

# Parasha 11: Vayigash (And Came Near) B'reshet/Genesis 44:18 – 47:27)

\*All Scripture References from The Orthodox Jewish Bible - Referred to as OJB – unless otherwise noted

## Joe Snipes (Torah Teacher) Gates To Zion Ministries



In our Torah parasha for this week, we have Yosef/Joseph '*revealing himself*' to his brothers. As we saw in our parasha from last week, Yosef's/Joseph's brothers were still unaware of who they were dealing with. Yosef/Joseph '*recognized*' them, but they were still '*in the dark*' as to his own identity. This is about to change in our study this week.

There is still a '*process*' at work that Yosef/Joseph has '*set in motion*' so that he might know if there had truly been a change in his brothers. He needed to know if there was any change at all in their hearts, and their relationship with one another. Or, were they still the same selfish, wanton, conniving brood who had sold him into slavery so many years before? Everything Yosef/Joseph had been orchestrating since his brothers first came to Mitzrayim/Egypt to buy food was meant to arrive at this moment. What we are about to read will settle the matter in Yosef's/Joseph's heart. It will lead to his '*revealing his true identity*' to his brothers, and the result of what that moment will bring.

## Yehudah's History

We have watched as each of the brothers who stood in line for the place of '*bechor/firstborn*' in the family failed to '*prove themselves*' worthy of that honor. Reu'ben/Reuben failed in relation to his father's concubine, his mother Leah's handmaid. Shimon and Levi failed in the handling of their sister Dinah's situation with the men of Sh'chem. Finally, the place of honor becomes Yehudah's/Judah's to prove himself worthy of receiving. The position of '*bechor/firstborn*' was of great importance within the family unit, because the one who filled that place became responsible to be the '*go'el/kinsman redeemer*'. He would control the '*family inheritance*' and '*ensure*' that all within the family were taken care of.

In the outset, Yehudah/Judah had not shown much hope in this effort. Reu'ben/Reuben had initially made a somewhat weak attempt at trying to '*regain his place as bechor/firstborn*'. He did try to deliver his brother Yosef/Joseph from the '*murderous plot*' of his other brothers. However, he didn't put himself out in any real way. He did succeed in a '*momentary reprieve*' for his brother Yosef/Joseph in getting the rest of his brothers not to kill him. He '*persuaded them*' instead to put him in a pit. Yet, it '*appears*' his motives were more than just for Yosef's/Joseph's sake. It was more about '*keeping the hope alive*' of being able to look good in his father's eyes. The end result being '*reconsideration*' for the '*familial place of authority as bechor/firstborn*' he had lost. Finally, Yehudah/Judah steps in and suggests that rather than kill Yosef/Joseph, they should pull him out of the pit and sell him. It would keep his blood off of their hands and they would all profit

from the scheme. The brothers agreed with Yehudah/Judah, and they worked out an elaborate tale to tell their father Ya'akob/Jacob. They shredded Yosef's/Joseph's priestly coat, dipped it in the blood of goats and told their father that a wild beast had devoured him.

Then, we have the *'seemingly'* strange, placed story of Yehudah's/Judah's situation with his daughter-in-law Tamar? She had married his oldest son Er, who had died without a son to carry on his name and inheritance. Yehudah/Judah then asked his next oldest son, Onan, to take his brother's widow in *'levirate marriage'* in order to provide a son to *'carry on Er's name'*. Onan fails to follow through and dies under YHWH's judgment. Finally, Yehudah/Judah steps in and promises to give his youngest son, Shelah, to his daughter-in-law once he is old enough. However, in the *'process of time'*, Yehudah/Judah fears that his youngest son will die too. So, he does not follow through with his promise. It's then that Tamar takes things into her own hand. She disguises herself as a prostitute and sets herself veiled on the crossroads by the way her father-in-law is traveling to Timnah. Yehudah/Judah sees her, lies with her and agrees to leave *'three of his possessions as a surety for payment'* which he vows to send later. When he does send his servant with the payment, the woman is not found. No one seems to know of anyone that meets that description. So, he returns to Yehudah/Judah, tells him of what has happened, and time goes by.

