

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

"And his brother is dead." (44:20) - ואחיו מת (מד:כ)

Why did Yehuda lie about Yosef being dead, when approaching the Viceroy of Egypt, while he knew that Yosef was sold and not killed?

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomi Yitzchaki 1040-1105, France) points out that Yehuda was fearful that perhaps if he were to say to the Viceroy that Yosef is alive, he would command him to bring and present him.

The Meshech Chochmah (Rabbi Meir Simcha Dvinsk 1843-1926, Latvia) legitimizes Yehuda's statement of Yosef being deceased. He claims that Yehuda did not deliberately fabricate. Yehuda was aware of the intense relationship between Yosef and his father, Yaakov. Had Yosef still been alive, there was no doubt that Yosef would have found a way to contact his beloved father. Since, until this time, no connection was ever made, Yehuda assumed that he was no longer alive.

The Meshech Chochmah quotes the Talmud Ketubot 22b as proof for this sureness on the part of Yehuda. Rashi points out that in certain cases a woman can be confident that her husband has passed away by saying "I am convinced that he has expired, for if not, he would have returned by now."

Shabbat Shalom

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