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## **Parshah VaYigash December 26, 2020 – 11 Tevet 5781**

### **Family Reunions**

Family reunions always sound like a good idea at first thought. The planning, anticipation, and getting there, is an adventure in and of itself. Then there is the possibility that the family has “historical issues” that present challenges to feelings that need to be overcome in order to move forward.

This week’s Parshah deals with the family reunion of Yosef and his brothers. The scene has been set. Yosef’s brothers have met their brother. Yosef recognizes them, but they do not recognize him.

I find the recognition to be a challenge. How could it be that they do not recognize him? The obvious answer is that they sold him into slavery, and it could not be possible that Yosef could attain such a powerful position. The one hidden reason is that they did not “want” to recognize him because of their feelings of guilt for “selling” him and now having to accept that Yosef “the dreamer” was “for real”.

It is hard for some people to accept that someone was able to “rise above” and succeed when they had so much against them. Yosef does what could or should have been impossible.

Yehudah is leading this “family reunion”. Rav Tzadok brings a midrash Rabbah that Yehudah was willing to do any one of three things concerning his interaction with his “unrecognized” viceroy brother.

Yehudah was willing to go to war, negotiate, and/or pray. Benjamin, the youngest child of Yaakov, and the youngest brother was NOT going to be kept in Egypt.

Yehudah prayed and his words to G-d and Yosef were the same. “Please, my lord, let our servant appeal to my lord, and do not be impatient with your servant, you who are the equal of Pharaoh.”

Family reunions are truly special. Yes, there are disagreements that may even lead to “battle”, but when you direct your heart toward G-d for guidance the family can agree to disagree and grow with love.

Shabbat Shalom!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

