SHARING HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Rabbi Yisroel Taub (the Modzhitzer Rebbe) asks two questions about this verse. First, why does the pasuk include an apparently extra word - "וד" - a word? The pasuk could have said: “May your servant speak in my lord’s ear?” Second, why did Yehuda have to speak directly into Yosef’s ear? We would assume that Yehuda wanted to tell Yosef a secret – apparently a secret that would calm Yosef’s anger.

Rabbi Taub explains that when one person gets angry at another person, it is usually rooted in the fact that they have a disagreement. Each person feels that he is certainly right, and that his friend’s claim is unjust. Each person’s sense of propriety and justice is offended. However, if one would only entertain the thought that perhaps the other person is in fact correct, any anger that one feels will quickly disappear. One’s own sense of justice will no longer be offended, and he will be able to accept the situation more rationally.

Yehuda personally had an experience that taught him this – the incident with Tamar. Yehuda was livid with anger when word reached him that Tamar was pregnant, and he ordered that she be put to death. But the moment that Yehuda was willing to hear Tamar’s message, and recognized the signs that showed that he in fact was the father, his anger immediately subsided, and he declared (38:26), “She is more right than I am.”

This very lesson is what Yehuda wanted to share with Yosef. This is the “word” that he wanted to whisper. He approached him, wanted to speak nearby and quietly – directly into his ear. His message is "וד אינון יפה". Literally, “וד" means “please", but it also means “informed me". Yehuda said to Yosef, "Look at me, at what happened to me.” Yehuda shares his personal story, seeking to create a crack within Yosef’s wall of anger, as if to say, “If you will learn from my own mistake, you will see that there really is another side to this issue. Once you consider that, your anger will disappear.” And, of course, the best way for Yehuda to accomplish this is to share a personal story, not a lecture. A personal story establishes a rapport, easing the listener into the acceptance process as well.

GIVE HIM A BREAK

Beware of the day of judgment, beware of the day of rebuke...If Yosef’s brothers could not withstand his rebuke, how will it be when God rebukes us? -- Bereshis Rabba 93:10

The Dubno Maggid illustrates the point of the Midrash with a parable. A poor man with very limited means entered a store and inquired about the price of a certain sweater. The salesman told him it would cost $20. The poor man asked if he could buy it for $10, for that was all he had. The storekeeper became angry and swore that the sweater cost him $10 in the first place. How, then, could he sell it and not make any profit? Whereupon the poor man emptied out his pockets and showed that, in fact, he only had $10, and he asked for a favor. The proprietor was moved by the unfortunate man’s appeal, and he agreed to let him have the sweater for $10.

When the poor man arrived at his house, he told everyone that the store owner had sworn falsely to him. After all, he had first sworn that he himself had paid $10 for the sweater, but he ended up selling the garment to him for $10, which indicated that the merchant had actually acquired it for less. The family members of the poor...
man pointed out to him that he was arriving at an incorrect conclusion. “After all,” they explained, “when he agreed to accept the lower price, he was not showing that he had paid less than that for it and that he was still making a profit. The truth is that he was most probably losing money on the deal. He saw that you were desperate and it seemed that you were needy, so he decided to do you a favor.”

The ultimate judgement which a person is destined to face should be difficult and penetrating. “Shall mortal man be more just than God?” (Iyov 4:17) Can man expect to justify his actions and claim that his service of Hashem was adequate? “Behold, He puts no trust in His servants.” (Ibid. v.18) The fact that Hashem is willing to consider our simplest gestures and deem them acceptable in any manner is not because they are objectively adequate. Rather, as He gazes upon us and considers our lowly status, Hashem mercifully judges us favorably, for He knows that we are limited and that we are trying to do our best.

*AN EYE ON THE FUTURE*

**Rashi.** based on the Gemara (Megillah 16b), points out that the first time the word “neck” is written, it is written in the plural – רֵעֵי נְכֵן. Yosef cried a double cry as he saw that the two Batei Mikdash that would be built in the territory of Binyamin would later be destroyed. Binyamin cried on the neck of Yosef since he foresaw that the Tabernacle which would stand for 369 years in Yosef’s territory at Shilo would eventually be destroyed.

