

# RED ALERT!

VAYIGASH

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## DIVREI TORAH

- This Parsha is a decisive answer to many of the questions posed by the narrative. The viceroy reveals himself to the brothers; he is Yosef, the brother sold into slavery some 22 years ago. Yaakov moves with his entire family to Egypt, with Hashem's blessing. The family is completely reunited for the first time in 22 years, without the internal drama that caused the family breakup years ago. The family moves into comfort and blissful relaxation in Goshen, an Egyptian location that at first was a haven and quickly became home for the Jewish tribe. The other branches of the Avrahamic family had already grown in quantity and had become a growing nation, while the Jewish branch was slow to develop. In Egypt they will explode into a large quantity, feeling secure at first.

- In the Halachic world of Teshuva there are two stages: Kapara and Tahara. Kapara is atonement. Hashem forgives the sinner, and he escapes punishment. He developed remorse for his sin, asked for forgiveness, and pledged not to sin again in the future. But the sin remains in Hashem's

ledger book in Heaven. Tahara is gained when the sinner is placed in the same position in which he sinned, but this time he does not succumb to the temptation and does not sin. In this fashion, he is purified and removes the sin from his ledger book. This is what Yosef has accomplished for his brothers in the beginning of this Parsha. The brothers sold Yosef, Rachel's son, into slavery and returned to their father without him. Now, again, they see Rachel's other son about to go into slavery, and then they will return to their father without his favorite son. But this time, the brothers chose to act differently, wisely. With this act they gain Tahara.

- Yehuda was the brother who suggested to sell Yosef. This time he is willing to sacrifice his own freedom to save Rachel's son. This act binds Yehuda and Binyamin forever. The Beit HaMikdash will be built on the border between the tribal territories of Yehuda and Binyamin. This act of brotherly affection is what the Torah expects of brothers. The brothers Yehuda and Binyamin have earned to be the hosts of the Mikdash, the place that unites all the tribes to becoming Am Yisrael, the nation of Israel. All through the Torah, the actual location of the Mikdash is never revealed. One of the reasons for this, as stated by the Rambam, is not to allow the tribes the opportun-

ity to argue about where the Beit HaMikdash will be. Each wanted it. When Hashem reveals where it will be, it is well accepted immediately. They understood why.

- Within Yehuda's articulate appeal to the viceroy, he doesn't explicitly state the following, but the implication is there. The viceroy wants to enslave a thief into his house. Does he really want a slave in his house? A thief lacks something, and therefore steals to obtain it. He is redeemable... if he gains legally what he desires. But Binyamin does not lack a thing. He is the youngest son in a large, well-to-do family. If he is a thief as is demonstrated by taking the viceroy's cup, why would the viceroy want him in his house. It does not make sense. There must be something else that is not being stated.

- When revealing himself, Yosef immediately asks: Is my father still alive. This is repetitive. He has already asked that question, and they have already answered it. Maybe it is an emotional moment and therefore he cannot repress what is in his heart and mind. Or possibly Yosef is making a new point. Before he asked is your father alive. Now he is asking if MY father is alive. He is my father, not only yours. And I love him tremendously. In order to fulfill my prophetic dreams, I have made him suffer for some additional years. I now question my own decision to remain missing,

and absent from his life. I worry about my causing him to grieve for an additional time. This was my decision, my sin. I need to know whether he has declined in the additional years of my absence from his life!

