



Torah Reflections: Conversations on the Weekly Parsha  
PParshat Vayigash 5785: Justice and Mercy

Integrating Torah into one's life through reflection and conversation can be an incredibly fun and engaging experience. It's a journey of discovery, where ancient wisdom and timeless teachings come to life in our daily experiences. Through reflection, we have the opportunity to dive deep into the rich tapestry of Torah, extracting profound insights and lessons that resonate with our modern lives. The joy lies in the 'aha' moments, those instances when a Torah verse or story suddenly connects with our personal challenges, aspirations, and values. And when we engage in conversations about Torah with others, it becomes an interactive exploration, where diverse perspectives and interpretations enhance our understanding. These dialogues often spark excitement and intellectual curiosity, making the learning process both enjoyable and fulfilling. Torah becomes a vibrant and dynamic part of our lives, offering not just guidance but also a source of endless fascination, connection, and growth.

NOTE: Don't feel obligated to go through every source or answer all the questions—unless you want to. Even one source, or one question will give you plenty of material for discussion and meditation. Enjoy this!

Some thoughts about Parshat Vayigash

The midrash teaches that Joseph lost ten years of his life because he remained silent ten times when his brothers referred to their father, Jacob, as “your servant.” This story highlights the profound spiritual importance of honoring relationships and showing respect, even in difficult or strategic situations.

Joseph's silence was interpreted as agreement by the principle of *shtika k'hoda'ah* (silence is acquiescence). Despite his high position and the delicate circumstances, Joseph bore the consequence of not defending his father's dignity. This reveals that honoring others—especially those to whom we owe gratitude and respect—is not just an ethical obligation but a spiritual value that carries deep significance.

For Noahides, this story offers a universal message about the weight of moral responsibility in relationships. While there is no specific Noahide commandment to honor parents as there is in the Torah for Jews, the principle of respecting those who have nurtured and guided us reflects broader values of humility, gratitude, and justice. These values resonate with the universal call to live righteous and compassionate lives.

The story also reflects our relationship with G-d. The midrash explores the paradox of G-d as both *Avinu Malkeinu*—our Father and our King. A father can forgo his honor, while an earthly king cannot. This duality reminds us to approach G-d with reverence and awe while trusting in His mercy and compassion. Balancing this dual relationship mirrors the way we honor and respect those around us, cultivating an awareness of both justice and love in our lives.

Ultimately, the lesson of Joseph's silence invites Noahides to reflect on how we honor the people and values that shape our lives. It teaches that respect and humility are not signs of weakness but pathways to spiritual growth and divine connection.



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Now, reflect on the following questions:

1. How do you show respect and gratitude to those who have guided or supported you in life? What impact does this have on your relationships?
2. Have you ever remained silent in a situation where you felt you should have spoken up for someone? What did you learn from that experience?
3. How does viewing G-d as both a King and a Father shape the way you relate to Him in prayer or daily life?
4. Why do you think silence can sometimes be interpreted as agreement? How can you ensure that your values are reflected in your actions and words?
5. How can honoring those who have helped you become part of your personal growth and spiritual journey? What does this teach you about humility and gratitude?

Shabbat Shalom!