It would seem that the two brothers had more immediate things about which to cry. Yosef had not seen his family for twenty-two years, and many troubles had occurred both to him and to his brothers. Why does the Gemara quoted by Rashi assume that they were crying over the future rather than over the past and the present?

**Orayvim LaTorah** explains that Yosef cried immediately upon revealing himself to his brothers, expressing the overflowing feelings that he had held back while testing them. After speaking with them and arranging for the transfer of his father Yaakov and their families to Egypt, suddenly he and Binyamin break out weeping. Obviously this was not connected to his discussion with his brothers but to something else. Rather, once the plans were made for Yaakov and his family to go into exile into Egypt, both Yosef and Binyamin saw through divine spirit – שביעות הרוח – that this exile would be a portent of future exiles brought about by the internal enemies who would destroy the Tabernacle and external enemies who would destroy both Temples.

In Yosef’s case, the verse says that “he fell on the neck of Binyamin and he wept”. The two verbs (fell, wept) signify two destructions. The word “falling” denotes a temporary destruction. This symbolizes the destruction of the First Temple, which was rebuilt after seventy years. “Weeping” refers to a destruction that appears to have no end, which is the second destruction, which has yet to be rebuilt after close to two thousand years. Binyamin cried on Yosef’s neck for the Tabernacle which would never be rebuilt. Furthermore, the neck symbolizes the Temple, as the sages explain in Brachos 30a based on the verse in Shir HaShirim (4:4). “Your neck is like the tower of David.” The Gemara explains that the tower of David (the Temple) is the site of the “building built to which all mouths turn”. The word used for “building” here is the same word used for the neck, indicating that just as the neck rises up above the body, so too the Temple stands out in its place both spiritually and physically.

The generations of the forefathers clearly saw that their task was to set the tone for all future generations. Even though the Temples had not yet been built and destroyed, and even though they never would actually see them, they taught us to constantly keep the loss before our eyes and to look forward to the time when the Temple will be rebuilt.

*TOO GOOD TO BELIEVE?*

Usually, when a person hears good tidings, he wants to believe it. In fact, generally people convince themselves of good news even when they don’t explicitly hear it. If so, why did Yaakov refuse to believe his sons when they initially told him that Yosef was alive?

**Sefer Meged Yosef** explains that the answer lies in the fact that Yaakov originally did not deem Yosef’s situation to be “good news”. When he heard of Yosef’s position, Yaakov feared that...
Yosef might have become a conceited and arrogant person. These terrible character traits are the antithesis of what Yaakov had envisioned for his beloved son. Now he was confronted with the possibility that his son, who had been on the path to high levels of humility and fear of Hashem, was now the leader of a morally corrupt nation and could do and have whatever he wanted.

Only after Yaakov’s sons continued with more details about Yosef’s ascent to power (as the next pasuk says, they told Yaakov all the details of Yosef and his situation) and all the divine intervention involved did Yaakov realize that the power Yosef possessed was a function of divine will and not the yetzer hara.

IN HIS FATHER’S FOOTSTEPS

Hashem promised Yaakov that his son Yosef, who was the ruler and commander over all Egypt, would follow the lead of his father. Rabbi Yechezkel Avrahmski explains that this meant that whenever Yosef would raise his hand to implement a decision, he would first look towards Yaakov and determine whether the actions met with his approval. If the decision was favorable in the eyes of Yaakov, Yosef would follow through. If the matter was not favorable in the eyes of Yaakov, Yosef would not do it. Even after Yaakov died, Yosef continued to weigh every move and evaluate each decision in terms of how Yaakov would have judged it. This Torah perspective, which was instilled in him by his father, was the only factor that guided his actions. The image of Yaakov continued to appear before Yosef at all times, as he envisioned his father’s presence in his mind. This, then, is the meaning of the Gemara (Ta’anis 5b) which tells us that “Yaakov never died”.

OUR RESPONSE TO MONSEY, JERSEY CITY...

We join with our great concern regarding the recent horrific attacks against our fellow Jews in Jersey City, Monsey, Flatbush, Manhattan, and in Europe and in Eretz Yisrael.

