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HADAR Children & Families
VOLUME 3 ISSUE 12

ג׳–ט׳ טֵבֵת תשפ״ז December 13–19, 2026

מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah



- Yehudah begs Yosef to release Binyamin, and offers himself as a slave instead.
- Yosef can no longer bear to keep his identity secret. He orders all of the Egyptians out of the room and reveals his true identity to his brothers.
- Yosef tells his brothers to go home, get their father, and come back to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt).
- God tells Yaakov not to be afraid of going to Mitzrayim, and that his descendants will return to אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel) one day.
- Yaakov and Yosef have an emotional reunion.
- Pharaoh meets Yosef's brothers and Yaakov. He gives them permission to settle in the land of Goshen.
- The famine in Mitzrayim gets worse. The Egyptians use all of their money, animals, and land to buy food from Yosef.





פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Bereishit 45:24

Yosef sent his brothers (back to Canaan to get Yaakov), and they went.
He said to them: **"Don't fight on the way."**

בראשית מה:כד

וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת אֶחָיו וַיֵּלֵכוּ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם **אַל תִּרְגְּזוּ בַּדָּרֶךְ**:



What exactly was Yosef warning his brothers?

Rashi offers three explanations.

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

1) Don't get involved in a discussion about halakhah, so that you don't get lost along the way.

2) Don't take really big steps. Make sure you get to a town while it's still light out (so you don't have to travel at night).

3) The peshat (most straightforward) meaning is that Yosef knew his brothers were ashamed, and he worried that they might fight along the way, blaming each other for selling him. They might say things to each other like: You're the one who told lashon hara (gossip) about Yosef, and that's what made us hate him.

רש"י

1) אַל תִּתְעַסְּקוּ בְּדִבַּר הֲלָכָה שֶׁלֹּא תִּרְגְּזוּ עֲלֵיכֶם הַדֶּרֶךְ.

2) אַל תַּפְסִיעוּ פְּסִיעָה גַּסָּה וְהִכָּנְסוּ בַּחַמָּה לָעִיר.

3) וּלְפִי פְּשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל מִקְרָא יֵשׁ לוֹמַר, לְפִי שֶׁהָיוּ נִכְלָמִים, הָיָה דּוֹאֵג, שֶׁמָּא יָרִיבוּ בַּדֶּרֶךְ עַל דְּבַר מְכִירָתוֹ, לְהִתְוַכֵּחַ זֶה עִם זֶה וְלוֹמַר עַל יָדְךָ נִמְכַּר, אַתָּה סִפַּרְתָּ לָשׁוֹן הָרָע עָלָיו, וְגָרַמְתָּ לָנוּ לִשְׂנֹאתוֹ.

- Rashi's first suggestion is that Yosef was worried the trip would take too long. What would be the problem with that? Why would Yosef try to prevent it? If learning Halakhah might distract them so much that they forget to keep traveling, what does that tell us about what it's like to learn Torah and get into a deep conversation about it?



- The second concern seems to be about their safety. The Gemara (Taanit 10b) suggests that taking huge steps is bad for you, and that it's safest to travel only when it's light out. Why might Yosef be expressing concern about his

brothers' safety? Is that surprising? How so? What does that tell us about the kind of person Yosef is?

- In the third explanation, Yosef is concerned that the brothers might blame and fight each other. Wouldn't you think Yosef would actually want them to take the blame for their actions? Or to fight with each other in the same way they fought with him? If he didn't want those things, what would that tell us about Yosef?

- All of these explanations share the point of view that Yosef cares about his brothers, and is not holding a grudge against them. What can we learn from Yosef here? What's hard about really forgiving people who have hurt you? Why is it so important to do that?





דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

How to play:

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.

Debate: It's better to not keep secrets.



Agree!

- It can be hard to get close to a person when you're keeping a secret from them, or if they're keeping a secret from you.
- There's a power imbalance when some people know the secret and some people don't.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- Everything got better for Yosef and his brothers once Yosef revealed his identity.



Disagree!

- Some things are private and have to be kept secret.
- If people know you're good at keeping a secret, they'll trust you.
- Not everything should be said all at once. Sometimes it has to wait until the right time.
- Yosef was able to make sure Binyamin was safe, reunite with his family, and help everyone get fed and supported. Seems like he knew what he was doing.



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Design by Jen Klor. Illustration by Rebecca Kerzner.

aliyot:
1) Bereishit 44:18 to 44:30
2) 44:31 to 45:7
3) 45:8 to 45:18
4) 45:19 to 45:27
5) 45:28 to 46:27
6) 46:28 to 47:10
7) 47:11 to 47:31

haftarah: Yehezkel 37:15 to 37:28

שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.

