**Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, prompting the entire family to move to Egypt, where Joseph reunites with his father, Jacob.**

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Because a silver goblet has been found in his younger brother Benjamin’s bag, Joseph demands that Benjamin remain a [slave](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Torah/Deuteronomy/Biblical_Slavery.shtml) in Egypt while the brothers return to their father. Parashat Vayigash begins with Judah’s plea to Joseph.

“Oh my lord, have you a father or another brother? [My father](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Torah/Genesis/Jacob.shtml?TSBI) had two children by his adored wife [Rachel](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Torah/Genesis/Rachel.shtml?TSBI). But his firstborn son was torn to pieces, and he warned us that if an accident befalls Benjamin, “you will bring me to my grave in misery.”

“And now,” Judah said, “if I come home and the youngest lad is not with us, and the soul of the one is bound up with the soul of the other, then it shall come to pass that he shall die in sorrow. Please take me as your slave instead of Benjamin.”

**Revealing His Identity**

Joseph could no longer control himself. He released all his servants so that he could be alone with his brothers. “I am Joseph,” he said crying so loudly the whole palace could hear. “Is my father still well?”

But the brothers could not answer him because they were dumbfounded in Joseph’s presence.

“Now,” Joseph said, “do not be troubled about selling me into this place, for God sent me here in order to preserve life. So it was not you who sent me here. It was God. Hurry, go to my father and tell him the news and bring him here. I will provide for all of you.”  Joseph then fell on Benjamin and wept. He kissed his brothers and wept in their embrace. His brothers, too, wept with him.

Pharaoh was pleased to hear the news of Joseph’s brothers. He urged Joseph to bring his father and all the brothers’ families to Egypt. He offered them the best wagons to help them move and the choicest of lands when they arrived.

The brothers reached their father’s home. They told him that Joseph was still alive and that he had royal status. Jacob’s heart stood still because he did not believe them. But when they told him what Joseph had said and when he saw the wagons, the spirit of Jacob revived and he said, “It is too much. Joseph, my son is still alive. I will go there. I want to see him before I die.”

Then Jacob went to Beer Sheba and made an offering to the God of his father [Isaac](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Torah/Genesis/The_Binding_of_Isaac.shtml?TSBI). And God spoke to Jacob in visions in the night, saying, “Jacob! Jacob!”

“I am here,” Jacob said.

“I am the God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I will go with you and bring you back up again and Joseph will place his hand upon your eyes.”

Then Jacob’s sons carried their father in the Pharaoh’s wagons Joseph went to greet his father in Goshen, flinging himself upon his father’s neck to weep.

“Now, I can die since I have seen you are alive,” said Jacob.

“Let’s go tell Pharaoh that you are here,” says Joseph. “Since every shepherd is an abomination in Egypt, if Pharaoh asks your occupation, tell him that you have been breeders of herds all your life and ask to dwell in the land of Goshen.”

Joseph then spoke to Pharaoh and suggested that his family dwell in Goshen. The brothers, too, spoke of the famine in Canaan and requested permission to live in Goshen.

**Living in Goshen**

Pharaoh agreed. “Let them dwell in the choicest of lands of Goshen, and if you know that there are capable men among them, appoint them chief clerks over the herds I have.”

Then Joseph presented his father to Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh asked, “How old are you?”

“One hundred and thirty years old,” answered Jacob. “The days have been few and unhappy, and they have not been as long as my fathers in the days of their wanderings.” Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and settled in the land of Rameses in Goshen as the Pharaoh had commanded.

Now the famines in the lands of Egypt and Canaan were so bad that Joseph had all the people’s money because they had used it to buy grain. All of Egypt came to Joseph, saying, “Give us bread, lest we die.”

“Bring me your herds to trade,” Joseph replied. And they did.

But the famine was too great, and they came back to Joseph with neither money nor livestock. They said, “There is nothing left to give you except our bodies and our land. Why should we and our land perish before your very eyes? Purchase us and we and our land shall be slaves to Pharaoh. You can give us seed so the land shall not become desolate.”

So Joseph purchased all the farmland and Joseph gave the people grain and made a law that one-fifth of their land production went to Pharaoh. Only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh’s property.

So Jacob settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. They acquired property there and became fruitful and multiplied exceedingly.

**Questions For Discussion**

1. What did Joseph mean when he told his brothers not to be troubled by selling him, because it was God who brought him to Egypt? Has God ever brought you to a certain place, a certain time, a certain person? When? How?

2. How do you know that God created a situation and that it was not another person or your own actions?

3. When Judah is describing his father’s potential anguish over the loss of Benjamin, he describes “the soul of one bound up with the soul of the other.” What does that mean?  Is there anyone to whom your soul is bound?

Nancy Reuben Greenfield has written three adaptations of the Torah, including an interactive family version at www.TiptoeThroughTheTorah.com, and an engaging Jewish immigrant novel, The Golden Medina, available on itunes and Amazon.