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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIGASH - 5765

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Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayigash ravfrand@torah.org

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

[From 5758] Parshas Vayigash

What Did Yosef Mean by "Al Tirgazu B'Derech"? We find in this week's Parsha, that before sending his brothers back to Yaakov, Yosef told them "Al Tirgazu B'Derech". The Gemara in Taanis expounds from this verse a number of laws regarding proper behavior while travelling on the road. Rav Elazar said that Yosef told them not to discuss matters of Halacha amongst themselves on the road, the conversation should be restricted to lighter matters. Another opinion quoted is that Yosef told them not to take large steps. [Taanis 10b] After the emotional reunion between Yosef and his brothers, what are Yosef's parting words? "Al Tirgazu B'Derech" ? either don't get involved in complicated learning or don't take large steps. Both interpretations are very strange. First of all, these are common laws in Derech Eretz. The brothers knew that one should not get involved in complex intellectual matters while 'driving down the turnpike'. Obviously a person can get into an accident from concentrating on learning instead of concentrating on the road! Likewise, it was common knowledge that large steps were inappropriate on the road. (The Talmud there continues and says that it can cause a diminishing of one's eyesight.) The Be'er Yosef suggests that Yosef's parting message to his brothers was much deeper and more significant. Yosef was telling them something far more meaningful and symbolic than that which a simple reading of the Talmud indicates. Yosef was actually chastising his brothers. How did the whole event of the sale of Yosef come about? The brothers sentenced Yosef to death for being a slanderer. They believed that Yosef brought bad tidings of their actions back to Yaakov. They judged him as a rodef ?? one who was trying to endanger their own lives. Chazal quote that they convened a Beis Din [Rabbinic Court] and had a proceeding and sincerely sentenced him to what they deemed to be a just sentence. But the question remains ?? we are talking here about a Capital issue. Yaakov, their father was the Gadol Hador [Supreme (Halachic) Authority of the Generation]. Why didn't they consult with him? They dealt with an earth-shaking matter out in some temporary camp in Shechem, on the road. What about the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever? What about consulting with the Gadol HaDor? "Why are you paskening [deciding] Capital Offenses on the 'New Jersey Turnpike' without going to ask a shaylah?" This is the meaning of "Al Tirgazu Be'Derech" ?? Don't occupy yourselves with Halachic matters on the road. Such decisions have to be arrived at with patience, with peace of mind, with seriousness of purpose ?? all of which is impossible to achieve haphazardly on the road. That was your crime. In your zealotry to accuse me, you missed a basic principle of Halacha which is to be patient in executing justice [Avot 1:1]. A judge has a responsibility to be deliberate and patient. That is what "Al Tirgazu Be'Derech" implies. And "Al Tafsiyu Pesiah Gassah" does not

mean simply "don't take large steps". Chazal tell us [Sanherdrin 7b] that we learn out the principle that a Judge must be deliberate from the juxtaposition of the verse "Do not ascend by steps upon my altar" [Shmos 20:22] with that of "And these are the laws which you shall place before them" [Shmos 21:1]. When the Kohanim ascended the altar, he went up a ramp, rather than steps. The purpose of this was to minimize the size of his steps. Just like the Kohanim are not supposed to take large steps, so too Judges have to be slow and methodical in their deliberations. In other words, the expression "Pesiya Gassa" is a terminology used by our Sages to indicate "Don't be rushed when you pasken a din." This is the symbolism that a big step diminishes a person's eyesight. It does not mean that a person's eyesight will be worse after taking large steps. The meaning is that if one is too hasty and impatient, his perspective will become diminished ?? one's clarity of vision will be lessened. This is what Yosef was telling his brothers: Don't let this happen again. Your crime was one of being in too much of a hurry, not patient in administering justice. That is why we find ourselves in this situation now.

Don't Second Guess the Gedolim The Torah tells us that Yaakov saw the wagons (agalos) that Yosef sent to transport him [Bereshis 45:27]. Up until that point, Yaakov had been skeptical of the news that Yosef was still alive. But at that point Yaakov's spirit was rejuvenated and he joyously prepared to reunite with his beloved son. There is a famous Medrash that the last sugyah [portion] that Yaakov and Yosef had studied together before they were separated was the sugyah of the decapitated calf (eglah arufah). Yaakov's spirit was rejuvenated because he sensed that Yosef sent the agalos to remind him of what they were learning ('eglah' is a play on words of 'agalah'). The Beis Yisrael explains the symbolism of the section of Eglah Arufa. In the previous verse [45:23] we are told that Yosef sent ten donkeys carrying the best Egyptian produce. The Maharal writes (Gur Aryeh al haTorah) that the 10 donkeys symbolized the 10 brothers that sold him into slavery. The message that Yosef was sending to Yaakov was, "Don't blame the brothers and don't blame yourself." The brothers, he intimated, were like donkeys that schlep without knowing where or why they are carrying the load. They are just performing a mission. Yosef was telling Yaakov, there should be no recriminations. Do not speculate as to how this could have been prevented. It could not have been prevented! G'd wanted it this way. The brothers were like puppets in the hands of a puppeteer. They acted without knowing why they acted. This, says the Beis Yisrael, is the message of the Decapitated Calf: "It was not known who smote him" [Devorim 21:1]. We see a dead body. We don't know why he is dead, where he is from, who he is, why he was killed, or who killed him. Eglah Arufah says, "We don't know." Do not second-guess Providence. Certain things we just don't have answers for. Some things just happen because they were meant to happen. There should be no finger pointing and no recriminations. Perhaps the greatest complaint people have on Gedolei Yisrael in this century, and why people lack, Rachmana Litzlan, appropriate faith in Torah leaders is because they point to pre-war Europe. Many Jews came to Rebbes, to Rabbonim, to Roshei Yeshivos and they asked if they should emigrate to Eretz Yisroel. It was the consensus of most Gedolim to stay in Europe. People remained in Europe and there was a Holocaust. Nowadays people point to this period as a challenge to the concept of Emunas Chachomim: "You see, the Gedolim were wrong! They don't know any better than we do. If the Gedolim were smart, they would have said 'Go to Palestine' and the Jewish people would be better off today." This is a wrong attitude. This is what Eglah Arufa comes to tell us. "It is not known." We do not know why it happened. We don't know why G'd wanted a Holocaust, but we know that He must have wanted it to happen. We know that if He wanted a Holocaust to happen, it would happen. We know that if He didn't want His people to immigrate to Palestine, they would not immigrate to Palestine. The truth of the matter is that a theoretical case

could be made that had they all immigrated to Palestine, they would have been killed there also. People forget that there was a German general named Rommel who conquered most of North Africa. People forget about that because Rommel fought against Montgomery and lost. Why did he lose? Rommel lost because he ran out of gas ?? literally. Hitler, yemach shmo, did not give importance to the campaign in Northern Africa, so he did not give Rommel the proper supplies. However, Rommel was really a better general than Montgomery was. Montgomery was no genius, as the British want us to think. Rommel ran out of supplies. Imagine if there were 2,000,000 Jews living in Palestine. In that case, Hitler would have given Rommel the supplies. Rommel would have defeated Montgomery, crossed the Suez, gone into Palestine, and slaughtered the community there. Don't second-guess Divine Providence. Don't second-guess Chachomim and Emunas Chachomim. Don't think we can figure out Divine Providence. That is what Eglah Arufah is about ?? "It is not known". Sometimes we are like donkeys that do without knowing why we do. But this is often the way G-d's plans are fulfilled.

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From: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld <kornfeld@jer1.co.il> To: CSHULMAN " Torah insight by Mordecai Kornfeld Date: 12/27/95 Subject: Parashat Vayigash - "The Mitzvot that our forefathers kept" The Weekly Internet P * A * R * A * S * H * A - P * A * G * E Parashat Vayigash 5756 [from 9 years ago]

BY RABBI MORDECAI KORNFELD
HOW MANY MITZVOT DID OUR FOREFATHERS KEEP?

