

# whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

כטי' כסלו - ה' טבת ה'תשע"ח

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## Young Israel of Midwood

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## Vayigash

### ויגש

### זמנים

Weekdays

Shachris	
Sunday	6:50 8 & 8:30
Weekdays	5:50, 6:50, 7:30 & 8:30
Weekday Rosh Chodesh	5:40, 6:40, 7:30 & 8:30
Sunday Rosh Chodesh	6:30, 8:00 & 8:30
Mincha	420
Maariv	after mincha

### שבת ויגש

Candle Lighting	414 PM
Mincha	424 PM
Shachris	7:30, 8:50 & 9:00 AM
Mincha	1:45 & 4:10 PM
Maariv	520 PM
Shabos Ends	523 PM

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**An Astonishing Midrash "Let your anger not flare up at your servant, for you are like Pharaoh" (44:18) –**

just as Pharaoh is destined to drown in the sea, so you are destined to drown in the sea. **R' Yehonatan Eyebchutz** z"l (died 1764) explains as follows: The gemara (Nedarim 22) teaches that when one becomes angry, he forgets the Torah which he has learned. And, Pirkei Avot teaches that one who willfully forgets the Torah he has learned incurs the death penalty. It follows, therefore, that one who becomes angry incurs the death penalty. What type of death is he liable for? The gemara teaches that whenever the Torah makes someone liable for the death penalty and does not specify how the penalty should be administered, it is through suffocation. Chazal also say that at a time when there is no

## הגליון מוקדש לז"נ ר' אהרן בונים בן ר' דוב הלוי ז"ל יאהרצייט ה' טבת ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

sanhedrin and the death penalty is not administered, a person who is liable for suffocation will die by drowning. Therefore Yehuda said, "Do not let your anger flare up, for if you do you will drown." (Midrash Yehonatan)

## News Makers

"ויעלו ממצרים ויבואו ארץ כנען אל יעקב אביהם, ויגידו לו לאמר עוד יוסף חי" [שם, כ"ה-כ"ו] - לפני שנכנסו השבטים הבייתה היו מטכסים עצה כיצד לבשר לאביהם את הבשורה הטובה, שלא יזיק לו חס ושלום מחמת התרגשות מן הבשורה הפתאומית. ראו בשדה את סרח בת אשר שהיתה ילדה חכמה ונבונה מאד, והיתה רועה בצאן. אמרו לה: בבקשה ממך, קחי את הכנור, ותלכי לפני הסבא ונגני לו זמר, וכל בית של הזמר תסיימי במלים אלה: "יוסף דודי חי, יוסף דודי חי"... לקחה סרח את הכנור והלכה אצל יעקב והתחילה לנגן נגון נעים ויפה מאד, והבליעה בתוך השיר את הדברים האלה. ואף על פי שלא אמרה את זה במפורש, שמע יעקב ונתן דעתו על דבריה, כאילו שנצנצה בה רוח הקדש. בינתיים הגיעו האחים והודיעו לעבדים מראש על בואם, ושלחו את נפתלי שהיה קל ברגליו שיודיע ליעקב את הבשורה הטובה שעה אחת קודם. בא ושמע את סרח מנגנת בכנור ומחללת בחליל, ואמר ליעקב: כוננים דברי סרח וכך הוא הדבר. ומכאן זכתה סרח לאריכות ימים... [מתוך "ילקוט מעט לועז" מאת רב יעקב כולי ז"ל].

