

Parshas Vayigahsh in a Nutshell

(Genesis 44:18–47:27)

Judah approaches Joseph to plead for the release of Benjamin, offering himself as a slave to the Egyptian ruler in Benjamin's stead. Upon witnessing his brothers' loyalty to one another, Joseph reveals his identity to them. "I am Joseph," he declares. "Is my father still alive?"

The brothers are overcome by shame and remorse, but Joseph comforts them. "It was not you who sent me here," he says to them, "but G-d. It has all been ordained from Above to save us, and the entire region, from famine."

The brothers rush back to Canaan with the news. Jacob comes to Egypt with his sons and their families—seventy souls in all—and is reunited with his beloved son after 22 years. On his way to Egypt he receives the divine promise: "Fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."

(continued next column)



Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, December 26
Eastern Standard Time

Earliest Tallis.....6:18 AM
Latest Morning Shema.....9:36 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:21 PM
Plag Hamincha.....3:41 PM
Earliest Evening Shema5:06 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – Dec 25 / Teves 10

Candle Lighting.....4:16 pm

Mincha4:20 pm

Shabbos Day – Dec 26 / Teves 11

Shacharis.....9:30 am*

Torah Reading10:30 am

Rabbi Drasha11:05 am

Mincha4:20 pm

Rabbi's Drasha.....4:40 pm

Shabbos Ends5:20 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:36 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday)9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin

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Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Pharaoh gives Jacob's family the fertile county of Goshen to settle, and the children of Israel prosper in their Egyptian exile. ❖

**Join us each
weekday morning
Mon-Fri as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

**Thank You to:
The Baal Korei,
And
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"The soul of man is a lamp of G-d" (Proverbs 20:27). Just like the flame of the lamp strains upwards, seeking to tear free of the wick and rise heavenward — though this would spell its own demise —so, too, does the G-dly soul in man constantly strive to tear free of the body and the material existence, and be nullified within its source in G-d.

--Tanya

Chassidic Masters

“Powerful Insights From the Rebbe”

Compiled by Mordechai Rubin

1. The Purpose of it All

This Torah reading tells us how Jacob and his family made their journey from the Land of Israel to meet Joseph in Egypt. Jacob was understandably hesitant about leaving the Holy Land, and it was not until he received a pledge of assurance from G-d that he resolved to do so. But why did G-d want this? And why does He want us, Jacob’s descendants, to continue living in the different Egypts of our widespread Diaspora?

The Jews were created with a mission: to make this world a dwelling for G-d. Within the material substance of the world are contained sparks of G-dliness. Every piece of food we eat, every person we meet or situation we encounter is maintained by G-dly energy. Our mission is to tap that energy and use it for a positive purpose. For example, when we recite a blessing before or after eating and use the vitality that the food generates for a G-dly intent, we fulfill G-d’s objective in creating that food.

It’s like a fruit and a peel. The fruit — in the analogue, the G-dly spark — is what is of primary importance, but for that fruit to exist in our material world, it needs a peel — the material substance of our world.

This is the intent of the Jewish people in the world — to refine the world by highlighting the existence of this spiritual dimension, to show — ourselves and others — that there is a fruit beneath the peel. For this purpose, the Jews have wandered from continent to continent and from land to land, seeking to reveal the G-dly life-force hidden in these places.

This process began with Jacob’s descent to Egypt. ❖

2. Reaching Beyond

In Joseph’s act of feeding his family in a time of famine, despite all their wrongs towards him, he has given us the power to reach beyond the surface of our fellow Jew, with all its superficial failings, and to penetrate to the core of his being and respond to its fundamental holiness. And when we treat another Jew in this way, we arouse that core of holiness in him, and in ourselves as well, so that in time it breaks through its coverings, and the essence of our soul stands revealed. ❖

3. Being an Entrepreneur

The conflict between Joseph and his brothers (led by Judah) was the conflict between a spiritual tradition and a new worldliness, between a community of shepherds and an entrepreneur. The brothers could not accept that a person can lead a worldly existence without becoming worldly, that a person can remain one with G-d while immersed in the affairs of the most depraved society on earth.

