

# תורה מציון Torah MiTzion

RELIGIOUS ZIONIST KOLLELS כוללים ציוניים בתפוצות

**Shabbat Shalom from Torah MiTzion**

**Issue 123: Parshat Vayechi**

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**"And Yaakov Lived"- Our Patriarch Yaakov Never Died!**  
**by Rav Shai Froindlich, former Rosh Kollel, Montevideo**

Towards the end of his life Yaakov calls upon Yosef, his son, asking him to "perform kindness and truth with me; please do not bury me in Egypt; let me lie with my fathers...".

Yosef's response is: "I will do as you said."

But Yaakov is not satisfied; he insists that Yosef swear to carry out his promise.

Ramban comments that the demand for the oath is not a reflection of any doubt that

Yaakov entertains as to Yosef's reliability, but rather is meant to empower him in his appeal

to Pharaoh: perhaps he would not give Yosef permission to go, therefore Yaakov makes him swear, so as to strengthen his resolve.

But why is Yaakov so intent on being buried in Ma'arat ha-Makhpela? After all, Yaakov himself failed to bury his beloved wife, Rachel at that spot. Thus, even if there is some degree of importance attached to burial there, why is Rachel's case different from that of Yaakov?

It appears that these words hint to Yaakov's final lesson to his sons, and particularly to Yosef.

Yaakov's life is a long chain of challenges with the living: from the outset he must live with Esav, his brother, with the question of Yitzhak's future heir hanging over them. This conflict starts before they are even born, and at their birth we read: "Afterwards his brother emerged, with his hand grasping Esav's heel": this is the source for Yaakov's name ("ekev" = heel), which eternalizes this moment of conflict. Yaakov-from the time of his very formation-is a person who strives and struggles. At first, it seems that Yaakov has lost the battle- his hand grasps the heel of his brother-but later on this changes, as Esav himself declares: "It is not appropriate that he is called Yaakov? For he has usurped me twice: he took my birthright, and now also my blessing!"

Yaakov's struggle against Esav with regard to the birthright is no mere fight for status. It is, essentially, an ideological battle that rages over the question of how the world should be run: according to natural forces, reality, realpolitik, or according to a spiritual vision and faith. Is a hunter, a man of the field, the right person to lead the world, or should the role rest with "a plain man dwelling in tents" (of Torah)?

This question is unequivocally resolved when Yaakov receives the blessings, and his father retroactively recognizes his ability; "He shall also be blessed". In other words, Yaakov proves that it is possible to connect these worlds; that a man of faith can take the lead even in natural, worldly matters.

Yaakov proves once again that he is the chosen one and that his path is the right one when he prevails against "the man"- the prince of Esav. This confrontation would seem to represent the final struggle against the philosophy of a division of authority between political leadership and spiritual leadership.

In summary we may say that Yaakov bequeaths to his sons the consciousness that in life we must grapple and progress and retain our spiritual, idealistic perspective as we live our lives in this physical, material world. It is for this reason that Yaakov is awarded his new name- Yisrael. "You have striven (sarita) with God and with men, and you have prevailed.

Is this the end of the struggle? Does the battle go on only as long as I am alive and have someone or something to confront?

Yaakov teaches that this is not the case.

Even after death we still have the power to strive and to progress.

As Yaakov teaches: "Please do not bury me in Egypt." In other words: Do not relegate this message only to life in Egypt. Do not think that the struggles are only against someone else, against those who are different, against Esav, Lavan, the Egyptians, etc. The struggle is also- and more importantly-internal. It takes place inside me, in my private life: am I living as a "Yisrael"- a person who proceeds with a vision? Do I look at the world with the eyes of a person of faith?

A person who seeks to be buried together with his ancestors wants to eternalize the continuity that he represented during his life. In this way he demonstrates that he is continuing, in his life, the path that his forefathers walked. This is what Yaakov wants to show: he has not invented a new path. He has expanded, widened, deepened the path: the path is the same one! It is the path of struggling and grappling in life; connecting and deepening both outwardly and inwardly; continuity on one hand; development and upgrading on the other.

In this sense Yaakov is no different than Rachel: he, just like Rachel, continues his life mission from the place his burial: he continues the path of the forefathers, while she continues her role of the eternal matriarch, awaiting the return of her children from exile.

Thus we declare: "Am Yisrael Chai", the nation of Yisrael (the Jewish nation, descendants of Yaakov)- lives (in the fullest and most eternal sense of the word)!!

Shabbat Shalom

### **Halacha Column: Warming Up Food On Shabbat** **Rav Nehemya Taylor, Torani Advisor to Torah MiTzion**

Which foods may be reheated on Shabbat, and which may not? For those which one may reheat, how should one do it?

When we deal with reheating food on Shabbat, there are several halakhic problems.:

- 1) Cooking. This is one of the 39 categories of Torah-prohibited activities on Shabbat.
- 2) "Lest one stir the coals." This is a rabbinic enactment aimed at preventing someone from stoking the fire in order to increase the flame. It is considered lighting a fire, which is prohibited. (The modern equivalent is using electricity, which is prohibited because it is considered either lighting a fire or building.)
- 3) "It looks like cooking." This is a rabbinic prohibition to engage in an action which looks like one is cooking on Shabbat.

