

JUST TWO WORDS

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

The Lifeline is sponsored this week by David Samet, in memory of his grandmother Gittel Bas Yitzchok Dovid Haleyvei a"h, whose yahrtzeit is the seventh day of Chanukah. Please study this class in her memory.

"And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef.'" [45:3]

From the moment they first entered Egypt, the lives of Yosef's brothers were in turmoil. They simply couldn't understand what was going on. They entered the country the first time, and were immediately accused by Pharaoh's aide - the man who would decide whether they were to be given food they needed in order to survive - of being spies. They had to leave behind one brother, guaranteeing that they would bring Binyamin back with them. Then, when they left, they discovered that all of their money had been returned!

There was no logic behind it, no way for them to understand what had happened - and more importantly, why. Each one wondered if another brother had done something to trigger the Egyptians' suspicion - and they had no idea what they should do.

The second time as well, they were confused. First they tried to give back the money which had been returned to them, and they were politely turned away - they were told "Peace be upon you - do not fear, your G-d gave you a present!" [43:23] They were treated as guests and dined with the aide. Yet immediately after they set out for their journey home, Binyamin was arrested (after being "framed" for theft) and threatened with imprisonment. None of it made sense - they were left to wonder why G-d had brought these troubles upon them. One brother or another was going to end up as an Egyptian slave - and it made no sense at all...

... until "Pharaoh's aide" said: "I [am] Yosef." Just two words, and everything fell into place. All their questions were answered.

The Chofetz Chaim says that the same will occur when we are finally permitted to understand the course of history from G-d's perspective - when He declares, "I [am] HaShem." With two words, as it

were, all will be answered.

We, just like Yosef's brothers, have trouble understanding what is going on. We look at certain events and cannot understand why G-d runs the world as He does. But we must realize that, just like the story of Yosef, the world does have a logical pattern... just one which we currently aren't permitted to see. And just like Yosef's brothers, we must realize that there will be a happy ending!

Good Shabbos,

Rabbi Yaakov Menken