

Vayigash - Rabbi Lerner - December 16, 2012

Yaacov and His Family Relocate to Egypt

46:28: *He sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to prepare ahead of him in Goshen (Lehoros Lefanav Goshnah), and they arrived in the region of Goshen.* What does it mean *Lehoros Lefanav Goshnah*? **Rashi**: As **Targum Unkelos** says; it was to clear a place for them to set up the area for the arrival of the large family. The Midrash says that it means to set up a Beis Midrash - to set up religious institutions for the family. What does Rashi mean *Ketargumo*, as the Targum says? **Targum Yonasan** says that Yehuda was sent ahead to go to Yosef and clear the place before him, to clear the path to Goshen - it seems this was just to set up housekeeping arrangements. **Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel**: Yehuda was sent to Yosef to pave the way before them, and to subdue the pillars of the land. **Perush Yonasan**: Yonasan Be Uziel says this meant Goshen was the pillar of the land of Egypt - it was the best part of Egypt. As it says in 45:17-8: *Bring all of your family and I will give you the best of the land.* The best of Eretz Mitzrayim was Goshen. They took the best of Egypt. Another possibility: they are coming down to this exclusive place with the fanciest homes; the people living there were unhappy about having Jews moving in; they would be very resentful. It wasn't only taking over the land of Goshen. They would have to subdue the ill will and resistance of the people living there - that is what it means with the word *Lehoros*. They will accomplish this by saying they are doing this with Pharaoh's authorization - he calls the shots, not you, and you should keep your mouths shut. If you don't like Jews moving in, then move out. Yehuda had to pave the way to end any resistance of the people.

If *Lehoros* means setting up a spiritual infrastructure, **Rabbeinu Bachya** says there should be a teaching of Torah there. The Shevatim should be involved with the study of Torah. And to prove that there was a serious amount of learning going on, when Yosef left his father he was studying the parsha of Eglah Arufa, and this was how the brothers proved to Yaacov that Yosef was still alive - they told him what he had been learning with Yosef the day Yosef left, which only the two of them would have known. Yaacov had been poring all of his efforts of learning into Yosef - that is what is meant by Ben Zekunim. Rabbeinu Bachya says that Yosef was not singled out for learning by his father - all of the sons studied together with Yaacov in Eretz Canaan, and they continued to do the same when they arrived in Egypt. This learning had to be transplanted into Egypt, and that is what was meant by *Lehoros* - it is the language of Hora'ah.

Abarbanel: While the general understanding is that Yehuda was being sent to Yosef, so that Yosef would help him lay the groundwork for their settling in Goshen, the Abarbanel disagrees. When Yaacov and his family went to Egypt, they were to go straight to Goshen, and that is where Yaacov and Yosef would meet for the first time; they were not going to meet in the capital. In order for Yosef not to have to search for Yaacov, since he does not know exactly where in Goshen they would buy land, Yehuda was sent down to show Yosef where the family would be - like that Yosef would not have trouble finding him, as that would be disrespectful. While the family goes to Goshen, Yehuda would go to the capital to tell Yosef where they would be setting up their new home. The reason that Yosef was now coming to see Yaacov, was because Yehuda had now told Yosef where to find them.

46:29: *And Yosef prepared his chariot and went to greet Yisrael his father in Goshen; he appeared to him and fell on his neck, and he cried on his neck more (Od).* It is ambiguous as to

