



Parashat HaShavuah

בְּרֵאשִׁית

Bereishit (Genesis)
44:18-47:27 Vayigash
(And He Approached)

Understanding the Parsha

Genesis 44:18-47:27

We will Learn how to

- 1) interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) make thematic connections to that Parsha (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

NOTE to Parents: This study is longer than 4 pages. You may decide to do this study in several sessions.

Last week, we learned that Joseph had master-minded a plan so that his brothers would be placed into a difficult situation. Remember how in Parashat Vayeishev, the brothers plotted to sell Joseph into slavery, acting with cruelty towards Joseph and Jacob. Now, Joseph has arranged for similar things to happen to them. Will they leave Benjamin— who has obviously replaced Joseph as Jacob's most beloved son— as a slave in Egypt, turning their backs on him as they had Joseph? Or, will they act in a more noble manner?

Read Genesis 44:18-34. What seemed to be Judah's main concern about leaving Benjamin in Egypt?

He was mostly concerned about causing the d_____ of his father.
death

How many times does Judah say that Benjamin's absence would cause Jacob to die?

_____ See Genesis 44:22, 29, 31a and b, and 34b!
s

How do we know Benjamin has "taken Joseph's place" as the favorite son? Look at these thematic connections between Joseph/ Jacob and Benjamin/ Jacob.

In Genesis 37:12-14, Joseph r _____ home with his father while the brothers went off to tend the sheep.
remained

In this week's sidra (Torah portion), Benjamin r _____ with the father while the brothers went to Egypt.
remained

In Genesis 37:3, it says that Jacob l _____ Joseph more than all of his other sons.
loved

In this week's sidra, Judah said that Jacob l _____ Benjamin.
loves

In Genesis 37:3, Joseph is called the "child of his o _____ a _____."
old age

In this week's sidra, Judah says that Benjamin is the "child of his o _____ a _____."
old age

In Genesis 37:34-36, Jacob refused to be comforted and said that he would d _____ because of Joseph.
die

In this week's sidra, Judah said that Jacob would d _____ if Benjamin did not return with him!
die

As you can see, the great love Jacob had for his son Joseph is now directed towards Benjamin. Both boys were the sons Rachel bore Jacob in his old age. Until this point, the main purpose of Judah's speech has been to convince Joseph that Benjamin's absence would cause his father's death.

Read Genesis 44:32-34. How has Judah's focus suddenly changed in Genesis 44:32-34?

He is now offering Joseph an alternative to B _____ being held as a prisoner.
Benjamin's

Because of the ill effects Benjamin's absence would have on his father, Judah then turned his efforts on getting Benjamin's released. What is the thematic essence of his plan?

S _____ . Judah offers to take Benjamin's place.
substitute

That's right! Judah is offering himself in Benjamin's place, and we see that Judah is no longer thinking only of himself as he did in Genesis 37, where he suggested to sell Joseph for profit. He is totally concerned with his father. He didn't say that he wanted to become Benjamin's substitute because of his great love for Benjamin. His point was that he didn't want his father to die. Again, Judah has obviously repented of his past attitudes of jealousy and hatred. Not like his attitude with Joseph in the past, now Judah is willing to lay down his life for the life of the son his father loves!

The Chiastic Structure of Genesis 45:1-17

We have seen chiastic structures before. Do you remember how to identify a chiastic structure? A story is divided into two halves. The themes of the first half of the story are repeated in the second half of the story in reverse order. Also, the first and second halves of the story usually point us to the most important part of the story, the central axis.



Pattern For Chiastic Structures

There are probably hundreds of chiastic structures in the Tanakh! It is a teaching tool the Holy One uses to help us understand the themes of His Eternal Word. The **central axis** is always very, very important. And, each theme on either side of the central axis will thematically match, each helping to understand the other better. Let's learn a quick way of spotting them.

Read Genesis 45:4-8. Did it seem as if you read certain facts twice? If you didn't notice the repeating of certain facts, then read it again. See them this time?

Let's color code out facts to reveal the central axis

Let's develop our chiastic structure below. Fill in the blanks and color code your structure:

