

# TORAH WEEKLY



CELEBRATING  
**25** years  
OF TORAH GROWTH  
TOGETHER

Parshas Vayigash | December 23, 2023 | Volume 25 | Issue 9

## Look Again

By: Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg (Originally Published 2012)

Imagine, for a moment, that a story broke in the Israeli newspapers about a sensitive young man, the son of a great sage, who was the apple of his father's eye. The young man sat at his father's feet and drank in every word of wisdom the man uttered. His father bought him princely clothing in appreciation of his fine qualities, but his brothers became very jealous. They concocted a plan to get rid of him once and for all. They abducted him. He pleaded with them. He begged for his life. "I'm innocent," he screamed in desperation. "Be fair to me. Bring me back to my father and I will explain everything. Have mercy on me!" But all of his pleas fell on deaf ears. The brothers sold him to a band of Arabs who carried him off to Egypt where he disappeared. His old father is heartbroken and mourns his son every day. The story is reported in newspapers around the world.

What would you say to such a tale? Terrible story! You would be crying before you were halfway through the article. What a disaster! What a tragedy!

So why don't we cry when we read the story every year? Why, even little school children don't get too upset in the early winter, when the story of Yosef is read and retold. And after all, why should we cry? We know the ending, and it turns out beautifully. With hindsight, we know that when Yosef was led away to Egypt, he was really embarking on the journey to the Egyptian throne. He would rise to greatness and fame, and he would feed countless individuals during the years of famine. He would bring his entire family down to Egypt and take care of them. This is not a story that causes anguish. But at the time it happened, it seemed a total disaster.

Now let us look at the other side. Imagine again a story in an Israeli newspaper. Big banner headlines: Old sage reunited with long-lost son after a separation of twenty-two years. You read the details of the story, and your heart is warmed. After grieving for his lost son for twenty-two years, the elderly father discovers that his son is still alive. Furthermore, he learns that his son has risen to the highest circles of power, and has become a viceroy, the ruler of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. His son invites him to come down and join him in Egypt. Moreover, Pharaoh sends special royal chariots to bring him there in a style befitting the viceroy's father. Pharaoh welcomes the father with great honor and settles his family in the finest area of Egypt. The old sage can now live out his final years in tranquility and happiness, reunited with his most beloved son. The royal palace will take care of all his family's needs. How well things have turned out for the old sage. A heartwarming story, you would say as you shed a tear of happiness. What a beautiful ending to such a sad story!

But is it really? We know with hindsight that when Ya'akov was going down to Egypt and bringing his family with him, he was embarking on a journey into exile in Egypt, a journey of death and bondage and suffering.

From here we can learn, teaches Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon (Mashgiach [spiritual overseer] of Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, NJ) that what seems to be bad might really be good, and what seems to be good might, in fact, be bad. We see it clearly in the story of Joseph. So what are we supposed to do? How do we look at things? The answer is that we must have faith in G-d's guiding hand, have faith that all He does is goodness in one form or another. We must look closely at the story of Yosef and come away blessing G-d for the bad just as we bless Him for the good.

## Alumni Focus

Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg

PAST



Rabbi Schwartzberg, teaching Kollel, 2013

**2012-2014**

Years as a Denver  
Kollel Scholar

PRESENT



Rabbi Schwartzberg, 2023

**Loan Officer**  
Ramat Bait Shemesh, Israel

## Kollel Happenings



Rabbi Fleisher delivering the monthly Torah 4 Tycoons class at the Eastside Koshers Deli.