

# Parashat Vayigash

## פרשת מקץ

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## Holding onto God in the midst of our suffering

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 44:18-47:27

הפטרה: Ezekiel 37:15-37:28

הברית: Ephesians 2:1-10

החדשה

10 Triennial cycle: Bereshit / Genesis 44:18-45:27

One of the most memorable moments in the Story of Yoseph (Joseph), in this week's Parsha, Parashat Vayigash, is when Yoseph wept over his brothers forgiving them of their sin against him. *Bereshit / Genesis 45:2 He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. 45:3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me.' And they came closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 45:5 'Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. (NASB)* Yoseph's suffering was meant for good, to save and to preserve life. Yoseph understood that we cannot escape the trials and tribulations that come our way as believers and that it is imperative we hold on to what we know about God and worship Him in the midst of our suffering. Yoseph's testing and trials resulted in his testimony for the Lord, "...God sent me before you to preserve life."

### בראשית 45:1-5

בָּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִמָּצָא אֶת־אָבִי: וְלֹא־יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק מִה  
לְכָל הַנּוֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל־אִישׁ מֵעָלָי וְלֹא־  
עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוַדַּע יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֲחָיו: וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־קֶלֶוֹ  
2 כַּבְּדֵי וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה: וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף  
3 אֶל־אֲחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אִבִּי הִן וְלֹא־יָכֹלוּ אֲחָיו לַעֲנוֹת  
אִתּוֹ כִּי נִבְדָּלוּ מִפְּנָיו: וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֲחָיו נִשְׂוּנָא  
4 אֵלָי וַיִּנָּשׂוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי  
מִצְרַיִמָּה: וְעַתָּה וְאֶל־תַּעֲצְבוּ וְאֶל־יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי־  
5 מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הִנֵּה כִּי לְמַחְזָה שָׁלַחַנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֵיכֶם:

#### Bereshit / Genesis 45:1-5

45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, 'Have everyone go out from me.' So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 45:2 He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. 45:3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me.' And they came closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 45:5 'Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. (NASB)

30 Studying church history, a bishop named Polycarp of Smyrna lived in the  
second century from CE 69-155. It is believed that he was a disciple of the  
Apostle John. Polycarp suffered much for Yeshua, he died a martyr's death  
endured burning at the stake which failed, and then being stabbed to finish the  
35 failed burning attempt. There are many letters from the early believers that have  
survived from the second century, some of which were written only ten years after  
the Apostle John wrote his Gospel and the book of the Revelation of God around  
CE 95. One such letter is to and from Polycarp the leader of the ecclesia in  
Smyrna. The book of the Revelation of God, the last book in the Bible, mentions  
40 the believers in the ecclesia in Smyrna. *Hitgalut / Revelation 2:8 'And to the  
angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and  
has come to life, says this: 2:9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you  
are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are  
a synagogue of Satan. 2:10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the  
45 devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you  
will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the  
crown of life. 2:11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the  
churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'* (NASB) It is  
prophesied in *Hitgalut / Revelation 2:8-11* that persecution was to come to the  
ecclesia in Smyrna and according to history Polycarp was martyred for his faith at  
50 the age of 86. It is interesting to note that when John wrote *Hitgalut / Revelation*  
Polycarp would have been approximately 35 years old.

In *Hitgalut / Revelation 2:1-7*, God's love caused Him to exhort the  
Ephesians to repent and worship Him out of love. Similarly today, our worship is  
55 rooted in God's character and that our faithfulness is possible because He is  
faithful and true. Despite Yoseph's persecution, God was faithful and raised him  
up into a powerful position to save many lives. Even though Yoseph was in a  
position of power, he forgave his brothers for their sin against him. This  
demonstrates to us that Yoseph had a heart of compassion towards his brothers.  
60 Similarly, the persecution that was happening in Smyrna, the Lord told the  
believers that despite their poverty they were spiritually rich (*2:9*). God knows  
the hearts of those who are faithful and those who are deceitful. This is why  
Yoseph needed to test his brothers, to discern their hearts and to see if they had  
changed or grown spiritually over the years.

The portion of scriptures from the least two weeks covering Yoseph's life,  
65 and from *Hitgalut / Revelation 2*, the Word indicates that suffering is real.  
Yeshua himself experienced physical and spiritual suffering more painful than we  
can imagine. These scriptures urge us to be faithful during trials and persecution  
and to be merciful to those who persecute us. This kind of faithfulness is only  
possible by God's help and the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). Yeshua is our  
70 ultimate example of being faithful in suffering. His resurrection is a testimony to  
God's deliverance. This week's parsha teaches us that even though we can't  
escape the trials and persecutions that come our way, what we can do is hold on to  
what we know about God and worship Him in the midst of our suffering.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever