



## **Sicha Summary**

Chelek 15 | Vayigash | Sichah 1

### **The Context:**

Yosef finally reveals himself to his brothers after keeping his identity a secret while threatening to imprison his youngest brother, Binyamin. “I am Yosef, is my father still alive? (*Bereishis* 45:3)

### **The Question:**

The entire dialogue between Yosef and his brothers up to this point has been about the pain that Yaakov would experience if his youngest son, Binyamin, does not return home to him. What does Yosef mean by asking “is my father still alive?”

### **The Preface to the Explanation:**

Yosef did not ask a question in search of information, he was expressing wonder at the fact his father was still alive. As in, “How could it be that my father is still alive?”

We must clarify:

- 1) What was so shocking about Yaakov’s survival?
- 2) How does that question follow Yosef’s opening statement, “I am Yosef.”
- 3) Why does Yosef have to express this wonderment to his brothers?

### **The Explanation:**

Commenting on Yaakov’s refusal to be comforted over Yosef’s apparent death, Rashi says: “A person does not accept consolation over a live person whom he believes to be dead. For a heavenly decree has been issued over one who has died, that he be forgotten from the heart of those who survive,

but this decree has not been issued over one who is alive.” (*Rashi to Bereishis 37:35*)

Considering that Yaakov was in an emotional twilight zone — mourning Yosef but never being truly consoled — for twenty-two years, it was shocking that he could endure such emotional pain and still live.

Thus Yosef said, “I am Yosef,” I am still alive, and so my father must have never truly experienced comfort these twenty-two years, so how “is my father still alive?!”

This was a preface to his command to his brothers, “Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, “So said your son Joseph: G-d has set me a master to all Egypt. Come down to me, do not delay.” (*Bereishis 45:9*) Every second that Yaakov is left to think Yosef has died is a danger to Yaakov’s life. He must therefore be informed of his son’s survival and be reunited with him immediately.

### **Immediate Relief:**

Alternatively, Yosef knew that his father’s twenty-two year separation from Yosef was a consequence of his not having fulfilled the mitzvah of honoring his parents during the twenty-two years of his absence from home (*Rashi to Bereishis 37:34*). Once those corresponding twenty-two years had elapsed, Yosef immediately sent for his father, “Hurry... do not delay.”

### **The Lesson:**

At times, it is necessary to employ a restrictive “left hand” to reprimand negative behavior. But the moment the need for punishment passes, we must immediately adopt the welcoming, inviting “right hand” of kindness and compassion.