



*"I am Yosef
Is my father
still alive?"*

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayigash

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Dissipating The Trauma To Perpetuate A People

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Yosef revealed himself to his brothers and they were overwhelmed with shame.
2. He consoled them to not be saddened as G-d had sent him as their provider.
3. Yosef as Viceroy provided food for Egypt and all of the surrounding countries.
4. Yosef knew he was sold specifically for this purpose and prepared his family for the Egyptian exile.
5. Yosef names his first-born Menashe. G-d caused him to forget his family and strife he experienced.
6. The trauma and suffering his brothers caused was beyond repair and forgiveness.
7. If so emotionally scarred, it would have been impossible for Yosef to be a proper provider.
8. He wouldn't be selflessly dedicated without a trace of negativity towards them.
9. Yosef realized a miraculous transition began to occur: memories of his brothers' abuse faded as if it never happened.
10. To commemorate this miracle, Yosef named his son Menashe.
11. This was the basis for Yosef knowing beyond any doubt that he was sent to Egypt for this mission.

Parallel For Parallel Measure For Measure

CLICK TO VIEW!

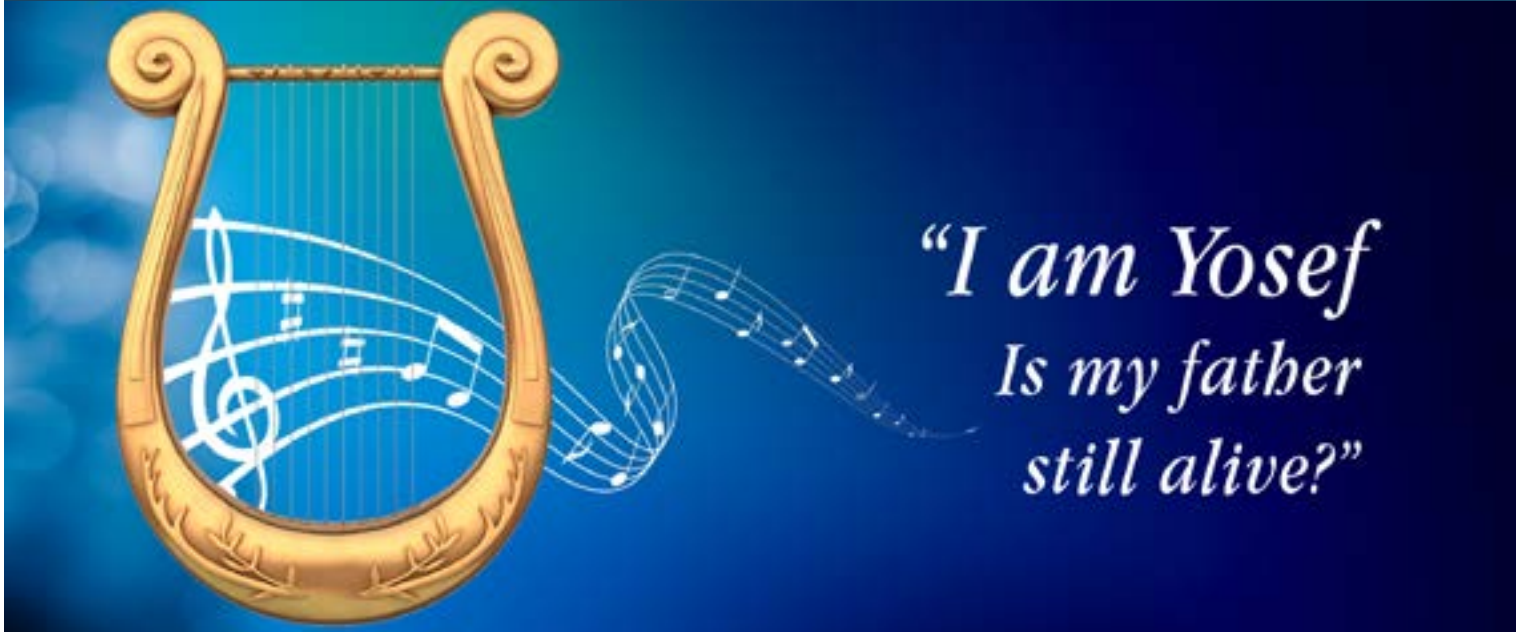


Weekly Video: Alive & Relevant To Perpetuate A People

CLICK TO VIEW!



Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayigash



When Circumstance Causes Clarity

The *Torah* tells us that *Binyamin* was accused of stealing the goblet of the Viceroy of Egypt (Yosef). *Yehudah* had initially said, "...we will become slaves to my lord (if the stolen goblet were to be found in their possession)." Yosef replied, "...The one with whom it is found shall be my slave, but the rest of you shall be exonerated."

Yehudah understood that the Viceroy intended to retain *Binyamin* as his slave. This initiated *Yehudah*'s plea on *Binyamin*'s behalf. *Yehudah* explained why he was the one to speak on behalf of all his brothers because he was the one who had guaranteed *Yaakov* the safe return of his youngest son, *Binyamin*. As it states, "*Yehudah* said, 'For your servant took responsibility from my father saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you then I will be sinning to my father for all time.'" Meaning, *Yehudah* had assumed responsibility for *Binyamin* to such a degree that if he did not return with him, he would forfeit his share

in the material and spiritual world. Why did *Yehudah* assume a level of responsibility for *Binyamin* that carried such serious liability?

Had *Yehudah* not accepted to be the guarantor for his brother's safe return, *Yaakov* would not have allowed them to take *Binyamin* to Egypt. If they did not return to Egypt with *Binyamin*, the entire family would definitely die of starvation. The Viceroy of Egypt had said that if they did not return with their youngest brother, then they should not return at all. Thus, they would not have access of food for their family in Egypt. One could simply say that since *Yehudah* was destined for leadership, because the kings of Israel were destined to descend from him, he assumed personal responsibility. However, we could say that his reason for assuming responsibility for *Binyamin* was unrelated to his position of leadership.

The *Torah* tells us that initially when the brothers were accused by Yosef, the Viceroy, of being spies they

were imprisoned for three days. Rather than believing that their predicament was due to the suspicions of the heathen Viceroy, they said, "Indeed we are guilty concerning our brother inasmuch as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we paid no heed; that is why this anguish has come upon us." Due to their introspection, they immediately understood that their situation was due to Divine retribution within the context of measure for measure for what they had done to Yosef.

The *Torah* tells us that when they were about to return to Canaan, they were accused of stealing the goblet of the Viceroy. *Yehudah* had said, "...G-d has uncovered the sin of your servants..." *Yehudah* understood that once again their precarious predicament was due to the anguish and suffering that they had brought upon Yosef. He also understood that he was the one who was primarily responsible for all that had transpired regarding Yosef.

After the brothers had sold Yosef into slavery, they distanced themselves from *Yehudah* and he fell out of their favor. They had seen how their father *Yaakov* had reacted to Yosef's disappearance. He had rent his garments and entered into a state of mourning from which he refused to be consoled. *Yehudah's* brothers faulted him for their father's grief because it was only due to his decision as the leader that Yosef was sold into slavery. They said to him, "Had you instructed us to return Yosef to our father, we would have definitely done so."

When *Yehudah* witnessed was evolving regarding *Binyamin* in Egypt, he realized in retrospect that all that he had done to Yosef was unjustified. He thus had to make corrections for what he had done. He needed to bring about Yosef's return. *Chazal* tell us that he had told the Viceroy that if he needed to bring about the destruction of Egypt in order to return Yosef, he would do so. *Yehudah's* statement to the Viceroy that he assumed the responsibility of being the guarantor took on another level of connotation. It was not only what he had promised his father regarding the safe return of *Binyamin*, it was also his understanding of his own level of liability.

G-d Brings Merit to the Meritorious

The *Torah* tells us that when *Yaakov* came to Egypt, his son Yosef, the Viceroy of Egypt went to meet him. The

Torah states, "Yosef harnessed his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in *Goshen*." Yosef, being the Viceroy, was the most revered individual in Egypt because he determined life and death through the distribution of the grain during the years of famine.

The *Midrash* states, "*Reb Yehudah* says in the name of *Reb Eivo*, 'There are two individuals who saw a level of honor and glory that no other person had seen. Who were they? They were *Yisro* and *Yaakov*. The *Torah* states when the Jewish people were in the desert, *Moshe* had gone out to greet his father in law, *Yisro*. Is it possible that *Moshe* should go out and others should not follow? The ones who were appointed to be responsible for the thousands, hundreds, and tens of people also went out with *Moshe*. Was it possible that these individuals went out and the seventy elders of Israel did not go out? Thus, the seventy elders also went out. If others saw the seventy elders go out would they not go out? Aaron, the High Priest went out.... The entire Jewish people went out to greet *Yisro* in the desert.

