

### Why didn't Joseph Phone Home?

1. Joseph believes that he is not a free agent, but rather the divinely chosen instrument for his family's salvation. He further believes that his early dreams in his father's home were a reflection of God's plan and that he is now obligated to bring that plan into fruition. He cannot, therefore, contact his father prematurely. He must wait until the time comes when the dreams can be fulfilled (Ramban, 13<sup>th</sup> Century Spain).
2. "And it was pleasing in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants." Life was not simple for Joseph even after his rise to authority in Egypt. His vulnerability may well have constrained him from contacting Jacob. The Egyptians regarded Joseph as a foreigner whose loyalty to Egypt was in doubt. Reassured by the prospect of Joseph's family remaining in Egypt, they now believed that Joseph would govern not as a foreign leader but as a citizen who intends to settle in the land together with his children. Now Joseph could contact his father ( Based on Seforno, 16<sup>th</sup> Century).
3. Joseph had no way of knowing that his brothers had deceived his father with the lie that Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast (see Parshat Vayeshev). For all Joseph knew, Jacob never believed him to be dead! Joseph was therefore plagued for years with this uncertainty and his father's silence led to suspicion ... Certainly Jacob had the wherewithal to search for his son. Why then, Joseph wonders, had no search taken place? Joseph comes to the erroneous, yet, to him, inescapable, conclusion that Jacob was somehow complicit in the brother's actions. Joseph had been cut off from the family, as Ishmael and Esau had been cast off in earlier generations [and had no reason to call home!] (Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, 21<sup>st</sup> century).