

# *Shiur L'Yom Sheni*<sup>1</sup>

[Monday's Study]

READINGS:     ***Torah Vayigash:***             **Genesis 44:18 - 34**  
                  ***Haftarah:***                         **Ezekiel 37:15-16**  
                  ***B'rit Chadasha:***             **Luke 6:6-11**

***“His soul is bound up with [the lad's] soul!”***  
                  **[Genesis 44:30]**

---

Today's Meditation is Psalm 111:1-3;  
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 8, *Mishpat [Justice]*

As we begin our study of the parsha the ancients call *Vayigash* we should keep in mind that a horrible worldwide famine has been ravaging the whole of planet earth for two long years. Only a few people know it, but the Holy One has revealed to Pharaoh that the famine is nowhere near over. It will, indeed, last five more years.

Food supplies are low. Prices are high. Tension is mounting. A mass migration of peoples is underway. And in the midst of all this craziness a fascinating episode of personal drama is about to play itself out between the sons of Ya'akov. The big news is not the famine; it is the prophetic reconciliation that is about to unfold.

This week Ya'akov and his sons will experience an exhausting but absolutely exhilarating roller coaster ride of emotions. *Longstanding patterns of deception* are about to be revealed. *Paralyzing layers of jealousy, hatred, fear, guilt, grief and shame* are about to be lifted. *False senses of identity* are about to be turned on their ear. Sin – and the sense of fear, guilt, and shame that comes with it – are about to be exposed. And we – like the sons of Ya'akov - will have to deal with it.

It is going to be a week of intense crisis. But in the end - by the grace of the Holy One - *truth will triumph, and love will empower us, and we will overcome.*

Keep in mind that the things I am talking about are not just *historical* or *literary*, nor are they merely *spiritual allegory*. I am talking about *events authored, orchestrated and choreographed by the Creator of the Universe.*

The events about which we will read are all the more stunning because they clearly *have tremendous prophetic implications.* They are not just tidbits from our

---

<sup>1</sup> All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as 'the Rabbi's son'. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without written permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2015, William G. Bullock, Sr.

collective past - they provide us a sweet foretaste of a similar series of events which are pre-programmed to transpire in the latter days of the descendants of Ya'akov on the one hand and of Pharaoh on the other hand.

So let us look very carefully at what we will witness this week. **First** we will see *Yosef* [Joseph] finally reveal his true identity to his brothers, ushering the first phase of glorious reconciliation between the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel.

**Second**, a place of temporary sojourn outside the land of promise, with all necessary provisions to sustain the covenant family through the famine years – a place called **Goshen** - will be prepared and readied for Avraham's descendants.

**Thirdly** Ya'akov will have his final 'God-encounter', in connection with which the Holy One will promise him that He will yet make his descendants into a great nation and will surely bring them back up from Egypt.

**Fourthly** we will see the prophetic precursor to the economic policy of the *Beast* of the book of Revelation, as Torah describes a multi-phase economic restructuring where first all *crops*, then all *personal possessions*, then all *land*, then all *human beings* in Egypt become the 'property of the State'. And keep in mind that though this all takes place through Pharaoh's power and under Pharaoh's seal, the mastermind and overseer of the program is actually one of Ya'akov's descendants - Yosef.

Ah, but let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. The curtain is rising. The actors are in their places. The action is about to begin.

### ***If I Perish, I Perish!***

As we concluded our study last week the mysterious young Viceroy of Egypt [i.e. Yosef in Egyptian disguise] had just announced some horrifying news to the Hebrew delegation which had come to purchase grain from Egypt's storehouses. He had announced that in punishment for the theft of his silver cup he was going to keep Benjamin with him in Egypt as his personal slave.

Exactly what Ya'akov had feared – the loss of his youngest son Benjamin – appeared to be about to happen. But not so fast! Before Yosef can say "*So let it be written, so let it be done!*" *Y'hudah* [Judah] steps forward and intercedes. The *parsha ha-shavua* puts it as follows:

***Vayigash elav Y'hudah v'yomer***  
*And Y'hudah drew very near to him [Yosef], and said,*

***bi adoni y'daber-na av'decha d'var b'oznei adoni***

*Please, your highness, let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears,*  
[Genesis 44:18(a)]

The name of this week's parsha is ***Vayigash***, meaning “*and he drew near*”, or “*and he approached*”. The operative Hebrew verb root in the word “drew near/approached” is ***nagash***<sup>2</sup>. The first Biblical usage of this verb is in Genesis 18, when our ancestor Avraham “drew near/approached” the Holy One to earnestly plead for S'dom and G'morah. The verb is used several times in Genesis 37 when Yitzchak repeatedly asks the one who is seeking his blessing (Ya'akov in Esav's clothes) to “drew near” so he can discern his true identity.