After about three months, it is reported to Yehudah/Judah that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant. In a rage of supposed righteous indignation, Yehudah/Judah demands that Tamar be brought to him and burned alive for playing the harlot. **\*\*[An allusion to the judgment given later in the written Torah, for the daughter of a priest who brings reproach on her family for the sexual sin of harlotry. (Wayikra/Leviticus 21:9) In the 'Jewish Traditional Writings' [Talmud], Tamar's lineage is traced to Shem, Noach's son. He is identified as the 'physical priest/king of Salem', Melchi-Tzedek/Melchisedec, who is a 'prophetic picture/type' of our blessed Master Yeshua. (Ivrim/Hebrews 7:1-3) Thus, Tamar's lineage identifies her in relation to the 'priestly line', and the reason for Yehudah's/Judah's demand for judgment of death by fire]** When she arrives, she brings forth the *'three possessions'* Yehudah/Judah, unbeknownst, had given her in pledge to pay her for her services. They were:

- 1) His signet
- 2) The signet cord by which it was carried, and
- 3) The staff

Tamar says she is pregnant by the one to whom they belong, and Yehudah/Judah confesses that they are his!

Yehudah's/Judah's sin was:

- 1) For not providing his son Shelah to Tamar to *'raise up'* a son as he had vowed
- 2) For the sin of having sexual relations with a *'supposed prostitute'* which turned out to be his own daughter-in-law. All of which was now common knowledge

As a result, Yehudah/Judah would suffer humiliation before his family and all who knew him. Some would ask, why is this story, which seems so out of place, related here?

The answer is simple. The Torah reveals YHWH's *'standard for holiness'*. It identifies *'what'* sin is. It also teaches clearly that there are *'consequences'* for those sins. At the same time, the Torah also provides a way to deal with our sins and promises redemption and forgiveness for us when we sin. The Torah is revealing to us the beginning of Yehudah's/Judah's *'transformation'*. He is being delivered *'from selfishness and pride'*. From being an *'unrighteous man'* to becoming a *'man of honor'*. A man who is worthy of being the *'bechor/firstborn and go'el/kinsman redeemer'* of his family.

We see this transformation in three ways. First, he willingly confesses that he has sinned toward his daughter-in-law Tamar when confronted by her. Also, that she was, in fact, more righteous than he. Second, he never touched her again in a sexual manner, and thirdly, one of the two children from his relationship with Tamar, Peretz, is included in the lineage through which our blessed Mashiach Yeshua will come. His name means *'breaker'* and is *'prophetic of Messiah'* who comes to *'break the yoke of sinfulness'* from off Yisrael and all mankind.

## Yehudah's Final Test

In last week's parasha, Yosef/Joseph is setting up what will be the *'final test'* of his brothers and in particular, that of his brother Yehudah/Judah. This *'test'* will show the *'true condition'* of their heart. The special *'divining cup'* which belonged to Yosef/Joseph, **\*\*[It is not recorded that he used it. It was a custom of Mitzrayim/Egypt for one in his position to have]**, was purposefully hidden by Yosef's/Joseph's steward in the belongings of his brother Binyamin/Benjamin. Having once left to return home, Yosef/Joseph sent his servant to stop his brothers and search for the cup. Of course, it was found among Binyamin's/Benjamin's possessions.

The brothers were all taken emotionally by this event. They began to tear their clothes and cry. Then, they returned to Yosef/Joseph and were brought before him. Now, this is where we pick up in our parasha for this week.

