

# A Thought for Shabbat

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## Shabbat Shalom

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In this week's Torah portion, *Vayishlach* (*Genesis 32:4-36:43*), we read of the death of Isaac. For the twenty years prior to his death, his sons Jacob and Esau did not speak. In fact, they were arch enemies as Esau vowed to kill Jacob the next time they encountered each other. And yet, prior to their father's death, they reconciled and together they buried Isaac, for it was the right thing to do. They embraced and made their relationship right.

The death of a loved one can bring people together for the great mitzvah of remembering and burying the dead, or it can further drive a wedge in an already divided relationship. But as with everything in life, we have a choice of how to act in any given moment. The death of a loved one is an opportunity to rise above our base humanity and strive for our best humanity.

At the most, let a friend or relative's life inspire us to reconcile with those from whom we are estranged. At the very least, let a friend or relative's death push us towards reconnection with those we have disconnected. If we want to honor our dead, let us live our lives most admirably. If Jacob and Esau could do it, so can we.