

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

IT'S NOTHING, REALLY!

"I am Yosef — is my father still alive?" (45:3)

Often when you apologize to someone, you hear the person reply, "It's nothing, really!" Sometimes they mean: "Why are you making such a business out of it? What did you do, after all? Forget it! It's really nothing."

Now for those people, saying, "It's nothing" is genuine forgiveness. It really is nothing to them. However, most of the time what people really mean is, "It's nothing really!! You must be joking! I don't even want to hear your voice! I just want to see you squirm around in front of me! I'm not letting you off the hook for anything. Apologize away! It's nothing really!"

A person who refuses to accept an honest apology can make himself guiltier than the "guilty party". Just as Judaism prescribes the appropriate behavior for one who needs to apologize, so too there is a correct way to behave towards someone seeking forgiveness. Indeed, someone who turns a plea for forgiveness into an opportunity for vengeance, however subtle it might be, will very probably end up committing

a graver sin than the original offense.

Picture Yosef's brothers standing in front of him, the utter humiliation and guilt of facing their young brother whom they had wronged so terribly. Now they were facing a king who had the power of life and death over them. How did Yosef react in this situation? Human nature would suggest that Yosef would, at least, have laid out in some detail all the hardship and suffering they had caused him. However, what we read in the Torah sounds more like an extended "thank-you" note than a reproach.

"And now, be not distressed, nor reproach yourselves, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you. Thus G-d has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival in the land and to sustain you. It is not you who sent me here but G-d."

The Torah teaches us that, as important as it is to say "Sorry", it's equally important to know how to say "I forgive you" in a way that genuinely comforts the offender.

• Source: *Da'at Torah*

TEMPORARY AMNESIA

"I am Yosef — is my father still alive?" (45:3)

Why, at this climactic moment when Yosef finally revealed his true identity to his brothers, did he ask whether his father was still alive? The brothers had already confirmed the fact several times. In fact, Yehuda had just finished an impassioned plea to free Binyamin on the grounds that Yaakov would not have survived the loss of Binyamin.

And here lies the understanding of Yosef's question. Yosef

wasn't asking for information about his father's well-being. Rather, he was *rebuking* Yehuda. He was saying to him, "You're so concerned that our father will not survive the loss of his son Binyamin? Where was that concern when you sold another of his sons into slavery? Don't forget to whom you are talking! I am Yosef! Is my father still alive?"

• Source: *Beit HaLevi*

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

With the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead. As a result of this act of total selflessness, Yosef finally has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and so he now reveals to them that he is none other than their brother. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of G-d's plan. He sends them back to their father Yaakov with a message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. At first, Yaakov cannot accept the news, but when he recognizes hidden signs in the message which positively identify the sender as his son Yosef, his spirit is revived. Yaakov together with all his family and possessions sets out for Goshen. G-d communicates with Yaakov in a vision at night. He tells him not to fear going down to Egypt

and its negative spiritual consequences, because it is there that G-d will establish the Children of Israel as a great nation even though they will be dwelling in a land steeped in immorality and corruption. The Torah lists Yaakov's offspring and hints to the birth of Yocheved, who will be the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu. Seventy souls in total descend into Egypt, where Yosef is reunited with his father after 22 years of separation. He embraces his father and weeps, overflowing with joy. Yosef secures the settlement of his family in Goshen. Yosef takes his father Yaakov and five of the least threatening of his brothers to be presented to Pharaoh, and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh. Yosef instructs that, in return for grain, all the people of Egypt must give everything to Pharaoh, including themselves as his slaves. Yosef then redistributes the population, except for the Egyptian priests who are directly supported by a stipend from Pharaoh. The Children of Israel become settled, and their numbers multiply greatly.

TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

YOMA 30 - 36

“Hillel is certainly worthy that we should desecrate Shabbat to save him!”

