

SHABBAT GUIDE

VAYIGASH

ABOUT THE STORY OF VAYIGASH

Vayigash means “to come close,” to draw near to the Light of the Creator. There are certain things we can do to help us move closer to the Light, while other things cause us to become more distant. Sharing brings us closer, for instance, while doubt and anger push us away. This reading gives us the power to come closer to the Light of the Creator.

MICHAEL BERG ON VAYIGASH

It says in the beginning of the portion Vayigash, Vayigash elav Yehuda. Yehuda, the leader of the brothers of Joseph, is going to “stand up” to Joseph, meaning he is going to speak to him, or come towards him. Then, it says it gets to the point where Joseph, after all these years, can no longer hold himself back from revealing who he truly is to his brothers, therefore ending all the pain for them and their father, Jacob.

I want to focus on the secret of what it means that Yehuda comes towards Joseph, because it is an important understanding. The Sefat Emet says the best thing to do any time a person has an experience in which the Light of the Creator does not seem to be revealed, any time a person feels pain, challenge, or darkness, is a concept he calls *lehitbatel*, which means, essentially, “I receive what is happening and subjugate myself completely to it.”

What usually occurs when we find ourselves in a situation in which we feel pain from something that has happened or is happening? We battle it. Even if it is unchangeable in the moment, we do everything we can to not accept it. However, the first thing the Sefat Emet says we have to do is understand that if it is happening, we need to completely accept it because no matter how bad it seems, it is coming from the Light of the Creator. With this

understanding, therefore, we come to see that when it says, “Yehuda comes towards,” it does not actually mean that he is coming towards Joseph, but that he is, in his consciousness, coming towards the situation. Vayigash elav Yehuda means that Yehuda is coming towards, and getting close to, the Light of the Creator that is within the situation, and therefore, accepting it.

The Sefat Emet is saying that the cure for darkness is found through doing this work of consciousness, because then the Light has to become revealed. That is what Shabbat Vayigash is about: the cure for every darkness, the gift of the work of consciousness that gives us the ability to break away the walls of negativity. Yes, we get the power, strength, and ability from the Light of the Creator to do this work on Shabbat Vayigash, but at the end of the day, the only ones who can reveal the barriers of darkness are ourselves...and the only way to do that is by this fight of consciousness.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

Vayechi, the next portion of the Zohar, tells us that our soul is excited—even while we may be feeling challenged, stressed, or unhappy. This week, remember that a great way to receive this elevated state of connection is by going through challenges and do your best to embrace them.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.