



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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MAGGID SHIUR, DAF YOMI, OU.ORG

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Utilizing Time Properly

At the beginning of *Parashat Vayechi*, we are told that Yaakov is about to die:

וַיִּקְרְבוּ יָמָיו: שְׁאֵל לְמוֹת “*The time drew near for Israel to die...*” (Bereishit 47:29)

The Zohar raises a striking question about the wording of this verse. Why does it say that the *days* of Yaakov’s death drew near? It is not the days that die, but the person. Moreover, why use the plural—*days*—when death occurs in a single moment?

In the past we had referenced an idea offered by Rav Zevin that is relevant. Everything in the world has a limited span—a beginning and an end. An animal is born and eventually dies; even a mighty tree will one day wither. The only thing that seems to have no duration of its own is *time itself*. It vanishes עֵין כְּהֶרֶף—in the

blink of an eye. Yet paradoxically, the one thing we can truly *take with us* is our time. When we use our time wisely and meaningfully, those moments remain with us forever.

Thus, the Torah describes Avraham as זָקֵן בֶּא “old, advanced in days.” Avraham’s days accompanied him because he filled each one with kindness, faith, and purpose. Every day became a vessel of eternal value.

Similarly, when the Torah says of Yaakov, “וַיִּקְרְבוּ יָמָיו: שְׁאֵל לְמוֹת”, the word *vayikrivu*—“came close”—suggests not merely the approach of death, but *closeness to Hashem*. Yaakov’s days were filled with Torah and mitzvot; they were days that drew him ever nearer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. His time did not fade—it accumulated holiness.

The *Sefer L’hitaneig* relates a moving story about Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov. Upon returning from a long journey, his children ran to greet him, eagerly asking what gifts he had brought home. Suddenly, the Rebbe fainted. When he regained consciousness, his wife asked what had happened. Rav Moshe Leib explained that their question had pierced his heart. “One day,” he said, “after our long journey in this world, Hashem will ask each of us, *What gifts have you brought with you?* What treasures of mitzvot, chesed, and Torah will we present?”

The very first mitzvah given to the Jewish people, *Kiddush HaChodesh*—sanctifying the new month—teaches this same truth. Why was this command chosen as the first mitzvah in Egypt? Because as slaves, they had no control over their time. Every moment belonged to their masters. As free people, the first act of

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spiritual freedom was to *sanctify time itself*—to transform time from something that passes us by into something that connects us to eternity.

Time is the most precious gift Hashem has placed in our hands—quiet, invisible, and relentlessly fleeting. We cannot hold it, but we can *fill* it. Every word of Torah learned, every act of kindness performed, every prayer whispered with sincerity turns a passing moment into a piece of eternity.

Like Yaakov and Avraham, we too can “come with our days.” Our challenge is to ensure that when our journey ends, our days are not empty pages, but rather filled with meaning and holiness.

May we merit to live with awareness of the sacredness of time—to see in each sunrise not just another day, but another opportunity to come closer to Hashem, to add light to the world, and to make every moment count forever. ■



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FRIDAY NIGHT, JANUARY 16 7:30 PM: *A Conversation with Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg: Personal Faith, Innovation, and the Values Driving AI and Israel's Startup Nation*

SHABBAT DAY, JANUARY 17 8:00 AM: *Pre-Shacharit Shiur: Autonomous Weapon Systems and Human Dignity*
Shiur Before Kiddush: Man, Machine, and the Meaning of Life
At Seudah Shelishit: Apocalyptic AI? Technology and the End of Days

MOTZAEI SHABBAT, JANUARY 17 7:30 PM: *Conscious Machines: The New Golems?*
All are welcome · Lectures are free of charge



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