



# Family & Friends

## Parshas Vayigash

January 2nd 2025 – Tevet 2 5785



Menorah Lighting

PARSHAS VAYIGASH  
RABBI SHLOMO BORINSTEIN

In this week's Parsha, we read how Yaakov Avinu packed up his family and came down to Mitzrayim. Chazal tell us that when Yaakov arrived in Mitzrayim, the famine which had crippled the entire region came to an abrupt end. In the Zechus of Yaakov, life returned back to normal.

There is discussion in the Midrashim as to whether the famine totally ceased upon Yaakov's arrival in Mitzrayim, or whether the Nile only went back to irrigating the fields for as long as Yaakov was alive, but since Yosef said the famine was going to last for seven years,

it resumed following Yaakov's death.

The question needs to be asked, if Yaakov Avinu has the Zechus to stop a famine, then why was there one in Eretz Canaan to begin with? If Yaakov can stop a famine that's at its height, certainly he should be able to stop one before it even begins? And if you want to answer that the purpose of the famine was just to get him to come down to Mitzrayim, it is hard to believe that HaShem couldn't find another way to get him down there. If Yaakov can stop a famine, then bring him down through other means. How could there be a famine in Eretz Canaan where Yaakov lives, when he has the power to prevent it?

Ben Zoma, in Pirkei Avos, asks who is considered a wealthy person. He answers, "One who is happy with his lot." The Maharal asks why he doesn't also mention one who has great financial assets. It may be a different type of wealth, but he's also considered wealthy. The Maharal explains that Ben Zoma is coming to give a definition of absolute wealth, something which is not dependent on other factors.

A person with lots of money may well be considered wealthy compared to another, but compared to a third he may be a pauper. One who is b'simcha has reached a certain level of shlaimus hachaim, completeness of life, that is independent and irrelevant of external factors. Simcha raises him to a "wealth" which has nothing to do with others.

The Pele Yoaitz writes, that



Mazel Tov

*Heartfelt Mazel Tov wishes to:*

Mr. & Mrs. Efraim Freed in their daughter's birth.

although the Gemora tells us we don't receive reward in this world for our mitzvos, this does not apply when it comes to simcha. If a person is b'simcha, he can reach a shlaimus in this world as well. It is brought that the Ari z"l was once asked how he was zocheh to HaShem revealing so much to him. He answered that he was careful to do every mitzvah b'Simcha.

Back in Parshas Vayeishev, when Yaakov thought that Yosef was killed, Chazal tell us that the Shechina left him because of his sorrow. Yaakov Avinu ceased to be the Yaakov Avinu of old because he wasn't b'simcha. Under such circumstances, it is possible for there to be a famine. If Yaakov isn't b'shlaimus then anything can happen.



Celebrating at the  
Guttentag Siyum

However, when Yaakov goes down to Mitzrayim and he once again has his precious Yosef and the Shvatim are once again complete, then Yaakov is b'simcha. When Yaakov Aveinu is b'simcha, when he is b'shlaimus, then the famine ends.

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## PROUD TALMIDIM

On June 26, 1963, just 5 months shy of his assassination, President John F. Kennedy delivered an impassioned speech in the heart of West Berlin, Germany, after the Berlin Wall came up. "Two thousand years ago, the proudest boast was 'civis romanus sum, I am a Roman citizen'. Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is 'Ich bin ein Berliner, I am a Berliner'.

The atmosphere in Yeshiva during Chanukah is one of spiritual elevation blended with unbridled joy. During the day, the Beis Medrash hums with the sound of Torah learning, voices rising and falling in animated discussion, where the air is charged with Chanukah's unique light and warmth.

When it comes time for lighting the menorah, the courtyard is transformed into a hub of activity amplified by the spirit of the mitzvah. Rows of tables are adorned with the flicker of menorahs, mingling with the warmth of camaraderie and shared purpose.

This year, on Sunday and Monday, the Yeshiva held the annual crowdfunding campaign. The scene that unfolds is unique.

On one side of the room, a group of talmidim is huddled around a laptop, cheering as the crowdfunding campaign's



## Campaign Preparations

thermometer inches closer to its goal. Every so often, the room erupts in applause as updates are read aloud, celebrating the generosity of alumni, parents, and community members. "Another \$1,800 from Brooklyn!" someone shouts, sparking a spontaneous burst of cheering and singing.

In another corner, a widescreen displays team donations. Friendly competition fuels the excitement as groups work the phones, reaching out to supporters with heartfelt pitches. "Your contribution isn't just a donation," one person passionately explains into the receiver. "It's an investment in Torah, in the future of Klal Yisrael."

Amidst the flurry of activity, an organizer steps up to the microphone, his voice cutting through the joyful noise. He shares a short words of inspiration,

connecting the miracles of Chanukah to the miracles of sustaining Torah learning in today's world. "Just as the small jug of oil burned bright beyond natural expectations, so too do supporters enable us to illuminate the world with Torah," he says, his words met with nods of agreement and renewed determination.

The scene is a microcosm of what makes the yeshiva so special: a blend of dedication, joy, and communal effort. As such the night continues, with a palpable sense of purpose filling the room. Together, they're not just raising funds; they're building the foundation for a brighter future, one donation at a time.

Beyond any doubt, those who spent Chanukah in Yeshiva would be proud to boast, 'Ich bin ein Torah Ore talmid, I am proud to be a talmid of Yeshivas Torah Ore'.