

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
VAYIGASH

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

SENSITIVE SONS

At the end of *Parshas Vayigash* we find some seemingly strange behavior from Yosef, who was essentially the ruler of Egypt. With his wisdom and foresight, Yosef acquired the land the Egyptians lived on in exchange for their survival. What did he do with this wealth? Soon after his family arrived in Egypt and settled in Goshen, Yosef demanded his citizens move from one town to another.¹ He uprooted the population, causing each resident to be an alien in their own country.

Why? What purpose does such a consequential edict carry? The Gemara² explains Yosef's reasoning in a few short words. "In order that his brothers should not be called exiles."

Yosef didn't want the residents of the Egyptian towns to disparage his brothers. To counter this, he caused the entire population of *Mitzrayim* (barring the priests) to be exiles themselves. Thus, no one would belittle the family of Yaakov; after all, we are all equally strangers in this town.

What is fascinating about this entire idea is that the brothers of Yosef were not pushovers. Would they truly have been insulted had their neighbors called them names? Additionally, we can safely assume that Yaakov and his children were not the only immigrants to the most powerful nation in the world. After all, famine ravaged the entire area, who wouldn't want to live in Egypt?

Nevertheless, Yosef was sensitive to the feelings of his brothers. He recognized that on a subtle level, the brothers would indeed be disturbed by the comments of their fellow citizens, and therefore did what he could to prevent this insult.

How sensitive is the human soul! How careful must we be when handling the feelings of others! One example — it is not uncommon for people to give others a nickname. Perhaps it is based on a physical feature, or a personality quirk. The nicknames may be humorous, but does the recipient appreciate it? Even if they are laughing with us, do they not feel slighted, deep down?

When we recognize the splendor and the majesty of the human soul, we will do what we can to avoid slighting the people around us.

When we recognize the splendor and the majesty of the human soul, we will do what we can to avoid slighting the people around us.

1 Bereishis 47:21

2 Chullin 60b

How sensitive is the human soul! How careful must we be when handling the feelings of others!

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We all want to be careful with another's feelings, and we all know it's important not to hurt someone else. However, it's very difficult to refrain from hurting someone if we are not even aware of what bothers them!

One idea is to focus on the positive. Of course we should avoid insulting or slighting others. However, it may be easier to put work into doing things for others, as opposed to guessing what it is that drives them.

When we are actively looking for ways to help others, and to be sensitive to their needs, we will automatically become attuned to what those around us are interested in.

It may be something as simple as bringing a cup of water to someone before being asked, or something as drastic as setting up a *shidduch* for someone who is looking to get married.

By actively focusing on others, and thinking, "What would this person like?" we set ourselves up to be a sensitive person, sensitive to others' needs, and sensitive to their sensitivities.



Virtually the entire Torah is built upon the foundation of a refined and noble character, borne out of successful Tikkun HaMiddos.

- Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l,
Sefer M'Achorei HaPargod pg. 222

Sponsored by Mrs. Beckie Braun
In honor of the birth of her granddaughter
Gittel Chaya Yehudis, to Rabbi Naftali and Rina Zions

To sponsor, please contact us at info@ohr-yisrael.com or call 732-451-GROW (4769)

WATCH OUT

At a recent *Sheva Brachos*,* a *chassan* told a story that astounded the guests. The young man had a stellar reputation as one who always did the right thing; hence this tale made the evening memorable.

It happened when he was in fifth grade. A classmate, Naftali, came in one day showing everyone an expensive new watch he had just received as a gift. His mother had warned him not to take the watch to school lest it get lost or broken, but he disobeyed. He wanted to show the fancy new watch to his friends and classmates. At recess, with everyone running out to play ball, the boy took his watch, and left it on his desk, so there would be no risk of scratching or breaking it during recess.

When he returned to class after recess, the watch was gone! He let out a hysterical shriek. How could he come home without the watch? His parents would punish him severely. There was no consoling the boy as he cried, begging his *rebbe* to help him find the watch.

The *rebbe* got everyone's attention and said, "I know that it may have been tempting for someone to take Naftali's watch. We all saw that it was very beautiful and quite expensive. However, we must get the watch back to him. Did anyone take it by mistake? And if yes, would you like to return it?"

No one stirred as the boys nervously glanced around to see if anyone was admitting anything. The *rebbe* waited a few moments and said, "I guess I have no choice. I am going to ask all of you to stand up front, facing the wall and I am going to go through your pockets to see if it's there."

The *rebbe* called up the boys and asked them to stand against the wall and not to turn around even for a moment until he gave them permission. The *chassan's* face turned red as he explained what happened next. "I was the third boy in line. Once everyone was in place he started going through the pockets of every boy, and he found the watch in mine. I was shaking as I waited for him to shout at me, or express glee that he found it.

"Instead he continued checking every single boy! When he finished searching the last boy, he said, 'You all can go back to your seats. I have the watch.'

"As I walked back to my seat I had to hold myself back from crying. I understood what the *rebbe* did and how he saved me from being embarrassed. He had continued the search so no one could figure out who had taken the watch. As we sat down he didn't even look my way so no one could possibly have any inkling who the guilty party was. He resumed teaching. I decided then and there that someday I would like to be like him."

**Adapted from "In The Spirit of the Maggid," by Rabbi Paysach Krohn. Names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- Even the greatest prophets were sensitive to being left out of a group.¹
- *Moshe Rabbeinu* was willing to push off the redemption from Egypt so as to not insult his brother, Aharon.² And because Aharon was not jealous of his brother Moshe, he merited to have the *Choshen Mishpat* on his chest.³

1 *Bava Kamma* 92b

2 *Shemos* 4:13, *Even Ezra ad loc.* s.v. ביד תשלח

3 *Shabbos* 139a