

Kriyat HaTorah Companion 2.0

Questions Raised in Each Aliya

Vayigash

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Shabbat Shalom

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Aliya 1 | 44:18-30

Examine verse 44:18.

What is Yehuda achieving in his aggressive approach of Yosef? What does he find troubling in Yosef's disposition towards the brothers?

Rashi suggests that in comparing Yosef to Pharaoh, he was suggesting that just as God had shown Pharaoh previously that it was inappropriate to kidnap Sarah, so too it would be inadvisable to kidnap Binyamin. The **Sforno** suggests that Yehuda was trying to communicate to Yosef that his objections were not personal in nature but political. As an extension of the political leadership of Egypt, Yehuda wanted Yosef to understand that his actions in kidnapping Binyamin would be politically unacceptable. The **Da'at Zkenim** suggests that Yehuda was confused by Yosef's desire to keep Binyamin. Would it not make more sense to expel a thief than to keep one?

Aliya 2 | 44:31-45:7

Examine verses 44:31-32.

Why does Yehuda stand out from his brothers in this way? What is the concern for the health of their father?

Rashi suggests that Yehuda was making the case to Yosef that he gave his word to his father to protect Binyamin and therefore he has much more to lose than his brothers. Yehuda would lose his "life" in this world and the World to Come, should he violate his vow to protect Binyamin. The **Sforno** suggests that it was Yehuda's guarantee that would jeopardize Ya'akov's life. When Yehuda returns without Binyamin at this side, Ya'akov would assume the worst before Yehuda could offer any explanation. Without Binyamin by Yehuda's side, Ya'akov will assume something fatal happened to Binyamin.

Aliya 3 | 45:8-18

Examine verse 45:8.

What is Yosef's intention here? Is it not the case that the brothers sent Yosef to Egypt?

The **Sforno** suggests that Yosef is stating in this verse that with hindsight it is possible to realize that God played a role in every step of this process, even that which seemed to be driven by the brothers' hatred. The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that Yosef was justifying the brothers' actions. He was concerned that their relationship would be defined by the hatred the brothers felt all those years ago. By assisting the brothers in realizing that their actions were fulfilling the destiny of Jewish history, they can realize that the hatred they felt in their hearts for Yosef was all part of a master plan and did not define them. *It seems like Yosef was trying to assuage the brothers of any guilt they may be feeling.*

Aliya 4 | 45:19-27

Examine verse 45:19.

What is the command recorded in this verse? How is it different from the command recorded in 45:17?

Rashi says that this command is restated to encourage Yosef to explain to his brothers that this is the wish of Pharaoh. The **Rashbam** suggests that this was a remarkable and unique command of Pharaoh. Sending Egyptian animals out of Egypt was unheard of, and so Pharaoh had to make an explicit and enthusiastic command to do so. The **Ohr HaChaim** echoes the theme of the **Rashbam** by suggesting that it was not a big deal to send an entourage to get Ya'akov. That being said, sending the wagons would require explicit permission from Pharaoh, which was done in these verses.

One has to consider to significance of these wagons both to Egypt, Yosef, & Ya'akov.

Aliya 5 | 45:28-46:27

Examine verse 46:1.

Why does Ya'akov stop in Be'er Sheva to offer sacrifices? Why does he invoke only his father, Yitzchak, and not Avraham?

Rashi suggests that the imperative to honor one's father is greater than honoring one's grandfather and therefore Ya'akov invoked his father's name. The **Rashbam** points out that this was continuing a tradition of building altars in the same place as your father. Just as Yitzchak built an altar there (26:25), so too Ya'akov builds an altar there. **Rabbeinu Bahya** suggests that while Ya'akov was in exile he could not experience God the way Yitzchak did through *Gevura*. Now that he was being reunited with Yosef and he could look back on the many hardships in his life and understand the reason behind them, he could relate to his father's relationship with God, that of *Gevura*.

Aliya 6 | 46:28-47:10

Examine verse 46:28.

Why does Ya'akov send Yehuda before him into Goshen? What is Yehuda supposed to do there?

Rashi suggests that Ya'akov sends Yehuda first to set up a place of Torah study. Alternatively, Yehuda goes first to prepare a place for Ya'akov to live comfortably. The **Sforno** suggests that Yehuda is sent first to begin construction on a suitable home for Ya'akov and his family to live in. **Rabbeinu Bahya** understands this verse in two ways. The centrality of Torah study was a point of pride for Ya'akov and he had been relieved to see that it was still important to Yosef (see **Rabbeinu Bahya** 46:28 on how Ya'akov knew it was still important to Yosef) so he asked Yehuda to establish a Torah center in Goshen. Also, Ya'akov saw an opportunity to create peace between Yehuda and Yosef through their shared love of Torah.

Aliya 7 | 47:11-27

Examine verses 47:11-12.

What is the extent to which Yosef provided for his family? How does the description of verse 12 inform us about it?

Rashi suggests that Yosef differentiated what he provided each member of his family, so that even the littlest of children has food they would eat. The **Sforno** suggests that even though Yosef could allocate great wealth and much food to his family, he only provided them as much as they needed and no more. During a time of famine, when the greater population is suffering, it is inappropriate for those with political connections to live lavish lifestyles. The **Radak** suggests that children don't eat established meals, they eat throughout the day, so Yosef enabled the children of his family to have access to food outside of meal times.

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