

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYIGASH · 9 TEVET 5770 · DEC. 26, 2009 · VOL. 17 NO. 11

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE POWER OF LOVE

*“And he (Yosef) fell on his brother Binyamin’s neck and wept. And Binyamin wept on Yosef’s neck.” (45:14)*

If your memory serves you well, ‘free love’ was a much touted slogan in the nineteen sixties. Actually, it wasn’t so much about ‘love’ as lust. And ‘free’ meant it didn’t cost me anything. Whatever the cost to other people didn’t enter the agenda. Which usually meant that someone else wound up picking up the tab emotionally. That kind of ‘free’ is pretty expensive.

However, ‘free love’ *does* exist.

When someone loves his fellow man not for any reason, but merely and purely because he is a creation of the Master of the World and a reflection of His Majesty, then this Free Love is a love which hastens the final redemption.

The Beit Hamikdash (Holy Temple) was destroyed because of ‘free hate’ — baseless hatred. What will hasten its return is the reverse — ‘free Love’. Love which doesn’t depend on any conditions.

*“And he wept”* — Yosef wept about the two Batei Mikdash to be built in Binyamin’s portion of the land that would eventually be destroyed. *“And Binyamin wept”* about the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting) that would be erected in Yosef’s portion of the land and also would eventually be destroyed.

Why were Yosef and Binyamin crying now, at this time of consummate joy at their reuniting, over events that were

thousands of years in the future? Furthermore, why were they crying over the *other’s* loss and not their own?

When the brothers encountered each other after 22 years of separation, they realized that what had kept them apart was ‘free hate’, the hatred of the brothers for Yosef. Immediately, they saw the future destruction of the Temple that would be caused by ‘free hate’. They cried, for just as free hate had separated them all these years, so too it would destroy the Temple in the future.

The cure for free hate is ‘free love’. To feel such empathy that the pain of one’s fellow is as one’s own.

That’s why each cried over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash of the other. Yosef and Binyamin were showing a path for generations unborn, teaching us the way to cure free hate.

For even though Binyamin’s Beit Hamikdash would not be built until Yosef’s Mishkan would be destroyed — its existence was predicated on the others demise — nevertheless Binyamin cried over the destruction of the Mishkan.

Binyamin would have preferred the Beit Hamikdash never to have been built, and then Yosef’s Mishkan would have stood forever. Such is the power of ‘free love’

• Source: Based on Rabbi Y. M’Kuzmir in *Iturei Torah*

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead. 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. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of G-d'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 sets out for Goshen. G-d communicates with Yaakov in a vision at night. He tells him not to fear going down to Egypt and its negative spiritual conse-

quences, because it is there that G-d will establish the Children of Israel 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 22 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 Israel become settled, and their numbers multiply greatly.

## ISRAEL Forever

### SECRET OF SURVIVAL

“He (Yaakov) sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to prepare ahead of him in Goshen.” (*Bereishet* 16:23) “To prepare for him a house of Torah study from which teaching would go forth.” (Midrash cited by Rashi)

The secret of Jewish survival, the Torah teaches us, depends on education.

In his maiden speech in the House of Lords, Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks echoed this idea in eloquent fashion.

“To defend a country you need an army but to defend civilization you need schools,” he declared, adding that secular schools could learn from the value Jews have placed on learning.

“In ancient times,” Sacks noted, “the Egyptians built pyramids, the Greeks built temples, and the Romans built amphitheatres. Jews built schools. And because of that, alone among ancient civilizations, Judaism survived.”

Modern echoes of the ancient formula to preserve Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

### KEFAR TRUMAN – TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND

Near the Ben-Gurion International Airport there is a moshav called Kefar Truman. It was established on July 19, 1949, a little more than a year after the historic recognition of the newly founded State of Israel by the



president of the United States, Harry S. Truman. Originally called Bnei Harel because its founders were veterans of the Harel Division of the I.D.F., it was renamed in honor of the president who was such a good and important friend of the Jewish state.

