

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON VAYIGASH - 5758

B'S'D' dramatic denouement. In an instant, the covering was removed from nature. Suddenly everything became transcendently clear. So will it be in the future. When the world hears just three words - "I am Hashem" - all the paradoxes and conundrums will be revealed to be no more than an overture to the final crescendo of world history. Then Hashem will reveal the faithfulness of His covenant, His Bris, with the People of Israel and the covering will be removed from the natural world once and forever.

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Torah Weekly - Vayigash 5758 ohr@virtual.co.il (Ohr Somayach)
Highlights of the Torah weekly portion ... Insights

Looking Out For Number One "Yosef gathered all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt...and...brought the money into Pharaoh's palace." (47:14) Commerce is usually a matter of sophisticated back-scratching. You know. You scratch my back, and I'll buy your F-16s at an inflated price. "What's in it for Number One?" is the subtitle on the business cards of the world.

It's like a breath of fresh air when you find someone who wants to complete the job for no other reason than that he made a commitment to do so. A person who puts his integrity above his bank account. The prototype for this kind of person is to be found in this week's Parsha. Yosef's rise to pre-eminence in Egypt was in order to fulfill his prophecy that his father and brothers would bow to him. And to make good Hashem's promise to Avraham that his descendants would be slaves in Egypt and emerge from there with great wealth. Yosef's ascendancy to power was no more than a preparation to fulfill these ends. Thus, after his father and brothers were safely ensconced in Goshen, logically Yosef should have stopped working with the enormous vigor that characterized him. This was not the case whatsoever. Even after there was no need for Yosef to carry on serving Pharaoh, Yosef launched into an agrarian plan which consolidated all the wealth of Egypt under the dominion of Pharaoh. Yosef continued to act as a prince to the manner born. Why? Yosef was the ultimate man of integrity. Even after his own interests had been served and there was no further need to enrich Pharaoh, Yosef returned the trust that Pharaoh had placed in him and secured the financial underpinnings of Pharaoh's dynasty.

In doing this, he sanctified Hashem's Name in the eyes of the people. For it was clear to all that Hashem grants success to those who fear Him. Yosef was looking after "Number One."

Pieces Of Eight "Then Yosef said to his brothers, 'Come close* to me, please...I am Yosef your brother - it is me whom you sold into Egypt.'" (44:4)

"...He (Yosef) showed them that he was circumcised." - Rashi All but eight verses in this week's Parsha start with the letter "Vav." Why? The letter Vav connotes the expression "Vey!" - "Woe!". It is as though all the other verses are crying out "Oy Vey!" to the selling of Yosef; "Oy Vey" to the parental anguish of Yaakov. The whole of this week's Parsha cries "Woe!" - with the exception of eight verses. What is the significance of the number eight? The number seven defines the natural world: There are seven days in the week; seven notes in the diatonic scale. Eight is that which reveals the supernatural in the natural. Bris mila, the mitzva of circumcision, is performed on the eighth day after birth. Bris mila reveals the metaphysical in the physical. Bris mila removes the covering of nature. It takes off the mask of the natural world to reveal that Man's body has a holy purpose. It teaches us that our physicality is to be elevated; that we can use our most aspect to strive for that which is above nature. Bris mila represents the natural within the supernatural. When the brothers stood in front of Yosef before he revealed his true identity, they thought they were in the middle of a protracted and worsening nightmare: They had wrongly been accused of theft. One of their brothers was already being held in custody, and now Binyamin, the youngest, was about to be taken into slavery. They knew that this would break their father Yaakov. They thought to themselves - "Why is all this happening to us?" With three small words - "I am Yosef" - everything became clear. All the distress and the heartbreak of the past months were dispelled in an instant of recognition. All the twists and turns in this convoluted plot had now reached their final

Sources: o Looking Out for Number One - Ramban, Rabbi Meir Schlessinger, Rabbi Moshe Zauderer o Pieces Of Eight - Rashi, HaRokeyach al HaTorah, Maharal, Rabbi C. Z. Senter Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International <http://www.ohr.org.il> (C) 1998 Ohr Somayach International