Yehudah/Judah, who is being prepared to take his place as the *'first born/ go'el/kinsman redeemer'* of the family, begins to rise to the occasion. Yet, there is more that is going on here than meets the eye. We are given this awareness by how Yehudah/Judah approaches Yosef/Joseph, though he still does not know who he is. Look at what happens,

***"Then Yehudah came near unto him, and said, Oh, adoni [my master], let thy eved [servant] speak now a davar [word] in oznei [your ears] adoni [my master], and let not thine anger burn against thy eved [servant]; for thou art even like Pharaoh." (B'reshet/Genesis 44:18 OJB-definitions mine)***

You must ask yourself, why would Yehudah/Judah ask to *'speak a word'* in the ears of this Mitzri/Egyptian viceroy at this point? As of yet, he had no idea that this was his brother. He had no idea that the one to whom he was speaking could even understand what he was saying. Yet, he did not let that deter him. Yehudah/Judah drew near and spoke any way. There is a point when the *'words'* are not as important as the *'spirit'* in which they are spoken. This is apparently Yehudah's/Judah's intent. However, in the account of this event in the *'Aramaic Targum Yerushalmi'*, **[One of the Aramaic paraphrased seferim/books, an extension of the written**

**Torah, that provides in-depth accounts of events recorded in the Torah proper], we find this...**

*'Yehudah approached him, raging in words, but subdued in tongue, he roared like a lion and said, 'I implore, my lord, let your servant now speak a word, and my lord, let not your anger be kindled against your servant. Did you not say to us from the first time we came to you, 'From before the Lord I fear?' And now your judgments have turned to become like the judgments of Pharaoh your master.' And he said, 'Behold now, our Lord, the first time we came, you said to us, 'From before the Lord I fear', and now you say, 'Of Pharaoh I am afraid.' Perhaps it has not been said to you, and perhaps you have not heard about Shimon and Levy, my two brothers, and their deeds in the fortress of Sh'chem. That they entered it and killed every male in it, because within the fortress they defiled our sister Dinah in it, who is not counted among the tribes, and who has no portion or inheritance in the division of the land! As for me, my strength is greater than the strength of Shimon and Levy. I vow if I draw my sword from the scabbard I will not return it till I have killed all the Egyptians. I will begin with you and I will end with Pharaoh your master, because I am as honorable as you are, and my father is as honorable as Pharaoh your master is. I swear to you by the life of my father, as you swear by the life of Pharaoh your master. If I draw my sword from within the scabbard, I will not return it until the land of Egypt is filled with the slain, until we make the entire land of Egypt desolate of inhabitants. With you I will begin, and with Pharaoh your master, by whom you swear, I will end. For the sake of doing so, I will act, despite the unwillingness of my father. Have you not heard? Have you not been told what my two brothers Shimon and Levy did in the fortress of Sh'chem, which was at peace? They entered into it and killed every male at the edge of the sword because they defiled Dinah, our sister, who is not reckoned among the tribes, who is not about to inherit with us. How much more so for the sake of our brother, who is counted with us among the tribes, who will receive a portion and will inherit with us in the division of the land! How much more so, because I am harsher than they are, because my strength is greater than theirs and because I have posted bail for the child before my father. Perhaps, you have not heard, or you have not been told, that we are kings and rulers in the land of Cana'an. As you and Pharaoh are rulers in the land of Egypt, so I and Ya'akov my father are rulers in the land of Cana'an'.*

I quoted all the above, because if you read it and pay attention to the *'inflections of the text'*, you will *'feel the passion'* with which Yehudah/Judah was speaking. It is powerful and even without understanding what was said, the passion provides its own interpretation. Yet, though Yehudah/Judah was unaware, Yosef/Joseph **DID UNDERSTAND** his brother's words! What he felt and heard, provided *'clear proof'* that there was indeed a *'change'* within the heart of his brothers. Most importantly, within Yehudah/Judah. This *'proved'* that he had passed the *'final test'* of character. It was the *'test'* that would determine what was about to happen next.