Anti-Semitism in America has flared up in a dangerous and alarming manner. Both the frequency of attacks and the degree of intensity have increased. It is frightening to listen to the news, as we are not sure what another day may bring. We feel the pain of our brothers and sisters around the country who have been the targets of these attacks.

We know that anti-Semitism, the tendency for the gentiles to harbor hatred towards Jews, is nothing new. Our sages have told us in no uncertain terms, “It is a halachah - Eisav abhors Yaakov.” Their actions may be senseless, and may be based upon a profound ignorance of who we are, but their hatred is a fact. Denying it is foolish, and trying to eliminate it completely is futile.

The changes we are experiencing in the frequency and intensity of overt acts of anti-Semitism against us can be put into perspective. The Torah gives us the tools necessary to understand how to respond and implement a strategy to deal with it. Firstly, we must acknowledge that Hashem has a plan and all that transpires in this world is Hashem’s will. Our only chance of survival is to rely upon “the true guardian of Israel”. Hashem is certainly ready and willing to protect us. For reasons we do not understand, He has temporarily diminished His sheltering cloud from above us. This has left us more vulnerable to the venom and animosity from the extremist elements among the population.

Nevertheless, the situation is by no means hopeless. What should our response be? We must make efforts on all fronts, including governmental cooperation and community outreach to build bridges of understanding with our neighbors. More importantly, we must beseech Hashem and daven that He restores His guard around us. We have fallen short of earning His complete protection, but we can strive to merit His salvation by being vigilant in exercising utmost care to protect ourselves and our institutions. We must increase our mitzvah observance and try to improve in any areas in which we might have recently become weak. Let us strengthen and intensify our davening together and show proper respect and decorum in our shuls. We must respect our Rabbis and their teachings, and strive to increase our love and compassion for our fellow Jew, both in word and in deed. These are classic and time-tested solutions to the threats which have recently flared up against us.

May we be me’aseh to Hashem’s constant protection, and may we merit seeing the day when the whole world will come to recognize His reign over all mankind.

Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand, Editor
**Halachic Corner**

According to the Guon of Vilna

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According to the Magen Avraham

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One should make a serious effort to daven with a congregation. If a person is on the road and he arrives at a certain place where he will stay overnight, if there is a place within the distance it would take to travel 72 minutes farther down the road where public prayers are held, he must try to reach that community to daven with a congregation, provided he can arrive there while it is still light. If he has already passed a congregation, he should turn back, if he can arrive within 18 minutes, in order to pray with a congregation.

It is highly meritorious to daven in a synagogue or a Beis Midrash, for these are sacred places. Thus, even if it happens that at times there is no minyan for davening, it is nevertheless meritorious to pray there even by oneself. A person should select a synagogue, or a Beis Midrash, where he should daven regularly. He should also select a permanent seat for davening. The space within a radius of four cubits (six feet) is considered as one and the same place in this regard. Even when davening privately at home, one should also choose a regular place, so that he not be disturbed.

If one is unable to go to the synagogue or to any other place where there is a minyan for davening, one should at least daven at the same time that the congregation davens.

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**Questions for Thought and Study**

1. How did Yaakov allude to Yosef’s actually being alive and how did Yaakov hint to the damage done to Yosef through his ordeal in Egypt?  
   See Ohr HaChaim 44:28

2. Yosef cried on both sides of Binyamin’s neck as he received a prophecy that the two Temples (which were in Binyamin’s land) would ultimately be destroyed. Why did Yosef have this prophecy at this unusual time?  
   See Maharil Diskin 45:14

3. How did Yosef indicate to his brothers that Yaakov should come to Egypt in a way that was against Yaakov’s natural tendencies?  
   See Da’as Ze’kayim 45:20

4. Why did Hashem repeat Yaakov’s name when He appeared to him in Pasuk 46:2?  
   See Rashi and Radak

5. Why does the Torah tell us that Yaakov and his family took their possessions only when they left Be’er Sheva but does not mention this when they initially left Chevron?  
   See Ohr HaChaim 46:6

6. Why did the brothers believe that Egypt would be better than Canaan if the famine was in both places?  
   See Ramban 47:4

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**This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored**

