## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER

ORTHODOX UNION Enhancing Jewish Life

OU Executive Vice President

# The Joy of Holy Burdens

When Yosef revealed his identity to his brothers, he joined with Pharaoh in sending wagons to carry Yaakov and his family back to Egypt. The verse (Bereishis 45:27) notes that it was only when he saw these wagons that Yaakov absorbed the news of Yosef's survival . Rashi cites the classic comment from the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 94:3) that explains this with a play on words, *Agalah – Eglah*, that Yosef by sending wagons (*Agalos*) was reminding Yaakov of their last shared session of Torah study where they had learned about the *Eglah Arufah* (see Dvarim Chapter 21).

There is, however, another version of this Midrash (see *Matnos Kehunah* commentary to Bereishis Rabba 94:3; Zohar I:211a) that draws a more direct line to Yosef's wagons. This version suggests that Yosef sent six wagons, and in doing so was foreshadowing the six wagons referenced in *Parshas Naso* (Bamidbar 7:3). These wagons, used by the *Levi'im* to aid them in transporting elements of the Mishkan, were gifted by the leaders of the twelve tribes. These wagons represented both the partnership of the tribes with each other – as represented by the twelve leaders donating six wagons (see Sforno there) – as well as their clear desire to share the burden of privilege of carrying the holy *Mishkan*. This holy burden was something they embraced and sought, rather than avoided. Thus, when Yosef sent for his family, he recalled those wagons of the *Nesi'im*, of the bearers of responsibility for their people and its holy mission. Yosef – who had been sold by his brothers to Egypt as an unwelcome burden – now welcomed those brothers and their families to Egypt, eager to bear the burden of privilege of caring for and sustaining them through the years to come. Witnessing his child's eagerness, that joyous embrace of familial and sacred responsibility, brought Yaakov back to life.

One of life's great gifts is the privilege to taste the joy of bearing the sacred burdens of our holy Torah, our holy people, and our cherished families. This is an endeavor that we all share together. I hope and pray that we can meet this opportunity and live lives of inspired responsibility. ■

May the Torah learned from
this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of and לע״נ

**LILY BIBER z״l**

**לאה ביבר בת אשר זעליג ז״ל**

On her 3rd Yahrzeit - ז׳ טבת

Dearly missed and always in the
thoughts of her children, grandchildren
and great-grandchildren

*Biber and Frankfurter Families*