The pictographic mural formed by the Hebrew letters of this *shoresh* [verb root] tell the story very well. The first Hebrew letter/pictograph is the ***nun*** [‘n’ sound], which pictographically revealing a son or heir. The second Hebrew letter is the ***gimel*** [the hard ‘g’ sound], pictographically showing a man walking. The last Hebrew letter is the ***shin*** [‘sh’ sound], which pictures ascending flames of fire, most often the *fire* manifestation of the Holy One's Presence [i.e., the ‘smoking firepot’ of Avram's vision and the ‘burning bush’ of Moshe's call].

Putting those three images together we see ***a son or heir walking into flames of fire*** – or into the very fiery Presence of the Holy One.

***Nagash*** involves drawing *very close* to someone as if to embrace that person, greet them warmly in the Middle Eastern style, and perhaps whisper in that person's ear. It is not a *diplomatic* approach, but a very *intimate* one.

For our ancestor Y'hudah making ***nagash*** to the temperamental young Viceroy of Egypt was a *dangerous* move – but one he felt he had no choice but to take. Much like Queen Esther in chapter 4 of the book that bears her name Y'hudah threw caution to the wind, effectively saying to himself, ***“If I perish, I perish.”*** [Esther 4:16.]

### ***Y'hudah's Personal Plea***

Yosef, of course, extends his scepter and allows the intimate approach of the one he alone knows to be the chief of all his brothers. That intimacy is, after all, what he has hungered for all his life. ***He once enjoyed closeness to his father*** – but he has never experienced such a thing with any of his brothers.

Y'hudah then bargains with the man he knows as *Tzafanat Paneach* for Benjamin's soul the way Avraham tried to bargain for Lot and his family. He

---

<sup>2</sup> Nagash is *nun, gimel, shin*. Strong's Hebrew word #5066, it is pronounced *naw-gawsh*'.

begins by saying: “**do not let your anger** [Hebrew *af*, referring to the apparatus of breathing, be it a breath of life or a blast of death] **burn against your servant.**” Genesis 44:18[b].

Y’hudah’s intimate communication then presented his personal perspective on the events of parsha **Miketz**. Y’hudah then adds to this rehash of mutual history a description of his father’s Ya’akov’s response to the news that Sh’mon had been imprisoned by an Egyptian overlord and that the only way the man would set him free would be for the brothers to produce Benjamin. Y’hudah describes Ya’akov’s impassioned response as follows:

**V’yomer av’decha avi eleinu atem**

*Your servant our father said to us:*

**y’datem ki sh’nayim yal’dah-li ishti**

*You know that two sons were borne by my wife [i.e. Rachel].*

**Vayetze ha-echad**

*One has already left me,*

**me’iti va’omar ach tarof toraf**

*and I assume that he was torn to pieces by wild animals.*

**V’lo re’itiv ad-henah**

*I have seen nothing of him until now.*

**Ul’kachtem gam-et-zeh me’im panai**

*Now you want to take this one from me too!*

**V’karahu ason**

*If something were to happen to him,*

**V’horadetem et-seyvati b’ra’ah she’olah**

*you will have brought my white head down to the grave in evil misery.’*

Note that Y’hudah remembered the words his father used to describe his long years of anguish very, very well. No doubt those words had haunted him – especially the references to the disappearance of Rachel’s firstborn son Yosef ‘ . . . *and I assume that he was torn to pieces by wild animals. I have seen nothing of him until now.*”

Y’hudah knew, you see, what had made Ya’akov ‘assume that Yosef was torn to pieces’ by wild animals. He knew the reason was that 22 years ago he and his brothers [except Benjamin] had presented Ya’akov with the blood-smeared garment of Yosef and asked him: **Haker-na**– can you identify this? He knew the full pain his and his brothers’ conspiracy had inflicted on his father. And now Y’hudah’s

own words testify of his guilt.

