

Parsha Press

PARSHAT VAYIGASH

It Isn't How It Seems Daniella Dobe Friedman



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Shabbat Starts:
4:12

In this week's parsha it says, "Vayomer Yosef el echav, 'Ani Yosef. Haod avi chai?' Vilo yachlu echav laanot oto ki nivhalu mipanav": And Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him because they were disconcerted before him. Rashi says on these words *Nivhalu mipanav-Mipnei habusha*, that the brother's couldn't answer Yosef because they were embarrassed, ashamed.

The Chofetz Chaim says that when Yosef said this, "I am Yosef," the brothers finally understood everything that had happened until now, everything that the viceroy to the king had done that didn't make sense. They understood everything that had happened in the past twenty two years since Yosef had those dreams. They finally saw the whole picture. This concept also relates to a mishna in Pirkei Avos that says, "*Hevei dan et kol haadam lekaf zechus,*" Judge everyone favorably.

My grandmother's friend was once in a hospital cafeteria getting a cup of coffee. She saw a frum man behind her on line and she offered to pour some coffee for him. He said, "No thank you." She asked again and said that it really was no problem and again he responded no thank you. She asked a third time and he finally answered very curtly that he would like to pour it himself. A little later, she saw him again and asked him nicely why he wouldn't let her pour the coffee for him. He answered by telling her, "my father is very sick and my brother and I are here visiting him. He asked us for a cup of coffee and my brother and I both wanted to get the mitzva. We decided to split it, that I would pour the coffee and he would bring it to our father." My grandmother's friend was stunned and she apologized for trying to take that mitzva away from him. You should always judge people *(continued on page 3)*

Father, Can You Hear Me? Morah Antman

Many people have wondered why Yosef asked if his father was still alive? The brothers had just spoken about him at every opportunity. Doesn't that mean he was alive?! Additionally, after being the viceroy of Egypt for so many years, why didn't Yosef contact Yaakov at all? Rav Avraham Rivlin (Mashgiach, Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh) answers this question with an in depth examination of Yosef's life up to that point.

Both Avraham and Yitzchak had only one child who continued the tradition of truth. The children of Yaakov may not have known that all of them were to continue the tradition. As far as they were concerned, there was only going to be one heir to the brachos of their father.

Rashi explains that when Yaakov sent Yosef to *(continued on page 2)*

News From Israel

Shas and Likud negotiators are meeting at this time in an effort to advance coalition government issues.

Prior to the meeting, Shas leader MK Eli Yishai stated that the party's spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, is not likely to change his position opposing the Gaza Disengagement Plan unless officials agree to major changes in the current plan.

In addition, Yishai added that his party will not join a government without a commitment towards significant changes in the current socioeconomic agenda.



(continued from page 1) his brothers it was from some inner source. Indeed, there is no logical explanation as to why Yaakov would send his son to be alone with his other sons when an earlier pasuk says explicitly, “*v'aviv shamar et hadavar*” (and his father kept the matter). Yaakov knew the whole difficult strife within his family and so it must have been some ancient, eternal drive that propelled him to send Yosef. It was this same drive that brought the brothers there; after all there was no reason for them to be grazing so far off (see Rashi on Genesis 37:11).

According to the Rambam, Yosef wasn't aware of this drive and so he came to the conclusion that his father had teamed up with his brothers to get rid of him. He thought he would not be connected to the family anymore and was now banished to Egypt. This explains why Yosef never contacted Yaakov, even though it was within his power. Yosef never thought his father still missed him. Now Yosef realized that Hashem was the source of all that had happened thus far, that the brothers regretted selling him and how Yaakov's love for him had never faded.

In order to explain why Yosef asked if his father was alive, Rabbi Paysach Krohn gives a very nice idea in his book “Around the Maggid's Table.” Rav Krohn quotes a little boy from Brooklyn as saying that the question wasn't a simple fact of whether Yaakov was dead or alive. Yosef was really asking: Is **MY** father alive? He wanted to know if Yaakov still loved him and thought about him. He wanted to know if Yaakov still had a father's love for him or if he indeed banished him from the family. We must never forget to show our loved ones how much we care for them, and how we will never forget them. Good Shabbos.

Is He Still my Father? Deena Klein

I'm sure everybody remembers the childhood book called Are you My Mother? It's about a little bird that fell from his nest and was asking every creature big and small, “Are you my mother?” Years later, I think there is a deeper meaning to the childlike plot.

A grade school teacher in Israel asked his class a question from this week's Torah portion and received an unusual answer from an unlikely student in the class. Why did Yosef ask his brothers after revealing his true identity, “Is my father still alive?” Yehuda was pleading for mercy for Binyamin on the basis that their father's health would be in grave jeopardy if anything happened to the boy. Yosef could not have been told more directly about his father's status. Why had he asked such an obvious question after years of personal silence?

The class was silent. Nobody could come up with a reasonable explanation until little Shimon in the back of the class raised his hand confidently. Everybody was amazed. Shimon was usually quiet and despondent. He never volunteered an answer or asked any questions. His grandparents had deposited him there after they had gained custody of the boy. His father had abandoned home and his mother was not in a position to care for the child. No wonder little Shimon was usually mentally absent while others were actively participating in the give and take of the classroom.

