

## “I” NEVER FORGET

### Background

Yaakov had just been given the news that his beloved son Yosef was murdered. The *posuk* says that he wasn't comforted. Even though many attempts were made by his sons and his daughter, he couldn't be comforted because, as the Gemara explains, there is a decree that a person should forget those who have died. However, that decree only functions if the person is in fact dead. Since the decree wasn't made about people who are alive, the decree didn't take effect because Yosef was alive. Hence, Yaakov couldn't be comforted.

#### ספר בראשית פרק לז

לד) וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שָׂמַל תּוֹי  
וַיִּשֶׂם שֶׁק בְּמִתְנָיו וַיִּתְאַבֵּל  
עַל בְּנוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים  
לה) וַיִּקְמוּ כָּל בְּנָיו וְכָל  
בָּנֹתָיו לְנַחֲמוֹ וַיִּמְאֵן  
לְהִתְנַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶרְד  
אֶל בְּנֵי אָבִל שְׂאֵלָה וַיִּבֶךְ  
אֹתוֹ אָבִיו

*And Yaakov tore his garments and put on sackcloth, and he mourned for his son for many days. And all of his sons and daughters got up to comfort him, but he wasn't comforted, and he said, "I will go to the grave in my mourning," and his father cried for him.*

#### רש"י על בראשית פרק לז פסוק לה

וימאן להתנחם - (ב"ר)  
אין אדם מקבל תנחומין  
על החי וסבור שמת  
שעל המת נגזרה גזירה  
שישתכח מן הלב ולא על  
החי

**And he was not comforted -** *A man does not accept comfort for someone living (but lost) when he thinks the person is dead because it was decreed that the dead should be forgotten from the heart, but not the living.*

### Questions

What possible difference could it make whether Yosef was alive or not. There is a reality that time heals. The human mind just naturally tends to forget. The wound slowly starts to heal, and lost ones are forgotten. What makes this question even more poignant is that we are dealing with a very long period of time; Yaakov mourned the loss of his son for 22 years. How is it possible that he didn't forget after all that time? And why should Yosef's being alive or dead make a difference to the mourning process when Yaakov was unaware of the reality?