

Kings and Kinsman- Parshat Vayigash

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

Parshat Vayigash begins with Yehudah approaching Yosef in what appears to be a high-level summit meeting. It is easy to understand Yosef as the royal representative of his nation, but why is Yehudah representing *Bnei Yisroel* in what is meant to be high level stakes for Binyamin's freedom? In Tehilim it says, "Behold, the kings assembled, they came together (Psalms 48:5)." These kings to refer to Yosef and Yehudah, two royal dynasties that would play important roles in the history of *Bnei Yisroel*.

It is an accepted maxim that two kings cannot rule simultaneously. How can we understand that both Yehudah and Yosef were kings over *Bnei Yisroel*? Further, what were their inherent characteristics that made them royalty? Ben Melech notes that even in the animal kingdom there appear to be two "kings." The lion is king over the wild beasts, while the bull reigns supreme over the domesticated animals. In Yaakov's blessing to his sons, Yehudah is compared to a lion while Yosef is compared to a bull. When we enumerate the seven "Shepherds" of our people on Sukkot, Yosef is included. In fact, Yosef's descendants did indeed shepherd the nation. Yehoshua, who led *Bnei Yisroel* into the Promised Land was a descendant of Ephraim and Yeroboam ben Nevat was king of the Northern Kingdom when the Davidic Dynasty split. As we see from our history, while the Davidic Dynasty is eternal and will reemerge with the coming of Moshiach, the Yosef reign is temporary.

Rabbi Reiss notes that in Tehillim 81, Yosef is called YeHosef, the "Heh" of Hashem's name being added to his original name. In contrast, Yehudah contains all four letters of Hashem's name with the addition of a "Daled." Yosef, the son of Rachel who kept her silence, sanctified God's Name in private, while Yehudah, whom Leah named as a public testament of gratitude to God, was destined to sanctify God's name among the masses.

Yosef, although publicly viceroy of Egypt, manifested his nobility in private, in his personal restraint against the wife of Potifar. On the other hand, Yehudah's acceptance of responsibility was public in the story with

Tamar. Yosef relates that in his dream, *kamah alumatilmy* sheaf [of wheat] rose up. But *almah* also means silence, that this trait of silence inherited from his mother was the source of his rising to greatness.

Bnei Yisroel is like one body with multiple limbs, explains the *Mima'amakim* quoting the *Maharal*. In this analogy, Yosef represents the heart of desire while Yehudah represents the head that leads to action. In human psychology, desire and ideation precede action. As Jews, we are asked to turn both towards Hashem's service, to elevate both desire and action, and thus to coronate Hashem. When the two are not aligned, we need the outer structure of kingship to move us in the right direction. This explains why our first king, King Saul, had to be descended from Rachel who epitomized the inner heart of our people. Saul's mission was to prepare the hearts of *Bnei Yisroel* to accept a king who would act in full accordance with Hashem's will. Had Saul succeeded, his dynasty would have ruled alongside the Davidic dynasty. Unfortunately, by bowing to the desires of the people and failing to eradicate *Amalek*, to control his own heart, sovereignty was torn from him, and David's would be the only eternal dynasty.

While the ten tribes followed Yeroboam, the Tribe of Binyamin remained with Yehudah. Their destinies were interwoven. The *Beit Hamikdosh*, the "heart" of *Bnei Yisroel* was in Binyamin's territory which itself was as a finger protruding into Yehudah's territory. Further, Binyamin felt tremendous gratitude to Yehudah for risking his life to save him from the disguised Yosef.

Yosef, or more generally Rachel, the heart, always had to precede the practical head. So Yehoshua, had to lead *Bnei Yisroel* into the Promised Land, and Saul had to be the first king of Israel. But in the future, the two will be united. This is alluded to in the words, "And Yehudah approached [Yosef]." When Moshiach comes, the power of the heart and the power of the mind will unite to lead *Bnei Yisroel* in revealing God's glory. The roles of *Malchut Yosef* and *Malchut Yehudah* are not parallel, but of sowing versus reaping, Yehudah's humility is a foil for the haughtiness of Edom, while Yosef's control of his inner

world is a foil for the wild animal that characterizes *Yishmael*. When the two unite, they will have the power to vanquish all enemies and this will be realized at the end of days.

As Yosef and Yehuda conversed, the brothers stood in awe observing these two giants in full control over themselves. We need to understand that we also need to be the king and ruler over ourselves, writes Rabbi Mordechai Ezrachi. Rather than allow circumstances or desires to dictate our actions, we must focus both our minds and our hearts toward doing what is right in the eyes of God. This is the essence of true royalty, explains Rabbi Bloch. Yosef became viceroy through the integrity others recognized within him, and Yehudah demonstrated his integrity by his willingness to be humiliated for the sake of truth. Thus, Yehudah and Yosef, who both exemplified the traits of self control, humility and forethought, could indeed approach each other.

