

Date: 28 Kislev 5786 (December 18, 2025)

Torah Portion: Miketz

Topic: Seeing They Do Not See

Genesis 42:6 and Genesis 44:18 stand as two poles of a single redemptive process. Between them unfolds a carefully staged tikkun, moving from coerced submission to chosen self-sacrifice. The Torah insists that reconciliation cannot be rushed; it must emerge from transformed moral agency. Both rabbinic tradition and later New Testament reflection recognize this same pattern, though they articulate it in different idioms.

Genesis 42:6 describes a scene of fulfilled destiny without repaired conscience: *“Yosef was the ruler over the land... and Yosef’s brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.”* Bereshit Rabbah identifies this as the fulfillment of Yosef’s dreams (Bereshit Rabbah 91:7), yet emphasizes that fulfillment alone is not redemption. The brothers bow because they must, not because they choose to. Fear and hunger drive them, not recognition or remorse. As the Midrash notes, the dreams have come true, but the brothers have not yet returned (*lo chazru bi-teshuvah*).

The Zohar interprets this bowing as submission without awareness. Yosef, associated with **Yesod**, stands as the channel of sustenance for Mitzrayim and the world (Zohar I, 198a). The brothers unknowingly align themselves beneath the very conduit they once sought to destroy. Yet Yesod remains concealed. Divine flow is present, but truth is withheld, because revelation without repentance would overwhelm rather than heal (Zohar I, 200b).

This dynamic finds a striking parallel in the New Testament’s language of spiritual blindness. The Gospels repeatedly describe people who stand before truth yet cannot recognize it. Our Moshiach Yehoshua’s words, “Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear” (Luke 8:10), echo Bereshit Rabbah’s insistence that perception is moral before it is visual. Recognition is not blocked by lack of evidence, but by unreadiness of heart. Likewise, the Gospel of Yochanan states that revelation can be present without recognition: “He was in the world... yet the world did not know him” (John 1:10). These passages resonate with the Midrashic claim that Yosef’s brothers do not recognize him because recognition would demand responsibility they are not yet prepared to assume.

The Talmud provides the controlling principle for why the story cannot end in Genesis 42. In Yoma 86b, the Sages define **complete repentance** as returning to the same situation and choosing differently. Genesis 42:6 is not yet that moment. The brothers bow, but they do not stand. They submit to power, but they do not speak truth. Therefore Yosef remains silent. Silence here is not cruelty; it is restraint in service of healing.

Genesis 44:18 marks the decisive reversal. *“Then Yehudah approached him...”* Bereshit Rabbah emphasizes the verb *vayigash* as a movement of moral courage (Bereshit Rabbah 93:6). Yehudah does not fall to the ground; he steps forward. He does not speak in defense of himself, but in defense of another. This is the precise tikkun of Genesis 42. Bowing is replaced by approach; fear is replaced by responsibility.

The Zohar explains that this moment represents the elevation of **Malchut**—responsible kingship—toward **Yesod** (Zohar I, 206a). When Malchut accepts accountability, Yesod can reveal truth safely. This is why Yosef will reveal himself only after Judah’s speech. Revelation follows responsibility, not the reverse.

Here, the Renewed Covenant offers a powerful parallel that illuminates—rather than replaces—the Torah reading. In Philippians 2, Paul describes a movement from exaltation to humility and back again, emphasizing that true authority is revealed through voluntary self-emptying rather than imposed power. While the theological frameworks differ, the moral structure is the same: authority becomes redemptive only when joined to self-giving responsibility. Judah’s offer to become a substitute for Benjamin embodies this principle within the Torah’s own covenantal logic.

Paul’s statement that “the veil is lifted when one turns back” (2 Corinthians 3:16) parallels the Zohar’s teaching that concealment persists until repentance creates a vessel capable of receiving truth. Yosef’s identity is veiled in Genesis 42 and unveiled only after Genesis 44 because only then can the brothers bear it without collapse.

Read together, Genesis 42:6 and Genesis 44:18 form a complete moral arc. The first fulfills the dream externally; the second fulfills it internally. The first bows bodies to the ground; the second lifts a soul to responsibility. The Renewed Covenant passages do not add new meaning to this arc, but echo its logic: revelation follows repentance, recognition follows responsibility, and true reconciliation is never forced.

The Torah's message is uncompromising. History is repaired not when power changes hands, but when hearts change direction. Genesis 42 asks the question through silence and concealment. Genesis 44 answers it through speech and self-offering. Only then can Yosef say, "I am Yosef," and only then can brotherhood be restored.

Shalom.