This statement, taught in a *beraita* on our *daf*, was made by the great Sages Shamaya and Avtalyon to show the greatness of the Hillel, who despite his poverty made every effort to learn as much Torah as he could. The *gemara* relates how each day he would work a bit in order to be able to pay the guard at the entrance to the yeshiva of these Sages, and then he would toil the rest of the day learning Torah inside the yeshiva. One winter day, however, he failed to find a means to earn anything, and went onto the roof instead to hear the words of Torah from the yeshiva through the chimney. However, it snowed heavily and he fell asleep, but was rescued and warmed up on Shabbat.

But why was there a need for a yeshiva guard and therefore a need to pay the guard each day? The Maharsha offers two possibilities. One is that the yeshiva was located — as was customary in those days — in a field, in a place of danger that needed guarding. Another reason for the guard and his fee, suggests the Maharsha, was that the yeshiva accepted only students who were the same “inside and out” — and not hypocrites. The guard was a scholar who was appointed to ascertain the worthy nature of those who came to learn in the yeshiva.

• Yoma 35b

“Master of the Universe! When the Jewish People sin before You, but afterwards they repent, view their intentional transgressions as if they were unintentional.”

“*Aviti, pashati, chatati*” — this is the order of the the *vidui* confession by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur according to Rabbi Meir in a *beraita* on our *daf*. Rabbi Meir cites a verse in which Moshe called for G-d's mercy after the sin of the golden calf, in which he mentions the various transgressions in this order (Shmot 34:7).

The *Chachamim*, however, disagree with this proof, and with the order of the *vidui* of the Kohen Gadol. They state that it should be “*chatati, aviti, pashati*”. They claim that the verse cited by Rabbi Meir is not a proof, since “After he has confessed his more severe intentional sins (*aviti, pashati*) why would he then mention the less severe unintentional ones? The *Chachamim* therefore state that the order of the *vidui* is “*chatai, aviti, pashati*”, and the verse states “*chet*” at the end to teach that Moshe begged G-d that even if the sins were *initially* done intentionally — *after repentance* they should be considered as unintentional.

• Yoma 36b

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What threatening words did Yehuda say to Yosef?
2. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died?
3. Why was Yehuda the one to plead for Binyamin?
4. What do we learn from Yosef telling his brothers, "Go up to my father"?
5. What two things did the brothers see that helped prove that he was really Yosef?
6. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?
7. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?
8. What did Yosef mean when he said, "Don't dispute on the way"?
9. What happened to Yaakov when he realized Yosef was alive?
10. Why did G-d tell Yaakov, "Don't fear going down to Egypt"?
11. "I will bring you up" from Egypt. To what did this allude?
12. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?
13. Who was the mother of Shaul ben HaCanaanit?
14. When listing Yaakov's children, the verse refers to Rachel as "Rachel, wife of Yaakov." Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not referred to as Yaakov's wives. Why?
15. Yosef harnessed his own chariot instead of letting a servant do it. Why?
16. Why were shepherds abhorrent to the Egyptians?
17. Why did Yosef pick the weakest brothers to stand before Pharaoh?
18. What blessing did Yaakov give Pharaoh when he left his presence?
19. Yosef resettled the land of Egypt, moving the people from city to city. What were his two motives for this?
20. Whose fields were not bought by Yosef?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 44:18 - He threatened that Yosef would be stricken with leprosy, like Pharaoh when he took Sarah from Avraham; alternatively, Yehuda threatened to kill Yosef and Pharaoh.
2. 44:20 - Yehuda feared that if he said his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand to see him.
3. 44:32 - He was the one who took "soul" responsibility for him.
4. 45:9 - We learn that *Eretz Yisrael* is higher than all other lands.
5. 45:12 - He was circumcised like they were, and he spoke *lashon hakodesh*.
6. 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of *Mishkan Shilo* built in Yosef's territory.
7. 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.
8. 45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes, they might not be alert to possible travel dangers.
9. 45:27 - His *ruach hakodesh* (prophetic spirit) returned.
10. 46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan.
11. 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.
12. 46:6 - He traded it for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.
13. 46:10 - Dina *bat* Yaakov.
14. 46:19 - Rachel was regarded as the mainstay of the family.
15. 46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father.
16. 46:34 - Because the Egyptians worshipped sheep.
17. 47:2 - So Pharaoh wouldn't see their strength and draft them.
18. 47:10 - That the waters of the Nile should rise to greet Pharaoh.
19. 47:21 - In order to remind them that they no longer owned the land, and to help his family by removing the stigma of being strangers.
20. 47:22 - The Egyptian priests.

