YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**STUDENT SUMMARIES OF Sichot of the Roshei Yeshiva**

**Parashat Vayigash**

**Sicha of HarAV Baruch gigi**

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Dedicated by the Etshalom and Wise families in memory of

Mrs. Miriam Wise, Miriam bat Yitzhak veRivkah, 9 Tevet.

Yehi Zikhra Barukh

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**"Then Yehuda Came Near to Him"**

Summarized by Hadar Horowitz

Translated by David Strauss

At the beginning of our *parasha*, the encounter between the two giants, Yehuda and Yosef, reaches its climax. After Yehuda concludes his words, Yosef reveals his true identity to his brothers:

Then Yosef could not restrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he cried: “Cause every man to go out from me!” And there stood no man with him, while Yosef made himself known to his brothers. (*Bereishit* 45:1)

Why did Yehuda's speech provoke Yosef to such an extent? What aspect of it led Yosef to reveal himself to his brothers?

In my opinion, it is clear that Yehuda's speech was not prepared in advance. He made no use of rhetorical devices, but simply said what was on his mind after undergoing a mental process within himself. Sometimes, it is precisely when a person finds himself in a state of helplessness and feels that there is nothing more that he can possibly do that he says things that come directly from the heart and enter the heart of the one who hears them. Yehuda recounts all the things that happened this far, taking responsibility for the consequences.

In *Shir Ha-Shirim*,the loved one seeks her beloved and adjures the daughters of Jerusalem:

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? That I am love-sick. What is your beloved more than another beloved, O you fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so adjure us? (*Shir Ha-Shirim* 5:8-9)

 They ask her: Why do you seek your beloved? After all, you are the fairest among women, and everyone wants you. Why do you want him in particular? She answers as follows:

My beloved is white and ruddy, preeminent above ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are curled, and black as a raven… His mouth is most sweet; he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. (*Shir Ha-Shirim* 5:8-9)

The loved one elaborates at length on the virtues and beauty of her beloved. She certainly does not read from a list that she had prepared in advance; instead, she shares her thoughts and her longings for her beloved with them. In similar fashion, Yehuda speaks to Yosef from the bottom of his heart.

Yehuda knows how to take responsibility for his actions. After realizing that he was wrong about Tamar, he admitted his mistake, declaring: "She is more righteous than me." Over time, he similarly realized that he was wrong when, instead of saving Yosef, he suggested: "Let us go and sell him to the Yishmaelites." So too, in the previous *parasha*, he admitted the guilt of the brothers and of Binyamin with regard to the stolen goblet:

And Yehuda said: “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out **the iniquity of your servants**; behold, we are my lord's bondmen, both we, and he also in whose hand the cup is found.” (*Bereishit* 44:16)

In addition, at the end of his speech, Yehuda assumes responsibility for Binyamin:

“For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying: ‘If I bring him not to you, then shall I bear the blame to my father forever.’ Now therefore, let your servant, I pray you, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brothers.” (*Bereishit* 44:32-33)

In truth, Yehuda was not his brother's guarantor. Although Yehuda offered himself as surety for Binyamin's safe return, Yaakov did not relate at all to this guarantee:

And Yehuda said to Yisrael his father: “Send the lad with me… I will be surety for him; of my hand shall you require him; if I bring him not to you, and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever”… And their father Yisrael said to them: “If it be so now, do this: Take of the choice fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and ladanum, nuts, and almonds… take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.” (*Bereishit* 43:8-13)

 Even though Yehuda was not bound by any special obligation toward Binyamin, he assumed this responsibility upon himself. But in addition to all the responsibility that he took upon himself, he also brought Yosef to understand that he had a part in the matter; it was because of him that from the outset Binyamin came to Egypt and would not be able to return to his father:

“And you said to your servants: ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’” (*Bereishit* 44:23)

It would appear that these words had an impact upon Yosef.

The Tosefta in *Berakhot* lists the reasons that Yehuda merited to receive the monarchy. One of them is:

**Because of his humility,** as it is stated: "Now, therefore, let Your servant, I pray You, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord." (Tosefta, *Berakhot*, chap. 4)

Yehuda waived his honor and offered to replace Binyamin, thus expressing the trait of humility. The *Sefat Emet* understands the verse, “Then Yehuda came near to him [*eilav*]” (*Bereishit* 44:18) as meaning that Yehuda came near to himself. Yehuda underwent an internal psychological process of assuming responsibility and worrying about his brothers, and his words so deeply impacted upon Yosef that he decided to reveal to his brothers his true identity.

[This *sicha* was delivered on Shabbat *Parashat Vayigash*,5779 (2018).]