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Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz

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 shlit'a (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)

"Then you will have brought me in my old age to gehinom." (44:29)

In the "olden-days," taught R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l (mashgiach/dean 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 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," and 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)

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SICHOT - 11: Parashat Vayigash yhe@virtual.co.il (Yeshivat Har Etzion)
Sichot of the Roshei Yeshiva summarized by students PARASHAT
VAYIGASH SICHOT OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT" A
"And He Sent Yehuda Ahead ... to Set Up Camp" Summarized by Dov
Karoll

Despite Ya'akov's joy upon hearing that Yosef was alive, he was nevertheless quite frightened to go down to Egypt. In fact, God Himself had to assuage Ya'akov's fears: "Do not be afraid to descend to Egypt" (46:3). Why was Ya'akov afraid? One possibility relates to the fact that mitzvot cannot be fulfilled in the same way when one is outside the land of Israel. There is an additional level of fulfillment when one is in Israel. According to the Midrash, in the time of the forefathers, the 613 mitzvot applied only in Israel. Thus, it was a major sacrifice for Ya'akov to leave Israel, and his fear is understandable.

Ya'akov's actions seem to hint at other sources of worry. As Ya'akov prepared to go down to Egypt, the Torah relates that "he sent Yehuda ahead toward Yosef, to set the way to Goshen" (46:28). What was Ya'akov trying to accomplish by sending Yehuda ahead? One could understand that he was going to set up camp, to prepare a physical residence. This is the first explanation cited by Rashi (s.v. Le-horot), based on the translation of Onkelos (and appearing also in the Midrash Rabba 95:3). However, why should Ya'akov have been worried about this - didn't Yosef promise that he would take care of their needs?

Because of this difficulty, it seems that Ya'akov may have had something else in mind in sending Yehuda ahead. There is another explanation cited by Rashi (s.v. Le-fanav), quoting the second opinion of the above-mentioned Midrash Rabba. According to this view, Yehuda was sent ahead "to set up a beit va'ad, a house of study." Ya'akov wanted the spiritual foundations to be established before he arrived. He didn't want to start organizing Torah study upon his arrival; rather, he planned ahead to have the system prepared when he and his family arrived.

In this view, Ya'akov was worried about the spirituality of his descendants in Egypt. He knew that his grandchildren would be raised in a foreign society, one with a strong and attractive culture of its own. Therefore, he wanted to be certain that they would still maintain their separate identity. Yosef, however, might have been oblivious to this concern. After surviving twenty-two years completely immersed in Egyptian society, Yosef might not have realized how challenging that society was. Ya'akov feared that his descendants, who did not grow up in his own house and therefore did not have the spiritual strength of Yosef, might be overwhelmed by these difficulties.

There is another question which one can ask based on this verse: why did Ya'akov wish to live in Goshen? Was his wish to remain separated due only to a desire to avoid offending the Egyptians by his family's profession of shepherding? Or is it possible that he wanted his family to be separate for other reasons, and used the sheep as an excuse? It seems that Ya'akov, unlike Yosef, wanted to remain on the outskirts of the society. Ya'akov was worried about his descendants' ability to maintain their separate identity and their close connection with Hashem. He tried to safeguard these by keeping some distance from the society, and setting up his own system of education.

There was an additional element which Ya'akov had to consider in setting up an educational system in Egypt. On the one hand, he wanted, and needed, his grandchildren's religious education in Egypt to be a strong one. This education would have to pass on all the teachings which he had imparted to his children, thus maintaining the continuity. On the other hand, the religious experience of his descendants needed to be imperfect. Since they were outside of Israel, there needed to be sense something lacking in

their development as a Torah community. There needed to be a longing and yearning for the ideal, for their return to Israel. Ya'akov had accepted the fact that they would be in exile, and that they needed to build a strong "exile-community." Nonetheless, it was crucial that they recognize the fact that they were in exile. Even the best "Diaspora community" must still be a community in exile, not one which feels comfortable and complacent, as if they have reached the religious ideal.

