

This week's *Parashah* begins with two conversations between Yaakov and Yosef. In the first, Yaakov gives instructions about his own burial. In the second, he blesses Yosef's children Menashe and Ephraim, and declares that their respective descendants will become two separate tribes. In that latter conversation, Yaakov brings up the death and burial of Yosef's mother Rachel. In particular, *Rashi z"l* explains, Yaakov tells Yosef that he buried Rachel at the side of the road by Divine decree so that, a thousand years hence, Rachel would pray for her descendants as they headed into exile.

R' Chanan Porat z"l (Israeli educator, *Knesset* member, and leader of the *Gush Emunim* movement) asks: Why did Yaakov bring up Rachel's burial in the same conversation in which he blessed Yosef's sons? Perhaps, suggests R' Porat, it would have been more appropriate for Yaakov to mention her burial in the earlier conversation about his own burial!

R' Porat explains: Earlier, when Rachel was still childless, she asked Yaakov to pray for her, saying (30:1), "Give me children; otherwise I am dead." The Torah records in the next verse that Yaakov responded angrily. Why? R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) writes that Yaakov objected to Rachel's overly dramatic words. Also, write some commentaries, perhaps motherhood was not her mission. Later, however, Yaakov came to understand Rachel's pain in a new light. He realized that her mission was motherhood of a unique kind--not only biologically to Yosef and Binyamin, but spiritually to all of the Jewish People. This is why *Hashem* commanded that she alone, of all of Yaakov's wives, be buried at the side of the road, where the Jewish People--even Leah's descendants--would pass by. What more appropriate time to acknowledge Rachel's role as the mother of the Jewish People than when Yaakov was expanding her role by naming her grandchildren as two additional tribes. (*Me'at Min Ha'ohr*)

Shabbat

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 21a) teaches: Wicks and oils that the Sages forbade using for *Shabbat* candles also may not be used in the *Bet Hamikdash*, for the verse says (*Bemidbar* 27:20), "[You shall command *Bnei Yisrael* that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination,] to kindle (literally, 'to raise') the lamp continually"--i.e., that the flame should rise on its own. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Rashi z"l explains: The flame should be capable of rising on its own without further assistance.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; first *Ashkenazic* Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*) writes: The requirement to use wicks and oils that will produce a consistent, bright flame, not a flame that flickers, alerts us to the perfection man is intended to achieve, which also is the goal of *Shabbat*.

He explains: The wick represents the body, while the flame represents the intellect and the soul. When man's life centers on the desires of his body, he may experience fleeting moments of wisdom, like a flickering candle, but the soul will not shine strongly and brightly. True, a candle will produce no flame if it has no wick; and without a body, there can be no intellect or soul. But just as the wick is not the purpose of the candle, so the body should not be the focus of existence. Rather, the body's purpose is to enable the soul to shine, just as the wick exists for the sake of the flame.

R' Kook continues: *Shabbat*, a day when we are detached from worldly pursuits, teaches the individual to strive for a life in which his body exists to serve the soul. Likewise, the *Bet Hamikdash* teaches the nation collectively to strive for a life in which the "flame rises on its own" (see below). Therefore, the wicks and oils that are prohibited on *Shabbat* are prohibited in the *Bet Hamikdash* as well. - **Continued in box inside** -

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“Yosef said to his brothers, ‘I am about to die, but *Elokim* “*Pakod Yifkod*” / will surely remember you (literally, “Remember, He will remember you”) and bring you up out of this land to the land that He swore to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov.’

“Then Yosef caused the children of Yisrael to swear, saying, ‘When *Elokim* “*Pakod Yifkod*” / will surely remember you, then you must bring my bones up out of here.’” (50:24-25)

When *Hashem* first spoke to Moshe Rabbeinu, He said (*Shmot* 3:16), “Go and gather the elders of *Yisrael* and say to them, ‘*Hashem*, the *Elokim* of your forefathers, has appeared to me, the *Elokim* of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, saying, ‘*Pakod Pakad’tee* / I have surely remembered you and what is done to you in Egypt.’” *Rashi* z”l (to *Shmot* 3:18) writes: *Hashem* was telling Moshe that as soon as he would use the expression “*Pakod Pakad’tee*,” *Bnei Yisrael* would listen to him, for they had a tradition dating back to Yaakov and Yosef that the redemption would be heralded by this phrase. [Until here from *Rashi*]

Where did Yaakov use this expression? R’ Shabtai Bass z”l (1641–1718) explains that although there is no explicit statement in the Torah that Yaakov used the phrase, *Rashi* understands the fact that Yosef used it twice (in our verses) to mean that once he was passing on a tradition from his father and once he was giving his own assurance about the future redemption. (*Siftei Chachamim*)

What is the significance of the phrase “*Pakod Yifkod*”? Why does it herald the redemption?

