

בְּשַׁלַּח

BESHALACH/WHEN HE SENT Shemot/EXODUS 13:17-17:16

Moshe is the major personality throughout the book of **Shemot/Exodus**, while **Yosef** is the major personality for a large part of the book of **Bereshith/Genesis**. In this week's parasha, we will see how they interact in a most fascinating way. On the surface, they seem to be mirror images of each other. Yosef came from within the Avrahamic family and lived much of his life outside of it. Moshe lived most of his life outside of the Avrahamic family and then entered deeply within. Yosef brought the Israelites down into Egypt while Moshe took the Israelites out of Egypt and up to the border of Israel.

But it will be through Moshe's relationship with the "**bones of Yosef**" that the children of Israel learn an inspiring lesson in faith. Yosef rose to greatness in Egypt, becoming second only to Pharaoh. The Egyptians claimed him as one of their own, fully expecting him to assimilate and identify with their culture. Nevertheless, Yosef's last request to his family reveals his personal identity as an Israelite:

Bereshith 50:24 And Yosef said to his brethren, "I am dying; but Elohim will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya'acov." ²⁵ Then Yosef took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "Elohim will surely visit you, and **you shall carry up my bones from here.**"

And so, we have in this week's reading:



Shemot 13:19 And **Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him**, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "Elohim will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my **bones** (עֲצָם - etsem) from here with you."

This brings a closure to the Israelite's time in Egypt. Yosef was the first in the family to be brought to Egypt after being sold by his own brothers. And now, as Ya'acov's extended family leaves Egypt, the "**bones of**

Yosef" are the one thing they will not leave behind. The Hebrew word for "**bones**" (עֲצָם) can also describe one's "**essence**," or one's "**identity**." As the Israelites journeyed forth, they carried the "**essence**" of the early lineage of Yosef with them. "**Yosef's bones**" live and still exist today. The story of his "**bones**" has a life that extends far beyond the grave.

"**Yosef's bones**" were carried from place to place over the next 40 years, completing their entire journey through the desert, across the Jordan and into the Promised Land...linking the Patriarchs, the oppression in Egypt, the Exodus, Sinai, and the conquest of the Land. Yosef told his brothers in **Bereshith 50:24** that "**Elohim will bring you out of this land to the Land of which He swore to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'acov.**" In other words, "**Elohim will surely get you home and the enemy will be conquered.**" And through it all, the preserved and embalmed "**Yosef**" was with them.

“Yosef’s bones” are not mentioned again until their **burial in “Shechem,”** the very place where Yosef was initially separated from his family.

Yehoshua/Joshua 24:31 Israel served יהוה all the days of Yehoshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Yehoshua, who had known all the works of יהוה which He had done for Israel. ³² The **bones of Yosef**, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they **buried at Shechem**, in the plot of ground which Ya’acov had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Yosef.

In the Hall of Faith chapter in the book of **Hebrews**, the Holy Spirit selects out of good men’s lives, the most brilliant instances of their faith. Which faith-filled event of Yosef’s life would you have expected to be mentioned? The many acts of integrity during his time in prison, his rise to power, his dealings with his brothers before he revealed himself, his saving of Egypt and his family during the time of famine, or maybe his forgiveness of his brothers? So, what was actually mentioned as the most illustrious proof of his faith?

Hebrews 11:22 By faith Yosef, **when he was dying**, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and **gave instructions concerning his bones**.

Is it surprising that the request of Yosef concerning his “bones” should be mentioned as the most notable act of his faith? So why was the similar request made by Ya’acov not mentioned?

Bereshith 49:29 Then he (Ya’acov) charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; **bury me with my fathers** in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ "in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre **in the land of Canaan**, which Avraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place.

Ya’acov’s desire was to be buried immediately with his relatives in Canaan. Yosef made an unusual request for his burial. Take me to the Promised Land...but not now! Wait to take my body when the Elohim of our Fathers takes the whole Israelite nation there! When would that happen? Yosef knew the Word יהוה had spoken to his great grandfather, Avram:

Bereshith 15:13 Then He said to Avram: "Know certainly that **your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.** ¹⁴ "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ "But **in the fourth generation they shall return here**, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete."

Yosef believed that יהוה would be true to His Word to bring back His chosen people to the Promised Land. He also understood that bondage would be in their near future. Yosef not only wished to be buried in Canaan, but he wished his “bones” to share with the people of Elohim in their captivity and their return. He was so certain that they would come out of the captivity that he postpones his burial till that glad event – conquest of the Promised Land. Yosef’s last act, his bold act of faith in the covenant promise to Avram, was his greatest achievement. His eyes were fixed upon the mighty promise of his family’s return to the Land.



Today, “Yosef’s bones” still reside in “Shechem” (modern day Nablus) as a silent reminder of יהוה’s promise to Israel for land inheritance. Like other places in Israel of great historical and prophetic significance, the location is challenged by unfriendly Palestinians. In fact, a Jew is not able to visit the site of Yosef’s bones and is greeted with this sign on the entrance road to Shechem:

It is important to recall that by the providence of Elohim, through no fault of his own, Yosef was married to an Egyptian woman. Their two children, Manasseh and Ephraim, therefore, were half Egyptian. If Yosef had desired to be buried in Egypt, his sons might have clung to Egypt and chose to be separate from Israel. Yosef’s request seems to beg, “No my children! You are not Egyptians, you are Israelites like your father! I could have given you the best possessions in Egypt, but the heritage I am pointing you to is the Promised Land! Believe in the covenant as it was given to our fathers!”

