



פרשת ויגש  
Parshat Vayigash

Ashreinu | אשרינו

ENHANCING YOUR STUDY OF THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION



CLOSE BUT SEPARATE

MRS. ALLIE GOLDENBERG

MRS. ALLIE GOLDENBERG

ARIELLA GROSS ('21)

ELIANA BROIDE ('21)

SAMANTHA HENNER ('20)

ELISHEVA GREENE ('20)

This week's parsha contains perhaps one of the most dramatic scenes in the Torah. An emotional Yosef reveals himself to his brothers, inquires of his father's well being,

and invites his brothers to settle in the land of Goshen, where they will be provided for. It is interesting that Yosef does not offer them to live with him in the land of Egypt itself, rather he tells his brothers:

וַיִּשְׁבֶּת בְּאֶרֶץ-גֹּשֶׁן, וְהָיִיתָ קָרוֹב אֵלַי

“And you will dwell in the region of Goshen, where you will be near me” (Bereshit 45:10). Wouldn't Yosef prefer for his father and brothers to live as close to him as possible? Why offer a neighboring land

instead of the land he himself lives in?

Our Rabbis teach us that Yosef was the first person in our history to go into exile. Yosef was the pioneer Jew who had to live in a foreign, secular culture. Initially, Yosef thought he could be a regular Egyptian who happens to be Jewish. And so the Torah tells us, Yosef arrives in Egypt, is a servant in Potifar's house and swiftly rises in the ranks, believing that he could be Egyptian and successful. When the wife of Potifar repeatedly advances towards Yosef, Yosef almost succumbs to the temptation. Rashi says that Yosef saw, דמות דיוקנו של אביו, *the image of his father* (Rashi, Bereishit 39:11), which prevented him from crossing the line and being with her. Yosef came dangerously close to forgetting he was a Jew. This was a turning point for Yosef, after which he realizes that is not enough to be an Egyptian who happens to be Jewish, rather he must be a Jew, strong in his convictions, who is still able to be involved in the Egyptian culture around him.

A new Yosef then emerges. When Pharaoh calls Yosef to interpret his dreams. Yosef responds:  
בְּלִעְדֵי אֱלֹקִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת-שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה

“Not I! God will see to Pharaoh’s welfare” (Bereishit 41:16). Yosef prefaces his interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream with the assertion that it is God who is in charge, and that he is God-fearing. It is only with this mantra that Yosef becomes Viceroy of Egypt, a model of how to be a strong Jew who resides in Egypt and is able to effect change, yet refrains from anything that is antithetical to his Jewish ideologies.

Perhaps understanding this challenge of living in exile is what prompts Yosef to offer the land of Goshen to his family. While Yosef grew and was able to overcome the temptation of the surrounding Egyptian culture, it was a constant struggle. The higher he rose in position, fame and esteem, surely the opportunities increased for crossing lines and giving into temptations. This struggle, while Yosef overcame it, was not what he wanted for his father and his brothers. To offer them the land of Goshen was to offer them an insular society, away from the culture of Egypt and the possibility of succumbing to its enticements.

As Jews living in a secular, temptation-filled culture, the message of Yosef is relevant thousands of years later. Yes, we can be involved in the world around us, enjoy its benefits and effect change in it. However, like Yosef, we must remain strong in our convictions, not cross lines and sometimes, when necessary, put ourselves in a Goshen-like state, avoiding those parts of secular culture that are antithetical and even harmful to our ideologies.

