



Torah Bytes

A weekly Dvar Torah on the Parsha by Rabbi Dovid Horwitz
and the Rabbanim of the Ra'anana Kollel
Vayigash 5785



In memory of Joshua Carr z"l on his third yartzheit

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The last words of the parsha describe how the Jewish people dwelled in the land of Egypt, the land of Goshen, and they solidified their hold on the land by prospering and multiplying there.

Rashi comments that they dwelled in the land of Goshen *which was in* the land of Egypt. What exactly is Rashi adding here? The Sifsei Chachamim explains that from the literal words of the passuk, one may have mistakenly thought that the Jews dwelled in two different places, some in Egypt and some in Goshen, therefore Rashi tells us that they all lived in one place, in Goshen!

Another idea the Torah could be emphasizing is that their destination wasn't just Egypt, it was Goshen! There was something in particular about Goshen that was the ideal living place of the Jewish people. It wasn't just a random place in Egypt where they ended up. There was a calculated strategy to place the Jews in Goshen, for their own benefit. This is clearly indicated by an earlier verse whereby Yosef instructs his brothers to tell Paraoh that they are shepherds by trade, **"so that he will send you to live in Goshen."**

Why was it so important to Yosef that the Jewish people settle in Goshen? Rashi explains that Goshen was a very fertile region of Egypt and was best suited to their lives as shepherds who needed fertile ground for their sheep to graze.

The Ramban suggests that Goshen was in a remote area of Egypt, far from the metropolis of it's capital. This approach can help explain Rashi's comment "that Goshen was in Egypt." Goshen was so far from mainland Egypt that one may have thought that it was actually not part of Egypt. This is why Rashi stated that Goshen was in Egypt. It wasn't as obvious as we think that Goshen was in Egypt and therefore Rashi needed to comment.

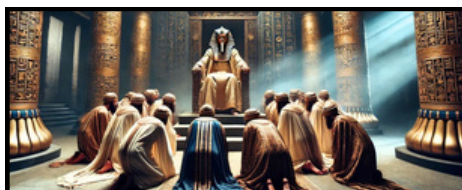
In truth, Yosef chose Goshen for both reasons, Rashi's and the Ramban's. In order for the people to gain a foothold and to prosper in

their new land, they needed a place where they could thrive both materially and spiritually. Practically, they needed a place where the land was fertile, in order to pasture their flocks. But even more important was the need to create their identity as the Jewish people. This was achieved by dressing differently, speaking a different language than the Egyptians, and naming their children differently. Had they lived together with the Egyptians, they would have integrated and assimilated before their heritage even had a chance to get off the ground. Yosef understood this and planned accordingly for their growth and cultivation.

Like Yosef, each of us must choose carefully where to live and raise a family. As important as it is to choose a place where we can make a livelihood, we must choose a place that will allow us to grow in our Torah and mitzvah observance. Even regarding where to live within a particular city, one should choose the neighborhood according to which shul and community he wishes to be a part of, which should of course be one that will help him grow in his Yiddishkeit, and not G-d forbid cause him to slide backward. Every Jew needs to find his Goshen to prosper!

I Am Joseph

Rabbi Guy Dvir



What led Joseph to reveal his identity to his brothers at that dramatic moment? Until then, he had successfully hidden his identity despite the emotional encounters. The answer lies in the profound transformation his brothers underwent.

Joseph tested his brothers to see if they had mended their ways since selling him. When Judah demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice his life for Benjamin—even offering to become a slave to save him—Joseph realized the family had gone through a process of repentance and change. That was the moment he understood he was no longer alone and had a unified family to return to.

The reunion of Joseph and his brothers was not merely a personal and familial moment. It was a foreshadowing of what would happen to the Jewish nation as a whole. Like Jacob's family, internal division and hatred led to destruction and a long exile. The Temple was destroyed, the people were scattered across the globe, and unity was lost.

Yet, just as in Jacob's family, the exile became an opportunity to rebuild unity. Through the suffering and challenges of exile, the Jewish people learned how much they needed one another. The exile was designed to help repair divisions and remind us that unity is the key to redemption.

When the Jewish people achieve true unity, G-d's light will be revealed, just as it was in that dramatic moment when Joseph declared, "I am Joseph." Similarly, G-d will one day proclaim, "I am Hashem," and all the darkness, confusion, and pain will be clarified. The light of redemption will shine upon us all.

This story teaches us the transformative power of forgiveness and the strength that comes from humility. Judah's act of self-sacrifice reminds us that true leadership stems from taking responsibility for others. Just as Joseph's trials led to the reunification of his family, the challenges we face today can also pave the way for growth and connection. In our own lives, let us strive to build bridges, repair relationships, and create unity in our communities. When we do, we bring ourselves closer to redemption, both personal and collective.

The message of Parashat Vayigash is clear: when we stand united, even the greatest hardships can be transformed into light. May we strengthen our unity and merit to see the final redemption soon.

