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# DAF KESHER

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## DVAR TORAH TWO ATHLETES

The Midrash uses a very striking metaphor to describe the confrontation between Yehudah and Yosef at the beginning of Vayigash: “Reish Lakish compared them to two athletes wrestling with each other. When one of them sensed that he was going to be defeated he said to himself, ‘Now he is going to beat me and I will be embarrassed in front of everyone.’ What did he do? He kissed the other on the hands and the bigger athlete’s anger subsided. Similarly, Yosef, when he felt that Yehudah’s anger was rising, was afraid of being embarrassed before all of the Egyptians. Immediately he said to his brothers, ‘I am Yosef your brother,’ and they were not able to respond to him” (Midrash Tanchuma Vayigash, Section 3).

The same Midrash quotes a verse in Mishlei to describe Yosef’s diffusion of Yehudah’s brewing anger: “The King’s anger is like messengers of death, but the wise man neutralizes it” (Mishlei 16:14). “The king’s anger,” says the Midrash, “refers to Yehudah (from whom Jewish royalty descended), and ‘the wise man neutralizes it’ refers to Yosef. Concerning Yosef, the Torah (quoting Pharaoh) says, ‘There is none as wise and understanding as you’ (Bereishit 41:39). When Yosef saw that Yehudah’s anger grew intense, he said, ‘Now Egypt will be destroyed.’”

Alongside those who connect the Yehudah-Yosef confrontation with lofty dichotomies (like Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef, or the two directions in service of G-d that Yosef and Yehudah each represent), there are those who make a straightforward reading of this episode, learning from it how to deal with conflict and anger. These latter readings of the Yehudah and Yosef conflict leave us with some very down-to-earth lessons about dealing with interpersonal conflicts and managing anger.

Harav Henoch Lebowitz, זצ"ל, (1918-2008, Rosh Yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim Yeshiva in Queens, NY) offers one such lesson in an article in his *Chidushei Halev* on Vayigash (pp. 259-260). He asks: Why does the Midrash praise Yosef so highly for “kissing the hands” of the “stronger athlete” when he saw that he was going to lose the battle? Even someone of average intelligence would drop out of a conflict if he saw he was losing and continuing would bring destruction; why was Yosef considered such a “wise man” for prematurely revealing himself to his brothers?

Rav Henoch’s answer is simple. Argument, conflict – machloket – arouses a drive to continue arguing even after the battle has effectively been lost. Seemingly normal people find it very difficult to back down even though they realize continuing their struggle is pointless. It takes special wisdom to bring out the inner strength to stop a machloket from snowballing. Yosef teaches us that power to break out of conflict at the right moment.

The Maharal (Harav Yehudah Loewe, זצ"ל, 1525-1609 – in his *Gur Aryeh* commentary on Devarim 25:1) compares machloket to “a dam that has burst open that, even though it started to flow slowly, eventually becomes a powerful, unstoppable flow.” Even those concerned about righteousness, justice, and truth, can get swept away during a machloket. Yosef teaches us the wisdom of breaking away.

Also in this week’s Daf Kesher: Source Guide – “I Will Come Back up with You” – “The Unity of Yehudah and Yosef,” by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky

## SOURCE GUIDE: I WILL COME BACK UP WITH YOU

Hashem's words to Yaakov before he descended to Egypt – I will descend with you to Egypt and I will surely bring you up – were not merely reassuring. According to the author of the Beit Halevi they signaled a major new stage in how Hashem would relate to the Jewish People and the world. This source guide follows the Beit Halevi's presentation as he outlines this fundamental principle in Jewish thought.

