

DIVREI TORAH FROM YESHIVOT AND SEMINARIES



Torah Tidbits is proud to highlight the many outstanding Rabbis and teachers that lead the various Yeshivot and Seminaries here in Israel.

YESHIVAT HAKOTEL, YERUSHALAYIM



Yeshivat Hakotel was founded in 1967 soon after the Six Day War at the center of the Jewish world overlooking the Kotel and the Har Habayit. As a Yeshivat Hesder, where students combine Talmud Torah and IDF service, Yeshivat Hakotel is the embodiment of the Jewish people's return to Yerushalayim and the Makom Hamikdash.

Led by the Rosh Yeshiva Rav Baruch Wieder, Yeshivat Hakotel offers talmidim a beautiful spacious campus under one roof built on top of the Kohanim's homes from Bayit Sheini. The location and breathtaking view of the Har Habayit helps talmidim develop a deep connection to Hashem and the past and future of our people.

In addition to advanced Gemara learning, Yeshivat Hakotel is also known for the integration of overseas and Israeli talmidim, a broad curriculum including over 60 shiurim in Tanach, Machshava, Halacha, and Mussar, the broad hashkafa, and a deep personal keshet with Rebbeim and Staff.



**Rabbi Reuven
Taragin**
Dean of Overseas
Students

Vayigash- Turning Lemons Into More Than Just Lemonade

Vayigash- Drawing Close

Vayigash means to draw closer to something or someone. In our parsha it refers to Yehuda, Yosef, and the brothers approaching one another (In 44:18 the word describes Yehuda approaching Yosef

and in 45:4 Yosef uses the term twice to invite his brothers to approach him.)

The distance they needed to traverse has been made clear in the last two parshiyot. In Parshat Vayeshev, Yosef separated himself from the brothers who, then, in turn, sold him into slavery. In Parshat Miketz Yosef disguised as Egyptian viceroy treated the brothers harshly and

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threatened the family's future. How does Vayigash bring the brothers and the family together?

Reversing Direction to Mitzrayim

The answer lies in Yosef's response to Yehuda's impassioned plea for mercy. The thrust of Yehuda's speech is that Yosef needs to allow Binyamin to return with the rest of the family to Yaakov and their familial home in Canaan. After revealing his true identity to the brothers, Yosef tells them that they and Yaakov need to come down together to Mitzraim.

Yosef bases this reversal on his understanding of Hashem's Hashgacha (Divine Providence). Though it was the brothers who initiated his sale to Mitzrayim, Hashem decided to use the sale as an opportunity to fulfill the promise made to Avraham to develop the family into a great nation. The famine is what forced the family to come to Mitzrayim for food and the fact that the famine was meant to continue for five more years¹ indicated that the family was meant to move to Mitzrayim so that Yosef could sustain and support their growth into a great nation.²

1 *The fact that the famine ended (early) when Yaakov and family arrives in Mitzrayim (Tosefta Sotah 10) reinforces Yosef's claim that the famine's goal was to get his family to move to Mitzrayim.*

2 *Hashem confirms Yosef's understanding of His Will in his words to Yaakov on his way down to Mitzrayim. Yaakov plans to visit Yosef and return to Canaan. Hashem explains to him that the descent*

Yosef links his claim that the family needs to move to Mitzrayim to his bold assertion that **'you (the brothers) did not send me here.** Rather, it was G-d who appointed me patron for Paroh, the master over his house, and the ruler over all of Mitzrayim (45:8).'

Yosef is more than someone who turns lemons into lemonade; he sees lemons as Hashem's Hand.



Hashem's Will Brings Reconciliation

Yosef uses his view of the situation as a result of hashgacha to encourage the brothers to avoid sadness or anger over past events. He hopes that his view will help foster conciliation between him and his brothers.

Selfish thinking can often bring people and even/especially family to clash. Seeing ourselves and each other in the light of Hashem's Will can help us transcend our differences and competitive jealousy and unify in Hashem's service.

He repeats his view at the end of Sefer Bereishit in response to his brothers'

to Mitzrayim is in order to enable Yosef to facilitate his family's growth into a great nation (46:3-4). See also Kli Yakar et al.

fear that he will seek revenge after their father Yaakov's death- 'You (the brothers) intended to harm, but Hashem intended good- so that the family could develop into a great nation (50:20).'

Yosef's remarkable ability to see Hashem's Will even in his brothers' harmful intentions helps him bridge the gap with his brothers and draw them closer to him.

We all face situations that are disappointing and frustrating. Often these difficulties are caused by other people and often by people we would expect to treat us otherwise. We can choose to see these situations as nothing more than the bad intentions of others or we can look for the message and opportunity Hashem intends for us to see.

This is how Dovid Hamelech responded

to those who wanted to kill Shimi Ben Geira for cursing him- Let him curse for Hashem has told him to do so (Shmuel II 16:11).³ Based on this story the Sefer Hachinuch (241) presents the following as the principle behind the prohibition of taking revenge- 'A person should know and internalize that everything that happens to him- even things perpetrated by others- happens because Hashem wills it.'

May we learn from Yosef and Dovid Hamelech how to see Hashem's hand and seek to learn Hashem's message from all of our life's experiences. ■

3 See also *Melachim I 2:8* where Dovid refers to this again in his words to Shlomo before his death.

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