



Carnegie Shul Chatter

December 28, 2023



Light candles 4:43pm - Shabbat Services 9:20am

Ask a Rabbi

There are many things in Judaism that are often taught to us in terms that are either black or white, without any halachic allowance for an exception to the rule. This is often true in matters concerning death and burial.

For example, I was always told that Jews do not embalm. And yet, in this week's parshah, we read that Joseph has the body of his father, Jacob, embalmed upon his death and his return to Canaan for burial. And Joseph himself is embalmed upon his death. How can this be?

Well, according to myjewishlearning.com, "There are instances in which embalming would be allowed, such as where a body is being transported over a long distance or if there's an unavoidable delay in burial. It may also be permitted if it is required by civil authorities. This is the explanation sometimes invoked to explain the embalming of Jacob and Joseph when they died in Egypt,

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Shabbat Services — Zoom Link Changed

Carnegie Shul hybrid services begin at 9:20am. Join us in the synagogue, or attend virtually. **If you haven't obtained our new Zoom link for our Sabbath services**, please contact our secretary, Rosalyn Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com. The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found at https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2492594/jewish/Vayechi-Torah-Reading.htm

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as recorded in the 50th chapter of Genesis.” And, chabad.org says, “There are, however, several exceptions to the general prohibition of embalming. These are:

1. When a lengthy delay in the funeral service becomes mandatory.
2. When burial is to take place overseas.
3. When governmental authority demands it.”

And so it is always best to consult with a rabbi if you have any questions concerning the death and burial of a loved one.



Please continue reciting the Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel daily and pray for the wellbeing of all of our Israeli brothers and sisters.

Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel

“Our Father Who art in Heaven, Protector and Redeemer of Israel, bless Thou the State of Israel which marks the dawn of our deliverance. Shield it beneath the wings of Thy love. Spread over it Thy canopy of peace; send Thy light and Thy truth to its leaders, officers, and counselors, and direct them with Thy good counsel.

“O God, strengthen the defenders of our Holy Land; grant them salvation and crown them with victory. Establish peace in the land, and everlasting joy for its inhabitants.

“Remember our brethren, the whole house of Israel, in all the lands of their dispersion. Speedily let them walk upright to Zion, the city, to Jerusalem Thy dwelling-place, as it is written in the Torah of Thy servant Moses: ‘Even if you are dispersed in the uttermost parts of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather and fetch you. The Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.’

“Unite our heart to love and revere Thy Name, and to observe all the precepts of Thy Torah. Shine forth in Thy glorious majesty over all the inhabitants of Thy world. Let everything that breathes proclaim: The Lord God of Israel is King; His majesty rules over all.”

Amen.

Parshat Vayechi in a Nutshell

From Chabad.org

Genesis 47:28–50:26

The name of the Parshah, “Vayechi,” means “And he lived” and it is found in Genesis 47:28.

Jacob lives the final 17 years of his life in Egypt. Before his passing, he asks Joseph to take an oath that he will bury him in the Holy Land. He blesses Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, elevating them to the status of his own sons as progenitors of tribes within the nation of Israel.



The patriarch desires to reveal the end of days to his children, but is prevented from doing so.

Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to each his role as a tribe: Judah will produce leaders, legislators and kings; priests will come from Levi, scholars from Issachar, seafarers from Zebulun, schoolteachers from Simeon, soldiers from Gad, judges from Dan, olive-growers from Asher, and so on. Reuben is rebuked for “confusing his father’s marriage bed”; Simeon and Levi, for the massacre of Shechem and the plot against Joseph. Naphtali is granted the swiftness of a deer, Benjamin the ferociousness of a wolf, and Joseph is blessed with beauty and fertility.

A large funeral procession consisting of Jacob’s descendants, Pharaoh’s ministers, the leading citizens of Egypt and the Egyptian cavalry accompanies Jacob on his final journey to the Holy Land, where he is buried in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron.

Joseph, too, dies in Egypt, at the age of 110. He, too, instructs that his bones be taken out of Egypt and buried in the Holy Land, but this would come to pass only with the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt many years later. Before his passing, Joseph conveys to the Children of Israel the testament from which they will draw their hope and faith in the difficult years to come: “G-d will surely remember you, and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Haftorah in a Nutshell

I Kings 2:1-12

In this week’s haftorah, King David delivers his deathbed message to his son and successor, Solomon, echoing this week’s Torah reading that discusses at length Jacob’s parting words and instructions to his sons.

King David encourages Solomon to be strong and to remain steadfast in his belief in G-d. This will ensure his success in all his endeavors as well as the continuation of the Davidic Dynasty. David then goes on to



give his son some tactical instructions pertaining to various people who deserved punishment or reward for their actions during his reign.

The haftorah concludes with David's death and his burial in the City of David. King Solomon takes his father's place and his sovereignty is firmly established.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Kate Peresman

Julia Browarsky Korenberg

Dr. Samuel Sherman

Goldie Sherman

Ruth Fogel Parker

Kenneth H. Peresman

Harry Levitt

May their memories be for a blessing.

Donations

The Carnegie Shul is most grateful for the following recent donations:

In Memory

Ronald R Rubenfield

In memory of Edward and Esther Rubenfield

Roger and Ronnie Wilk

In memory of Leona Kalson Wilk

High Holiday Donations

Dr. Elaine Berkowitz

Robert D. Bodell