ויצא האחד ממני ואמר אך טרף טרף ולא ראיתיו עד הנה

**"And I have not seem him since."** (44:28) The phrase "I have not seem him appears in one other place in the Torah – in the verse (Devarim 33:9), "The one who said of his father and mother, 'I have not seen him'; his brothers he did not know . . . for they have observed Your word and Your covenant they have preserved." What is the connection between that verse and ours? **R' Akiva Sofer** z"l (20th century) explains that in the verse in Devarim, Moshe Rabbenu praises the tribe of Levi for its inborn attachment to Torah. Even a Levite who had never seen his mother and father and who did not know his other family members, inevitably grew up to be devoted to Torah. The same thing was true of Yosef. Orphaned from his mother at age seven and separated from his father and brothers at age 17, he nevertheless grew up devoted to Torah. [Of course, Yaakov did not know this

לכבוד האי גברא וב"ב הרוצים בעילום שמם על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו שיהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב מיט יידישע נחת בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות בזה ובבא עבנצב"ב

when he uttered the words, "I have not seen him," but perhaps the words were put into his mouth prophetically.] (Da'at Sofer)

ולקחתם גם- את-זה מעם פני וקרהו אסון והודתם את-שיבתי ברעה שאלה

**"Then you will have brought me in my old age in sorrow to she'ol."**

(44:29) One meaning of "She'ol" is Gehinom. In the "olden-days," observed **R' Yechezkel Levenstein** z"l (mashgiach of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Shanghai in the 1940's), people truly believed in the existence of Gan Eden and Gehinom. Thus, as long as Yaakov thought that Yosef was dead, Yaakov had no doubt at all that he would descend to gehinom. (This was because he believed that he had failed in his mission to create the twelve tribes of Israel.) Similarly, Yosef's intention in acting cruelly to his brothers was, according to Ramban, to lessen the punishment which they would receive at the hands of G-d. He had no question at all that G-d does punish people for their sins and he therefore considered it to be in their best interests to suffer at Yosef's hands in this world. Today, continued **R' Levenstein**, we have lost this strong faith. We ignore the fact that death is inevitable and every person will have to answer for his deeds. The Gemara (Berachot 31a) relates that the sage Mar Zutra was once asked to sing at a wedding. He sang, "Woe to us that we will die." Apparently, this was not considered inappropriate by the other guests. Imagine, in contrast, the uproar that would ensue if a rabbi were to give such a speech at a wedding today! (Mi'mizrach Hashemesh)

ועתה כבאי אל-עבדך אבי והנער איננו אתנו ונפשו קשורה בנפשו

**"His soul is bound up with his soul" (44:30)** Yehuda was pleading with Yosef not to imprison Benjamin, for it would be devastating to Yaakov were Benjamin not to return. In trying to describe to Yosef the close relationship between Yaakov and Benjamin, Yehuda made the above

statement. The Hebrew word for "bound," keshura, has the same numerical value as the word "Torah." Through teaching Benjamin the Torah, Yaakov and Benjamin's souls were bound, totally connected. (Hamaayan)

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אֲבִי חַי וְלֹא-יָכֹל אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהֵלוּ מִפְּנֵי  
"Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef; is my father still alive?'" (45:3) Hadn't Yehuda told Yosef moments earlier (verse 44:31) that Yaakov would die if Binyamin did not return? Obviously, then, Yaakov was alive! **R' Shlomo Kluger** z"l (1784-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) explains: Yosef was saying, "You may find it unbelievable that I am indeed Yosef. I find it equally unbelievable that my father Yaakov did not die of sorrow when I disappeared. If it can indeed be true that my father is still alive, it likewise can be true that I am Yosef." (Chochmat Ha'Torah)

## Unbelievable

"וַיִּפְגַּע לְבוֹ כִּי לֹא הָאֲמִין לָהֶם" - אָמַר ר' שמעון: כִּד עָנְשׁוּ שֶׁל בְּדָאֵי שֶׁאֲפִילוּ אוֹמֵר אִמְתַּ אֵין שׁוֹמְעֵין לוֹ. שְׁכַן מְצִינּוּ בְּנֵי שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "וַיִּכְבְּרָה וַיֹּאמֶר כִּתְנַת בְּנֵי הָיִא", לְפִיכֵךְ בְּאַחֲרוֹנָהּ, אָף עַל פִּי שֶׁדְּבָרוֹ אִמְתַּ לֹּא הָאֲמִין לָהֶם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר "וַיִּפְגַּע לְבוֹ כִּי לֹא הָאֲמִין לָהֶם".  
[אבות דר' נתן, פרק ל']

וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם רֹאוֹת וְעֵינֵי אֶחָי בְּנִימִן כִּי-פִי הַמְדַבֵּר אֵלֵיכֶם

"Behold! Your eyes see, as do the eyes of my brother, Binyamin, that it is my mouth that is speaking to you." (45:12) **R' Shmuel Ehrenfeld** z"l (1835-1883; rabbi of Mattersdorf, Hungary) explains: Yosef was afraid that, after he had treated his brothers so harshly, Yaakov would not want to come to live with him in Egypt. Therefore he said, "You can see—and especially Binyamin, with whom I always had a strong bond, can see—that it was only my mouth—not my heart, not my true feelings—that spoke to you so harshly. (Chatan Sofer: Introduction) Rashi z"l explains our verse as Yosef's way of confirming his true identity: "It is my mouth that is speaking to you – in the Holy Tongue [i.e., Hebrew]." **R' Moshe ben Nachman** z"l (Ramban; 1194-1270) asks: How does speaking Hebrew prove that the speaker was Yosef? Surely, some Egyptians were familiar with the

language!**R' Moshe Greenes** z"l (rabbi in Brooklyn, N.Y.; died 1992) answers Ramban's question based on the answer to another question: Halachah attributes great significance to a person's voice. For example, a blind man is allowed to seclude himself with his wife even though he can't see her to verify her identity because he recognizes her voice. Why didn't Yosef's brothers recognize his voice? R' Greenes answers: Yosef and his brothers grew up speaking to each other in Hebrew. In contrast, in all of last week's Parashah and the beginning of this week's Parashah, Yosef did not speak to his brothers in Hebrew; he spoke to them in Egyptian and an interpreter translated. Voice recognition is not effective when the speaker is speaking a different language than the listener is used to hearing him speak, so Yosef's brothers did not recognize him. This is what Yosef meant when he said, "It is my mouth that is speaking to you" – in the Holy Tongue—not because he could speak Hebrew and no other Egyptian could; other Egyptians also spoke Hebrew. Rather, Yosef meant, "Now that I am speaking our mother tongue, you can recognize my voice." (Karan Pnei Moshe)

"And behold your eyes see that it is my mouth that speaks to you." (45:12) When Yoseph and his brothers met, they reconciled. Yoseph quickly dispatched his brothers to bring their aged father, Yaakov, to Egypt and, in so doing, subtly communicated to Yaakov that he remained his son in the truest sense of the word. That is, he never yielded to temptation or capitulated to the influences of Egypt. He continued his dialogue by underscoring his ability to speak "loshon ha'kodesh" (the holy language). But the above quote is confusing, since one hears, not sees, the spoken word. Yoseph was, however, emphasizing that he was speaking from his mouth, but that his heart and actions were in sync. Yoseph exemplified consistency between his outward expression and his internal orientation. (Peninim On The Torah) **How was Yosef** able to maintain the same "loshon ha'kodesh" (holy language) mentioned above (i.e., to have maintained the same sanctity of

life with which he was nurtured in his father's house)? What was so unique about the Torah which he learned from his father that even after so many arduous years he still remembered exactly what they had been studying together? We may suggest that the answer lies in Yaakov's personal involvement in his son's learning. A parent's personal study with his/her child is very special; the child develops an unique esteem and love for those precious moments of spiritual relationship. Children remember with rapture the spiritual moments spent with their parents - the Torah learning, the times in shul, the blessings on Friday nights, lighting candles, etc. We should make every effort to spend quality spiritual time with our children so that their memories of these moments will play a role in forging their spiritual future. (Peninim On The Torah)

וַיִּפֹּל עַל-צוּאְרֵי בְּנֵימִן-אֶחָיו וַיִּבְךְּ וּבְנֵימִן בָּכָה עַל-צוּאְרָיו

In this week's parashah, Yosef and his brothers are reunited after their long separation. The Torah tells us (45:14), "**He [Yosef] fell on Binyamin's shoulders and cried, and Binyamin cried on his shoulder.**" Rashi explains that Yosef was crying over the two Temples which would stand in Yerushalayim, in Binyamin's territory, and would be destroyed. Binyamin, in turn, cried over the Tabernacle at Shiloh which would stand in Yosef's territory (before the Bet Hamikdash was built) until it, too, would be destroyed. Why were these far-in-the-future events on the brothers' minds at this time? **R' Yonason Sacks** (a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshivat Rabbenu Yitzchak Elchanan) explains as follows: Chazal teach that the Bet Hamikdash was destroyed because of Jews' senseless hatred for one another. So, too, it was senseless hatred which resulted in Yosef's being sold as a slave. The reunion of Yosef and Binyamin should have been a joyous event, for the effects of the brothers' hatred had been undone, but Yosef and Binyamin saw prophetically that that hatred was destined to be rekindled. Therefore they cried. Regarding the final redemption, we read (Yishayah 44:12), "I shall make your walls [of Yerushalayim] ka'dechod." What does "ka'dechod"

mean? The gemara (Bava Batra 75a) records two opinions – either it is shoham/onyx or it is yashfeh/jasper. When these views were expressed, the gemara continues, G-d declared, "Let it be both." [Ed. Note: In Aramaic, G-d's declaration is a play on the word "ka'dechod."] R' Sacks observes: Shoham and yashfeh are the stones of Yosef and Binyamin, respectively, in the kohen gadol's breastplate. The ultimate redemption, the prophet tells us, also will feature a reunion of sorts of Yosef and Binyamin. (Torah Dimensions, Cassette No. 1001-4, Hamaayan)

ויאמר ישראל רב עוד-יוסף בני חי אלכה  
ואראנו בטרם אמות

**"Yisrael said, 'How great! My son Yosef still lives! I shall go and see him before I die'."** (45:28) We say in the Pesach Haggadah that Yaakov descended to Egypt, "Anus al pi ha'dibbur" / "Coerced by the word [of G-d]." **R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik z"l** (1903-1993) explains that Yaakov did not want to leave Eretz Yisrael, but he was coerced by the circumstances, since he had a burning desire to see Yosef again. Why is this significant? R' Soloveitchik explains: Had Yaakov and his family left Eretz Yisrael voluntarily, one might have argued that they had forfeited their claim to the Land that originated from Hashem's promises made to the Patriarchs. However, generally speaking, the halachah is that an act done under coercion neither cancels nor generates obligations. R' Soloveitchik observes that when Yaakov left Eretz Canaan for Charan, Hashem expressly promised him (28:13), **"The ground upon which you are lying, I will give it to you and to your descendants."** In contrast, Hashem made no such promise when Yaakov left Eretz Canaan to go to Egypt. Apparently, such a promise was not necessary, since Yaakov's trip to Egypt was involuntary. [Rabbi Shlomo Katz of Hamaayan notes: Perhaps Yaakov's journey to Charan was considered voluntary because he was not in immediate danger from Esav as long as Yitzchak was alive, or because he voluntarily traveled to Charan to find a wife.] (Haggadah Shel Pesach: An Exalted Evening)

