

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!



Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
VAYIGASH 5778

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

# בְּשִׁיטְיָחָ

## Mistaken Meaning

**P**arshas Vayigash opens with Yehudah reviewing all of the misfortune the *Shevatim* suffered at the hands of Yosef. Indeed, one may wonder, what did Yosef gain from making his brothers suffer - why not tell them who he is immediately? The *Medrash*<sup>1</sup> explains that the purpose of the ruse was for the benefit of the brothers! Yosef wanted to eradicate any bad feelings that the brothers and Yosef had. By forcing the brothers to show their willingness to battle for one of their own, they showed Yosef that they truly cared for one another. And by showing the brothers that despite his power, he chose not to harm them, Yosef showed that he harbored no ill will.

Later, when Yosef reveals himself, the *Pasuk* states<sup>2</sup>, "The brothers were unable to respond to Yosef because they were so bewildered," and the *Medrash*<sup>3</sup> explains that they were dumbfounded because they realized their error (likely referring to the sale of Yosef). The *Alter* of Novordhak (Reb Yosef Yoizel Horwitz, 1847-1919) is puzzled by the reaction of the brothers.<sup>4</sup> True, it is shocking that Yosef is standing in front of them, but what was their error? At the time of their decision to sell Yosef, they weighed all of the factors, and decided that according to *Halacha*, he is to be sold. The fact that Hashem orchestrated events to save Yosef doesn't change the facts they knew at the time of Yosef's sale!

Reb Yosef Yoizel, explains that what actually shocked them was their realization that *recent* events were for their good. Ever since they came down to *Mitzraim*, they were treated poorly by the viceroy. Threatened, imprisoned, and now potential slavery. They didn't understand what was happening to them. Why were they going through this? And then, in a flash, they understood with clarity that everything that was done for their own good. They were embarrassed by their realization of how thoroughly they misunderstood what was really going on.

Sometimes we go through events that leave us wondering - why am I going through this? Some of us get into arguments, and don't understand why others don't see things our way. And we don't all have the "I am Yosef" moment that gives us the clarity we want. Recognizing the possibility that we have misinterpreted events can give us the strength to get through difficult times, and can allow us to admit when we were wrong.

1 *Medrash Rabbah* 93:9, Rav S. R. Hirsch *Bereishis* 42:9

2 *Bereishis* 45:3

3 *Medrash Rabbah* 93:10

4 *Madreigos Ha'Adom, Darchei Chaim Perek* 5

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have the "I am  
Yosef" moment  
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clarity we want.**

### *Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step*

Have you ever gotten into an argument where you were sure you were right? Perhaps raised your voice, and got red in the face? And then in the middle of it all, the realization, "Uh-oh! I'm making a mistake!" How embarrassed and foolish we feel when that happens!

We all have had those moments where we were certain we understood something, only to realize that we totally missed the boat. Remembering that we can make mistakes is a great way to avoid arguments in the future.

This also helps when learning with someone. Sometimes, in our eagerness to get our point across, we don't even listen to what the other person is saying. Again, remembering that we can make mistakes will allow us to be more receptive to the thoughts of others.

When two people are sure they are right, there is a 50-50 chance one of them is wrong. Understanding that person may be you can prevent a lot of heartache.

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# FALLING ON DEAF EARS

*The Other Side of the Story* is a wonderful book published by Mesorah publications. It is full of situations that turned out to be different than what they appeared to be at first. All of the stories are excellent, below is one such story.

Mr. Abrams and his son Avi were guests of Mr. Berger, Avi's father-in-law. That Shabbos morning, Isaac Berger was happy to be able to introduce Mr. Abrams to his friends at shul. Of course, Mr. Abrams and his son sat next to Mr. Berger, who was a very prominent member of the shul and had seats right near the front.

*Krias HaTorah* was almost over, and it was time for the Rabbi to speak. For Mr. Abrams, this was going to be one of the highlights of the Shabbos, since the Rabbi was known to be a very gifted speaker.

Before the Rabbi rose, Mr. Berger suddenly noticed that Mr. Abrams and his son-in-law had picked themselves up and moved over to the other side of the shul. His surprise turned to anger, especially when his friend sitting behind him tapped him on the shoulder and asked jokingly, "Hey Isaac - what happened to Mr. Abrams? Is he mad at you?"

Embarrassed and annoyed, Mr. Berger thought, I don't know if he's mad at me, but I'm sure mad at him.

Mr. Abrams and his son were captivated by the Rabbi's speech, but Mr. Berger didn't enjoy a word. After shul, he made his way to the door, and Mr. Abrams and his son quickly followed after him.

"Good Shabbos," beamed Mr. Abrams to Mr. Berger as they walked out together. Mr. Berger was silent. Mr. Abrams kept up a steady stream of comments. As they walked home, Mr. Berger was still so distracted and annoyed that he almost missed hearing Mr. Abrams say, "It was a good thing that I remembered at the last minute to change my seat. I'm deaf in one ear so I had to move to the other side of the shul to be able to hear from my good ear."

And it's a good thing I kept my mouth shut, thought Mr. Berger, as he smiled back at Mr. Abrams.

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## DID YOU KNOW?

- Life can be even more difficult after doing *Teshuvah*. Once a person has recognized their sins, Hashem is now doing the next step in eradicating the stain.<sup>1</sup>
- Not only do life's difficulties help a person spiritually, but there is always an aspect of our challenges that help us physically as well.<sup>2</sup>
- We rarely know the true reasons and motivations behind others' actions. One who judges others favorably are themselves judged favorably from Heaven.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Beis Elokim L'Mabit Sha'ar HaTeshuva Perek 2*

<sup>2</sup> *Chidushei HaLev Devarim* p. 242

<sup>3</sup> *Shabbos 127b, Sefer Shmiras HaLashon Sha'ar HaTevunah Perek 4*