

PARSHAT VAYIGASH
GENESIS 44:18-47:27
HAFTARAH EZEKIEL 37:15-28
5 TEVET 5786/25 DECEMBER 2025



Still Life with Violin and Pitcher
by Georges Braque

RING THE BELLS

1. “Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs.” (Genesis 15:13)
2. Joseph made himself strange to them. (Genesis 42:8)
3. Then Judah approached him (וַיִּגַּשׁ *vayigash*)... (Genesis 44:18)
וַיִּגַּשׁ - to draw near

4. “Then Judah approached him” (Genesis 44:18). “The design in a person’s mind are deep waters, an individual of understanding can draw them out” (Proverbs 20:5). “The design in a person’s mind are deep waters” refers to Joseph. But as much as Joseph was wise, Judah approached and overcame him, as it is said, “Then Judah drew near.” What does this resemble? A deep pit into which no one could climb down. Then a clever person came and brought a long rope that reached down to the water so he could draw from it. So was Joseph deep, and Judah came to draw the water. (Midrash Tanhuma)

5. “*Vayigash eilav*” (Genesis 44:18). To Joseph. But also to his own self. And also to God. He made no legal plea. Yet, since he accessed the reality of his narrative, salvation came to him, as in “Truth springs up from the earth” (Psalm 85:12). (Sefat Emet)

6. Joseph could no longer control himself (לִהְתְּאַפֵּק)... (Genesis 45:1)
 - לִהְתְּאַפֵּק - to hold, be strong; (reflexive form) to restrain oneself
 - לִפְיֵק - n., channel to contain water, streambed

7. He kissed all his brothers and wept (וַיִּבְכֶּה) upon them... (Genesis 45:15)
 - בכה – to weep in grief/joy/humiliation

...and after that his brothers could talk to him. (Genesis 45:15)

8. Ring the bells that still can ring
 Forget your perfect offering
 There is a crack, a crack in everything
 That’s how the light gets in
 (Leonard Cohen, “Anthem”)