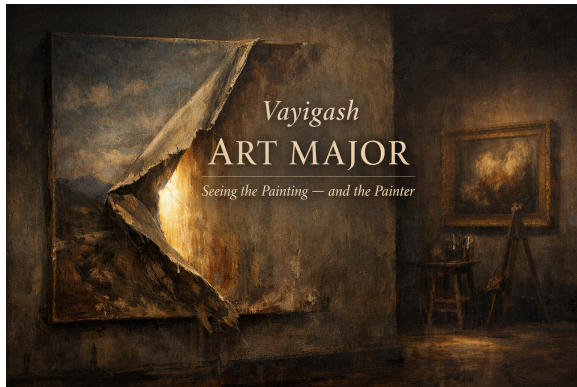


Rabbi Shlomo Farhi.com

SPREADING LIGHT AND
TORAH TO OUR AMAZING
BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN
AM YISRAEL



Vayigash — Art Major

I want to start with something that bothered me.

Not something big.
Not something mystical.
Not a “wow” idea.

A word.

Yosef keeps saying וַעֲתָה.

Now.

He says it once — fine.
People say “now” all the time.

But then he says it again.

And the second time, it starts to feel... strange.

“Now, don’t be sad.”

“Now, don’t be angry.”

“And now — you did not send me here.”

That last one doesn’t sit.

Because Yosef has been gone for twenty-two years.

Not a season.

Not a phase.

Not “we’ll talk when things calm down.”

Twenty-two years.

He was seventeen when he was taken.
A kid.

Sold.

Dragged away.

Passed from hand to hand.

Thrown into prison.

Forgotten.

This is not a misunderstanding.

This is an entire lifetime.

And now — now of all times — he says:
You didn’t send me here.

Why “now”?

If they didn’t send him now, they didn’t send him then.

And if they didn’t send him then — what exactly happened in that pit?

I want to sit in that question longer than we usually do.

Because we rush to resolve discomfort.
We don’t like tension.

We don't like living in an unanswered question.

But Rabbi Farhi doesn't rush it.
And Yosef doesn't either.

This Is Not a Silver Lining

There's a common religious move people make when life hurts.

Someone hurts you. Something painful happens.
And eventually we say:

"Okay... it was bad... but look what came out of it."

Silver lining.
Growth.
Perspective.

That can be true.

But Yosef is not saying that.

He is not saying:
"You sent me to Egypt and Hashem made it work."

He is saying something much more uncomfortable:

You never sent me anywhere.

That's not comfort.
That's a complete redefinition of how the world works.

Because if Yosef is right, then a lot of what we call "cause and effect" is actually "illusion and interpretation."

Selling Is Real — Sending Is Not Yours

Yosef does not deny their action.

He looks at them and says:

כִּי מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי
You sold me.

He doesn't soften it.
He doesn't excuse it.
He doesn't turn it into a therapy line.

Selling is real.
Selling hurts.
Selling carries responsibility.

But then he changes the verb.

And the Torah is too precise for that to be random.

כִּי לְמַחְיָה שָׁלַחַנִי אֱלֹקִים
Hashem sent me.

Do you hear the difference?

Selling is an act.
Sending is direction.

Selling is "I did something."
Sending is "this is where it had to go."

A human being can act in a way that *could* have led somewhere.
But only Hashem can decide where it leads.

This is the line Yosef draws:

You did the action.
You did not control the outcome.

And we resist that line.

Because if that line is true, it means we've
been handing people power they never had.

So Why Does Yosef Keep Saying “Now”?

Because “now” isn't about time.

It's about vision.

Only now, when you see where the story
landed, can you admit what was true the
whole time.

You were involved.
You were never in charge.

And Yosef repeats it because he knows:
even when you say it, you don't really
believe it.

Not yet.

We believe it when we're calm.
We don't believe it when we're hurt.

The Pittsburgh Rebbe — The Steering Wheel That Saved a Family

Let me slow this one down — because this
story isn't a mashal on the side.
This is the key that unlocks the whole
parsha.

The Pittsburgh Rebbe once got into a car.

Nothing dramatic.
No announcement.

He sits down... and immediately something
feels off.

He looks forward — and freezes.

There are two steering wheels.

Not a driving instructor setup.
Not a child's toy.

Two full, adult steering wheels.

Same size.
Same shape.
Same feel.

One where it belongs.
And one... right next to it.

He doesn't say anything right away.

He just looks.
And then looks again.

Finally, he turns to the driver and says:

“I have to ask you something.
I've been in many cars in my life...
I've never seen this before.”

