

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vayechi 5785

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Yosef gives his final mussar to his brothers.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אֲנֹכִי מֵת וְאֱלֹקִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהָעֵלָה אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ  
הַזֹּאת אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיַּעֲקֹב:

“And Yosef said to his brothers, ‘I am dead. And the Lord shall surely consider you and will take you up from this land to the Land that He promised to Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov.’” (Bereishis 50:24).

Why did Yosef say that he was dead or about to die? Why did Yosef have to assure them that Hashem would take them up from the land? They were free people at the time, why did they not go up or why did they think there would be a time they could not go up?

There are two words that have to be translated in context in order to understand the pasuk and the pasuk, itself, has to be taken in context. The word "consider" is different than "remember." Consider or take account of is first used when Hashem took account of Sarah and gave her a child. (Ibid 21:1). Yosef's masters took note of Yosef. (Potiphar in ibid 39:4, and the prison warden in ibid 40:4). The term is used when someone merits something and another acknowledges it. We see this again when Hashem tells Moshe that He has taken note of Bnei Yisroel. (Shmos 3:16). Recall or remember means when Hashem shows His mercy. Hashem recalled Noah and all the living creatures on the ark. (Bereishis 8:1). He recalls the covenant between Him and Noah (ibid 9:15) and Him and the Avos (ibid 17:10). Hashem remembers Rochel and gave her a child. (Ibid 30:22). This was mercy. Sarah, on the other hand, was fulfilling a promise and something Sarah earned by being Avraham's support in Canaan, Egypt, and Gerar. When Hashem comes to save Bnei Yisroel from bondage, the pasuk says, “And the Lord heard the groans, and the Lord recalled His covenant with Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov.” (Shmos 2:24).

The pasuk says “the Lord.” It does not say “Hashem.” The Torah uses the term “the Lord-Elokim” when Hashem deals directly with nature. “Hashem-YKVK” is used when He acts as lord over mankind. When Hashem appeared to Avraham (ibid 12:7, 17:1, 18:1), Yitzchok (ibid 26:2), and Yaakov (ibid 28:12), it was always “Hashem.” Why, then, was it Elokim that recalled the covenants? “And the Lord appeared to Yaakov further, when he came from Padam Aram, and He blessed him.” (Ibid 35:9). Elokim added the name Yisroel to Yaakov's name. (Ibid 35:10).

What the Torah is teaching is that the nation of Yisroel was part of Creation, it was part of the natural order of the world. Avraham's descendants were becoming a nation called Yisroel. It would be twelve tribes but one Bnei Yisroel. It was the Creator that did this. So too, the Torah is teaching it was not the natural order of the world that Bnei Yisroel remain in bondage. It was not mercy that would take them out. It was the Creator

that heard the groans and saw the suffering. Their suffering was against nature and only because of their sins. Bnei Yisroel, though, could not be left to rot in bondage. "The Lord knew." (Shmos 2:25). The Lord knew it was time. Once the covenants were made, it was up to the natural order of things to make them correct.

The other word from our pasuk is *וַיַּעֲלֵה* "and He will take you up." It could simply mean directionally, as Eretz Yisroel is northeast of Egypt. However, it also has the connotation of raising them up, even against their will. The term is used when referring to lighting the menorah of the Mishkan. (Shmos 25:37). Instead of using the term "to light" it uses "to go up." The lights are to go up; go forth. The Mizbeach was called the altar of the *oleh*. It was called this because the *oleh* offering (and all animal offerings) went up on it, as opposed to the *mizbeach ketores* that was located in the *Kodesh*. However, it also means, the altar that makes go up. The term means not only to raise something but to make it reach its ultimate heights. The offerings, the lights of the menorah, and Bnei Yisroel were to "go up and forth" to their full potential.

Yosef spoke to his brothers in direct response to their attitude towards him. They begged for forgiveness—but only after Yaakov died and only in Yaakov's name. Even after seventeen years of living with Yosef as their protector and provider, they feared his revenge not his feelings. (Ibid 50:15). They did not apologize to Yosef, but instead said (or made up) that Yaakov insisted on Yosef forgiving them. (Ibid 50:17). He wept because, like years earlier, they showed more care for their father, themselves, and Binyomin, and no remorse over him. (Ibid). Instead of apologizing, they flung themselves and offered their servitude to him out of fear. (Ibid 50:18). To this, Yosef had a simple response: "Fear not, because instead of the Lord, I am." (Ibid 50:19).

In our pasuk he says something similar. "I am dead." You planned my imprisonment in the pit-dungeon and you covered up my sale into slavery. You plotted and planted evidence of a bloody tunic. For twenty years you failed to look for me or inquire of my whereabouts. You considered me dead. Therefore, I am dead. I am not here anymore to elevate you, to provide you your destiny. I will support you and sustain you, but nothing more.

"It will be the Lord that will surely take note of you." It will not be me who puts you in Eretz Yisroel. Although Yosef would have had the power to do so. If they believed in him and his dreams then he could have fulfilled their destiny. It was their own stubbornness and lingering jealousy that prevented this. Now, the natural order of the Promises to the Avos have changed. It will not be the Hashem that deals with mankind that fulfills the Promise. Now it will have to be Elokim and the natural order of the world. It will not be until the natural world can no longer tolerate Bnei Yisroel in Egypt that they will go out. They deserve to go out, so they will. But only at the last moment.

"He will take you up." It will be Hashem that will make them go up to their potential as a nation, one nation, one body, one Yisroel. They still have not learned *achdus* or to concede to one brother as king. They will learn it in bondage sure enough.

"From this land...to the Land promised." This land will cause the unity. That Land will be there so they can solidify as one nation and sow their destiny.