Good luck!



1. According to Yehudah, what two words did Yaakov use to describe Yosef's apparent death? Note that these two words are the same except for their vowels.

2. What do the Egyptians overhear when Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers?

3. Where did Yosef plan for his family to live in מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt)?



4. How many donkeys did Yosef send back to his father?

5. Which two sons have rhyming names?

6. Whom does Yaakov bless?

7. What percentage of their crops did the Egyptian people give to Pharaoh?



8. Which of Yaakov's children only had one child (listed on the list of descendents)?

9. How many times in the parashah does it say that Yosef cried?

10. **From the haftarah:** Which שֵׁבֶט (shevet, tribe) is mentioned as the leader of the kingdom called Yisrael?

* Look for the answers on page 8!

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פַּרְשָׁנוּת • Commentary



The Torah says that "all the people of Yaakov's house that came to מִצְרַיִם (Mitzrayim, Egypt) were 70" (Bereishit 46:27).

But there's a problem, as Ibn Ezra notices:

Ibn Ezra (Spain, 950 years ago)	**אבן עזרא**
There were actually 69!	כִּי ס"ט הָיוּ.

In fact, the Torah lists 66 people that came to Mitzrayim, plus Yosef and his two children who were already there (Bereishit 46:8-27). So that's 69. **Where did the number 70 come from?**

Ibn Ezra offers a few possibilities. Here are two:

1	According to a midrash, Moshe's mother, Yokheved, was born crossing the border on the way into Mitzrayim (Bavli Sotah 12a).	וּבְדָרֹשׁ: כִּי יוֹכֶבֶד נוֹלְדָה בֵּין הַחוֹמוֹת (בבלי סוטה דף י"ב עמוד א).

Maybe Yokheved was the 70th. But if she's in the number, why isn't her name listed? According to this midrash, it's because she's a little in-between. She was born as they crossed the border into Mitzrayim, so was she among the group that came down to Mitzrayim, or was she part of the people's growth after they got there? Hard to say! So she's not named in the list, but she is counted in the number.



- Going down to Mitzrayim may seem like the start of something bad. Yaakov is clearly worried about what might happen there (Bereishit 46:4), and we know Benei Yisrael will become slaves soon. But Yokheved is the mother of Moshe, who will be the leader God appoints to free them. Why is it nice to think that the very first thing that happens to Benei Yisrael in Mitzrayim is that Yokheved is born? What does Yokheved represent? What message is being taught to us?

This is Ibn Ezra's preferred explanation:

2	Or Yaakov is also counted in the number...this is the best explanation.	כִּי יַעֲקֹב נִכְנַס בַּחֶשְׁבּוֹן... וְהוּא הָעִקָּר.

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Ibn Ezra notices that 46:27 says, "All the people **in the house of Yaakov** who came to Mitzrayim were 70." So even though Yaakov isn't in the list of his own descendents that came before, why shouldn't he be counted in "the house of Yaakov"?!

- When you think about your own "household," who's part of it and who's not?
- Why might the Torah put extra emphasis right now on the fact that Yaakov is still part of this family coming down to Mitzrayim?



הַפְטָרָה • Haftarah

In our parashah, Yosef and his brothers are reunited, and the family becomes one again. In our haftarah, the prophet Yehezkel speaks about a future time when the Jewish people will be unified in a similar way.

Several hundreds of years before Yehezkel lived, the Jewish people became divided in two.

Yehudah and Yisrael

"Yehudah" was the name for the group that included the שֵׁבֶט (shevet, tribe) of Yehudah and some of its neighboring shevatim that lived in the south of Eretz Yisrael. "Yisrael" represented all the other shevatim that lived in the north. (Sometimes Yisrael is also called "Efrayim," who was the leader of this group of tribes.)

Yehudah was ruled by one king, and Yisrael was ruled by a different king. Then Yisrael was exiled to Bavel, and about 100 years after that Yehudah was exiled, too.

In our haftarah, God speaks to the prophet Yehezkel, who was a member of Yehudah living in exile in Bavel. God tells Yehezkel to do this:

Yehezkel 37:16-19

...take one stick and write on it, "For Yehudah and the Children of Israel their friends"; and take one stick and write on it, "For Yosef—the stick of Efrayim—and the whole house of Yisrael their friends."

Bring them one to the other one, so that they become one stick; let them be united in your hand.

And when any of your people ask you, "Won't you tell us what these actions of yours mean?"

Answer them, "This is what God said: I am going to take the stick of Yosef—which is in the hand of Efrayim—and its neighboring shevatim in Yisrael, and I will place the stick of Yehudah upon it and make them into one stick; they will be one in My hand."