The driver starts laughing.

“Rabbi, let me tell you a story.”

Hashem blessed them with a child who
was... how do you say it nicely?
Majnoon.

From when he was very young, it was dangerous to drive with him in the car.

Not annoying.
Not distracting.

Dangerous.

The child decided he was the driver.

Wherever he sat, he would unbuckle himself, lean forward, and grab the steering wheel.

They tried yelling.
They tried reasoning.
They tried restraining him.

Nothing worked.

It became *sakanat nefashot* — real danger.

So they had to think.

What do you do with a child who refuses to accept reality?

You don't fight him head-on.

You outsmart him.

They installed a second steering wheel.

And here's the genius part.

It wasn't fake-looking.
It wasn't a toy.

It was identical.

Same resistance.
Same turning.
Same clicking.

The child could grab it, spin it, yank it — and feel completely in control.

Meanwhile, the car went exactly where the real driver wanted.

The driver looks at the Rebbe and says:

"This steering wheel saved our family's life."

The Rebbe sits back quietly.

You can almost picture him staring forward.

And after a moment he says:

"Yishtabach Shemo..."

"This finally explains the world."

What That Story Is Really Saying

From inside that car, the child is not pretending.

He's not acting.

He *feels* like he's driving.

His arms are tense.
His hands are tight.
His whole body is invested.

And that's what makes this such a perfect *mashal*.

Because Hashem doesn't give us a fake wheel that looks fake.

He gives us a wheel that looks real.

It turns when you turn it.
It clicks.
It offers resistance.

It feels like effort matters.

And effort does matter — just not in the way we think.

Here's the part that is hard to live with:

Hashem wants you to be engaged.
He does not want you to be the author.

Which is why he doesn't remove the wheel.

He leaves it there.

So you can show up.
So you can choose.
So you can become.

Hishtadlut Without Panic

This is where people get afraid.

Because if I'm not driving... what am I doing?

You're doing your part.

You're showing up.

You're being responsible.

You're making effort that makes sense:

- to support your family
- to protect yourself
- to improve your middot
- to learn Torah

- to do ma'asim tovim

But you're not doing it because "if I do X, the world must give me Y."

That's not emunah — that's entitlement dressed up as responsibility.

Real emunah says:

"I will do what's right to do — and I will let Hashem decide what the right outcome is."

That's not easy.

It's simple to say.
It's hard to live.

Why Success and Failure Don't Behave

Now the shiur hits a nerve.

Because if this is true, you'll start noticing what you already noticed — but didn't want to admit.

You'll see:

- people with incredible education who are unemployed
- people with "everything going for them" who can't catch a break
- people with minimal preparation who somehow win
- people who barely work who somehow have what others can't achieve

And it stings.

Because we built our nervous system
around a belief:

“If I do the right steps, I control the result.”

But Yosef is telling you:
You don’t.

You do the steps.
Hashem decides the destination.

That’s the only way the world makes sense.

“You Sold Me — You Didn’t Send Me”

Now Yosef’s line lands with weight.

He’s not saying:
“You’re innocent.”

He’s saying:
“You don’t own my life.”

You sold me — yes.
That’s your act. That’s your sin.

But you didn’t send me — meaning:
You never had the power to decide where
my life was going.

If Hashem wanted me home, I’d be home.
If Hashem wanted this story stopped, it
would stop.

He let your act exist.
He never gave you authorship.

That’s why Yosef can say it without rage.

Not because it didn’t hurt — but because he
refuses to hand them the keys to his
destiny.

Art Basel — What Real Art Actually Is

Let me slow this down, because this part
matters.

They tell a story about a country that
decided to run a competition.
A serious one.

Who is the greatest artist in the country?

Round after round, it comes down to two
finalists.

The judges walk into the gallery and stop in
front of the first painting.

And suddenly — something unbelievable
happens.

A bird flies in.

It swoops down, lands on the painting, and
starts pecking at the fruit.

Why?

Because the grapes are painted so
realistically that the bird thinks they’re real.

The room erupts.

People are clapping.
Laughing.
Staring.

“It fooled a bird!”

Everyone already knows who won.

The judges turn and walk toward the second artist.

But his painting is covered.

The artist looks uncomfortable.

They ask him,
“Are you ready to present?”

He hesitates.

“I don’t think I should.”

“After what we just saw... just give him the prize.”

The judges are confused.
Then irritated.

Finally, one of them walks over and rips the cover off.

And the room goes silent.

Because the painting is the cover.

Every fold.
Every shadow.

A painting of a covered painting.

And suddenly they understand.