INTRODUCTION

[Yaakov] sent Yehudah ahead to Yosef in Egypt, to "teach" ("L'horot") before Yakov's arrival, to Goshen. (Bereishit 46:28)

"He sent Yehudah before him" -- to set up a House of Study before Yakov's arrival, where Yakov would teach the words of the Torah and where his twelve sons and their families could study the Torah... This teaches us that wherever Yaakov went he studied the Torah, just as his fathers had. The Torah had not yet been given, yet we are told concerning Avraham, "He kept My safeguards, My commandments, My decrees and My teachings" (Bereishit 26:5)... [Avraham] kept all the minutiae of the Torah, teaching them to his children as well, as it says, "I chose him because he will command his children and his household after him to follow in the ways of Hashem; to carry out righteousness and justice" (ibid. 18:19). (Bereishit Rabba 95:3)

The Midrash asserts that although they lived long before the Torah was given to us at Mount Sinai, our forefathers kept all the Mitzvot [=Divine commandments] that the Torah would command their descendants in the future. This idea is reiterated by Chazal in many other places (see e.g. Yoma 28b; Rashi to Bereishit 26:5; Rashi to ibid. 32:5 -- "Yaakov said, 'I dwelt by Lavan, yet I kept all of the 613 Mitzvot' "). The patriarchs taught these Mitzvot to their children, the twelve tribes. They, in turn, also kept all of the Mitzvot of the Torah (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Ch. 6). And not only were our forefathers mindful of future *biblical* commands, they even heeded future *rabbinic* ordinances (Yoma 28b).

Hashem revealed to our forefathers the Mitzvot that he was going to give to the Jews at a later time. The forefathers, out of their profound love to do the will of G-d, voluntarily accepted upon themselves to perform these Mitzvot "ahead of schedule." It is an accepted principle that even if one is not subject to a given commandment, it is nevertheless considered meritorious for him to observe that Mitzvah. He is even rewarded for doing so (Rambam, Melachim 10:10).

Upon further investigation, however, there would seem to be scriptural and Midrashic evidence that contradicts the assertion that our forefathers kept all the Mitzvot of the Torah. In the specific area of marital laws, it would seem that they did not keep the laws of the future Torah:

[1] Rashi tells us (in this week's Parasha, 46:10), that Shimon married his sister Dinah. This marriage would seem, in fact, to contravene not only the laws of the Torah given to the Jews, but even Noachide Law! This system of law, which the Torah expects *all* human beings from the beginning of time to adhere to, includes laws against incest. There is, however, an opinion (in Sanhedrin 58a) that asserts that the Noachide laws against incest do not prohibit marital relations with a sister. Apparently, the Midrash that Rashi quotes is also of that opinion. However, our original question -- that as one who observed the Mitzvot of the future Torah, Shimon should not have married Dinah -- remains.

Another Midrash (quoted by Rashi to 46:26), posits that all of the twelve tribal ancestors were born with twin sisters, whom they subsequently married. This presents the same problem as the previous question. If the sons of Yakov kept the Torah of the future, how could they have married their own sisters?

[2] The Torah tells us specifically (Shemot 6:20) that Amram married his father's sister -- Yakov's granddaughter. This is an explicit violation of Torah law (Vayikra 18:12, 20:20). Although a *gentile* may marry his father's paternal sister (Sanhedrin 58b), how could the Midrash assert that the forefathers kept the laws of the future, *Jewish,* Torah.

[3] As Rashi explains (Bereishit 38:26), Yehudah married his daughter-in-law Tamar. Even if such a relationship is permitted for a gentile, isn't this a violation of Torah law for Jews (Vayikra 18:15)?

[4] Yaakov married two sisters (Bereishit 29:16), which is in violation of Torah law (Vayikra 18:18). We find, in fact, in the words of Chazal [our Sages] in various places that Yaakov's marriage of two sisters is frowned upon (see Pesachim 119a, end of Midrash Ruth Rabbati).

Why didn't our ancestors keep the future marital laws of the Torah in the above-mentioned cases? This question has been raised by numerous commentators throughout the ages. (See especially Perashat Derachim ibid.; Pardes Yosef to Bereishit 26:5.) Many commentators have discussed, at length, possible ways to deal with these difficulties. Let us take a brief look at some of their suggestions.

I The Ramban (12th cent. Spain) is among the earliest of the commentators to address this issue. In his commentary on the Torah (Bereishit 26:5 and Vayikra 18:25), the Ramban suggests the following rule. The Midrash only means to assert that our forefathers kept all the Mitzvot of the Torah while they were in Eretz Yisrael [=Israel]. Out of Eretz Yisrael, however, they did not make a point of keeping all the Mitzvot of the future Torah. Yaakov's marriage of two sisters took place in Charan, which was outside of Eretz Yisrael. Similarly, Amram married his aunt in Egypt. (This approach does not seem to help for problems [1] and [3], however, since Yehudah, and presumably his brothers too, married their wives in Israel.)

My rebbi, Hagaon Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman of blessed memory, explains the Ramban's reasoning in his work "Kuntresei Shiurim" on Gemara Kiddushin (20:6):

There are two facets to the fulfillment of any Mitzvah in the Torah, Rav Gustman explains. The first is, that we benefit directly from keeping the Mitzvot. We derive personal gain, whether physical or spiritual in nature, or both, from the performance of each and every Mitzvah. The second aspect to keeping the Mitzvot, is that we have obeyed a Divine commandment -- an order decreed by Hashem which we must follow, regardless of any benefit derived. (See also Kovetz He'arot, Chiddusei Agadot 3:2.)

The Midrash tells us that when we are outside of Eretz Yisrael, we keep the Mitzvot only "in order to retain our familiarity with them so that we may perform them as prescribed when we eventually return to Eretz

Yisrael" (Rashi to Devarim 11:18). The Ramban (Vayikra 25:10) explains this to mean that the main purpose of the Mitzvot is accomplished only in Israel. What that means is that outside of Israel, the first aspect of the Mitzvot is lacking. The spiritual or physical benefit that we have from the Mitzvot accrues only through performing them in Eretz Yisrael. Nevertheless, we are certainly *obligated* to perform the Mitzvot even outside of Israel, since Hashem has commanded us to keep the Mitzvot there too -- even if He did so only so we should "retain our familiarity with them" (Gur Arye to Devarim loc. cit.). Thus, all that is left to the observance of Mitzvot outside of Eretz Yisrael is the other facet of Mitzvah observance -- the fact that they are commandments of Hashem, which must be obeyed.

In the days of our forefathers, there was not yet any Divine commandment to keep the Mitzvot of the Torah. Their observance of the Torah was only in order to reap the great spiritual benefits that come from Mitzvah observance. Hence, when they were outside of Eretz Yisrael there was no longer any point at all in their following the Torah's commandments. The first aspect -- that of personal benefit -- does not apply outside Israel according to what we have explained, while the second aspect -- that of following the decree of G-d -- did not apply before the Torah was given at Sinai.

II A number of early commentators suggest another approach to our question (Yefe Toar on Bereishit Rabba, 16:6; Mizrahi to Vayikra 20:17; "the opinion of some" quoted by Maharal to Bereishit 46:10; Levush Ha'ora to Bereishit 32:5. These commentators were actually preceded in this suggestion by the Radbaz [14th cent. Spain] in his responsa, vol. 2, #696).

In Chagigah (3a) the Gemara refers to Avraham as "the first proselyte." This can be understood in a figurative sense -- Avraham was not technically a proselyte and he never underwent any formal process of conversion. The Gemara merely means to say that Avraham severed his ties with idol-worship and idol-worshippers, and began to serve Hashem (see Tosafot loc. cit.). However, it is also possible to take the comment of the Gemara literally, and to assert that Avraham was considered to be a proselyte in the strict sense of the word.

According to Jewish law, when a proselyte adopts the Jewish religion he is considered to have been "born afresh" at that time. He is no longer considered to have familial ties with his former, non-Jewish, family, at least as far as marital laws are concerned. He may therefore marry his own biological mother, sister, or daughter, if they later convert to Judaism (Yevamot 97b).

