



אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL פרשת ויגש

כ"ז כסלו תשפ"ה 4.1.25

1

How are you? How was your Chanukah? What light did you take from it into your life? This week's parsha is Parshat Vayigash, we are coming towards the end of the Book of Genesis, and it's very moving.

After many years of separation, an emotional reunion finally takes place between Yosef and his brothers. During the meeting, the brothers are frightened. They regret selling Yosef and realize their sin. But Yosef calms them and explains that it was God who sent him to Egypt, telling them: "Now do not be distressed or reproach yourselves because you sold me here; it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you." In other words: you don't run the world, God does. If He caused me to come here, it was "for sustenance," for a good and important purpose, to ensure food for all of us.

2

This isn't just a historical story; there's a message for us: our family is the entire Jewish people, and we need to maintain unity and love between us.

3

Wherever Yosef went, he found for himself a role and a mission. Even when things were difficult for him, he understood that in every situation a Jew needs to be proud of their identity, to be happy, and to spread light. This is also the theme of our story this week.

4

A STORY FOR SHABBAT

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BEING "STUCK"

Many years ago, a women's conference was held in Detroit, Michigan. About 20 participants flew in to attend the conference and were supposed to fly back to New York on Friday at 2 p.m. But that day a huge snowstorm blanketed the city and the airport was closed. All the planes were grounded, and no flight was allowed to take off. Now, this story took place in the days before cellphones. Miriam Pupak, the conference organizer, went to a pay phone, inserted a few coins, and called their rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. When the rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, answered the phone, Miriam said to him: "We don't know what to do; we're stuck in Detroit and won't be able to make it back home on time for Shabbos."

Rabbi Klein told her to wait a minute as he relayed her message to the rebbe. Then he returned to the phone and said: "The Rebbe would like to know what you mean by the word, "stuck"? Miriam began to explain the meaning of the word, when Rabbi Klein stopped her in the middle and said, "The Rebbe knows the meaning of this word. But he wants to send you the following message: 'A Jew is never stuck. Even if you find yourself at an airport in Detroit, you aren't stuck. There must be a reason for you to be there.'"

The telephone conversation ended. Miriam gathered all the women and told them what she had heard from the Rebbe. They immediately understood the message. Within a few seconds, the women took out small kits of Shabbat candles from their suitcases and began approaching Jewish women at the airport, asking them if they would like to light Shabbat candles. In the end, their flight did take off, but there are women in the U.S. today who are still lighting Shabbat candles thanks to a group of women who were "stuck" in Detroit.

(From the "Ligdol" book series)

Food for Thought

Try to remember this story next time you feel "stuck." Any time your program is postponed, or your schedule doesn't go according to plan, check whether there might be something special for you to discover, learn, or do in that specific place.





FROM THE DIARY OF A CHEMED STUDENT

Together in Learning:

The Spirit of Achrai B'Kodesh

I am a student at Yeshivat Amit Eliraz and a proud member of a group called Achrai B'Kodesh. This group is made up of students who are passionate about learning Torah. We add additional Torah study to our daily schedules during our free time, such as during breaks.

Achrai B'Kodesh includes students from 7th to 12th grade, with over 50 members, including two rabbis. Sometimes, we enjoy fun activities, such as tours or two-day trips across the country. On our last trip, we had a learning session, and afterward, we sang together at one of the stops. You can see a photo of it below. In Parshat Vayigash, Yosef reveals his true identity to his brothers. Yosef forgives his brothers and brings the family back together. This moment teaches us about the importance of connection and unity, even after times of separation. In our group, we try to build strong connections through Torah learning, uniting students of all ages and supporting each other.

David M, 10th grade



Around the Shabbat Table

- What makes us feel "at home"? Is it the physical place, or perhaps the small things like the White Wagtail or blooming cyclamens? Can you think of things that help you feel at home?
- Does the weather affect your mood? If yes, how?

FROM THE DIARY OF A SHLICHA

Batya Keller, an educational Shlicha at the school SAR in New York, writes to us as follows:

Did you know that the White Wagtail - the small and beautiful black-and-white bird that comes to Israel every autumn and heralds the coming of winter - doesn't come to America? Did you know that for most Jewish children in America, the date of the 7th of Cheshvan means nothing? This is the special day when we begin to pray for blessed rain in Israel. Did you know there's a song in English with the words:

"Rain, rain, go away..." because

only here in America can rain fall in summer while playing in a playground or on a tent we set up while camping. Can you imagine children in Israel singing such a song when they rejoice over every drop of water?



Last year, when temperatures dropped

below zero and everything was grey and gloomy, my husband flew to Israel and put on his uniform. We would wake up every morning to near darkness, dress warmly, and dream of snow that would bring some magic and beauty to New York's winter days. Days pass by, I teach Hebrew to second graders, and the children learn well in school. And then one day, my husband - the brave soldier - tells us about the rain and cold, and also sends us a picture of him hiking and guarding in the Judean Hills. Immediately noticeable in the picture were the pink cyclamen flowers covering all the hills around him. It reminded me of how beautiful winter is in Israel. A few days of rain and everything blooms and turns green. While everything here is grey - in Israel nature is full of color. A tear of longing rolled from my eye. And great joy for the beauty that awaits us when we return.



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
נשמת החיילים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואייל טויטו הי"ד



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