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ON PARSHAS VAYIGASH - 5757

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"prero@torah.org" The Tenth of Teves: A Fast for Torah

- A Fast for Torah -----

Asarah B'Teves, the Fast of the Tenth of Teves, is this coming Friday, December 20 1996. One fact that makes this fast unique is that it is the only fast day that can occur on a Friday. We fast as we normally would, read the Torah at Mincha (afternoon services) as we normally would (although the Tachanun and Avinu Malkeinu prayers are omitted), and we break our fast on the Shabbos eve meal. ...

[From last year.] <mj-ravtorah@shamash.org> Wed, 3 Jan 1996

Shiur HaRav on Parshas Vayigash

"My brothers and the house of my father that was in the land of Canaan have come to me... And the men are shepherds, for they have been men of cattle... And they told Paroh that they have come to dwell in the land for there is no pasture available to the sheep of your servants for the famine is strong in the land of Canaan, your servants request that they be permitted to live in the land of Goshen" (Breishis 46:31-47:4).

The Rav ZTL asked why did Yosef feel it necessary to tell the brothers to inform Paroh that they were shepherds by trade? Would the brothers, who

B'S'D' were honest people, not have told Paroh what their true profession was? The Rav explained this based on the statement the brothers made that they have "come to dwell in the land for there is no pasture available to our cattle" in the land of Canaan due to the famine. The thrust of their statement was that though they personally would be able to survive the hardships of the famine, their animals would not. Their coming to Egypt was an act of mercy for their animals (Tzaar Baalei Chaim).

There are 2 terms used to represent shepherds: Anshei Mikneh and Ro'ay Tzon. The Ramban (41:32) explains that the brothers told Paroh that they own much cattle. However, they were different from other cattle ranchers in that they were "hands on" owners. They tended their cattle in the tradition of Avraham Avinu where the owners themselves tend the cattle. Though they could well afford it, there are no slaves that are relegated to performing the menial tasks. There is no class distinction between owner and servant in that all had the same title: Ro'eh Tzon. The simple question is: why should the owners work at such a job when the servants could be assigned the task instead (Ya'akov was clearly wealthy and had many servants of his own (as indicated in Breishis 30:43) yet he personally tended the sheep of Lavan and his sons tended his own sheep (30:35 and 37:12))?

The Rav explained that the truly caring shepherd must develop the characteristic of patience. He must care for each individual little lamb. To the shepherd the individual is extremely important. These are required traits for the kings of Israel. For example the prophet Nathan is commanded to tell King David that Hashem has chosen him from out behind the sheep corral (2 Samuel 7:8). This is what Yosef told Paroh, that his brothers are Ro'ay Tzon, they have the characteristics of shepherds, even though they are Anshei Mikneh, great cattle ranchers. They still tend personally to each animal even though they economically do not have to.

The goal of this scripted conversation between the brothers of Yosef and Paroh was that the brothers should emphasize to Paroh that they had no desire to assimilate into the Egyptian lifestyle and culture. They were to emphasize that they have been shepherds from their earliest youth, it is in their genes, handed down to them by their forefathers. Yosef, having lived among the Egyptians for some time, knew that if the brothers did not keep their traditions, the pull of the Egyptian culture would be too strong. He was well aware that if his brothers gave up their shepherding, they would fall victim to assimilation in Egypt. By saying that shepherding was their only profession, Yosef knew that Paroh would allow them all to settle in Goshen as a family unit. Paroh would not scatter them around Egypt. "How good is it and how pleasant is it when brothers dwell together" (Tehillim 133:1).

Keeping the Jewish family intact is the insurance against assimilation. When the brothers said that they have "Come to dwell in the land" they were stating clearly that the intention of their father Yaakov was not to assimilate with the people of the land. He did not want to immerse himself in their culture and lifestyle so as to live there permanently (as stated in the Sifri on Parshas Ki Tavo and as we recite in the Haggadah "Shelo Yarad Yaakov Avinu L'hishtakeah Sham"). Indeed, the entire section of the Parsha that deals with Yosef orchestrating and maneuvering Paroh into allowing Bnai Yisrael to remain intact and to settle in Goshen speaks to the singular goal of remaining a unique and separate family for the duration of their temporary stay in Egypt.

Paroh answered Yosef that his brothers are welcome to spread out and assimilate into Egyptian society and to take from and become a part of the culture and lifestyle, as he said "settle your father and brothers in the finest parts of the land". However I, Paroh, recognize that they do not want to assimilate, but rather their intention is to remain for a short time and to return to their homeland as soon as the economic conditions there can once again support their lifestyle as shepherds. To facilitate their return they wish to remain together as a family unit and to do that I will allow them to dwell in Goshen for the duration of their stay.

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"ravfrand@torah.org" "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Vayigash

Parshas Vayigash: -----

Mystery of History Solved with 'I Am Yosef' / 'I Am Hashem'

At the beginning of this week's Parsha, Yehuda enters a dialogue with Yosef and tells him that it would be impossible for their father to withstand the loss of Binyomin: "It will happen that when he sees the youth is missing he will die, and your servants will have brought down the white-haired head of your servant, our father, in sorrow to the grave." **ÄBereshis 44:31Ä**

Finally, after this touching and dramatic scene, Yosef breaks down and admits his true identity to his brothers. "Now Yosef could not restrain himself...he cried in a loud voice...and he said to his brothers 'I am Yosef' (Ani Yosef)." **Ä45:1-3Ä**

At this moment, when Yosef finally told his brothers 'I am Yosef,' what were the brothers thinking?

Perhaps the brothers were thinking that twenty-two years of history suddenly has become clear.

Think about what has been happening during the past twenty plus years. Their father, Yaakov, is a broken and depressed Jew. He is crying. He refuses to be comforted. He goes into a prolonged mourning. The Shechina **ÄDivine PresenceÄ** leaves him. The brothers witness all of this.

Then there is a famine. The brothers have to go down to Egypt. They are wondering why all this is happening. In Egypt, they meet this fellow who gives them such a terribly hard time. They are accused of being spies. They are taken hostage. They have to go back to their father. They have to negotiate with him. They find the silver cup...

During those twenty years, the brothers were probably wondering, "What is happening to us? Why are all of these troubles... our father... spies... accusations... hostages... happening?" They didn't understand what was happening to their lives.

Finally, with two words: "Ani Yosef" (I am Yosef) everything becomes clear. They understand that this was Yosef doing all this to them. They understand, perhaps, that there was a reason why Yosef was taken down to Egypt -- that if Yosef hadn't been in Egypt they all would have died in famine. They now understand what they did wrong.