And so, Yosef made the point that this world was not his home. The wealth and pleasures of Egypt never captured his affections. He remained a foreigner in his mind and soul. That Yosef considered himself a foreigner was quite a statement, because he had it all – incredible wealth, fame and power. His entire family was with him there in Egypt, sharing the best Egypt had to offer. At the time of Yosef’s death, the Israelites were living a very comfortable lifestyle. Why would the family of Ya’acov desire anything different? But Yosef had a clear understanding of the covenant that was made with his fathers regarding the Land of Canaan. “Yosef’s bones” are even today a constant reminder that the Israelites must never forget where their home is. Yosef offered the ideal model of how a believer should die – clinging in hope to the covenant promises not yet fulfilled, the Exodus from our “Egypt” and entrance into the “**place He has prepared for us!**”

We know the Exodus from Egypt will find a much greater fulfillment in the future. This time, not only “Yosef’s dry bones” but the “**bones of all of Israel**” will live! Ezekiel was shown the picture of the resurrection of these “**bones**”:



Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of יהוה came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of יהוה, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it *was* full of **bones**.² Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry.³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Adonai יהוה, You

know."⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, **hear** the word of יהוה' Thus says Adonai יהוה to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter

into you, and **you shall live**.⁶ "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am יהוה So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and **the bones came together, bone to bone**.⁸ Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them.⁹ Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' "¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, **these bones are the whole house of Israel**. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'

It will be necessary for both “Yosef and Yehuda,” to be gathered from the nations, brought to the Promised Land, and become “one” in the “Hand of Adonai”:

Ezekiel 37:16 "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For **Yehuda** and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For **Yosef**, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.'¹⁷ "Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become **one in your hand**.¹⁸ " And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?' --¹⁹ "say to them, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Surely I will take the stick of Yosef, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Yehuda, and make them **one stick**, and **they will be one in My Hand**.'" ²⁰ "And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.²¹ "Then say to them, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;²² "and **I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel**; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.

Now one more thing. Back when Yosef gave the request for his bones to be taken out of Egypt, he repeated an interesting phrase:

Bereshith 50:24 And Yosef said to his brethren, "I am dying; but Elohim will **surely visit** (pakod yifkod - פָּקֹדְךָ יִפְקֹד) you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya'acov."²⁵ Then Yosef took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "Elohim will **surely visit** (pakod yifkod - פָּקֹדְךָ יִפְקֹד) you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

“Surely visit” is a repetition of the word “pakod” (פָּקֹד). It is like saying, “visit, visit.” Notice this phrase is used in both verses 24 and 25. Torah scholars declare these words to be **code words** that Moshe was instructed by יהוה to use when speaking to the “**elders of the tribes of Israel**” after he returned to them in Egypt. And by these words first used by Yosef (pakod yifkod - פָּקֹדְךָ יִפְקֹד), they knew that **Moshe** was their deliverer:

Shemot 3:16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, ' Adonai יהוה of your fathers, the Elohim of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya'acov, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited (pakod yifkod - פָּקַדְתִּי פָּקַדְתִּי) you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt

The “**people believed**” when they heard the **code words** that יהוה had “**visited**” (pakad – פָּקַד) them:

Shemot 4:31 So the people believed; and when they heard that יהוה had visited (pakad – פָּקַד) the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

When יהוה “**visits**” (pakad – פָּקַד) His people, it can be related to “**redemption**,” “**salvation**,” and the “**remembrance of His covenant**.” Therefore, we are not surprised to find this **code word** used by **Zechariah**, father of **Yochanan the Immerser** (John the Baptist):

Luke 1:67 Now his father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: ⁶⁸ "Blessed is Adonai יהוה of Israel, For **He has visited** (pakad – פָּקַד) and redeemed His people, ⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, ⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who *have been* since the world began, ⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, ⁷² To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³ The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: ⁷⁴ To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

When **Yeshua** raises a young man’s dead “**bones**,” the people recognize יהוה’s “**visitation**” (pakad – פָּקַד) through **Yeshua**:

Luke 7:14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. ¹⁶ Then fear came upon all, and they glorified Elohim, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "**Elohim has visited** (pakad – פָּקַד) **His people**." ¹⁷ And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

But sometimes, יהוה “**visits**” (pakad – פָּקַד) those who have not profited by the many warnings they have received, nor repented of the sins they have committed. For them, His “**visitation**” will mean judgment and terrible vengeance. **Yeshua** foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem in its future and wept because they did not recognize the “**time of their visitation**”:

Luke 19:41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they

are hidden from your eyes.⁴³ "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,⁴⁴ "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation (et p'kudatem – עֵת פְּקֻדָּתְךָ)."

There will be a future “**visitation**” when Yeshua returns. We want to be ready so we will be on the side of **deliverance** and **salvation** and not be on the side of **judgement**:

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify Elohim in the day of visitation.

In the same way that Yosef made it clear that יהוה will “**surely visit**” (פִּקְדוֹ יִפְקֹד - pakod yifkod) the Israelites, we also wait for the “**visitation**” of Yeshua in His second coming. This is the hope concerning our “**bones**” and the resurrection! “**Yosef’s bones**,” even today as they lie in Shechem, prove that יהוה can bring His chosen ones home. And those “**bones**” are not done traveling. There will be a day when even those dead “**bones**” will rise!

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For Adonai Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of Elohim. And the dead in Messiah will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet Adonai in the air. And thus we shall always be with Adonai.¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Now to go back to the “**faith**” of Yosef. People need to see what you do, serving יהוה, but they also need to see you **believing**. They need to see that your faith is believing in the promises of יהוה, when things are dark and also when things are very good. They must see that you believe, like Yosef, that this world is passing, but the Word of the Almighty is forever!

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle