

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Vayigash	23 Dec 2017	5 Tevet 5778	Gen. 44:18-47:27	Eze. 37:15-28	Luke 24:30-48

Genesis 44:18-47:27

In parashat Vayigash, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. The Torah reads, “Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Yoseph; does my *abba* still live?” And his brothers could not answer him; for they were trembling at his presence.”¹ Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah would burst in tears at “And his brothers could not.” He said: If the rebuke of a man of flesh and blood (Joseph) is so powerful that it causes so much consternation, the rebuke of Elokim (when it comes) will all the more so cause much shame.”²

Let’s go back a bit and recap on the life of Joseph. His brothers hated Joseph and sold him to Ishmaelites when he was 17 years old and eventually sold to Potiphar in Egypt. He was falsely accused and imprisoned. He interpreted a dream of Royal Cupbearer and asked him a favor to rescue him from unjust punishment. Hashem punishes him with two extra years, making his imprisonment for 12 years because he relied on man and not Him. Hashem decided it was time for Joseph to be released and caused dreams to the Pharaoh who was perplexed by the dreams and none of his servants could not interpret his dreams. Hashem then caused the Cupbearer to remember two years ago and Joseph who interpreted his dreams. Joseph was taken out of prison and interprets dreams of the Pharaoh who in turn promotes him as viceroy of Egypt. Seven years later, his brothers came to him to buy grain and bows to him just as Joseph dreamed when he was very young.

Twenty-two years passed, and Joseph finally has all his brothers in his chamber and realized that it is now time to reconcile the difference between his brothers, and declares that he is Joseph to his brothers. His brothers were frightened of his revelations. It is at this verse Rabbi Elazar began to cry.

If, Joseph, being a mere human being, rebukes his brothers, and his brothers could not stand before him because they were frightened of him, then what will happen on the great day of judgment, when the Almighty shall rebuke us for what we did in the world?! Of course, it will be all the more so.

The Torah does not say Joseph rebuked his brothers. He merely said, “I am Joseph.” So, for Rabbi Elazar to burst out in tears seems out of context. The Talmud suggests two possible reasons for his brothers’ reaction. First, they were astounded by the realization that the man standing before them was none other than their long lost brother Joseph whom they searched as they entered the city in Egypt. Second, the comparison between Joseph’s rebuke of his brothers and Hashem’s rebuke of mankind seems to be exaggerated. It was the brothers who sold Joseph into slavery, subjecting him to the worst type of abuse. So, it stands to reason that they were totally shocked when they faced him and expected harshest punishment to them.

¹ Genesis 45:3

² BT Chagigah 4b

The Torah teaches that the figures depicted in the Torah are not just physical people who lived at a certain period of time. They also embody particular psychological and spiritual force, existing continuously within the human heart.³

To understand Joseph, we also must understand the nature of our soul. So, what does our soul look alike? What elements of our personality can we attribute our soul?

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi in the Tanya defines the soul as a flame that seeks to depart from its wick and kiss the heavens. He writes, "The soul constitutes the quest in man to transcend the parameters of his ego and become absorbed in the source of all existence." It is like a flame that tries to leave its wick and kiss the heavens.

For this reason, when Rabbi Elazar would reach this verse, he would cry. There is a similar midrash, which states something similar, but in a different way. It says, "Woe to us from the day of judgment, woe to us from the day of rebuke. Joseph was the youngest of the tribes, and yet his brothers could not stand before his rebuke, as it says, 'And his brothers could not answer him for they were frightened of him' and when the Almighty comes to rebuke every person individually how much more so."

Now, the commentaries on the Torah ask: Where exactly is there a rebuke here? I see Joseph revealing himself, He says, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" Where does he rebuke them [his brothers]? Here it is clear to the sages that there is rebuke, that is similar to the rebuke that will be administered by the Almighty, when he challenges us at the end of days, in the World to Come.

So where does it say here that Joseph rebuked his brothers? The commentaries explain that the words, "Is my father still alive," which are seemingly unnecessary, because just a moment ago Joseph's brothers had told him, "Our father, your servant is well..." that he is still alive.

So, what is this seemingly pointless question? What, does Joseph not know that Jacob is still alive?! Therefore, the commentaries answer that Joseph's question is itself. In one sentence, "Is my father still alive?" contains the rebuke that the sorrows you (plural) caused our father by selling me, it is a wonder to me that he is still alive. How can it be that father is still alive after all the grief that has been caused here?! Thus, in truth there is no greater rebuke than the one given by Joseph.

Thus, when they were faced with such rebuke of their younger brother, the tribes could not answer, and they were frightened by him. All the more so, when the Almighty rebukes us. Now, the first lesson we can learn from this connection, between the rebuke given by Joseph and the one given by the Almighty, is that apparently the Almighty too will ask us a similar question, "Is my father still live?" How is it possible that the Almighty asks us, "Is my father still live?"