A Memorial Tribute on the First Yahrzeit

IN MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED ROSH HAYESHIVA
HARAV MENDEL WEINBACH ZT'L

Rabbis, students, alumni, friends and members of the family have
come together to share their memories, stories and thoughts in the

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE BOOKLET FOR RAV WEINBACH

The booklet will be available in print shortly as well as in PDF format on www.ohr.edu

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT VAYIGASH

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

When Yosef reveals his identity to his brothers he makes it clear that they should not be upset at having sold him into slavery. Additionally, neither G-d, nor Yaakov nor Yosef reproves them for their actions, since Yosef's exalted position in Egypt will result in their survival. Essentially although they intended to harm their brother, the outcome was positive. Abarbanel asks the obvious question. Even though the sale of Yosef had a positive result, the *transgression* of the sale itself remains. An individual should not be exonerated just because his purposeful and evil behavior ends up having a positive outcome, especially an outcome that could not have been even remotely anticipated by the brothers at the time of the sale. Rather, what they intended was to doom Yosef to a miserable existence for what promised to be a dramatically shortened life.

Abarbanel explains that a famous verse from Proverbs (21:1) is the basis for understanding this conundrum: "Like streams of water, so is the heart of a king in the hand of G-d; wherever He wishes, so He directs it." Abarbanel is telling us that the entire unfolding of these events was directed by G-d. Kings, rulers and statesmen who can, with a single word or action, alter the course of history, can become G-d's agents to bring about specific important events. Just as farmers collect the winter's rainfall and direct the 'streams of water' by means

of dams, canals and ditches to the areas where it is most needed, so too can G-d direct a myriad of seemingly unrelated coincidences to produce His intended result. This is the metaphor of the king's heart, for the heart is the ultimate motivator of human behavior.

In this case the brothers' hatred of Yosef, a product of their own free will, gave G-d the 'opening', as it were, to direct the brothers to sell Yosef into slavery in Egypt. When Yosef realizes that they are afraid of retribution, he tells them, according to most translations, "And now, don't be distressed or reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that G-d sent me ahead of you." According to this translation it sounds like Yosef is telling them that *despite* having sold him, they shouldn't be upset, because in the end good would result. Abarbanel, however, understands the verse as follows: "It is *because* you sold me that you shouldn't be upset or reproach yourselves..." — your hearts were in G-d's hands and you were doing His will.

Because the ensuing Egyptian exile and the subsequent miracles of the Exodus and the 40-year experience in the Wilderness were the seminal events in the creation of G-d's chosen people, the principal actors in that drama had the status of great rulers who throughout history G-d has used to bring about dramatic shifts in the course of the human experience.

NEW!

"The Talmud Navigator"

Ohr Somayach presents

an innovative package specially developed to assist learning, analyzing and remembering the Talmud!

What is Ohr Somayach's new and innovative feature for assisting everyone to learn, analyze and remember the Talmud? Especially helpful for those learning Daf HaYomi! **Talmud Navigator – "Excel" in Talmud**

The Talmud, often referred to as "The Sea of the Talmud", is vast both in breadth and depth. The *gemara* (Megillah 18b) describes the difficulty of maintaining a hold on all the Torah you learn, quoting Proverbs (23:5): "When you lift (or close) your eyes from it – and it disappears".

Chazal (Eruvin 54b) prescribe a method for gaining a true understanding and making a lasting acquisition of all the material you learn. Rav Chisda is quoted as saying, "The Torah can only be acquired with signs."

Talmud Navigator is an attempt to organize the Talmud in database form, mapping and charting the Talmud by tagging the various components and building blocks of the according to type and hierarchy. It is based on the system outlined by the Ramchal in

Derech Tvunos.