### ***The Power to Hurt Others***

Y'hudah's words point out a very important aspect of life. Every human being possesses, by virtue of *the power of human relationship*, a very frightening power – the *power to hurt others*. I am not at this juncture talking of the power to inflict physical injuries on *enemies* or *strangers*. I am talking about the power to cause untold pain and suffering *to the people one loves* – and *by whom one is loved* – the most. Y'hudah and 'his gang of 9' inflicted decades of unbearable anguish upon their father, Ya'akov. The one their anger was directed toward and the one they were trying to hurt had been Yosef. But the one who suffered most was the one they called 'father'.

Which brings up a very important matter. I have a very pointed question to ask you. Have you, like Y'hudah, caused years of anguish to another human being? Have you by your words or by actions or by uncaring silence and/or inaction at a propitious moment inflicted misery on a parent? or a spouse? or a brother or sister? or a child? or one who considered you a friend?

Think about it. Think long and hard. Be honest with yourself. Think of all your family members, and think of all your closest friends over the years. What wounds and scars have you left on these people in your wake? How dangerous has it proven for other people to be in relationship with you?

If you have caused others anguish it is does not mean you are the 'scum of the earth'. But it does mean that it is time to take responsibility for the harm you have done, and seek to make reparation or restitution, as far as possible, for the damage you have caused. And it means it is time to '*nagash*' [i.e. draw very near] the Holy One, to *acknowledge your errors* and to *petition Him to release healing power into the lives of those you have wounded*. And when you have done that, wait patiently upon the Holy One. If, as, and when He tells you what else you need to do, make sure you *do it with all your heart* - whatever the cost.

### ***Y'hudah Offers to Bear Benjamin's Punishment***

What happens after Y'hudah tells the young Viceroy of Egypt of his elderly father's sad tale of bereavement is truly stunning and beautiful. Y'hudah actually offers to take Benjamin's place and bear Benjamin's punishment in his stead by himself volunteering to serve as the young Viceroy's slave for life. Here are the precise words Torah records Y'hudah as saying:

***Ki avdecha arav et ha-na'ar me'im avi***

*... your servant became collateral for the boy [Benyamin] to my father,*

***l'emor im-lo avi'enu elecha***

*saying, 'If I don't bring him to you,*

***v'chatati l'avi kol ha-yamim***

*then I will bear the blame to my father forever.'*

Is this the same man that the traumatized 17-year old Hebrew boy Yosef saw gleefully counting silver as the Yishmaeli merchants pulled him out of the pit at Dotan? Twenty years have passed – is it possible that Y'hudah has changed? Yosef does not know the story of Y'hudah's travels in Kena'an. He does not know the pain Y'hudah had felt for his own lost sons. He does not know what deep transformations were wrought in Y'hudah in connection with the wayward lives and premature deaths of Er and Onan. He does not know the humility that Y'hudah's experience with Tamar has wrought in the man who is speaking to him. But his curiosity has been awakened. And thus he does not laugh. He does not command Y'hudah to silence or order him removed from his presence.

And so, Y'hudah continues:

***V'atah yeshev-na av'decha tachat ha-na'ar***

*Now therefore, please let your servant stay instead of the boy,*

***eved l'adoni***

*a bondservant to my lord;*

***v'ha-na'ar ya'al im-echav***

*and let the boy go up with his brothers.*

***Ki-eych e'eleh el-avi v'ha-na'ar eynenu iti***

*For how will I go up to my father, if the boy isn't with me?*

***pen er'eh v'ra asher yimtza et-avi***

*Lest I see the evil that will come on my father."*

**[Genesis 44:32-34]**

With those words Y'hudah falls silent. He has nothing more to offer and nothing more to say. There is nothing at all more that he can do. His fate, and that of Benyamin, Ya'akov, and the rest of the brothers, now rests in the hands – and the power to hurt or to heal – of the young Viceroy of Egypt in whose ear he has dared to speak.

### ***Of Tables Turned***

The last time Yosef was this close to Y'hudah, as you will remember, it was

Y'hudah who held “all the cards”. On that occasion some very unpleasant things happened to Yosef – he was attacked, beaten, stripped of his garment, and thrown into a pit with vipers from whence he cried out for help to no avail. From the pit into which he was thrown Yosef had heard not only the sounds of Y'hudah's cruel laughter but also his announcement of the plan to sell Yosef into slavery – and to tell their father he had been killed by wild animals.

