

Parshah Insights 2021

Parshah: Vayigash

(Genesis 44:18-47:27)

Sin is its own punishment

Joseph Tests His Brothers

1 – The Test of Repentance (42:9-24)

*My brothers committed a great sin.
Do they regret it?*

2 – The Test of Humility (43:33-34)

*My brothers used to be filled with jealousy.
Are they still?*

3 – The Test of Forgiveness (44:8-16)

*My brothers used to be filled with accusations.
Are they still?*

4 – The Test of Love (44:33)

*My brothers used to think only of themselves.
Do they still?*

Genesis 44:33

“Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers.”

“Ba'al Teshuvah”

The Secret of Judah's Name:

Yehudah

YHVH

David

יהוה

יהוה

דוד

“Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.” (Gen. 42:8) – This is one of the traits of Yosef not only in his own generation, but in every generation, i.e., that Mashiach ben Yosef recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. This is the work of Satan, who hides the characteristics of Mashiach ben Yosef so that the foot-steps of the Mashiach are not recognized and are even belittled because of our many sins. Otherwise, our troubles would already have ended. Were Israel to recognize Yosef... then we would already have been redeemed with a complete redemption.”

∞ The Vilna Gaon (1720-1797)

When Joseph said, “I am Joseph,” God’s master plan became clear to the brothers. They had no more questions. Everything that had happened for the last twenty-two years fell into perspective. So, too, will it be in the time to come when God will reveal Himself and announce, “I am Adonai!” The veil will be lifted from our eyes and we will comprehend everything that transpired throughout history.

∞ Chafetz Chaim (1838-1933)

We complete the Seder meal by removing the afikoman matzah from its hiding place. The matzah, which represents the redemption, was hidden for some time, and only at the end of the meal is it revealed. This symbolizes the ultimate Redemption. Once the latter is realized and is revealed, we will understand that it was with us all the time, throughout the centuries of suffering in the diaspora, although it was concealed from our view.

✎ R' Abraham J. Twerski (1930-2021)

The words “Ani Yosef” are truly terrifying words, and they should make us shudder, too – only, we don’t think when we read them. They bounce off our thick heads, and we don’t absorb the intended lesson. We’re completely oblivious... That’s why I tell people that these words, “Ani Yosef”, are the most fearful words in the entire Torah. It’s a [verse] that should fill every thinking man with apprehension. Because on the Great Day of Judgement, we too will discover that we have been living in error. I’m not saying it’s all error, but everyone is deceiving themselves to a very, very great extent. And on the Day of Judgement the truth will be revealed before our horrified eyes, and we will not have a tongue to answer.

✎ R' Avigdor Miller (1908-2001)

Benjamin: A Type of the Messianic Believer

- Only son born to “Israel”
- Rachel – *Ben-oni* – “Son of my sorrow”
- Jacob – *Ben-yamin* – “Son of the right hand”
- Did not participate in the sale of Joseph
- The “Cup” hidden with Benjamin
- Receives greater blessing
- His soul is “bound” to the Father’s
- Absent from most of the narrative
- Had to wait for his brothers to catch up
- A small tribe of great significance
- Territory contains Temple
- Paul – a Benjamite (Rom.11:1)

Jacob's Seven Troubles

1. **Esau** (threatened to kill him)
2. **Laban** (lied to and cheated him)
3. **Rachel** (died in childbirth)
4. **Dinah** (raped by Shechem)
5. **Joseph** (sold and thought to be dead)
6. **Simeon** (hostage in Egypt)
7. **Benjamin** (taken to Egypt)

“And Elohim spoke to Israel...”

(Genesis 46:2)

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל...



James 1:12

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Discussion Questions:

- Why did Judah confront Joseph instead of one of his three older brothers – Reuben, Simeon, or Levi?
- Describe how each of Jacob's seven troubles was really a blessing in disguise.
- Can you think of an instance in your own life when a sin itself was also its own punishment?
- If we truly want to please God, why is repentance not enough?
- Everything is a test. Do you agree?

NOTES:

Genesis 42:21-22 Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us." And Reuben answered them, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood."

Genesis 42:28 He said to his brothers, "My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!" At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?"

Genesis 44:16 So Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. Behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found."

What is perfect teshuva? This occurs when an opportunity presents itself for repeating the offence once committed, and the offender is able to commit the offence, but refrains from doing so because of the teshuva – not out of fear or failure of vigor. (Maimonides, 1138-1204)

In the place where ba'alei teshuvah ["masters of repentance"] stand, even the wholly righteous do not stand, as it is stated: "Peace, peace upon him who is far and him who is near." (Isaiah 57:19) Peace and greeting is extended first to him who is far, the penitent, and only thereafter is peace extended to him who is near, the wholly righteous. (b. Berachot 34b)

Luke 15:4-7 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

1 Samuel 13:14 "But now your kingdom shall not continue. Adonai has sought out a man after His own heart, and Adonai has commanded him to be prince over His people, because you have not kept what Adonai commanded you."

Romans 11:1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

Psalms 68:24-27 Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary – the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines: "Bless God in the great congregation, Adonai, O you who are of Israel's fountain!" There is Benjamin, the least of them, in the lead, the princes of Judah in their throng, the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for Adonai has spoken.

Revelation 21:4 And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death. There shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain. The first things have passed away.

Psalms 126:6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Joseph Weeps 7x: 42:24 / 43:20 / 45:14,15 / 46:29 / 50:1,7