

# Parasha Meditation Vayigash

**Bereishit 41:1–44:17**

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

## Reaching the Meeting Point of Contention

### Introduction:

#### Keeping our Inner Flame Alive

After Chanukah, when each of us has been invested with renewed strength of *emunah* (faith) and excitement for the mitzvot, we need to carry the message of Chanukah into the coldest winter month of Tevet. Now, when the warmth of Chanukah is especially needed, we read *Parashat Vayigash*, which is about keeping our inner flame alive, and bringing shalom (peace) into the fragmentation between the different segments of our people.

#### Entering the Meeting point of the Truest Divine Inner Self

The descent of Ya'acov's extended family into the darkest exile of Egypt was preceded by the fiery flame of Yehudah's soul confronting Yosef's inner fire. וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה – “Yehudah approached him...”<sup>1</sup> Yehudah penetrated the depths of Yosef's heart in order to convince him to release his brother Binyamin.<sup>2</sup> The word “Vayigash” means to draw near and to meet. The two different paths of archetypal Jewish leadership challenged and confronted each other until they both entered the meeting point of their very truest Divine inner self. This is true shalom, when each opponent draws out the very best from the other, in order to unite.

#### Making Inner Peace Between Our Conflicting Selves

רבי מאיר אומר אין ויגש אלא לשון שלום – Rabbi Meir says, there is no “Vayigash” except for the language of shalom.<sup>3</sup> We too need to access and confront the Yehudah and Yosef parts of our soul until we reach our inner truth where Hashem's light shines through. When we succeed to find inner peace between these contrary aspects of ourselves, we can bring light to our darkest exile and engender outer shalom between the fragmented Jewish leadership in our Land.

#### Reaching the Level of “Vayigash” – Drawing Near

*Sfat Emet*<sup>4</sup> explains that we are called יְהוּדִים / *Yehudim*, because we מוֹדִים / *modim* – admit that everything is from G\*d. This is what causes us to draw near. We need to clarify to ourselves that even in the midst of darkness there is life of the will of G\*d. When we nullify ourselves to the will of G\*d, during the times of darkness and *hester panim* (The hiding of Hashem's face), then we reach the level of וַיִּגַּשׁ / *vayigash* / “He drew near.”

<sup>1</sup> Bereishit 44:18.

<sup>2</sup> The *Mei Shiloach* on Parashat Vayigash.

<sup>3</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni Bereishit*, Chapter 43, Allusion 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Sfat Emet, Parashat Vayigash*, Year 1871.



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### Revealing the Inner Point (Tzion)

This is also called to draw near to Yosef, because Yosef is the inner point from Hashem. The *gematria* (numerical value) of the word Yosef is equal to the *gematria* of Tzion – 156. Tzion is the meeting point between *yesod* (foundation) and *malchut* (royalty).<sup>5</sup> This was indeed a very hard time for Yehudah, and his solution was to draw near to the inside of the matter, and accept G\*d's will with happiness. When we clarify that all is from G\*d, then its inner meaning is revealed. It states, "Yosef" who is the inner point, "could not refrain himself"<sup>6</sup> – and the inner point was revealed. It follows then "that every man was taken out etc.,"<sup>7</sup> because the exterior which conceals the interior became nullified.

### Taking Initiative to Approach

This week's *parasha* begins with the words, "*Vayigash Yehudah*" – "*Yehudah approached.*" He did not wait to be called. He took the initiative to do something. Similarly, each of us has to get out there and use some of the new potential we have acquired on Chanukah to bring about shalom in both our personal and broader world.

### Meditation:

Sit comfortably in your chair, take several deep breaths and relax.

1. Breathe in Hashem's life-giving light, breath out any tension from all the limbs of your body, starting with your head and finishing with your toes.
2. Allow your mind to drift as you go through the happenings of your day in your mind's eye. Which accomplishments did you achieve, and which hardships did you undergo? Did you deal with the challenges of your day the best you could, or did you fall short of acting according to your truth?
3. Allow all of the happenings of your day to glide through you and accept them all, even when you didn't live up to your fullest potential. Did you have a disagreement or confrontation with anyone today or in the last few days or weeks?
4. Allow your mind to focus on the last difficulty you experienced with another person. Think about why you felt/spoke/acted the way you did, where were you coming from?
5. Now let your mind shift to the person you interacted with. Why did he or she feel/speak/act that particular way? What kind of criticism did the other person have of your way? Make an effort to find the kernel of truth in the other person's approach.
6. Try to get in touch with your own weakness discovered by your "opponent," even if it hurts.
7. Breathe into the pain of your own incapability. Breathe in the word **שָׁא** – inhale **א/ga**, exhale **ששששששששששש/sshshshshshshsh**. Repeat four more times.

<sup>5</sup> The last two of the ten *Sefirot* through which Hashem manifests in the world.

<sup>6</sup> *Bereishit* 45:1.

<sup>7</sup> The continuation of the verse previously quoted.



# About Us



## **Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum**

*Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum, a native of Denmark, is Founder and Director of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Bible and Jewish Philosophy from Michlala Jerusalem College for Women, and a Masters of Art in Jewish History from Touro College. Chana Bracha also began her practice as a spiritual healer through Emuna, tefila and energy work.*

*For more than two decades Chana Bracha has taught Bible studies with special emphasis on women's issues in Israel and the United States. She creates curricula emphasizing women's spiritual empowerment through traditional Torah values. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin located in the Judean Hills of Israel offers a unique program to women of all ages and backgrounds to learn in a holistic Torah study environment that nurtures the mind, body and soul. Intensive textual study of Tanach, Halacha and Chassidut are woven together with creative spiritual expression, and connection with the land of Israel through organic gardening, herbology, Jewish sources of healing and sustainable living. Classes in Jewish mysticism, Chassidism and Jewish meditation are directed at the spiritual thirst so prominent in our times.*

*In 2010 Rebbetzin Chana Bracha published her first book, *Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*.*

*Chana Bracha has a married son and several granddaughters. She lives with her husband and younger son on the land of the Judean hills, Israel.*

*If you are interested in:*

*Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin contact [info@berotbatayin.org](mailto:info@berotbatayin.org) or in Spiritual Healing with Rebbetzin Chana Bracha, please contact her at [director@berotbatayin.org](mailto:director@berotbatayin.org)*

*or visit her blog: <http://rebbetzinchanabracha.blogspot.com/2010/11/emunah-healing-for-women.html>*

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At Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, we weave together Torah studies with creative spiritual expression, connecting with the Land of Israel, and healthy, organic lifestyles. In the heart of the Judean Hills, with its serene beauty, our students experience an approach to Judaism that bridges mind, body and soul. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin is designed as a micro-community within the Village of Bat Ayin where women of all ages and backgrounds engage in intense Torah learning as part of an integrated, participatory approach to Torah living.

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Beginner and advanced levels are offered for women of all ages and religious backgrounds. Whether your interest in Judaism has recently been ignited, or you are seeking a wider perspective, Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin offers the opportunity to improve your learning skills while strengthening your commitment to Judaism within the parameters of Halachah – all while engaging your inner creative spirituality, working the Land, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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