Twenty-two years of their lives suddenly became clear with two words. They understand their father. They understand Egypt. They understand the accusations. Like a bolt of lightning, things that made no sense whatsoever now became totally clear.

We always look to find a connection between the Haftorah of a Parsha and the Parsha itself. This week's Haftorah is from the book of Yechezkel. The obvious connection between the Parsha and the Haftorah is that at the beginning of the Haftorah, G-d tells Yechezkel to symbolically unify the Tribe of Yosef and the Tribe of Yehudah. This event parallels the opening verses of this week's Parsha. This is the simple connection between the Haftorah and the Parsha.

But the Avnei Shoham says that there is, perhaps, a different connection between the Parsha and the Haftorah. At the end of the Haftorah, G-d talks about the future redemption: "And my dwelling place shall be upon them and I shall be a G-d unto them, and they shall be unto Me for a people. Then the nations shall know that I am the L-rd (Ani Hashem)..." **ÄEzekiel 37:27-28Ä**

We find the same expression as we find in the Parsha, but instead of 'Ani Yosef' (I am Yosef) we have 'Ani Hashem' (I am the L-rd).

We lived in Exile for two thousand years. For thousands of years, Jews have had questions. They didn't understand and we still don't understand -- what is going on with us?

We've been expelled from France; we've been expelled from Germany; we've been expelled from England. There were pogroms; there were Inquisitions; there were Holocausts. History doesn't make sense! This is the Chosen People? Chosen for what? Chosen for slaughter?

Chosen for persecution? This is the Chosen Nation?

I met an old Russian Jew recently. He was not a religious Jew. I started talking with him and he told me he misses Russia. He misses the language. He misses the culture...

I asked him, "Don't you enjoy the 'religious freedom'?"

He responded, "I'm not religious. Why do I need it? This is a Chosen People? To be trampled and killed?"

He didn't understand it. There have been thousands and millions of Jews throughout the years who haven't understood it.

And then... in the future... with two words -- 'Ani Hashem,' I am HaShem, everything will become eminently clear. Just like the brothers of Yosef, who, with the two words of 'Ani Yosef,' understood all the troubles and all that happened to them, the prophet tells us that in the future, when we hear -- Ani Hashem --, when there will be an end to this bitter Exile, we will also be able to look back and say "We understand it all -- all the Holocausts, all the persecution, all the troubles."

Don't Complain About Life -- Don't Even Look Like Complaining About Life -----

Towards the end of the Parsha, Yaakov comes down and meets Pharaoh. Pharaoh asks him, "How old are you?" Yaakov responds "I've lived 130 years. Few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the life spans of my forefathers in the days of their sojourns." **ÄBereshis 47:8-9Ä**

The Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei haTosfos comments on the fact that the first question Pharaoh asks Yaakov upon meeting him is his age. It does not seem an appropriate opening question upon meeting someone for the first time. They explain that Yaakov gave the appearance of being extremely old, and therefore Pharaoh questioned him about his age.

This, they say, is the simple interpretation. However, they say that according to the Medrash, when Yaakov said the words, "I've had a bitter life," G-d said to him, "I saved you from Esav and Lavan, I returned Dinah and Yosef to you and now you are complaining about your life that it has been bitter? By your life, the number of words from 'vayomer' (and he said) until 'b-ymeim megureihem' (in the days of their sojourns) will be deducted from your life". The Medrash is saying that the Patriarch Yaakov was punished for every word of complaint that he said starting from 'And he said' until 'their sojourns.' These 33 words explain the fact that Yaakov (147) lived 33 fewer years than did his father, Yitzchak (180).

We see unbelievable things from this Daas Zekeinim. First, we see that Yaakov uncomplained about his bitter life. G-d responds, "What are you complaining about? I saved you from Lavan and Esav, I returned Dena and Yosef!"

One can perhaps ask: Is this worthy of gratitude?

G-d saved him from Esav? Yasher Koach! **ÄCongratulations!Ä**

He Saved him from Lavan? Yaakov had to put up with that cheater for Twenty-two years before You Saved him from Lavan! Yasher Koach! Could Yaakov have said to G-d: "You gave me back Dinah -- my daughter who was raped?"

"You gave me back Yosef -- my favorite son, the son of my old age who I lost for 22 years -- You gave him back to me?"

"Tell me, G-d, did I have a terribly bitter, horrible, life or not?"

And yet, we see, of course, that G-d is right!

We see from this teaching of Chazal, our Sages, an especially difficult concept for we in America who talk about 'the quality of life.' We see from this Chazal that a person can have trouble with his children... A person can have trouble with his life... He can have enemies... He can have to go into exile... but life, even under bad and trying circumstances is a beautiful thing. The gift of life itself, even with troubles, is worth living. And if a person does not appreciate life, G-d will hold him accountable.

But one sees even more from this Chazal. One sees how much more a person has to be appreciative of life. Why? The Mirer Rosh Yeshiva, z"tl, asks that when one counts the words from 'Vayomer Yaakov el Paro' until 'b-ymeim megureihem' one sees there are only 27 words! The Daas Zekeinim

says that from 'Vayomer' until 'megureihem' is 33 words! He answers that the count of 27 words is starting from the wrong 'Vayomer.' It is not the 'Vayomer Yaakov el Paro' (and Yaakov said to Pharaoh) that is the basis of the punishment. It is the previous verse beginning 'Vayomer Paro el Yaakov...' (and Pharaoh asked Yaakov -- how old are you) that is the basis of the punishment! Counting from there, we find 33 words. The question is, just because Pharaoh asked Yaakov how old he was, G-d should deduct from Yaakov's life? Yaakov didn't even open his mouth yet to complain? Why should the reckoning against him begin already? We see from here that the reason why Pharaoh asked about Yaakov's age was because Yaakov looked like a broken and decrepit old man, all white and bent over. That is the complaint against Yaakov. Looking old and feeling old -- looking and feeling unhappy -- in such a way that one is prompted to ask 'How old are you?' is not blameless. Not only is there a blame for complaining about life, for articulating it and expressing it -- but if one feels that way and looks that way, it already means that he does not have a proper appreciation of life! That too, is deserving of blame... to the extent that five extra years were deducted from his life. The Gift of Life is something that we don't appreciate enough!

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"yhe@jer1.co.il" 12/19/96 9:14am PARSHA - PARASHAT VAYIGASH
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 L'zecher nishmat Yechiel ben Shlomo Yitzchak by his daughter and son-in-law, Alma and Andrew Klein.
 ***** This shiur is dedicated in the memory of our grandfather Eliezer ben Yosef, Louis Feinerman, whose yearzeit is Tevet 5. A true talmid chacham who set an example for the entire family and many others. - The Family

PARASHAT VAYIGASH
 by Rav Michael Rosensweig
 I.

Among the most pervasive themes in Sefer Bereishit is that of "ma'aseh avot siman le-banim." The conduct and standards of the patriarchs establish ideals to which we should aspire and dictate the parameters of appropriate interaction and normative behavior for future Jewish generations. Hence, the midrash and later commentaries subject the motivation and behavior of the avot to microscopic scrutiny.

On the surface, the episode of Yosef and his brothers represents a rare opportunity to chronicle the ideal response to adversity and gross mistreatment. Following this line of thinking, one would have anticipated that Yosef, whom Chazal characterize with the appellation "ha-tzaddik," the righteous, would react to his victimization by his brothers with selfless graciousness, unqualified forgiveness, and boundless understanding. Yet, strikingly, we encounter an exceptionally complex and ambivalent posture, demanding clarification and analysis.

II.

In Parashat Miktetz, Yosef appears to toy with and manipulate his brothers. According to the Midrash Tanchuma (Bereishit 45:3), he puts them through psychological torture before revealing his true identity: "Yosef said to them: 'Did you not tell me that this one's brother is dead? I will summon him and he will come to me.' And he called, 'Yosef son of Yaakov,

come to me.' And they looked at the four corners of the house. He said to them, 'Where are you looking? I am Yosef your brother.' Immediately, their souls departed, and they could not answer him for fear." Even when he evidently reaches out to them - "Geshu na elai, va-yigashu" - he uses deliberately enigmatic language, undoubtedly designed to leave them wondering about his true intentions. The term geshu connotes both appeasement and readiness to do battle. Moreover, his formulation - "I am your brother Yosef whom you sold to Egypt" - was bound to accentuate their guilt. In the next verse (45:5), as he seemingly allays their anxiety - "Now, do not be distressed or reproach yourselves because you sold me hither; it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you" - Chazal understood that Yosef intentionally emphasizes the contrast between their malicious intent and God's divine providence. The fact that they were the beneficiaries of their own act of betrayal could not have been lost upon the brothers, nor could it have brought them much comfort. These ambivalent references take place even as Yosef risks his own life to protect the brothers' reputation in the eyes of Egypt (see Rashi and midrash on 45:1-2) and in the eyes of their father (see Ramban's commentary).

An analysis of various other verses (45:9-15; 22, 24), including those at the end of Sefer Bereishit (50:15-21), reinforces the impression that Yosef's ambiguous terminology was intentional, that his agenda was complex, and that his posture was ambivalent. How does all of this fit the picture of Yosef ha-tzaddik?

Perhaps, Yosef's complicated response reflects his religious obligation as well as his personal need to assimilate and relate to that which he experienced at the hands of his brothers on different levels. Yosef's personal integrity as well as his historical responsibility precluded a simplistic, one-dimensional, unqualified forgiveness, although that approach might have been more personally satisfying.

III.

On one level, Yosef simply did not have either the right or the capacity to completely absolve his brothers, as their crime transcended their personal confrontation. Yosef was not the only victim of the brothers' treachery. In his tone-setting revelation (45:3), Yosef perhaps intends to juxtapose his personal inclination to forgive ("I am Yosef"), with his role as his father's only reliable protector ("Is my father still alive?"). The message he effectively conveys is that only he deserves to be identified as his father's son, as the others have forfeited their role by virtue of the suffering they have inflicted (see Sforno). The Netziv notes that the term "chai," alive, connotes a certain quality of life associated with happiness, something which the brothers undermined, and which Yaakov only experienced again upon receiving the news that Yosef was alive - "And the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived" (45:27). According to many of the Rishonim, Yosef elected never to inform Yaakov of his sons' betrayal in order to minimize his suffering. In any case, Yosef was not in a position to concede his father's pain.

IV.

Moreover, Yosef was undoubtedly sensitive to the fact that Kelal Yisrael had suffered an irrevocable loss of spiritual leadership due to Yaakov's personal distress. This loss was compounded by the fact that the nation was in its most formative stages at the time. The term "Yisrael", used to designate Yaakov's destiny and legacy in his role as spiritual mentor to the nation, is largely absent from the Torah's narrative until Yaakov becomes aware that Yosef has, indeed, survived. The one prominent exception (Bereshit 43:6-11), in which Yaakov is uncharacteristically forced to take the initiative and set aside the personal grief that has paralyzed him in order to insure the future of Kelal Yisrael, provides a sharp contrast which reinforces this impression. (See, also, Neziv's comments on 43:6). Chazal convey this theme when they indicate that "And the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived" signifies the return of the Shekhina to Yaakov once he was able to extricate himself from the despair which had dominated his life during Yosef's disappearance. While Yosef might graciously forgive his brothers for their cruelty, the potential of those years of lost spiritual development for the Jewish nation could never be recovered.

V.

Furthermore, the brothers' behavior constituted an enormous chillul Hashem. Chazal declare that even sincere repentance does not fully neutralize desecration of God's name. This harsh ruling reflects not only the severity of the breach, but also the fact that the impact upon others exposed to such conduct cannot easily be retracted.

And Yosef's treatment at the hand of his brothers was hardly an ordinary case of chillul Hashem either. Consider the implications for others if the sons of Israel, who were destined to exemplify personal integrity and spiritual leadership, were able to exhibit such intense jealousy and cruelty to one of their own. Thus, Chazal perceive that the sale of Yosef was a betrayal of transcendent proportion and significance, which compromised the very standards of Jewish and even human interaction. The connection to the execution of the assara harugei malkhut (Midrash Mishlei 1 s.v. Kol hon yakar; see R. Bechai 37:28), the epitome of viciousness and cruelty, undoubtedly reflects not only punishment but some measure of cause and effect.

The broader implications of the sale of Yosef could not simply be dismissed or glossed over even by a Yosef ha-tzadik. Only by persistently accentuating the impact of their betrayal, even as he extended personal forgiveness, could Yosef hope to ultimately sensitize his brothers to the enormity of their flawed world view, and thereby begin the process of overcoming the effects of their behavior.

VI.