**The Midrash Rabbah** comments on the verse (45:28), **"Yisrael said,**

**'How great! My son Yosef still lives!'**"-- Yaakov said, "How great is the strength of my son Yosef! How many troubles caught-up with him, yet he remained righteous, unlike me [Yaakov] who sinned by saying (in the words of Yeshayah 40:27), 'My way is hidden from G-d' [i.e., G-d has hidden Himself and is not watching over me directly]. I am certain I will share in the reward about which it says (Tehilim 31:20), 'How abundant is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You!'" How did Yaakov know that Yosef had remained strong in his faith during all of his years in Egypt? Also, why did Yaakov expect to be rewarded for Yosef's faith? **R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Yadler z"l** (Yerushalayim; 1843-1917) explains: Commentaries ask: Why didn't Yosef write to his father during the 22 years that Yosef was in Egypt and let Yaakov know that he was alive? The answer is that Yosef did not write because he understood that what was happening to him was part of a bigger plan. He may not have understood the exact meaning of events, but he recognized that he would be interfering with history by contacting Yaakov. Yaakov now understood Yosef's thinking and recognized that Yosef's decision required tremendous faith and a strong belief that Hashem is directing history. According to the midrash, Yaakov's own faith had not remained as strong. In Olam Haba, one can receive reward in two ways, R' Yadler writes: either for his own meritorious actions, or for those of his children and students. The latter is what the verse refers to when it says, "How abundant is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You!" Unlike the reward for a person's own deeds, which is finite (because he stops earning reward when he dies), the reward that a person earns for being a positive influence on others is infinite (and therefore "hidden"), for he continues to earn it as long as his positive influence continues to bear fruit. (Tiferet Zion)

**And Yisrael said, "How great! My son Yosef 'od' / still 'chai' / lives!'"**(45:28) Then Yisrael said to Yosef, 'Let me die this time...' (46:30) **R' Aryeh Laib Zunz Charif z"l** (1765-1833; rabbi of Plock, Poland)

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writes: The Zohar states that King David would have died at birth, but Yaakov and Yosef gave him 70 years. Yaakov lived 33 fewer years than his father and Yosef lived 37 fewer years than his father, a total of 70 years. The Torah writes that Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years. Together with the time it took Yaakov to travel to Egypt, Yaakov had (part of) "chai" / 18 years left when he heard that Yosef was still alive. For his part, Yosef had (part of) 62 years left. (Yosef was 39 when his father arrived in Egypt and he died on his 110th birthday, one day into his 111th year.) The sum of 18 and 62 is 80, the gematria of "od" / "still." Yaakov recognized that he and Yosef had 80 years left between them. Yaakov wanted to see Yosef, but he also wanted Yosef to live as long as possible (without taking years from King David). Therefore, as soon as Yaakov saw Yosef one more time, Yaakov was ready to die. "Let me die

this time, because you are still alive," he said. (Melo Ha'omer)

**ויקחו את-מקניהם ואת-רכושם אשר רכשו בארץ כנען ויבאו מצרימה יעקב וכל-זרעו אתו**

**"They took their livestock and their wealth which they had amassed in the land of Canaan and they came to Egypt . . ." (46:6)** Rashi z"l comments:

But all that Yaakov had gotten in Padan Aram he gave to Esav as payment for Esav's share in the Me'arat Ha'machpelah. He said, "The possessions I obtained outside Eretz Yisrael are of no value to me." The midrash **Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Zuta** (ch.19) relates that Yaakov and Esav divided the worlds between them—Esav took this world, and Yaakov took the World-to-Come. Later, when Esav saw that Yaakov had amassed a fortune while living with Lavan, Esav asked Yaakov, "What right do you have to enjoy this world?" Yaakov's answer (found in the midrash) has been given several interpretations. According to some, Yaakov answered that his fortune was a reward for his mitzvah observance and was not covered by their deal. Others explain that Yaakov answered that their deal permitted him to have what he needed to live. In any event, Rashi teaches that Yaakov then turned over those possessions to Esav as payment for Esav's share in the Me'arat Ha'machpelah. **R' Chaim Palagi** z"l (1788-1868; rabbi of Izmir, Turkey) writes: However Yaakov's answer is interpreted, that "excuse" is necessary only regarding belongings from outside of Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael is Hashem's portion, and we are His flock, so Yaakov was entitled to the wealth of Eretz Yisrael. This is why Yaakov divested himself of all the belongings he had amassed in Lavan's house and turned them over to Esav. He kept for himself only those belongings he had amassed in Eretz Yisrael. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Pninei Rav Chaim Palagi)

