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ON VAYIGASH - 5759

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* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Vayigash For the week ending 7 Teves 5759 / 25 - 26 December 1998 <http://www.ohr.org.il/tw/5759/Bereishi/Vayigash.htm> Insights

"I'm All Right, Jack!" "Yosef sustained his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food according to the children" (47:12). One of the less pleasant aspects of survival in the corridors of power is "protexia." It's not what you know it's who you know. Protexia is totally contradictory to the way a Jew behaves in public life. We learn this from Yosef in this week's Parsha. Yosef is the archetypal "court Jew." He is respected and needed by the state. He commands tremendous power. But he never uses his power to feather his own nest. When Yosef's father and his brothers come down to Egypt in the midst of a ravaging famine, he could quite easily have cut through the red tape and given them a disproportionate amount of food. However, he gives them only "according to the children," according to their number and no more. Yosef's family received no more than anyone else in the country despite their protexia. At a time when your community is suffering, how can you go home and say "Sling a steak on the grill; I'm all right, Jack!?" A Jew in public life has a G-d given obligation to sanctify the name of his Creator just as Yosef did, by feeding his family "according to the children."

Jewish Distinction "Have no fear of descending to Egypt, for I shall establish you as a great nation there." (46:3) It's said that over 25% of Nobel Prize nominees are Jewish. If that's true, it's a remarkable statistic seeing as the Jews are but one-half percent of the world's population. Jews have a history of distinguishing themselves in all the societies to which they have contributed. But there's another kind of Jewish distinction. In the Passover Haggada we read that in Egypt we were "a nation there," meaning that we were a distinctive entity. The Egyptians would not break bread with the Jews; it was distasteful to them. But it was this very antipathy which allowed us to become a nation in Egypt. If we had stayed in Canaan where there was no similar repugnance, we may have totally intermarried and been lost. When we apply to the local golf club and get turned down, we could feel slighted because "the Egyptians" won't break bread with us. However, it is precisely this "distinction" which has helped us to remain a nation throughout two thousand years of exile. That's real "Jewish distinction."

History Lesson "He sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to teach ahead of him in Goshen" (46:28) Yaakov's descent into Egypt is the paradigm of the descent of the Jewish People into every exile in history. The actions of the fathers are a roadmap with which their children navigate their way through every exile. What does Yaakov do before he enters the land of Egypt, before he arrives in exile? He sends Yehuda "ahead of him to teach." He sends Yehuda to Egypt to open a house of study. Yaakov was sending a message to all his children until the end of history: The survival of the Jewish People in exile, whether that exile is in Egypt or Spain, Babylon or Brooklyn, is secured only by creating a spiritual home for the Jewish People before their bodies arrive. Not the reverse.

All Four One "He sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to teach ahead of him in Goshen" (46:28) Yehuda is a very special name. The name Yehuda, spelled "yud, hey, vav, dalet, hey" contains the Tetragramaton, the ineffable four-letter name of G-d. But it also contains another letter, the letter dalet. No name in Hebrew is merely conventional. Name defines essence. What is the essence of Yehuda that is represented by a combination of the Tetragramaton and dalet? Dalet is the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It equals four. There are four points of the compass, four directions. Four connotes movement away from a central point, deviation. The mystical writings tell us that G-d created this world with the letter heh and the next world with the letter yud. What does it mean that G-d created this world with the letter heh? If you open up a Torah scroll you'll notice that the letter heh is really made up of two other letters. Dalet and yud. Look at the dalet. The dalet is like two lines at right angles to each other. One line travels north/south and the other east/west. The dalet represents the idea of movement in four directions. Now look at the yud. In its simplest form, the yud is no more than a dot. A dot has no direction. In

order for us to write a yud we have to give it some form of substance. To the naked eye, a dot seems devoid of substance, of direction. It's no more than a point. However, if you magnify that dot under a microscope you'll see that however small you write that dot, it still occupies space. It is still contained within the parameters of length and width; of direction. The ideal dot cannot be drawn in this world. A point which occupies no space is something that can only exist in a world which is above space -- the World to Come. That's why the yud represents the World to Come. The ideal form of this world is encapsulated in the letter heh. A dalet -- the epitome of direction, of dimension -- whose focus is the yud -- the point which is beyond this world.

The very shape of the letter heh teaches us what we are supposed to be doing in this world: To take all the multiplicity of this world, all its direction and variety, to take the four corners of the world and make them revolve around that yud, that ineffable point outside of space and time. The purpose of this world is to center itself on that which is beyond this world. That's the ideal incarnation of this world. However, when the dalet "forgets" the yud and focuses only on itself, when this world seeks to become all of existence, then it denies the Creator and becomes a travesty of existence.