Yosef's complex and ambivalent agenda also facilitated the twin processes of teshuva and mechila. Teshuva entails a delicate balance between spotlighting and camouflaging sin. On the one hand, one must be careful not to embarrass the ba'al teshuva by reminding him of his sins (see Hilkhos Teshuva 7:8). At the same time, the need to confront one's errant past is a prerequisite for teshuva - "it must perpetually be before him" (see Hilkhos Teshuva 2:4,5). Yosef's use of ambiguous language contributed to this process by insuring that while his brothers need not be humiliated, they would also be encouraged to engage in a comprehensive introspection and fully confront the enormity of their actions.

Moreover, he may have intuited that their psychological well-being may have demanded some release of guilt. This need is already evident in their own projection of a link between their troubles in Egypt and their sale of Yosef before they were even aware of Yosef's identity, as documented in the midrash. Perhaps their response to Yaakov's death reflects this theme as well. Some render "lu yistemenu Yosef" ("lest Yosef hate us," 50:15) - as "halevai" ("would that he would hate us") - a secret desire to be punished or at least admonished for their actions. (Tur interprets the word accordingly, but takes an opposite approach to its significance.) In some circumstances, unwarranted and exaggerated kindness can be a form of cruelty.

VII.

The passage of time and the re-integration of Yosef within the shevatim did not significantly alter Yosef's complex posture towards his brothers. Possibly, this reinforces the impression that his reaction constitutes a normative rather than a primarily emotional response. The ambiguities and ambivalence persist and re-surface in the aftermath of Yaakov's death. Yosef, returning with his brothers from his father's funeral, stops at the pit in which his tribulations began to recite a birkat ha-nes (blessing on a miracle). Was his purpose to put the past behind him once and for all and to affirm the role of Divine Providence, or to provide a jarring reminder to his brothers? He responds to their concerns with ambiguous tears - "va-yevk Yosef be-dabram elav" (50:17), indicating, according to different views, either his continuing sense of anguish over what had befallen him, his sense of loss vis-a-vis his father, or an expression of pain at having been accused - falsely or accurately? - of harboring hostility toward his brothers. Undoubtedly, this range is not mutually exclusive, particularly if our analysis of the underpinnings of Yosef's perspective are correct.

VIII.

R. Bechai concludes that Yosef came to terms with but never fully pardoned his brothers (50:17) - "His brothers asked for his forgiveness, but

the Torah does not mention that he granted it. Our Sages have explained that one who sins against his fellow is not forgiven [by God] until he appeases his fellow. And even though the Torah mentions that Yosef "reassured them, speaking kindly to them" from which it seems that Yosef was appeased, we still never see the Torah mention that he forgave them, or that he absolved them of their guilt. If so, they died in their sin, unforgiven by Yosef, for they could not obtain atonement unless Yosef were to forgive them. Therefore, the punishment was stored away for a future time, i.e. the assara harugei malchut (ten leading scholars martyred by the Romans)."

The predominant rabbinic view, however, is that Yosef was ultimately able to embrace his brothers and extend his forgiveness, even if he was unable to fully absolve them of their guilt. The fact that he eschewed a simplistic and perfunctory act of mechila, electing instead to address the full implications of their betrayal ultimately enhances his stature as Yosef ha-tzadik. The Midrash Tanchuma concludes: "He kissed all his brothers, and wept over them' - just as he only reconciled with his brothers through weeping... so does the yeshu'a (salvation) come to Israel only through weeping." May our sensitivity to Yosef's complex perspective hasten that yeshu'a.

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SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS VAYIGASH

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

He appeared before him, fell on his neck and he wept on his neck... (46:29) Yaakov, however, did not fall upon Yosef's neck... for as our Sages say, Yaakov was reciting Shema at that moment (Rashi)
Reciting Shema: How Early? How Late?

Many commentators wonder why Yaakov was reciting Shema while Yosef was not. If it was time for Shema to be recited, why, then, did Yosef not recite Shema as well? Harav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik of Yerushalayim(1) gave the following answer: Yaakov met Yosef just before sunrise. L'chatchilah, one should recite Shema at that time, as Yaakov did. B'dieved, however, one may recite Shema for the first three hours of the day. Since Yosef was preoccupied with the mitzvah of kibud av at the time, he reasoned that he could recite Shema a bit later. Yaakov, who had no reason to delay the l'chatchillah time of Shema, recited Shema at the preferred time. Let us elaborate:

Correct Times for Reciting Shema

There are five different time slots in which Shema may be recited:

The B'dieved time: After alos amud ha'shachar. Alos amud hashachar, the crack of dawn, is generally defined by the poskim as 72 minutes before sunrise(2). One is not allowed to recite Shema at this time. However, one who did recite Shema that early, fulfills the mitzvah b'dieved(3). If this happens more than once a month, he does not fulfill the mitzvah even b'dieved(4). When absolutely necessary (b'sheas ha'dchak), one may regularly recite Shema at this time even l'chatchillah(5).

The correct time: When it is light enough "to be able to recognize an acquaintance"(6). Different poskim have different calculations(7), ranging from 60 minutes before sunrise(8) to 35-40 minutes before sunrise(9).

The preferred time: Immediately before sunrise. Since the preferred time to recite Shmonei Esrei is immediately after sunrise, the preferred time to recite Shema is immediately before sunrise so one can lead into Shmonei Esrei

without interruption(10). This is known as tefillas vasikin.

The questionable but accepted time: Until three hours of the day have elapsed. If one recites Shema after sunrise, or at any time before the three hours of the day have elapsed, he has performed mitzvas Krias Shema. Many poskim hold that l'chatchillah, this is not the proper time to recite Shema(11), but for various reasons it has become commonly accepted even by those who are meticulous in their mitzvah observance(12). Still, some poskim refer to one who recites Shema at this time as fulfilling the mitzvah only b'dieved(13). According to these poskim, one should recite Shema before sunrise even if he is not wearing Tefillin(14). Also, according to some poskim, one should recite Shema before sunrise even if he is unable to recite birchos Krias Shema(15).

The forbidden time: After three hours of the day have elapsed. There is a well-known dispute among the poskim as to how to figure these three hours. Some hold that the three hours are counted from alos amud hashachar, while other poskim rule that the three hours are counted from sunrise(16). Most authorities rule leniently, like the second view, and this is the practice followed in most places(17).

Although one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of Krias Shema after three hours have elapsed, birchos Krias Shema may be recited until the end of the fourth hour of the day(18).