Similarly, when *Yaakov* had come to Egypt, Yosef his son went out to greet his father. Is it possible that the Viceroy of Egypt go out to greet *Yaakov* and others not go out? Thus, the elders of Egypt went out to greet *Yaakov*. Subsequently the entire Egyptian people went out to greet *Yaakov*...The level of glory that *Yisro* and *Yaakov* experienced teaches us that, 'The wise will come to inherit honor.'..." Why did *Yisro* and *Yaakov* merit to have such an exceptional and unique level of honor and glory? Secondly, what is the value of that glory?

The *Torah* states, "*Yisro*, the Sheik of *Midian*, the father-in-law of *Moshe*, heard all that G-d had done for *Moshe* and Israel, His People – that G-d took Israel out of Egypt." *Yisro* was the Sheik of *Midian*, a person of great renown in the world of paganism. He lived in a state of comfort and glory. Although the entire world had also heard what G-d had done on behalf of the Jewish people, *Yisro* was the only one to abandon and forgo his comfort and glory and join the Jewish people in the desert.

Yisro's level of understanding, appreciation, and reverence for G-d and the *Torah* was unique. One of the names that *Yisro* possessed was "*Choveiv* (beloved)." *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who explain that he was given this name because of his exceptional love for *Torah*. Where

do we see that he had an unusual love for *Torah*? In order for him to forgo all of his glory in *Midian* and go out into a wilderness, his love for *Torah* had to surpass and eclipse all that he had possessed. *Yisro* thus deserved a unique level of acknowledgement and honor. *Moshe*, the spiritual equivalent of the entire Jewish people, thus chose to go out to greet him. He was followed by the entire Jewish people.

Yaakov, our Patriarch did not want to go down to Egypt because he understood that it would be the beginning of the extended exile. *Yaakov* understood that eventually the Jewish people would be spiritual diminished as a result of the pagan environment in Egypt. G-d appeared to *Yaakov* before his descent to Egypt and told him not to be afraid. The overwhelming initial negative spiritual influence is alluded to in the closed paragraph structure of the Portion of *Vayechi*. It is referred to as a “sealed portion” because the “eyes and hearts of the people became sealed to spirituality.”

Despite this level of negativity, *Yaakov* together with his family descended to Egypt because of his faith in G-d. Although the Jewish people would be spiritually minimized as a result of Egypt, *Yaakov* had faith in G-d that ultimately they would be redeemed to receive the *Torah* at Sinai. As G-d had said to Avraham, our Patriarch that after the long exile, they would go out with “great wealth.” *Chazal* explain that the true “great wealth” is referring to the *Torah* that the Jewish people would receive at Sinai.

Yosef harnessed his own chariot to greet his father because he wanted to accord him the greatest level of honor. He was not only the most spiritual person in existence, his level of faith in G-d was unique. Because of *Yaakov*’s unhindered descent to Egypt, G-d accorded him the greatest level of honor and glory. In essence, it is based upon the principle of “G-d brings merit to the one who is meritorious.”

The glory that was given to *Yaakov* was the ultimate level of sanctification of G-d because *Yaakov* was G-d’s representation in existence. His arrival in Egypt caused *Yosef*, the Viceroy, to go out to greet him. Ultimately, it caused the entire Egyptian people, who were pagans to go out to greet *Yaakov* the monotheistic person. Similarly, *Yisro* abandoning all materialism for the sake of G-d caused a sanctification of His Name – that the entire Jewish people came to acknowledge *Yisro* for what he had done.

Insensitivity in Essence is Synonymous with Cruelty

The *Torah* states, “*Yosef* said to them (his brothers) on the third day, ‘...let one of your brothers be imprisoned in your place of confinement...Then bring your youngest brother to me so your words will be verified...” *Yosef*, the Viceroy of Egypt, imprisoned one of his brothers while the others went back to Canaan to return for *Binyamin*. At that moment, they reflected upon their tenuous predicament and said, “Indeed we are guilty concerning our brother (*Yosef*) inasmuch as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we paid no heed; that is why this anguish has come upon us.”