The Jewish People were destined to be exiled by four kingdoms: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. It's no coincidence that there are four kingdoms and four exiles. Those four kingdoms epitomize separation from the center of all creation, from G-d. Yaakov sent Yehuda to Goshen. If you look at this verse in Hebrew, you'll see that Goshna ("to Goshen") consists of four letters. Each letter hints to one of the exiles of the Jewish People. It was not by coincidence that, of all the brothers, Yaakov sent Yehuda to Goshen. Yaakov was pre-figuring the journey of the Jewish People into the four exiles that are contained in the word Goshna. Yehuda carries in his name the very spiritual DNA of the Jewish People's mission in this world: To center the dalet of this world on the yud. Yehuda's name contains the antidote to those four exiles: To take the four directions, the four corners of the world, and focus them on that which is above the world, the point that can never be seen, the still point at the center of this turning world. It's also no coincidence that the fulfillment of this task will come through the mashiah (gematria Goshna), who is the scion of Yehuda. He will take the four corners of this world and make them one. When that day comes all the apparent separation and fragmentation of this world will vanish. On that day, G-d will be One and His name One. Sources: I'm All Right, Jack! - Sforno, as heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer Jewish Distinction - Sforno, as heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer History Lesson - Bereishis Rabba 95:3; Rashi All Four One - Maharal, B'nei Yissaschar, (see also The Secret of the Dreidel <http://www.ohr.org.il/special/chanukah/chan95.htm>)

Haftorah: Yechezkel 37:15-28 Chips Off The Old Block One of the ways that a prophecy becomes irreversible is when it is reinforced by a symbolic action. In this week's Haftorah the prophet Yechezkel foretells that in the time of the final redemption the two halves of the Jewish People, symbolized by Yehuda and Yosef, will be brought together like two blocks of wood. Hashem tells Yechezkel "Join them together (so that they) look like one. They shall be one in your hands." (37:17) Even though nothing could be more separate than two blocks of wood, eventually these two blocks will become one. And even though only Hashem can perform the miracle of making one block out of two, for us to deserve that Hashem will accelerate the redemption we must "look like one." The Jewish People must be united and free from malice and baseless hatred. For although the redemption is irreversible and inevitable, it is in our hands to delay it or to make it happen today.

The Shattered Halves "Say to them `Thus says my L-rd Hashem/Elokim: Behold! - I take the wooden tablet of Yosef which is in Efraim's hand, and of the tribes of Israel his comrades, and shall place them with it together with the wooden tablet of Yehuda, and I will make them one wooden tablet, and they shall become one in My hand." (37:19,20) Throughout the centuries of exile, the eye of the prophet sees the Jewish People still divided into the two antagonistic kingdoms of Yehuda and Efraim. The stamp of Efraim/Yisrael is religious nihilism: Fanatical enmity towards every Jewish point of view, and indiscriminate acceptance of every non-Jewish religious

point of view. On the other hand, Yehuda/Yisrael cannot escape the reproach that he picks out which mitzvos he wants to keep, and those he keeps more or less mechanically. When these two shattered halves of the Jewish People are again united, it will not be a sad compromise. Rather, Hashem promises that both will be refined and purified, assured of help to achieve this purity, and these "two wooden tablets" will become "one in My hand." * Rabbi Mendel Hirsch Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International E-Mail: info@ohr.org.il Home Page: <http://www.ohr.org.il>

From: owner-drasha[SMTP:owner-drasha@torah.org] Drasha Parshas Vayigash -- For Crying Out Loud Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

It was a war of words, a battle of will, power, and courage. Who would blink first: Yehuda or Yoseph? This is the scenario. Before the brothers departed Egypt. Yoseph had surreptitiously planted his silver goblet in his brother Binyamin's sack. Not long after Yoseph sends his brothers back to Canaan, his agents pursue them, arrest them, and accuse them of robbery. Lo and behold, Binyamin is caught with the silver goblet. Binyamin is brought back to the palace where Yosef sentences him to eternal servitude. The brothers are helpless. Yehuda, having accepted full responsibility for Binyamin's safe return, pleads with Yoseph while he also prepares for battle. After all, he exclaims, "How can I return to my father without my brother, lest I see the evil that will befall my father!" (cf. Genesis 44:34). Yoseph sees the true feeling that Yehuda and the brothers show for the youngest one, and cannot continue his charade. He sends all the Egyptians from the room and bursts out, "I am Yoseph! Is my father still alive?" (Genesis 45:3) Hardly a commentary fails to expound upon the obvious question. Yoseph was just told how eagerly Yaakov awaits the return of Binyamin. Therefore Yoseph knew that Yaakov was alive. Why now did he ask the question?

It was the Jewish wedding of the century, the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Elazar Schapiro, the illustrious Munkatzcer Rebbe, was to marry the son of the Rebbe of Partzov. Both Chassidic dynasties were royal, aristocratic, and majestic. And the ceremony was to be equally regal. The bride and groom would ride in opulent carriages, drawn by four white horses. The wedding meal was so large that every needy member of the community would be allowed to partake. It was the Jewish event of the century! There was so much excitement that an actual news crew came to film the wedding. The footage would be incorporated as part of the pre-feature newsreels shown at American movie theatres across the Atlantic! "Imagine!" thought the reporters, "this would attract hundreds of Jewish people who had roots in Europe into the theatre!" The difficult part was to convince the Munkatzcer Rebbe to speak for the cameras. The Rebbe vehemently opposed the frivolities and wanton ideas of the cinema, and would not participate in a film. The producer assured the Rebbe that only his voice, not his face (an assurance that proved to be false), would be presented to the large audiences.

