

## *Keter Al HaTorah, Bereishit 46*

Now that Yaakov has been reinvigorated with the news of Yosef's whereabouts, he and the rest of his large household are heading down to Egypt.

**1.** Read pesukim 1-4/ד-א.

**A.** Yaakov has just heard the most exciting news of his life, and he is no doubt focused on reaching Yosef in Egypt as quickly as possible. It is therefore surprising that the Torah seems to take us on a detour to Be'er Sheva in pasuk 1/א, telling us about the stops that Yaakov made as he traveled and the offerings that he brought. How does the pasuk below, from an earlier event in Yaakov's life, provide more context for pasuk א in our perek? How does it also help us appreciate the larger, national significance of this moment?

**פרק כ"ח, פסוק י':** וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעֵר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה:

*Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.*

**Nahum Sarna:** "Jacob's odyssey began at Beer-sheba; it fittingly concludes with a revelation at the same place. The divine Voice will not be heard again until the advent of Moses."

How does this observation about Yaakov's earlier and later departures from Be'er Sheva help us appreciate the national significance of this moment?

Other commentators note that when Yaakov reached Be'er Sheva he had Yitzchak on his mind. See Shadal below:

**Shadal:** "Be'er Sheva is the southern border of the Land of Israel (as it is stated, 'From Dan until Be'er Sheva,') and before he left Israel, [Yaakov] wanted to know God's will, in case He might prevent him from traveling, the way He prevented his father and said to him, מִצְרַיִם לֹא תֵיכַד תֵּיכַד מִצְרַיִם לֹא תֵיכַד בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶמַר אֵלֶיךָ, =Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land I will tell you about."

How does Shadal's comment explain the fact that Hashem is called יִצְחָק in pasuk א, instead of a more common name?

**B.** Compare the words in pesukim 2-3/ג-ב to the two pesukim below, which are written about Yitzchak after he leaves Gerar with his family. What are the similarities between them and what are the differences?

**(כג)** וַיַּעַל מִשָּׁם בְּאֶר שֶׁבַע:

*He went up from there to Beersheba.*

**(כד)** וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹקֵי אֲבֹרָהּם אֲבִיךָ אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי־אֶתְּךָ אֲנֹכִי וּבְרַכְתִּיךָ וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ בְּעֵבֹר אֲבֹרָהּם עַבְדִּי:

*Hashem appeared to him the same night, and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Do not be afraid, for I am with you, and will bless you, and multiply your seed for my servant Abraham's sake."*

Nechama Leibowitz addresses the words אל תִּירָא = don't fear, which seem out of place, both when Hashem says them to Yitzchak, and when He says them to Yaakov.

**Prof. Leibowitz:** *"There is no previous indication given in the text that Yaakov or any of the Patriarchs were afraid of anything. It is as if the Torah wished to teach us that nothing is hidden from God. The fear of the mighty and the confident that lies deep down in their hearts stands revealed to the all-knowing God. The question may here be asked- what had Jacob to be afraid of? He was going to see his long-lost favorite son for whom he had mourned for twenty years. In Egypt he would live under the protection of his son who was vice-regent of the realm... Evidently the fear alluded to here is not connected with Yaakov's personal feelings. It is part of the symbolic or archetypal dread of the founder of the nation of the spiritual consequences of leaving the homeland and going into Egypt.... Jacob was concerned for the future of the nation as a whole, the future of his children in the Egyptian exile and the bondage to come. Though he knew full well that he was going to a land of plenty and to live in comfort, who would guarantee that his descendants would want to leave Egypt and return to the land of Canaan which alone had been promised to his forefathers? Perhaps his children would forget their destiny as they wallowed in the plenty of Egypt and would not want to leave. To these misgivings and doubts did the Divine message allude."*

Yaakov is not simply taking a quick trip to Egypt for a family reunion over a long holiday weekend. He is packing up his extensive family and belongings and heading down to a foreign land, a country that was not hospitable to his grandfather, and from which his father was forbidden from traveling. Furthermore, over the last two decades, Yaakov and his children have been settling and multiplying in the land that Hashem had promised them. It must have felt confusing to Yaakov to be taking this (seemingly) backward step, particularly in the closing years of his life. He must have wondered about what kind of legacy he would ultimately leave behind.