יחזקאל לז:טז-יט

...קַח־לְךָ עֵץ אֶחָד וּכְתֹב עָלָיו
לִיהוּדָה וְלִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרָו וּלְקַח
עֵץ אֶחָד וּכְתוֹב עָלָיו לְיוֹסֵף עֵץ
אֶפְרַיִם וְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרָו:

וְקָרֵב אֹתָם אֶחָד אֶל אֶחָד לְךָ לְעֵץ
אֶחָד וְהָיוּ לַאֲחָדִים בְּיָדֶךָ:

וְכַאֲשֶׁר יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ
לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹא תַגִּיד לָנוּ מָה אֵלֶּה לָךְ:

דַּבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹקִים הִנֵּה
אֲנִי לֹקֵחַ אֶת עֵץ יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר בְּיַד
אֶפְרַיִם וְשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרָו וְנָתַתִּי
אוֹתָם עָלָיו אֶת עֵץ יְהוּדָה וַעֲשִׂיתִם
לְעֵץ אֶחָד וְהָיוּ אֶחָד בְּיָדִי:

- What do you notice? What do you wonder about?
- How many times do you see the word אֶחָד (ehad, one) in these pesukim? Why is this word repeated so many times?
- In our parashah, what caused Yosef and his brothers to be separated, and what did it take to bring them back together? What would it take to make a reunion between the Jewish people today?
- Why is unity so important?



דִּקְדּוּק • Grammar

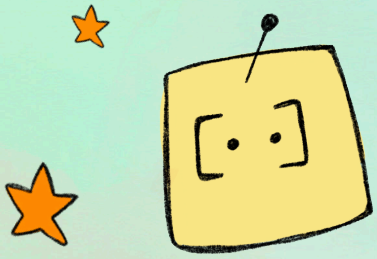


Right at the beginning of our parashah, there are two different phrases that are **almost** the same. Can you tell the differences?

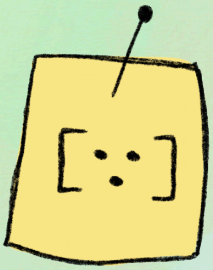
הֲיֵשׁ לָכֶם אָב	יֵשׁ לָנוּ אָב
(ha-yeish lakhem av)	(yesh lanu av)
Do you have a father?	We have a father
(Bereishit 44:19)	(Bereishit 44:20)

- The first phrase starts with a letter heh; the second phrase doesn't have it. That heh turns the phrase into a question.
- The first phrase is about לָכֶם (lakhem, you); the second phrase is about לָנוּ (lanu, we).

And there is another difference; can you spot it?

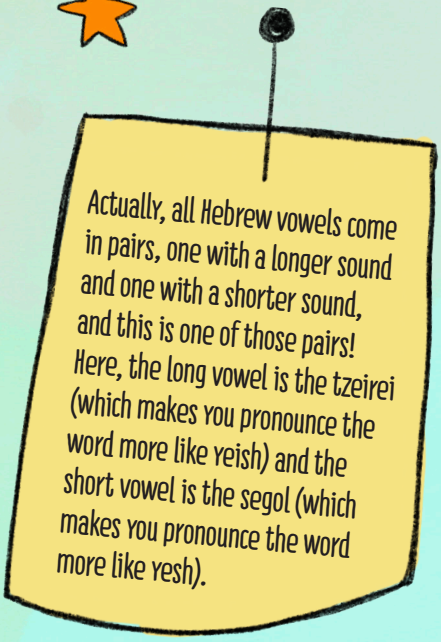


- In the first phrase the word יֵשׁ (yeish) is spelled with a tzeirei, a vowel in the shape of two dots, side by side. In the second phrase, the same word is spelled with a segol, a vowel of three dots in a triangle.



There are lots of reasons why some words use long vowels and others use short ones. Here, the normal word is יֵשׁ (yeish) with a tzeirei. But when the word is put next to a word with an accent on the first syllable—LA-nu, as opposed to la-KHEM—it is too hard to say a long vowel followed by an accented sound.

So the vowel gets shortened to make it easier to say the two sounds together. Very considerate, no?



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. טָרֹף טֹרָף (tarof toraf, torn [by beasts]) (44:28)
2. Yosef crying (45:2)
3. The land of Goshen (45:10)
4. Ten (45:23)
5. Binyanim's sons Mupim and Hupim (46:21)
6. Pharaoh (47:10)
7. 20%, aka one fifth (47:24)
8. Dan (46:23)
9. Four times: when he first revealed himself (45:2), while embracing Binyamin (45:14), while embracing his brothers (45:15), and when reuniting with his father (46:29)
10. Efrayim, who is Yosef's son (Yehezkel 37:16, 19)