This system of textual organization serves as a self-help way to outline the *sugya* in a clearer fashion. It assists in promoting a better understanding of the flow of the *Gemara* and in facilitating summary and review. It is also an excellent tool for a less advanced *Gemara* learner to identify and grasp the logical flow and interconnections of its various components.

Each Thursday we will post a PDF file which maps the *gemara* studied in that week's *Daf Yomi* cycle. G-d willing, we plan in the future to make available the Excel file which enables the user to make his own condensed selections of the *Gemara*. For example: Highlighting the main statements, arguments, questions, conclusions or personalized anchor points of the *sugya* determined by the learner to facilitate his own review.

Talmud Navigator is prepared by Rabbi Hanoach Zweig and is available at www.ohr.edu

SILVER LINING

From: Allen

Dear Rabbi,

I know someone who in the past had an average income, but was very generous in many ways. Over the last 5-10 years, the person has become pretty wealthy, but he's not nearly as generous as he used to be. I don't understand this. If the Torah teaches to give charity, the more he has the more he should give, and here he's giving less, and in a much less friendly and warm way. Can you help me understand this?

Dear Allen,

"Money makes the world go around", but often it turns people around as well. We might judge your friend favorably and suggest perhaps now he's giving larger sums to large organizations, or perhaps there's some other explanation as to why you feel it less on a personal level.

But since you also perceive he's giving in a much less friendly and warm way, given the possibility that you're right, what might be an explanation for this? Here I'll depart from judging your friend, but rather address the more general phenomenon.

Unfortunately, it is true that people who become wealthy often lose the personal, giving traits that they had when they were less well-off.

There are several reasons for this.

The person is now able to indulge himself. Once he gets used to indulging himself, he's less concerned about the needs of others. He's also able to get by without other people and can entertain himself in many ways on his own. The result is a social disconnect, which doesn't necessarily mean he becomes a hermit. On the contrary, he might become more high profile, but simultaneously anti-social.

Also, the needs of protecting his wealth make him constantly wary of others, and highly competitive. Whereas

before he generally saw himself in the same boat as everybody else, which fosters a feeling mutual aid and responsibility, now he views anyone who might cause him to part with his money as an enemy who might sink his ship.

Finally, his financial success becomes his measure of self-worth. He becomes fixated with this because, through it, he defines himself. Rather than getting satisfaction from sharing with others, his sense of contentment is centered around filling his own coffers.

There was once such a person who received the blessing of a great rabbi for wealth in order to be able to give even more charity. When the blessing was fulfilled, rather than sharing more, he gave even less. The rabbi heard of this and went to visit the man, who accepted him respectfully but coolly.

After admiring the lavish furnishings, the rabbi turned his attention to a large and exquisitely framed mirror. He asked the man what he saw, to which he replied that he saw himself and his wonderful home. The rabbi then asked him to pull aside the drapes obscuring his windows and describe what he saw. "There are many people in the street. There's the needy butcher who's marrying off his daughter. There's the elderly widow whose health is failing. There are some children, poorly clad, shivering in the cold."

The rabbi then remarked, "It's odd that both the mirror and the window are made of glass, yet in the one you see only yourself and your comfortable surroundings, while in the other you see others and their suffering. What's makes the mirror so different?"

Condescendingly addressing the rabbi's seeming lack of familiarity with luxury, the man replied, "Dear rabbi, the glass of the mirror is lined with a layer of silver that prevents you from seeing through it, so that all you see is yourself!" To which the rabbi replied, "Oh! Now I understand why everyone's saying you've changed so much. Your life used to be a window without curtains. Now it's a silver-laced mirror..."

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

RABBI YISHMAEL, THE TANA

"One who learns Torah in order to teach will be granted by Heaven success in both learning and teaching" — Rabbi Yishmael son of Rabbi Yochanan ben Berokah (Avot 4:5)

One who does his learning of Torah in a manner that includes the teaching of others is guaranteed suc-



cess not only in his teaching but in his learning as well. Although he sacrifices time from his own learning, he will not suffer any loss because G-d will bless him with the wisdom he seeks.