"Rebbe, this is a wonderful opportunity for you to talk about the Hassidic court of Munkatz! Imagine how many Jews would be fascinated by your life's work. It would also be a wonderful opportunity to send personal wishes to all your followers who have left Europe to come to America." Finally, the Rebbe consented. The film caught the Rebbe speaking for the microphones and the camera that was obscured from his view. He was very brief. Tearfully, he repeated his message a few times and then turned his head and stopped talking. The American crew was excited. They were going to present the wedding with its entire mystique and majesty to American audiences. However, when the wedding film was shown in American theatres the scene of the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony was a stark contrast to the interview with the Rebbe. They did not see a jubilant Rabbi Schapiro toasting the large audience upon the joyous occasion. Instead, they saw Rabbi Schapiro pleading tearfully on the silver screen. "Yidden heet der Shabbos!" "Jewish Brothers! Keep the Shabbos!" Those were the only words he said. Then he turned his face and wept. Those were the only words that the Rebbe chose to speak. (The film is now archived at the Museum of

Jewish Heritage in New York City.)

Yoseph had bottled his emotions from the moment he saw his brothers upon their entry to Egypt until the moment he revealed his identity in the privacy of his chambers. But all the while of his pent-up emotion there was one question he felt he had to ask. How is my father? Is he alive and well? Although the information was afforded him, he felt a responsibility -- almost instinctive in nature -- to ask about his dear father's welfare. All he had on his mind throughout the ordeal was that one question. The moment he was free to talk his piece, he instinctively asked, "Is my father still alive? How has he fared through this trying ordeal? Those words were on his heart and mind for 22 years. The moment he had the opportunity to speak, he did not chastise his brothers. He did not demand retribution. He did not seek vengeance. All he did was reveal his true feelings and asked the question that was quashed for 22 years. How is my father?"

Good Shabbos Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Drasha, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Rosh Mesivta at Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, <http://www.yoss.org/> Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215 (410) 358-9800 FAX: 358-9801

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YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT
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Debbie and David Fischman dedicate this shiur in memory of Ruth Rand, Rivka Ruth Bat Anshel VeChana who was niftara on 11 MarCheshvan 5759. Dedicated in memory of avinu morenu Yosef Roumani ben Binyamin Z"L. This shiur is dedicated to the memory of Ze'ev Wolf ben Shlomo Packer by his loving children and grandchildren, the Sterman, Packer, and Sicklick families.

PARASHAT VAYIGASH

By Rav Yaakov Meidan

These are the Names of the Children of Israel _ Names and Numbers

Our parasha contains the list of the seventy members of Yaakov's house who came to Egypt. The list is rife with difficulties.

I) Chetzron and Chamul

These two sons of Peretz son of Yehuda are mentioned among those who descended to Egypt during the years of famine. The commentaries have already raised the difficulties concerning the closeness of events in Yehuda's life, which take place during the twenty two years that elapse between the sale of Yosef and the descent of Yaakov's family to Egypt. It will be recalled that Joseph was seventeen at the time that he was sold, thirty at the time of his appointment as viceroy, and that a further seven years of plenty and two years of famine passed before the descent to Egypt. During the course of those twenty-two years, Yehuda married the daughter of Shua, and begat Er and Onan. These two sons consecutively married Tamar and then died. 'Many days passed' before Tamar was deemed able to marry Shela. In the meantime, Yehuda married Tamar and begat Peretz. Peretz himself grew up, married, and begat Chetzron and Chamul who were among those who descended to Egypt. In other words, during the course of twenty two years, three generations were born to Yehuda and came of age, not to mention the 'many days' that Tamar waited in vain for the levirate marriage to take place.

The two well-known approaches to this problem are those of Avraham Ibn Ezra (on Bereishit 39:1) and Rashi. The former suggests that the events surrounding Tamar and Yehuda actually transpired many years before the sale of Yosef, and that the Torah records these events out of strict chronological sequence. The Chizkuni echoes Rashi's claim that the sections are in fact recorded in their correct order but suggests instead that earlier generations had children at a very young age (i.e., seven years -- see TB Sanhedrin 69b).

Both of these explanations are difficult to accept. The Chizkuni's

approach assumes three consecutive generations of childbearing at the age of seven, although the generation immediately preceding and succeeding this anomaly clearly did not follow this pattern. Yaakov, for instance, begat Yehuda at the age of about eighty, and Chetzron begat Kalev (identified by our Sages with Kalev ben Yefuneh) at about the age of one hundred and seventy. How unusual therefore, to find three generations compressed into a period of twenty-two years.

The Ibn Ezra's approach is no less satisfactory and in a number of articles (see for instance, Megadim 2) I have shown that Rashi's contention that the Torah records events in chronological sequence is more reasonable. Our central difficulty thus remains unresolved.

II) Seventy or Sixty Nine

Our Sages and all of the commentaries have pointed out that the children of Leah mentioned by name number thirty-two (Reuven and his four sons, Shimon and his six sons, Levi and his three sons, Yehuda, his three sons and two grandsons, Yissakhar and his four sons, Zevulun and his three sons, and Dina). Bereishit 46:15, however, records 'thirty-three souls.' Similarly, the Torah records that sixty-seven souls in total descended to Egypt (Leah _ 33, Zilpa _ 16, Binyamin son of Rachel _ 11, Bilha _ 7), and yet 46:26 speaks of sixty-six. The next verse then alters this number to a total of seventy by including Yosef and his two sons!