- Yosef kissed all his brothers (45:15). We saw in a previous narrative, when Esav kissed Yaakov (33:4). Esav kissed Yaakov after a separation of more than twenty years, after he said internally that he planned to kill his brother. When they kissed, they buried the hatchet. The injured brother was willing to start a new relationship with his brother. Here too, there was a serious act by the brothers to harm their younger brother. When Yosef kissed them all, he demonstrated that he was willing to forgive them. To forge together and build a new loving relationship is what is desired. Yet some deep hurt cannot be totally erased. Esav and Yaakov resolve to distance themselves from each other. And in this case, the brothers remained concerned that after their father will die, Yosef might seek to get back at his brothers. (Rabbi Steinsaltz)

- When Yaakov decided to go to Egypt, the Torah referred to him as Yisrael. This reveals to us that the move to Egypt is of national importance. This would turn out to be the fulfillment of the divine promise to Avraham that his offspring will be

enslaved for many years in a foreign land. It is not known how much Yaakov realized. The servitude will not begin as long as Yaakov and his sons were alive. They will die in Egypt before their descendants become slaves. The entire Patriarchal family will be buried in Israel when the slaves are liberated centuries later. At this time in the story Yaakov was aware that Yosef is not able to leave Egypt and come visit him. So he knows that Pharaoh is in control of their lives!

- MIDRASH. Rabbi Shimon said that this is the result of being a liar. He won't be believed later when he tells the truth. Earlier, the brothers lied to their father when they presented the torn bloodied colored tunic to their father when they knew that Yosef was alive. Now they returned from Egypt and said that Yosef is alive. No wonder Yaakov did not believe them. When they said that, they were admitting that what they said to him 20 years ago was a lie.

## **Questions by RED for Parshat Mikeitz**

### **From the text**

1. What did Yehuda propose to release Binyamin? (44:33)
2. What question did Yosef ask the brothers immediately when he revealed himself? (45:10)

3. Where was Yosef going to relocate his family in Egypt? (45:10)

4. Who gained the most from Yosef's sale of grain to the people? (47:15)

5. Who were the only Egyptians exempted from the famine prices, enabling them to retain their land? (47:22)

### **From the Rashi**

6. Why did Yosef order the Egyptians to leave the room before revealing himself to his brothers? (45:1)

7. Why did Yosef and Binyamin cry when they hugged? (45:14)

8. One of Shimon's sons is listed as being the son of a Canaanite woman. Who was the Canaanite woman? (46:10)

9. Yaakov sent Yehuda ahead to Goshen. What was Yehudah's mission? (46:48)

10. Why did Yosef move the Egyptian people to different cities? (47:21)

### **From the Rabbis**

11. Why was Pharaoh pleased to greet Yosef's family in Egypt? (Ramban)

12. Why did Yosef give the brothers new clothes as a gift? (Avraham the son of the Rambam)

13. Why did Bnei Yisrael begin to buy property in Goshen? (Kli Yakar)

## Midrash

14. Two individual men went to greet a great man. And the great man went out to greet the other one coming there. One was Yaakov when the viceroy (Yosef) came out to greet him. Who was the other man?

## Haftara - Yechezkel

15. What was written on the two pieces of wood?

### Relationships

- a) Yosef - Menasheh
- b) Rachel - Bela
- c) Yov - Yashuv
- d) Peretz - Kehat
- e) Palu - Carmi

## ANSWERS

- 1. Yehuda offered to take Binyamin's place as a slave.
- 2. "Is my father still alive"?
- 3. In Goshen
- 4. Pharaoh.
- 5. The priests.
- 6. He didn't want the Egyptians to see the brothers become embarrassed.
- 7. Yosef cried, for he saw both Batei Mikdash (located in Binyamin's territory in Eretz Yisrael) destroyed. Binyamin cried, for he saw the destruction of the Mishkan in Shilo, in Yosef's territory.

8. She was Dina, Shimon's sister.

9. To establish a house of study.

10. In order to protect the brothers. All the people in Egypt were now exiles from their homes.

11. Because now Yosef would no longer be seen as a former slave, but as a member of a prestigious family.

12. To be properly dressed as brothers of the viceroy.

13. They began to view themselves as permanent residents.

14. Yitro, when Moshe went out to greet him.

15. Yehuda and Efrayim.

### Relationships

- a) Father & son
- b) Grandmother & granddaughter
- c) The same person, Yissachar's son
- d) First Cousins
- e) Brothers