

Tell a story
Parsha Vayigash
by Julie Zhuk on 2025-01-04

We left off in last week's Parsha that Benjamin has been left in the company of Joseph and the brothers were able to go back home to Jacob. Before leaving, Judah begs Joseph to let Benjamin be released and him, Judah be taken instead in his place. He would feel much better and this way he would keep the promise he made to his father. After all he had promised his father that he would watch over Benjamin and he would keep him safe. Joseph watches how Judah gives up Benjamin and offers himself and he is in awe at first. He is in awe at Judah's loyalty. This causes Joseph to decide instantly to give himself up and reveal to his brothers who he is. Right then and there he decides, here goes nothing and he reveals himself. After doing so he asks if their father is alive. So much time has passed so he doesn't know.

This week's Parsha the brothers have already been reunited, but this time the focus is on Joseph letting them know who he really is. He will tell them that he is the true Joseph and why everything happened the way it did. Joseph knows that all of this time, they have been thinking he has been a non-Jew such as the other Egyptians and Pharaoh himself. The brothers are in for a surprise in this Parsha. The biggest surprise is going to be for their father Jacob, for he has been long thinking that Joseph had died. We have to remember that Jacob saw the evidence with the multi-colored coat filled with blood from the animal of a goat. When Jacob sees Joseph in this Parsha and the brothers find out that their brother Joseph is who he really is, twenty years will have gone by. Most importantly, Jacob stayed observant to the Torah. Joseph didn't assimilate himself into the Egyptian culture. Joseph retained his identity and raised his family, raising his two sons Ephraim and Menashe to be faithful to the Jewish way of life. Furthermore, Joseph's grandchildren that consist of Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac stayed faithful to the Jewish way of life.

Jacob saw some wagons that Joseph had sent over, it was a private sign. Joseph remembered the last portion that Jacob had been studying and many years had passed before his abduction all those years ago. We learn in this week's Parsha the Hebrew word for wagon is agalah. It also has the same root as the word as eglah meaning calf. Jacob realized that Joseph had been studying a portion of the Torah, the story of an unsolved murder and the atonement that was achieved through a ceremony involving a calf. Not only does Jacob see Joseph physically in this Parsha, but he also sees him alive spiritually. The brothers shared with Joseph that yes their father was alive and then they started to feel really awful for their actions of what they did to Joseph. They were very apologetic towards Joseph, but he stopped them. Joseph told them, that it wasn't the brothers who sent them to Egypt.

G-d was the reason why he ended up going through being in the pit and then the prison that Potiphar had him in for 12 years and then making his way to being a viceroy, and then finally making it to the top in Egypt. Joseph's main message to his brothers was everything happened because G-d had a plan for him. G-d said to Joseph, "Fear not to go down to Egypt, I will make from you a great nation. I will go down with you to Egypt. And I will also surely bring you up again. Joseph helped keep Egypt stay strong as a country by selling food and seed during the time of the famine. In return, Pharaoh gave Joseph's family lived in Goshen.