Sforno in his commentary explains that *Yosef*’s brothers realized at that moment that their insensitivity towards their brother’s heartfelt supplications was in essence cruelty. Although they believed that they had rendered a proper judgment concerning their brother, that he was a pursuer (*rodeif*) and thus deserved to be killed. He would ultimately cause their destruction through his tale bearing to their father *Yaakov*.

Nevertheless, they should have had mercy on him when he pleaded not to be sold into slavery. Because they had acted cruelly towards their brother *Yosef*, G-d (measure for measure) brought upon them in kind a heathen who was acting cruelly towards them by accusing them of being spies and demanding that they must bring before him *Binyamin*.

If in fact their evaluation of their brother’s behavior was correct and indeed he was a pursuer and thus put their lives in jeopardy, why are they considered to be cruel. Their understanding of *Yosef* as a “pursuer” was not that he would actually attempt to physically bring harm upon them. But rather, they were concerned that his negative tale bearing would discredit them to their father *Yaakov*, who would ultimately curse them, which is the equivalent of death. However, if they had shown mercy to their brother *Yosef* and had been sensitive to his pleas, they would have merited Divine Protection that their father should always see them for what they truly were.

Rambam writes in the Laws of *Teshuvah*, “If one approaches you for forgiveness with heartfelt remorse, you should forgive him. One should not be cruel towards his fellow and should be easily appeased to

forgive. When one asks for forgiveness you should forgive him wholeheartedly and willingly, even if you were pained and victimized by him many times. You should not seek revenge or harbor ill feelings against him. Because this is the way of the children of Israel. One should not be cruel, but rather forgiving.

However, the gentiles who are referred to by the verse as having a covering over their hearts (*arlei leiv*) they do not act in this manner. Their claim and anger remains forever...Because they are not willing to forgive, their seed is not permitted to intermingle with that of the Jew."

Rambam writes in the Laws of Fasting, "When one cries out to G-d for the sake of repentance and the *shofar* is blown, it will cause His Mercy to come upon the Jew and remove him from his state of difficulty and suffering. However, if one does not cry out to G-d and believes that his predicament is due to happenstance, then he is considered to be cruel. Because the individual does not have the sensitivity to understand that his suffering is from G-d, he is classified as 'cruel.' He will continue to do evil deeds which will bring upon him further suffering because he is unable to repent."

The *Midrash* tells us that there is no nation in the world that has been able to withstand G-d's punishment and not be destroyed, other than the Jewish people. Despite the degree of punishment and suffering the Jewish people have experienced they remain intact. This is because when G-d's wrath comes upon the nations of the world, rather than recognize that their punishment is a consequence of their failings and evil ways, they choose to defy and rebel against Him rather than submitting to His Will. They are therefore destroyed.

In contrast, when the Jewish people are faced with suffering, they become introspective and recognize that the cause of their predicament is due to their own failing. They are thus motivated to repent and correct their ways. This is because the Jew possesses the characteristic of not being cruel and hard-hearted.

Yosef's brothers understood that they were being treated in a cruel manner because they had acted similarly towards their brother Yosef. Had they shown him mercy by heeding his heartfelt pleas they would have not fallen into the clutches of the Viceroy. Thus, the issue of needing to bring their youngest brother *Binyamin* before the Viceroy would not have come about.

Weeping, an Outgrowth of Realization

The *Torah* tells us that after Yosef had revealed himself to his brothers they were overwhelmed. The *Midrash* states, "When Yosef saw that they were greatly embarrassed, he said to his brothers, 'Come close to me...' and they came close.' Each of his brothers then kissed Yosef and cried upon him. Just as Yosef's brothers were appeased through weeping, so too G-d will ultimately redeem the Jewish people when they will be in a state of crying. As the verse states, 'They will come with tears and with great beseeching I (G-d) will lead them...'" Just as Yosef's brothers were appeased through weeping so too will the Jewish people be ultimately redeemed in a state of crying.

The *Torah* states in the Portion of *Bereishis*, "And the Spirit of G-d hovered upon the surface of the waters..." The *Midrash* explains, "What is the 'the Spirit of G-d? It is the spirit of *Moshiach*. *Moshiach* will come when the Jewish people are in a state of repentance. As the verse states, 'Your hearts will gush forth with water...'" Why is repentance synonymous with weeping?

