

THE NAKED TRUTH

by Rabbi Label Lam

And they drew close the days of Israel to die... (Breishis 47:29)

And they drew close the days of Israel to die: Rabbi Yossi says, "It is not written that "the day" drew close but rather "the days". How many days does a person die? Is it not in one moment and in a single instant that he dies and exits the world?" (Zohar)

What a great question! How many days does a person die?

The Dubner Maggid was well known for his creative and insightful parables. He answered all questions with parables. One time someone asked him how come he always answers questions with parables and he said, "I'll tell you a parable!"

Truth was walking down the street and he was naked. Everywhere he went he caused a stir. People were extremely uncomfortable in his presence. After a short while, he was banned from most every place and understandably so. He had a close friend though and his name was Parable. Parable approached Truth and offered a suggestion. He said, "I have a suit that would fit you just fine and if you would wear it then people will accept and tolerant of you and they might eventually grow to accept you!" He agreed to give it a try and lo and behold it worked!

Maybe with this in mind we can decipher and appreciate the words of the Holy Zohar. "Rabbi Yehuda said, 'Come and see that when a person's days draw close before the Holy King and if that person is a Tzadik, he goes up and enters with those days. They are made for him into garments of honor that the soul dresses up in them. These are those days that the person merited with them to be without sin. Woe to him who diminished his days- above. Then those days that were blemished are missing from that garment, and he wears clothing that are lacking. How much more so if there were many such days and the person has no garment to wear in that world, then woe to him and woe to his soul. When he exits this world he doesn't find the days with which to dress in them and the garment to cover up with them.

Happy are those righteous ones that all their days are stored by the Holy King and they are made into garments of honor to wear in the next world and with that garment they merit to enjoy the supreme delight of the pleasures of the next world and with that same garment they are in the future to be resurrected with the revival of the dead!"

Even while Jacob was doing what was an act of deception by dressing up his arms and neck to

appear as Essau, he was listening to the commandment of his mother, as she had implored him, "And now my son listen to my voice... shema b'koli" (Breishis 27:8) All those early experiences of life are not lost. They are stored away to be later woven into eternal garments. It can be said, and not whimsically, that Jacob and all of us are in the "shemata business" (the garment business), that is the business of "shemata b'kolo" "and you should listen to His voice". For anyone who understands it well, and I'm not sure that I do myself- that is- the naked truth! Text Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.