One approach, that of our Sages and Rashi, adds Yokheved to the list of those who descended, suggesting that she was born upon entry to Egypt. This would therefore bring the total of Leah's descendants to thirty-three (as verse fifteen states) and the entire number to seventy (in accordance with verse twenty-seven). Yokheved, however, is conspicuously absent from the list of names. A different approach, that of the Rashbam, suggests that the seventieth soul is none other than Yaakov himself, who is counted among Leah's family. The sixty-six souls spoken of in verse twenty-six do not include Yaakov, since it speaks of 'Yaakov's descendants.' I believe that another approach is in order.

III) The Daughters of Yaakov

Among the seventy souls who descend to Egypt, two daughters are mentioned -- Dina and Serach daughter of Asher. According to Rabbi Yehuda's view that each of Yaakov's sons had a twin sister, why were these girls not included among the reckoning of those who descended to Egypt? He responds that in fact all of these women perished before the descent. Notwithstanding the fact that Yaakov's sons were about forty years of age at this time, apparently all of the women who were a similar age perished!

This is difficult from a statistical point of view as well. It seems somewhat unlikely that among seventy souls, sixty-eight were male and only two were female. Did Yaakov's sons only beget males? Are we to therefore assume that Yaakov's grandchildren all married Egyptian women? In a seemingly singular incident, the Torah records the lineage of the son of an Egyptian man and an Israelite woman (Vayikra 24:10). If all of the children of Israel were in fact descended from Egyptian women, then what would have made that case so exceptional? Is the difference between an Egyptian mother and an Egyptian father so significant?

IV) The Suggested Solution

Our approach rests on the assumption that the number seventy, which describes the total of those who descended to Egypt, is not accidental. The Torah itself emphasizes this number several times (see Shemot 1:5, Devarim 10:22). The significance of this number is associated with the following poetic passage: When the Supreme One assigned portions to the nations and divided humanity, He set the borders of peoples according to the number of the people of Israel. For Israel is God's portion, and Jacob is His inheritance (Devarim 32:8-9).

The Torah views the descendants of Noah who were divided and scattered after the Flood as being parallel to the descendants of Yaakov who went down to Egypt. The history of humanity -- nations and their cultures, wars, and accomplishments -- began with seventy souls, and the transformation of the family of Israel into a nation also began with seventy souls.

This parallel carries not only a thematic weight (see, for instance,

the Maharal, Gevurot Hashem, ch. 9), but a practical, judicial significance as well. The land of Israel was divided according to the number of those who descended to Egypt (see Bamidbar 26), and this included the sons of Yosef.

The poetic passage quoted earlier thus suggests that just as God divided His world among the seventy nations, so too He divided his land among the seventy families descended from Yaakov. This approach assumes a more flexible interpretation of the 'seventy souls' who went down to Egypt, and explains the difficulties raised above, as we shall see. In order to present the material more easily, we shall begin with the final difficulty first.

A1) The Daughters of Yaakov

Rashi understood that if the Torah counted Dina and Serach bat Asher among the seventy, the implication is that females were also included among those who descended to Egypt. If these two alone were singled out by name, it would follow that the others perished.

We begin with an opposite assumption. Certainly Yaakov's household included many females (see Bereishit 37:35 'all of his and pertinent commentaries), and this is reasonable according to accepted statistical models. Yaakov's grandsons presumably married their cousins. Those many females were not counted among the seventy who descended to Egypt just as females were not included in any of the censuses of the people. This is perfectly reasonable if we associate inclusion in the census with inheritance of the Land, which was divided only among the males. Of course, we still have not explained the inclusion of Dina or Serach daughter of Asher.

B1) Sixty Nine or Seventy

Earlier, we raised the contradiction that exists between the two numberings in this section. Leah's descendants are either 32 or 33, the descendants to Egypt number either 66 or 67, and the total number of Bnei Yisrael in Egypt is either 69 or 70. Rabbi Yossi Ofer dealt with this problem admirably in volume 84 of Alon Shevut. Fundamentally, he adopted the approach of the Rashbam that the seventieth soul is Yaakov himself (as well as the thirty third member of Leah's group). Sometimes the passage includes Yaakov and at other times it does not, there being in fact two systems of numbering at work.

The limiting system sees each matriarch as having double the number of descendants as her maidservant. Leah has 32 while Zilpa has 16, and Rachel has 14 while Bilha has 7. Thus Leah has thirty-two descendants.

The more inclusive system presents the house of Leah as representing one half of the total number of those who descend to Egypt, namely 33 out of the 66. The transition figure is Yaakov himself, who sometimes is counted and at other times is not.

Based on his approach (which assumes these numerical relationships for reasons which are not the subject of our present inquiry), perhaps Dina is included in order to round out Leah's descendants to a particular number, and so too Serach who rounds out Zilpa's descendants to 16.

Serach is thus included among the seventy perhaps because of her unique qualities which are enumerated in the Midrash and for this reason she received a portion in the land. We are therefore suggesting that Dina and Serach were recorded among the seventy, but there were certainly more females in Yaakov's household.

