

DA'AS TORAH

Background

For twenty-two years, Yaakov was in mourning. In his mind, his dear son Yosef had been killed, so he grieved for many years until he found out that Yosef had not in fact been murdered.

In dealing with the question of why HASHEM didn't inform Yaakov that his son wasn't killed, Rashi answers that HASHEM was bound to secrecy because the brothers created a *Bais Din* and joined Him to it. They decreed that anyone who revealed the information to Yaakov would be excommunicated. The *Medrash Tanchuma* tells us that since Reuvain was not there at this time, there were only nine brothers present. For the excommunication to take effect, they needed a *Bais Din* of ten. Therefore, the brothers brought HASHEM into the *Bais Din*, and He became the tenth. Since HASHEM was part of the *Bais Din*, HASHEM couldn't reveal to Yaakov what had happened to Yosef.

Questions

Rashi is quoting a Medrash that seems to say that HASHEM was bound against His will (if it could be) because the brothers convened a *Bais Din* and excommunicated anyone who revealed the secret. How is it possible to have a serious discussion about forcing HASHEM to become part of a *Bais Din* and then "binding HASHEM" into something?

ספר בראשית פרק לז

לג וַיִּכְרֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כְּתַנְתָּ
בְּנֵי חַיָּה רָעָה אֶכְלֶתְהוּ
טָרֵף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף

And he (Yaakov) recognized it and said, "It is the cloak of my son. A wild animal ate him. Torn, torn is Yosef."

רש"י על בראשית פרק לז
פסוק לג

ולמה לא גלה לו
הקב"ה לפי שהחרמו
וקללו את כל מי שיגלה
ושתפו להקב"ה עמהם
(תנחומא) אבל יצחק
היה יודע שהוא חי אמר
היאך אגלה והקב"ה אינו
רוצה לגלות לו

Why didn't HASHEM reveal the truth to him (Yaakov)? Since they (the brothers) excommunicated and cursed anyone who would reveal to Yaakov what they had done, they joined HASHEM to their group. However, Yitzchak knew, and he didn't tell Yaakov because he said, "It is clear that HASHEM doesn't want to tell, so it isn't my place to tell."