With this in mind, we can understand how the forefathers married what would seem to have been forbidden relatives according to Jewish law. The two "sisters" that Yaakov married were actually not sisters at all. After they adopted Yakov's way of life (which they certainly did before Yaakov married them), they were halachically considered to be converts. They thus became "reborn," losing all familial relationships that they had previously had.

Similarly, Yakov's sons and their sisters were technically not related to each other. Before the giving of the Torah, each individual had to accept upon himself the service of Hashem on his own, even if his father already had done so. Thus, the sons and daughters of Yakov were themselves considered to be converts, and to have lost all familial ties to each other in the process. Amram's aunt was not prohibited to him because of their familial relationship, either. (Problem [3], of Yehudah marrying his daughter-in-law, is not resolved by this approach. Tamar presumably "converted" before marrying Yehudah's son, so she was by any account his full, halachic daughter-in-law.)

III Some commentators suggest that the Midrash does not mean to say that the forefathers kept all the Mitzvot of the Torah *unequivocally.* Rather, that they did so *in general* -- provided that there were no circumstances that called for them to refrain from keeping them. For instance, when Shimon married Dinah, Rashi (Bereishit

46:10) explains that there were very specific reasons that compelled him to do so. Because of these reasons, he was willing to forego his usual habit of observing all the future Mitzvot of the Torah. The same may perhaps be said of the other cases in question.

What circumstances prompted the other "transgressions" of Jewish marital law? Some commentators suggest that Yakov, and perhaps his children too, had Kabbalistic reasons for marrying the people they married (see Rashba, responsa, vol. 1, #94; Radbaz, responsa, vol. 2, #696; Ohr HaChaim to Bereishit 49:3; Midrash Talpiot, Anaf Yaakov). Alternatively, perhaps when it came to finding partners in marriage, they did not accept upon themselves to necessarily adhere to the Mitzvot of the future Torah. Appropriate mates are always difficult to find (and they were especially so at that point in time), so once a fitting wife was found they could not afford to pass up the opportunity to marry her (Maharal to Bereishit 46:10).

IV The Maharal (to Bereishit 46:10 and Vayikra 20:17) proposes a very original approach. The forefathers, suggests the Maharal, kept only the positive commandments of the Torah, not the negative ones. The forefathers kept the Mitzvot as one who is not commanded to, yet takes it upon himself to keep the Mitzvot anyhow. Such a course of action is praiseworthy, and indeed rewarded, only if it is done through positive actions. *Refraining* from transgressing what one is not prohibited from doing, though, is not an act that is rewarded, the Maharal asserts. The laws of marriage that were abrogated by the forefathers were, of course, all negative commandments. Thus, these laws were not relevant to them!

(See also Chidushei HaGriz, stencil edition, Parashat Lech Lecha, for another interesting approach to our subject.)

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PARASHAT VAYIGASH
[from a few years ago]

The final verse of Parashat Vayigash reads, "Yisrael dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; they acquired holdings in it, were fertile and increased greatly." Given the general tendency of the Torah towards brevity, one might question the need to state "in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen." After all, we are already quite aware of the fact that Goshen was in the land of Egypt!

Rav Moshe Feinstein suggests that the Torah wished to stress that the successful, fruitful and vibrant community of Yaakov's family was established specifically in the land of Egypt. Even on foreign soil, while embedded within a culture founded on paganism and immorality, Benei Yisrael managed to sustain a vigorous hub of Jewish religion. As Chazal comment, Yaakov's first concern upon his approach to Egypt was the establishment of a yeshiva. This represents the concerted effort invested in ensuring Jewish continuity and religious devotion in the Diaspora.

As the first national exile, Benei Yisrael's sojourn in Egypt paved the way for Jewish survival in subsequent exiles. It demonstrated the stubborn ability of our people to "acquire holdings, be fertile and increase" even under the most hostile conditions. Throughout the centuries, our unwavering compliance with the strictures of the Torah and intense devotion to Torah study have ensured our surmounting of the obstacles placed before us in every generation.

On the individual level, as well, the Egyptian exile serves as a source of encouragement. If the Jews can establish themselves with such success (which, as we know, later became alarming in the eyes of the Egyptian

authorities) in the land of Egypt, then every individual, endowed with the divine image, has the capacity to grow and flourish even should he find himself - for whatever reason - in an Egypt-like situation. Even when the future looks bleak, when one feels like a stranger to himself and searches for direction, he can - through concentrated effort and hope - overcome the challenges before him and achieve redemption. [Prepared by David Silverberg.]

Something about the wagons Yosef sent him must have caught Yaakov's attention: "They recounted all that Yosef had said to them and he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to transport him, and the spirit of their father Yaakov revived." What was so special about the wagons?

Chazal explain that Yaakov sensed a subtle allusion intended by Yosef through the wagons. The Hebrew word for wagon is "agala," which resembles the word "egla," a calf. Through the wagons, Yosef hinted at the halakha of "egla arufa." This law requires that upon the discovery of a murder victim with no evidence, the elders of the nearest city conduct a ceremony in which they break a calf's neck and declare their having no knowledge of negligence with regard to the victim. Chazal explain that this was the last halakha that Yaakov and Yosef studied together before the latter's abduction. This is why the wagons, which symbolized the "egla arufa," struck an emotional chord within Yaakov. The question, though, remains, what does this halakha have anything to do with Yosef's bringing Yaakov to Egypt?

Rav Shimon Shkop suggested that upon catching Yosef's hint, Yaakov realized that his son had incorporated the lessons he had learned from his father about leadership. Already during Yosef's childhood, Yaakov must have sensed Yosef's future as a leader. He therefore taught him the laws of "egla arufa," which point to the primary element of leadership - responsibility. When a murder victim is found, the nearest authoritative body must assume the responsibility of investigating the murder. As Chazal explain, they investigate not only the murder itself, but the climate in which it occurred. They must explore the possibility that perhaps the victim left the city without adequate provisions, which may have indirectly led to his death. The onus falls upon the elder statesmen of the city to identify and correct the social ills prevalent among their constituency. All this Yaakov imparted to his son, Yosef, who was destined to assume the responsibility of leadership.

Thus, Yosef wanted to allude to his father that he never forgot the critical lesson he learned. He had said to his brothers, "You must tell my father everything about my high station in Egypt and all you have seen..." Through the wagons, however, Yosef assured his father that his "high station" was not misused. To the contrary, "G-d has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival on earth, and to save your lives in extraordinary deliverance." Yosef utilized his royalty for the sake of helping and saving others.

Thus, when Yaakov realized that Yosef was a leader in the spirit of the "egla arufa," "the spirit of their father Yaakov revived." [Prepared by David Silverberg.]

As his father made his way towards Egypt, Yosef saddled his chariot and went to greet him. Rashi comments that Yosef refused to have one of his many servants saddle his chariot, insisting that he do the job himself, so as "I'hizdarez lichvod aviv" - to demonstrate extra zeal for the honor of his father. How exactly are we to understand this "zerizut" that was manifest through Yosef's preparing his own chariot?

Rav Mordechai Gifter explains that zeal in this regard enhances the very performance of the mitzvah of honoring parents. True, on one level, nothing would have seemed any different would Yosef's handymen have prepared the royal chariot. Yosef would have gotten there just as fast. However, the mitzvah of honoring parents is just that - to honor them. By personally involving himself in the preparations rather than delegating, Yosef afforded further honor to his father. His personal

exertion expressed his high regard for Yaakov, that he himself found it worthwhile to roll up his sleeves and work on behalf of Yaakov's arrival in Egypt.