- By  ה'תרצ''ו - Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Yosef Polstein on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Yaakov Meir Polstein; to Rabbi Eliezer & Malki Eisenberg on the birth of a grandson, born to Moshe & Tzivia Jolen; and to HTC Board of Regents member Rabbi Yosef Rajchenbach and his wife Judy on the marriage of their granddaughter, Bella Rajchenbach, to Avraham Yeshayahu Swiatycky.
- Hebrew Theological College, in conjunction with Yeshiva Parents and Yeshiva Women, is excited to announce our 39th Annual Melave Malka, Motzaei Shabbos, February 1st, at 8:00 PM. Featured Guest Speaker: Rabbi Yona Reiss, presenting “Challenges of Legalized Marijuana – Nipping the Problem in the Bud”. There will be a sumptuous fleishig buffet served. The evening will conclude with our exciting raffle. For info/RSVP on this enjoyable event: 847-982-2500 or www.htc.edu/mm.
- Hebrew Theological College’s Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro will take place this Thursday, January 9, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Tzvi Haskell will speak on “Reuven: A Lesson In Leadership”. Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shiur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more info: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or jzisook@htc.edu.
- Blitstein Institute of Hebrew Theological College presents the Samuel T. Cohen and Sarah W. Cohen “High Tea and Torah” lecture series: “Torah Giants and their Writings”. This session will be presented by Rabbi Binyomin Olstein this Tuesday, January 7th, at 1:30 PM at Shallots Bistro. Come early and receive 10% off your lunch order.
- Blitstein Institute is honored and grateful to receive, by special application invitation, a generous grant from the Ralla Klepak Trust for the Performing Arts. With this gift, we will inaugurate the Ralla Klepak Performing Arts Leadership Initiative to train students across the disciplines to incorporate the performing arts to serve individuals with special needs or disadvantages and enhance the lives of children and young adults of the community.
- Yeshivas Hakayitz 2020 enrollment is now open. Eligibility: Boys entering grades 6 through 11. Camp dates: June 30 - July 27. Join the 200 campers & counselors from coast to coast for the 41st year of summer camping’s most unique experience. We offer exciting Torah Studies, competitive sports leagues, electives, bunk activities, awesome daily trips, & the most inspiring Shabbosos. For application, related camp media, and more info: please visit yhk.htc.edu.
- Kayitz Adventure Trip 2020 for boys currently in grades 7 & up, Aug. 16-19. Whether you are enrolling your son in Yeshivas Hakayitz or not, this is a 5 full day, jam-packed adventure of great fun. Beautiful Camp Ao-Wa-Kiya on Stony Lake & Michigan’s west coast is our home. Adventures include instructional sailing & skiing, tubing, canoeing, kayaking, SUP, zipline, target sports, high ropes course, lakefront inflatables, Silver Lake boating, sand dune jeep tours, hikes, sandboading, horseback riding, & more. See details: yhk.htc.edu.
The Honors Program of Blitstein Institute invites all post-high school young women to join us for a Halacha Shiur and Melava Malka this Motzaei Shabbos, January 4, at 8:30 PM, in the Blitstein Institute Library, with guest speaker Rabbi Zev Cohen. Special thanks to our previous guest speaker, Rabbi Yisroel Langer, and to the sponsors of the Motzaei Shabbos Halacha Shiur Series Filui nishmas Shoshana Friedman, n’vu.

The Blitstein Institute Honors Program invites the community to our fall semester Honors Program event, “Learning Disabilities: Can We Do Better?” Guest speaker: Dr. Shana Erenberg, well-known educator and champion of special education. Her presentation will examine recent research in the field & current best practices for individuals with learning disabilities. ATT students are eligible for 1/4 ATT credit. This Sunday, January 5, 7-8:30 PM, in the Blitstein Institute Library. Please RSVP to scohen@htc.edu.

Yachad seeks a full-time Chicago Chapter Director to add to its dynamic team. Responsibilities include the supervision of all programming and related activities, strategic initiatives, and stewardship of existing and future organizational partnerships. Works closely with local staff and National team. Please send a résumé with a cover letter to herrmann@ou.org or to cohene@ou.org. No phone calls, please.