Proper Times to Recite Shacharis Shmone Esrei

There are five different slots in which Shmone Esrei may be recited:

The bishas hadchak/b'dieved time: After alos amud hashachar. When absolutely necessary, e.g., before embarking on a trip or going to work or school, one may daven at this time l'chatchilla(19). Otherwise, it is not allowed to daven at this time(20). A retired person, who was formerly permitted to daven before sunrise due to his work schedule, should now daven after sunrise only. B'dieved, if one davened before sunrise, he has fulfilled his obligation and does not need to repeat Shacharis(21).

The preferred time: Exactly at sunrise. This is known as tefillas vasikin.

The correct time: After sunrise.

The B'dieved time: After four hours of the day have elapsed. L'chatchillah, one must daven before this time. If he failed to do so, he must still daven now, although his davening is not considered as if he davened on time.

The forbidden time: After chatzos (midday.) After chatzos, it is forbidden to daven Shacharis. Under certain circumstances, a tashlumin (makeup tefillah) may be said(22).

QUESTION: As stated earlier, one should not daven before sunrise l'chatchillah. What should one do if an early minyan needs him to join in order to have the minimum number of men required for a minyan?

DISCUSSION: Contemporary poskim debate this issue. Some(23) hold that he may join the minyan but he may not daven with them. Therefore; if there are only five mispalellim besides him, he should not be the sixth one. If, however, there are nine mispalellim besides him, he may join them - in order to complete the minyan - but he may not daven along with them.

Other poskim(24) hold that in a situation where his refusal to join will cause the minyan to be canceled, he should daven with them so that they, too, will daven with a minyan.

QUESTION: What should one do if the only minyan in town davens Shmone Esrei before sunrise? Is it better to daven without a Minyan at the proper time than to daven with a minyan at an improper time?

DISCUSSION: If the choice is to daven without a minyan but exactly at sunrise, thus gaining the advantage of vasikin, then one should do so. If he cannot do so, some poskim(25) allow him to daven with the minyan available. Provided that they daven Shmone Esrei after it is "light enough to recognize an acquaintance" , while many others(26) hold that he should wait for the proper time and daven without a minyan.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Quoted in Rinas Yitzchok Al Hatorah pg. 230. 2 Biur Halacha 89:1 quoting the Rambam. 3 OC 58:4. 4 Mishna Berurah 58:19. 5 OC 58:3 and Mishnah Berura 19. 6 OC 58:1. 7 The Steipler is quoted (Tefillah Khilchasa pg. 68) as saying that it is difficult to estimate this time without a daily visual inspection. 8 The custom in Eretz Yisroel, as quoted

in Sefer Eretz Yisroel by Harav Y.M. Tikutinsky pg. 18. There are other times as well. 9 Igros Moshe OC 4:6. Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky calculated the correct time as 36 minutes before sunrise (oral ruling quoted in Emes L'yaakov Brachos 8b). 10 OC 58:1. 11 This is the view of Rif, Rambam and Gra, and it is quoted without dissent by Mishnah Berurah 58:3 and 4. This is also the ruling of Aruch Hashulchan 58:6 and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 103). 12 The basis for this leniency is in the wording of Shulchan Aruch 58:1 who rules that the time to recite the Shema is from Mishaykir until three hours of the day have passed; he does not differentiate between L'chatchillah and B'dieved. See Shulchan Aruch Harav 58:4 and Kaf Hachayim 58:8 who quote two views on this issue and tend to be lenient. Note also that neither Chayei Adam 21:3 nor Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 17:1 require that L'chatchilla one recite the Shema before sunrise. 13 See above footnote. 14 Shulchan Aruch Harav 58:4; Biur Halacha 58:1. See, however, Kaf Hachayim 58:8. 15 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 103) based on Shulchan Aruch Harav 58:4. 16 Both views are quoted in Mishnah Berurah 58:4 without a decision. See also Biur Halacha 46:9. 17 Aruch Hashulchan 58:14; Chazon Ish OC 13:3; Igros Moshe OC 1:24; Minchas Yitzchok 3:71; Yalkut Yosef pg. 100. There also those who are stringent and rule like the first view (see Teshuvos V'hanagos 56 quoting Harav Aharon Kotler). Many places in Eretz Yisroel conduct themselves in accordance with the first view. 18 OC 58:6. 19 OC 89:8; Igros Moshe OC 4:6. 20 This is the general agreement of all poskim. Note, however, that there is a minority view, the Pri Chodosh, who holds that it is permitted l'chatchillah to daven before sunrise, as long as it is light enough to recognize an acquaintance. Biur Halacha 89:1 rules that although it is preferable not to do so, (possibly) we should not object to those who are lenient. 21 Mishnah Berurah 89:4. Note, however, that Tefillin may not be put on until it is light enough to recognize an acquaintance. 22 See OC 108 for all the details involved. 23 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Tefillah Khilchasa pg. 78 and in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition pg. 169). 24 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tefillah Khilchasa pg. 78 and in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 169). 25 Harav Yitzchak Peterburger in Shu"t Pri Yitzchok 2; Shu"t Yaskil Avdi 5:10. 26 Shu"t Sh'eilas Shmuel OC 12; Igros Moshe OC 4:6; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfei on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 167); Harav Ovadia Yosef (Yalkut Yosef pg.137). HALACHA is published L'zchus Hayaedl Doniel Meir ben Hinda.

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parasha-page@jer1.co.il" Parashat Vayigash 5757 - "The brother's mistake" The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem (kornfeld@jer1.co.il)

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= This week's publication has been dedicated by Moshe Rosenstein in memory of his grandmother, Mrs. Chana Rosenstein of Capetown S.A. (mother of Dr. Neil Rosenstein of Elizabeth New Jersey). Mrs. Rosenstein passed away on the 26th of Tishrei 5757. *** Please contact me if you would like to dedicate a Parasha-Page.

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== PARASHAT VAYIGASH 5757 THE BROTHERS' MISTAKE A MATTER OF RECOGNITION Yosef told his brothers, "Come close to me," and they came close. He then said, "I am Yosef, whom you sold to Egypt! ...Behold, you see with your own eyes ... that it is my mouth that is speaking to you." (Bereishit 45:4,12) "You see with your own eyes" ...that I am your brother, because you see that I am circumsized just as you are, and also that "it is my mouth that is speaking to you", i.e., I am speaking

the Holy Tongue (Hebrew). (Rashi ad loc.)