The Almighty has a number of different attributes and relationships [with us]. The Almighty is called "our King." He is our King. He is also our Beloved, as He is described in the Song of Songs. He is also our Father, "Our Father, our King." (*Avinu Malkeinu*)

³ Chabad, "Do you know your soul?"

Therefore, we can learn from this verse which is the most important part of rebuke, is that the Hashem will ask us, "How could you have caused such sorrow to your Father, your Father in heaven?" The Torah teaches that everything in life is connected, like the entire story of Joseph and his brothers, it all returns to honoring one's father.

Jacob, the father of 12 tribes, all of whom are beloved, all of whom are heroic, holy, and Jacob's bed remains whole. And yet, we see that Reuben disrespects his father, and that they all hurt him, by selling Joseph. Is there a greater cause of pain to their father? "Is my father still alive?" What sorrow have you caused your father?

There is a numerical connection between "I am Joseph" (אֲנִי יוֹסֵף) and "[Is] my father still alive?" (הֲעוֹד אָנִי חַי) The word, "*ani Yosef*" contains 7 letters with the value of 217. The divided value is 31. So, we take אָנִי חַי (*ani chai*) which is the value of 31. So, when Joseph asked, "[Is] my father still alive?", he is really saying, "My father is alive!" Thus, Joseph is saying, "You caused so much pain to my father, but he still lives!" Thus, when Joseph said, "[Is] my father still alive?" contains the rebuke of his brothers and joy of his father being alive. Hence, Rabbi Elazar sheds tears and cries when he read this verse.

Now, this doesn't mean that Joseph was all innocent. He lost 10 years of his life for disrespecting his father. He died at the age of 110, a lot younger than his brothers. The sages say that Joseph too minutely disrespected his father, by not stopping his brothers from calling Jacob "your [Joseph's] servant."⁴ The brothers with the exception of Benjamin disrespected Jacob by selling Joseph, as did Reuben individually.

The sages teach that Joseph repeated, "my father is alive" seven times, if not, Hashem forbid, he (Joseph) is no longer Joseph.

So, again we have to take the moral of this story, which is, that our Father in Heaven, He is everything. And the main relationship that the Israelites have as well as the nations of the world who do not know the Elohim, for them too He is Elohim as He is King. He is the King of the entire world. The main point of an Israelite is that He is our Father, like Jacob our patriarch.

And we must know that we are all hurting the honor of our Father. As we understand a bit more than before, if we are to take this to our heart, and perhaps we can also weep a little when we come to this verse when Joseph said, "I am Yosef. Is my abba still alive?"

It is known that the words, "I am Yosef," are similar to "I am Havayah your Elohim." The revelation of Joseph to his brothers is similar to the Giving of the Torah by "I am who I am." There, of course it is our Father in Heaven revealing Himself by saying "I am Havayah your Elohim that has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from a house of slavery."

As it says in the Tanya, these words are an allegory for a father who descends to take his son out of the mud, out of the dirt, wash him, and then to bring him into the inner chambers. This is the way a father treats his son, and then we wait to see how the son treats his father in return.

⁴ Genesis 44:27

Yeshua, who is the Mashiach ben Yosef came to us some 2000 years ago and asked us, “Is my father still alive?” Yeshua will return again as the Mashiach ben David. Then, “Is my father still alive?” will be rectified. Then there will only be “My father is still alive” to receive *nachas* from us.

There is a traditional blessing, “May you have *nachas* from your children” shared among parents in Israel. The word “*nachas*” is understood to be pride and joy. And for most parents, pride and joy from their children is the greatest blessing in life. However, the word ‘*nachas*’ actually means ‘rest,’ not ‘pride and joy.’ We are *nachas* in sense that our children can take of themselves and of their family by living a moral and responsible life in Hashem. Thus, when we follow His words and walk His way, *Avinu Malkeinu* will no longer experience any sorrow, only *nachas* and good.

“May you have *nachas* from your children.”

The haftarah, Ezekiel 37:15-28 and the Ketuvim Natzerim, Luke 24:30-48 is in line with today’s teaching of parashat Vayigash. Just as Joseph brought his family from Canaan to Egypt, Hashem gave Ezekiel a prophecy that the breach would be healed between the House of Judah and the House of Israel, and the nation reunited under the Davidic dynasty of King Messiah.

We read in Luke where the Messiah comes to his disciples and assures them as well as “opening their eyes” to see the importance of Torah, Prophets, and Psalms. Just as Yeshua kept the feasts of YHWH, he also kept rabbinical holidays as well. In John 10:22-28, we read last week that Yeshua observed Chanukah, a Feast of Dedication.

Few days ago, we lit all 8 candles of Chanukah. It is the holiday of Light as well as the era of coming of Messiah. The eight days of Chanukah shines a very unique light known as “hidden light.” This is considered as the light of Messiah. From the very beginning of creation, Hashem is already talking about four exiles and salvation in Genesis 1:2.