### A. I Will Descend with You and Come Back up with You

Hashem spoke to Yaakov in Beer Sheva, immediately before his descent to Egypt during the Great Famine:

<p><b>1. Bereishit 46:1-4</b></p> <p>(1) Yisrael and all that was his travelled. And he came to Beer Sheva and offered sacrifices to the G-d of his father Yitzchak.</p> <p>(2) G-d said to Yisrael in visions of the night – He said: “Yaakov, Yaakov!” And he said, “Here I am.”</p> <p>(3) He said: “I am the G-d, G-d of your father. Do not fear going down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.</p> <p>(4) I will descend with you to Egypt and I will surely bring you up, and Yosef will place his hand on your eye (provide for all of your needs).”</p>	<p><b>בראשית מו:א-ד</b></p> <p>(א) וַיֵּסַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיָּבֹא בְּאֶרֶץ שֶׁבַע וַיִּזְבַּח זִבְחִים לְאֱלֹהֵי אָבִיו יִצְחָק.</p> <p>(ב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַרְאֵת הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי.</p> <p>(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱנֹכִי הֵקֵל אֲלֵי אָבִיךָ אֵל תִּירָא מִרְדֵּה מִצְרַיִם כִּי לֹגִי גָדוֹל אֲשִׁימָךְ שָׁם.</p> <p>(ד) אֲנֹכִי אֲרַד עִמָּךְ מִצְרַיִם וְאֲנִי אֶעֱלֶךָ גַּם עֲלֵה וְיוֹסֵף יָדוּ עַל עֵינֶיךָ.</p>
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The author of the Beit Halevi on the Chumash (Harav Yosef Dov Ber Soloveitchik, זצ"ל, 1820-1892, Brisk, Lithuania) helps us appreciate the enormity of the Divine message to Yaakov. It goes way beyond reassuring Yaakov, who is worried about leaving Israel and relocating his family in Egyptian society:

<p><b>2. Beit Halevi on the Torah, Bereishit 46:3</b></p> <p>The intent of this verse is that the greatest of all promises now comes to Yaakov, that His Name will be called upon (linked up with) Israel.</p>	<p><b>בית הלוי על התורה בראשית מו:ג</b></p> <p>כוונת הכתוב דכאן באה לו ההבטחה הגדולה שבכל ההבטחות, שיהיה נקרא שמו על ישראל.</p>
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He elaborates:

<p><b>3. Beit Halevi on the Torah, Bereishit 46:3</b></p> <p>This means that He will never publicize His glorious Name in the world through a supernatural act unless it is for the sake of Israel's salvation. Through the salvation of Israel His glorious Name will be publicized throughout the world.</p>	<p><b>בית הלוי על התורה בראשית מו:ג</b></p> <p>והכוונה בזה דלעולם לא יפרסם שם כבודו בעולם ע"י מעשה היוצא חוץ מדרך הטבע רק באמצעות צורך ישועתן של ישראל, וע"י ישועת ישראל יתפרסם שם כבודו בכל העולם.</p>
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There are two aspects to this principle. Not only does Hashem reveal His Name when he acts miraculously to save Israel; His Name is also hidden when Israel is in a lowly state:

<p><b>4. Beit Halevi on the Torah, Bereishit 46:3</b></p> <p>And (conversely) in any event or time when Israel will, G-d forbid, be in a lowly state, His Honor will automatically be hidden and concealed. This is what is meant by “I will descend with you to Egypt.” For as long as you will be in descent, My Honor is not revealed in the world. This is what is meant metaphorically as “He descended with them to Egypt.” This is in line with the verse, “I (Hashem) am with him in distress” (Tehillim 91:15). When I will bring you up [from Egypt], then through your going up My Name will also become well-known among the nations and it will be for My honor.</p>	<p><b>בית הלוי על התורה בראשית מו:ג</b></p> <p>ובכל מעשה ובכל זמן שיהיו ישראל בשפלות חלילה ממילא יהיה גם כבודו בהסתר ובהעלם, וז"ש לו "אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה," דכל זמן שאתה תהיה בירידה גם כבודי אינו נגלה בעולם, וזהו שנקרא בדרך משל שירד עמו למצרים, ע"ד מאה"כ "עמו אנכי בצרה" (תהלים צא:טו). "ואנכי אעלך גם עלה." כשאהיה מעלה אותך אז ע"י עלייתך יתפרסם גם שמי בכל הגוים ויהיה עליה לכבודי.</p>
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<p><b>5. Tehillim 91:15</b></p> <p>He will call me [says Hashem] and I will answer him 'I am with</p>	<p><b>תהילים צא:טו</b></p> <p>יְקַרְאֵנִי וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ עִמּוֹ אֲנִי בְּצָרָה אֲחַלְצֶהוּ וְאֶכְבְּדֶהוּ.</p>
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him in distress.' I will release him and bring him honor.