After Yosef had revealed himself to his brothers, they were overwhelmed with shame and embarrassment. They realized and understood that their hatred for him was unjust. His dreams were truly prophetic and they had seen with their own eyes that they had come to fruition. They were especially embarrassed and pained by the untold suffering that they had brought upon their brother when they had sold him into slavery. As a result of being confronted with the truth, they did not have the emotional capacity to deal with the issue at hand. They thus began to weep.

When one is overwhelmed beyond his capacity (in the positive or in the negative) it expresses itself through crying. At the end of time when truth will become obvious, the Jewish people will become overwhelmed with shame. Understanding, in retrospect, how many of their perspectives and beliefs were distortions of truth, due to their own conflicts of interest, they will be brought to a state of weeping. The state of crying will be a confirmation that the Jewish people have come upon the profundity of truth; thus realizing their failing. That realization will cause them to repent. In fact, this is foretold by the opening verses in the *Torah*, when it is stated, "And the Spirit of G-d hovered upon the surface of the waters..."

The Importance of Yosef Harnessing His Own Chariot

The *Torah* tells us that when Yosef became aware that his father Yaakov had come to Egypt, “Yosef harnessed his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen.” *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who explain, “He personally harnessed his chariot in order to honor his father with alacrity.” Yosef did not want to be delayed in honoring his father by delegating this task to his servants. The *Torah* tells us that *Avraham*, our Patriarch and *Bilaam* the evil one both harnessed their own donkeys when they had set out on their individual objectives.

The *Torah* tells us regarding *Avraham*, that he harnessed his own donkey when he was told to perform the *Akeidah* (The Binding of Yitzchak). *Chazal* explain that although *Avraham* was extremely wealthy and was 137 years old at the time, he harnessed his own donkey rather than delegating it to his servants because “Love disrupts all protocol.” *Avraham*’s love for G-d was to such a degree that at that moment all that existed was fulfilling the Will of G-d. His sense of self at that moment did not exist.

We also find that when *Bilaam*, the prophet for the nations of the world, embarked on his journey to curse the Jewish people to destroy them he hitched his own donkey. *Chazal* explain the reason for this was, “Hate disrupts all protocol.” *Bilaam*’s intense and all consuming hate for the Jewish people caused him to be singularly focused on his mission to destroy the Jewish people. His sense of self had no relevance at that moment, although he was a self-absorbed and egotistic person.

One would think that regarding Yosef harnessing his own chariot, despite being the Viceroy of Egypt, *Chazal* would have also said that this is another example of, “Love disrupts all protocol.” Yosef’s special love for his father Yaakov would have caused him not

to focus on his own status. However, *Chazal* do not say this. Rather, Yosef harnessed his own donkey so that he could honor his father without delay. Why is this example not similar to that of *Avraham* harnessing his own donkey?

The *Torah* tells us that when Yaakov came to Egypt, although the famine was initially meant to be for seven years it ceased upon his arrival to do his merit. The famine thus lasted only two years. The ending of the famine due to Yaakov’s arrival was a sanctification of G-d’s Name. Despite the fact that the Egyptian people were pagans, they understood that the ending of the famine was due to Yaakov, who was the representation of the Omnipotent G-d in existence. This was only a sanctification of G-d’s Name because the people had a sense of Yaakov’s importance and value due to the Viceroy’s hitching his own chariot.

Since the Egyptian people were aware that Yosef, the Viceroy, who was one of the most renowned and powerful personalities in the world, harnessing his own chariot to accord his father proper honor in the most expedient manner, they realized that Yaakov must of an exceptional dimension of person. When Yaakov had come to Egypt he had given a special blessing to Pharaoh that the Nile would rise in his presence. By doing so, it provided water to all of Egypt. Thus, Yaakov, the man of G-d, became synonymous with the one who gives life.

Regarding *Avraham*’s harnessing of his own donkey, it was purely out of his love for G-d. No one was aware of the objective of his mission to bring his son to the *Akeidah*. Thus, it was only to reveal to us that “love disrupts all protocol.”



Yad Avraham Institute



Yad Avraham Institute

📍 810 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019 ✉️ ravkalatsky@gmail.com ☎️ (212) 259-0300 **YadAvNow.com**