A) Genesis 45:1a Joseph told Egyptians to <u>l</u> _____ the room	COLOR BROWN
B) Genesis 45:1b Joseph was <u>r</u> _____ to his brothers	COLOR ORANGE
C) Genesis 45:2 Joseph <u>w</u> _____	COLOR YELLOW
D) Genesis 45:3a Joseph asked about his <u>f</u> _____	COLOR GREEN
E) Genesis 45:3b Brothers couldn't <u>b</u> _____ it was Joseph	COLOR LIGHT GREEN
F) Genesis 45:4a Joseph asked brothers to come <u>c</u> _____	COLOR LIGHT BLUE
G) Genesis 45:4b "I am <u>J</u> _____ your brother"	COLOR BLUE
H) Genesis 45:4c-5a Joseph said his brothers <u>s</u> _____ him to Egypt	COLOR PURPLE
I) Genesis 45:5b Joseph was sent <u>a</u> _____ to be a provider for them	COLOR PINK
J) Genesis 45:6 Two years of hunger have past; Five more to go.	COLOR RED
I1) Genesis 45:7 Joseph was sent <u>a</u> _____ for a great deliverance of his family	COLOR PINK
H1) Genesis 45:8a Joseph said the Holy One <u>s</u> _____ him to Egypt	COLOR PURPLE
G1) Genesis 45:8b <u>J</u> _____ was master over Pharaoh's household	COLOR BLUE
F1) Genesis 45:9-11 Joseph requested that his father be brought <u>c</u> _____	COLOR LIGHT BLUE
E1) Genesis 45:12 Joseph tried to <u>c</u> _____ them that he was Joseph	COLOR LIGHT GREEN
D1) Genesis 45:13 Joseph sent a message to his <u>f</u> _____	COLOR GREEN
C1) Genesis 45:14-15 Joseph <u>w</u> _____	COLOR YELLOW
B1) Genesis 45:16 Joseph's brothers were <u>r</u> _____ to Pharaoh	COLOR ORANGE
A1) Genesis 45:17 Pharaoh told Joseph's brothers to <u>l</u> _____ Egypt, and return	COLOR BROWN

Notice how each part of the chiastic structure is thematically equal to its matching part. Level G may seem thematically unbalanced. However, the importance of equating, Joseph (your brother), with Joseph (master over Pharaoh's household) is right to the point when you remember the dreams he had. This is Joseph, the brother who had dreams that one day his brothers would bow to him because he would be master over them. The thematic connection with Joseph (master over Pharaoh's household) shows us that Joseph's dreams were right on!

What are we to think about the central axis? Seems kind of strange that the most important lesson of this chiasmatic structure is that **two years of famine have past and five remain.**

What seems to be the most important point concerning the central axis?

The n s.əquunu two and five and lack of food.

The Torah seems to be stressing the fact that even though two years of the famine have past, five more years remain. **Does this chiasmatic structure point to any of the main pieces of the central axis?**

Yes. It points to the fact that Joseph was sent by the Holy One to provide

bread/ food for them for the remainder of the f əvıf years!

So, the preservation of life by providing food for five years is the **important theme.**



Speaking of the number five, have you noticed how often it has been used in the story of Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers? Think about these things:

Genesis 43:34— And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

Genesis 45:6— For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

Genesis 45:11— And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

Genesis 45:22— To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

Genesis 47:2— And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:34— Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

Genesis 47:24— And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

Genesis 47:26— And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.

The number five is the most important number in Joseph's plan. Remember Joseph's Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah, which means the Bread/ Food-Man of Life. His name was prophetic of the role he fulfilled. He provided bread for the entire world, not just Egypt. **Let's see how noticeable the number five is in Joseph's life.**

In **Genesis 41:34**, we learn that one-f ḥıfıf of the produce of the seven years of plenty will be stored to provide food for the seven years of famine.

In **Genesis 43:34**, Joseph provided f əvıf times more food for Benjamin than he did for his other brothers.

Although this passage doesn't directly pertain to Joseph providing food to the world during the seven years of famine, note the thematic connection between food and the number five! Also see, in Genesis 43:29, Joseph blessed Benjamin by stating, may "God be gracious to you my son."

Read Genesis 45:11. Once again, we see the number f əvıf associated with Joseph providing food for his loved ones.

In **Genesis 45:22**, Joseph gave Benjamin f əvıf changes of clothing. Hmmm, interesting. Here we see Joseph giving to Benjamin and the number five.

In Genesis 47:2, Joseph presented his brothers to Pharaoh. But guess what. He only presented **f** of them.

Later, Joseph puts a one-**f** tax on the Egyptians. Wow! Here a five, there a five, everywhere a five, five.

So what is the significance of the number five? Let's read a few more passages before we answer that question.

Read Genesis 42:25-28, 35; 43:18-23; 44:1 and 8. Last week we talked about how Joseph seemed to be playing a cruel game with his brothers. But how do we explain the returned money? If he was getting revenge, why didn't he make them pay for their grain? This is another proof that Joseph was not trying to be cruel to his brothers to get revenge. He had one goal— to find out if his brothers had changed/ repented or not. As he did different things to help himself to know whether or not they had repented, he showered them with graciousness— he returned the money— giving them the food they needed, without cost. Considering how they treated Joseph, did they deserve to be given their food for free? Of course not. Therefore, Joseph was being very gracious to them. You see, **grace is when you receive something good that you don't deserve. Mercy is when you don't receive the bad that you do deserve.** Friends, the Holy One uses the number **FIVE** to teach us about **GRACE!** If you reread A-G in our structure, you will notice that the number five is mentioned with acts of grace. This is why it really sticks out in this story.