C1) Chetzron and Chamul

I believe that it is possible to explain that the incidents surrounding Yehuda took place in the aftermath of the sale of Yosef, and the Torah records the events in their correct chronological sequence. During the twenty-two years that elapsed until the descent to Egypt, Yehuda begat Er, Onan and Shela. Er and Onan grew, married Tamar and perished, and Yehuda subsequently married her and begat Peretz and Zerach. The descent to Egypt took place close to the time of the birth of Peretz and Zerach, before Chetzron and Chamul were born! This would explain the compression of events within the twenty two years. What remains to be explained is the inclusion of Chetzron and Chamul among those who descended to Egypt,

although they had not yet been born.

Let us see how the Torah speaks of Chetzron and Chamul, and compare it to another two grandsons: Chever and Malkiel the children of Bria:

The sons of Asher are Yimna and Yishva and Yishvi and Bria and Serach their sister, and the sons of Bria are Chever and Malkiel (46:17). The sons of Yehuda are Er, Onan, Shela, Peretz, and Zerach. Er and Onan perished in the land of Canaan, and the sons of Peretz were (Va-yehiyu) Chetzron and Chamul (46:12).

The latter verse implies that Chetzron and Chamul come to round out the number of Yehuda's descendants to five, after the death of Er and Onan. Although Er and Onan perish before the descent to Egypt, their place among the seventy is 'held for them' until the subsequent birth of Chetzron and Chamul who replace them. Thus, Chetzron and Chamul are also counted in the book of Bamidbar among those who are slated to receive a share in the Land, and there as well Er and Onan are mentioned. This explanation is reinforced by the fact that the Torah speaks of Chever and Malkiel as the present descendants of Bria in contrast to Chetzron and Chamul who 'were' (to be) the sons of Peretz.

D) Summary

According to our analysis, the number of those who descended to Egypt was not seventy. The true relationship between the number of those who went down to Egypt and the number seventy is predicated on the following considerations:

1) The number of females who descended to Egypt is unknown, just as it is in every other census in the Torah. It is reasonable to assume that the number of females was roughly equal to the number of males.

2) The two females who were included _ Dina and Serach _ round out the number seventy. They in particular were mentioned for reasons associated with the ratio of Leah's children to those of Zilpa. In addition, they may have been singled out because of their unique qualities (as the Midrash enumerates in the case of Serach) and it is also reasonable to assume that they received an inheritance of land.

It stands to reason that at the time of the descent to Egypt, Chetzron and Chamul were not yet born. When they were born in Egypt, they retroactively took the place of Er and Onan among the 'seventy souls.'

The number seventy is accurate but in a more flexible sense, and it therefore can include two females as well as two deceased individuals who are later to be replaced. The use of the number seventy creates the parallel between the division of the land among the seventy descendants of Yaakov and the division of the world among the seventy nations who descend from Noah: 'God sets the borders of nations according to the number of the children of Israel.'

E) A Seeming Difficulty

A central problem remains unresolved, and no doubt the reader has already thought of it. If indeed the Torah's entire purpose is to parallel the number of those who descended to Egypt with the descendants of Noah, of what value is this parallel if in fact it is not strictly accurate? If only 66 males went down to Egypt (including Yosef and his two sons) how can we include two females (Dina and Serach), and two deceased individuals (Er and Onan) who are later to be replaced by two as yet unborn males (Chetzron and Chamul)? Certainly, the descendants of Noah also included females and deceased males who nevertheless were not counted among the seventy! How can flexible numeration make up for an imperfect parallel?

Our response would be that the central issue here is not the number of males, but rather the number of portions of land: "When the Supreme One allotted nations their inheritance..." God bequeathed seventy lands to the descendants of Noah and seventy portions of land to the descendants of the family of Yaakov. Even if the exact number of those who descended to Egypt is not seventy, the number of portions of land is seventy. Thus, females as well as those who are to be born in the future can be included as long as they stand to inherit land. Proof for this can be demonstrated by the fact that the number of descendants of Yaakov mentioned in our parasha

equals 57. Yaakov and his twelve sons bring this number up to 70. On the eve of the entry into the Land, after the passing of about two hundred and fifty years, the internal breakdown of the families counted among the seventy changes for various reasons (see Rashi on Bamidbar 26), including the fact that the tribe of Levi is removed from the census. Nevertheless, the census in Bamidbar 26 records 57 families, which when added to Yaakov and his sons again brings the number to 70. In the case of each of the tribes, all of the descendants who were not part of the family units singled out by name, inherited under the general name of the tribe, namely Yaakov's sons. In other words, although the list of families who ultimately inherit land does change, the number of seventy portions of land remains constant because it is the significant thing.

If counting Yaakov and his twelve sons as separate units from the 57 families strikes you as unwarranted, then I would suggest that the additional 13 can be made up by the exact number of Levite families counted in the parashah Pinchas, who in fact receive an inheritance of cities in the land. In either case, the number seventy remains unchanged.

Shabbat Shalom. <http://www.vbm-torah.org>

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From: yhe-sichot-return@vbm-torah.org ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY
VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PROJECT (VBM) STUDENT SUMMARIES
OF SICHOT DELIVERED BY THE ROSHEI

This shiur is dedicated to the memory of Ze'ev Wolf ben Shlomo Packer by his loving children and grandchildren, the Sterman, Packer, and Sicklick families.