**C.** We noted above that Yaakov twice departed from Be'er Sheva to travel out of Israel. On both occasions, he received messages at night from Hashem. When he was heading for Charan, he dreamt about a ladder from heaven, and Hashem assured him that his future was bright. Read Hashem's original promise to Yaakov, included below, and compare it to the one Hashem makes in our perek, at the end of pasuk ג and in pasuk ד. How are they similar, and how are they different?

(יג) וְהָיָה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֶי אֲבֹרָהִם אֲבִיר וְאֵלָקִי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְנָנָה וְלִזְרַעְךָ:

*Behold, Hashem stood above it, and said, "I am Hashem, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed.*

(יד) וְהָיָה זֶרְעְךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה וּקְדָמָה וּצְפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּה וּנְבָרְכְּךָ בֶּן כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה וּבְזֶרְעֶךָ:

*Your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.*

(טו) וְהָיָה אֲנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וְשָׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל־הָאָדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעְזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ:

*Behold, I am with you, and will keep you, wherever you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken of to you."*

R' Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, author of the Meshech Chochma, explains the special significance of both nighttime revelations:

**Meshech Chochma:** *"We find that it was only in the case of Yaakov, here and in Parshat וַיֵּצֵא, and not of Avraham and Yitzchak, that God appeared in 'visions of the night.' This was because [Yaakov] was prepared to go and live outside the Holy Land. The Divine Revelation came to him, at night, to show him that the Divine presence rests on Israel even in the night, in the darkness of the exile, as [Chazal] stated, 'Whenever Israel was exiled, the Divine presence accompanied them. They were exiled to Egypt, the Divine presence accompanied them...to Babylon, the Divine presence accompanied them.' Regarding this Psalm 20 observes, 'The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble, the name of the God of Yaakov will fortify you.' While they are in trouble and in the darkness of night, the God of Yaakov, who was revealed to him at night, will fortify you."*

On the one hand, Hashem is telling Yaakov that life outside of Israel is "dark." But at the same time, Hashem is also promising His assistance and protection.

Ramban sees a similar message in the shift from the name Yisrael to the name Yaakov which occurs in pasuk ב:

**Ramban:** *"After the Almighty had told him that 'his name should no more be called Yaakov, but Yisrael should be your name,' it was only right that He should address him by this honored title. The Almighty's employment of his old name, 'Yaakov,' on this occasion, implies that henceforth he would not wrestle with God and men and prevail, but remain in the house of bondage until He would bring him out. The exile was beginning."*

The brief exchange between Hashem and Yaakov in pasuk 2/ב is reminiscent of language in Akeidat Yitzchak. Based on the explanations of Meshech Chochma and Ramban, what might be the connection between Yaakov's current concerns and the challenge of faith imposed on Avraham during the Akeidah?

**D.** R' Ezra Bick of Yeshivat Har Etzion offers a different explanation for the repeated shift in these pesukim between the names Yaakov and Yisrael.

**R' Bick:** *"The difference between Yaakov and Yisrael that was exemplified when he responded to Yehuda's demand that he send Binyamin to Egypt with the brothers was that Yisrael took responsibility and initiative. Before that scene in Miketz, Yaakov was passive, not in command of his destiny. Yehuda succeeded in rousing Yaakov from his lethargy, and that was immediately indicated by the use, albeit only for a short time, of the name Yisrael. The emphasis is, I suggest, on the meaning of Yisrael as "you have struggled with God and man," and less on the "prevailed;" or, if you will, "prevailed" (vatuchal) should be understood more as "you have succeeded to struggle" rather than "you have overcome." (After all, Yaakov did not overcome the man with whom he wrestled, but only managed to keep wrestling all night).*

