

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vayigash 5784

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Yehuda vouches for Binyamin and redeems himself.

**כִּי־אֵיךְ אֶעֱלֶה אֶל־אָבִי וְהַנְּעָר אֵינְנוֹ אִתִּי כִּן אֶרְאֶה בְּרֹעַ אֲשֶׁר יִמְצֵא אֶת־אָבִי:**

“Because how can I possibly go up to my father and the young man is not with me. Lest I shall see the evil that will find my father.” (Bereishis 44:34).

Why is the story repeated? What details are revealed in Yehuda’s recounting of the story that the Torah already said took place? Why does the Torah use the term flowery term of **אֵינְנוֹ אִתִּי** when it could say something more simply **אִי־נִשְׁמַר אִתִּי** not with me?

This is Yehuda’s redemption arc. He orchestrated the events that Yoseph was thrown in the pit and then eventually sold into slavery to Mitzrayim. After the tests and accusations made by Yoseph – as vizier – against the brothers, Yehuda finally gets it. He takes responsibility. That is why Yoseph was compelled to prematurely tell his brothers who he was – before the rest of the brothers established their proper motives. (Ibid 45:1).

Yehuda approaches. (Ibid 44:18). This is more than a physical movement. It is an emotional one. He “touches” Yoseph. He calls Yoseph an equal to Pharaoh. (Ibid). Yehuda acknowledged that when he bowed to Yoseph he considered that bowing to the ultimate authority – the actual king. He now recognized the dream. He figured out who he was talking to and what this was all about.

Yehuda is the first of his brothers – and the one most responsible – to admit to the truth. Yaakov, for his part, never believed Yoseph died. He considered Yoseph merely **אֵינְנוֹ אִתִּי** not with us. The brothers used that term about Yoseph when first meeting the vizier Yoseph (ibid 42:13) and then when they recounted to Yaakov what happened (ibid 42:32). Reuven used that term when he could not find Yoseph in the pit (ibid 37:30). Yaakov uses it when he says “Yoseph is no longer and Shimon is no longer.” (Ibid 42:36). Now, Shimon was merely in prison. Therefore, this term means “alive but not here.”

Yehuda then admits that if something happened to Binyamin it would be the brothers that sent their father to death, not this Egyptian ruler or anyone else. (Ibid 44:31). The fault will be square on their shoulders. Why would Binyamin’s slavery cause their father’s death? Yehuda says he cannot go back without Binyamin “lest he will see the untimely undoing of his father.” (Ibid 44:34). Why? Did Yaakov no longer believe in the dreams? Did he not believe that Yoseph was out there and the dreams will come true? Had Yaakov lost all faith? No.

Yehuda took responsibility for having Yoseph go missing and then took responsibility for his younger brother. His fate would be tied to finding Yoseph and whatever would happen to Binyamin. Why the taking on this responsibility? It was more than feeling guilty. It was belief. Yehuda now acknowledged that if all the children of Rochel go missing and are enslaved then the dreams may not come true. Yaakov would

give up on the dreams. Yoseph is already missing. If Binyomin is taken into slavery, too, then Yaakov will lose all hope. It was time for Yehuda to find Yoseph.

Our pasuk says, "How can I go up to my father, the young man is not with me." (Ibid 44:45). Naar - "young man" means an attendant or a single unmarried person. Clearly, by now Binyamin was a man in his late twenties. He was not a youth. It is, however, what Yoseph was termed when all this started. (Ibid 37:2). Yehuda is saying "How can I return from Egypt without returning with 'the Youth?'" He was not only on a quest to protect Binyamin but he had to find Yoseph, "the young man."

The last he knew, Yoseph was sold as a slave to Mitzrayim. Yehuda now submitted slavery because he knew this vizier was Yoseph. He wanted atonement. That was his concern now. Yes, Yaakov can still have faith that the dreams will come true so long as Yoseph and Binyamin were alive. However, Yehuda had to return with Yoseph. That is the only way to fully placate their father and rectify what he did.

By now Yehuda understood all the clues and hints. The food the vizier had prepared had no *gid hanashe*. (Ibid 43:16). He took the innocent Shimon as a slave. (Ibid 42:24). Shimon was not part of the sale as he and Levi were reporting back to their father on the incident of Shechem. (Ibid 34:30). Yoseph the vizier seated them in age order. (Ibid 43:33). He treated Binyamin special. (Ibid 43:34). These were all hints. Yehuda finally understood it. This vizier must be Yoseph and he was ready to be his slave.

Yoseph was moved by his admittance of guilt. Reuven – who told the brothers not to kill Yoseph – tried to take responsibility saying his sons' lives would be traded for Binyamin's. (Ibid 42:37). To that, Yaakov replied that more death did none of them any good. (Ibid 42:38). When Yehuda told Yaakov that they must bring Binyamin down to procure food, for the first time Yaakov challenges them asking why they mentioned Binyamin. The pasuk uses his title "Yisroel." (Ibid 43:6). This connotes them as a nation. Yisroel feared they trying to do away with Binyamin, too.

When taking surety of Binyamin, Yehuda said his recompense would be eternal sin against his father. He was taking responsibility of the sin against Yoseph and he would compound it if anything happened to Binyamin. (Ibid 43:9). This made Yisroel capitulate. They needed to survive (ibid 43:8) and Yehuda admitted to his guilt and asked for atonement. Yisroel then says, "Take your brother" calling Binyamin their brother not just "my son" (ibid 43:13) and uses the term Kel Shakkai when praying for them (ibid 43:14). Kel Shakkai is the term used for Hashem in relation to the brochos to Avram, Yitzchok, and Yisroel.

Yehuda tells Yoseph he finally gets it. "Your servant pledged himself for the young man." (Ibid 44:32). I pledged myself for Binyamin but also to you Yoseph, "the naar." The sin upon his head is for both of them. Yehuda openly admitted his guilt to Yoseph. "And now, establish (lit. settle) your servant in place of the young man as a slave to my master." (Ibid 44:34). If not, Yehuda could never return to his father. He would be ostracized and cast out of the family forever. (Ibid 44:35). The only way he could return is if Yoseph and Binyamin were with him. Or if he remained a slave but Yoseph and Binyamin returned home, he would still be part of the family. He conceded kingship to Rochel's children. At this, Yoseph capitulated.