



The Joy of Torah - For Life

## **Parshas Vayigash - Extreme Love!**

**Shmuz by Rabbi Shimon Max**

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Parshas Vayigash relates the conversation between Yehuda and Yosef about allowing Binyamin to come home, and how Yehuda would take his place as a slave because Yosef could not return home without Binyomin lest he see the “ra’ah” (the bad) of his father’s mourning. The Ramban explains that Yehuda brought up the idea about taking Yehuda’s place because Yosef may have thought him to be insincere in his willingness to replace Binyomin. Yosef may have wondered why Yehuda would make such an offer and cause himself to be a slave forever, and thus may have suspected that Yehuda is really only asking to become a slave because he has the intention to escape. The advantage of Yehuda taking Binyamin’s place was that the slavery would not be forever for Yehuda as it would have been for Benjamin because Yehuda felt he would be able to get away.

The Mahari Abohab, Rabbi Yitzchok Abohab (1433 -1493), a distinguished, prominent author on the Ramban, comments on the Ramban that Yehuda may have thought Yosef believed that there is no obligation in the world that one would not rationalize to absolve himself from in order to avoid a life sentence of slavery because this is human nature, although, of course, not proper, and against all Torah values. Yehuda, however, explained that his love for his father was so great that he could not bear to see his father in pain, and this would convince Yosef that for this reason he would be willing to become a slave forever.

Why would Yosef believe this reason, especially in light of the Mahari Abuhav’s point above? It must be that the brothers had given over such a feeling of love for their father, that Yehuda thought he could get Yosef to believe this. We learn from here the high level we must strive for in the relationship with our parents, as is demonstrated in the extent of the care and devotion that the shvatim exhibited toward their father.