

## Parshat Vayigash: Hidden Tzaddikim

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

The gemara says that Yosef's name is spelled with an extra hey in Tehillim. This hey, which is one letter of the four letter name of Hashem, was given to Yosef because he sanctified Hashem's name in private. In contrast, Yehuda's name contains all four letters of Hashem's name because he sanctified Hashem's name in public.

The Shem Mishmuel explains that this Gemara makes a profound statement about the character of Yosef and Yehuda. Yosef was the epitome of "hatzne'a lechet," he walked modestly with Hashem. He was a hidden tzaddik. Chazal say that he would groom himself because he wanted his outside appearance to deceive people into thinking he was not righteous. He was so private that his own family did not know who he truly was. He was an exceptional tzaddik, who stood firm in his faith and remained loyal to the Torah throughout the long years of suffering in Egypt. Yehuda's righteousness, however, was well known. He confessed in public to the sin he had committed with Tamar. Both tzaddikim had special roles to play in the destiny of Klal Yisrael.

Yosef would not be deceived by the outside

blandishments of Egypt. Even though he spent many years among the finest pleasures that Egypt had to offer, he did not join their way of life. He searched for the essence.

This is an important model for us. The culture around us has such incredible attraction. It is so tempting for us to submit to the bad and rationalize it as good. The power of Yosef gives us the strength to withstand this difficult trial. Yehuda was the leader of the Jewish nation. When he rose, the nation rose with him. The Jews need someone who can lead them along a clear path. This is the revealed tzaddik.

The Shem Mishmuel cites a saying of the Zohar, "The Jewish people have fallen never to rise again." This refers to our present exile. How will the Jewish people return? The Rambam says the revival of the Jewish people will come through their repentance. This repentance will be a movement led by the descendants of Yosef and Yehuda, respectively.

In the future there will be a Mashiach ben Yosef and a Mashiach ben David. Mashiach ben Yosef will come first. Mashiach Ben

David, from the family of Yehuda, will come later and bring us into the final Messianic era. Mashiach ben Yosef will follow the model of Yosef, who brought down spiritual energy mi'lemala l'mata, from above down into the physical world. He will connect heaven with earth. This will be the first stage, because the Jewish people will be so worn out from exile that they will not have the strength to repent on their own. They will need that extra inspiration to give them new life. After this rebirth, Mashiach ben David will come. He will be a part of the people, someone who will live with the Jewish nation and show them how to live a spiritual life once again.

Yosef taught us how to survive through difficult times. He taught us to believe in the power of a dream. Yosef maintained his emuna and simchat hachaim because he knew Hashem had a mission for him. He saw his dreams come true. We too must have dreams and believe in them. We should not be deceived by the seeming dangers of the outside world. Hashem is with us and will protect us come what may. Let us try to emulate the model of Yosef by keeping our dreams alive as we navigate the challenges of life.

## Parshat Vayigash – Dual Flames

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

The Torah tells us that when Yaakov and his family went down to Egypt, he sent Yehuda ahead to prepare for them a place in Goshen. Rashi explains that he sent him to set up a *beit midrash*, a place to learn or a place to live. The Midrash Tanchuma writes on the verse, "And Yehuda he sent ahead of him," that the blessing on the *havdala* candle is not said until we get pleasure from its light. We learn this from Hashem. First, He saw the light was good and then He made a distinction between light and darkness. Similarly, after we benefit from the light, we say *hamavdil* making the distinction between *Shabbat* and the rest of the week. How does this relate to Yaakov sending Yehuda ahead?

The Daat Sofrim explains that the idea of *havdala* is seeing the difference between two things. Yehuda's mission was to separate the

light and holiness of Torah from the darkness of the outside world. This too is the *havdala* we make on motzai Shabbat. The Beer Yosef echoes this idea. Yaakov was worried that the young children shouldn't be exposed for even one moment to the impurity of Egypt. Therefore, he sent Yehuda ahead to prepare a separate place for them to live. *Havdala* is the clear distinction between the ways of Egypt and the ways of Yisrael. Wherever we are, we have to have the foresight and sensitivity that as Yaakov separated himself from the Egyptians, we should separate ourselves and our youth from the negative environment around us. We must be sensitive to how much of the outside world we let in, and at the same time invest effort to make the light of Torah and *mitzvot* bright enough to overshadow the darkness.

The Midrash says that on the first *motzai Shabbat* Adam encountered darkness. He was afraid that evil would overcome him. Hashem gave him prophetic insight to take two stones and rub them together to create fire. He then made the blessing *Borei meorei ha'aish*. Another Midrash in Pirkei d'rav Eliezer notes that fire was not Adam's initiative. Hashem sent down a pillar of fire to light his way and protect him from evil. When Adam saw that Hashem hadn't left him, he said the blessing *Beorei meorei ha'aish*. What actually happened? The Shvilei Pinchas says both *midrashim* are correct.

The Gemara in Yoma says there cannot be an awakening above unless there's an awakening from below. We have to create fire from below so we can draw down fire from above. Adam took the initiative. He rubbed two stones

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together and was met with fire from above. Every *motzai Shabbat*, we too create fire and Hashem responds. The Ramak says when we say *borei meorei ha'aish*, four angels come down, Michael, Gavriel, Rafael and Uriel. They bring the great light of the *Shechina* to guard and illuminate our way throughout the week. The custom to bend our four fingers before the *havdala* flame hints to these four angels. We say *beorei meorei ha'aish* on two wicks symbolizing the intertwined fires, our fire below and Hashem's fire from above.

