

Parashah # 11
(Updated 1.03.09)

VaYigash ~ וַיִּגַּשׁ ~ And he approached

Torah: B'resheet/Genesis 44:18-47:27

Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 37:15-28

B'rit Hadashah: Acts 7:9-13-15-16

What a SHOW!!!! In living Technicolor, I might add!!!

Traditions!!! Have ya ever wondered where some of our traditions have come from???? When someone has been to visit and they get ready to leave, do you walk them to the door? Do you go outside with them? How about to the car? Out the driveway as they start driving out???? (My mom was one of those!) Well . . . get a load of this!!!!

One Jewish tradition is learning the importance of escorting people when they begin a journey. Although no more than approximately eight feet is required, to accomplish this mitzvah, even that shows the one being accompanied, that he is not alone but is connected to others. One can be physically alone, yet spiritually connected to the one who escorts him on the beginning of his journey. Similarly, one may be physically far from Israel but spiritually connected to it.

The reason for my interjection of this information has to do with the last time Yosef saw his father. When Ya'akov sent him to check on his brothers, he began to escort him as (Hah-lah-khah) Halakah indicates. At 17, Yosef begged his father, then approximately 117, not to accompany him down the steep hill from (Hehv-row'n) **Hevron/Hebron** because it would require a difficult climb back up by himself. However, Ya'akov's response was that this Mitzvah was of great importance. In retrospect, I believe, we can see that Yosef actually was spiritually connected to his father all those years.

CHAPTER 44

The opening verse of this week's **Parashah/portion**, **verse 18** reads: "Then **Y'hudah/Judah** approached him (**Yosef/Joseph**) and said, 'If you please, my lord, may your servant speak a word in my lord's ear . . .'. Though Judah didn't realize to whom he was speaking, he was asking to whisper in the Viceroy of Egypt's ear; to say something softly to him, to speak to him in a quiet way.

Are you like me? Do you ever wonder why in the world the Torah tells us this seemingly insignificant detail? Yet, we know that Torah is always teaching us something. That's why we never tire of studying it and never cease to learn new insights from it, year after year.

At a time when Judah could be screaming with frustration because of the anguish that would come over his father, **Ya'akov/Jacob**, if he returned home without his youngest brother, **Binyamin/Benjamin**, he requests a time to talk quietly with Yosef, although he didn't know him by that name at the time. It made me think of **Mishlei/Proverbs 15:1** "a soft answer turns away wrath" and another, "A wise man speaking quietly is more worth heeding than the shouts of a ruler commanding fools." (**Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 9:17**) With Judah's offer to substitute himself in Benjamin's place (**verses 33 & 34**), I believe that Yosef finally received the confirmation he needed that his brothers' devotion to Jacob and their love for Benjamin was sincere and that they had already learned their lessons regarding the crime they had committed against their brother, Yosef.

CHAPTER 45

Finally, Yosef can contain himself no longer and cries out "**Ani Yosef**"/"**I am Joseph**" (**verse 5**) "G~d sent me ahead of you to preserve life." Wow!!! How much this is a fore shadow of Yeshua who came before us to preserve life! Can you imagine the mixed emotions that must have been felt at that moment; the weeping with joy and sorrow? I'm sure there must have been hundreds of questions going through everyone's head. AND, probably, this is the first time they heard him speak in Hebrew. The rest of the time Yosef would have been speaking in Egyptian. To me, this parallels Yeshua not being recognized by His own "brethren". I'm sure there will be much weeping when He reveals Himself to his brothers on "that day" too!

Some time ago, one of the members of our Torah Study group, Brother Lynn, made a rather astute observation. In **verse 1**, it says he (Yosef) couldn't control his feelings in front of his attendants and cried "Get everybody away from me! So no one else was with him when Yosef **revealed** to his brothers who he was." Okay, so imagine this . . . all of

his servants are out of the room; there is no one around, just him and his brothers and he **revealed** himself. Lynn believes that Yosef showed his brothers that he was circumcised because only the Hebrew children were circumcised. That makes sense and I'm inclined to agree with Brother Lynn. Furthermore, in **verse 4**, "Yosef said to his brothers, "Please! Come closer! And they came closer." Why else would it be necessary for the brothers to come closer except to see the revealed circumcision?

Verses 9 & 10 say that Yosef wants his brothers to go to his father, tell him that Yosef is still living and bring him to Egypt. Yosef reiterates in **verse 12** that they have seen and that his own mouth is speaking. I believe he is referring to the fact that he is speaking **Ivrit/Hebrew**. Then in **verse 15** "his brothers talked with him" is another reference that they were conversing in their native language.

