

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Vayigash	4 Jan. 2020	7 Tevet 5780	Gen. 44:18-47:27	Ezek. 37:15-28	Luke 24:30-48

This week's Torah portion begins with "And Yehudah came near to him and said, "O my master, please let your servant speak a word in my master's hearing, and do not let your displeasure burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh." (Gen. 44:18) This verse alone raises many questions that needs to be resolved.

"And Yehudah came near to him" – Yehudah was already speaking to Yosef. So, why does the verse say, "And Yehudah came near to him?" Or HaChaim answers: On *peshat* (literal) level, when a king holds court, the royal officials and advisors sit before the king as their inner circle. If a person comes to seek audience with a king, he stands outside the inner circle to make his request. Until this point, Yehudah was a commoner and he had to stand outside Yosef's advisors to communicate with Yosef. Therefore, by saying "Yehudah came near," it means he entered into Yosef's private space by standing inside the "inner circle," so that his words would not be heard except "to him [Yosef]" privately. Once Yehudah stood inside the inner circle, he said, "O my master, please let your servant speak a word in my master's hearing."

"And do not let your displeasure burn against your servant" – By speaking only to Yosef is a breach of protocol, therefore do not be angry with me. The Gemara<sup>1</sup> explains that whoever bests the king in argument is beheaded because he humiliated the king. Thus, if Yehudah would prevail over the king, Yosef, in an argument, within earshot of those present, his life would be in endangered under the law of one who bests the king. Yehudah therefore wished to continue the conversation in private. In this way, even if he would prevail, he would not have dishonored Yosef before his court.

"For you are like Pharaoh" – You are like Pharaoh and the law for both of you is the same. Meaning, anyone who bests the king in open debate (advisors to hear) will not be allowed to live. Therefore, Yehudah requests for the sake of saving his life, he be granted permission to speak privately in Yosef's ears, for this way, even if he should prevail over Yosef with his arguments, the king would not be disgraced by this, and Yehudah would not be subject to the death penalty as one who bested the king. Thus, Yehudah is asking Yosef to speak in private.

"My master asked his servants, saying, "Have you a father or a brother?" (v. 19) From this verse to verse 29, Yehudah recounts to Yosef the details of what happened from the time the brothers first came to Mitzrayim until now. It is only in verse 30 that he arrives at his main point, that if Binyamin does not return home his father will die, and Yehudah therefore proposes to become Yosef's servant in place of Binyamin.

By laying out the events, Yehudah wished to convey to Yosef that they brought Binyamin only because they were forced to do so by Yosef's demands. Otherwise, they never could have pried him away from his father, since Ya'akov was so attached to him. And, there was a real possibility that if Ya'akov did not see Binyamin upon their return to Canaan, he would die from anxiety over Binyamin's safety. Thus, Yehudah wanted Yosef to understand that his concern for Ya'akov's well-being was not contrived, but was a real problem. Being a servant {Yehudah} to Yosef would justify his proposal to remain as a servant instead of Binyamin.

Verse 20: Since you [Yosef] accused of us being spies, we were forced to say that we had another brother [Binyamin] for if being investigated as spies, any small or irrelevant information might be revealed, even

<sup>1</sup> Avodah Zarah 10b

though not related to spying considered as a lie, would be chained and imprisoned immediately. Therefore, by bringing Binyamin to you, it showed that we were telling you from the very beginning that we are not spies, but to purchase grain from you. Also, even if we provide another proof that we are not spies, the condition you set that we are not spies, is the only affirmation you will accept, is to bring you Binyamin. Therefore, we brought him before you.