R’ Yaakov Moshe Charlap z”l (1882-1951; rabbi of Yerushalayim’s Sha’arei Chesed neighborhood and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav) explains: We read about the Exodus (*Shmot* 12:39), “For they were driven from Egypt, for ‘*Lo yachlu*’ / they were unable to delay.” This indicates that, a moment before the Exodus, *Bnei Yisrael* felt that they could not possibly tolerate the exile for another moment. (Yosef felt similarly just before he revealed his identity to his brothers, as we read (*Bereishit* 45:1), “‘*Ve’lo yachol*’ / Yosef was unable to restrain himself.” He could not keep up his “act” any longer.)

This, continues R’ Charlap, is the secret of the double expression “*Pakod Yifkod*.” The Redeemer--whether Moshe Rabbeinu at the time of the Exodus, or *Mashiach* in the future--has a dual role: to inform us that *Hashem* wishes to redeem us, and also to awaken in the Jewish People a desire to be redeemed. In the future, as in Egypt, the redemption will occur only when we feel that we are unable to continue in the present situation for another moment, when we feel that we must flee our exile and go home to *Eretz Yisrael*. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mei Marom* p.49)

“The time approached for Yisrael to die, so he called for his son, for Yosef, and said to him, ‘Please, if I have found favor in your eyes, ... do kindness and truth with me--please do not bury me in Egypt. For I will lie down with my fathers and you shall transport me out of Egypt and bury me in their tomb.’

“He said, ‘I personally will do as you have said.’

“He replied, ‘Swear to me,’ and he swore to him.” (47:29-31)

R’ Moshe Yirmiyahu Narol Hakohen z”l (rabbi in Narol, Poland and Metz, France; died 1659) explains the conversation between Yaakov and Yosef in light of the *Halachot* of oaths. An oath to do or not do something can take two forms and can be violated in two ways: one might swear that he will do something (e.g., eat, talk, go somewhere, etc.), and then he does not do that thing; or one might swear that he will not do something, and then he does do that thing. According to *Halachah*, violating an oath not to do something is punishable in *Bet Din* by lashes, because the violation involves an action, but violating an oath to do something is not punishable by lashes because the violation is passive (not eating, not talking, etc.)

Yaakov asked Yosef to make both types of promises: “Do not bury me in Egypt” and “transport me out of Egypt and bury me in their tomb.” But Yosef was afraid that Pharaoh would not permit Yaakov’s body to leave Egypt, so he did not want to swear that he would not bury Yaakov in Egypt. Yosef made only an oath to do what Yaakov said--an oath whose violation (if it came to that) would be passive. Yosef did not want to swear that he would not bury Yaakov in Egypt--an oath whose violation would be active and punishable by lashes. Yaakov noticed Yosef’s hesitance and insisted that, nevertheless, he swear, *i.e.*, that he take both oaths. (*Birkat Tov*)

- Continued from back page -

What does it mean that the nation’s “flame rises on its own”? R’ Kook explains: All societies have notions of *Tzeddek* / righteousness and justice. However, those man-made norms are created and practiced only for the mutual good of the society’s members; to borrow a phrase from the *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 81a, in a different context), “You watch mine and I’ll watch yours.” Because society’s notions of *Tzeddek* are man-made conveniences, they are easily altered when it is expedient to do so.

But there exists a *Tzeddek Eloki* of Divine origin. Like all good *Middot* / character traits, *Tzeddek Eloki* is a trait implanted in the Divine soul of every member of *Klal Yisrael*. By performing *Mitzvot*, we uncover the “flame,” the light and holiness of that soul, and cloak our bodies in it. By studying Torah, we do the same for our intellects. Then, the “flame” of *Tzeddek* that already exists within us can rise on its own, not influenced by society, and can burn clearly and brightly. (*Ein Ayah: Shabbat* 2:3)