Ah but the Holy One has now arranged circumstances so that *the tables are turned*. This time when Y'hudah approaches/draws near to Yosef it is Y'hudah who is in danger - and it is Yosef who “holds all the cards”. Yosef could *crush* Y'hudah now. Or he could *force him into a lifetime of slavery*, as Y'hudah had tried to do to him. What will he do? What would you do?

### ***Questions for Today's Study***

1. Let's begin our study of parsha *Vayigash* with a few questions:

[A] For what purpose did Y'hudah ‘approach’ Yosef at the beginning of this week's parsha?

[B] Why do you think Y'hudah approached Yosef ‘privately’, rather than speaking in front of all the brothers and Yosef's servants?

[C] What did Y'hudah say would be the effect of losing Benjamin on their father, Ya'akov?

[D] What was there about Y'hudah, at this stage in his life, that made him the most qualified to explain the effect on a father of the loss of two children? [Hint: see Genesis 38:6-10]

[E] Which descendant of Y'hudah lost two of his sons? [Hint: see II Samuel 12:15-19 and II Samuel 13:28-29; see also II Samuel 18:9-15].

[F] What prophetic significance do you see in the fact that Y'hudah [from whom the Messiah came] offers himself to bear the punishment on behalf of his brother?

2. In today's Haftarah Yechezkiel [Ezekiel] has just experienced the vision of the *Valley of Dry Bones*, where he saw the Holy One regather Israel as a nation, powered by the breath of the *Ruach HaQodesh*. This week's haftarah reading is the “second phase” of the restoration vision which began in the *Valley of Dry Bones*. The Holy One reveals to Ezekiel two “sticks” – one representing *Y'hudah's* companions [called ‘the children of Israel’] and one representing Yosef's companions [called ‘*the house of Israel*’]. Here is the way the prophet opens his description of the so-called ‘vision of the two sticks’:

***Vayehi d'var-Adonai elai l'emor***

*The word of the Holy One came again to me, saying,*

***V'atah ben-adam kach-lecha etz echad uch'tov alav***

*And you, son of man, take one stick, and write on it,*

***L'Y'hudah v'l'vnei Yisra'el chaverav***

*“For Y'hudah, and for the children of Yisra'el his companions”*

***ulekach etz echad uchetov alav***

*then take another stick, and write on it,*

***l'Yosef etz Efrayim***

*“For Yosef, the stick of Efrayim,*

***v'chol-beit Yisra'el chaverav***

*and [for] all the house of Yisra'el his companions”*

**[Ezekiel 37:15-16]**

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the word translated as “stick”. [It is Strong's Hebrew word #6086, transliterated as *`etz*, and pronounced *ates*.] Write the Hebrew word in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings, and describe the word picture of that word and its verb root [which is Strong's Hebrew word #6095 (*`atzah*, pronounced *aw-tzaw'*)].

[B] What was Ezekiel told to write on the first “stick”?

[C] What was Ezekiel told to write on the second “stick”?

[D] What does today's Haftarah aliyah have to do with today's Torah aliyah?

[E] What group of people do you think the Holy One [through the prophet] was referring to as the companions [Hebrew *chaverav*<sup>3</sup>, *chet, beit, resh, vav*] of Y'hudah [Judah]?

[F] What group of people do you think the Holy One [through the prophet] was referring to as the *companions* [Hebrew *chaverav, chet, beit, resh, vav*] of Efrayim [Ephraim]?

[G] Who is the person identified by the Holy One [through His prophet Ezekiel] as the head of the '*children of Israel*'?

[H] Who is the person identified by the Holy One [through His prophet Ezekiel] as the head of the '*house of Israel*'.

[I] What do you think is the difference between the '*children of Israel*'<sup>4</sup> [a term first used in Genesis 32:32 to describe those who do not eat the thigh muscle/sciatic nerve of kosher animals in remembrance of the dislocation of Ya'akov's thigh by the Divine Wrestler at Yabbok], and the '*house of Israel*'<sup>5</sup> [a term first used in Exodus 16:31, to describe those

---

<sup>3</sup> This is a noun form of the Hebrew verb root *chabar*, *chet, beit, resh*, Strong's Hebrew word # 2266, meaning to *unite with, join with*, or to *be allied with* someone or some cause.

