

# Parsha Pearls

Vayechi 5768

**And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years (47:28).**

Rashi says that one reason why this parsha, unlike all others, begins with a "closed paragraph" - in the middle of a line with no break at all - is that Yaakov Avinu wanted to reveal to his children the time when the final redemption would come, but it was closed and hidden from him.

Rabbeinu Bachya adds that this metaphor of "closed" is used in reference to the final redemption in another place. The prophet Yishaya said (9:6), "When authority is increased and there is no end to peace, on the throne of David and his kingdom, to prepare it and support it." The word "increased" (lemarbei) is written with a final, closed mem in the middle of a word, in violation of the rules of Hebrew. This is to hint that the authority and elevation of Israel is closed during exile. During exile, the Jewish people will have no authority, and the time at which they will regain that authority will be closed and hidden from all.

There is one other place, says Rabbeinu Bachya, where the rules of open and closed letters are broken. That is in Nechemiah 2:13, which relates that Nechemiah saw "the wall of Jerusalem, which were open, and its gates had been consumed by fire." The word "hem" – they [were open] – is written with a regular, open mem, not the final mem that is supposed to be used at the end of a word. The open mem hints to the open walls of Jerusalem.

The Midrash (it is unknown what Midrash he is referring to) says that when one of these grammatical errors will be fixed, the other will as well. When moshiach comes and the walls of Jerusalem become closed - symbolized by the closing of the mem -then the authority of the Jewish people will no longer be closed and hidden - symbolized by the opening of the mem.