Hashem has, so to speak, linked Himself up with Israel's fate. As this verse in Tehillim expresses it, Hashem's Presence is with Israel. The source for this, says the Beit Halevi, is the following passage from the Yerushalmi:

**6. Yerushalmi Taanit 2:6**

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish quoted Rabbi Yanai, who said: The Holy One, blessed be He, joined His great Name up with Israel.

**ירושלמי תענית ב:ו**

רבן שמעון בן לקיש בשם רבי ינאי שיתף הקדוש ברוך הוא שמו הגדול בישראל.

Reish Lakish elucidates through a parable:

**7. Yerushalmi Taanit 2:6**

[This is like] a king who had the key to a little treasure chest. The king said: If I leave it as is it will get lost. Rather, I am going to make it a chain so if it gets lost the chain will reveal it. Thus said the Holy One, blessed be He: If I leave Israel as they are, they will be absorbed among the gentiles. Rather, I will connect My Great Name with them so they stay alive. What is the idea underlying [Yehoshua's prayer] "The Canaanite and all of the inhabitants of the Land will hear and will turn against us and cut off our name from the Land, and what will You do to Your Great Name?" – for He is joined up with us. Immediately: "Hashem said to Yehoshua 'Stand yourself up'" (Yehoshua 9:9). What you just mentioned ('What will you do with Your Great Name?') stood (the Gemara builds on the absence of a ך in the word קם for you (was accepted).

**ירושלמי תענית ב:ו**

למלך שהיה לו מפתח של פלמנטריא קטנה. אמר המלך אם אני מניח כמות שהיא אבידה היא. אלא, הריני עושה לה שלשלת שאם אבדה השלשלת תהא מוכחת עליה. כך אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אם מניח אני את ישראל כמות שהם, נבלעין הן בין העכו"ם. אלא, הרי אני משתף שמי הגדול בהם והן חיים. מה טעמא, "וישמעו הכנעני וכל יושבי הארץ ונסבו עלינו והכריתו את שמינו מן הארץ ומה תעשה לשמך הגדול?" – שהוא משותף בנו. מיד "ויאמר ה' אל יהושע קום לך." קם לך ההוא דאדכרת.

Linking His Presence with Israel's welfare ensures their safety and continuity. Yehoshua incorporated this into his prayer, and it brought about a Divine response.

Hashem revealed His Honor through His triumph over the Egyptian army at the Yam Suf, the Reed Sea. Hashem told Israel to retreat, luring Pharaoh and the Egyptian army to pursue. When Hashem saved Israel through the splitting of the Sea – the paradigm of overt miracles – His Name, His Revelation became world-known:

**8. Shemot 14:1-4**

- (1) Hashem said to Moshe, saying:
- (2) "Speak to the Children of Israel and they should return and encamp before Pi Hachiroth, between Migdol and the Sea before Baal Tzefon; they should encamp opposite the Sea.
- (3) And Pharaoh will say about the Children of Israel: 'They are confused in the land; the desert has closed in on them.'
- (4) And I will strengthen the heart of Pharaoh and he will pursue them and I will become honored through Pharaoh and all of his army, for I am Hashem." And they did so.

**שמות יד:א-ד**

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר.  
(ב) דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּשׁוּבוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ לִפְנֵי פִי הַחִירֹת בֵּין מִגְדֹל וּבֵין הַיָּם לִפְנֵי בַעַל צְפֹן נִכְחוּ תַחְנוּ עַל הַיָּם.  
(ג) וְאָמַר פַּרְעֹה לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְכִים הֵם בְּאֶרֶץ סֹנַר עָלֵיהֶם הַמַּדְבָּר.  
(ד) וַחֲזַקְתִּי אֶת לֵב פַּרְעֹה וַרְדֵף אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֶכְבְּדָה בַּפַּרְעֹה וּבְכָל חֵילוֹ וַיַּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי ה' וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן.