In the meantime, Pharaoh learns that these men are Yosef's brothers so he joins in the welcome. I can't help but wonder what was going on in his mind. Can't you just see the wheels turning? Let's see . . . we seem to have so much favor on us when Yosef is around, I wonder what additional good will come when the rest of his family is here. SO, Pharaoh insists on sending wagons to retrieve Jacob and all of his family. In fact, he suggests that they don't even have to bring any of their belongings because he will provide the very best of Egyptian fare for them when they arrive. (**Verses 16-20**)

Surface reading would indicate that as a very nice gesture but Yosef makes sure that plenty of additional wagons are sent so **Jacob/Israel** and family could bring **ALL** of their personal possessions so they would not have to assimilate into the Egyptian way of life. One of the things Yosef impressed on his brothers, to tell his father, was the fact that he continued to follow the G~d of his fathers. In fact, it was this very thing that caused Jacob to become revived so he could see for himself that Yosef was as spiritually strong as he used to be.

As the brothers are preparing to leave, **verses 21-24**, Yosef gave them provisions for their journey. In addition, he gave each one of them a set of new clothes but to Binyamin he gave 7 ½ pounds of silver and five sets of new clothes. (There are those numbers again; seven for spiritual perfection and five for grace!!!) Then to his father, he sent 20 donkeys with various provisions. Twenty is the number of . . .

- maturity
- completion
- attainment
- redemption and
- expectancy.

I believe we can see each of those words coming into play at this juncture. There was one final admonition from Yosef upon their departure. He said to them "Don't quarrel among yourselves while you're traveling!" (**verse 24**) Why do you suppose he made such a statement to them? Although he has observed a very definite change in their hearts, could he have been concerned about Binyamin's welfare since he had received more than his brothers?

One more matter before moving on. At this point, the brothers have somewhat of a dilemma on their hands. How were they going to break this astounding news to Ya'akov without giving him a heart attack?! It is said that they decided to have a little girl, (Seh-rahk) Serach, Asher's daughter, play the harp and sing to her grandfather. They told her: "When you sing for grandfather next time, sing to him: 'Yosef is still alive, Yosef is still alive . . .'"

We are told when little Serach sang these words, Ya'akov almost collapsed when he finally comprehended their meaning. However, the gentleness of her voice softened the shock and he was calmed. He gave Serach a blessing of longevity, and it is said that she became the only one to go down to Egypt with Ya'akov and ascend 210 years later with Moshe.

However, **verse 26**, clearly states that "they told him, Yosef is still alive . . .". Perhaps the story concerning Serach is from the Oral Torah and just wasn't canonized. When you consider all of the wagons and the gifts Yosef was sending back to his father, it was no small entourage returning to Kena'an. Perhaps Asher did go ahead of the rest to tell Serach what she needed to do and by the time everyone else arrived Ya'akov was more prepared to hear all of the things that happened while "the boys" were in Egypt.

CHAPTER 46

"In a vision at night G~d called to Isra'el (his new name) and said Ya'akov! Ya'akov! (his old name). (**verse 2**) Why does his name change in the middle of the verse? I found an interesting commentary on Aish.com regarding this. Even after Jacob's name was changed to Isra'el as a result of his victory over the "angel", he still retained his original name.

Jacob refers to a lower level or the physical realm, while Isra'el denotes his higher level or spiritual realm. G~d speaks to Isra'el and informs him that he really is "Jacob, Jacob" the lower level, since he is about to be exiled to Egypt for 210 years of blood, sweat and tears which personifies the harsh bondage of Pharaoh. However, it was in the physical realm that HaShem caused Ya'akov to increase.

Verse 3 states "Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt. It is there that I will make you a great nation." Notice: It didn't say, while you are here in the Promised Land; while you are in your comfort zone; while you are where I want you to be eventually, but "**THERE**" I will cause your increase. Sometimes, we have to go where we don't necessarily want to go in order to receive our promise. The bottom line is obedience! Sometimes, our promises come from being in Egypt!

Often, it is when we are in exile or when we are faced with challenging circumstances that we are made "great". Sometimes it is adversity that puts us in touch with G~d; if in fact it doesn't DRIVE us to Him.

Verse 27 states "Thus all the people in Ya'akov's family who entered Egypt numbered seventy." I want to make note that we really don't know how many entered Egypt. Let's go back to **verse 7** which says "his sons, grandsons, daughters, granddaughters and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt." Then in **verses 8-26** we have the names of all the sons and their sons who entered and those names totaled 70 but according to **verse 20**, M'nasheh and Efrayim were born in Egypt, so they didn't come into the Egypt, they were already there, as well as Yosef.

Oh, by the way, from last week's Torah portion, for those of us who might have thought when the other brothers went to Egypt, perhaps the reason Binyamin stayed in Kena'an with Ya'akov, was because he didn't have any family to feed . . . well, guess again! **Verse 21** lets us know that he was the most prolific of all the sons!!! Check it out! Binyamin had ten sons, more than the other brothers.

Then **verse 26** tells us Ya'akov's direct descendants, not counting the wives of Ya'akov's sons totaled 66. Now add Ya'akov plus Yosef and his sons, who were already there; that's where the number 70 comes into play. Seventy represents G~d's administration of the world, judgment and Israel's captivity and return. However, as I said earlier, we really have no idea specifically how many went into Egypt with Ya'akov because we don't know how many wives there were (we know they were not a monogamous society at this point) and we don't know how many children and grandchildren there were.

There are many different commentaries concerning these numbers. What I was able to derive from what I read follows. The number 70 is the total number of the patriarchal family who began to live in Egypt. The number Stephen used in **Acts 7:14**, of 75, was quoted from the Septuagint and apparently this discrepancy has to do with the 70 rabbis who translated the Hebrew Tanakh into Greek approximately 250 years before Stephen's speech. It is interesting that HaShem had seventy people begin Israel's life in this journey into (Meetz-rah-yeem) **Mitzrayim/Egypt**. There are several other significant seventies in the Bible.

- The seventy people of Israel seems to tie in with the seventy other nations of the world. (D'varim/Deuteronomy 32:8)
- There are 70 elders (B'midbar/Numbers 11:16)
- Seventy years of captivity (2nd Chronicles 36:21)
- Seventy weeks of years prophesied before the Messiah comes (Daniel 9:24-27)
- Seventy translators of the Septuagint
- Seventy witnesses that Yeshua sent throughout Israel (Luke 10:1)

According to **verse 28** Jacob "sent Judah ahead of him . . . to prepare ahead of him in Goshen." It is believed that Judah's primary objective in preceding the rest of the family was to establish a **Yeshiva (Jewish school of learning)**. Historically, the first priority of Jewish communities has always been Torah education so this set a precedent for all Jewish history.

Yosef wanted to be sure his family settled in Goshen, which was rich pastureland and apart from the corrupt influence of Egyptian society. Because he had found favor with Pharaoh, he felt sure that Pharaoh would want to recruit some of his family so he counseled his brothers on how to respond to the king. They should be truthful but in a way that would keep him from associating with them. The Egyptians were animal-worshippers and detested shepherds so Yosef had them introduce themselves as herdsmen. Therefore, Pharaoh shunned them and let them settle in relative isolation in Goshen. (**Verses 46:31-47:6**)

(As I'm preparing this the L~rd brought to my remembrance, hearing my mother use the phrase "land o'goshen!" I wonder if she had any idea what she was referencing. I doubt it!)

CHAPTER 47

Yosef introduces his father to Pharaoh, **verse 7**, who inquires about Ya'akov's age. Ya'akov responds that his "stay on earth has been 130 years; they have been few and difficult, fewer than the years my ancestors lived." True, Ya'akov had a challenging life.

- He had a brother, **Esav/Esau**, who didn't like him
- He lived in fear that his brother would kill him
- He had to leave his home to escape his brother's wrath
- He spent 20 years working for the love of his life, Rachel
- His only daughter, (Dee-nah) Dinah was tragically raped
- His beloved Rachel died in childbirth with his second son
- His favorite son was believed dead
- And now he had to leave his home because of famine

However, hadn't G~d always been with him?

- Hadn't he obtained the birthright
- Hadn't he obtained the blessing
- Hadn't he married Rachel
- Hadn't he been given 12 sons
- Hadn't he been reunited with his brother, Esau
- Hadn't he amassed great wealth, herds and flocks
- Hadn't he been spared the famine
- Hadn't he been miraculously reunited with his son, Yosef

There is a Midrash on **verses 8 & 9** concerning Ya'akov's attitude about his life. Though times had been challenging for him, he still had received many blessings. The years of Ya'akov's life were 147 while the life of his father **Yitz'chak/Isaac's** was 180. There was a difference of 33 years in their ages at death. It is said because of his "bad attitude" that his life was cut short by 33 years which parallels the exact number of Hebrew words used in **verses 8 & 9**. Perhaps the scripture, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (**Mishlei/Proverbs 18:21**), was derived from this incidence!

While that makes an interesting story, I believe it is important for us to grasp hold of the fact that we should look on the brighter side of all things in our life. In fact, I know someone who, when asked how she is, almost always responds with "I'm blessed and highly favored of the L~rd!" regardless of what she is going through or how she is feeling.

Verses 14-17 "Yosef collected all the money . . ." A funny thought occurred to me as I was reading the part where the Egyptians had used all their money to buy grain, then they were forced into the bartering system of trading their cattle and other livestock for food. Would this episode have placed Yosef in the position of being the first "stock" broker?????