## **Yosef Reveals Himself To His Brothers**

***"Then Yosef could not control himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause kol ish [all the men] to go out from me. And there stood no ish [man] with him, while Yosef made himself known unto his achim [brothers]." (B'resheet /Genesis 45:1 OJB-definitions mine)***

Now, the moment had come. Yosef/Joseph is standing with his brothers. All the emotion that has been pent up for so long is about to be released. Beloved, there has been within so many of us, such a *'deep seated'* desire for the Jewish people to accept us. Yet, we did not fully understand why. There has literally been, as it were, a jealousy of their *'ancient relationship'* with YHWH. Even though we, as believer's, have an understanding of YHWH's *'redemptive purposes'* through our blessed Master Yeshua, unfortunately, most Jewish people have not yet been able to experience this. Now, in YHWH's mercy, we are coming to *'realize'* our own *'forgotten connectedness to Yisrael'* as the *'non-Jewish house of Yosef/Ephraim'*. We know why the desire for our *'Jewish brothers to know us and receive us'* has been there. But there is so much history, *'deep waters'* that have run beneath that bridge: such *'hard feelings'* that have been the bane of our separation for over 2730 years. Yet, the promise is there, given by YHWH through the nevi'im/prophets. The day when those things will *'pass away'* and the brothers will be rejoined.

*“And it shall come to pass in Yom HaHu [That Day], that Adonoi [Master YHWH] shall set His yad [hand] again the second time to recover the She'ar (Remnant) of His people, which shall be left [as survivors], from Assyria, and from Mitzrayim [Egypt], and from Patros, and from Kush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Chamat, and from the islands of the sea.*

*And He shall raise up a nes [a banner, i.e., send a signal] for the Goyim [Nations], and shall assemble the outcasts of Yisroel **\*\*[this is the house of Ephraim]**, and gather together the dispersed of Yehudah **\*\*[the house of Judah]** from the four corners of ha'aretz [earth]. The kinah (envy, jealousy) also of Ephrayim [Ephraim] shall depart, and the adversaries of Yehudah [Judah] shall be cut off; **EPHRAIYIM [EPHRAIM] SHALL NOT ENVY YEHUDAH [JUDAH], AND YEHUDAH [JUDAH] SHALL NOT HARRASS EPHRAYIM [EPHRAIM].**” (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 11:11-13 OJB- *emphasis/definitions mine*)*

Just as in our Torah portion, Yosef/Joseph will *'reveal himself'* to his brothers **\*\*[Note- the phrase *'reveal himself'* was not to be in words alone. It meant, that Yosef *'exposed'* to them his *'circumcision, the covenantal sign'* of YHWH!]** Even then, it will be a *'process'*. Yosef's/Joseph's brothers were not quite as excited about this event as he was. They felt that in their case, it was not as good as it seemed. After all, the things they had done were still there between them. Now, with their younger brother having such a place of power, what a most opportune time for him to exact his revenge?

However, nothing could have been further from Yosef's/Joseph's mind. Through the *'process of watching his brother's reactions during their testing'*, Yosef/Joseph *'knew'* they had changed. He had already forgiven them in his heart and told them so. Yosef/Joseph, through the operation of the principle of the *'execution stake'* had been brought to *'see'* the sovereignty of YHWH in all that had transpired.

*“And Yosef said unto his achim (brethren), I am Yosef; doth Avi [my Father] yet live? And his achim [brothers] could not answer him; for they were shocked with dismay at his presence. And Yosef said unto his achim [brothers], Come near to me, now. And they came near. And he said, I am Yosef achichem (your brother), whom ye sold into Mitzrayim [Egypt]. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me here; for Elohim [the Mighty One] did send me before you to save life.*



*For these two years hath the ra'av (famine) been in the land; and yet there are chamesh shanim (five years), in the which shall neither be plowing nor harvest. And Elohim [the Mighty One] sent me before you to save you a she'erit (remnant) in the earth, and to save life for you by a peletah gedolah (great deliverance, escape). So now it was not you that sent me here, but HaElohim [The Mighty One]; and He hath made me as an Av [Father] to Pharaoh, and adon [master] of all his Bais [House], and Moshel [Governor] throughout kol Eretz Mitzrayim. [all the Land of Egypt]" (B'resheet/Genesis 45:3-8 OJB- definitions mine)*

What a blessed moment that has finally come! Yosef/Joseph has 'revealed himself' to his brothers, and the 'full reunion' with his father Ya'akov/Jacob is set in motion. The emotions flow as Yosef/Joseph continues to express his love for his brothers, especially Binyamin/Benjamin.