PARASHAT VAYIGASH SICHOT OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL
SHLIT" A Summarized by R. Yosef Tzvi Rimon and Danny Orenbuch

Two very moving moments in Yaakov's life are described in this week's parasha: when Yaakov learns that Yosef is alive, and when they finally meet. Let us deal with each episode.

1. "Yosef sent wagons to his father and when Yaakov saw them, the Torah teaches us 'the spirit of Yaakov their father revived.'"

Rashi, based on the midrash (Bereshit Rabba 94:3), explains that by sending wagons (agalot), Yosef was hinting to the parasha of eglarufa, which he and his father had been studying together before Yosef disappeared (agal and eglar are spelled identically in Hebrew). The Yerushalmi, on the other hand, maintains that this was a hint to the wagons which the nesi'im brought in parashat Naso.

It is noteworthy that Yaakov and Yosef had been studying the parasha of eglarufa at their last meeting, since by accompanying Yosef out of the city, Yaakov had been fulfilling what was demanded by the law of eglarufa. In the circumstances of eglarufa, the elders can state that their "hands did not spill this blood" only if they provided the victim food and accompanied him out of the city. Otherwise, in his loneliness and desperation, he might have attacked someone and been killed. Yaakov, in order to alleviate his son's loneliness, especially in light of his relations with his brothers, accompanied Yosef out of the city. Yaakov practiced what he preached; he embodied the compassion and concern which the laws of eglarufa seek to instill within us.

However, the wagons which Yosef sent may also hint to the wagons donated by the nesi'im at the time of the dedication of the altar. The Torah is relevant in each generation, and is appropriate for every period and age. The leaders of the nation are responsible for upholding the Torah in every age and in every place. They must have the sensitivity to apply the timeless Torah in changing circumstances. This is symbolized by the wagons, which are mobile, showing that even when Am Yisrael is wandering, the Torah is carried with us.

Yosef had spent a long time in Egypt, and Yaakov was worried that Yosef had lost his link with Torah, that he had not succeeded in applying the Torah in Egypt. Yosef specifically sends him wagons in order to show that he recognizes the "mobility" of the Torah, and that he kept the Torah even in Egypt. Therefore, "the spirit of Yaakov their father revived."

2. "And Yosef made ready his chariot and went up to meet Yisrael his father... and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while." (Bereishit 46:29) It seems from here that it was Yosef who wept on Yaakov's neck, indicating that Yaakov did not weep. Chazal explain that at that moment Yaakov was reciting Keri'at Shema."

We may ask the question, could Yaakov find no other time to recite Keri'at Shema? Why specifically now, as he was meeting with Yosef?

It is well-known that people desire to approach God when they are in a crisis. But when all is well, at times of rejoicing, they forget this previous desire. But Yaakov, in his great religious sensitivity, felt the need to acknowledge God precisely at the moment of his greatest joy - his reuniting with his son after so many years of anguish.

There is another possible explanation for Yaakov's behavior. Judaism has two ways of explaining the concept of "God is One" - what is this "oneness" of God? The philosophers, on one hand, explain that any characteristic found in God is unique, and there is nothing comparable to it. If God is powerful, then His power is one that exists in nothing else; only in Him. (This is not only a matter of quantity, but of quality - we cannot refer to God's kind of power when we are dealing with humans.) The same applies to God's wisdom, etc. Anything that exists in God cannot exist in anyone or anything else.

The kabbalists, on the other hand, maintain that "God is One" in that His "rule" is one. Outwardly, while all types of people may sometimes seem to be in positions of power and authority, it is in fact God who controls everything; it is He who "pulls all the strings." In the days to come all will know that "God is One and His Name is One" - all will recognize that it is God who in fact rules and controls everything.

The fact that Am Yisrael would, at some stage, descend to Egypt, was known in advance. At the Berit Bein ha-Betarim God told Avraham: "Your descendants will be strangers in a land not their own, and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years...". Chazal explain that Yaakov should rightfully have descended to Egypt in iron chains, but God had mercy on him and he went in a respectable manner. When Yaakov arrived in Egypt and stood before Yosef, he suddenly realized how God had, in essence, brought him there. He suddenly realized how God's promise to Avraham at the Berit Bein ha-Betarim had materialized, how God had caused it to come about that Yaakov should go down to Egypt, seemingly in a most natural way. Suddenly he perceived God's unity (according to the kabbalistic view), and how God's rule is truly one, and that it is God who controls all. And so at that moment the only appropriate response escapes his lips: "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu HASHEM ECHAD."

(Originally delivered at Seuda Shlishit, Shabbat Parashat Vayigash, 5753. Translated by Karen Fish.) Copyright (c) 1998 Yeshivat Har Etzion.