This concept, continues Rav Gifter, underlies the halakhic principle, "mitzvah bo yoter mibishlucho." Many mitzvot can be performed through an agent. One example in the Gemara relates to preparations for Shabbat. One can fulfill this mitzvah by hiring workers to complete the necessary preparations. Nevertheless, the halakha states unequivocally that it is far more preferable for one to perform the mitzvah by himself, rather than appoint another to do it for him. The reason, explains Rav Gifter, is the same reason why Yosef personally saddled the viceroy's chariot. Although one can achieve the same result through an agent, he affords greater honor to the beneficiary of his actions by personally involving himself in the required tasks. We perform a far greater level of "kevod Shamayim" - honor of G-d - by going through the work ourselves in the fulfillment of mitzvot. Many "Ba'alei Mussar" have stressed the need for "zerizut" - zeal and enthusiasm - in our performance of mitzvot. The greater effort, concentration and excitement that accompany our mitzvot, the greater honor we show for G-d, and the more we demonstrate our willful and enthusiastic subservience to His word. [Prepared by David Silverberg.]

Upon their arrival in Egypt, Yosef's brothers had "great connections" ("protektzia" in modern Hebrew). Not only was their brother the country's second-in-command, who was single-handedly responsible for the overhauling of the nation's economy and turning Egypt into the wealthiest country in the region, the only one with grain during the devastating famine, but in addition, the only man in Egypt with more authority than he - Pharaoh - loved him. Yosef had earned the monarch's trust, respect and adoration. Thus, the brothers basically could have gotten anything they wanted in their new residence. In fact, immediately upon hearing of their arrival, Pharaoh graciously offered, "I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall live off the fat of the land." They could have enjoyed hon, prestige and distinction.

Instead, Yosef gave his brothers specific instructions to tell Pharaoh that they are shepherds by trade: "You shall say, 'Your servants have been breeders of livestock from the start until now...'" - so that you may stay in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians." Evidently, Goshen - where Yaakov and his family settled - was not exactly home to the social elite of Egypt. It was reserved for the shepherds, the "abomination" of Egypt. Rather than enjoying the luxuries of the highest social stratum in Egypt, Yaakov's family willfully relegated themselves to life in Goshen.

The Chafetz Chaim comments that the brothers' choice in this regard teaches us about sacrifice and priorities. The brothers gave all this up in order to live in isolation from mainstream Egypt. They wanted to remain on the country's outskirts, where they could focus on the building of their nation, the establishment of religious institutions, and internal growth. They were very wary about assimilating too much within Egyptian society. They sacrificed prestige and prominence in order to ensure their own spiritual stability.

Yes, religion demands a lot from us. It calls upon us regularly - perhaps constantly - to offer of our time, energies and resources. Am Yisrael has flourished specifically because it has always been prepared to make these sacrifices for the sake of Torah and mitzvot. This is our chosen destiny and eternal responsibility - to maintain a proper hierarchy of priorities, that we sacrifice - when need be - wealth, honor and the like for the sake of the Torah, and not, Heaven forbid, the opposite. [Prepared by David Silverberg.]

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JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

RABBI YISROEL CHAIT

[transcribed by students]

In analyzing Joseph's relationship with his brothers we must ask several salient questions which will help shed light on the entire sequence of events recited in the Torah.

We must first analyze the source of the brothers hatred of Joseph. Joseph was their fathers favorite since he was born the son of his old age. However, Joseph reinforced their resentment by telling his brothers the content of two dreams that he had. This fact indicated his arrogant nature. The dreams were obviously divinely inspired. However, we must understand why there were two dreams. Furthermore, the brothers response to each dream was different. The first dream was concerning the bundles of wheat. The brothers response to this dream was continued hatred. The second dream concerning the constellations evoked a different response. The brothers were jealous and Jacob heeded this dream. The difference between the dreams can help us appreciate the different responses. The first dream reflected that Joseph would rule them physically. The bundles of wheat represent physical sustenance. Thus the brothers hated him even more for they resented that they would be physically subservient. However, the second dream reflected that Joseph would be the mentor, that he would lead them spiritually as well. The constellations represent spirituality. This evoked a response of jealousy. However, Jacob heeded the dream because he recognized Joseph's potential. We must appreciate that the brothers envy was based upon the fact that Jacob had chosen Joseph as the one who would be the leader and carry forward the tradition. The brothers did not act upon mere jealousy. They determined based upon Joseph's vanity and narcissism that he was not deserving of such an honor. He constantly told their father lashon hara, derogatory talk concerning them. His revealing to them his dreams reinforced their opinion that he was arrogant and unworthy. It reinforced their image of his vanity. Jacob, however, realized Joseph's intellectual abilities and conviction and realized in time he would mature and mold his character as a wise man. As time passed Jacob's assessment of Joseph's abilities and nature was proven accurate.

The brothers sinned by misjudging the situation and not trusting their father. The dreams merely bolstered the resentment that they had for Joseph. As a result they sinned by allowing their emotions to control their actions and shape their opinion. They committed an injustice against their brother by selling him into slavery. They did not realize, because of his arrogance and vanity, that he was capable of change. This was the background that set the stage for Joseph's encounter with his brothers some thirteen years later.

At the outset, an important footnote throughout the entire ordeal must be examined. The brothers during their entire encounter with Joseph did not recognize him, nor suspect that the Viceroy could be Joseph, despite their intimate knowledge of him. This incongruity could be explained because of the very nature of their sin. They miscalculated Joseph's potential for greatness. They viewed him as a vain and arrogant person. Accordingly, they felt by selling him into slavery, it would ensure that Joseph would not be the mentor. They felt that such an egotistical and vain person, would succumb to the life of the physical. They thought the support and security of his father and family was essential and without it, he would desert the tradition. Therefore, the Medrash tells us that when they entered Egypt they looked for Joseph in the houses of ill repute. They never imagined nor appreciated Joseph's true intellectual conviction and ability to elevate himself to a higher level. This essentially was their "chate", sin. They misjudged his abilities and failed to realize that he was still a child at the time they passed judgment, and capable of change. Therefore, this image was still in their mind and prevented them from ever imagining that Joseph was the Viceroy.

When analyzing the entire sequence of events commencing with the brothers descent into Egypt, and their meeting with Joseph and his

ultimate revelation of his identity, one gets a rather puzzled picture. It leaves an impression of a rather prolonged detached series of events without any type of logical nexus. Furthermore, many of Joseph's actions seem petty. When he recognizes his brothers he remembers his dreams and he responds by accusing them of being spies. Why didn't he reveal his identity to his brothers immediately? How come Joseph continues to place his brothers through a series of ordeals. The most encompassing question and perhaps the most disturbing, is once Joseph had the ability why didn't he communicate with his father and tell him of his well-being. Surely he would have spared Jacob undue suffering.

In order to start to appreciate the import of these questions, we must assert one logical proposition. Joseph's entire intentions were to benefit his brothers by affording them the opportunity to do teshuva, repentance. All the events can be explained by keeping this motif in mind when analyzing each event. Joseph used his ingenuity throughout the entire sequence and did not arouse suspicions in order to enable the events to develop in a manner that would facilitate their ability to do teshuva gemura, complete repentance.

Joseph foresaw that his brothers would be coerced to come to Egypt to buy provisions because of the famine. As a result, he viewed the situation as the opportune time to allow his brothers to repent. He was hoping that they would search for him and rectify the situation. Upon their first meeting with Joseph he acted as a stranger to them. The Torah tell us that Joseph remembered the dreams and accused them of being spies. Joseph was not vengeful. He was aware that the prophecy would become true and that this presented an opportunity to allow his brothers to change and ultimately acknowledge him as the mentor. Paragraph 42 verse 3 states "And the ten brothers of Joseph went down to Egypt to buy provisions." Rashi comments that they are referred to as Joseph's brothers because they regretted their actions and were determined to buy Joseph's freedom, at whatever price. Thus they had started on the path of repentance. In fact, they entered Egypt from ten separate entrances. This would facilitate their secondary mission of searching for Joseph and obtaining his freedom. However, his accusation of their being spies had to have a basis in order to dispel any suspicions. He knew that they entered from different entrances in order to search for him. He thus concluded that they felt guilty and realized that this presented an opportunity for him to question them. As a result of their guilt they tried to impress Joseph by telling him that they were searching for their brother. They sought to impress him with their loyalty. Thus he asked them, if your brother couldn't be bought would you fight for him. They responded in the affirmative. Joseph had thereby set a basis for his accusations. They affirmed that they would break the law if necessary. Therefore, his claim that they were spies was valid.