The Chicago Mitzvah Campaign is conducting another Tefillin checking opportunity, Sunday, January 12, through Thursday, January 16, at KJBS, 3701 W. Devon Avenue. Expert batim macher will also be available for batim repairs. CMC is endorsed by Vaad Mishmeret STaM and local Rabbonim. Reservations necessary. Call 1-866-MY RABBI (1-866-697-2224).

Meet additional mental health professionals and expand your referral network. Attend Nefesh Chicago’s 1st Speed Networking event at Evita, 2nd floor. The event is open to clinicians: incoming and seasoned, agency and private practice. At Evita. Motzaei Shabbos, January 11, at 7:30. Spaces are limited. Reserve now. Event Chair: Olga Kilstein, LCPC, MACFT at olga@chicagofamilytherapy.com. Register at https://nefeshchicago.org/register.

Beginning this week! Chicago’s Inspiring Kollel is excited to announce that Rabbi Moshe Revah, renowned Maggid Shiur and a Rosh Yeshiva in Bais HaMidrash LaTorah, will be giving a shiur in the new cycle of Daf Yomi: Mesechta Brachos, starting January 5. Schedule: Sundays-Fridays 6:00 -7:00 AM, followed by Shacharis at the Kollel, 6506 N. California.

Or Torah’s Binyan Ariel Learning Center congratulates all the members of Rabbi Yisroel Gluck’s Daf Yomi Shiur as they complete Shas for the second time! Please join us as we begin Gemara Brachos, so you can finish Shas as well! The shiur meets at Or Torah, 3800 Dempster, Sunday through Friday at 9:15 AM. The shiur is preceded by Shacharis at 8:00, followed by Rabbi Lauer’s Dirshu Daf Yomi B’Halacha - Mishna Berurah Shihu. For more information, please call 847-858-0188.

Join Young Israel of Skokie for a cooking demonstration by Chicago’s own Sharon Matten, author of the new cook book, “Shabbos Under Pressure”. Sunday, January 19, 2020, at Young Israel of Skokie, 8746 E 57th Street, Skokie. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Demo starts at 7:30. We will be raffling off 3 pressure cookers at the end of the evening. There is an admission fee that includes a cookbook and a raffle ticket. For more information contact morahtami1211@yahoo.com.

Sharei Tzedek Mishkan Yair invites all men to join one of the most stimulating and informative Daf Yomi shiurim in Chicago, given by Rabbi Doni Deutsch, weekday mornings at 7:15 (preceded and followed by Shacharis) and Shabbos afternoons before Mincha. Brachos starts this Sunday at 7:15 AM!

Save the Date! Chicago Community Kollel celebrating 38 years! Motzaei Shabbos, February 15, ’20, at Zeigler Cadillac Buick GMC, 6900 McCormick Boulevard, Lincolnwood, IL. Details will follow.

Yosef and Shira Malka Walder invite you to join the members of the Kehillah Fund for a community Melava Malka honoring Nesanel Siegal for his years of dedication, as we celebrate 15 years of investing in our children’s future with our support for Jewish education. Motzaei Shabbos, February 22, 2020, at Zeigler Auto Group of Lincolnwood.

Yachad wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the Ralla Klepak Performing Arts Trust and its trustees upon the awarding of a generous grant, funding Yachad Chicago’s Ralla Klepak Performing Arts Inclusion Initiative. In the coming months, we will build out this exciting and innovative program, taking Inclusion to new heights in Chicago!

Ralla Klepak n’vu dedicated her life to advocating for the disadvantaged and for those whose rights were being violated. Yachad is honored to honor Ralla’s memory and legacy through this program. Info: 847-44-YACHAD, ChicagoYachad@ou.org.

Girls Grades 4-8, come join the Girls After School Program in Science & Robotics, 4:30-6:30 PM at Walder Science. On Monday & Wednesday students will have a blast studying chemical reactions & making their own glow sticks, plastic, spy ink, & more! Our Tuesday & Thursday group will experiment with cutting-edge skills of Robotics & Coding, now revolutionizing technology, medicine, & education.


After School Science Builders invites boys in grades 4-8 for hands-on learning to explore and build cutting-edge science experiments and projects! Students will explore topics in biology, aviation, botany, build airplanes, design their own aquatic tanks and environments, and more! Monday and Wednesdays 5:00-7:00 PM at the Walder Science Center in Adas Yeshurun building. New sessions begin January 6. Sign up/info: www.walderlab.org, 773-649-5360, programs@walderlab.org.
In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Dorothy Weinberg, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on the 13th of Teves. May her memory be for a blessing.

