THE WEISS EDITION

ויגש

Vayigash

A Time to Weep

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One-Track Education

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

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45:14 | מה:יד

וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְּארֵי בִנְיָמִן אָחִיו וַיֵּבְךְּ וּבִנְיָמִן בָּכָה עַל צַוָּארָיו

He fell on his brother Binyamin's neck and wept, and Binyamin wept on his neck.

A Time to Weep

When Yosef revealed his identity to Binyamin, they embraced one another and wept. According to Rashi, they cried because they each prophetically foresaw the destruction that would take place in the other's territory in the Land of Israel. Yosef wept for the two Batei Mikdash, the First and Second Holy Temples, which would be built and ultimately destroyed in Binyamin's territory, and Binyamin wept for the Mishkan that would be erected and later destroyed in Yosef's territory.

Interestingly, Rashi implies they each cried only in anticipation of what would befall the other, but not for the misfortune that would happen in their own territory. Why didn't they grieve their own misfortune?

Practically, crying is only a coping mechanism. It may al-

leviate some of your pain and sorrow, but it cannot change the source of your grief.[1]

Now, the knowledge that a peer is bringing spiritual ruin upon himself should certainly make you upset, but only he can stop that destruction from happening. If you have prayed for him and made every effort to lead him to the right path, but have been unsuccessful, his impending ruin should bring you to tears, for the pain of such devastation is great, and there is nothing you can do to stop it.

Conversely, when you become aware that you are bringing ruin upon *yourself*, the correct response is not to alleviate your pain through tears, but actually to do something about it! In fact, crying can distract you from addressing the issue, as you may console yourself that your pain and awareness is enough.

This is why Yosef and Binyamin did not cry for the Temples that would be destroyed on their own territories, but for the misfortune that would befall the other. To cry over their own issues would entirely miss the point.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 10, pp. 148–149

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1. The exception is tears of *teshuvah*, repentance, which are constructive in their own right. See, for example, Tehillim 56:9.

מה:כו-כז | 45:26-27

וַיַּרְא אֶת הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לָשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ
וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם: וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב
עוֹד יוֹסֵף בְּנִי חָי אֵלְכָה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת

He saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to carry him,
and the spirit of Yaakov their father revived.
Yisrael said: "It is much! Yosef my son is still alive!
I will go and see him before I die."

Surviving or Thriving?

In case his father doubted that he was indeed still alive, Yosef sent a sign with his brothers to confirm his identity.[2] Since the Hebrew words for "wagon" and "calf" are spelled the same, עגלה, Yosef sent wagons to his father to allude to the last topic he and Yaakov had studied together—the laws of *eglah arufah*, the calf that is decapitated to atone for an unsolved murder.[3]

When Yaakov saw the wagons, the verse says, "his *spirit* was revived": he was now certain that Yosef was alive both physically and spiritually, still "living" with the Torah they had studied together 22 years earlier. Yaakov's words in the next verse, "It is much! Yosef my son is still alive," likewise express his admiration for Yosef's spiritual strength: "The power of my son is great, since he endured so much suffering and yet he still stands in his righteousness! He is greater than I."[4]

Despite the theme shared by these two verses, we traditionally separate them in the public Torah reading. The words

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2. Bereishis Rabbah 94:3.

3. See Devarim 21:1–9.

4. Bereishis Rabbah 94:3.

"The spirit of Yaakov their father revived" conclude the third portion of the reading, and the next verse opens the fourth. This underscores the two distinct aspects of Yosef's spiritual endurance that impressed Yaakov.

The first verse describes Yaakov's "revival of spirit" upon recognizing that Yosef had withstood his challenges and maintained his attachment to the Torah. But that feat alone was something that Yaakov had also accomplished when he lived with Lavan for 20 years: "I lived with the wicked Lavan, but I observed the 613 commandments—I did not learn from his evil ways."[5]

More remarkable, however, was Yosef's second achievement: not only had his environment not affected him, *he* had affected his environment! As the ruler of Egypt, he used his power to influence the Egyptians spiritually as well.[6] Of this second aspect, Yaakov said—in what we read as a separate portion of the reading—"The power of my son is great… he is greater than I."