*"And he fell upon the neck of Binyamin [Benjamin] achiv [his brother], and wept; and Binyamin [Benjamin] wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his achim [brothers], and wept upon them; and after that his achim [brothers] talked with him." (B'resheet/Genesis 45:14-15- definitions mine)*

## The Full Reunion Begins

Now, I think before we go on, it is right to point out one thing from the above scripture that is very pertinent to our lesson. It is found in the last sentence, '...after that his achim [brothers] talked with him.' You can see that YHWH has already begun the 'healing process' between Yosef/Joseph and his brothers. If you remember from our earlier parasha, there was so much 'hostility present' within the hearts of Yosef's/Joseph's brothers. We read,

*"And when his Achim [Brothers] saw that Avihem [Their Father] loved him more than all his Achim [brothers], they hated him, and COULD NOT SPEAK WITH SHALOM [PEACE] UNTO HIM." (B'resheet/Genesis 37:4 OJB- emphasis/definitions mine)*

When communication is restored in relationships that have been strained, it is a 'sign' of the 'beginning of restoration'. There is a way yet to go for things to be fully rectified between these brothers, but the healing has begun.

The rest of the chapters of our parasha are about Yosef/Joseph sending his brothers to bring his father, Ya'akov/Yisrael, to him. It is a wonderful event, as the reality of Yosef's/Joseph's being alive breaks over Ya'akov/Jacob. Yosef/Joseph at Pharaoh's behest sends wagons and supplies for his father, brothers and their families to make the journey to Mitzrayim/Egypt. Yosef's/Joseph's reunion with his father is a beautiful moment indeed. It is a time of blessed reunion, restoration and rectification for the family. It also gives a picture of the 'reunion' that will one day happen between our blessed Master Yeshua, the True King/Messiah of all Yisrael and His own Jewish brethren. A time, when the 'broken/divided house of Yisrael' will stand as ONE, WHOLE HOUSE. The scriptures do indeed testify of this great event.

*"And now, saith Hashem [YHWH] My Yotzer [Maker] from the beten [womb] to be Eved [Servant] of Him, to bring back Ya'akov [Jacob] to Him, so that Yisroel [Yisrael] would be*

*gathered to Him; so shall I be honored in the eyes of Hashem [YHWH] and Elohai [My Mighty One] shall be My oz (strength). ]*,\*\*[The rabbinic understanding of this is to be referring to The Mashiach/Messiah]

*And He said, It is too small a thing that Thou shouldest be Eved [Servant] to Me to raise up the Shivtei Ya'akov [Tribes of Jacob], and to bring back the Netzurei Yisroel (Preserved of Israel, the She'erit/Remnant); I will also give Thee for Ohr Goyim [Light for the Nations], that Thou mayest be My Yeshuah (Salvation) unto the ketzeh ha'aretz [ends of the earth].”*  
(Yeshayahu/Isaiah 49:5-6 OJB- *definitions mine*)

*“Then shall the Bnei Yehudah [Sons of Yehudah/Judah- southern house] and the Bnei Yisroel [Sons of Yisrael- northern house- Yosef/Ephraim] be gathered together, and appoint for them Rosh Echad [One Head] \*\*[The rabbinic understanding of this is, to be referring to The Mashiach/Messiah- see Yeshayahu/Isaiah chap. 11; Hoshea/Hosea 3:5], and they shall come up out of ha'aretz [the land]; for gadol [great] shall be the Yom Yizre'el (Day of Jezreel [G-d/Elohim/The Mighty One will sow]).”* (Hoshea/Hosea 1:11 (2:2)- OJB- *definitions mine*)

May it come quickly and in our day. Amein! Remember our 'Hebraic idiom' we learned earlier:

*Ma'aseh Avot Siman Le'vanim...  
The deeds of the fathers are signposts for the children*

We say the following blessing as we continue each week's study of Torah...

*Chazak u'Barukh...  
Strength and Blessing!*

## [Parasha 11: Vayigash/And Came Near](#)