



Parshas Vayigash 2018, the ego trip

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of my grandmother, Shoshanna Bas Sholom, and my aunts, Chana Bas Yehuda and Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

We picked up Parsha at the end of last week, where Benjamin was found to have Yosef's goblet. Yosef commanded that Benjamin remain in Egypt while the brothers were free to return home.

At this point, our Parsha begins with Yeudah reacting to Yosef's command; he pleads with Yosef to take him as a slave instead. He explains that if he were to return home without Benjamin, his father would die from the agony of losing a second son.

At that time, Yosef could no longer restrain himself; overcome with emotion, he asked all but his brothers to leave his presence. He revealed his true identity to his brothers with both sorrow and happiness: *"I am Yosef!"* He then instructed them to return home quickly and bring their father and families back to Egypt.

The brothers were speechless, completely in shock and disarray; they could not believe their brother was still alive. They started to tremble, fearing the punishment that Yosef would retaliate against them with.

But instead, Yosef called them back to him, telling them they were forgiven. When he made history, he became the first person in the Torah to forgive.

When the brothers returned home, they told Ya'akov something he'd never thought he would hear in his lifetime: Yosef is still alive! Ya'akov was ecstatic and overjoyed, as the Pasuk says (45:27), *“And the spirit of their father, Ya'akov, was revived.”*

Before Ya'akov began his journey down to Egypt, Hashem appeared to him and said that He would go with him down to Egypt and make his family a great nation. Ya'akov then gathered his family and quickly traveled down to Egypt to his beloved son, Yosef.

However, a question comes to mind: what was so powerful about Yeudah's speech that it overcame Yosef with emotion? What was so compelling that it made Yosef break character and reveal his true identity?!

To answer this question, we must go back in history to when Yosef was sold. Shimon and Levi conspired to kill Yosef, but Reuven, the firstborn, suggested they throw him into a pit instead. He intended to come back later and save him, but before he could return, Yehuda sold him to a band of passing Arabs. Starting the sequence of events that led them to this exact moment.

Yosef was overcome with emotion because he had just witnessed a complete transformation of Yeudah. He went from a person who sold him without remorse to a man who stepped up as a leader amongst his brothers.

He took full responsibility for his past actions and ensured they never occurred again. He stepped up by ensuring that Benyamin would go home to his father. When faced with the prospect of leaving his brother behind, he offered his life instead of Benyamin's.

At that point, Yeudah achieved the highest level of repentance, which is taking responsibility for your past actions and putting all your effort into changing them.

Because of this circumstance, he merited that most of the kings would come from his descendants and that the ultimate redeemer would come from his offspring.

Yeudah introduces the powerful idea that leaders are human beings who can make mistakes. But what differentiates them is the ability to learn and grow from past experiences and ensure that it never happens again.

In our daily life, you can lead or be led. You can be led by your ego, which will hinder your ability to grow and stop you from reaching your true potential. But ultimately, it will set you up for an unfilled, disappointing, and undesirable life.

Alternatively, You can lead your life by learning and growing from the misdeeds of your past actions and using those experiences to inspire you to stay strong when tested, setting yourself up for success and prosperity.

**"A true leader is a person who is big enough to admit his mistakes
but strong enough to correct them."**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*