This time was different, as everyone else sat quietly and Shimon, to the amazement of all, was waving his hand with enthusiasm. The Rebbe called on him and he answered, “Maybe what Yosef meant to ask was not if Yaakov was alive but rather is my father still alive? Does he still think about me? Is he still my father?”

Yosef in Egypt was at the end of his personal exile. He understood with great clarity that Yaakov was still alive but was he still “his father”? At the climax of the complete Egypt experience, two hundred and ten years later, The A-lmighty thundered into the ears of the entire nation, “I Am Hashem your G-d who took you out of (continued on page 3)

IT ISN'T HOW IT SEEMS (continued)

(continued from page 1) favorably because you can never see the whole picture. The brothers finally realized that they didn't see the whole picture and they were embarrassed that they had acted like they did. The Chofetz Chaim also says that the same will happen when *mashiach* comes. Just like Yosef said "I am Yosef," Hashem will say "I am Hashem," and we will understand everything that has happened in the history of the Jews.

Is He Still My Father? (continued)

(continued from page 2) the land of Egypt." As much as these words carry the mandate of knowing that G-d is a reality, the greater message, perhaps, is concretizing the idea of a personal G-d. Hashem is your G-d. He took you out of Egypt. He cares about you. He is still your father. Yosef, at the end of his torment, had great evidence about the existence of "a father". But the question of his heart, as little Shimon was able to explain from his unique perspective was "Is he still my father? Does he care about me?" Now I understand a little better that old book my mother read me hundreds of times. The bird knows he must have a mother, he just doesn't know who it is. He's out of his element on the jungle floor. He's dislocated from his precious nest. Shortly after Yosef asked the question that had troubled his heart for twenty-two years, he was reunited with his father. The verse describes how Yosef fell on his father's shoulder and cried. What was Yaakov doing? The sages tell us he was saying *Shema Yisrael*, Listen Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One!

Why was he doing that particular mitzvah at that time? Perhaps, as Yaakov felt the overwhelming emotion of being finally reunited with his estranged son Yosef, he could begin to approximate the feeling, so to speak, of the Almighty when one of his lost children returns to Him- as the bird, returning to his nest or as the child who has found that the caring parent is still a caring parent.

-Adapted from Torah.org

"Quote of the Week"

It's kind of fun to do the impossible"

-Walt Disney

SHMIRAT HALASHON

While anger and insensitivity destroy the fabric of one's soul, *loshon hara* is in a class by itself.

**Chofetz Chaim:
A Daily Companion**



Story of a Gadol

R' Yisrael Salanter was once observed washing his hands for *netilat yadaim* using the smallest amount of water mandated by *Halacha*. A curious onlooker wondered why the Rav was using the bare minimum of water for the *mitzvah* instead of using a larger quantity of water to ensure that his hands would be completely covered. The onlooker asked the Rav to explain this strange practice. R' Yisrael Salanter answered that he was aware of the great difficulty that the water carrier endured in order to supply the households with an adequate supply of water. Therefore, he preferred not to fulfill the *mitzvah* with an abundance of water, knowing full well that using such a plentiful amount would increase the burden upon the individual charged with the responsibility of bringing water to the house.

We can learn from this that while it is important to do *mitzvot* in the most generous manner possible, ultimately it should not be done at the expense of another individual.



FAST FACTS on "LASHON HaKODESH" Batya Matla Herzberg



- ✓ Just as the Torah was written in *lashon hakodesh*, so too the world was created with *lashon hakodesh*
- ✓ One opinion in the *gemara* states that before the incident of *dor haflaga*, the only language spoken in the world was *lashon hakodesh*. Another says that seventy languages were spoken then and all of them were understood by everyone, even though each person spoke his/her own
- ✓ The *Ramban* says that it is called *lashon hakodesh* because that was the language in which Hashem wrote the *Torah*, spoke to the *neviim*, and gave *aseret hadibrot*, etc, all items of utmost *kedusha*
- ✓ The *Kuzari* says that *lashon hakodesh* is the most important of all languages
- ✓ Because this was the language that *Eiver* spoke, it is called *Ivrit*
- ✓ In *Tzphania* 3:9 it says "for then I will change the nations to speak a pure language so that they will all proclaim the name of Hashem to worship him with a united resolve." The *Ibn Ezra* says that the language referred to here is *lashon hakodesh*

Mazel Tov



To Batsheva Waltuch on the Bar– Mitzva of her brother Eli
To Mrs. Pomerantz on the birth of a granddaughter, Amanda Rachel
To Mrs. Liebttag on the birth of a grandson
To SKA graduate Elana Pelcovitz on her engagement to Zachary Wolf
December 18
Arielle Weinberg

December 20 December 21
Estee Goldschmiedt Judy Grossman
Rikki Schonbrun

Special Happy Birthday to the weekly editor:
ATARA FEINBERG!

Parsha Quiz



פרשת ויגש
עליות חמישי וששי
מ"ה:כ"ח- מ"ז:י'

רש"י
מ"ו:ט"ו—שלישים ושלוש
י"ט- בני רחל אשת יעקב
כ"ט- ויאסר יוסף מרכבתו
מ"ז:י' - ויברך יעקב

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