who was crying. **Rashi**: when it says Vayera Elav, it means Yosef appeared before his father; Yosef is falling on his father's neck, and Yosef is crying on his father's neck. **Ramban**: it means he cried a lot. **Rashi**: while Yosef is crying, Yaacov did not fall on Yosef's neck or kissing him; he is reciting Shema. **Ramban**: What does it mean Vayerah Elav, he appeared to him? If he is falling on his neck, he is right there already - what does it mean he appeared to him? Furthermore, it was not proper respect for Yosef to be falling on his father's neck like that - he should bow to Yaacov and kiss his hand, not fall on his neck. Therefore, a better interpretation (which the **Abarbanel** agrees with) is that Yaacov at this time is old, with failing eyesight. When Yosef arrives in his royal chariot, dressed as Egyptian royalty, he was unrecognizable to his father or even his brothers. When he got close to his father and they could see each other's faces and recognize each other, it was Yaacov who fell on Yosef's neck and he cries again - Od means additionally, not a lot - otherwise it would have said Harbey. Od means it happened before - Yaacov was the one who had previously cried about his lost son Yosef for 22 years - he had never stopped crying for him, had never stopped sitting Shiva for him. Now that he sees his son, he cries more onto the mountain of tears he had previously shed. The other reason that this peshat makes more sense than Rashi's is that who is more likely to cry for whom? It is known to everyone that a father cries more for a child now that he has recovered his child after he had given up in despair, than a child, who is the king of Egypt, to cry for his father. The word Od fits better with this peshat than Rashi's. The clincher is the next pasuk: 46:30: *And Yisrael said to Yosef "Now I can die because I have seen your face, that you are still alive."* **Rashi** quotes **Targum Unkelos** who says this means that should he die now, he is ready for the grave - all of the loose ends are taken care of. Rashi offers another explanation, quoting a Midrash. The **Sifsei Chachamim** say that now after seeing Yosef's face, after all of this time, Yaacov would definitely not want to die - just the opposite - he should be davening very hard to live a long time to make up for all of the years of horror, to make up for lost time and be joyful with his son. So Rashi offers the Midrash that Yaacov thought that he was going to die twice - in this world and the next world; he felt this way because when Yosef disappeared, he lost his ruach hakodesh. He thought that Hashem was signaling to him that he was being harshly judged because of Yosef's death. Why would he feel guilt over Yosef's death? Because by his foolishly showing favoritism to Yosef, with the Kasones Pasim, chazal say it is an enormous mistake by showing favorites amongst his children. Yaacov thought that he was being punished by Hashem, and he would die in both worlds. Now that he sees that Yosef is still alive, he knew he would die only once, in this world. Even though he made a mistake, there was now reconciliation - it was not a fatal mistake. Yaacov's spirit had been resurrected when he saw the wagons that Yosef sent. Now that he saw that his 12 children were intact, all 12 tribes would be there to divide the land; he knew the prophecy of inheriting Eretz Yisrael would be realized, so his spirit was revived and the ruach hakodesh returned to him.

Da'as Zekanim Miba'alei Tosefos: When it says that Yosef went up to greet his father in Goshen, it was an elevation for Yosef since he was going to greet his father and show the mitzvah of Kavod to his father. But another way to understand the word Vaya'al is not because the land of Goshen was higher than the land of Egypt; it was at the boundary of Eretz Yisrael - and might actually have been in the boundary of Eretz Yisrael. We know this because of a pasuk in Yehoshua Perek 16 that talks about dividing up the land - it lists all the parts of the land that goes to Yehuda, and one of the places is Goshen. Yehuda's land stretched into Sinai and Gaza, and included the Nahar Mitzrayim - so Goshen becomes part of Eretz Yisrael. So the reason it says Vaha'al is because it was part of Eretz Yisrael - Goshen is absorbed into Eretz Yisrael. **Rav**

Nissan Alpert: Goshen was very important. The gematria of Goshna is the same as Moshiach - 358. It was not an accident that the land that the Jews ended up in Egypt was Goshen. The language of Goshen means drawing near, just like Vayigash. It is all about brothers drawing near to each other. When Yosef reveals his true identity, he says to them Geshe Na Elai - draw near to me; they had withdrawn from him after he revealed himself - they were worried he was going to take revenge. But he does just the opposite - he tells them to approach close to him, and they do - Vayigashu. Yosef reassures them that he was going to take revenge, that instead he was going to protect and provide for them. When he draws close to them, they draw close to him. He reveals himself after he draws close to them, and they draw close to him. When Jews draw close to each other, that is the greatest thing - it emphasizes they are all one family and love each other. All Jews should all feel brotherhood with each other. When the brothers first planned on selling him, the Torah says that they saw him Meyrachok - from far away. It means that in their minds he was distant - he was not a brother to them, he was foreign to them, he was an enemy to them. They despised him and wanted to kill him. Goshna is all about approaching together - that is what brings about the Geulah. That is why the haftorah for this parsha is from Yechezkel - taking two branches, one labeled Yehuda, one Yosef, and bringing them together - they fuse together. It symbolizes the original split of the Jewish people by the rivalry of the brothers, and then the miraculous reunion of the brothers that would ultimately bring about the geulah. That is Vayigashu. Yosef tells the brothers to hurry up and settle in the land of Goshen, the land of approach - and they would be close to him - but not just physically. It means that they would be close to each other in their hearts and mind in a reunification. Why was Yaacov saying Shema when he reunites with Yosef? **Rav Alpert** says that this was the perfect time to say Shema. When the shechina left Yaacov for 22 years he felt that there must have been some defect in his children; they responded with the words of Shema, that they are all reunited and complete with Hashem. We see that when the Jews are not together, when the subjects of the king are in civil war with each other, then the king is not really the king - it is a messed up kingdom. The greatness of the king is to unify the nation under him. That is kabalos ol malchus shamayim. When we are one, then the kingdom is one, When Yaacov realized they were all together, that was kabalos ol malchus shamayim, that would bring about the Moshiach.