit would therefore not be complete.

Whereas Yaakov preferred to bring about the final redemption sooner, G-d preferred to give Bnei Yisrael the opportunity to merit the redemption of their own accord, making it the most perfect and complete redemption possible.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 20, pp. 228–232

49:6-7 | מט:ו-ז

בְּסֹדָם אַל תָּבֹא נַפְשִׁי בִּקְהָלָם אַל תֵּחַד כְּבֹדִי כִּי בְאַפָּם
הָרְגוּ אִישׁ... אָרוּר אַפָּם כִּי עָז וְעֶבְרָתָם כִּי קָשָׁתָה

Let my soul not enter their conspiracy, let my honor have no part in their assembly; for in their wrath they killed a man... Cursed be their rage, for it is fierce, and their fury, for it is harsh.

If You Can Beat Them

Before his passing, Yaakov rebuked Shimon and Levi and cursed their rage, "for in their wrath they killed a man..." The Midrash[7] explains that the "man" that Shimon and Levi are said to have killed actually refers to quite a few men: the entire adult male population of Shechem! Yaakov refers to all of them as "a man," because to defeat all of Shechem was as simple for them as defeating one man.

Why, while rebuking them for their actions, did Yaakov pay tribute to the ease with which Shimon and Levi—endowed by G-d with extraordinary strength—decimated the population of Shechem?

Evidently, this unnatural strength was part of the reason Yaakov was so displeased with Shimon's and Levi's rage-driven actions.

In theory, Yaakov agreed with Shimon and Levi that punishment of the people of Shechem was justified.[8] He was

7. Cited by Rashi ad loc.

8. See Ohr Hachaim, Bereishis 34:25; Ramban, Bereishis 34:13; Mishneh Torah, Hil. Melachim 9:14.

critical only of their deceitful method. They promised the people of Shechem peace if the entire male population would circumcise themselves, but then they exploited their weakness and pain, and attacked them in violation of their agreement. Such deceitfulness disgraced Yaakov and the belief system for which he stood.

Yaakov therefore rebuked Shimon and Levi, pointing out that considering their ability to wipe out the entire city with the ease of killing one man, they had no need to resort to deception. They could have confronted the people of Shechem directly and made them suffer the consequences of their behavior. "Cursed be their rage!" said Yaakov, for it blinded them from recognizing their ability to carry out judgment without resorting to trickery.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 5, pp. 151–152

50:13 | נ:יג

וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֹתוֹ בָּנָיו

His sons carried him…

Bearers of the Aron

All of Yaakov's sons, with the exception of Yosef and Levi, who were represented by Ephraim and Menasheh, carried Yaakov's coffin from Egypt to Canaan. According to Rashi, Yaakov instructed them, "Levi shall not carry it, because he (i.e., his tribe) is destined to carry the *aron*. Yosef shall not carry it, because he is a king."

We find, however, that although the tribe of Levi was precluded from carrying Yaakov's coffin, Moshe himself, who was of the tribe of Levi, carried Yosef's coffin out of Egypt. Evidently, carrying these two coffins represented two very different ideas, only one of which conflicted with the tribe of Levi's future as bearer of the *aron*.

Our Sages tell us that as long as Yaakov lived, his presence in Egypt prevented his family's enslavement.[9] Thus, Yaakov's passing and the transfer of his body from Egypt marked the early beginnings of Bnei Yisrael's slavery.

Levi and his tribe, however, were never subjected to the slave labor.[10] When Pharaoh originally came to recruit Bnei Yisrael to "join him" in his work effort, the tribe of Levi refused, reasoning that it was not appropriate to participate in building Pharaoh's cities when one day they would be the ones carrying the holy *aron*. As a result, when Pharaoh later

9. See Rashi, Bereishis 47:28.
10. See Rashi, Shemos 5:4.

forced his original workers into slave labor, the tribe of Levi was not affected.[11] Accordingly, it was unsuitable for Levi, who "transcended" the Egyptian bondage, to take part in carrying Yaakov's coffin, which represented the beginning of their bondage.

Carrying Yosef's coffin from Egypt, however, was a symbol of Bnei Yisrael's redemption, for Yosef's remains had been their greatest source of hope and belief in their redemption. As Yosef had assured them, "G-d will surely remember you, and you shall bring up my bones from here with you."[12] The one most suitable to carry Yosef's coffin was therefore Moshe, from the tribe of Levi, who led Bnei Yisrael to their long-anticipated redemption.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 20, pp. 237–238

11. See Baalei Hatosafos, Shemos 1:13.

12. Shemos 13:19.

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת **יעקב** ב"ר **שמואל יוסף** ע"ה

גרינבוים

נלב"ע ביום ט"ו טבת תש"פ

תנצב"ה

•

נדפס ע"י זוגתו ובני משפחתו

מרת **ביילא רישא** תחי'

הרה"ת **מנחם מענדל** וזוגתו **זעלדא רחל** שיחיו **גרינבוים**

לעילוי נשמת

מרת **שרה נחמה** בת ר' **שמואל מרדכי** ע"ה

יארמוש

נלב"ע ביום ט"ו טבת ה'תשע"ז

תנצב"ה

•

נדפס ע"י בניה ובנותיה ומשפחתם שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח **אפרים פישל** ב"ר **משה** ע"ה

בראפמאן

נלב"ע י"ט טבת תשס"ו

•

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו



THE LIGHTPOINTS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT *of*
Rabbi Moshe Aaron Tzvi and Mrs. Ruty Weiss