Tohu / unformed	Bohu / void	darkness	covering the deep⁵
<u>Bavel - Babylon</u>	Madai - Media / Persia	Yavan - Greece	<u>Edom</u> – Rome
“waste”	“Haman” – physical death	“Sports” – spiritual death	Unmeasurable wickedness
Fear	Darkness	Great	Fell upon him⁶

“And the Spirit of Elohim hovered over the face of heaven.” The Spirit is the Messiah to come. Then Hashem called in (ye’hi) (Gen. 1:3) some kind of light that already existed. Hashem said that the Light was so good, He hid it for the coming of Messiah. The Light shone for 36 hours before it was hidden by Hashem. This is also one of the reason we lit 36 candles during Chanukah. It is also taught Adam Rishon saw through this Light saw the universe.

⁵ Genesis 1:2

⁶ Genesis 15:12

We see a little of this light during the erev Shabbat and Pesach Seder. We see most when we sit next to the candle during the eight days of Chanukah.

After the Greeks destroyed the Temple and defiling it. The Maccabees (164-63 BCE) rededicated the Temple with the oil found in the Temple. The jar had a High Priest seal on it and it had a day's worth of oil for lighting ceremony. Miraculously, it lasted 8 days while the people made oils. Where did the jar of oil comes from?

When Jacob went to Charan, he went there with empty pockets. He then left Charan with 11 children, 4 wives, servants, and many livestock. He crossed over Jabbok River with his family. He then left his family and then crossed back to the ford to get a jar of oil. He fought with the angel of Esau and retrieved the jar. What is so important to get that oil?

The Zohar teaches that when Jacob went to Charan, he entered the worst place in the universe to the world of *kelipot* to start getting out souls. Jacob had to go down there, that is Charan, to start pulling out these souls. The first soul he pulled out was four mothers, Rachel, Leah, Bilah, and Zilpah. Then he took out 10 souls (Jacob's ten sons before Joseph and Benjamin was born). Then he took out 600,000 sheep which is the *klod* (congregation) of Israel.

Jacob returns to the river ford to get the jar containing oil represents the souls who were so low that they reincarnated as an inanimate object (oil). And he came to take them out because he did not want to leave any soul behind. That is why Jacob fought with the angel of Esau. This oil was left with the High Priest during King David's dynasty and later hidden so the marauders cannot take it. left Charan, he had 600,000 sheep which symbolizes men who left Egypt with Moses.

Now, during the period of the First Temple, there was so much peace that whoever went to the Courtyard of the Temple, they would get some kind of elevation. When the Messiah returns, even the nations who are not in the Temple would be affected.

What is the difference between the First and the Third Temple? Because there are two types of heavenly revelations. The first one is the essence of Hashem. And the second is just an essence. We have *nefesh* in our body and the *nefesh* has different powers. One of them is the power of pleasure that is a very low level, i.e., put something in my mouth and feel the pleasure coming from it. But, there is also a power of intellect. That I have to search, study, and absorb to understand.

There is another power known as emotion. This allows me to reach out and feel something that is not connected to me. So I can develop, like love to some individual, admiration, respect, or the complete opposite, like hate, jealousy, and animosity. But this is a power in my *nefesh* that develops my emotion.

Now, there is another that is above all these powers. It is called 'the essence of *nefesh*.' When do I feel that? When there's revelation we will experience when the Third Temple is built and the Messiah returns.

How do we apply theory into practicality? When the Hasmonean lit the menorah, it was not the menorah, but it was Chanukiah. They wanted to lit the menorah, not the Chanukiah. Something is

different here. The menorah is lit inside the Courtyard of the Temple during the daylight, and Chaukiah at night outside the Temple. Another difference is that the menorah would stand on the right side of the *cohen* (priest), and the chanukiah has to be on our left.

Another difference is that during Chanukah, unlike any other feasts that have food, we do not celebrate Chanukah with food. When we look at the history of Israel, with the exception of Chanukah which was a spiritual victory, all other victories were the victory of the body. So, we celebrated the victory of the body with food. The victory of Chanukah was on the *neshamah*, so we don't need food for that.

According to the *halacha*, the food consists of water and bread. It is the only food we need to survive which is essential for our existence. Then, there is another type of food, a beverage that I really don't need it but nice to have it. It makes me feel good and happy, and helps with digestion. And that is wine. When we look at water and bread, we are talking about written and oral Torah. That is essential. That is something that we have to consume every day to live. Wine is the secret of the Torah. It is highly recommended but we can survive without it.

Then we have another type of beverage, oil. We just can't drink it by itself. But when we add to the food, it adds a lot of good taste. We can make the food taste much better. And the oil is referring to the secrets of the secrets of the Torah which will be revealed when the Messiah comes. We are just getting a smell of it now by lighting the *shemash* with the fire.

In conclusion, we can say that the haftarah is the reunification of Israel during the second coming of Messiah. And the Ketuvim shows promise of Yeshua that He indeed will return as well as showing us what we need to do while we await for His return.