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## Take back Kever Yosef, TODAY!

by David Wilder

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**It is our collective responsibility to ensure that Joseph's tomb return's to Israel**

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Text messages, received at seven in the morning, aren't a good way to start the day. Today's was no different. A terror shooting at Kever Yosef, Joseph's tomb, in Shechem, left one Jew dead and others injured.

A little while later, arriving at Ma'arat HaMachpela for morning prayers, I asked a friend if he knew who'd been killed. When he answered Ben Yosef Livnat I froze. Benyo, as he was known, had been my neighbor. He had studied at Kollel Ohr Shlomo in Tel Rumeida for a few years. I saw him there every morning, studying "Hassidut," usually "Likutai Me'oran," the teachings for Rebbi Nachman of Breslav, with a 'chevruta' a study partner, before the nine o'clock start of the regular day's program. During his last year in the Torah program, he moved, with his wife and family, to Beit Hadassah. They lived in an apartment under ours for about a year, before moving to a Breslav neighborhood in Jerusalem.



Benyo dead!? Shot and killed!? At Kever Yosef!? Now, a few hours later, I still cannot fathom Benyo – Ben Yosef Livat, no long among the living.

Benyo's father, Noam, was severely wounded while serving in the IDF. Belonging to the Beitar movement, he was involved in Gush Etzion and later became religious. He helped initiate the Elon Moreh and Kedumim communities in Samaria, and later studied at the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva at Joseph's tomb in Shechem. Benyo – Ben Yosef, was one of six children in the family and his name reflects the family's bond with Joseph and Joseph's tomb, where ironically, he was murdered.



Benyo is not the first Jew to lose his life as a result of total dedication to Joseph's tomb and the Shomron – Samaria region. This holy site, was, according to the cursed Oslo Accords, supposed to remain under Israeli control, despite the fact that the city Shechem, was abandoned to Arafat and the Arabs. However, numerous violent attacks at the site led to the murder of Israeli Border policeman, Cpl. Madhat Yusuf, there in October, 2000. Yusuf, injured by Arab gunfire, bled to death at the tomb when Israeli forces were forbidden to enter the site and save him.

A week later, Hillel Lieberman, was murdered by Arabs while trying to access the tomb following Israel's decision to abandon the area to the Arabs. A week and a half later Rabbi Binyamin Herling, also from Elon Moreh, was killed during a hike in an area just outside Shechem. He too bled to death after being wounded, when Israeli forces were

forbidden to take actions necessary to end Arab shooting in the area.

Arabs destroyed the tomb, burning it to the ground. However Jews refused to abandon Joseph and leave this holy place Judenrein. For years Jewish worshippers have secretly visited the tomb, during the night and early morning, praying and reciting Psalms. Eventually the IDF began to offer 'secure visits' to the site. But the demand to permanently return to Joseph's tomb continued, with many groups, including many Breslav Hassidim, frequenting the holy site. So it was that Ben Yosef Livnat and some of his friends arrived there early this morning for early morning Passover prayers. Arabs in the area, including armed terrorists in uniform, known as 'palestinian police' were used to seeing Jews arrive, pray, and then leave.

However, this morning these terrorists opened fire on a few cars of Breslaver's at the tomb, killing Benyo and wounding a few others, one of whom is in critical condition. Benyo, only twenty five years old, leaves a widow and four orphans, the oldest of whom is not yet five.

There are many conclusions to be reached following this horrid terrorist murder, on the eve of the last day of Passover. Again, and how many times must it be reiterated, Israel cannot and must not initiate so-called 'security arrangements' with the PA. Armed Arabs know only one use for their weapons, and that is, as has proven hundreds of times, is to murder Jews. Hundreds and thousands of Jews have been killed and injured by weapons provided to the Arabs by Israel and distributed to 'palestinian police,' that is, terrorists in uniform. How many more lives must be snuffed out until Israel's leadership

understands that our neighbors will continue to kill Jews, given the opportunity to do so. Why should we help them to kill our own people!?

But, the first, and most obvious step to be implemented is the return of Kever Yosef, Joseph's tomb, to full Israeli control. Benyo's murder will not stop Jews from praying at this site; to the contrary, I expect it will accelerate and increase Jewish presence at the site. But Israel must, must, must, make it clear to our neighbors that there is a price for killing of Jews. Joseph's tomb is one of the holiest places in Israel, similar to Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem and Ma'arat HaMachpela, the tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in Hebron. Why should such a sacred place remain in the hands of our enemy, who continues to desecrate it and kill Jews there!? It is our collective responsibility to ensure that Joseph's tomb return's to Israel, and that responsibility obligates Israeli leadership, the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the entire Israeli cabinet (including Benyo's aunt, Minister Limor Livat), to meet today, and officially decide to return a permanent Israeli security presence to Kever Yosef, thereby allowing full, free, secure access to all Jews who so desire to worship there, day and night, three hundred and sixty five days a year. This is the only way to sanctify the memory of all those killed at this site and prevent further Jewish bloodshed at this most significant location in Israel.

Benyo was a wonderful person, a beautiful Jew and his murder will leave a huge gap in the lives of all who knew him. May his memory be blessed and may G-d comfort his

widow, orphans, parents, brothers and sisters and all who knew and loved him.