In the current exile, this experience has taken different forms at various stages. For the majority of the two thousand years of exile, the host nations did not allow the Jews to feel much comfort. When those Jews used to say "Le-shana ha-ba' bi-Yerushalayim ha-benuya," "May we merit to be in the rebuilt Yerushalayim at this time next year," they really meant it. They truly believed that the return to Israel would be qualitatively better than their existence in exile. Unfortunately, in Western societies, where the Jews are more accepted, this feeling is often lacking. Even when not fleeing persecution, we must sense that our religious life is not ideal. For example, in America today many observant Jews lose track of this feeling that they are in exile. They reach such levels of comfort that they feel totally "at home" in America, which leaves them little yearning for a better future in Israel. This is a very dangerous situation.

To summarize, Ya'akov sent Yehuda ahead to set up a house of study which was to provide a strong Jewish education for the children who would grow up in Egyptian society. It would give them both firm Torah values and a firm Jewish identity. It would also teach them that their community in Egypt was not the ideal one, and that they must yearn to return to rebuild a true Jewish community in Israel. The same principles should hold true for every community in the Diaspora. They need to develop a strong Torah community, but inculcate the recognition that the ideal Torah community can only be built in the land of Israel.

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How Should We Make a Bar Mitzvah Celebration garah@netvision.net.il
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Education Corner Rav Elisha Aviner How Should We Make A Bar-mitzvah Celebration? According to halacha, the main part of the celebration is on the day that the boy becomes of the age of mitzvah observance. It is a mitzvah to hold a seudah on the same day in order to thank Hashem that the boy has become obligated to keep mitzvot. Maharshal learns the obligation of making this seudah from the Gemara (Kidushin 31a) which tells that when Rav Yosef became blind, thinking that as a result of this he was exempt from mitzvot, he found out that even a blind person is obligated to keep mitzvot and he made a great seudah. From here we learn that one who becomes obligated to keep mitzvot must make a thanks-giving feast to Hashem. Another support for this is in the midrash on the passuk, "And Avraham made a great feast on the day that Yitzchak was weaned". The midrash explains that this is the day on which Yitzchak was weaned of the evil inclination, meaning, when he turned thirteen years of age. This seuda is a seudat mitzvah and the minhag is that the boy makes a speech of divrei Torah during the seuda. The poor minhag of disturbing the youth whilst he is speaking should be abolished! There are those who are of the opinion that if the boy makes a speech then the seuda is a seudat mitzvah even if it takes place a day or two after the day he becomes bar-mitzvah. It is best, however, to strive to make it on the day itself. The boy is called up to read from the Torah on the Shabbat which follows the day of his bar-mitzvah. There is no obligation for the boy to actually read from the Torah in synagogue, merely to be called up to the Torah. It is however a good minhag since it allows the boy to accompany his entrance into mitzvah observance with a prolonged period during which he develops a personal connection with the Torah (the period in which he learns ta'amei ha'mikra and the parsha) and this educates him to have responsibility for a holy matter (preparing for correct reading before a congregation of adults).

But if the child finds the study of the ta'amei ha'mikra difficult, then one should by no means pressurize him because the bar-mitzvah must be a pleasant uplifting spiritual experience of joy and not a traumatic period of pressure and fears. A boy who struggled during prolonged preparations for reading the Torah in public, should be praised and encouraged for doing so. The most important encouragement is to be present in synagogue to listen to his reading! Therefore, guests who are invited to his bar-mitzvah should try to be present at the reading of the Torah in order to pay respect to the boy, and should not suffice with being present at the reception which the family arranges at the end of the service (the "kidush") in order to be honored with the cakes.

INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Har Nof Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld
Shabbos 31 IMPURE MOTIVES QUESTION: A gentile came to Hillel, wanting to convert on the grounds that he wanted to be a Kohen Gadol. Hillel converted him, and told him to go learn the laws of Kehunah Gedolah. How could Hillel convert him? The Gemara in Yevamos (24b) states that it is forbidden to accept converts who want to convert only to receive the benefits that a Jew receives! ANSWERS: (a) The MAHARSHA explains that Hillel did not actually convert the gentile at first; Hillel only converted him *after* he went and learned that he cannot become a Kohen Gadol. Hillel told him to learn about the laws of Kehunah Gedolah *before* he converted. However, this poses another problem. Why was Hillel allowed to teach a gentile Torah before he converted? The Gemara in Chagigah (13a) states that it is forbidden to teach Torah to a gentile! Similarly, the Gemara in Sanhedrin (59a) states that a gentile who learns Torah is Chayav Misah! The Maharsha answers that for purposes of converting, it is permitted for a gentile to learn Torah. (b) TOSFOS in Yevamos suggests another answer. Hillel saw that the gentile was sincere and that he would convert even if he could not become a Kohen Gadol, and therefore he converted him. (REBBI AKIVA EIGER points out that it may be inferred from Tosfos that Hillel specifically waited to convert the gentile before teaching him Torah, for otherwise he would not have had to "take chances" by converting the gentile before knowing whether he would change his mind after learning that he could not be a Kohen Gadol. If so, this Tosfos refutes the supposition of the Maharsha, and proves that it is not permitted to teach Torah to a gentile even if he has plans to convert.

THE DAFYOMI DISCUSSION LIST brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Har Nof Rosh Kollel: Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld SUBJECT: Shabbos 22a: Yosef and Chanukah Shalom Spira <mcsf@muscia.mcgill.ca> asked: Question: Besides the names of the Chachamim making the Drashah about the pit into which Yosef was thrown, is there perhaps a fundamental connection to the story of Yosef in the context of hilchos Chanuka in the mostly non-Aggadic perek of Bameh Madlikin? Anyway, a freilech and healthy Chanuka to all. Thank you. The Kollel replies: The Midrash (Yalkut Reuveni) comments on the verse in Shir ha'Shirim (7:14): "Ha'Duda'im Nasnu Rei'ach," "The Duda'im emit a fragrance" -- this refers to Reuven (who picked the Duda'im for his mother); "v'Al Pesacheinu Kol Megadim," "and on our doorways are all the sweet fruits" -- this is the candle of Chanukah (which is placed within one Tefach of the doorway)....

The allusion, put simply, is to the fact that the persecution at the hands of the Syrian-Greeks, who were led by Antiochus (whose name in Gematria equals that of Yosef -- 156) was a Divinely ordained punishment for the sale of Yosef, as the Megaleh Amukos points out. (Yosef is described as "beautiful in description and beautiful in appearance" (Bereishis 39:6). This great beauty was countered by the concept of physical beauty that was idolized by the Syrian-Greeks, beauty in its most Tamei form.) There are a number of works on this topic in both Hebrew and English. If you are interested, I printed an excellent essay on the subject in my newly published collection of The Weekly Internet Parasha-Page, entitled "Torah from the Internet" by Judaica Press. The book is now available (in the US) at your local bookstore, or via Email to JudaicaPr@aol.com, or through the Web at

the www.torah.org virtual bookstore. Price: approx. \$19.95 (+shipping).
Chanukah Sameach! -Mordecai Kornfeld

The Weekly Daf ohr@virtual.co.il (Ohr Somayach) Insights into Daf Yomi from Ohr Somayach

Whose Candle Must Go? When Rabbi Tanchum of Noi received the following question he decided to use it as a topic for his public lecture: "If there is a candle whose light is preventing a mortally ill person from sleeping and thus endangering his life -- may one extinguish this candle on Shabbos?" He began his lecture with a reference to the words of King David in Tehillim that "the dead cannot praise Hashem," and stressed the urgency of studying Torah and performing mitzvos during one's lifetime because there is no opportunity to do so after death. After a lengthy discourse on the circumstances of David's own death on Shabbos, the sage concluded his lecture with this ruling on the halachic question put to him:

