

PARSHAT VAYIGASH
GENESIS 44:18-47:27
5 TEVET 5782/12 DECEMBER 2021



Alios Itzhak (The World Stage: Israel)
Painting by Kehinde Wiley

REFRAMING

1. “Your sheaves gathered around and bowed low to my sheaf.” (Genesis 37:7)
“The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” (Genesis 37:9)
“Do me the kindness of mentioning me to Pharaoh, so as to free me from this *bayit*. For I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and I have not done anything here that they should have put me in the pit (*bor*). (Genesis 40:14-15)
“Let Pharaoh...organize the land of Egypt in the seven years of plenty.” (Genesis 41:34)

Leaving Pharaoh’s presence, Joseph traveled through all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:46)

2. “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you....God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.” (Genesis 45:4-8)

3. Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. (Viktor Frankl)

If our thinking is bogged down by distorted symbolic meanings, illogical reasoning and erroneous interpretations, we become, in truth, blind and deaf. We can intervene consciously about the interpretation that we make of things that happen to us. We can choose what to internalize about certain facts. (Aaron Beck)

Above all, during the interval, change from “ego orientation” to “task orientation.” While you can't control your experiences, you can control your explanations. Pessimistic labels lead to passivity, whereas optimistic ones lead to attempts to change. (Martin Seligman)

4. In celebrating Chanukah, we remind ourselves that our Jewish identity must not be grounded in biological descent but in a heroic commitment to a way of life. Our past, the memories we bring from the home we came from, are only the beginning stages of our spiritual self-understanding as Jews. How we live in the present and what we aspire for in the future must be the major sources nurturing our identity as Jews. (David Hartman)