*The news of Yosef restores Yaakov's spirit and he rises to the status of Yisrael, one who will contend with his destiny, with man and with God. He sets out for Egypt thinking that there is indeed a need to contend with what is waiting for him there, and he is planning to assume once again the leadership of the emerging Am Yisrael. The fact that Egypt is exile does not imply that there is no need for struggle and leadership. But God informs him that that is not what will be. The experience of Egypt is indeed one of passivity, of suffering, and not one of reaction. This is not true only of the period of servitude but becomes true immediately when they arrive. The house of Yaakov is a ward of the state, provided for by Yosef from the king's stores, totally dependent on royal favor, and hence it is not a total surprise that eventually they fall into servitude."*

**E.** In pesukim 3-4/ד-ג, Hashem addresses Yaakov's concerns about the future and reveals that He has a detailed plan:

**Seforno:** *אנכי הא-ל אלוקי אביך, I am the One Who told your father "do not go down to Egypt." I am also the One Who says to you אל תירא מרדה מצרימה עתה, "do not be afraid to go down to Egypt at this time." The difference is that the time has come. כי לגוי גדול, if you were to remain in the land of Canaan at this time, your family would intermarry in short order with the members of the local population, so that they would become assimilated with them and the future of a Jewish nation would be jeopardized. This is something that will not happen in Egypt. Moses recalls this in his parting speech to the nation in Deut. 26,5 [the viduy speech that is made when we bring bikkurim].*

**R' Shimshon Raphael Hirsch:** *"The fact that God [had] called him Yaakov and not Yisrael was a sobering reminder, making Yaakov aware of the immediate consequences of his journey down to Mitzrayim. Hence Yaakov replies, הִנְנִי, 'I am ready for anything you will ordain.' Thereupon God says to him: 'You need have no fears. I am the God to whom you have just made your joyous family offering. Ultimately even this journey will bring you greatness. It is in Mitzrayim that you will become the great nation of which I have spoken in My promise to you. I Myself will accompany you (and your family) down*

to Mitzrayim, and (after you have become a nation) I will bring you up again. And as regards you personally, you will never lose Yosef again."

## *The Family Heads South*

### 2. Read pesukim 5-7/ז-ה.

**A.** We noted above that R' Bick considers the name Yisrael to be associated with the qualities of activity, initiative and struggle. When Yaakov took the reigns and began to actively work on his family's future, the Torah called him Yisrael. It is this energetic spirit that seems to have motivated Yaakov's initial journey to Be'er Sheva at the beginning of our perek, when the pasuk tells us *וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁבַע* = *Israel traveled with all that he had, and came to Beersheba*.

Now look at the name shift in pesukim 5-7/ז-ה. Based on R' Bick's understanding of the two names, what has changed since pasuk א?

**R' Bick:** *"Originally "Yisrael travelled to Beer Sheva." After God's appearance, Yaakov is carried by his children, together with the children and women, in a cart (verse 5). Suddenly, he appears to us as an old and infirm invalid. What is more, the verse emphasizes that the wagon was sent by Par'o to carry Yaakov. Yaakov is not travelling to Egypt, he is being carried there, and is already being carried, being born, by Par'o's command. For the rest of the parasha, Yaakov is passive, moved around by others. "*

R' Bick's explanation helps us understand the sudden name shift, but it doesn't directly address the disparity between Yaakov's name and that of his children- the Torah continues to refer to them as B'nei Yisrael. R' Hirsch provides a sobering answer:

**R' Hirsch:** *"Here again, significantly, there is a change in the names. The family [Israel's sons] were in the happiest frame of mind. They had no premonition of the sad fate which awaited them and toward which they were now journeying. Their father, however, was filled with somber thoughts of his people's exile which he had been told to expect. Hence we read that Israel's sons carried their father Jacob."*

**B.** An additional explanation for the fact that both of Yaakov's names have been—and will continue to be—used in this narrative is suggested by R' Zeev Weitman, also of Yeshivat Har Etzion. R' Weitman reminds us that in perek 45, Yaakov received an invitation to Egypt from both Yosef and from Pharaoh himself. Each invitation had a different type of stay in mind. Yosef wanted his father and brothers to live in Egypt for five years, while the famine prevailed, while Pharaoh wanted the family to settle permanently in Egypt, to guarantee that their brother Yosef would remain as well. R' Weitman says that the Torah uses the two names of Yaakov to portray the dual nature of the invitation that Yaakov received.

