

For the week ending 7 Teves 5756  
29 & 30 December 1995

## Parshas Vayigash

This issue is dedicated by Israel & Chaim Neustadter, on the occasion of the Yahrtzeit of wife and mother  
Sarah Golda bas Harav Chaim Eliezer Alter, Zichronah Livracha.

### Summary

**W**ith the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are frozen in confusion. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself in his stead. As a result of this act of total selflessness, Yosef finally has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and so, he now reveals to them that he is none other than their brother Yosef. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of Hashem's plan. He sends them back to their father Yaakov, with a message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. At first, Yaakov cannot accept the news, but when he recognizes hidden signs in the message which positively identify the sender as his son Yosef, his spirit is revived. Yaakov together with all his family and possessions set out for Goshen. Hashem communicates with Yaakov in visions by night. He tells him not to fear going down to Egypt and its negative spiritual consequences, because it is there that Hashem will establish the Children of Yisrael as a great nation even though they will be dwelling in a land steeped in immorality and corruption. The Torah lists Yaakov's offspring, and hints to the birth of Yocheved, who will be the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu. Seventy souls in total descend into Egypt where Yosef is reunited with his father after twenty-two years of separation. He embraces his father and weeps, overflowing with joy. Yosef secures the settlement of his family in Goshen. Yosef takes his father Yaakov and five of the least threatening of his brothers to be presented to Pharaoh, and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh. Yosef instructs that in return for grain, all the people of Egypt must give everything to Pharaoh, including themselves as his slaves. Yosef then redistributes the population, except for the Egyptian priests who are directly supported by a stipend from Pharaoh. The Children of Yaakov/Yisrael become settled and their numbers multiply greatly.

### Commentaries

THE ARTICULATE SPEECH OF THE HEART

**‘And Yehuda approached (Yosef) and said ‘Please, my master, allow your servant to speak in the ears of my master...’ (44:18)**

In Czarist Russia, there were times of hard decrees against the Jewish People. The Chafetz Chaim once went to plead against such a decree before a high government official. As the Chafetz Chaim spoke no Russian, and the government official spoke no Yiddish, an interpreter stood waiting. The Chafetz Chaim spoke with the feeling and sincerity that can only emanate from a heart as pure as his, and when he

**inside is the spark  
of his Jewishness...  
even if he never  
learned Alef Beis!**

finished, a pregnant silence filled the room. The interpreter started to speak. “Your honor, the Jew claims...” The Russian government official raised his

hand and said “No translation will be necessary...I understood every word...” As a result of this meeting, the decree was subsequently revoked.

Until he revealed his true identity, Yosef spoke to the brothers only through an interpreter, and thus Yehuda was under the impression that he didn't understand Hebrew. Nevertheless, Yehuda approached Yosef and wanted to speak “in his ears.” He was aware that the content of his words would not be understood, but he wanted to communicate to Yosef the depth of his feelings, for it is the words which come from the heart that enter the heart of another.

(Based on Rabbi Yosef Dov,  
Rosh Yeshivas Brisk in Yerushalayim)

It changes all the time...

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## WHEN TWO WORLDS MEET

### **“And Yehuda approached...” (44:18)**

Two worlds. Yehuda and Yosef. The world of revelation and the world of concealment. Yehuda is the line of King David, the revealed majesty of Israel, apparent and clear for all to see. Yosef is the majesty of Israel which is hidden. Yosef recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. He is the spark of Israel which is hidden, burning away in exile, in all the Egypts of history. The spark which never goes out. The eternal flame. Even if from the outside he looks like the ruler of a gentile nation, inside is the spark of his Jewishness, the indelible engraving of the holy tongue on his heart, even if he never learned *alef beis*. He is bound to his inescapable holiness, even when he is dragged through the spiritual sewers of a hostile world. Yehuda approaching Yosef. Revealed majesty meeting concealed majesty. Yosef. Like the deep waters of a well, hidden, sealed over by a great stone. Sealed by the constrictions of a physical world and all its cares. Yehuda. Like a bucket reaching down into the depths to draw up from him the pure still waters. To reveal Yosef to himself.

*“And Yehuda approached Yosef...”* The meeting of two worlds. A foreshadow of the ultimate redemption. Yosef crying at his re-uniting with his brothers. When we cry for Israel, when we cry for all our brothers who are still in Egypt, when we cry for all the hate and the violence, remember that just as Yosef was revealed to his brothers in tears, so too, the ultimate complete redemption comes in tears. Then, the descendant of King David, the scion of Yehuda will gather us from the four corners of the earth, and he will rule in revelation, in majesty with head held high.

*(Based on Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, L'Torah UI'Moadim)*

## I'LL GO FIRST!

### **“I (Hashem) will descend with you (Yaakov) to Egypt, and also I will surely bring you up” (can be read: “also I will come up”). (46:4)**

Two people standing at the mouth of a deep cavern. One an experienced and confident expert. The other, nervous and fearful — his first descent. Obviously the expert is the one to lead the way. That's what Hashem is saying here to Yaakov “I'll go first, and you come after Me, and I will be with you. And when you come up from the cave, you will go first, and only then will I come up.”

## Haftorah:

### **Yechezkel 37:15-28**

#### TWO CHIPS OFF THE OLD BLOCK

**O**ne of the ways that a prophecy becomes irreversible is if it is reinforced by a symbolic action. In this week's Haftorah, the prophet Yechezkel foretells that, in the time of the final redemption, the two halves of the Jewish people, symbolized by Yehuda and Yosef, will be brought together like two blocks of wood. Hashem tells Yechezkel *“Join them together (so that they) look like one. They shall be one in your hands.” (37:17)* Even though nothing could be more separate than two blocks of wood, eventually these two blocks will become one. And even though only Hashem can perform the miracle of making one block out of two, for us to deserve that Hashem will accelerate the redemption, we must *“look like one”*: The Jewish People must be united and free from malice and baseless hatred. For although the redemption is irreversible and inevitable, it is in our hands to delay it or to make it happen today.

*(Based on The Midrash Says)*



Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

*The Rock, from Whose food we have eaten*

*l'kt lan run*

*Tzur Mishelo Achalnu*

Avraham Avinu, says the Midrash, utilized his hospitality to educate people to an awareness of the Creator. After the wayfarer had finished eating and drinking at Avraham's table and wished to thank him he would be told to bless and praise Hashem for the food had been provided by Him. In similar fashion the host turns to his household and guests and invites them to direct their thanks and blessings to the Divine Rock, for it is His food they have eaten.

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