## MEANINGFUL DAYS

ARIELLA GROSS ('21)

In this week’s parsha, Parshat Vayigash, Yosef introduces Yaakov to Pharaoh for the first time. Pharaoh, shocked at Yaakov’s elderly appearance, asks Yaakov how old he is:

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יַעֲקֹב: כַּמָּה יָמֵי שָׁנֶיךָ.  
וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-פַּרְעֹה, יָמֵי שָׁנֵי מְגֹרֵי  
שָׁלְשִׁים וּמֵאת שָׁנָה: מַעֲט וְרַעִים, הָיוּ יָמֵי  
שָׁנֵי חַיִּי, וְלֹא הִשְׂגִּיחוּ אֶת-יָמֵי שָׁנֵי חַיִּי אֲבֹתַי  
בְּיָמֵי מְגֹרֵיהֶם

Pharaoh asked Yaakov, “How many are the years of your life?” And Yaakov answered Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourn [on earth] are one hundred and thirty. Few and hard have been the years of my life, nor do they come up to the life spans of my fathers during their sojourns” (Bereishit 47:8-9).

Of all of the questions Pharaoh could have asked Yaakov, why did he ask about his age? And why was he so fixated on Yaakov’s appearance? Sforno explains that Pharaoh was merely superficial and was curious if Yaakov owned life-prolonging ingredients. Pharaoh had not heard of any Egyptian who lived to 130, and he sought to uncover the secrets to longer life.

The Daat Zkenim takes a different approach and explains that Pharaoh actually asked Yaakov a deeper question about life, not one based on his appearance. Yaakov responds with the words, יָמֵי שָׁנֵי מְגֹרֵי -- the days of the years of my sojournings - which implies Yaakov’s understanding of life’s temporary nature. While Sarah’s life, for example, was referred to as שָׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה -- the years of the life of Sarah, Yaakov describes his life as sojourning because he recognized that our true lives are in the next world and our lives in this one are simply a step along the way.

This pasuk reminds us of the importance of the next world over this world and that spiritual matters trump physicality. While Pharaoh inquired to Yaakov about his age, Yaakov understood his question in a more deep and powerful way. Through his response, Yaakov reminds us to use our limited time in this world to focus on Hashem and spirituality, instead of merely appreciating the grander aspects of the material world.

# KEEP GROWING

ELIANA BROIDE ('21)

In Parshat Vayigash, we see Yosef bring Yaakov to meet Pharaoh. The first thing that Pharaoh says to Yaakov is: “How many are the days of the years of your life?” which seems odd. Why is Yaakov’s age relevant to Pharaoh?

It is clear that Pharaoh is not asking about his literal age. Rather, he is asking Yaakov how many days in his life he feels were fulfilled. In other words, Pharaoh is asking Yaakov how many days of his life he truly lived to the fullest. Ultimately, those are the days that count -- not the days that go by aimlessly.

Every single day we say *Modeh Ani* as we thank Hashem for allowing us to wake up and live another day. Waking up in the morning is our validation from Hashem that He has so many opportunities for us to fulfill. He is giving us a chance to do great things in the world. It seems like an ambiguous and insurmountable task, but one step at a time, with one smile, one helping hand, or one “thank you,” we have the ability to make a difference.

We are now finished celebrating the incredible holiday of Chanukah, where we all joyously light candles commemorating the miracles that the Jewish people experienced. We know that we light the newest light first, from left to right, each night adding a new candle. This continuous increase correlates to how we all strive to grow every day: grow in our studying, grow in our faith in Hashem, and grow in our efforts to make the world a better place. We should all continue to grow, not only during Chanukah, but every day so we can live each day with purpose.

This is exactly what Pharaoh was asking Yaakov. He was asking how many days Yaakov truly lived to fulfill his great potential. And this is exactly what we should be focusing on every day. Instead of spending those minutes watching your feed

grow on Instagram, spend those minutes focusing on how you’re personally trying to grow. Spread your light that you have in the world, and completely fulfill your potential.

# IT’S NEVER TOO LATE

SAMANTHA HENNER ('20)

In last week’s parsha, Parshat Miketz, as a result of a famine in the brothers’ hometown, they traveled to Mitzrayim, leaving their youngest brother, Binyamin, at home with their father Yaakov. In response to the family’s request for food, Yosef asks Yehuda to bring Binyamin to Mitzrayim, where he would be placed in prison. Yehuda knows that his father would be devastated and heartbroken to see Binyamin go, since he was already mourning the “death” of Yosef which Yehuda took part in. Yehuda finally gets permission from Yaakov to take Binyamin. So, in this week’s parsha, Parshat Vayigash, Yehuda tells Yosef that he “pledged himself for the boy to my father,” meaning he would take full responsibility for Binyamin.