Before we read R' Weitman's own words, look back at the pesukim in our perek (through pasuk 8/נ,) and try to fit his approach into each one. Now read his explanation:

**R' Weitman:** *Yaakov had already decided to accept Yosef's invitation for a short-term stay in Egypt, but he was troubled by Pharaoh's invitation and the possibility that his family's sojourning would turn into permanent residence in Egypt. It was only after God revealed Himself to Yaakov and told him "Do not fear going down to Egypt, for I shall make you a great nation there" that Yaakov was ready to move on and take up Pharaoh's invitation, too....*

*"Yaakov" is the name denoting exile, where guile and cunning are needed in order to survive and to get by under foreign rulers who harbor no special love for Am Yisrael. The Torah uses this name when speaking of Yaakov acceding to Pharaoh's invitation, with its hint of a long exile.*

*"Yisrael" is the name that was given to Yaakov upon his return to Eretz Yisrael. It denotes uprightness, power, and the ability to engage in direct confrontation and battle, with no need for guile. "Yisrael," firmly planted in Eretz Yisrael, decides to go and visit Yosef, but with a view to going, seeing, and returning. He intends to "stay over," but not to "stay." It is this name that the Torah uses in describing Yaakov's response to Yosef's invitation....*

*Up to Be'er Sheva it had been Yisrael who had gone down in the wagons which Yosef had sent – "And he saw the **wagons which Yosef had sent** to carry him" – and it was to Yosef's invitation that he acceded. But from Be'er Sheva onwards, **Yaakov** was carried by his sons on the **wagons sent by Pharaoh**. Thus, he acceded also to Pharaoh's invitation to go and settle in Egypt."*

The shifts between the two names, Yaakov and Yisrael, will continue once the family reaches Egypt and settles there, so we will have to follow these shifts and try to explain them, based on the approaches we have read.

**C.** In pasuk 5/ה, why does the Torah repeat the fact that Pharaoh was the one who sent the wagons to transport the family?

**Netziv:** *"After Yaakov informed his sons of Hashem's instruction to settle in Egypt indefinitely, his sons informed him that Pharaoh had similarly decreed to Yosef that he should not send grain to Israel but instead bring the family to Egypt. [This is evidence of Chazal's teaching that] 'the will of a king is in God's hands.'"*

**D.** Notice that in pasuk 6/ו, the Torah uses an active verb, וַיָּבֵאוּ, to mention that Yaakov and his children traveled to Egypt, while pasuk 7/ז is more passive, stating that Yaakov brought all of his descendants with him on the journey- הֵבִיא אֹתוֹ מִצְרָיִם. The language in the second pasuk makes it seem as though the family members did not travel of their



own accord. Why the discrepancy? See the two explanations below. Which approach seems especially relevant to life in Galut?

**Or HaChaim:** *"The Torah tries to tell us that there were ideological differences between the sons of Jacob. Some agreed willingly to migrate to Egypt and to accept the burden of God's decree that their children would become slaves in Egypt. Others strove to delay as long as possible the descent to the land which would be known as the 'iron crucible' of the Jewish people. The Torah tries to describe who was who by mentioning separately אֶתְּ בָנָיו וּבְנֵי בָנָיו on the one hand, meaning that those did not have to be persuaded to undertake the journey with Jacob. On the other hand, when the verse continues to speak separately about Jacob bringing with him 'his daughters, granddaughters and all his descendants,' these are the people who did not go down to Egypt voluntarily."*

**Netziv:** *"His sons and grandsons came down of their own accord, for they had been commanded by God to descend to Egypt, and through them the promise of כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זֶרַעְךָ - your offspring shall be strangers, would be fulfilled. But his daughters and granddaughters and his disciples were not commanded about this, and they could have become married to other people in the land of Canaan. But Yaakov brought them with him to Egypt to watch over them and protect them [from this possibility] as long as he could."*

**E.** In pasuk 7/ז, why does the Torah use the plural word בָּנוֹתָיו = daughters? Did Yaakov have more than one daughter?