In loving memory of Dr. Jack Litz, on the occasion of his third yahrtzeit on 9 Teves, January 6, 2020. Jack was a wonderful and devoted husband, father, brother, grandfather, and loving uncle and friend to many. His sense of humor, warmth, kindness, care for everyone, and his wonderful smile exemplified who he was. He is truly missed. May his neshama. – Elaine Gordon Weiman; Jessica, Matthew, Elchonon Dovid and Meira Toba

In loving memory of Dr. & Mrs. Oscar Novick in memory of their mother, Rose Novick, הרément המזרחי, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on 9 Teves.

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Nancy Spector, who was present for us while we were conceived. May her memory be for a blessing. (Anshe Motele; Highland Park, IL; Beit Shemesh, Israel)

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Sanford Altschul, with words of delectable cuisine – all in support of our school. For full info/reservations visit www.ariecrown.org

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Sophie Schultz, on the occasion of her 37th yahrtzeit on 9 Tevet. We still miss her very much.

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Hosia Saunders; Ari, Bobbi, Devorah Hadassah, Elchanan David Baruch, and Leora Yitta Gordon.

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,2. In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Dorothy Weinberg, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on the 7th of Teves. She was an example of modesty, humility, and grace. May her memory of their beloved mother and grandmother, Nancy Spector, on the occasion of her 17th yahrtzeit on 11 Tevet. May the intellect and character she possessed be an inspiration to all who knew her. There will be a kiddush Shabbos day at Bais Yitzchak, with words of remembrance. May she have an aliyas neshama and be a meilitzas yosher for Klal Yisroel.

In loving memory of Dr. & Mrs. Oscar Novick in memory of their mother, Rose Novick, הרректה, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on 9 Teves.

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Nancy Spector, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on 13 Teves - January 10, 2020. May her memory be for a blessing. (Anshe Motele; Highland Park, IL; Beit Shemesh, Israel)

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In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Dorothy Weinberg, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on the 13th of Teves. May her memory be for a blessing.

Likutei Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, הרректה. May their memory be for a blessing.

Answers:

1. Yaakov said, אָלֵ֖כְּכָ֑נִים מַעֲרָרָ֖ים ("Alas, he is surely torn to shreds"). The word מַעֲרָרָים is limiting Yosef's suffering — that he was "torn" but not actually killed. Yaakov also said (37:33) מַעֲרָרָים מַעֲרָרָים ("A wild beast has devoured him."). Yaakov was alluding to the wife of Potiphar (the "wild beast") who caused Yosef to sin (partially – see Sotah 36b), which caused him to have only two sons, as he lost the merit of having twelve sons. The two sons were counted as tribes.

2. Yosef was experiencing such great "joy" by reuniting with his brothers that he was in danger of dying. Hashem, therefore, chose this time to give Yosef this prophecy to decrease his complete joy. (This is similar to our breaking a glass at a wedding ceremony.)

3. Yosef understood that Yaakov was protective of his possessions (as indicated in the Midrash regarding when he went back for small jars in 32:35). He therefore told them to tell Yaakov "not to take pitty on your belongings" (45:20) that he should leave quickly and not wait to sell his possessions for a good price.

4. Rashi says that the repetition was a sign of endearment from Hashem to Yaakov. Radak says that this was to indicate to Yaakov that he was truly receiving prophecy, as he had not had prophecy in twenty-two years.

5. Ohr HaChaim gives two possible answers. First, when they first left Chevron they did not intend to stay in Egypt but would just see Yosef and go back. Once Yaakov heard directly from Hashem that they would be staying in Egypt for a while, they went back to get all of their possessions. Another answer is that they were so committed to Hashem's command to go to Egypt that the Torah indicates that they had all of their possessions with them. They had taken everything with them when they initially left Chevron.

6. Egypt had the provisions that Yosef saved, so there still was a small amount of land left for grazing. Another explanation is that there was still some marshland left for grazing due to the canals and reservoirs of Egypt.