Rashi tells us that Yosef's two statements were intended to convince his brothers he was indeed their brother Yosef. He told them to "come close" to show them that he was circumcised, and he pointed out to them that he was speaking the Holy Tongue, which is a sure sign of the family of Yakov Avinu. Apparently, the brothers did not believe Yosef when he first revealed his identity. It was necessary for him to prove to that he was indeed telling the truth. A number of questions arise concerning this description of the events. Firstly, as Ramban points out, why did the brothers not trust Yosef when he identified himself? Rashi informs us several times (42:3,13,14) that the brothers were aware of the possibility that they might encounter Yosef in Egypt, and were in fact anxious to find him, buy him back and bring him home. They find a man in Egypt who mentions Yosef's name, as well as the fact that his brothers sold him as a slave to be taken to Egypt. How could there possibly be any room for doubt in the brothers' minds after hearing this? It should be recalled that in 43:33 we are told that Yosef was able to seat his brothers at the table in precise age order, a feat at which they themselves marveled (ibid.). Even if the brothers did not guess Yosef's identity then and there, in retrospect it should at least have verified the truth of Yosef's statement when he eventually did reveal himself. (See also Rashi to 43:7, who adds that Yosef displayed to his brothers a familiarity with even their private lives, based on his memories from their youth.) Secondly, how could the brothers ignore Yosef's constant efforts to have Binyamin brought to him, his profuse show of favor to Binyamin when he did come (see 43:34 and Rashi to 43:33), and finally his attempted abduction of him? Surely the peculiar attitude of the viceroy of Egypt toward Binyamin, coupled with the fact that he seemed to know so much personal information about them and their family, should have given them enough evidence that they had found the man for whom they were so anxiously looking! Thirdly, even if we accept that the brothers needed further convincing, how would the two proofs that Yosef presented prove his identity at all? Rashi tells us (in 41:55) that *all* the Egyptians underwent circumcision during the first stage of the famine. Besides, all the various nations that descended from Avraham practiced circumcision, so how could it be considered an identifying characteristic of the son of Yakov? (This question is raised by the commentaries on Rashi -- Mizrahi, Gur Aryeh.) Using his knowledge of Hebrew as proof of identity is no less perplexing. As the Ramban asks, wasn't Hebrew the language of the land of Canaan? Why, then, would it be so unusual for a high governmental official to be able to speak a foreign language, especially that of a neighboring country? Surely many Egyptians spoke Hebrew well! Besides, what motive would anyone have -- especially a powerful governor of a powerful nation -- in claiming to be Yosef? THE OWNER OR THE SLAVE? II In order to address these questions, let us first examine another comment of Rashi in last week's Parasha:

"Yaakov saw that the sale (Shever) of food was taking place in Egypt..." -- Yaakov saw through divine inspiration that there was something for him to look forward to (Sever) in Egypt. It was not a clear enough prophecy, however, for him to realize that this glimmer of hope was the discovery of Yosef. (Rashi to 42:1)

Perhaps it was not simply a flash of divine inspiration that occurred to Yaakov that gave him the premonition that Yosef might be found in Egypt, but also an insight into the course of events happening there. The Gemara tells us that Yaakov was the personification of the Talmudic statement that "With the arrival of the Torah scholar, there arrives blessing." (Berachot 42a). Indeed, in Bereishit 31:9-12 we see that Yaakov was blessed, through supernatural means, with an inordinate amount of economic success in his dealings with Lavan. Lavan himself noted the connection between Yaakov's presence and financial prosperity (30:27). Furthermore, after Yaakov had just lavished a fortune of gifts upon his brother, we read that Yaakov arrived in Shechem "complete," which Rashi (33:18) explains to mean that he immediately regained all the money that he had spent on Esav. Even in the years of famine, after the rest of the residents of Canaan had long since depleted their supplies of grain Rashi (42:1) tells us that Yaakov and his family were blessed with sufficient food for themselves. In fact, when

Yaakov arrived in Egypt, we are told that the famine which was to have plagued the area for another five years abruptly ended in his merit (Rashi 47:19). Wherever Yaakov went, and in whatever situation he was to be found, there was sure to be prosperity and blessing -- both for him and for those in his vicinity. In 37:2 Rashi (quoting Bereishit Rabba) points out the amazing similarities between the life's events of Yaakov and those of Yosef (both were hated, both were pursued by their brother(s), etc.). The Gemara in Berachot (ibid.) tells us that Yosef shared with his father the quality of bringing blessing to his surroundings as well. This is seen clearly in several places in the Torah: "Everything he did, Hashem caused to succeed" (39:3,23). And of course, let us not forget that he became the viceroy over all of Egypt! Like his father, his ability to bring blessing wherever he went extended to those around him as well: "As soon as (Potiphar) appointed him to be in charge of his house... Hashem blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Yosef" (39:5). Yaakov saw that whereas the famine was affecting the *entire* region, the seven years of plenty were mysteriously limited to Egypt alone (see Ramban to 41:2). If Egypt was benefiting from such an unusual degree of prosperity, it occurred to Yaakov, it might be that Yosef had something to do with it. The fact that this prosperity started as soon as the new leader took control in Egypt only heightened Yaakov's feeling that a single person was somehow involved in the turn of events. The brothers may have come to the same conclusion. This may be why they came to Egypt with full confidence that Yosef was to be found there (Rashi, 42:3,13,14). This analysis however, only seems to *add* to our wonder. Why did the brothers not suspect that the ruler himself was Yosef, especially after he told them his identity outright? The answer to this question is that the brothers did not even remotely consider that their brother could have ascended to such a senior position in Egypt. He could not speak the Egyptian language; he was a foreigner; and he had -- at least at one time -- been a slave. Any one of these factors, as the Sar Hamashkim (chief butler) pointed out, would have disqualified Yosef for any senior appointment under normal circumstances (see Rashi to 41:12). Furthermore, the brothers knew that this ruler was married and had children. They knew that Yosef was a holy man and would never have married an idolatrous Egyptian woman! (In fact, the Midrash [Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, 38] says that the "daughter of Poti Phera" whom Yosef married was actually an adopted daughter, for Poti Phera had adopted a foundling from the land of Canaan -- who turned out to be none other than the daughter of Dinah and the granddaughter of Yaakov!) No, the possibility that this ruler of Egypt was Yosef was out of the question. On the other hand, they suspected, perhaps this ruler had been the *master* of Yosef in the past. It was his association with the righteous Yosef that brought such unusual prosperity to his land (the same type of prosperity that Potiphar, Yosef's first master, had experienced)! Now we can understand why the brothers were not suspicious when they saw that the ruler knew so much personal information about them and their missing brother. A master may certainly have questioned his slave about his past, and this would be especially true in the case of such a holy and extraordinarily successful slave. The brothers indeed knew that they were on to something when they heard all that Yosef told them, but they thought that "something" was not Yosef himself but the man who *owned* Yosef!