<sup>4</sup> Note: the Torah, in this very *parsha* [*Vayigash*] is going to identify the '*children of Israel*' for us. See Genesis 46:8-27.

<sup>5</sup> Other Scriptural references to the House of Israel include, but are by no means limited to: Exodus 40:38, Leviticus 10:6, 17:3, 8, 10; Ruth 4:11; I Sam 7:2-3; II Sam 1:12, 6:5, 12:8, and 16:3; I Kings 12:21;

who ate manna in the wilderness, prior to arriving at, and receiving the revelation of Torah at, Mt. Sinai]?

3. In the B'rit Chadasha reading selected for parsha *Vayigash* Messiah Y'shua approaches the religious system in place in his day. On a Shabbat [either Friday evening or Saturday morning] Messiah walks into the regular meeting held at a local 'worship center' – a place very much like one of our present day local churches or synagogues. Here is how Lukas [Luke] records the event for us:

*It also happened on another Shabbat  
that he [Y'shua] entered into the synagogue and taught.  
There was a man there, and his right hand was withered.*

*The Sofrim and the P'rushim watched him,  
to see whether he would heal on the Shabbat,  
that they might find an accusation against him.  
But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man who had the withered hand,  
**"Rise up, and stand in the middle."**  
He arose and stood.*

Notice that Y'shua has just rather shockingly 'taken over' the meeting. He has disrupted the order of service, and has in the process totally dishonored the officials in charge. And the Master is just getting warmed up.

*Then Y'shua said to them, **"I will ask you something:  
Is it lawful on the Shabbat to do good, or to do harm? To save a life, or to kill?"***

With this unanswerable challenge Y'shua has added insult to injury. Not only has He dared to interrupt the service and dishonor the officials of the local worship center by taking over their meeting, but has deliberately embarrassed them in front of the people. And next He will, by healing the man's hand, go one step beyond - exposing them to everyone as enemies of the Holy One.

*He looked around at them all, and said to the man, **"Stretch out your hand."**  
He did, and his hand was restored as sound as the other.*

Who healed the man's hand? No man did. Healing is not the province of a man. Healing is the province of the Holy One, and the Holy One alone. The Holy One clearly wanted this man's hand healed. And those who objected were thereby clearly shown to be resisting God's will.

[A] For what purpose did Y'shua go into the 'local worship center' – in this case a synagogue - on the Shabbat in question in today's aliyah?

[B] Does the Bible say that Y'shua was *invited*, or even called upon, by the leaders of the synagogue to teach there?

---

Psalm 115:12, Is. 5:7, 14:2, 46:3, and 63:7]. Jeremiah 3:18,20, 5:11, 15, 11:10,17, and 31:27, 31, Ezekiel 39:12, 22, 23, 25, and 29; Hosea 1:4, 6 and 11:12; and see Matthew 10:6 and 15:24.

[C] In the local worship center in question that day was a man with a shriveled right hand. Was his presence there allowed by Torah? Explain.

[D] Why do you think the man with the shriveled right hand was there that day?

[E] Which of the persons involved in today's aliyah were concerned about the man with the shriveled right hand?

[F] Where in Torah or TaNaKh was Israel instructed to build local worship centers like synagogues?

[G] What does Torah say about worship services held in and by local worship centers such as synagogues and churches? Read carefully Deuteronomy 12, where all public worship activities are assigned to *one particular location* where the Holy One would 'choose to place His Name' – i.e., Jerusalem.

[H] How are our 'local churches' or 'Messianic synagogues' *like* and how are they *different from* the synagogue whose service Y'shua totally disrupted, and whose officials He publicly shamed, in today's reading?

*In your search for truth, may you never cease to care  
about the pain of the bereaved or the feelings of the infirm.  
And may you, like Y'shua, never "fit in" at the meetings of organized religion.*

### ***The Rabbi's son***

### ***Meditation for Today's Study***

Psalm 111:1-3

*Praise the Holy One!*

*I will give thanks to the Holy One with my whole heart,  
In the council of the upright, when the called out ones are gathered.*

*The Holy One's works are great,  
Pondered by all those who delight in them.  
His work is honor and majesty. His righteousness endures forever.*