From: weekly-halacha@torah.org] Subject: Parshas Vayigash- Zmanim: Krias Shema & Shachris By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav. He appeared before him, fell on his neck, and he wept on his neck excessively... (46:29) Yaakov, however, did not fall upon Yosef's neck... for as our Sages say, Yaakov was reciting Shema at that moment (Rashi)

RECITING SHEMA: HOW EARLY? HOW LATE? Many commentators wonder why Yaakov was reciting Shema while Yosef was not. If it was time for Shema to be recited, why, then, did Yosef not recite Shema as well? Harav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik of Yerushalayim(1) gave the following answer: Yaakov met Yosef just before sunrise. L'chatchilah, one should recite Shema at that time, as Yaakov did. B'dieved, however, one may recite Shema for the first three hours of the day. Since Yosef was preoccupied with the mitzvah of honoring his father at the time, he reasoned that he could recite Shema a bit later. Yaakov, who had no reason to delay the l'chatchilah time of Shema, recited Shema at the preferred time. Let us elaborate:

CORRECT TIMES FOR RECITING SHEMA There are *five* different

time slots in which Shema may be recited: *The B'dieved time: After alos amud ha-shachar. Alos amud ha-shachar, the crack of dawn, is generally defined by the poskim as 72 minutes(2) before sunrise(3). One is not allowed to recite Shema at this time. However, one who did recite Shema that early, fulfills the mitzvah b'dieved(4). If this happens more than once a month, however, he does not fulfill the mitzvah even b'dieved(5). Under extenuating circumstances (b'she'as ha-d'chak), one may regularly recite Shema at this time even l'chatchilah(6). *The correct time: When it is light enough "to be able to recognize an acquaintance"(7). Different poskim have different calculations(8), ranging from 60 minutes before sunrise(9) to 35-40 minutes before sunrise(10). *The preferred time: Immediately before sunrise. Since the preferred time to recite Shemoneh Esrei is immediately after sunrise, the preferred time to recite Shema is immediately before sunrise so that one can lead into Shemoneh Esrei without interruption(11). This is known as tefillas vasikin. *The questionable but accepted time: Until three hours of the day have elapsed. If one recites Shema after sunrise, or at any time before three hours of the day have elapsed, he has performed mitzvas Kerias Shema. Many poskim maintain that l'chatchilah, this is not the proper time to recite Shema(12), but for various reasons it has become commonly accepted even by those who are meticulous in their mitzvah observance(13). Still, some poskim refer to one who recites Shema at this time as fulfilling the mitzvah only b'dieved(14). According to these poskim, one should recite Shema before sunrise even if he is not wearing tefillin(15). Also, according to some poskim, one should recite Shema before sunrise even if he is unable to recite birchos Kerias Shema(16). *The too-late time: After three hours of the day have elapsed. There is a basic and well-known dispute among the poskim as to how to figure these three hours. Some maintain that the three hours are counted from alos amud ha-shachar, while other poskim rule that the three hours are counted from sunrise(17). Most authorities rule leniently, like the second view, and this is the practice followed in most places(18). Although one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of Kerias Shema after three hours have elapsed, one should still say Kerias Shema at the time he says birchos Kerias Shema and Shemoneh Esrei(19). Birchos Kerias Shema may be recited until the end of the fourth hour of the day(20).

CORRECT TIMES TO RECITE SHACHRIS SHEMONEH ESREI
 There are *five* different time slots in which Shemoneh Esrei may be recited: *The b'she'as ha-d'chak/b'dieved time: After alos amud hashachar. When absolutely necessary, e.g., before embarking on a trip or going to work or school, one may daven at this time l'chatchilah(21). Otherwise, one is not allowed to daven at this time(22). A retired person who was formerly permitted to daven before sunrise due to his work schedule, should now daven after sunrise only. B'dieved, if one davened before sunrise, he has fulfilled his obligation and does not need to repeat Shacharis(23). *The preferred time: Exactly at sunrise. This is known as tefillas vasikin. *The correct time: After sunrise. *The b'dieved time: After four hours of the day have elapsed. L'chatchilah, one must daven before this time. If he failed to do so, he must still daven now, although his davening is not considered as if he davened on time. *The forbidden time: After chatzos (midday). After chatzos, it is forbidden to daven Shacharis(24). Under certain circumstances, a tashlumin [makeup tefillah] may be said(25).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Quoted in Rinas Yitzchak al ha-Torah pg. 230. 2 There are opinions who maintain that in order to correctly figure alos amud ha-shachar we must take the degree of illumination that occurs at the equinox in Jerusalem 72 minutes before sunrise, and calculate the angular depression of the sun at that instant. It is almost exactly 16 degrees. Then one takes the instant at which the sun is 16 degrees below the horizon for each place and season, and that is the appropriate time to take. Working with this, the intervals for Jerusalem are 72 minutes at the equinox, 77 in midwinter and 87 in midsummer 3 Beir Halachah 89:1 quoting the Rambam. See further in Beir Halachah who recommends waiting a few minutes past alos amud ha-shachar - so that the "face of the east lights up." 4 O.C. 58:4. 5 Mishnah Berurah 58:19. 6 O.C. 58:3 and Mishnah Berurah 19. 7 O.C. 58:1. 8 Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky is quoted (Tefillah K'hilchasa pg. 68) as saying that it is difficult to estimate this time without a daily visual inspection. 9 The custom in Eretz Yisrael, as quoted by Harav Y.M. Tikutinsky in Sefer Eretz Yisrael, pg. 18. There are other times as well. 10 Igras Moshe O.C. 4:6. Harav Y. Kamenetsky calculated the correct time as 36 minutes before sunrise (oral ruling quoted in Emes l'Yaakov, Berachos 8b). 11 O.C. 58:1. 12 This is the view of Rif, Rambam and Gra, and it is quoted without dissent by Mishnah Berurah 58:3 and 4. This is also the ruling of Aruch ha-Shulchan 58:6 and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 103). 13 The basis for this leniency is in the wording of Shulchan Aruch 58:1 which rules that the time to recite Shema is from when it is light enough to be able to recognize