**Rashi:** בָּנוֹתָיו = his daughters - *"This word means, 'whoever was part of [the category of] 'his daughters,' namely, Dinah, for she was his only one [in the category] of daughters. Similarly, there is the language, וּבְנֵי דָן חֻשִּׁים and the sons of Dan 'were' Chushim. All of 'the sons' of Dan amounted to Chushim alone."*

Later in this perek, after the Torah lists all of the descendants of Yaakov who entered Egypt and calculates that there were 66 in all, Rashi further wonders whether there should have been more:

**Rashi:** *"According to the one who says [in Bereishit Rabba] that twin girls were born with each of the Shevatim, we must say that they died before the descent to Egypt took place, for they were not counted here."*

Netziv offers a different type of explanation:

**Netziv:** *"We can wonder about how the sons of Yaakov only bore males and no females. But it seems that they did bear many females, and they just weren't counted among the seventy souls [that entered Egypt], moreover, Yaakov himself also had daughters from his wives, which is the meaning of the pasuk in perek 37/ז, 'and all his sons and daughters arose to console him.' However, they were not mentioned by name because nothing happened to them that was historically relevant to the larger nation of*

*Israel, as opposed to what happened to Dinah. And don't be surprised, because there is also a statement in Bava Batra regarding Avraham that he had a daughter, and she was not mentioned in the Torah since nothing emerged from her that needed to be remembered in Israel for future generations. And this was also what happened regarding our forefather Yaakov."*

### *Yaakov's Family Tree*

**3.** In pesukim 8-27/ז"ח-כ"ח, Yaakov's sons and grandsons are named and counted. While these pesukim are mainly lists of names, we will mention a few noteworthy items.

**A.** Read pasuk 10/י. Who is this שאול, the son of a כנענית?

**Rashi:** בן הכנענית THE SON OF THE CANAANITISH WOMAN – *means the son of Dinah, who had been associated with a Canaanite (Shechem). When they (her brothers) had killed Shechem, Dinah refused to leave the city until Simeon swore to her that he would marry her and regard the child she was about to bear as his own (cf. Genesis Rabbah 80:11).*

**Ibn Ezra:** בן הכנענית – *"This is meant to attest to the fact that the wives of the shevatim were Aramean, Edomite, Egyptian and Midianite. And the Torah mentions this woman alone because Shimon did something inappropriate by taking a Canaanite woman, and this is also why the Torah mentions Er and Onan [Yehuda's sons] because they were the sons of a Canaanite."*

**R' Hirsch:** *"If this כנענית refers to Dinah, who was married to Shimon (Bereishit Rabba 80:11), then it seems that שאול was not the son of Shimon, but rather the son who was born to Dinah from Shechem. If so, we see that even this son was not alienated by Yaakov's family.... We see then that even at this early stage, the rule was that a child born to a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father was considered to belong to the mother's family and not the father's family."*

**B.** In pasuk 15/ט"ו, how many children and grandchildren are attributed to Leah and Yaakov? Commentators note, however, that only 32 people are listed in the pesukim, not 33 as the pasuk states. Here are the arguments that Rashi and Ramban make in order to resolve this difficulty:

**Rashi:** *"שלשים ושלש THIRTY THREE – But in the enumeration above you will find only thirty-two. The one whose name is omitted is Jochebed who was born "between the walls" just as they entered the border city, as it is said (Numbers 26:59) "Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bore to Levi in Egypt — she was born in Egypt, but she was not conceived in Egypt (Bava Batra 123)."*

**Ramban:** *"There is a great wonder regarding Yocheved, one of the hidden miracles that are the foundation of the Torah.... If we say that [Levi] fathered her in his youth, when he fathered all his other children so that her birth occurred shortly after he descended to*



