

"Now I can die since I have seen your face, because you are still alive." (46:30)

The word *ogpv*, "now," does not seem to fit into the text. *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who reveal a message underlying Yaakov's words. Yaakov told Yosef, "Now that you are alive, I will die only once." There are two types of death. First, there is the physical death which confronts every being of flesh and blood. Second, there is another, more definitive form of death -- spiritual death. Such spiritual extinction is characterized by the lack of eternity in the individual.

Yaakov proclaimed, "I see that you and your children have continued to maintain and forge future links in the legacy of Judaism. Your sojourn in the land of assimilation has not severed your bond to *Yidishkeit*. Your religious values are alive; your children uphold them. Consequently, I will live on in eternity. The life that I have lived will end, but I will not be relegated to spiritual extinction.

Yaakov's greatest fear, dying two deaths, was not realized. He saw his son face to face. Yaakov looked into the eyes of Yosef and saw pride in his heritage. This is the meaning of *hrjt*

lhbp ,t h,utrw "since I have seen your face." What is the meaning of seeing his face? When someone has something to conceal, when he is attempting to obscure something sinister, he turns his face away. Yaakov feared confronting Yosef's face: Would Yosef turn away and hide from him, or would he stand facing his father with resolute pride? When Yaakov saw Yosef's face, he was satisfied that the spiritual legacy he had transmitted to him would endure.

We find a similar idea expressed by *Chazal*. They state that *Hallel* is not recited on *Rosh Hashanah*, because the *Sifrei Chaim*, Books of the Living, and *Sifrei Meisim*, Books of the Dead, are open before Hashem on *Rosh Hashanah*. The solemnity and trepidation of the judgment precludes singing *shirah*. We may question the meaning of "Books of the Dead." To what type of judgment are the departed subjected? They no longer have the ability to do good or bad.

Rav Yisrael Salanter z.l., asserts that the dead are judged in accordance with the deeds of their descendants, since they have had an active role in their children's education and spiritual development, be it positive or negative. Commensurate with the effort expended by the parents on behalf of their children's spiritual upbringing, they will be favorably judged. Those who chose to provide for everything but their children's spiritual future, will have to answer for it. Indeed, as *Chazal* say, "*Brah Me'zakeh Avu'ah*," a son brings merit for his father. The opposite is also regrettably true.

Parents must realize that their action or passivity in raising their children as *Torah* Jews will be one of the determining factors regarding their own spiritual immortality.