"The light created by man is called a candle and man's soul is called a candle (Mishlei 20:27). It is preferable for man's candle to be extinguished in favor of Hashem's candle." Maharsha points to the similarity between this gemara and one further on in Mesechta Shabbos (151b) in which Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel states: "The Shabbos may be violated to save the life of a one-day old baby but not to bury King David. In regard to the child we say that it is preferable to violate one Shabbos to enable this child to observe many future Shabboses, but in regard to King David there is no longer any possibility for him to perform any mitzvos." The interesting thing about both of these two aforementioned rationales for violating the Shabbos to save a life is that neither of them is the conclusive source for the ruling. In the Talmudic discussion of this source (Mesechta Yoma 85b) the explanation about the candle is not even mentioned and the one about observing future Shabboses is rejected as inadequate. The only fully adequate source, concludes the gemara, is the passage (Vayikra 18:5) "You shall live in them," which teaches us that wherever there is even a reasonable possibility that Shabbos observance may endanger life it must be abandoned. Rashi explains that since uneducated people came to public lectures it was the policy of sages like Rabbi Tanchum to embellish their halachic rulings with such homiletic explanations which would be more effective in getting their point across. Shabbos 30

Two of Each After spending twelve years of intense Torah study in the cave where they hid from their Roman pursuers, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son Rabbi Elazar found difficulty in reconciling themselves with an imperfect world in which people neglected Torah study. Even after being sent back to the cave for another year by Hashem for being too destructive in their criticism, Rabbi Elazar still could not make peace with the world despite his father's efforts to change his perspective. He finally succeeded in doing so on one occasion so dramatically described in the gemara. Shabbos was approaching and an elderly Jew was rushing home clutching two bundles of hadassim (myrtle branches) in his hands. "What are these for?" the sages asked him. "To honor the Shabbos," he replied. "But isn't one bundle enough?" they wondered. "One is for Zachor," he explained, "and the other for Shamor." "See how Jews love their mitzvos," said Rabbi Shimon to his son, who finally made peace with an imperfect world. In the two Torah accounts of the Ten Commandments, the commandment regarding Shabbos is once introduced (Shmos 20:8) with the words "Zachor (remember) the Shabbos" and another time (Devarim 5:12) "Shamor (observe) the Shabbos." Although both Zachor and Shamor were said in one Divine word, as we say in our Lecha Dodi prayer on Shabbos Eve, they refer to two different dimensions of this holy day. Zachor relates to the positive actions we do on Shabbos to sanctify it -- Kiddush, prayers, meals and zemiros songs -- while Shamor is the title for the vast category of creative labors prohibited on the Day of Rest. The custom of lighting at least two candles in honor of the Shabbos is also based on the need to focus on both of these dimensions. The hadassim in their role of fragrant beauty serve as a source for the flowers which decorate the Shabbos table. But Maharsha sees another dimension in the choice of hadassim which appear in Tanach (Zecharia 1:8) as a symbol of the

righteous. Just as we learned (Shabbos 23a) that one who is diligent in lighting Shabbos candles will merit having sons who are Torah scholars, so will Shabbos-honoring hadassim, representing righteousness, achieve the same goal. Shabbos 33b

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<http://www.intournet.co.il/mtv/parsha.html> Nehama Leibowitz About these Shiruim by Dr. Moshe Sokolow VAYIGASH

Preface: Ambiguity; Again? In Part One of Parshat Toldot we discussed the case of the ambiguous pronoun reference, illustrating it by means of the two-part commentary of RASHI to the words: KI TZAYID BEFIV: Yitzhak loved Esav, for the hunt was in his [whose?] mouth. There are several additional ambiguous phrases in the current Parsha, and we will begin with them.