an acquaintance, until three hours of the day have passed; it does not differentiate between l'chatchilah and b'dieved. See Shulchan Aruch Harav 58:4 and Kaf ha-Chayim 58:8 who quote two views on this issue and tend to be lenient. Note also that neither Chayei Adam 21:3 nor Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 17:1 require that l'chatchilah one recite Shema before sunrise. 14 See above note. 15 Shulchan Aruch Harav 58:4; Beir Halachah 58:1. See, however, Kaf ha-Chayim 58:8. 16 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 103) based on Shulchan Aruch Harav 58:4. 17 Both views are quoted in Mishnah Berurah 58:4 without a decision. See also Beir Halachah 46:9. 18 Aruch ha-Shulchan 58:14; Chazon Ish O.C. 13:3; Igras Moshe O.C. 1:24; Minchas Yitzchak 3:71; Yalkut Yosef pg. 100. There are also those who are stringent and rule like the first view (see Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:56 quoting Harav A. Kotler and Orchos Rabbeinu 1:53 quoting Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky). Many shuls in Eretz Yisrael conduct themselves in accordance with the first view. 19 O.C. 60:2. See Mishnah Berurah 4 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 2. 20 O.C. 58:6. 21 O.C. 89:8; Igras Moshe O.C. 4:6. 22 This is the general consensus of all poskim. Note, however, that there is a minority view, the Pri Chadash, who rules that it is permitted l'chatchilah to daven before sunrise, as long as it is light enough to recognize an acquaintance. Beir Halachah 89:1 rules that although it is preferable not to do so, (possibly) we should not object to those who are lenient. 23 Mishnah Berurah 89:4. Note, however, that tefillin may not be put on until it is light enough to recognize an acquaintance. 24 Rama 89:1. Men and women are included in this - see Halachah Discussion on Parashas Va'eira. 25 See O.C. 108 for details.

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From: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayigash adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 174 -- Twins Good Shabbos!

Learning The Interpretation Of A Verse From a "Turned Off" Student After Yosef's dialog with his brothers, he finally breaks down and says "I am Yosef -- Is my father still alive?" [Bereshis 45:3] All the commentaries ask an obvious question: the entire dialog between Yosef and his brothers was centered on their father. Yaakov had been the constant focus of Yosef's questions and the brothers' responses. So why does Yosef ask again if his father is still alive?

I once spoke at a Torah U'Mesorah convention on the topic of "What makes a Great Jewish Educator." One of my sources was the Rambam's comment [Hilchos Talmud Torah 5:12] that a teacher must love his students as if they were his own children. I pointed out that in previous generations it was perhaps more difficult to understand what it meant for teachers to have to love their students. In our generation, however, we have been given additional insight into this matter. Unfortunately, in our society (due to our multitude of sins) parents sometimes do not care about their children. Some children do not receive the love which they need. Their parents are too busy making money by working 12, 14, or 16 hours a day to have time for their children. Some parents think love is giving their child a Mercedes for his 16th birthday. This is not love. Love is spending time with your child and being there for your child. Today we have a generation that is simply starving for love. Therefore, children are often looking for love in the classroom. A function that was always provided by the parents -- a pat on the back, or a hug -- now falls to the teacher, because no one is home, literally. Our new insights into the words of the Rambam come to us because we see what children are not receiving at home, and we see what they need. And this is the love that teachers must often provide.

I then related the following true story, which explains Yosef's question. There was once a student whose father had deserted his family. This sort of student often causes a lot of problems for a teacher. He was totally "turned off" to everything. The teacher tried to become close to the child. He invited the child over to his house. Nothing helped. The child just sat there in class and did not participate. As is unfortunately the case with teachers sometimes, the teacher was prepared to write this child off. "Put him in the back of the class; let him just sit there. Hopefully he will absorb some of what is being taught. I gave it my best shot, there is nothing more I can do." And so that is what the teacher did. For about half the year, the child just sat and 'vegetated'.

Finally the class started Parshas VaYigash. They learned the dialog between Yosef and the brothers. Then they learned the verse "I am Yosef -- is my father still alive?" The Rebbe asked our question to the students -- what does Yosef mean by this question? This child from the back of the classroom, the one who had not participated for half the year, raised his hand and gave this incredibly poignant interpretation: "Yosef is saying, 'I know that YOUR father is still alive, but is MY father still alive? Has my father given up on me? I have been away from home; I have been in a strange land for 22 years; is MY father still alive? Do I still have a father who cares about ME?'" That child was not only asking Yosef's question. He was asking his own question. Sometimes we have children who in different ways and in different forms are asking "Is my father still alive?" "Does my father still care about me?" We must listen to questions like that.

Sources and Personalities Ramba"m -- (1135-1204) Rav Moshe ben Maimon; Spain, Egypt; Authored "Yad HaChazakah" (Mishneh Torah), Code of Jewish Law. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim dhoffman@torah.org Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215
