



Parshas Vayigash 2022, experiencing G-d's plan

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Shaul Ben Berta and Lior Gabay Ben Michal.

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. As well as Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Yehuda stepping up and negotiating with Yosef to let Benyamin return home. He pleads with Yosef to take him as a slave instead, citing that if he returned home without Benyamin, his father would die from the pain of losing a second son.

Suddenly, Yosef couldn't restrain himself anymore; overcome with emotion, he told all but his brothers to leave his presence. Tearfully, he reveals his true identity to his brothers, ***"I am Yosef your brother."***

His brothers were speechless and in complete shock; they could not believe that Yosef was alive and had become the viceroy of Egypt. Yosef asks about Ya'akov and instructs them to return home and bring him and their families back to Egypt.

But as the initial shock wore off, the gravity of their sin grew much clearer. They began to worry about Yosef's retaliation and punishment for their actions. But Yosef, with great compassion, brought his brothers closer to him and told them they were forgiven.

The brothers quickly returned home and 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 he headed down to Egypt, G-d appeared to Ya'akov in a dream.

G-d said to Ya'akov that He was accompanying him throughout his journey and time in Egypt. He will go down with him and remain with him until he is buried in the holy land. The following day, Ya'akov gathered his entire family and quickly traveled to Egypt to see his son, Yosef.

However, a question comes to mind: As Ya'akov prepared to make the journey to Yosef in Egypt, G-d appeared to him. He told Ya'akov not to fear, for He will be with him throughout his time in Egypt. The Torah writes (46:3) *"And G-d said, 'I am G-d, the G-d of your father's house. Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will make you there into a great nation.'" But why did G-d need to tell Ya'akov that He was going with him? What fear, worry, or apprehension was G-d alleviating by informing Ya'akov that He would be with him?*

The Rabbeinu Bachya (*Rav Bachya Ben Asher, a 14th-century Torah commentator*) gives a simple answer. He writes that Ya'akov learned from his father, Yitzchak, not to leave Israel unless G-d commands. Although Ya'akov wanted nothing more than to see his son, G-d did not command him to go to Egypt. Therefore, G-d appeared to Ya'akov and told him to take his family and travel to Egypt.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan scholar, and kabbalist*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that when Ya'akov heard Yosef was alive, he desired more than to see his son. But he realized that his journey to Egypt would lead to the Jewish people's enslavement and oppression.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that Ya'akov's dilemma regarding his family's future made him doubt his trip to Egypt. Although he wanted to see Yosef, he could not get past the pain the nation would suffer from the Egyptians. So he went to his father's home in Be'er Sheva to learn what G-d had in store for him. Should he go to Yosef in Egypt or stay in the land of Israel?

G-d's appearance to Ya'akov validated his dilemma and apprehension. Yes, there will be a period of immense suffering and enslavement, but that's where a family becomes a nation.

G-d tells Ya'akov that just as slavery is inevitable, so is the continuity of his descendants, the Jewish people. G-d swore to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov **again** that their children would survive many tragedies. Their descendants would encounter hatred and hostilities but live to celebrate their salvation and liberation. We, the Jewish people, will know and feel the pain of exile; but also experience G-d's glory with the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate redemption!

In our daily life, it is imperative we realize that we can never truly hide from experiencing the ups and downs in the journey of life. It is a natural, innate, and necessary part of the human experience. Just as we begin with pain for the mother but life for the child, it is impossible not to feel the highs and lows inherent in our world.

However, it does not mean we should avoid encountering those feelings. For all significant innovations and successes got through failure and defeat. All courage, bravery, and heroism overcame fear, anxiety, and cowardice. When we face our fears, we unlock our soul's power and strength to achieve and reach far beyond our imagination.

**"To try, to fall, to fear, and yet to keep going
is what it takes to be a leader.**

**That is Ya'akov, the man who had his greatest visions of heaven
at the lowest ebbs of his life."**

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*