**B. Sanctifying the Divine Name**

This fundamental principle taught in our Parshah and echoed by the verse in Tehillim and the Yerushalmi – that Hashem has linked His Name and His Honor to the People of Israel – leaves the Jewish People with a high level of responsibility. We are Hashem's representatives in this world. Our positive actions cause a Kiddush Hashem, a sanctification of the Divine Name, and, G-d forbid, opposite actions can have the opposite effect. The mitzvah to love Hashem includes, "that the Divine Name should become beloved" through us when they see how a person associated with G-d acts (Yoma 86a). The ultimate Kiddush Hashem is through the final redemption, when "I will sanctify My Name that was defiled among the nations" and Hashem will bring His People back to His Land, they will serve Him, and His Presence will dwell among them (Yechezkel 36:23-27).

## THE UNITY OF YEHUDAH AND YOSEF BY RABBI SHAYA KARLINSKY

The emotional confrontation between Yehudah and Yosef that opens this week's Parshah is the culmination of a fundamental dichotomy that began with the confrontation between Yaakov and Esav. That conflict created a tension within the Jewish People when Yaakov acquired Esav's birthright and blessings.

The conflict was about the proper path in avodat Hashem, the service of G-d. Is G-d best served by man's involvement in activities which, by their very nature, are holy and elevated – prayer, Torah study, Divinely legislated commandments, tefillin, matzah, shofar – or is G-d better served by man's interaction and confrontation with the material, physical world, where man can impose upon it a dimension of holiness, extracting from it the Divine potential that exists within everything that G-d created?

Is the highest level of service performed in the confines of the beit midrash and beit kneset or by confronting the outside mundane, if not profane, world, and imposing upon it a level of sanctity?

Yehudah, Levi, Yissachar, and the children of Leah represented the former; Yosef, the son of Rachel, represented the latter. Yosef's descent to Egypt, his confrontation with, and his position of power in that foreign culture, while maintaining absolute fidelity to the values he received from his father was a supreme spiritual accomplishment. But the dangers were great, and one of lesser inner perfection would surely have failed. This was the root of the opposition of his brothers to such a path.

The Midrash teaches us that this conflict is ongoing throughout Jewish history. It says that the verse “ אחד באחד יגשו – One collided with another” (Iyov 41:8) refers to the confrontation between Yehudah and Yosef.

The ultimate resolution is prophecized in this week's Haftarah: “ כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי ה' הִנֵּה אָנִי לֹקֵחַ אֶת עֵץ יוֹסֵף וְאֶת עֵץ יְהוּדָה וְהָיִיתִי בְיָמַי כְּעֵץ יוֹסֵף וְהָיִיתִי כְּעֵץ יְהוּדָה וְעָשִׂיתִם לְעֵץ אֶחָד וְהָיִיתִי אֶחָד בְּיָמַי – Thus proclaims G-d: I am taking the stick of Yosef and I will place upon it the stick of Yehudah and I will unite them in my hand” (Yechezkel 37:19).

Ultimately, the Jewish People is charged with serving G-d in many dimensions. There are members of the Nation who must focus their service in the realm of the exclusively holy and elevated, and there are others who must be involved in sanctifying the mundane and physical. The requirement to succeed in this type of service is a deep connection to sanctity and holiness as a foundation. It is not coincidental that Yosef was known as “Yosef Hatzaddik.” Each Jew will have parts of his own life – or even his day – where he must serve in one dimension or the other. The messianic vision of this week's Haftarah is the unity and integrity – whether on a national or on a personal level – of these complementary dimensions of our service of G-d.

### שבת שלום ומבורך

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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:  
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, Hebrewbooks.org, and the Tanach section of Chabad.org.

**We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.**