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, pp. 222–228

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5. Rashi, Bereishis 32:5.

6. See Rashi, Bereishis 41:55.

46:3 | מו:ג

אַל תִּירָא מֵרְדָה מִצְרַיְמָה כִּי לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשִׂימְךָ שָׁם

Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for there I will make you a great nation.

No Pain, No Gain

As Yaakov and his family journeyed to Egypt, G-d appeared to Yaakov and told him: "Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for there I will there make you a great nation." What was Yaakov's concern? Rashi explains, "Because he [Yaakov] was anguished that he was compelled to leave [the land of Canaan] and go abroad."

Rashi's wording indicates that Yaakov was not only *afraid* of what his future held in store, but also *anguished* about leaving the land of Canaan. Yet it appears that G-d does not address Yaakov's anguish, only his fear. G-d tells him not to be afraid, because his family will emerge from Egypt even stronger than when they arrived; but evidently, his distress over leaving Canaan was still justified. In fact, Rashi's words can be interpreted as a hint to the reason Yaakov need not be afraid: his anguish itself would guarantee that his family would thrive there.

Yaakov's resultant mix of emotions—confidence in G-d's promise, while simultaneously anguished over being exiled from the eternal Jewish homeland—symbolize the paradoxical feelings that the Jewish people must have toward *galus*, our state of exile and subjection to foreign rule until the coming of Moshiach.

On the one hand, we must not be daunted by the intensity

of *galus*. Knowing that we were exiled solely by G-d's will, we can be certain that G-d has endowed us with the strength necessary to overcome any challenge to His service that *galus* presents. On the other hand, we must never become comfortable with our state of exile, for it is precisely our distress and discomfort that give us the strength to transcend the awful darkness and confront its challenges.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, pp. 234–235

46:28 | מו:כח

וְאֶת יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח לְפָנָיו אֶל יוֹסֵף לְהוֹרֹת לְפָנָיו גֹּשְׁנָה

He sent Yehudah ahead of him to Yosef,
to prepare Goshen in advance.

One-Track Education

Yaakov sent Yehudah to Egypt to establish a place of Torah study and education in Goshen before the rest of the family arrived.[7] Why was it necessary for this institution of learning to be established by Yehudah, rather than by Yosef, who was already living in Egypt, and who certainly had both the means and the conviction to do so? Yosef had even proven himself to be on a higher spiritual level than Yaakov's other sons, considering that his preoccupation with the governance of Egypt diminished neither his spiritual sensitivity nor his devotion to G-d. So why did Yaakov insist on sending Yehudah to establish the school, instead of Yosef?

Despite Yosef's spiritual greatness, excellence in Torah study requires something that he simply did not have—time and freedom to devote himself exclusively to Torah study, with no other care in the world. Granted, this does not reflect negatively on Yosef, who flawlessly fulfilled his G-dly mission that demanded wholly engrossing himself in Egypt's national interests; but the quality of his Torah study, in and of itself, could not be on par with that of his brothers, who were shep-

7. Rashi ad loc.

herds by trade, and for the most part entirely removed from the pressures of the world.

Yaakov therefore appointed Yehudah to establish the center of Torah study in Goshen. This academy would be the foundation of Yaakov's family's residence in Egypt, and the spiritual power plant for the entire world, so it was crucial that the students devote their minds to Torah alone, without worrying about the outside world. It was Yehudah alone, not Yosef, who was capable of founding such a school.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 3, pp. 827–830

לעילוי נשמת

אפרים הלוי ב"ר **שמואל** ע"ה

לוי

נלב"ע י"א טבת ה'תשפ"ד

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בנו הרה"ת שמואל הלוי

וזוגתו מרת רבקה שיחיו לוי



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