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What threatening words did Yehuda say to Yosef?
2. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died?
3. Why was Yehuda the one to plead for Binyamin?
4. What do we learn from Yosef telling his brothers "Go up to my father"?
5. What two things did the brothers see that helped prove that he was really Yosef?
6. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?
7. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?
8. What did Yosef mean when he said "Don't dispute on the way"?
9. What happened to Yaakov when he realized Yosef was alive?
10. Why did G-d tell Yaakov, "Don't fear going down to Egypt"?
11. "I will bring you up" from Egypt. To what did this allude?
12. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?
13. Who was the mother of Shaul ben HaCanaanit?
14. When listing Yaakov's children, the verse refers to Rachel as "Rachel, wife of Yaakov." Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not referred to as Yaakov's wives. Why?
15. Yosef harnessed his own chariot instead of letting a servant do it. Why?
16. Why were shepherds abhorrent to the Egyptians?
17. Why did Yosef pick the weakest brothers to stand before Pharaoh?
18. What blessing did Yaakov give Pharaoh when he left his presence?
19. Yosef resettled the land of Egypt, moving the people from city to city. What were his two motives for this?
20. Whose fields were not bought by Yosef?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 44:18 - He threatened that Yosef would be stricken with leprosy, like Pharaoh when he took Sarah from Avraham; alternatively, Yehuda threatened to kill Yosef and Pharaoh.
2. 44:20 - Yehuda feared that if he said his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand to see him.
3. 44:32 - He was the one who took "soul" responsibility for him.
4. 45:9 - We learn that *Eretz Yisrael* is higher than all other lands.
5. 45:12 - He was circumcised like they were, and he spoke *lashon hakodesh*.
6. 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of *Mishkan Shilo* built in Yosef's territory.
7. 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.
8. 45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes, they might not be alert to possible travel dangers.
9. 45:27 - His *ruach hakodesh* (prophetic spirit) returned.
10. 46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan.
11. 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.
12. 46:6 - He traded it for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.
13. 46:10 - Dina *bat* Yaakov.
14. 46:19 - Rachel was regarded as the mainstay of the family.
15. 46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father.
16. 46:34 - Because the Egyptians worshipped sheep.
17. 47:2 - So Pharaoh wouldn't see their strength and draft them.
18. 47:10 - That the waters of the Nile should rise to greet Pharaoh.
19. 47:21 - In order to remind them that they no longer owned the land, and to help his family by removing the stigma of being strangers.
20. 47:22 - The Egyptian priests.

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## TALMUDigest

## BAVA BATRA 128 - 134

- Who is disqualified to serve as a witness
- When the borrower contradicts the witnesses who testify that he paid his debt
- Distribution of belongings to circumvent inheritance
- Determining who will inherit the gift when the receiver dies
- Favoring one son as an heir over the others
- When can one apply a ruling he has learned
- Special provisions in a marriage contract
- What power does one give to his wife or others when he wills them his entire estate
- How evaluation of circumstances can affect a ruling
- How a woman forfeits her right to collect payment of the *ketubah*
- Disinheriting one's sons
- Credibility in claiming that someone is his heir

### FAVORING AN HEIR

“On the day that he causes his sons to inherit whatever will be his.” (*Devarim* 21:16) This is how the Torah describes the setting for a father passing on his property to his heirs.

Rabbi Yochanan ben Brokah calls attention to the fact that the Torah uses the term “causes his sons to inherit” rather than the simpler “his sons inherit”.

From this choice of language he derives that, although inheritance is normally an automatic process, a father has the

power to determine (cause to inherit) one of his sons as his sole heir.

The *gemara* does point out, however, that this power is limited to favoring one son above the others or, when there are no sons, one daughter over the others. He cannot, however, designate a brother or other relative as his heir while disowning his own children.

This limitation is derived from the above-mentioned passage, which speaks only of a case in which sons are involved.

• *Bava Batra 130a*

### What the SAGES Say

“A judge must rule only according to his own understanding.”