In this conflict, Joseph was to emerge the victor. The spiritual seclusion that characterized the first three generations of Jewish history was destined to end; Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, where the “smelting pit” of exile was to forge their descendants into the nation of Israel. As Joseph had foreseen in his dreams, his brother and his father bowed to him, prostrating their approach to his. Jacob had understood the significance of these dreams all along, and had awaited their fulfillment; Joseph’s brothers, who found it more difficult to accept that the era of the shepherd was drawing to a close, fought him for twenty-two bitter years, until they too came to accept that the historic challenge of Israel was to be the challenge of living a spiritual life in a material environment.

Nevertheless, it was Judah, not Joseph, who was chosen by Jacob to establish the house of learning that was to serve as the source of Torah knowledge for the Israelites in Egypt.

The Jew lives in a material world, but his roots are planted in the soil of unadulterated spirituality. In his daily life he must be a Joseph, but his education must be provided by a Judah. ❖

G-d deals with man measure for measure: because Judah had sold Joseph into slavery, he was now compelled to offer himself to Joseph as a slave.
-- (Abarbanel)

**Please remember Anshei Lubavitch
in your end-of-year donations.**

From Our Sages

Judah approached him . . . (Genesis 44:18)

Said Rabbi Yehudah: The verb “he approached” (vayigash) implies an approach to battle, as in the verse “So Joab and the people that were with him approached unto battle” (II Samuel 10:13).

Rabbi Nechemiah said: The verb “he approached” implies a coming near for conciliation, as in the verse “Then the children of Judah approached Joshua” (Joshua 14:6).

The sages said: It implies coming near for prayer, as in the verse “It came to pass, at the time of the evening offering, that Elijah the prophet approached . . .” (I Kings, 18:36).

Rabbi Eleazar combined all these views Judah approached Joseph for all three, saying: If it be war, I approach for war; if it be conciliation, I approach for conciliation; if it be for entreaty, I approach to entreat.

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

[Jacob’s] heart fainted, for he did not believe them (Genesis 45:26)

Such is the liar’s fate: even when he speaks the truth, he is not believed. At first the sons of Jacob lied to their father when they dipped Joseph’s coat in the blood of a goat, and he believed them; but then when they told him the truth, he did not believe them.

-- (Avot d’Rabbi Nathan, ch. 30)

Jacob blessed Pharaoh (Genesis 47:10)

He blessed him that the Nile should rise at his feet and water the land; thus the famine ended after two years (instead of seven).

-- (Midrash Tanchuma; Rashi):6).



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Marc S. Berman, Esq.

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140 E. Ridgewood Ave.

Suite 415

Paramus, NJ 07652

Telephone: **(201) 797-4411**

msb@bermanlawoffice.com

www.bermanlawoffice.com

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Haftorah for Vayigash in a Nutshell

Ezekiel 37:15-28

This week's haftorah mentions the fusion of the kingdoms of Judah and Joseph during the Messianic Era, echoing the beginning of this week's Torah reading: "And Judah approached him [Joseph]."

The prophet Ezekiel shares a prophecy he received, in which G-d instructs him to take two sticks and to write one on, "For Judah and for the children of Israel his companions" and on the other, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions." After doing so he was told to put the two near each other, and G-d fused them into one stick.

G-d explains to Ezekiel that these sticks are symbolic of the House of Israel, that was divided into two (often warring) kingdoms: the Northern Kingdom that was established by Jeroboam, a member of the Tribe of Ephraim, and the Southern Kingdom, that remained under the reign of the Davidic (Judean) Dynasty. The fusing of the two sticks represented the merging of the kingdoms that will transpire during the Messianic Era — with the Messiah, a descendant of David, at the helm of this unified empire.

"So says the L-rd G-d: 'Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side, and I will bring them to their land. And I will make them into one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be to them all as a king...'"

The haftorah ends with G-d's assurance that "they shall dwell on the land that I have given to My servant, to Jacob, wherein your forefathers lived; and they shall dwell upon it, they and their children and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever." ❖

Just as we have complete confidence that God will certainly rebuild the ruins of Zion and Jerusalem, gather the dispersed of Israel from all corners of the world through the righteous Moshiach, and bring them joyfully to witness the rejoicing of Zion and Jerusalem, so do we trust that regarding the loss of the individual mourner, God will fulfill his promise, "Awake and rejoice, you who repose in the dust," and we will experience true joy when all are reunited with the future resurrection of the dead.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