The first artist fooled a bird.
The second fooled every human being in the room.

They hand him the prize.

“Fooling animals is impressive,” they say.
“But fooling people — that’s real art.”

Ein Tzur Keilokeinu — Ein Tzayar Keilokeinu

Now the Gemara makes sense.

The pasuk says:

אֵין צוֹר כְּאַלְקֵינוּ
There is no Rock like Hashem.

And Chazal say:
Don’t read it that way.

Read it as:

אֵין צַיֵּר כְּאַלְקֵינוּ
There is no Painter like Hashem.

Here’s the question that should bother you:

If Hashem wanted to say painter — why not just say painter?

And the answer in the shiur is sharp:

Hashem can only be your Rock
if you first recognize He is the Painter.

If you believe the painting is reality, you won’t lean on the Rock.

You’ll lean on:

- money
- control
- people
- status
- plans

And when those collapse, you’ll say: “Where is Hashem?”

But Yosef is telling you:
He was here the whole time.

You were leaning on a painting.

The Person Who Hurt You

Now we reach the moment that's hard to read because it's hard to live.

Yosef asks you to do something that sounds impossible.

To look at the person who hurt you... and say:

"You did not send me here."

Not as a slogan.
Not as a coping trick.

As a truth.

This doesn't mean they didn't do something.

They sold you.
They swung.

But their swing doesn't cross into Hashem's territory.

Their action can exist.
Their action cannot decide your destination.

And you can feel how much that changes resentment.

Because resentment is often built on one assumption:

"They controlled my life."

Yosef says:
They never did.

The Dog and the Stick

The Torah says:
לא תקום ולא תטור
Don't take revenge. Don't carry a grudge.

And the Rishonim explain it with a mashal that is almost insulting:

A dog gets hit with a stick.

What does the dog do?

It bites the stick.

Again and again.

But the stick didn't choose anything.

The stick didn't decide to hurt the dog.

Revenge is biting wood.

It might feel satisfying for a moment — but it's based on confusion.

You're fighting the wrong thing.

You're reacting to the tool, not the source.

And that's why Yosef's line is so powerful:

Yes — you sold me.
No — you didn't send me.

Why Hashem Must Hide

If Hashem made this obvious, there would be no test.

So He paints.

Perfectly.

He paints villains that look like villains.
He paints situations that feel airtight.
He paints consequences that seem unavoidable.

He paints a second steering wheel so convincing that you don't even question it.

And then He waits:

Will you notice?

Will you keep turning harder — or will you realize who is driving?

That is the nisayon.

The Final Gallery

One day — in the time of Mashiach — the shiur says there will be a gallery.

Not to shame us.

To reveal.

All the paintings Hashem ever painted.

And we'll finally see:

"Oh... that was You."

"I recognize this style... I just didn't know it was Yours."

That recognition isn't trivia.
It's redemption.

ברוך השם לעולם אמן ואמן.

Shabbat Takeaway — From the Shiur

Yosef is not teaching forgiveness.
He is teaching causality.

You can be hurt by someone
without them being the author of your life.

People can sell you.
They cannot send you.

Hashem gives every person a steering wheel that looks real, feels real, and demands effort — but only one wheel is connected.

Our job is to show up, to act responsibly, to engage fully.

Outcomes belong to Hashem alone.

When we confuse effort with control, we suffer unnecessarily.

When we mistake the painting for reality, we lean on illusions.

But when we recognize Hashem as the Painter, He becomes our Rock.

One day, all the paintings will be revealed.
And we will realize that nothing ever sent us anywhere except Hashem Himself.

That clarity — is redemption.

Shabbat Table

Discussion — Vayigash:

Art Major

1. Looking at Life from “Now”

Yosef keeps using the word “*now*.”

How does looking at a situation from a “now” perspective change the way we relate to past pain or mistakes?

2. Selling vs. Sending

Yosef tells his brothers: “*You sold me, but you didn’t send me.*”

How does that idea shift the way we think about responsibility, blame, and control in our own lives?

3. The Steering Wheel Illusion

The shiur compares life to turning a steering wheel that feels real but isn’t connected.

Have there been moments when you realized effort didn’t translate into control — and what did that teach you?

4. Hashem as the Painter

Hashem is described as a master artist who creates situations that look completely real.

What “paintings” in life are hardest for people to recognize as paintings while they’re inside them?

5. Relating to Those Who Hurt Us

Yosef invites us to say to someone who hurt us: “*You didn’t send me here.*”

What do you think is the hardest part of thinking this way — and what might be the most freeing part?