Shaarei Derech, suggests that the title **Melech** is an acronym for the requisite traits of a true king: **M=Moach/mind, L=Lev/heart, C(K)=K-oved/liver/symbol of physicality**. Thus, one must first control one's mind, then turn one's heart to desire that which is correct, and then the physical manifestations of these will follow through action. As Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz notes, one's thoughts have the power to elevate [or lower] a person, so that a person will move only in ways that are consistent with his thoughts. If we have the thought, we can will ourselves to do things we would otherwise not feel like doing, adds Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv. Focus your thoughts and desires on doing the right thing and then follow through.

Yaakov Avinu, in blessings his sons before his death, recognizes the traits of each of his sons. Yosef was a man of truth. He sees things in absolute truth, the quality of angels. Yehudah took this one step further. He lets the truth penetrate his heart so that he recognizes his errors and accepts full responsibility even at great personal risk. Dovid Hamelech carried on Yehudah's legacy, admitting his sin and doing *teshuvah*, exemplifying truth as it needs to be practiced on earth. Yosef knew the truth of angels, those beings who never sin. At the end of days, these two will merge.

Builder of Her Home A Woman's Lifestyle Within The Home

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah-Heller

The lifestyle of a woman who does her husband's will is described in the Rambam. All of her deeds are in accordance with what he says. In her eyes he is like a minister or a king. She goes according to the desires of his heart and distances herself from everything he despises. He sees the vision. She actualizes it. She hears what he says. There are so many women who don't listen, who assume. There are so many husbands who feel locked out, who retreat into silence because their wives are in a continual state of self-expression and don't hear him. What a good wife does, reflects that she has heard him. She is aware of what's truly in his heart and brings that close, while distancing herself from everything he despises.

There are things people do with a defined plan and other things they do on automatic pilot. They aren't always aware of what their motivations are. If a man and woman are living together, they have to be on one page in both of these aspects of life. He articulates

what he wants to be achieved. It's not her role to redefine where he's headed. Her part is to use her insight to make his desires happen in a way that will bring the best possible end results. Every husband's vision is to have children who are successful, who have a sense of meaning and purpose, who know their spiritual goals and how to reach it. His vision might be that the chinuch of the children be according to *Torah*. She doesn't have to redefine what *Torah* is. She has to see that whatever is pure and good in her children finds expression. For that she needs enormous insight. She has to know the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer hara* of each one of her children. She has to know what her husband's vision is and move it along the right path. He sets the direction. She has to make it happen.

Going according to the desires of his heart means being aware of his subconscious desires. They are not strangers. She knows what will draw forth what is good in him. She knows what despises and repels him. Let's say you have a man who is a thinker and has a

rich inner life. He's disturbed by a lot going on. His wife should be sensitive to this. She shouldn't build a home that is a hubbub of distractions. If you have a husband who likes people, creating a home that is an ivory tower will leave him and the rest of the family suffocated. She has to be sensitive to what he wants, what makes him feel unheard, and conversely understood.

The same way a person instinctively follows his own heart, so too a man's wife should be like his own body. They should have a collective self. The goal is that they should feel like one soul where neither one is striving towards autonomy, but rather towards unity. The deepest connection in life is the connection you have to your own body. The soul and body are compared to flour and water. Once mixed, it can't be separated. When it says, "One's wife is like one's body," it means that their unit is like body and soul where you can't say, "This is her, this is me." It's one team working together towards one goal.

Mesilat Yesharim: First Steps

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

Nisyonot (challenges) are meant to bring out the best in us and elevate us to the highest level so that we can earn *olam haba*. "*Hayom la'sosom umacher l'kabel secharam*- This day is for action and tomorrow- in the next world, we will receive reward." (Eruvin 22a)

The Mesilat Yesharim is based on a Gemara in Masechet Avodah Zorah. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said there are nine steps to get to the

highest point of *kedusha*. He begins with *zehirut* (watchfulness). One has to work on oneself and restrain oneself from sin. If a person invests in this even a little Hashem will help him. However, it works step by step. In order to come to any level of *sur me'ra* (separating oneself from evil) one has to begin with *Torah*. A man who lacked *zehirut* and unintentionally killed someone had to run to a city of refuge. There the *Leviim* taught *Torah*

which brings to *zehirut* and there the murderer would come to realize the importance of living a *Torah* life.

This is the first thing Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair tells us. Before we begin any process of destroying evil we must begin with *Torah*. *Torah* shows us how to live a life of discipline and values which will ultimately lead to true joy and fulfillment.