

# WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

## PARSHAS VAYIGASH

### Yehuda vs. Yosef

This week's Parsha, Vayigash, begins, "And Yehuda approached him (Yosef)." This confrontation between Yehuda and Yosef begins in the Parsha and ends in the Haftora, which talks about the uniting of Yosef and Yehuda in the time of Moshiach. Then it says, "And My servant David will reign over them. . . And David, My servant, will be Nassi over them forever." David, the king from the tribe of Yehuda and the progenitor of Moshiach, is symbolic of both.

This confrontation between Yehuda and Yosef is deeper and more meaningful than just the story in the Parsha. It is two worldviews colliding, and in the end, the way of Yehuda reigns supreme. What are these two approaches?

The Zohar says that Yehuda's approaching Yosef is the same idea as having geulah

**THE MORE YOU  
CLIMB THE  
MOUNTAIN,  
THE HIGHER  
THE MOUNTAIN  
BECOMES.  
BECAUSE THERE  
IS ALWAYS MORE  
YOU CAN ACHIEVE.**

have redemption near prayer.

The problem with the Zohar's comparison is that it seems to be reversed. You see, in

Kabbalistic thought (the Zohar is a book of Kabbalah), Yosef symbolizes redemption, and Yehuda symbolizes prayer. In the Parsha, Yehuda approaches Yosef, meaning that redemption stays in its place, and prayer comes near to it, showing that redemption is superior. However, in our prayers, we bring redemption near prayer. Meaning that redemption is there for prayer, and that prayer is superior.

Yosef is the complete Tzadik, meaning that his job is to shine light onto the world and inspire. He affects the world by flooding it with great light from above, motivating the people to be good. The problem is that he doesn't change the world, and as soon as the light is gone, the world reverts to its old self. This is the idea of redemption in the form of a great light from above.

Yehuda is the king. The main job of the king is to serve the nation, in other words, to deal with the world from the bottom up, motivating the people to change themselves. This kind of change is real and everlasting. This is the idea of prayer, it is serving Hashem from the bottom up.

What is more important, shining from the top down or the service from the bottom up? The way of Yosef or the way of Yehuda?

Each of these ideas has its pros. Yehuda's approach generates real and everlasting change, but since it comes from below, it is limited. There is only that high a person can reach on his own. Yosef's approach, on the



other hand, coming from above, is unlimited. Even though it doesn't affect everlasting change, it can take a person to unlimited heights. When both of these approaches work together, you get everlasting change and unlimited heights. The question is, how can they work together? And ultimately, which approach is the main way, and which is there to help the main approach?

Let's revisit the story of Yosef and his brothers, and it will become clear.

In Yosef's dream, the brothers are in the field, bundling sheaves. This is working in the world from the bottom up. Then they encircled Yosef's sheaf and bowed. This symbolizes that they have gone as far as they can on their own. Now they need Yosef to take them to the next level.

The Yosef approach helps those taking the Yehuda approach to go to the next level. At the same time, because the work below is very powerful, Yosef gains from it, and he is taken to higher spiritual realms.

There is another way Yosef helps Yehuda. When the brothers brought Binyamin down to Egypt, Yosef had their bags filled with grain, and he had his goblet hidden in Binyamin's bag. This is what brought them back in front of Yosef for the confrontation between Yehuda and Yosef. Yosef hiding the goblet in Binyamin's bag is what brought them before Yosef. In other words, Yosef's approach serves another purpose, to motivate from above, to move the person to take the Yehuda approach, so ultimately he can come before Yosef and reach unlimited heights.

The key to this working is that it has to be hidden, like Yosef's goblet. In other words, the person can't know that he is being motivated. He has to feel like it is his own effort.

This is similar to a famous debate in the Talmud, whether Torah study is more important or is doing mitzvahs more important. The Talmud concludes, "Study is greater because it brings you to do (the

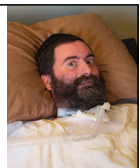
mitzvah)." This is ironic because it is ultimately saying that the greatness of Torah study is that it will cause you to do mitzvahs, that the Torah is there for the mitzvahs. On top of that, when you study Torah to understand how to perform an actual mitzvah, it enhances the Torah study.

Yosef symbolizes Torah, which is a light shining from the top down. Yehuda symbolizes mitzvahs, raising the world from the bottom up. Ultimately, the Torah, Yosef, is there to cause you to do the mitzvahs, Yehuda.

When Yehuda approached Yosef, he said, "please let your servant speak words in the ears of my master... Because you are like Pharaoh." Meaning, help me with my approach even though you will be lowering yourself to do so because now you are Viceroy, but you will become like Pharaoh, ultimately it will raise you up to a higher level. So by approaching Yosef, he wasn't saying that Yosef is greater, rather that Yosef is better off helping him facilitate the Yehuda approach. In other words, redemption is there to take prayer to a higher level, and Torah study is there to take mitzvahs to a higher level.

When Moshiach comes we will see the value of mitzvahs over Torah, the value of the work down here over the top-down approach, Yehuda over Yosef, as we will all be united under Yehuda, through the king from the House of David, King Moshiach. May he come soon.

*Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.*



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