Part One: Who Would Live, and [more to the point] Who Would Die? Yehudah has stepped forward to argue Binyamin's case before Yosef. He reminds Yosef that it was his idea to bring Binyamin down to Egypt (now I've gone and done it; whose idea was it--Yosef's or Yehudah's?) and that he had cautioned him that Binyamin could not leave Yaakov. His exact words are (44:22): *o*the lad cannot leave his father, for if he were to leave his father--he would die. QUESTION: Who would die? ANSWER 1: Surely Yaakov, the elderly father. Already bereft of the older son of his favorite wife, he would not recover from the loss of her only surviving child. ANSWER 2: Surely Binyamin, the frail and pampered youngest child, whose mother died in childbirth and whose older brother--for all intents and purposes--was also dead. QUESTION: What does the Torah say? Is there textual evidence to decide the question? ANSWER 1: A subsequent Torah text supports the answer that they feared for Yaakov's life. To wit (44:31): *o*When [Yaakov] sees that [Binyamin] is missing, we will be responsible for sending our elderly father to an early grave. ANSWER 2: An earlier text clearly supports the answer that it was Binyamin's life for which there was concern. To wit (42:4): *o*Yaakov didn't send Binyamin, Yosef's brother, along with his other brothers because he feared that an accident would befall him.

Since we cannot resolve the question through direct Scriptural citation, let us refer it to a panel of experts: the medieval commentators. QUESTION: Which interpretation do the medievals espouse? ANSWER 1: Clearly the first interpretation [i.e., Yaakov would die], as RASHBAM [also Bekhor Shor, Shadal, and Ibn Ezra--as cited by Ramban] states: *o*His father would die. ANSWER 2: Clearly the second interpretation, as RASHI [also Targum and Ramban] says: *o*If [Binyamin] left his father we were concerned lest he die on the way, just as his mother died on the way. * Since we cannot resolve the question through recourse to the medieval commentators either, let us refer it to the moderns. QUESTION: How do the moderns resolve the question? [Note that the argument between the moderns follows the lines of the medievals and utilizes the Scriptural support which we have already cited.] ANSWER 1: The Jewish Publication Society *o*Torah Commentary sides with the first interpretation, translating the verse: *o*The boy cannot leave his father; if he were to leave him, his father would die. In his commentary, Nahum Sarna explains: *o*Actually, the subject of the Hebrew verb *va-met* is ambiguous. It may be either Benjamin or the father. In light of verse 31, the latter is the more likely. ANSWER 2: The ArtScroll *o*Stone Humash clearly supports the second interpretation, commenting: *o*Jacob reasoned: *æ*... I sent Joseph on a journey and he did not return; the same might happen to Benjamin.. for their mother, too, died on the road. * What is the final resolution to be? If there is neither Scriptural evidence, medieval commentary, nor modern interpretation adequate to the task of deciding, unambiguously, whose life was in jeopardy, how are we ever to know? There are actually two answers to this question, too. ANSWER 1: We don't have to know. In fact, Talmudic tradition (Yoma 52b) acknowledges our inability to resolve every Scriptural ambiguity satisfactorily, relegating

unresolved verses to a special category called: SHE-EIN LAHEM HEKHRE'A, unresolved. ANSWER 2: If both possibilities have equal textual support, medieval justification, and modern verification, then they are likely to both be right. In answer to the question: Whose life was in jeopardy?, we would then answer: both Yaakov's and Binyamin's. [EXTRA: IBN EZRA notes that only five verses are listed in Yoma 52b, and our's is not among them. Why do you think that is?]

Part Two: OD AVINU HAI: Reviving Yaakov's Spirits After their reunion with Yosef, the brothers return to Canaan to prepare their father for the trip to Egypt. They tell him (45:26): *o*Yosef still lives and he rules over the entire land of Egypt, but his heart went numb [or: failed] because he didn't believe them. In order to convince him, they tell him all the things Yosef told them and they show him the wagons which Yosef sent to transport him; as a result: *o*Yaakov's spirits are revived (verse 27) *o*A close look at these two consecutive verses shows that each one consists of two parts: Verse 26: (a) Yosef still lives, and (b) he rules over the entire land of Egypt; Verse 27: (a) they tell him all the things Yosef told them, and (b) they show him the [royal] wagons which Yosef sent to transport him. QUESTION: How do these different parts relate to each other? ANSWER: The natural relationship is a:a and b:b. In other words, to convince him that Yosef was still alive they told him what Yosef had said, and to prove that he ruled over Egypt they showed him the wagons. QUESTION: What did Yosef tell them that confirmed his identity? ANSWER: According to RASHBAM, he didn't tell them anything as much as give them the opportunity to approach him (45:4) and satisfy themselves, close up (14-15), that he is, indeed, their brother (12). According to RASHI, on the other hand, he gave them what amounts to a secret, or coded, message which only he and Yaakov shared. [EXTRA QUESTION: Why didn't Yaakov's spirits revive immediately upon hearing that Yosef was alive? Why did that await the additional, and, ostensibly secondary, news that he was the ruler of Egypt?]

