

Rose Goldsand – Raizel bat Menachem Mendl v'Yenta

Died January 11, 2001

Listening to Gary describe the life of his beloved grandmother reminds us all of the sacrifices that have been made on our behalf by our ancestors. Our Jewish tradition stresses the mitzvah of respecting our parents and this is a mitzvah that we continue to obey even after they are gone.

Tomorrow on the first Shabbat after Rose's passing we will read the final portion of the Book of Genesis, Vayechi.

This portion also tells of the passing of our Patriarch Jacob and the blessings that he gives his sons. Just as Rose's life was full of challenges, Jacob too suffered pain and tragedy. Jacob was threatened with death by his brother Esau; he worked night and day for twenty years and was cheated out of his wages by his father-in-law Laban. His beloved wife Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin and his favourite son, Joseph, is sold into slavery, and believing him to be dead, Jacob mourns for him for 22 years.

Rose was able to enjoy many years of happiness, first achieving freedom in Canada and then sharing in the success of her children and grandchildren and the birth of a great grand child. Jacob too, found rewarding times in the last 17 years of his life in Egypt surrounded by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

So it is interesting that although this portion describes the last days of Jacob and his passing, it never uses the word "died". In fact the first words of the portion are Vayechi Yaakov – Jacob lived.

In commenting on this our sages state "Yaakov our father did not die", but how is this possible since the Torah does tell us that Jacob was buried.

The Talmud explains that although his physical body was buried, he didn't die, "For as long as his children are alive he too is alive."

True life, according to our sages, is measured by the values of a person and the transmission of these values to future generations. Since Jacob's children and grandchildren continued in his footsteps, Jacob too was considered alive.

~~So~~ We ^{can} keep Rose Goldsand alive in our hearts and our minds despite the loss of her physical presence. Inspired by her dedication to family and community we can continue to instill her values on generations to come, as we remember the sacrifices she and others of her generation made for us.

Tehi nishmata tzroora beetzror hachaim
May her soul be bound up in the bond of life