

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of  
Dovid *ben Yosef A”H*  
a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of his *neshamah*

## Coming Home

## PARSHAS VAYECHI 5769

This week’s *parshah* offers an opportunity to clarify an interesting topic that pertains to future events. While we generally tend to refrain from delving into areas of a concealed nature, *Chazal* have chosen to reveal certain aspects of this subject to us. Obviously, it is not possible for us to form a complete picture of these esoteric ideas, as our comprehension is extremely limited in these areas. Nevertheless, *Chazal* have still afforded us a small glimpse into this arena, if only enough to whet our appetites and to foster a desire to pursue merit.

(What follows is based largely on the fifth chapter of the exceptional *sefer Emunas Hatechiyah*, written by R’ Moshe Nesanel from Zettel, circa 1800. The *sefer* is adorned with numerous approbations, including one from the venerated Kovno Rav, R’ Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor.)

There is a well-known Mishnah in Sanhedrin (10:1):

“Every Jew has a share in the World to Come, as the verse states, “And the members of your nation are all righteous; they will inherit ‘the land’ forever...” (*Yeshayah 60:21*).

The reward reserved for every Jew is not limited to his spiritual soul but includes his physical body as well. When the great *techiyas hameisim* (resurrection of the dead) will occur, one’s body will once again be reunited with his *neshamah*. As we shall see, however, there are gradations as to how different people will merit this reunification.

### All Roads Lead to the Holy Land

This is borne out by Ya’akov Avinu’s request of his son Yosef in this week’s *parshah*. Before his passing, Ya’akov pleads with Yosef to bury him in Eretz Yisrael and not to leave him in the land of Egypt. Amongst the reasons given for this request, Rashi mentions that Ya’akov was concerned about the *mechilos* (underground tunnels).

What is the nature of these tunnels that worried Ya’akov?

The Resurrection will take place in Eretz Yisrael. When the time arises, those buried outside of Eretz Yisrael will have to undergo a (rather uncomfortable) journey through underground tunnels leading to Eretz Yisrael. They will then emerge up through the ground of Eretz Yisrael as they come back to life. Having one’s bones roll through the ground was something Ya’akov understandably wished to avoid; those buried in Eretz Yisrael (generally) are spared the ordeal.

It behooves us to understand, however, what exactly awaits those interred in *chutz la’aretz* (outside of Eretz Yisrael). Many outstanding *tzaddikim* are buried in Lithuania, Poland, the United States, etc. Must they be subjected to this rigorous pre-Resurrection experience?

There actually is a way out, so to speak, even for those who are buried in *chutz la'aretz*. Firstly, it appears that there is a type of “special dispensation” for those who, in their lifetimes, displayed a particularly strong love for Eretz Yisrael and a yearning for the Redemption. There were great *tzaddikim* (including such luminaries as the Vilna Gaon and the Chofetz Chaim) who longed for Eretz Yisrael and actually strove to travel there, but for whatever reason, Heaven decreed that it was not to be – at least, not yet. While all others buried in *chutz la'aretz* will have to take the underground route, those who fall into this particular category will be treated differently. They are the only ones who will rise to life and emerge from the ground right from their burial places in *chutz la'aretz*. In this way, they will be able to merely “pick up where they left off,” and resume their journey to the Holy Land, which was temporarily interrupted. (Members of the generation who wandered in the desert may also fall into this category.)

### **Preparing for the Journey**

Aside from this particular exception, there is a manner of underground travel that is not so harrowing; one need be extremely righteous, though, to merit this path. A mundane (and somewhat inexact) comparison would be to the difference between coach and first-class. Simply put, *tzaddikim* merit larger, roomier tunnels and are afforded the ability to stand on their feet and proceed comfortably on their way. The average folk – meaning those who have sufficient merit to be eligible for Resurrection but not enough to be spared the rigors of the tunnel journey – will still require this final stage of atonement before coming back to physical life. They will have to endure the feared and agonizing experience of having their bones rolled across the earth until they arrive at the Resurrection destination (Eretz Yisrael).

(The reason Ya'akov Avinu, who was obviously a perfect *tzaddik*, was nevertheless concerned about undergoing the difficult manner of transportation via the underground tunnels was due to his great humility. While he realized he would merit Resurrection, he nevertheless did not view himself as the perfect *tzaddik* who would be awarded the less painful option).

While most people are aware that the Resurrection holds a prominent place in our daily prayers (as the subject of the second blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei*), some may not realize that we actually pray to merit the painless method of traveling through the tunnels. This plea is contained in the words (found in the blessing preceding *K'rias Shema*) “*V'solicheinu komemiyus l'artzeinu* – Lead us upright to our Land,” *upright* in the literal sense (i.e., standing on one's feet as opposed to rolling).

It goes without saying that the above represents the mere tip of the iceberg of the topic of the *mechilos* in particular and *techiyas hameisim* in general. And, as stated above, there is only so much that is revealed. What should be clear, however, is the benefit of yearning for the *geulah* and striving for the righteousness that warrants such blessed results.

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