Part Three: Living and Eating Apart When Yosef's family is finally reunited with him he prepares to introduce his father and brothers to Pharaoh. He counsels his brothers that *o*when Pharaoh summons you and asks you, *æ*What is your livelihood?, tell him, *æ*Your servants have been herdsmen since our youth and in the manner of our ancestors. For what purpose? In order that you shall dwell in the land of Goshen because the Egyptians abhor shepherds (46:33-34). The Egyptian abhorrence of shepherds, matched by their aversion to eating the flesh of cattle and sheep (see 43:32), was on account of their worship of those animals (see RASHI, here, and TARGUM on 43:32).

This *o*taboo clarifies an earlier verse in the Parsha of VaYeshev, and raises a challenge to RASHI's commentary thereupon. After being sold to Potiphar (39:1 ff.), Yosef demonstrates his capabilities and quickly rises to the position of overseer in his house. In appraisal of this situation we read (verse 6): *o*[Potiphar] left all that he possessed in Yosef's hands, not concerning himself with anything except the bread which he ate; and Yosef was fair of form and fair to look at. Based on our prior discussion, it appears clear that on account of the taboo we were discussing, Yosef, a Hebrew, was ineligible to oversee the preparation of food for Egyptian consumption. This, in fact, is the interpretation offered here by IBN EZRA. RASHI, however, comments: *o*the bread refers, euphemistically, to [Potiphar's] wife. QUESTION: Why did RASHI abandon the Peshat in favor of a Drash? ANSWER: RASHI could have been motivated by the juxtaposition of the bread with a description of Yosef's striking physical appearance. Such a description is certainly more intelligible in relation to Potiphar's wife than it is to his meals.

[EXTRA: The matter of Egyptian taboos regarding sheep plays a prominent role in the story of the Exodus from Egypt, as we plan--IYDH--to demonstrate in the Parsha of BO. After the plague of AROV (swarms--of either insects or wild beasts), Pharaoh is prepared to allow the Jews to offer the sacrifices they requested, providing that they don't leave Egypt in the process. Moshe rejects the proposition, saying: *o*It would not be wise to do this, for it is Egypt's abomination which we would slaughter to our God; if we were to slaughter Egypt's abomination before their very eyes--would

they not stone us?ö (Shemot 8:22).]

[Didn't make it into distribution:] Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayigash
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RavFrand is sponsored this week by David Samet in memory of his grandmother, Gittel Bas Yitzchok Dovid Haleyvei a"h, whose yahrtzeit is the seventh day of Chanukah. Please study this class in her memory.

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 Kohen 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 Rebbe's, to Rabbanim, 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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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Vayigash (Shiur date: 1/1/74)
The Torah tells us that the children of Jacob returned from Egypt and told Jacob that Joseph was alive and that he was the viceroy of Egypt. And Jacob fainted away as he did not believe them. They showed him the Agalos that Joseph sent to carry him to Egypt and Jacob's spirit was rekindled. Jacob fainted out of fright brought on from the story that Joseph was still alive and his initial skepticism about the veracity of the report. Why did Jacob initially reject the testimony of 11 eye witnesses? Also what was the significance behind the Agalos that Joseph sent and how were they connected with the rekindling of Jacobs divine inspiration (Ruach Hakodesh)?