Why Joseph was sent to Egypt— Read Genesis 45:6, the central axis of our chiastic structure. Think about the verses right before and after Genesis 45:6. According to Genesis 45:5-7, what is the real reason why Adonai made Joseph viceroy over Egypt?

So that he could **S** the lives of his family!

In Genesis 42:2 it says, Jacob must send his sons to Egypt to buy food so that they can live and not die. In Genesis 43:8, it says Judah must take Benjamin to Egypt so they can live and not die. In Genesis 45:7 it says, “God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

According to Genesis 43:7 and 27, what does Joseph want to know about Jacob?

Is he still **a** ?

According to Genesis 45:26 and 28, what does Jacob want to know about Joseph?

Is he still **a** ?



According to Genesis 47:25, why is Egypt so thankful to Joseph?

Joseph's leadership secured **I** for the entire nation.

You see Friend, this is a story about LIFE and DEATH! If Joseph had not interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and stored food during the seven years of plenty, Egypt and the rest of the world would have perished. Remember, this was a famine in the EARTH, not just Egypt. So, we can easily see that the Holy One's purpose for sending Joseph to Egypt was so that he could secure life for his family and the entire world.

Mathematics 101— Let's review Joseph's course of action. During the seven years of plenty, Egypt stored one-fifth of their grain so they would have enough to survive during the seven years of famine. If you saved one fifth of your income over the next seven years, do you think your savings would be enough to sustain you during seven years without a regular income? I seriously doubt it. Yet read what the Torah says about the grain Joseph stored during those seven

years— Genesis 41:48-49! I don't know about you, but something isn't adding up. If I saved twenty percent of my income for seven years, at the end of seven years I'd have 1 and 2/5th of my salary saved, not money like the sand of the sea in great abundance. How could the grain he stored have become so large that "he ceased counting?" Now read Genesis 41:53-57. Not only did Egypt have enough bread for themselves, they were able to sell bread to the entire then known world!!! Surely, this is not simple math we're dealing with here. In fact, as you continue to read the story of the famine, you will realize that Egypt never ran out of grain. They only ran out of means to buy the grain a few times.

How can we explain this odd happening?

One explanation could be that the Holy One m רַבִּיבְרַבָּא the grain!

That's right. In fact, I'd have to say that any other explanation other than one which relies upon the supernatural power of Adonai would have to be incorrect. The math would never work out.

Read Genesis 47:13-27. Please notice the following consequences of the seven years of famine:

- All the money from the land of Egypt and Canaan was given to Joseph. Joseph then gave the money to Pharaoh.
- All the livestock of Egypt was sold to Joseph for food. Joseph then gave the livestock to Pharaoh.
- All the land in Egypt was sold to Joseph for food. Joseph then gave the land to Pharaoh. The land of the priests was not included.
- Joseph resettled the entire nation of Egypt.
- Joseph obtained the people of Egypt as serfs for Pharaoh.
- The people of Egypt are thankful to Joseph for saving their lives and they willingly give their lives in service to Pharaoh.

Do you see any theme that is constant throughout Joseph's actions?

All of his actions are directed towards S שֵׁרָבָה to Pharaoh.

That's right. At each step, Joseph takes what the people bring, and gives it to Pharaoh. He is Pharaoh's faithful servant. Furthermore, the people of Egypt happily serve Pharaoh as serfs of the state. This seems almost too good to be true. Yet, it was.

Find the hidden words for this weeks Parsha

V	F	O	S	E	V	I	F	S	U	J
A	A	L	B	G	O	S	D	O	A	A
Y	M	O	E	Y	P	W	E	C	O	I
I	I	A	E	P	H	E	T	I	A	D
G	N	P	S	T	A	B	F	O	P	Y
A	E	C	I	V	R	E	S	I	C	S
S	R	E	G	R	A	I	N	R	L	N
H	L	D	R	E	O	D	E	A	T	H
O	B	E	N	J	H	M	I	N	D	S
E	S	U	O	H	E	R	O	T	S	N
L	I	V	E	S	T	O	C	K	N	S



- VAYIGASH
- EGYPT
- FIVE
- TWO
- FOOD
- FAMINE
- SERVICE
- PHARAOH
- LIVESTOCK
- GRAIN
- MERCY
- LIFE
- DEATH