• Midrash Shmuel quoted in Tosefot Yom Tov

FROM HEAVEN'S VANTAGE POINT

One who prays must direct his eyes downward and his heart upward (Yevamot, 105b).

The students of Rabbeinu Yonah understood this directive as an instruction to banish all physical and worldly pleasures from their hearts and imagine that they were standing in the Heavens above.

One of the main functions of Jewish prayer and meditation is to draw down Divine flow and blessing into this world. By looking down toward the earth, one will be constantly reminded that the purpose of prayer is not to escape from the world, as in other religions, but rather, to help sustain it.

There is, however, a negative effect that can occur when one directs his attention to this world. His heart may be drawn towards its pleasures, as it is written: "And do not follow after your hearts and after your eyes, which lead you astray." We are therefore also instructed to direct our hearts upward toward Heaven, for only when our hearts are firmly directed towards Heavenly matters - namely, the pursuit of holiness - are we protected from being led astray.

Once a person is duly detached from this physical world, with his heart firmly rooted above, he will not be subject to the temptations of the heart. Rather, his passion and interest

will be purely for spiritual endeavors. He will then be like an angel standing in Heaven, looking down towards the physical world below. Like the angels, who are able to see through the false illusions of this world, he will be able to see the true essence of what he desires. He will then pray for the correct things, and his intentions will certainly be for the sake of Heaven.

When, however, a person looks down without first removing his heart's desires from worldly pleasures, his prayers and requests can be misguided. He will believe that all his requests are for Heaven's sake, but that belief will be false.

When one is in the midst of heartfelt prayer, his connection to G-d is stronger, and the inner voice that stems from the conscience is easier to hear. At such times, a person's temptations are weakened. This can explain why a person is reluctant to pray for foolish things. He is embarrassed to face G-d and ask for what he knows will ultimately serve no good. One should take advantage of the clarity of mind experienced during prayer to ask G-d for what he truly needs in order to serve Him better, thereby fulfilling the purpose for which he was created.

@ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Alumni and Students*

by Daniel Keebler

CATERER, MATCHMAKER, AND TALMID CHACHAM

Rabbi Shalom Katz, Age: 58

Har Nof, Jerusalem

McMaster University – Major: B.A. in Religion

Catering Business

Ohr Somayach Alumnus - 1979

Young Shalom Katz started as a busboy and worked his way up to manager of a three-story gourmet restaurant of French cuisine. When his culinary talents led him to Los Angeles, he was working for a top caterer in Beverly Hills, including catering the bar mitzvah of a Jewish Hollywood star. But for young Katz, the excitement at that time was not the food he was putting out to the rich and famous, but the Torah he was taking in from a local synagogue. He decided to come to Ohr Somayach to study Judaism more seriously.

Rabbi Katz says he never spent one penny on advertising since he became observant. Yet, less than one month of his arrival at Ohr Somayach, a neighborhood *rebbetzin* was determined to organize groups of women to take cooking classes taught by young Katz. He was soon asked to do a catering job for a famous neighborhood family, and from there he began

catering about once a week.

Rabbi Pindrus used to tell young Katz and his peers at Ohr Somayach that they need to *learn* the Torah, not just "learn how to learn." Rabbi Katz feels he has lived up to those words over the years. After Ohr Somayach, he joined a *kollel* (advanced Torah study institution) in Har Nof, where he learns to this day — morning, afternoon, and evening — taking time off to cater as he needs. "Earning a living is totally Divine Providence, and a fine balance with Torah learning," says Rabbi Katz who has married off five of his seven children so far and completed four cycles of the Babylonian Talmud with the worldwide Daf Yomi (literally: "daily page") program. He is currently a study partner with the future Chief Rabbi of India and is helping him prepare for his rabbinical exams.

Despite his busy schedule, Rabbi Katz spends 30 minutes a day on the phone as matchmaker for English speaking *ba'alei teshuva* (returnees to traditional Jewish observance), and teaches marriage preparatory courses to young bridegrooms. Rabbi Katz says that he enjoys participating in the process of G-d's bringing together two souls.