• *The Sage Rava - Bava Batra 131a*

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## HAPPILY MARRIED

**From: Name Withheld**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I would like to know how to be happy in marriage. What are the things that a wife should do to make her husband happy? I thought that cooking nice meals, having a nice Shabbat table, caring for the sleep/good rest of one another was a way to express love. However, there are things missing and I cannot find the answer by myself. I come from divorced parents so I did not have a role model of what a married couple should be. Please help me.*

Dear Name Withheld,

Being happy in marriage is one of the most fundamental sources of fulfillment a person can attain. But since it depends on so many variables, it's hard to give a patent answer that would apply to everyone. So I'll try to limit my response to the way I understand your particular question, with the hope that it will help others as well.

You seem to seek to please your husband through caring for his physical needs such as meals and rest. This is your way of expressing your love for him. Indeed, according to Jewish Law, a spouse, man or woman, is required to fulfill certain needs of the other, such as food, clothing and shelter.

The Torah also recognizes this as a way of expressing love. On a purely simple level, one seeks to provide for the needs of those one loves. Love can also be catalyzed through this giving. Therefore, the Hebrew word for love, "*ahava*" – based on the word "*hav*" which means give – makes love "giving". What's more, the numerical value of "*ahava*" is 13, which is the same as the numerical value of "*echad*" meaning oneness. By giving in love, a couple becomes unified as one. Furthermore, mutual giving is double "*ahava*" or 26, which is the numerical value of G-d's name, denoting a state in which their relationship is infused with the Divine Presence.

Nevertheless, in many ways, it's easier to provide for the

material needs of a person than to provide for his emotional needs. Thus we often get wrapped up in expressing our love by doing for, or providing for, our loved ones at the expense of providing their emotional fulfillment. This often has the unfortunate result that the very acts intended to express love actually mask it. We're convinced our acts show love; but our loved ones don't "feel" loved. It is therefore extremely important to be attentive to your husband's emotional needs by investing the type of planning, time and energy you would invest in providing for his physical needs.

Of course, a healthy, love-giving relationship is expressed not only on the physical and emotional planes but also on the intellectual and spiritual planes to which everything mentioned above applies as well. Try your best to initiate and maintain the types of discussions, interactions and experiences that will be intellectually and spiritually stimulating to both you and your husband. By sharing a more multi-dimensional and multi-faceted oneness, your relationship will certainly be enriched – particularly to the extent to which you bring G-d into the picture.

Having said all that, another pitfall in over-emphasizing the physical manifestations of love such as "doing for" or "providing for" is that this can become stifling and suffocating. When this is the case, not only do our actions mask the feelings we intend to convey, they actually may repel the one we love. Our constant and intense doing and providing threatens our loved one's privacy and independence. Our giving then becomes taking. And in truth, this applies to all planes of the relationship.

Therefore, love-giving requires not only proactively providing for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of our loved ones, but also by giving them space, room and time to explore and celebrate who and what they've become as a part of us while apart from us. Ultimately, it's this part of me/part from me dynamic, reaching back to the creation of Man his separation into Adam and Eve, which enables a husband and wife to experience happiness and fulfillment in marriage by growing together side by side.

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## LATE FOR AN APPOINTMENT

**Question:** I sometimes find myself stuck in traffic or otherwise detained from keeping an appointment on time. While there is a possibility that I can make it on time or at worst with a slight delay, there is also the danger that my arrival will be postponed even further by circumstances. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** The only decent thing to do in such a case which

is common to virtually everyone is to call the person you are scheduled to meet and relate your situation. His schedule may be flexible enough to accommodate your lateness or he may wish to reschedule for another hour or date. Never gamble on making it on time and saving a call because unexcused lateness may well be interpreted as a sign of disrespect.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY \_\_\_\_\_

### WHEN JEWS RUN FOR CONGRESS

**W**hen it was announced that the special election in Florida to fill the seat of a prominent Jewish congressman was scheduled for April 6th, a Jewish organization called to the attention of Governor Charlie Crist that this date coincided with the last day of Pesach. In response to the charge that such scheduling

was “an attack on the religious Jewish community” the governor ordered the election date moved up a week.

Two of the Democratic candidates running to replace Congressman Wexler in a primary to be held in early February are also Jewish.

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