And if that isn't enough, how about this . . .

Verse 20 "So Yosef acquired all the land in Egypt. . ." He apparently became the first Real Estate Broker as well!!!

During these passages, Judah referred to Ya'akov as "your servant" **ten** times, yet Yosef did not protest, most likely so the brothers wouldn't suspect his identity. It is said that because of this affront, Yosef's punishment was to die **ten** years before his older brothers.

Revelation!!!

Before we leave our Torah portion I want to share something HaShem has made abundantly clear to me. Do you remember a couple of weeks ago when we made the comparison of Yosef with Yeshua?

- Both were sent by their Father
- Both came to see their brothers.
- Both were plotted against by their brothers.
- Each was sold for pieces of silver
- Both were stripped of their robes.
- Both were put in a pit

Here is another matter to consider: the role of **Binyamin/Benjamin**. He really had/has a key role. Of all the brothers, he is the only one who was not involved in Yosef's disappearance; he is the only one of the brothers who accepted and loved him. If you think of and consider the parallels, I believe that Binyamin represents Messianic Judaism, i.e. those of us who have chosen to believe the truth of Torah, follow its ways, and observe the **moedim/appointed feasts and festivals** set out by HaShem. Yeshua, like Yosef, came to his brothers, was rejected by his older brothers but was accepted by his younger brother. I don't know that I have explained this adequately enough. I just know, in my spirit, that this is what HaShem wants me to realize without a doubt!

Revelation #2!!!

For the last couple of years, I have felt and believed that Torah is a blue print for the rest of the Tanakh/Bible and for life. Furthermore, I believe that **B'reshet/Genesis** is a blue print for the rest of scripture and for life! As time goes on and as I see many things happening and approaching, I am reminded of the words by King **Sh'lomo/Solomon** in (Koe-heh-leht) **Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 1:9** "What has been is what will be, what has been done is what will be done and there is nothing new under the sun." Bearing that verse in mind, I believe we will find some very interesting information in the weeks to come.

VaYigash ~ וַיִּגַּשׁ ~ And he approached Haftarah: Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 37:15-28

As we know from our Torah portion, Ya'akov and his sons are reunited with Yosef and our Haftarah is prophetic in nature concerning the eventual reunification of the twelve tribes of Israel. In today's time, we hear of the "Ten Lost Tribes"; which in fact, are not lost but scattered or dispersed throughout the nations of the world.

Just as Yosef and the other family members fell on each other's necks and wept, they wept tears of joy because their long years of separation were over. So, too, Yeshua weeps tears, longing for the reunification of His brothers. This prophecy speaks of a time when a king from the House of David, who will be a servant of G~d, and who will unify the people in allegiance to Torah. Idolatry will be gone and the Temple will stand; the standard of life will be obedience to the laws of Torah and the entire world will know that HaShem is G~d!!!

VaYigash ~ וַיִּגַּשׁ ~ And he approached B'rit Hadashah: Acts 7:9-13-15-16

Just as HaShem sent Yosef to Egypt in order to save the rest of Yosef's family from the famine, so too, HaShem sent Yeshua to not only save His brothers but to save the rest of the world as well. Here we see a very interesting parallel between Yosef and Yeshua. Yosef's identity is hidden from his brothers initially until the timing was right for the entire family to be saved.

Before Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, he cleared the Egyptians out of the room. I believe, if Yosef is a parallel to Yeshua and his brothers are the Jewish people, the Egyptians in Yosef's presence could be a parallel to Gentile believers. They are members of Yosef's court, his servants and officials; they already know him. When it came time to deal with his own family, Yosef removed them (the Egyptians) from the situation. In like manner, I believe when Yeshua chooses to reveal Himself to the Jewish nation, He will not require the assistance of "missionaries". Just as (**B'reshet/Genesis 45:1**) "there was no man with him when Yosef made himself known to his brothers" I believe that there will be no man with Yeshua when He makes Himself known to His brothers.

Yeshua's identity has been hidden from His brothers as well. In fact, there are some who would argue that Christianity has tried very hard to remove **Yeshua's/Jesus'** Jewishness from Him. We would do well to remember that Yeshua . . .

- Was born a Jew
- Lived as a Jew
- Worshipped as a Jew
- Followed Torah as a Jew
- Died a Jew
- Arose a Jew
- Is coming back as a Jew
- And will rule and reign as a Jew

That is why He is called “King of the Jews”. Only a brother Jew can have the title “King of the Jews”. I can assure you the first thing He is going to tell His people when He reveals Himself to them is “I am your brother.” Hallelujah!!!!

In closing, I believe Yeshua is a man like Yosef, eager to be reconciled with His brothers, eager to heal the wounds and right the wrongs of the past. He is full of empathy and longs for the final reconciliation and redemption.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 48