Joseph thereby sought the imprisonment of Shimon for two reasons. He sought to have Benjamin brought to Egypt. He also desired to isolate one of the brothers. In order for it to be a complete repentance, the same situation must arise and the person must demonstrate that he has changed by not falling victim to the same trappings of the sin. Therefore, Joseph sought to create similar circumstances to afford them the opportunity of teshuva gemura. This required that they must face their father and advise him of their need to bring Benjamin to Egypt. They had to countenance their fathers' despair and take responsibility for Benjamin's well being.

Upon being presented with these circumstances the brothers stated that this sad state of events had befallen them because of their unjust actions against Joseph. Joseph heard their misgivings and turned from them and cried. Rashi comments that he cried because he heard that they had charatta, they regretted their actions. It was not a mere emotional response. He cried because he realized that one of the components of teshuva was present. They had regrets over their past actions. The Torah specifically tells us that they were upset because they did not have mercy upon their brother when he cried to them. They were callous to his pleas for sympathy. However, he could not reveal himself as yet, because he

wanted to ensure that they would be completely forgiven and elevate themselves to a higher level of conduct. This could only be done after his entire plan had unfolded.

The Torah also affords us an interesting insight into the process of repentance. Genesis Chapter 42 Verse 22 states "And Rueben answered them saying, Did I not speak unto you saying do not sin against the child and you would not hear, and also behold his blood is required." Rueben's statement seems to be a response to a question. However, no question was asked. It follows the verse whereby the brothers acknowledge their guilt for not responding to Joseph's pleas for mercy. It therefore appears that since Rueben was the eldest, the brothers were attempting to shift much of the blame onto Rueben. However, Rueben's response was not merely defensive. Repentance demands that the wrong doer properly acknowledge his guilt. If one denies his culpability, he is incapable of doing teshuva and to change his character. The Torah emphasizes this point by phrasing Rueben's response as an answer. The brothers had to acknowledge their guilt if repentance was to be effective. Upon their return home, he secretly returned the money to them because he intended to keep them off guard. They suspected that he would accuse them of stealing the money. However, when they returned with Benjamin, he made no such accusation, but on the contrary he befriended them. This allowed him to place the cup in Benjamin's sack without raising suspicions. They totally discounted any doubts they had because he did not question the earlier incident. Psychologically he allayed any fears that they may have possessed. Therefore, on their return, he ate and drank with them and they feasted together.

It is interesting to note that since Joseph was sold into slavery, he did not drink wine. He missed their absence. Although he was ruler of a great land and had his own children, there was still a void in his life. He respected his brothers as wise men, as individuals with whom he shared a common intellectual heritage. This vacuum was always felt and prevented him from indulging in wine. This day, with his brothers present, he allowed himself to partake.

Before sitting down to the meal he used his cup ostensibly as a tool for divination. He sat them in order at the meal based upon their ages. The brothers were amazed. They did not suspect magic but were in awe of the fact that he was totally prepared for their meeting and had obtained such detailed information about them. He used the cup because it would serve as the perfect excuse for Benjamin's unlawful possession of the cup. Benjamin ostensibly stole the cup to help him find his brothers whereabouts. At the meal he desired to foster their emotions of jealousy, so he sat with Benjamin. He again discounted their suspicions by claiming that he would sit with Benjamin since they both did not have mothers. Joseph also favored Benjamin by giving him portions five times greater than the other brothers. Joseph was not merely expressing his fondness for Benjamin. He was recreating the same situation that existed between Jacob and himself. In furtherance thereof, he placed the goblet in Benjamin's sack. He wanted to place Benjamin in jail in order to recreate his entire ordeal, to the greatest extent possible.

The brothers responded by ripping their garments and acknowledging that G-d was punishing them for their sin of selling Joseph. Thereby, Judah made an appeal on behalf of his brothers for Benjamin's freedom. He acknowledged their guilt by selling Joseph and offered himself as a slave in Benjamin's stead. Judah's appeal was a lengthy plea to Joseph's compassion. They had to appeal to his mercy because they couldn't deny their guilt and say that Joseph set them up. They also sinned against Joseph by not acting compassionately. A complete teshuva demanded that they recognize their oversight, therefore they were coerced into appealing to his kindness. Thus, when they offered themselves in Benjamin's place, they demonstrated that they were at a higher level of perfection and their repentance was complete. Joseph immediately revealed himself unto his brothers. Upon his revelation, his primary concern was his father Jacob's welfare. Until this point he could not

inform his father that he was still alive. To do so, would have prevented his brothers, the progenitors of B'nai Yisroel of doing teshuva. Had he advised his father earlier of what transpired, the brothers might have been incapable of facing their father. They might have fled and this would have jeopardized the continued existence of B'nai Yisroel. Accordingly, Joseph was forced into remaining silent. However, after they did teshuva and elevated themselves to a higher level, they were able to face their wrongdoing. Therefore, when their repentance was complete and he was able to reveal himself, he immediately sent a message to Jacob advising him that he was still alive. This message contained an allusion to the last topic they were learning together. This served to comfort Jacob, for he realized that the tradition would be carried on through Joseph, as Jacob had envisioned.

From: TorahWeb.org [torahweb@torahweb.org] Sent: December 15, 2004 Subject: Achdus K'lal Yisrael: Diversified Unity - Rabbi Yaakov Haber to subscribe, email weekly@torahweb.org for anything else, email: torahweb@torahweb.org the HTML version of this dvar Torah can be found at: <http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>

RABBI YAAKOV HABER

ACHDUS K'LAL YISRAEL - DIVERSIFIED UNITY

"And you, son of Man, take for you one branch and write on it 'for Yehuda and the Children of Israel his compatriots,' and take one branch and write on it 'for Yoseif, the branch of Ephraim and the entire House of Israel, his compatriots.' And you should draw for you one near to the other unto one branch, and they shall be united in your hand.... So says G-d: 'Behold I shall take the Children of Israel from amongst the nations to which they went, and I shall gather them from around, and I shall bring them to their land. And they shall no longer be two nations and will no longer be split into two kingdoms... and they shall be one nation and I shall be their G-d. And my servant David will be king over them and [there will be] one shepherd for all of them, and they shall walk in my laws, and my statutes they shall keep and perform them.'" (Yechezkel 37:16-24)

Haftoras VaYigash contains these prophetic words of consolation by Yechezkel of the eventual gathering and unification of the Jewish people. The Haftarah echoes the dramatic reunification of Yoseif and his brothers in Egypt after years of envy, hatred, suspicion and separation. It would appear that this reunion served as an example - Ma'aseh 'Avot Siman laBanim (the actions of the forefathers are a sign for the children) -- for their descendants.

There is a direct parallel between the dual events mentioned in the prophecy -- the gathering of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael mentioned in the prophecy ("and I shall gather them from around, and I shall bring them to their land") and their reunification as a cohesive unit ("and they shall be one nation and I shall be their G-d") -- and the tenth blessing of the Shemone 'Esrei. There we pray: "v'sa neis l'kabeitz galuyoseinu, v'kab'tzeinu yachad mei'arba kanfos ha'aretz..." -- "and raise a banner to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the Earth." The blessing repeats the ingathering of the exiles twice in a seemingly redundant fashion. Rav Shimon Schwab (in Rav Schwab on Prayer, Artscroll/Mesorah) suggests that the first "gathering" refers to the physical return of K'lal Yisrael to its Holy Land; the second "gathering" refers to the reunification of the ideologically splintered Jewish people.