The Mishnah states (*Shabbat* 22b), "Anything which had been placed in hot water before Shabbat can be placed in hot water during Shabbat." This is the source of the principle, "There is no prohibition of cooking something which has previously been cooked (*Ein bishul achar bishul*)." One does not transgress the prohibition of cooking when reheating something that had been cooked before Shabbat. This rule applies to solid foods. However, for liquids we follow the opinion that there is a prohibition of reheating what had previously been cooked (*Yesh bishul achar bishul*). Therefore, it is prohibited to reheat liquids on Shabbat. However, one may leave hot liquids on the *plattah* (warming tray) before Shabbat.

In order to avoid the problem of "stirring the coals," we reheat food at a pre-set temperature. (The standard *plattah* has no settings. It is either on or off.) One who is using a gas or electric burner to reheat food should cover the knobs which control the temperature. This ensures that one will not adjust the temperature out of habit or by accident.

One can avoid the problem of "looking like cooking," either by covering the fire (with a

metal sheet called a *blekh*) or by putting an empty pot or other item on the *plattah*, since nobody cooks that way.

To summarize: When it comes to reheating food on Shabbat there are three principles which must be followed.

- 1) One may not reheat liquids on Shabbat.
- 2) Foods should be reheated at an unadjustable temperature.
- 3) Foods should not be reheated over an open flame.

What is the *halakhah* of food which is composed of both solid and liquid -- chicken in its juices, potatoes in oil, and the like? Are they to be considered solids or liquids?

According to the *Pri Megadim*, it depends which item is in the majority. If the food is primarily solid, it is permitted to reheat it. If it is primarily liquid, it is forbidden.

The *Iggrot Moshe* finds this difficult. He asks why one should be permitted to reheat something just because the liquid is only a small part of it. That small part is still being cooked! Therefore, he rules that it is proper to be stringent regarding this case.

The *Shulchan Arukh* (O.C. 318:16) rules that it is permitted to reheat food even though the fat in the food will melt and become liquid. The *Magen Avraham* explains that whether a food is deemed as liquid or solid depends on its state when the reheating began. Therefore, even though the fat will liquefy, it is still considered solid, so it is permitted to reheat it.

To summarize: One may not reheat liquids on Shabbat. However, one may reheat coagulated gravy even though after it is heated it will become liquid gravy.

There are additional details about reheating food on Shabbat, and it is proper to learn them in an in-depth fashion. This column was limited to basic principles only.

### **Family Learning: Parshat Vayechi Bluma Zalcman**

- 1) What did Ya'akov make Yosef swear to him?
- 2) How did Ya'akov bless Efraim and Menashe?
- 3) What was the bracha, blessing, that Ya'akov gave Reuven?
- 4) What animal is Yehuda compared to in his bracha?
- 5) Where was Ya'akov Buried and who held up the burial procession?

*Answers follow below*

### **Looking Back: Chana Senesh**

Chana Senesh was born to an assimilated family in Hungary. Her father was a journalist and a playwright who died when she was six years old. She grew up with her mother and brother.

Chana attended a Protestant girls' school which was also available to Jews, but the tuition was increased. There was some anti-Semitism in the school and when Chana was elected to the school's literary society she didn't join due to the increased anti-Semitism. Instead, she joined Maccabea, a Hungarian, Zionist student movement.

Chana graduated in 1939 and decided to move to Israel (Palestine at the time) and join a girls' agriculture school in Nachalal. In 1941, she joined a kibbutz called Sdot Yam and simultaneously joined the Haganah. 2 years later, she enlisted in the British Army, and began paratrooper training in Egypt in the British SOE.

On March 15, 1944, were parachuted into Yugoslavia and there joined a partisan group. Almost two months later, Chana and her fellow paratroopers started crossing over the Hungarian border in small groups. Chana was caught immediately. She was imprisoned in the Horthy Miklos Prison. There she was continuously tortured. However, she refused to talk and give any details about her comrades or mission, even when the Hungarians threatened to torture her mother as well. (Her mother was eventually released).

Chana was able to communicate with the other inmates by putting up large letters in the windows one at a time. She also helped keep their spirits up by singing.

Chana was put on trial for treason on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1944. There were two postponements during her case. However, Chana was executed by a firing squad even before the judges found her guilty. Her remains were brought to Israel in 1950 and she was buried on Har Herzl, along with other Israeli pioneers and soldiers.

She had kept a diary up until her last day and it was published 2 years later in 1946. She was also a very talented writer and many of her poems became famous and put to music the most famous of which is sung at the end of some versions of Schindler's List.

*"My G-d*

*My G-d*

*I pray that these things never end:*

*The shore and the sea*

*The rush of the waters*

*The crash of the Heaven*

*The prayer of man"*

After the Cold War ended, a Hungarian military court officially exonerated her. Her family in Israel was notified of this in 1993.

The Kibbutz, Yad Chana is named for her.

**Torah MiTzion** establishes Religious Zionist Kollels (centers of Jewish learning and outreach) in Diaspora Jewish communities to strengthen the study of Torah, Jewish identity, the unity of the Jewish people, and the connection between Torah study and Israel.

The Kollels, led by a Rosh Kollel, are comprised of Israeli shlichim (emissaries) - married men and their wives, and single young men, graduates of Yeshivot Hesder in Israel - who serve in the communities for a period of one-three years.

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**Answers: Family Learning-**

- 1) That Yosef would bury him in Eretz Yisrael
- 2) "Hamalach HaGoel ot mikol ra- yivarech et hanearim viyikareh bahem shi."
- 3) He told him not to sin anymore and took away the melucha, and the cohanim from his shevet
- 4) A lion
- 5) He was buried in Ma'arat Hamachpeila and Eisav tried to stop the burial procession.