Now, we will jump to chapter 46 of B'resheet. There are many debates that arose from the count of Ya'akov's family, and the contradiction of Stephen in Acts 7:14 who said "seventy-five people." Whatever the debate, rather contradiction, may be, Yeshua said, "It is impossible for the Scripture to be broken." (John 10:35)

Wives of Ya'akov	Verse	Son	Actual Count	Sub Total	Total	Daughter
Leah	9	Reuben	5			
	10	Shimon	7			
	11	Lewi	4			Yochebed*
	12	Yehudah	6			
	13	Yissaskar	5			
	14	Zebulun	4			
	15		1	32*		Dinah
	15				33	
Zilpah	16	Gad	8			
	17	Asher	8			Serah
	18			16		
	18				16	
Rahel	20	Yosef	3			
	21	Benyamin	11			
	22			14		
	22				14	
Bihah	23	Dan	2			
	24	Naphtali	5			
	25			7		
	25				7	
				69	70	

Verse 15: The actual count is 32, but the Scripture shows 33. The sages teach that Yochebed, mother of Moshe was born just before entering Mitzrayim. The reason for her name not being listed is because she was less than 30 days old and they were not certain whether she would live past 30 days as the mortality rate was high during that period.

Verse 26: Entered Mitzrayim 66 beings = 69 – 3 (Yosef and his sons already in Mitzrayim and not counted).

Verse 27: 70 souls:  $69 + 1$  (Hashem in v. 4);  $70 = 69 + 1$  (Yochebed born to Lewi);  $70 = 69 + 1$  (Ya'akov).

Finally, in Jubilees 44:33 "And all the souls of Ya'akov which went into Mitzrayim were seventy souls. These are his children and his children's children, in all seventy; but five died in Mitzrayim before Yosef, and had no children."

It is written (47:1), "Then Yosēph went and spoke to Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Kena'an. And see, they are in the land of Goshen." That is Yosef was telling Pharaoh that his father and his brothers came to Mitzrayim as Pharaoh commanded (45:17-18) Or else, they would not have come to Mitzrayim. On this verse, Yosef was merely reporting to Pharaoh that he followed all the instructions of his king.

It is written (47:5), "And Pharaoh spoke to Yosēph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you." The first way to understand is that Yosef was to speak to his brothers in the name of Pharaoh. And the second way is that Yosef was to say all this to his brothers in his own name. A brief recount of event is necessary to understand the difference it made in whose name the brothers were instructed. Pharaoh said to Yosef, "And you, you have been commanded, do this: Take wagons out of the land of Mitzrayim for your little ones and your wives. And you shall bring your father, and come." (Gen. 45:19) It meant that Yosef was to tell his brothers that Pharaoh had commanded him to let them take wagons from Mitzrayim as no one was allowed to take a wagon out of Mitzrayim without express permission from Pharaoh himself.

If everything that Pharaoh had told Yosef was to convey to his brothers as the words of Pharaoh, it would have been unnecessary for Yosef to tell his brothers that he had been authorized by Pharaoh to give them wagons, for everything he was saying to his brothers was the words of Pharaoh. Thus, we can see that Pharaoh had told Yosef to convey everything else in Yosef's name, and it was only the wagons that was to be conveyed in Pharaoh's name. We can conclude that Yosef had told his brothers in his own name that they should come to settle in Mitzrayim.

When Yosef spoke to his brothers before he spoke to Pharaoh about their arrival in Mitzrayim. He said, "I am going up to inform Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Kena'an, have come to me.'" (Gen. 46:31) Therefore, when Pharaoh said (Gen. 47:5), "Your father and your brothers have come to you," not to Pharaoh. Thus, in this verse, Pharaoh is correcting Yosef that his family came not to Pharaoh, but Yosef since Pharaoh only authorized wagons and he already gave authorization to Yosef to bring his family.

Now, what makes a difference whether it was Pharaoh's instructions or Yosef's instruction for Yosef's family to come to Mitzrayim? If Yosef's family moves to Mitzrayim by Pharaoh's instruction, then he would be responsible to take care of Yosef's family for life since it was decreed by him as it would be an everlasting gift. Therefore, Pharaoh was specific that the matter should not originate from him, but from Yosef. And the obligation to take of Yosef's family would be on Yosef and not on Pharaoh, and the gift would remain valid as long as this Pharaoh was alive. Thus, Pharaoh told Yosef, "Your father and your brothers have come to you."