Yechezkel expresses the reunification of B'nei Yisrael as the reunification of Yehuda and Yoseif. On a simple plain, this references the split into two kingdoms headed by rulers from these two tribes. Perhaps we can suggest another meaning highlighting the reunion of two different types of Jews. Throughout the ages, there have always been two models of 'Avodas Hashem: the approach of exclusive devotion to Torah study and directly spiritual pursuits and the approach of

combining Torah study with a greater involvement in the world, whether professionally or academically. Stellar models of both have existed throughout Jewish history. Rav Soloveitchik suggested that this duality was the root of the dispute between Yoseif and his brothers. Yoseif's approach to the Service of G-d would be to infuse the entire mundane world with sanctity by engaging it and elevating it. (See Sheim MiSh'muel where he explains that this concept is one symbolic idea behind the placement of the Chanuka Menora which represents the light of Torah outside the house demonstrating that the Torah must illuminate all aspects of the outside world.) Indeed, Yoseif's roles as trusted manager, dream interpreter, economist, viceroy, and orchestrator of history while remaining loyal to the traditions of his father's household serve as a prototype of this type of Jew. Yehuda and his brothers espoused a more insular approach focusing on Torah study without as much involvement in the world at large. Ultimately, the reunification of the brothers represented the validity of both approaches. K'lal Yisrael has twelve tribes. Some, such as Leivi and Yissachar, would exclusively dedicate their lives to Torah study serving as the central foundation for the accurate transmission and interpretation of Torah for all generations. Others would engage in professions, trades and agriculture and support those engaged exclusively in Torah study. Individuals from all tribes could become "honorary members" of Sheivet Leivi choosing a Torah-alone lifestyle sensing that as their calling. (See Rambam, end of Hilchot Sh'mitta V'Yoveil, also Shulchan 'Aruch O"C 157 and Bei'ur Halacha s.v. "ya'asok").

Although each of these two prototype-members of K'lal Yisrael performs a valuable, indispensable role, often, since they are so different from each other, their differences could lead to arguments or even fissure as happened, according to Rav Soloveitchik, in the case of the original Sh'vatim. The prophet foretells the state of redemption when all the factions of B'nei Yisrael unify recognizing that through their diverse but complementary roles they all partook in bringing the Glory of G-d to the world.

Of course, we need not wait for the final redemption to start the process. It is incumbent upon all members of the Jewish people to recognize legitimate although distinct approaches to 'Avodas Hashem all with the Torah and Taryag Mitzvot ("and they shall walk in my laws, and my statutes they shall keep and perform them") as their foundation and to embrace diversified unity based on the Torah within our ranks. (For a further expansion on diversified unity, see "The Nazir, N'si'im, and Nuances" - Naso 2001 on TorahWeb.org.)

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS

[from 2 years ago]

Vayigash

The First Penitent

The sequence from Bereishith 37 to 50 is the longest unbroken narrative in the Torah, and there can be no doubt who its hero is: Joseph. The story begins and ends with him. We see him as a child, beloved - even spoiled - by his father; as an adolescent dreamer, resented by his brothers; as a slave, then a prisoner, in Egypt; then as the second most powerful figure in the greatest empire of the ancient world. At every stage, the narrative revolves around him and his impact on others. He

dominates the last third of Bereishith, casting his shadow on everything else. From almost the beginning, he seems destined for greatness.

Yet history did not turn out that way. To the contrary, it is another brother who, in the fullness of time, leaves his mark on the Jewish people. Indeed, we bear his name. The covenantal family has been known by several names. One is Ivri, "Hebrew" (possibly related to the ancient apiru), meaning "outsider, stranger, nomad, one who wanders from place to place." That is how Abraham and his children were known to others. The second is Yisrael, derived from Jacob's new name after he "wrestled with G-d and with man and prevailed." After the division of the kingdom and the conquest of the North by the Assyrians, however, they became known as Yehudim or Jews, for it was the tribe of Judah who dominated the kingdom of the South, and they who survived the Babylonian exile. So it was not Joseph but Judah who conferred his identity on the people, Judah who became the ancestor of Israel's greatest king, David, Judah from whom the messiah will be born. Why Judah, not Joseph? The answer undoubtedly lies in the beginning of Vayigash, as the two brothers confront one another, and Judah pleads for Benjamin's release.

The clue lies many chapters back, at the beginning of the Joseph story. It is there we find that it was Judah who proposed selling Joseph into slavery:

Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover his blood? Let's sell him to the Arabs and not harm him with our own hands. After all - he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed. (37: 26-27)

This is a speech of monstrous callousness. There is no word about the evil of murder, merely pragmatic calculation ("What will we gain"). At the very moment he calls Joseph "our own flesh and blood" he is proposing selling him as a slave. Judah has none of the tragic nobility of Reuben who, alone of the brothers, sees that what they are doing is wrong, and makes an attempt to save him (it fails). At this point, Judah is the last person from whom we expect great things.

However, Judah - more than anyone else in the Torah - changes. The man we see all these years later is not what he was then. Then he was prepared to see his brother sold into slavery. Now he is prepared to suffer that fate himself rather than see Benjamin held as a slave. As he says to Joseph:

"Now, my lord, let me remain in place of the boy as your lordship's slave, and let him go with his brothers. How can I return to my father without the boy? I could not bear to see the misery which my father would suffer." (44: 33-34)

It is a precise reversal of character. Callousness has been replaced with concern. Indifference to his brother's fate has been transformed into courage on his behalf. He is willing to suffer what he once inflicted on Joseph so that the same fate should not befall Benjamin. At this point Joseph reveals his identity. We know why. Judah has passed the test that Joseph has carefully constructed for him. Joseph wants to know if Judah has changed. He has.

This is a highly significant moment in the history of the human spirit. Judah is the first penitent - the first baal teshuvah - in the Torah. Where did it come from, this change in his character? For that, we have to backtrack to chapter 38 - the story of Tamar. Tamar, we recall, had married Judah's two elder sons, both of whom had died, leaving her a childless widow. Judah, fearing that his third son would share their fate, withheld him from her - thus leaving her unable to remarry and have children. Once she understands her situation, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute. Judah sleeps with her. She becomes pregnant. Judah, unaware of the disguise, concludes that she must have had a forbidden relationship and orders her to be put to death. At this point, Tamar - who, while disguised, had taken Judah's seal, cord and staff as a pledge - send them to Judah with a message: "The father of my child is the man to whom these belong." Judah now understands the whole story. Not only

has he placed Tamar in an impossible situation of living widowhood, and not only is he the father of her child, but he also realises that she has behaved with extraordinary discretion in revealing the truth without shaming him (it is from this act of Tamar's that we derive the rule that "one should rather throw oneself into a fiery furnace than shame someone else in public"). Tamar is the heroine of the story, but it has one significant consequence. Judah admits he was wrong. "She was more righteous than I," he says. This is the first time in the Torah someone acknowledges their own guilt. It is also the turning point in Judah's life. Here is born that ability to recognise one's own wrongdoing, to feel remorse, and to change - the complex phenomenon known as teshuvah - that later leads to the great scene in Vayigash, where Judah is capable of turning his earlier behaviour on its head and doing the opposite of what he had once done before. Judah is ish teshuvah, penitential man.

We now understand the significance of his name. The verb lehodot means two things. It means "to thank," which is what Leah has in mind when she gives Judah, her fourth son, his name: "this time I will thank the Lord." However, it also means, "to admit, acknowledge." The biblical term vidui, "confession," - then and now part of the process of teshuvah, and according to Maimonides its key element - comes from the same root. Judah means "he who acknowledged his sin."

