



Yehuda Katz, of Blessed Memory, and Us

After forty-four years, Yehuda Katz z"l, who had been missing since the First Lebanon War, was finally laid to rest in Israel.

That is a sentence worth reading twice.

And in the very week when Yehuda, the last missing soldier from the Battle of Sultan Yacoub, was brought to burial, the Torah portion spoke about the mitzvah of *hashavat aveidah*, returning a lost object. Our commentators explain that the basic obligation is to return something that has been lost to its owner. But there is a broader idea here as well: to restore what is missing to its proper place — in the body, in the soul, in our people.



To bring back what has been lost, in every sense.

The Torah expresses this in three profound words: “You may not ignore it.” And indeed, the Jewish people did not look away. Even when decades have passed, even when the search is difficult, we do not say: “It’s lost. There’s no hope.”

This is also an opportunity to thank the many unsung heroes who made that possible.

The Torah continues: “And so shall you do with anything your brother loses.”

Last week, quite literally, a lost brother came home, to be buried in the soil of the Land of Israel. That moving commitment to those who are missing should shape the way we approach every area of life.

May we continue to notice what is missing, to search, to restore, and never to give up on what has been lost. And may we be instrumental in returning everything to its rightful place. ■

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