

## Rabbi Aharon Ziegler - Parashat Vayigash 2020, 5781

When Yehuda offers his dramatic plea to Yosef, he says to himself (44:30), that if I return home to father Yaakov without Binyamin, my father is certain to die of grief. Therefore, he offers himself to remain as a slave, and to allow Binyamin to return home. A most noble and self-sacrificing gesture that any son could make on behalf of a father.

The question that arises: Binyamin had ten children at home, why didn't Yehuda mention the grief that Binyamin's children would experience at their father's absence?? I heard that R' Menachem Mendel of Kotz used this as an example of a truism –that parents have more compassion for their children than children have for their parents.

Rav Soloveitck mentioned this not merely as an understanding of human relations and family dynamics but also as an Halachik principle. The Torah states in Parashat Mishpatim (22:1-2) that if a thief is caught tunneling into a home, it is presumed that the owner will fight to protect his family and property, and the thief is prepared to fight and kill the owner, if necessary. Consequently, the householder may act on the principle of "HABA L'HORGECHA HASHKEM L'HORGO"-if someone comes to kill you, act first and kill him. If the householder kills the presumed pursuer, he is not guilty of murder, since he is considered to have killed in self-defense.

However, the Torah continues, if the sun shines upon him Then the homeowner is deemed guilty of murder. According to Gemara Sanhedrin (72a), that means If it as clear as day, as the sun, that the intruder had no intent to physically harm, then it is forbidden for the owner to kill him. The obvious question is, how and under what circumstances could the homeowner be so positively certain that the Intruder would do no physical harm?? To which the Gemara responds, that the only scenario where this is possible is in the case where a father burglarizes his son. For then, we can be positively certain that a parent will not harm his own child. The Gemara offers this as the one and only example, for if it would be reversed, that the son was burglarizing the home of his parent, we could not make such a positive assumption. For a child does not have the same compassion for a parent –as a parent has for a child.

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Aharon Ziegler-from Yerushalayim

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT VAYIGASH: [answer any 5 out of 6 for a perfect score]

1-44:24, Yehuda, when speaking to Yosef, refers to his father Yaakov as "Avdecha Avi" –"your servant, my father". According to gemara Sotah (13b) Yehuda was punished for describing his father in a degrading manner. What punishment did he get?

2-Once Yosef identifies himself to his brothers, 45:3, what was the first question he asked them?

3-In 46:15 the Torah states the total number of Leah's offsprings was 33. Yet counting them as they are listed in 46:16-19, we count only 32. How do we account for the missing child? See Rashi.,

4-Yehuda was the one who spoke up to Yosef, to release Binyamin and take him as a prisoner instead. Yehuda was not the oldest brother, he was the fourth in line. Where do we see that the 4<sup>th</sup> son spoke up to Yosef in the first pasuk of our parasha? (you must learn a little about the "Trup" cantillations to answer that.

5-Why did Yosef resettle the entire Egyptian population from one city to another? [47:21]

6- In what way is the ending of Parashat Vayigash different than the ending of other parshiyot?