We now also understand one of the fundamental axioms of teshuvah: "Rabbi Abbahu said: In the place where penitents stand, even the perfectly righteous cannot stand" (Berachot 34b). His proof-text is the verse from Isaiah (57: 19), "Peace, peace to him that was far and to him that is near." The verse puts one who "was far" ahead of one who "is near." As the Talmud makes clear, however, Rabbi Abbahu's reading is by no means uncontroversial. Rabbi Jochanan interprets "far" as "far from sin" rather than "far from G-d." The real proof is Judah. Judah is a penitent, the first in the Torah. Joseph is consistently known to tradition as ha-tzaddik, "the righteous." Joseph became mishneh le-melech, "second to the king." Judah, however, became the father of Israel's kings. Where the penitent Judah stands, even the perfectly righteous Joseph cannot stand. However great an individual may be in virtue of his or her natural character, greater still is one who is capable of growth and change. That is the power of penitence, and it began with Judah.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: December 15, 2004 4:33 AM To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT65 -11: Parashat Vayigash
YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM) STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA PARASHAT VAYIGASH
SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A
<http://vbm-torah.org/archive/sichot65/11-65vayigash.htm>
Together They Shall Proclaim Your Sanctity Adapted by Dov Karoll

The Torah lists at length Yaakov's descendants as they go down to Egypt (46:8-27). The family of each wife of Yaakov is listed separately: first the children and grandchildren of Leah, then the children of Zilpa, followed by the children of Rachel, and finally the children of Bilha. The Torah makes no attempt to homogenize or blur the differences between them. Each group stands alone, with its own approach. The Torah hints to us here that each approach is valid, and they should all coexist. The mistake Yosef made at the beginning of Parashat Vayeshev, which resulted in his sale, was that he tried to impose his own approach on all the brothers.

The Vilna Gaon, in his commentary on Mishlei (16:1, s.v. le-adam), says that each person has his own unique approach to the Torah. In the days of the prophets, you could go to a prophet to find out how to go about following that intuition. In our post-prophetic era, the Gaon recommends that a person should not rely on this intuition, but he does claim that it still exists. Nevertheless, the Chiddushei HaRim

says that it is the task of the sages of each generation to articulate a new understanding of the Torah appropriate to that generation.

The same holds true in the contemporary State of Israel. Some of the early Zionists wanted to create a melting pot, where everyone would come out the same. Our parasha teaches us that, to the contrary, each person and each group must be allowed to make its own contribution. The greatness of the Jewish people is that each individual and each group complements the others. Anyone who accepts the basic principles of Judaism, such as the divinity of the Torah, should be allowed to operate independently and contribute to the whole. Once you have this basic common ground, the rest is just details, and should be treated that way.

In recent years, one of the songs that has become popular is "Yachad." At a recent tisch, I pointed out that this song is based on a part of the Kedusha that refers to people giving praise to G-d "along with" with the ministering angels. "The angels above, along with Your people below, shall crown You together, O Lord our G-d; together they shall proclaim Your three-fold sanctity..." (Kedusha of Musaf, Nusach Sefarad). It is relatively easy to have unity with the angels. The hard part is having unity among the Jewish people. It is this we must strive for.

[This sicha was delivered at se'uda shelishit, Parashat Vayigash 5762 (2001).]

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FROM DAF YOMI -

From: Kollel Iyun Hadaf [kornfeld@netvision.net.il] Sent: December 13, 2004 To: daf-points@shemayisrael.co.il Subject: Outline of the Daf: Tamid 32
THE FREIDA MILLER MASECHES TAMID POINT BY POINT SUMMARY OF THE DAF prepared by P. Feldman of Kollel Iyun Hadaf daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>

Tamid 32

1) QUESTIONS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

(a) Alexandrus Mokdon asked ten things of the Ziknei ha'Negev (the Elders of the South):

(b) Question #1: Which is farther -- from the heavens to the earth, or [the width of the earth] from east to west (Maharsha - from the support given for Answer #1, it is evident that this means from the eastern extreme to [where we are, in] the middle of the world)?

(c) Answer #1 (Ziknei ha'Negev): It is farther from east to west; 1. Support: When the sun is in the east or west (sunrise and sunset), one can look at it, but when it is overhead, it is too strong to look at.

(d) Answer #2 ([other] Chachamim): Both are the same -- "[Hashem's kindness is] chi'Gevoha Shamayim Al ha'Aretz...; chi'Rechok Mizrach mi'Ma'arav"; 1. If one of these distances was greater, the verse would mention only the greater one! 2.

Question: Why is the sun too strong to look at when it is overhead? 3. Answer: This is because it is uncovered (but when it is in the east or west, mountains intervene).

(e) Question #2: Which was created first -- the heavens or the land (Maharsha; Mefarsh - or were they created at the same time)?

(f) Answer (Chachamim): Shamayim was created first -- "b'Reishis Bara Elokim Es ha'Shamayim v'Es ha'Aretz."

(g) Question #3: Which was created first, light or darkness?

(h) Chachamim: There is no answer to that question. 1. Question: They should have said that darkness was created first -- "veha'Aretz Haisah Sohu va'Vohu v'Choshech," and afterwards it says "va'Yomer Elokim Yehi Or va'Yehi Or"! 2. Answer: Chachamim feared that he would ask what is above and below [the firmament, over the heads of the angels called Chayos], in front and in back (past the east and west limits of the firmament). 3. Question: If so, they also should not have answered that Shamayim was created first! 4. Answer: At first, they thought that he just happened to ask about it; when they saw that he persisted to ask about the beginning of Creation, they feared that he would ask about before that.

(i) Question #4: Who is a Chacham?

(j) Answer (Chachamim): A Chacham is one who foresees what will come [from his actions, and acts accordingly].

- (k) Question #5: Who is a Gibor (mighty)?
 (l) Answer (Chachamim): A Gibor is one who overcomes his Yetzer [ha'Ra].
 (m) Question #6: Who is an Ashir (rich)?
 (n) Answer (Chachamim): An Ashir is one who is happy with what he has.

2) HOW TO LIVE

- (a) Question #7: What should one do in order to live?
 (b) Answer (Chachamim): He should kill himself (Mefaresh - he should lower himself; Rosh - he should toil for food to live in this world, and deny himself pleasures and toil in Torah to live in the world to come).
 (c) Question #8: What should one do in order to die?
 (d) Answer (Chachamim): He should aggrandize himself (this brings envy and Ayin Ra'ah upon himself).
 (e) Question #9: How can one make oneself popular (so his words will be accepted)?
 (f) Version #1 - Answer (Chachamim): He should hate (avoid contact with) the king and authorities (lest people think that he informs). 1. Alexandrus: I know more than you -- he should love his king and authorities, and [persuade them to] do good to people [of his locale]!
 (g) Version #2 - Answer (Chachamim): He should hate (evade) kingship and authority (rather, he should be humble). 1. Alexandrus: I know more than you -- he should love kingship and authority, if he rises to power he can do good for people!
 (h) Question #10: Is it better to live at sea or on the dry land?
 (i) Answer (Chachamim): It is better to live on the dry land -- seafarers' minds are not clear until they come to land.
 (j) Alexandrus: Which of you are wisest?
 (k) Chachamim: All of us are equal -- everything you asked, all of us agreed about the answer.
 (l) Alexandrus: Why do you oppose me? (Rosh - you do not intermarry or eat and drink with us; Mefaresh - you do not accept our god; we outnumber you, you should fear us! Maharsha - Alexandrus wanted to be praised for his wisdom, might, and wealth, but Chachamim answered that he is not the true Chacham, Gibor or Ashir.)
 (m) Chachamim: The Satan deceives (you are above now, you will descend in the end (R. Gershom - to Gehinom)).
 (n) Alexandrus: I could kill you through a royal edict (for answering me with contempt)!
 (o) Chachamim: Indeed, you could -- but [you promised not to harm us,] it does not befit a king to falsify his words!

