

PARASHAT VAYIGASH

Genesis 44:18–47:27

Vayigash, which means “and he approached him,” begins with the confrontation between Judah and Joseph, whose identity is still unknown to his brothers. Judah tells Joseph that, if he refuses to allow Benjamin to return to his father, the old man will die. He pleads with Joseph to take him as a slave in place of Benjamin. Joseph hears Judah and then dramatically reveals his identity to his brothers. He instructs them to bring Jacob to Egypt and to settle there in Goshen. Pharaoh also invites Joseph’s family “to live off the fat of the land.” Jacob arrives in Egypt for an emotional reunion with Joseph and is welcomed as well by Pharaoh. The famine continues, and Joseph arranges for people to exchange livestock for food and, then, land for food. Controlling the land for Pharaoh, Joseph distributes seed for planting with the agreement that the people will give one-fifth to Pharaoh and keep four-fifths for themselves. Meanwhile, Jacob and his family increase in numbers and wealth in the area of Goshen.
