

"And Yosef shall put his hand on your eyes." (46:4)

The *Ibn Ezra* infers from this *pasuk* that it is customary for the living to close the eyes of the dead. Hashem was assuring Yaakov that Yosef would be there when he passed away. Yosef would arrange to take Yaakov out of Egypt to be buried in the *Me'oras Ha'Machpeilah*. The custom is that the eldest son closes the eyes of his father, as the parent takes leave from this world. The *Yalkut Yehudah* offers a poignant and meaningful foundation for this custom.

Closing one's eyes indicates peace of mind. When one sleeps, his eyes are closed. He is at peace with the world as he reposes in tranquility. As a parent passes on, he is anxious about his children's future. Will life fare well for them? Will they retain their devotion to *Torah*, or will it wane with the passage of time? By closing the father's eyes, the son communicates a message: Worry not, for I will continue to propagate what you have taught me. I will make sure that you will be able to rest peacefully. Closing the eyes is the son's act of commitment to preserve and cherish his father's legacy, to maintain his devotion to an everlasting heritage. It is a unique form of saying good-bye which simultaneously represents the beginning of a new relationship between parent and child.