3) ALEXANDRUS' TRIP TO AFRICA

- (a) Alexandrus dressed them in purple and put gold chains on their necks, and told them that he plans to go to Africa.
 (b) Chachamim: You cannot -- on the way there are mountains where it is dark even during the day.
 (c) Alexandrus: I am determined to go -- tell me how!
 (d) Chachamim: Take big donkeys of Egypt that can go in the dark, and balls of ropes; tie one end of the ropes where there is light, and take the other end through the dark so you will know how to return.
 (e) Alexandrus did so; he came to a city of [only] women, and planned to wage war against it. 1. The women: If you kill us, people will say, you killed women (that is no sign of strength); if we kill you, people will say, you were killed by women (a great disgrace)! 2. Alexandrus [agreed]; he requested bread -- they gave to him gold bread on a gold table. 3. Alexandrus: Who can eat gold bread? 4. The women: [We assumed you wanted gold --] if you wanted bread, you did not need to come all the way here!
 (f) When Alexandrus left, he wrote on the gate of the city, "I, Alexandrus, was foolish until I came to an African city of women who counseled me."
 (g) When he was returning, he sat to eat bread by a stream. He had salted fish with him, and was rinsing off the salt in the stream; they absorbed a nice smell (Rosh - returned to life). He concluded that the stream comes from Gan Eden.
 (h) Version #1: He [merely] washed his face in the water.
 (i) Version #2: He followed the stream to its source, the entrance to Gan Eden, and requested that it open for him. 1. He was told, "Zeh ha'Sha'ar la'Hash-m Tzadikim Yavo'u Vo" (you are not worthy to enter). 2. Alexandrus: I am a king, I am important -- [if you will not let me in,] give me something! 3. They gave him a skull (Rosh - eyeball) -- he put it on the scale against all his gold and silver, it outweighed them. He asked Chachamim to explain this. 4. Chachamim: It is of flesh and blood, it is never sated, it always seeks to draw more towards itself (just like your wealth did not satisfy you, you had to go to Africa). 5. Alexandrus: How

can I verify your answer? 6. Chachamim: Cover it with dirt [so it cannot see], then you can find its weight. 7. He did so, and succeeded -- "She'ol va'Avadu Lo Sisbanah v'Einei ha'Adam Lo Sisbanah" (just like the grave and Gehinom always want more to come there, also man always desires more [until he is buried in the dirt]).

...

(m) (R. Elazar): Chachamim increase Shalom in the world -- "v'Chol Banayich Limudei Hashem v'Rav Shelom Banayich" (we read this "Bonayich").
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From: Kollel Iyun Hadaf [kornfeld@netvision.net.il] Sent: Monday, December 13, 2004 8:52 AM To: daf-insights@shemayisrael.co.il; nzion@dafyomi.co.il; dpkinz@aol.com; avisfeld@netvision.net.il Subject: Insights to the Daf: Tamid 32 THE FREIDA MILLER MASECHES TAMID INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>

Tamid 32

1) AGADAH: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALEXANDER AND THE "ZIKNEI HA'NEGEV" QUESTION: The Gemara relates that Alexandrus Mokdon -- Alexander the Great -- posed ten questions to the Ziknei ha'Negev, the Elders of the South.

One of the questions that he asked was, "Who is a Chacham (a wise man)?" The Elders answered, "Who is a Chacham? He who foresees what will be." The MEFARESH (DH ha'Ro'eh) explains that a wise person understands, based on his wisdom, what will happen in the future, and he exercises appropriate caution.

Alexander asked further, "Who is a Gibor (mighty man)?" The Elders answered, "Who is a Gibor? He who conquers his Yetzer ha'Ra."

Alexander continued and asked, "Who is an Ashir (a rich man)?" The Elders answered, "Who is an Ashir? He who is happy with his portion."

Why did Alexander ask these questions to the Elders, and what was the significance of their replies?

ANSWER: The MAHARSHA (printed in the EIN YAKOV) writes that Alexandrus' intention in asking these questions was that the Elders should be forced to praise him. Alexander considered himself to be wise, since he was an astute philosopher and a disciple of Aristotle. He considered himself to be mighty, because he was a great warrior who had conquered many lands. He had accumulated a massive amount of wealth through all of his conquests.

However, the Elders explained to him that he, in truth, did not possess all of these great attributes in which he believed he excelled. Their replies regarding wisdom, might, and wealth were based on the verse, "A wise man shall not pride himself in his wisdom, and a strong man shall not pride himself in his strength; a rich man shall not pride himself with his wealth. Rather, one should pride himself with this: contemplate and know Me..." (Yirmeyahu 9:22-23).

The verse says that this wise man should pride himself for using his intelligence ("Sechel") to enhance his knowledge of Hashem. Through knowledge of Hashem one attains true happiness in life and fulfills the real purpose for which he was created. When Alexander wanted to be praised for his philosophical acumen, the told him that the true scholar is one who can see the "Nolad." The Maharsha explains, in a novel interpretation, that this means that the person perceives and understands the ultimate purpose for which he was born ("ha'Ro'eh Es ha'Nolad" -- he sees the purpose for which he was born) -- to know Hashem. This is the real Chacham.

When Alexander wanted to be praised for his military prowess, the Elders replied that his power does not prove that he is a man of might. True might is demonstrated only by one who is able to overcome his Yetzer ha'Ra (see Avos 4:1). Similarly, the Elders told him that true wealth is not measured by the amounts that one has earned (or plundered). Rather, the truly wealthy man is he who is happy with his lot and enjoys the fruits of the labor of his own hands (see Avos ibid.).

The Gemara continues and related that Alexander asked the Elders, "What should a person to do be accepted in society?" The Maharsha explains that with this question, too, Alexander was trying to make the Elders praise him, in the way that he later argued that one should love authority and power so that one can do good for others and win their favor and admiration. The Elders replied that, on the contrary, one who wants to be liked should despise authority and power. The Maharsha explains that even though Alexander seemed justified in his claim that one can utilize power to help people and thereby become popular, the Elders argued that one should stay far away from a position of authority, because it is impossible to act justly to everyone without harming others.

When Alexander asked the Elders who was the wisest among them, his intention was to take revenge on that sage for suggesting answers that rejected Alexander's supremacy. They replied that they were all equally wise, and that they had all arrived at the same answers independently. Alexander asked them why they had rejected all of his arguments without fearing his superior strength. They replied, according to the Maharsha's explanation, that they answered his questions candidly because they knew that they were correct on every point. Alexander told them that even though they defeated him in debate, nevertheless they are deserving of death, as the Gemara in Sanhedrin (39a) teaches that one who defeats the king must be thrown into a den of wild beasts.

The Elders defended themselves by pointing out that Alexander had promised them, before the debate, that if they would win, he would not harm them, and thus it would not be fitting for a king to break his promise.

Alexander then dressed the Elders in purple (Argaman) and placed gold ornaments around their necks, as a sign of his deference to them. (D. Bloom)

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By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

-- Tamid 32 <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1976>

THE SCHOLARLY PEACEMAKERS

One of the best known Talmudic statements is "Torah scholars increase peace in the world."

It is so familiar not only because, in addition to its appearance in our gemara and at the conclusion of Mesechot Berachot, Yevamot, Nazir and Bechorot, it is included in our prayer service. (There is a footnote in our sefarim which already calls attention to the fact that everywhere else this statement is attributed to Rabbi Elazar in the name of Rabbi Chanina while here it is credited to Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah.)

The source for this statement is the passage (Yeshayahu 54:13): "And all your sons shall be students of G-d and there will be abundant peace for your sons." The last word in this passage - banayich - which we read as "your sons" can also be read as bonaich which means "your builders," and teaches us that those who study G-d's Torah build peace in the world.

There is a reason why this particular statement appears in all of the above-mentioned places, explains Maharsha, and he relates its appearance here to the preceding account of the dialogue between Alexander of Macedonia and the Torah scholars in the south of Eretz Yisrael. When he asked them to define who is considered a wise man, a powerful one and a wealthy one, he was hinting to them to pay tribute to the philosophical wisdom he acquired as a student of Aristotle, to his power as demonstrated in conquering so many lands, and his wealth accumulated from those conquests. These Sages, however, put down this haughty conqueror by defining true wisdom as recognizing the true purpose for which man was created, true power as self-control and true wealth as being content with one's modest earnings and not accumulating wealth through aggressive military conquest. The moral lessons thus communicated by Torah scholars to a power-thirsty militarist certainly had an impact on retraining him from unlimited warfare and they thus proved that Torah scholars indeed increase peace in the world. The extension of this is the statement of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah that the very study of Torah also serves, in some mystical way, to increase peace in the world.

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