**בניו ובני בניו אתו ובנות בניו וכל זרעו הביא אתו מצרימה**

**"His sons and grandsons with him, his daughters and grand- daughters and all his offspring he brought with him 'Mitzrymah' / to Egypt."** (46:7) **R' Mordechai Hakohen** z"l (1523–1598; rabbi in Tzefat, Eretz Yisrael, and Aleppo, Syria; a student of one of the leading students of the **Arizal**) asks: This verse seems to be superfluous, as the previous verse says, "They came to Egypt — Yaakov and all his offspring with him." He explains: This verse is teaching that Yaakov took the souls of

all future Jews into exile in Egypt with him so that they would "see" G-d's miracles and wonders and receive the Torah at Har Sinai. This is how we are able to say in the Pesach Haggadah: "In every single generation, one is obligated to see himself as if he personally came out of Egypt. It was not only our forefathers whom the Holy One redeemed from slavery; we, too, were redeemed with them, as it is written (Devarim 6:23), 'He brought us out from there.'" Similarly, we say in our daily prayers [in Nusach Sefard], "Emet / Truly, You redeemed us from Egypt," not, "You redeemed our ancestors." [In Nusach Ashkenaz, the word "Emet" is not said at this point, though the blessing containing the phrase, "You redeemed us from Egypt," does begin with "Emet."] Another reason why all of the souls had to be in Egypt was to prepare them for the long exiles later in Jewish history. R' Mordechai notes: The Gematria of "Mitzrymah" / "to Egypt" (385) equals the Gematria of "Moshe Go'el" / "Moshe Redeemer," indicating that Bnei Yisrael's redeemer came to Egypt with them. Regarding the time of the Exodus we read (Shmot 13:18), "Bnei Yisrael went up from Egypt 'Chamushim'." One of the interpretations of "Chamushim" is that only a small percentage of Bnei Yisrael left Egypt. R' Mordechai explains: Only a small percentage of the Jewish People left Egypt in a physical body. The rest, i.e., the future generations, left Egypt in a hidden form, as souls only. This is alluded to as follows: The word "Chamushim" ("Chamushim") is spelled chet (chet-tav), mem (mem-mem), shin (shin-yud-nun), yud (yud-vav-dalet), mem (mem-mem). The "hidden" part of each of those letters (for example, the 'tav' of 'chet-tav' and the 'yud-nun' of 'shin-yud-nun') has a combined Gematria of 550, which equals the Gematria of "Atidin" / "those who are in the future." This hints that the future generations left Egypt in a hidden form. (Siftei Kohen)

**R' Yitzchak Albaliah** z"l born 1035 – died 1094 R' Yitzchak was born in Cordova and died in Granada (both in Spain). Legend has it that one of his ancestors, a Jew named Baruch, used to weave curtains for the Bet Hamikdash. When the Roman Emperor Titus destroyed the Temple in 68 C.E., the governor of Spain requested that a number of expert Jewish craftsmen be exiled to his province, and thus Baruch settled in the Spanish city of Merida. R' Yitzchak studied under the French

scholar, **R' Prigoras**, and under the Spanish sage, **R' Shmuel Hanaggid**. On the 9th of Tevet 4826/1066, R' Yitzchak was visiting R' Shmuel's son, **R' Yehosef Hanaggid**, in Granada when the latter was savagely murdered by a mob of Arabs. R' Yitzchak himself escaped miraculously. In 1069, King al-Mutamid of Seville appointed R' Yitzchak as his advisor and chief astrologer and as chief rabbi of his realm. In this capacity, R' Yitzchak was able to influence the king's treatment of the Jews. While holding these posts, R' Yitzchak also headed a yeshivah and wrote a Talmud commentary, now lost, titled *Kupat Ha'rochlim*. Several of R' Yitzchak's rulings are cited in the writings of **Rambam** and **Ra'avad**. R' Yitzchak's son, **R' Baruch**, was a student of **R' Yitzchak Alfasi** ("Rif") and a dayan/rabbinical judge in Cordova. (The Artscroll Rishonim pp.68-70; Sefer Hayuchasin)

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