THE PLAN FOR BINYAMIN'S CAPTURE

III With this in mind, we can explain how the brothers viewed the curious behavior of Yosef towards Binyamin and why they suspected the Egyptian ruler of falsely representing himself as their brother. The brothers knew that the famine was now affecting Egypt as well as all the other surrounding countries. Whatever mysterious merit had been working on its behalf during the seven years of plenty seemed to have disappeared. Since it was well known that the Egyptian culture was steeped in immorality (see Rashi Bereishit 12:19), the brothers suspected that Yosef, as righteous as he was, may have succumbed to the licentious temptations of his surroundings and thereby lost his ability to be a source of blessing to himself and to his environment. Alternatively, they may have reasoned that Yosef did indeed remain steadfast in his righteous ways and was persecuted for doing so (as

did in fact happen to him in the house of Potiphar -- 39:7-20!). He would therefore be no longer in the service of the viceroy. If the ruler was now deprived of the services of his righteous servant, as indicated by the fact that Egypt was now suffering along with the rest of the region, it would be quite understandable that he would want to find a substitute of equal qualifications. Surely he would know from Yosef that he had other brothers and that one of them was a full brother (and was more likely to share his characteristics) who was not involved in the grievous sin of selling Yosef as a slave. This was Yosef's only brother who remained righteous, and he would therefore be able to bring blessing himself. It was only natural, therefore, that the viceroy should want to use any means possible to try to entice Binyamin to come to Egypt and to seize him as his slave. Bearing all this in mind, we can understand the manner in which Yehudah tried to persuade Yosef not to keep Binyamin. He told Yosef that keeping Binyamin would certainly lead to the death of their father. This father, as the ruler certainly knew, was the source of all the blessings that Yosef merited, and bringing about his death would definitely frustrate any plans he might have of obtaining the blessing of prosperity through enslaving Binyamin. Furthermore, Yehudah argued, if Binyamin leaves his father he himself will die (see Ramban to 44:22), and there will certainly be no benefit gained by keeping him away from his father! This is why the brothers refused to believe Yosef even after he revealed himself. They suspected that he was responding to Yehudah's argument. He had become convinced that keeping Binyamin would not accomplish anything, as the blessing that the ruler was seeking would not be able to function. "This ruler is now trying to get us to bring our father Yaakov himself to join him in Egypt, in order that he may bring about the return of Egypt's blessing!" they thought. "To this purpose, he has taken up the tactic of masquerading as Yosef himself!" Since this was the brothers' suspicion, it is obvious that hearing the viceroy mention Yosef's name and that he was sold by his brothers would do nothing to alleviate their skepticism toward the ruler.

UNMASKING AN IMPOSTER: THE VILNA GAON'S STRATEGY IV But if so, how did the signs of circumcision and the knowledge of Hebrew manage to convince the distrustful brothers after all else had failed? Besides, as we pointed out earlier, the proofs of circumcision and the knowledge of Hebrew were themselves far from "solid" proofs of Jewish identity in the land of Egypt! An authoritative story about the Vilna Gaon is recorded at the end of the book Divrei Eliyahu as follows:

Once there was a man who fled to an unknown location shortly after his wedding, leaving his wife an "Aguna" (i.e., unable to remarry, as her husband had never formally divorced her). About fifteen years later a man came to her town claiming to be the abandoned woman's long-lost husband. No one in town was familiar enough with the man to be able to positively identify him after so long a lapse of time. He tried to prove his identity by mentioning all sorts of personal details about himself and his wife, including very private matters that only a husband could know. Nevertheless, the woman didn't trust him. She insisted that she would not accept him until the matter was brought before the Torah scholars of the generation. The family decided to refer the question to the Vilna Gaon: How could they ascertain whether this man was indeed the long-absent husband, or not? The Gaon suggested that the man be asked to show his alleged father-in-law the seat in the synagogue in which the father-in-law sat. A new husband normally accompanies his father-in-law to the synagogue on the first Shabbat after the wedding and sits next to him, so the man should have no trouble identifying the seat. His advice was taken. The man was unable to identify his supposed father-in-law's seat, and was exposed as an impostor. As it happened, this man had simply met the true husband, and had learned from him all about the husband, his wife and her family, down to the most personal details. Shortly thereafter, the true husband did return, and was immediately recognized by all. When asked how this particular test of true identity occurred to him, the Gaon replied that if someone would stoop to such depths of deceit -- and the sin of adultery -- to steal someone's wife, he would never have the slightest interest in anything that has to do with sanctity or religion. He may have quizzed the husband about many personal

matters, but the synagogue would certainly never enter his mind.

Perhaps we can apply the moral of this story to our Parasha. If Yosef was suspected of being an impostor, the only way to disprove this allegation would be to show that he was aware of matters of *holiness*. A charlatan might know every detail about the person he is trying to impersonate through extensive questioning, but he would not think of asking questions involving sacred issues! Yosef was not exhibiting the physical property of being circumcised or the intellectual ability of being able to master the Hebrew language; he was showing the brothers that he was aware that the circumcision was a sign of the *sanctity* of the House of Israel, and that the Hebrew language was the *Holy Tongue*, which embodies the sanctity of prophecy and of Divine creation (see Ramban, Sh'mot 30:13). When the brothers saw that he was aware of these facts, they were convinced that they were not dealing with an Egyptian scoundrel as they had originally suspected. This man was indeed their brother Yosef!

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Dvar Torah: Vayigash/Vayechi 5757

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

JUDAH & JOSEPH

"Vayigash elav yehuda... For every claim of Joseph - Judah cut him down victoriously. To what could they be compared? To an ox (Joseph: 'bechor shoro hadar lo', 'like the firstling of the bullock, he is noble,' Deut. 33:17), from whom all the other animals would flee in fear, until the lion came ('Gur aryeh Yehuda', 'Judah is a lion's whelp,' Gen. 49:9) and the bull could not stand before him. So too in the time to come, the Anointed One of Battle, Moshuach milchama, will arise from Joseph, but the Anointed One from Judah shall be stronger than he, as it says: vegavarti et beit Yehuda ve'et Beit Yosef oshia, "And I will strengthen the House of Judah, and I will save the House of Joseph [and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them, and they shall be as though I had not cast them off, for I am the Lord their G-d, and will hear them.]" (Tanchuma, Vayigash, 3) During these weeks, we read the story of Joseph and his brothers, but in particular the story of Joseph and Judah: two poles of the Jewish nation, two personalities conflict. And while it would seem that this conflict would have been resolved in the context of Parshat Miketz and Vayigash, evidently, according to this Midrash - this conflict continues on for millennia! From the very birth of our kingdom, this conflict found its roots, from the conflict between David and Saul (from Benjamin), to the division of the Kingdom between Judah in the south and Israel, known in the prophets as Efrim, in the North.