The *yetzer hara* is called *tov meod* because when good overcomes evil, good takes on a higher dimension. Struggling with and overcoming the *yetzer hara* brings us to greater heights. Adam did not comprehend the repercussions of his sin until *motzai Shabbat* when darkness overwhelmed him. His negative side, the part he had never met before, stood before him and he was overcome by terror. Then Hashem in His great mercy taught Adam how to create fire by rubbing two stones together. The *lev ha'even*

(heart of stone) is the *yetzer hara*. Hashem hinted to Adam, instead of being frightened by the evil inclination take both inclinations and rub them together. Once engaged in struggle, the *yetzer tov* will overcome the *yetzer hara* and create light. The Zohar says the greatest light emanates from darkness. If we invest all our strength and effort to fight evil, Hashem will help us emerge victorious.

We face two battles in our *avodat Hashem*, the inner battle of Yosef and the outer battle of Yehuda. Maharal explains that evil is everything that conceals Hashem. Goodness is a manifestation of Hashem, who is the ultimate reality. The *yetzer hara* can be defeated by bringing Hashem into the picture just as Yosef did when he saw the image of his father. If one feels on the edge of sin one can simply say, "Hashem is here now," and make that truth real. If one realizes that evil is an illusion the battle is over. Yehuda's philosophy was to struggle with darkness head on and create a *kidush Hashem* in public. In contrast Yosef said, "I'm not getting involved in this world." He

wouldn't eat with the Egyptian people. He maintained his Judaism despite all odds in a hidden way. Yosef is called *Tzafnat Paneach*. The Sefat Emet explains that Yosef's hiddenness was his strength that allowed him to unravel what was concealed. When Yaakov sent Yehuda ahead he was teaching us that there are two ways to make *havdala* between good and evil, the hidden and public way. When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers there was a reversal of roles. Yosef entered into the arena of the outside world while Yehuda was silent.

The ultimate goal is not one or the other, but appreciating both. Yaakov sent Yehuda ahead so that he would meet Yosef. The uniting of these two opposite paths was like Adam rubbing the two stones together. When Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Yehuda will come together and take on the quality of each other, it will inspire the ultimate light of redemption.

## Davening with a Minyan

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Ari Jacobson

The poskim address the question of including a boy younger than *bar mitzvah* in a minyan, when there are only nine men available. The basis of this practice is a discussion in Masechas Berachos. The Talmud teaches that ten men are required for a *minyan*, but nine men plus the *aron kodesh* doesn't count, since an *aron kodesh* is not a human being. Rabbeinu Tam refers to the practice of counting a boy under *bar mitzvah* – even if he is holding a *chumash* – as a *minhag shtus* (foolish custom). Just as the *aron kodesh* doesn't count, a *chumash* or a Sefer Torah wouldn't count, even if you have someone holding it.

However, there are some prominent authorities such as the Magen Avraham who disagree and maintain that it would be acceptable. Others suggest that even according to early authorities who permitted it, they did not mean a printed *chumash*, but a real *Sefer Torah*. This is why those who still do this today will have the boy stand near the *aron kodesh* with the *Sefer Torah* so he's holding not just a *chumash* but a *Sefer Torah* as well. Although one may not make fun of this custom, we avoid it when possible, in keeping with the view of the Rabbeinu Tam and other primary medieval authorities

The Kitzur notes that one should pay attention to the recital of the *kaddish* and to answer amen with concentration, and especially *amen yehei shemei rabbah*. The sages taught that one who recites *Amen yehei shemei rabbah* with all his physical strength and mental concentration receives forgiveness for his sins. Even if there was a negative decree issued against him it will be annulled when he proclaims this *amen yehei shemei rabbah*. One should ideally answer *Amen yehei shemei rabbah* out loud. However, the Kitzur warns not to yell too loud as it may make people laugh and cause them to sin. They shouldn't laugh, but you shouldn't put yourself in a position where people would do that.

The Kitzur writes further that we answer *Amen yehei shemei rabbah yisbarach*. Then the *chazzan* repeats *yisbarach* and we answer Amen. This is not the general custom. The Mishne Berurah refers to various practices regarding how far one should answer. Is *yisbarach* the end of *yehei shemei rabbah* or is it the beginning of the next sentence? There are different customs. Some answer Amen *yehei shemei rabbah* and then begin *yisbarach* as the new sentence. Others follow the practice noted in the Kitzur, answering *yisbarach* with the *yehei shemei rabbah*. There is a third practice maintained by *chassidim* and

sefardim to go even further until *d'amerin b'alma*.

How should one conduct oneself? For public responses and declarations, one has to follow the custom of the shul one is davening in. Failing to do so may be a Torah violation of, "*Lo titgodedu*." The Gemara in Yevamot interprets this to mean, "*Lo te'asu agudot*," don't create a situation in which everyone is doing their own thing. A community should follow a uniform practice. There are two distinct interpretations among medieval commentators as to what this means. Is it primarily in order to not give the impression that there are two different codes of law? Others say if forcing everyone to keep the same custom will cause fighting, then it's probably better to leave it alone.

The Chofetz Chaim though did not hold this way. The Mishne Berurah says each shul should have one uniform custom. If a community has a very strong *minhag* that everyone answers *Amein yehei shemei rabbah* without *yisbarach*, then that's what one should do. If it's not clear, some are saying *yisbarach* and some are saying until *l'almei olmayah*, then one could follow one's own custom.