*Egypt, then she would be very old at Moshe's birth [i.e. about 130 years old.]... And if we say that [Yocheved] was born to [Levi] many years after he settled in Egypt, and we will assume that he bore her 57 years after his coming down to Egypt, when he was one hundred years old... then there would be two wonders in this matter. That [Levi] was as old as Avraham [when he fathered Yitzchak,] ...and Yocheved would be an old woman of 73 at Moshe's birth. And if we set her birth even later, to the end of Levi's life, the wonder would be even greater than that of Avraham.*

*However, I will tell you something that is true and clear in the Torah: that those miracles which occur by the prediction of a prophet who prophesies so first, or through an angel who appears on a Divine mission, those Scripture mentions. But those that occur on their own [without any prior prophecy,] to aid a righteous person or to destroy a wicked person, those are not mentioned explicitly in the Torah....*

*Now if Yocheved lived as long as her father [137 years,] and the moistness [of youth] remained with her until close to her old age...then there is nothing wondrous about her giving birth to a child at the age ascribed to her by our Sages. Because God wanted to redeem Israel through these brothers [Moshe and Aharon] but the time for the redemption had not yet arrived. God delayed their birth for many years until their mother became old, and 'nothing is beyond Hashem!'"*

**C.** Read pasuk 20/כ and notice the differences between its format and the format of the rest of the pesukim listing the children and grandchildren of Yaakov. What is the Torah's purpose in presenting the information about Yosef and his sons differently?

**R' Hirsch:** וַיֵּלֶד לְיוֹסֵף = to Yosef were born... "Even though Yosef and his family lived in the land of Mitzrayim surrounded by a way of life utterly alien to them, 'children were born to Yosef.' He did not merely beget them; they remained 'his' also after they had been born. And his wife, though she was the daughter of an Egyptian priest, bore and raised them לְ=for him, meaning, in his spirit."

**HaK'tav V'Hakabbalah:** "The Torah already informed us in Parshat Miketz that Osnat bore him Ephraim and Menashe, so it could have briefly said here, 'the sons of Yosef were Menashe and Ephraim,' like it does with the rest of the sons. But according to the opinions [of Chazal] that Osnat was the daughter of Dinah, we can say that she completed the count of seventy souls [descending to Egypt], and the Torah included her in what it says earlier [in pasuk 15/ט] every soul of his sons and daughters. Even though he only had one daughter, his daughter's daughter was included in the count of his daughters, and for this reason, the Torah tells us once again that Osnat bore them."

## *The Reunion*

**4.** Read pesukim 28-30/ל-נ"ב.

How many verbs appear in pasuk 29/ט"כ? Notice that each verb is conjugated in third person male singular, and that the first action in the pasuk is carried out by Yosef. Does this mean that every action in the pasuk is carried out by Yosef? Who else could be performing some of the actions in this pasuk? Is there definitive proof in either direction?

While it is completely clear that Yosef prepared his chariot and went up to meet his father, the remaining verbs in the pasuk are ambiguous, particularly the final two. As Nechama Leibowitz puts it, "grammatically speaking, there is little to choose between the two alternatives.... There is no conclusive indication from the text itself as to who is the subject--Yaakov or Yosef—neither from the use of the word עָוָה or the context."

The lack of a clear grammatical or contextual solution to this puzzle is not necessarily a problem. After reading and considering the approaches below, you will see that their various suggestions enrich the narrative, even though some conflict. The scenario proposed by each commentator offers a different path through the Yaakov/Yosef story, and each is worth exploring. After reading each one, take note of who is said to be doing the "appearing" and the "crying".

**Rashi:** *"וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו AND HE APPEARED BEFORE HIM – Yosef appeared before his father.*

*וַיִּבֶךְ עַל צוּאָרָיו עוֹד AND WEPT ON HIS NECK A GOOD WHILE – The phrase וַיִּבֶךְ עוֹד signifies weeping copiously.... Yaakov, however, did not fall upon Yosef's neck nor did he kiss him. Our Rabbis say: the reason was that he was reciting the Shema."*

Malbim elaborates on the words of Chazal cited by Rashi:

