

וַיִּשָּׂק יַעֲקֹב לְרֹחֵל וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־קוֹלוֹ וַיִּבְדֵּ:

“And Yaakov kissed Rochel, and he lifted up his voice, and he cried.” (Bereishis 29:11).

“And Yaakov kissed Rochel.” Onkelos and every other commentator translate וַיִּשָּׂק “and he kissed her.” The Torah uses the word וַיִּשָּׂק to kiss. (See Ibid 29:13, 32:1, 33:4, and 45:15). וַיִּשָּׂק means to give to drink as in “and Yaakov gave to drink the sheep of Lavan his uncle.” (Ibid 29:10). When there is a *cheerik* under the Yud, it means to kiss. (See Ibid 27:27 when Yitzchok kissed Yaakov before the Brocha; 48:10 when Yaakov kisses his grandchildren and blesses them; 50:1 when Yoseph fell on Yaakov’s neck and kissed him). However, when there is a *patach* under the Yud it means to give to drink. (See 29:10 where Yaakov gave Lavan’s sheep to drink; Shmos 2:19 when Moshe watered Yisro’s sheep).

There is a connection between these two words. Why did the Torah not simply use the words וַיִּשָּׂק? Why use it without the ו? This is because the kiss is not just a kiss. It’s an act of sustaining the other person. It is giving them to drink, in a way. When one waters sheep, he is giving them a life force, he is sustaining them to live further. Water is also a symbol for Torah and the spiritual. This is because all life is made up of water; humans, fruits, vegetables, and the seas are all made up of water. Water carries oxygen in it. And water keeps flowing and continues to seek a resting place until it fills up its container. Even then, water evaporates and then comes down in the form of rain or snow. In every instance when a person is kissing another via וַיִּשָּׂק it is the person giving a spiritual lifeforce to the other. Yitzchok kissed his son before blessing him. Yaakov kissed his grandchildren before blessing them; Yoseph was giving Yaakov life again after reuniting.

When a kiss is just a kiss, it is וַיִּשָּׂק. Lavan simply kissed Yaakov out of greeting and his children out of love. The two standouts are when Eisav kissed Yaakov (ibid 33:4) and when Yoseph kissed his brothers (ibid 45:15). When Eisav kisses Yaakov it is when he is greeting Yaakov upon Yaakov’s return to Canaan. Eisav vowed to kill Yaakov after Yitzchok died because Yaakov stole his brocha. However, when they reunite Eisav is instead filled with brotherly affection and there is reconciliation. Eisav kisses Yaakov – וַיִּשָּׂק. He is sustaining Yaakov, giving him back his life. Thus, it is written without a *nun*. When Yoseph meets his brothers after 22 years away he kisses his brothers. The pasuk says וַיִּנָּשֶׂק לְכָל־אָחָיו וַיִּבְדֵּ עֲלֵהֶם וְאָחָרֵי כֵן דִּבְרָו אִחָיו אִתּוֹ: “And he kissed all of his brothers and he cried on them. And afterwards his brothers spoke to him.” (Ibid 45:15). He kissed them simply out of greeting. He had nothing more to give them. They already took everything from him. He has already given them food (they did not necessarily need as the entire purpose of going down to Mitzrayim was a ruse). He did not yet give them Goshen or bring down his father. At this point, he kissed them to show them he was their brother. It was a kiss of brotherly affection.

Yaakov kissing Rochel is synonymous with *And Yaakov gave Rochel to drink*. He watered her animals and also gave her water. This was akin to when the servant of

Avraham asked Rivkah to give him to drink and she also gave water to his camels. “I am your father’s kin; I am Rivkah’s son” (ibid 29:12) and I will behave as such. He didn’t kiss her out of any love. There was no love there. Nor was there a familial greeting as they never met before. Instead, he then knew she was his soulmate and he would become her husband and he would sustain her.

“And he raised his voice.” Yaakov “raised” a few times. He lifted his feet and went to the eastern country. (Ibid 29:1). He lifted up his voice and cried. (Here). He lifted his children onto camels. (Ibid 31:17). He also lifted up his eyes and saw that Eisav was approaching him with an army. (Ibid 33:1). **וַיִּשָׂא** “lifting” in the Torah is a term of an intentional act. One lifts up his eyes, means he looks yonder and is searching about. When he lifted his eyes, he was scouting for Eisav. He saw him from afar. When he lifted his feet, he did it with intention to head toward the eastern lands, because having heard Hashem’s promise to him, he went to fulfill his journey and find his wife. When he lifted his children and wives onto camels, he was absconding from Lavan. He left with purpose. Here, he lifted his voice.

Eisav, too, lifted his voice and cried. **וַיִּשָׂא עִשָׂו קוֹל וַיִּבְרַח׃** “And Eisav raised his voice and cried.” (Ibid 27:38). Eisav called out, intentionally. He just lost his father’s blessing and learned that his brother was blessed to be a master over him. He asked if Yitzchok had another blessing. He raised his voice and cried. It means he called out. He called out to see if Yaakov was nearby. He wanted this reversed and justice done, immediately. He called out for anyone around to search and give him Yaakov’s whereabouts. He cried because he lost his fortune but he also then felt like he lost his brother. He cried and prayed for divine assistance. He did not want to lose out on his father’s bracha.

Here, Yaakov not only raises his voice but he raises **אָתָּה** his voice. The **אָתָּה** makes it a proper noun. He was lifting up the power of his voice. His father had said **הַקּוֹל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב** “the voice is the voice of Yaakov.” (Ibid 27:22). Yaakov had a voice of power and persuasion. When he talked people and Heavens listened. Yaakov raised this voice.

“And he cried.” Using the power of his voice, he cried. He cried and prayed that his journey be over. He cried for years of success and progeny. He cried for sustenance and sustainability. He explains that his journey is over, he has found Rochel and the house of Lavan. He came to the lands of the east and did not have to seek too far to find Lavan. (The eastern lands are massive and finding Lavan could have been a task that would take several more years. The Torah does not say he arrived in Charan, but merely in the eastern lands he found a well. His journey was over even before reaching Charan). He cried for the success of having found Rochel and Lavan’s household, fulfilling his parents’ wish that he travels to his mother’s brother and find a wife. He also cried for himself, a brother lost, and now all hopes lashed to a cousin he just met.