

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Graciously shared with PhiloTorah

VAYIGASH

After the brothers had shown genuine remorse for what they had done, Yosef then revealed his identity to them.

VAYOMER YOSEF EL ECHAV, ANI
YOSEF, HA'OD AVI CHAI

"And Yosef said to his brothers, I am
Yosef, is my father still alive?"

The pasuk continues:

V'LO YACHLU ECHAV L'ANOT OTO
KI NIVHALU

"And his brothers were unable to
answer him because they felt
disconcerted before him."

My Chavruta of old, Rabbi David
Movsas, asked why is Yosef asking if
his father is still alive? Yehuda had
just used the plea of the sorrow of his
aged father if Binyamin would not be
released home. Why then was it
necessary for Yosef to ask if Yaakov
was still alive?

We can find the answer in the Talmud
Chagiga. The Talmud discussed that
when Rabbi Eleazer came to the
pasuk, "But the brothers could not
answer him because they felt
disconcerted before him", he wept

and said, "if such is the result of the
rebuke from a human being, how
much more so must it be when
someone is rebuked by the Holy One
Blessed Is He!"

The Rabbis taught us that Yosef's
words of "I am Yosef, is my father still
alive?" is considered a rebuke to the
brothers. But how? Rabbi Yosef Ber
Soloveitchik (Beit HaLevi) explains
that the word Tochacha - Rebuke is
learnt out from the word Hochacha -
"Proof". The essence of rebuke is to
convince the person to realize on his
own that he has done wrong. By
recalling to them the words that they
themselves had spoken, he convinced
them that they had sinned.

Yehuda had wanted to arouse
compassion in Yosef for his aged
father. Yosef, now, wanted Yehuda to
realize that his own argument was
inconsistent with the brothers' own
action of selling Yosef into slavery.
With the words "Is my father still
alive?", Yosef was saying... if it did
not occur to you when you sold me
into slavery that it would kill my
father, why are so worried about him
now? This was the reproach implied in
his question. Thus, Yosef refuted the
arguments of his brothers with their
own words, and this is the reason why
the brothers became so frightened
that they were unable to answer him.

Rabbi Soloveitchik continues to say
that a similar rebuke will be admin-

istered in the days to come by G-d himself. In this manner, everyone will be shown the folly of his ways, through his own deeds and words. In the confusion and flurry of life, rationalization comes very easily to our lips. Either it is lack of time or lack of money or lack of talent. However, on the Day of Truth those invalid excuses will be challenged with the other actions and interests we did accomplish, for which there was always sufficient time, money, and talent. It will be our own deeds that will accuse us. That shame can be avoided if we attempt in a sincere fashion to harmonize our live with the Will of G-d. 🗑️