**Malbim:** *"According to Chazal, Yosef cried, while Yaakov recited Kriat Shema. What they mean to say is that the concept of love of Hashem cannot be imagined in the same terms as love of one's fellow man. And since at that time it was natural that a very strong feeling of love for Yosef arose inside of Yaakov, since he had mourned for him for many days, Yaakov began then to recite Kriat Shema, and the sparks of love for Hashem became stronger in his heart than his love for Yosef, to the point where he didn't even face Yosef at all, since he devoted his soul to thoughts of loving Hashem. This is like it says about Rabbi Akiva, who said, 'all my days I was distraught about the pasuk, "וְאֵהָבֶתְךָ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ" - when would I be able to fulfill it.' Therefore Yaakov said [after encountering Yosef,] אֶמּוּתָהּ הַפַּעַם = let me die now- that Yaakov yearned to die at that moment when he was full of love for Hashem and would be sanctifying His name, for there was nothing left for him in this world."*

**Ramban:** *"The true explanation is, in my opinion, that Yisrael's eyes were already dim with age or that Yosef came in his chariot with his face covered by the turban as is the custom of the Egyptian kings and was not recognized by his father... Therefore the text reminds us that as soon as he appeared to his father and he was able to look at him closely, his father recognized him and fell on his neck and wept for him more, in*

*continuance of the constant weeping for him till this day, during all the time that he had not seen him. After that, Yaakov said, 'Now I can die having seen your face.' It is a well-known phenomenon. By whom are tears more easily shed? By the aged parent who finds his long-lost son alive after despairing and mourning for him, or the young son who rules?"*

**R' Hirsch:** *"Yosef wept. Yaakov did not weep. Yaakov had ceased to weep long ago but Yosef still wept. He was still weeping when Yaakov was talking with him. These little details reflect a profound truth. Through all the years of Yosef's absence, Yaakov had led a dull, monotonous life, weeping for Yosef. All his emotions had been spent in mourning Yosef. Yosef's life, in the meantime, had been a most eventful one. As a result, Yosef had had no time to surrender so completely to the pain of separation from his father. He was totally absorbed in the immediate present. But now, in his father's embrace, he truly felt the emotional impact of this separation and relived the twenty years that had passed. Yaakov had already become Yisrael, but Yosef was still weeping."*

### *Career Advice from Yosef*

#### **5.** Read pesukim 31-34/ל"א-ל"ד.

Separate Yosef's remarks to his brothers in pesukim, 31-34/ל"א-ל"ד into two sections. Why do you think that Yosef discusses the same topic with his brother from these two different perspectives?

**Prof. Sarna:** *"Earlier, Joseph had designated Goshen as the proposed domicile of the family, but Pharaoh, in confirming the invitation to settle in Egypt, has left the place unspecified. Joseph must now obtain clear and unambiguous royal authorization for Israelite settlement in Goshen. He therefore shrewdly prepares his brothers for an audience with Pharaoh and rehearses the speeches and answers to be given on that occasion as to elicit the desired result."*

R' Hirsch sees a larger, spiritual purpose in Yosef's guidance and relates it to more recent Jewish history:

**R' Hirsch:** *"They were instructed to answer Pharaoh's question candidly, to tell him the truth even though it would be unpleasant. For the undeniable loathing which the Egyptians felt for the occupation of the brothers—like the aversion that the nations were subsequently to feel for the Jews—was to serve as the primary factor in the survival of that race which was designed to journey through the ages in isolation. Prior to the new spiritual and moral dawn of the nations, the barriers that the nations in their folly had erected to isolate the Jews served to protect the Jews from becoming infected with the barbarism and the demoralization of the men in whose midst they had to walk through the centuries. That is why Joseph made a point of disclosing that aspect of his brothers which would be most unpalatable to the Egyptians. He intended that, as a*

*result, his brothers should be sent to dwell in a province isolated from the rest of the country.”*

In the next perek, we will read about the brothers standing before Pharaoh, describing their occupation, and requesting to live in Goshen. We will compare the advice Yosef has given the brothers in our perek with the words they ultimately say to Pharaoh and we will try to understand why they deviate a bit from his suggested script.