This is where Yehuda’s actions come full circle. Yehuda does perfect teshuva by refusing to let Binyamin go to jail, and even goes as far as to say that he would go in place of Binyamin. The pesukim make it obvious that Yehuda cares about his father’s feelings and regrets his previous actions.

In perek 44, pasuk 34, Yehuda strongly utters:

כִּי-אֵיךָ אֶעֱלֶה אֶל-אָבִי, וְהִנֵּעַר אֵינֶנּוּ אִתִּי:  
פֶּן אֲרָאָה בְרַע, אֲשֶׁר! מִצָּא אֶת-אָבִי

“For how can I go back to my father unless the boy is with me? Let me not be witness to the woe that would overtake my father!”

The Ramban explains that Yehuda did not want to trade places with his brother to benefit himself, but rather he did not want to return home without Binyamin and add to his father’s mourning.

How can we learn from this story and what life lessons can be taken away? In Yehuda’s quest for forgiveness from Hashem, he completely changed

and corrected his prior misbehavior and hurtful deeds. Sometimes when we transgress we think it may be impossible for Hashem to forgive us. However, we learn from this parsha that we can always do teshuva. Even though Yehuda committed a horrible act by selling his brother, he realized the error of his ways and, when given the opportunity, he did not repeat his offense and protected his younger brother Binyamin. We learn from Parshat Vayigash that sincere expressions of teshuva and change of character are never too little or too late.

## QUESTION CLARITY

ELISHEVA GREENE ('20)

The ideas and words cited in this Dvar Torah are based on the words of Rabbi Twerski. From the moment the brothers set foot in Egypt they were bewildered by the inexplicable events that were occurring: Why is the viceroy accusing us of being spies? Where in the world did he get that absurd notion? Why is he insisting on our bringing our younger brother? Why did he take Shimon hostage? How did the money we paid for the grain get into our sacks? How does the viceroy know our birth order so precisely? Why the plot to accuse Binyamin of thievery? With only two words, all of their worries and questions were answered, אָנִי יוֹסֵף -- "I am Yosef" (45:3).

Many times problems in our lives are big and worrisome but they can also be solved with short answers. As teenagers and students, we are encouraged to ask questions and figure out how we understand life. Sometimes the answers to these questions are more complicated but there is little need for these complex explanations because they are often too difficult to understand. The Chofetz Chaim says that one day Hashem will reveal Himself to us and will answer our questions with only two words, "Ani Hashem". Through these words, we will be able to understand everything and then all of our worries will be understood and everything will fall into place like a jigsaw puzzle. This is what happened for Yosef and his brothers when the two little words, "Ani Yosef," are used. Once we hear the simple answer, only then everything will make sense, but only in time will we be able to find these answers.



# Staff

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LEORA WINOGRAD ('21)

### DESIGN DIRECTOR

CHANI KAMINETSKY ('20)

### EDITORS

YONI KURTZ ('20)

BATSHEVA SHEKHTER ('20)

AKIVA ROSENTHAL ('20)

MAX FROHLICH ('21)

YARDEN RINDSBERG ('21)

### MONTHLY CONTRIBUTORS

BATHSHEVA SHEKHTER ('20)

YAFFA SHEKHTER ('20)

YONI KURTZ ('20)

ASHIRA MEYEROWITZ ('21)

BENNY FRANK ('21)

ELIANA BROIDE ('21)

NAOMI REICHENBERG ('22)

MEIR SCHOCHET ('21)

ABBY DENNIS ('20)

ATARA KEEHN ('23)

DONIE ZAK ('21)

### FACULTY ADVISOR

RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

### DEVELOPERS

PENINA KAHANE ('22)

CHANA SCHANDELSON ('22)

A KYHS PARSHA PUBLICATION



RAVH@YESHIVAHS.ORG