The brothers reported to Jacob that Joseph was still alive in Egypt. He had remained the same Joseph despite all his trials and successes, he was the viceroy of Egypt, yet he still remained steadfast in his righteousness. As the commentaries point out on the verse "And Joseph was in Egypt", he retained the same sense of righteousness that he had in Canaan years before and was untainted by the trappings of his position and Egyptian culture. Jacob could not understand how Joseph could be the ruler of Egypt and maintain his nature of kindness and compassion. That is why he refused to accept their report of his discovery in Egypt.

When the brothers related to Jacob the words of Joseph, how he had cautioned them not to quarrel among themselves over his sale, that he had been sent by Hashem to provide for them and their families throughout the years of famine, Jacob realized that these were the words of one who had grown up with the notion of kindness as taught in the house of Abraham. Finally they showed him the Agalos that Joseph sent. This was a symbol to Jacob that Joseph was reminding him of the Parsha of Eglu Arufa, which was the last topic they studied together before their relationship was interrupted abruptly 22 years previously. The fundamental principle of Eglu Arufa is the responsibility that the Ziknai Yisrael have for their generation and how they must shoulder the accountability for the death of an unidentified person who is found outside the borders of the city. Joseph told Jacob through the message of the Agalos that he sent with his brothers, that he still remembered the lessons he learned years before of responsibility and compassion as portrayed by the Eglu Arufa. The Torah says that Jacob saw the Agalos that Joseph sent to carry him. Lasays Oso. Lasays means to elevate, Joseph indicated that he was sending the Agalos to lift the spirit of Jacob, Ruach Yaakov, which he succeeded in doing.

The Torah tells us that Jacob stopped in Beer Sheva on his way to Egypt. Hashem appears to him and tells him not to be fearful of descending to Egypt for Hashem will accompany him down and back again on his return trip. Jacob was apparently seeking this spiritual guidance, for immediately after receiving it he travels directly to Egypt with his entire family. Why was Jacob reticent to go to Egypt and what did Hashem promise him that cleared the way for his immediate departure?

The Ramban says that the Patriarchs were considered to be Jews while they lived in Eretz Canaan. However, when they left Canaan they were considered Bnay Noach. This explains how Jacob was permitted to marry two sisters while he was in Charan. However, when he returned to Eretz Canaan, he was once again bound by the Torah and the prohibitions of Erva. Rachel who was the second of the wives that Jacob married, and who was therefore the prohibited one as an Issur Erva, died just prior to Jacob's return to Eretz Canaan. For on his return he regained the Kedushas Yisrael that he surrendered when he went to Charan.

[Hashem promised Abraham (Breishis 17:7-8) that He will maintain his covenant with Abraham and his children, to be their God and to grant them the land that they dwelled on and He will be unto them Elokim. However at the time of Mattan Torah (Shemos 19:5-6) Hashem enters into a covenant with Bnay Yisrael to keep His Torah because all belongs to Hashem, Ki Li

Kal Haaretz. Prior to receiving the Torah, the Kedushas Yisrael was limited to the Patriarchs while they were dwelling in Eretz Canaan, Eretz Megurecha. However with Mattan Torah Bnay Yisrael were bound with Kedushas Yisrael no matter where they may be.]

Jacob was afraid that as a result of his leaving Eretz Canaan to go down to Egypt to see Joseph, he would once again lose the Kedushas Yisrael that comes with dwelling in Eretz Canaan. He also knew that this Kedushas Yisrael would be lost for a long time to come, as his children were to be enslaved for an extended period in Egypt. He was afraid that the Jewish Nation might become assimilated in Egypt and disappear as a separate, and chosen nation. Hashem appeared to him and promised him that he should not fear this. While Isaac was not permitted to leave behind the Kedushas Yisrael for even one moment, Jacob and his children are not subject to this restriction. Their going down to Egypt is in compliance with the will of Hashem. Hashem promised him that they will not lose Kedushas Yisrael, rather they will receive an additional measure of Kedushas Yisrael because Hashem will make them into a great nation while they are in Egypt. Jacob was reassured because Hashem promised Jacob that He will accompany him down to Egypt and He will bring him out of Egypt as well.

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