

But as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died on me on the road...and I buried her there on the road to Efras, which is Bais Lechem. (48:7)

On what basis did Yaakov expect Yosef to bury him in the *Meoras Ha'Machpeilah*, when Yaakov did not do so for Yosef's mother, Rachel? Sensing Yosef's possible quandary, Yaakov *Avinu* responded with the reason that he purposely buried Rachel by the roadside. When the Jewish people were to be led to captivity after the destruction of the first *Bais Hamikdash*, they would receive solace from Rachel's grave. When they passed along the road to Bais Lechem, anguished, persecuted, depressed and exhausted, Rachel's soul would come to her grave to supplicate the Almighty on their behalf. Rachel's cries for her children have been the motif of her resting place. Indeed, to this very day, the broken-hearted Jew comes to *Kever Rachel* to pour out his heart. The question that confronts us is, if the souls of the dead are aware of their children's pain, what difference does it make where their graves are located? Rachel would certainly have prayed for *Klal Yisrael* regardless of where she had been buried.

Horav Mordechai Rogov, zl, remarks that a mother grieves for her child's pain when the child continues to be "hers." When children build upon the spiritual heritage infused in them by their parents, when they hold dear the values that their parents cherished, they merit recognition. Children who distance themselves from their heritage, who seem to have a difficult time relating to and "recognizing" their parents, will be undistinguishable to their parents.

Regrettably, the grave has been the place that children return to visit and -- at times -- shed a tear about the present and the past. They visit their mother and they remember: They remember her devotion; her meticulous observance; her sense of commitment; her love for the way of life for which so many have lived and died. This memory may invoke a feeling of remorse; it brings to mind their mother's last wish- that her children maintain themselves in the *derech Hashem*, path of the Almighty. Indeed, the grave physically marks the connection. It sustains the relationship between parent and child.

In Yaakov *Avinu's* attempt to arouse Rachel's maternal feelings towards her descendants, he buried her in a place that would be accessible to them when they needed her most. Her grave on the road to exile would inspire their prayers. Through their supplications, they would bond with their mother who would -- in turn -- pray for their survival.