



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

2ND EDITION / ISSUE 11

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VAYIGGASH

5th Teveth 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 34, verses 18 - 30

- ✚ The viceroy is determined to keep Binyamin prisoner for the theft of his golden goblet.
- ✚ Yehudah steps forward and offers himself in exchange for his younger brother. He explained that he made an oath to his father that he would take full responsibility of Binyamin as he is the only remaining link to Yaacov's beloved wife; Rachel and her other son 'Yosef' whom are both dead. Yehudah pleads that if he returned home, failing to bring Binyamin back with him; Yaacov would surely die of a broken heart.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 34, verses 31 - Chapter 35, verse 7

- ✚ The viceroy is unable to control his emotions any longer and orders everyone to leave the room, as he wishes to speak to the brothers alone. Crying out loud, the viceroy revealed to the brothers his true identity, that he is in fact their long lost brother Yosef whom they sold all those years before.
- ✚ The brothers are so shocked and dumbfounded with the revelation that they became afraid and ashamed of what they had done. Yosef comforts them saying it was all part of Hashem's plan to bring him here to Mitzraim (Egypt) in order to preserve their lives from the famine.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 35, verses 8 - 18

- ✚ Yosef tells his brothers that as there is still five years famine yet to come and they should go back and tell Yaacov, their father the truth that his beloved son, Yosef is still alive and that he requested them to bring Yaacov back to Mitzraim so he would not starve.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 35, verses 19 - 27

- ✚ Pharaoh discovers that Yosef's brothers are here with him and reiterates to them that Yaacov and their entire families will be made very welcome if they come back to stay in Mitzraim.
- ✚ Laden with wagons, donkeys full of provisions and gifts provided by Pharaoh and Yosef, the brothers return back to Canaan to inform their father that his beloved son Yosef is still alive and well.
- ✚ Yaacov refused to believe them at first, but when he sees the wagons approaching, Yaacov's grief ended and his spirit returned back to him.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 35, verse 28 - Chapter 36, verse 27

- ✚ Yaacov travels to beer-sheba to offer up a korbanos (sacrifice) to Hashem.
- ✚ Hashem comes to Yaacov in a vision, telling him to not be afraid because unlike his father Yitzchak, he will grant permission, allowing Yaacov to go down into Mitzraim.
- ✚ Yaacov, his wives, sons and their families depart Canaan and begin their journey towards Mitzraim.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 36, verse 28 – Chapter 37, verse 10

- ✚ Yehudah went on ahead to set up their new dwelling places in the fertile area of Mitzraim called Goshen. Yosef rushes out in his chariot to greet his father. After embracing each other, Yaacov reveals he is now ready to die.
- ✚ Yosef introduces his father to Pharaoh who when asked his age, Yaacov replies 'I'm 130 years old, but my years have been mainly unhappy ones'

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 37, verses 11 - 27

- ✚ .Yosef continues to work for Pharaoh and soon acquires for him the majority of the land of Mitzraim and its livestock. Yaacov and his family continue living in Goshen, where they prospered and multiplied. **(Please read 'Weekly Discussion' section for more insights)**

Haftorah – YEHEZKEL (EZEIKEL) Chapter 37, verses 15 to 28

OVERVIEW:

- Following the death of Shlomo Hamelech, (King Solomon) the Jewish nation was divided. The tribes of Yehuda and Binyamin were governed by Rechavam (who was a direct descendant of David) and Yiravam (who was descended from Ephraim) and ruled over the other ten Tribes.
- Hashem commanded Yehezkel to take two pieces of wood and inscribe Yehuda on one piece and Ephraim on the other.
- Yehezkel then placed the two pieces together in his hand, where it miraculously fused into just one piece.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- One of the primary reasons why the Jewish people ended up in Mitzraim (Egypt) was because Yehuda and Yosef (who were both destined to be Kings over the Jewish people) weren't united.
- The Sedra begins with the confrontation between Yehuda and Yosef. Yehuda who had the original idea to sell Yosef as a slave, was now willing to become Yosef's servant in exchange for Binyamin.
- In the Haftorah, Hashem was prophesying to Yehezkel that he will reunite the two divisions of Yehuda and Ephraim in the land of Israel; making them whole again and ending the dispute and golus (Exile)

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

After receiving bad news or experiencing a tragic event, people will sometimes respond with the words, "It's Hashem's will. "Or "its bashert," meaning it was meant to be.

In this week's Parsha of Vayiggash, despite having good reasons to be frightened and harboring guilt by tossing Yosef into a pit and later selling him to merchants who led him into servitude in Mitzraim (Egypt). Yosef reassured his brothers that they should not feel any remorse about the way they had treated him.

Yosef explained to his brothers they had nothing to fear; because it was Hashem's will who bought him to Mitzraim enabling him to assure the survival of their family during the harsh famine which was raging throughout the land.

Maimonides teaches that free will is a fundamental belief in Judaism and that everyone has the ability to make their own choices and subsequently responsible for the choices that were made. If true, how Yosef could say, as noted above, that "Hashem sent me ahead of you to assure your survival", when in next week's portion, he claimed that though the brothers intended to harm him, "Hashem turned their actions for the sake of good. It's a paradox! All is foreseen by Hashem, yet free choice runs supreme. So how are both things possible?

The 'Yosef story' helps us to understand this seemingly contradiction. On the one hand, Yosef appears to make free choices: he was a master planner who protected the surplus of the good years so that Mitzraim could survive the seven year famine. He cleverly tested his brothers to determine if they had become men of good faith, and much more. On the other hand, Yosef saw the bigger picture, and attributes much of his achievements to Hashem. In doing so, he acquired humility and someone who recognized he is just a cog in the wheel of Hashem's master plan. For example: when Pharaoh tells Joseph that he heard that the young man was a fine interpreter of dreams, Yosef responds, "Not !! It is Hashem who will account for Pharaoh's well-being"

Judaism expects us to be a partner with Hashem. Yosef believed that Hashem had a plan for him and so should we. I do not pretend to know yours or even my own divine purpose of where we fit in the grand scheme of things but I do believe, whatever happens to us, both bad and good, may connect to that which is beyond our comprehension but will ultimately fulfill 'Hashem's master plan' of uniting us all and bringing ourselves ever closer to Hashem's presence and the start of the messianic era.