Jacob himself, in his blessings to his children, ordains who will lead the people. who will be their king. "Lo yasur shevet m'Yehuda", "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah". Yet he also declares: "tehi'yena le'rosh Yosef...", "Joseph shall be a leader, the crown over his brothers."

We yearn for the coming of the Messiah - the King of Israel, descended from King David. But if we have two kingdoms, two dynasties, then perhaps we should have two messiah's - one from the tribe of Judah, the other from the tribe of Ephraim or Joseph? That's exactly what the above Midrash says: Ultimately there will be a Moshiach b. Yosef and a Moshiach b. Dovid! 2 Moshiachs? 2 kingdoms? 2 Israel's! Is this possible? Is this to be? We must understand that the root of this conflict lies in the unique role of each of these two tribes.

Yes, Joseph was indeed chosen to lead our people, "Lemichya sh'lachani

elokim lifneichem" (Gen. 45:5), to see to their physical safety, to ensure the economic well-being and stability of Egypt, and of Israel in Egypt. Joseph was chosen to path the way for our survival in exile, and establish the foundations necessary to emerge out of exile in tact!

It is Joseph who promises the people: "pakod yifkod elokim etchem," "G-d will surely take you out of here one day". It is Joseph who implants in our people the love and yearning for the land of Israel - and who imbues in his brothers an eternal bond with that land, "take my bones out with you."

It is Joseph who expresses his love for his people, and commitment to their well-being.

Asks the Talmud: Who is the paradigm of the "Moshiach b. Yosef? Achav! Yes, Achav! The wicked idolatrous king who married Izebel and murdered the prophets of the Temple! Because that same wicked idolatrous king gave his life to defend his people, introduced the Ba'al in Israel not out of temptation but out of a desire to help Israel fit in with the societies and cultures of the "civilised modern world", who believed that what he was doing was for the good of the people.

Joseph represents the universality of Israel, her dreams of being part of the grand history of the world, to be part of society, to fit it, and to be respected. Judah, on the other hand, was chosen to represent the uniqueness of Israel! He represents the desire within Israel to be separate, unique, with a unique mission, and a special relationship with G-d.

It is Judah who Yakov sends on ahead to Egypt, according to our Sages, to establish the roots of spirituality there, by building a Yeshiva, realising how important Torah study is to our survival and continuity. It is Judah who's paradigm is king Yoshiyahu, leading the battle against idolatry, purging the land of the cultures of Molech, Ba'al, and Ashtoret. It is Judah who raises the banner of the holiness and the specialness of the Jewish people by establishing the Temple in Jerusalem.

It is no wonder that Judah and Joseph are at conflict, from the moment they are born.

Joseph says we must be part of the world, while Judah says we must be distinct from it. Joseph says we must care for the body of our people; Judah says we must care for her soul! Joseph says: "I must lead our people, for only I have the BREADTH of vision to know how to care for the needs of our nation - her needs in terms of security, economy, culture, diplomacy and politics. You cannot mix spirituality and politics, says Joseph, or the results will be catastrophic!" Judah says: "I must lead our people, for only I have the DEPTH of vision to know how to care for the spiritual needs of our nation: the Temple, the establishments of Jewish law and tradition, the war against the idolatry of our neighbours! Only I know how to safeguard the ultimate purpose of our nation!"

Joseph is a part of Egypt. Judah is at war with Egypt!

From day one we have been a people divided. And unfortunately, today we are no less divided!

BUT, says the prophet Yechezkel, in the Haftorah of Parshat Vayigash, this conflict need not go on forever! There will yet come a time when the staff of leadership of Joseph will unite with the staff of leadership of Judah, and they will become one people, with one leader, and at that time the leadership of our people will be established through the legacy of King David: "ve'avdi David melech al kulam", "...and David my servant king over all."

Unique about King David was his ability to bridge the two worlds, his ability to assert himself as defender of Israel, who loved each and every member of his people, even those sworn to be his mortal enemies, who could even love King Saul who sought all his life to kill David! And yet who could also yearn to sit in the sanctuary of the Temple, and bask in the Glory of G-d, King David who could fight the battles of Joseph with the spirit of Judah!

Says the Almighty to Yechezkel: Take the staff of Judah and the staff of Joseph and bring them together, and they will be one in your hand. He doesn't ask the prophet to unite them, he asks them to bring them together. G-d will unite the people. But not before WE unite ourselves! G-d will end the conflict between Judah and Joseph - but not before we bring Judah and Joseph face to face!

In the history of the Jewish people Judah and Joseph have been fighting for

3500 years! How easy it could be for one to give up hope of ever uniting our people. One could say: "Yechezkel, you are a dreamer to think that we can live under one banner!" Look at Israel today. Look at the rift between the religious and the secular, almost split right down the middle, as if between Joseph and Judah.

Split over the army of Israel - Split over the peace process of Israel - Split over the Jewish education Split over Sabbath observance Split over the role of science, technology, archaeology, biology... And the Almighty says unite the people? YES!

Because Judah and Joseph themselves could come together! Because David and the children of King Saul could unite. Because Judah and Joseph need not be mutually exclusive; they have the potential within themselves to complement each other!

To live in the courtyards of the Temple sanctuary, without being part of the world around us is not Judah. It is some Second Temple asean cult, but it is not Judah! But to belong to the family of nations "like any other nation" without our identity card, without Torah, without the values of Judaism we have cherished for so long is not Joseph either!

Judah did not hide behind the walls of Torah. He drew strength from the Torah to defend his people, and to defend his brother. Joseph did not advocate abandoning our traditions in order to better "fit in" with modernity. He encouraged his people to live separately from Egypt in order to preserve their cultural and spiritual identity.

No, Judah and Joseph need not fight each other for eternity. But it is WE who must unite them. It is WE who must find a way to get them to communicate. It is WE who must take the staff of Joseph and the staff of Judah and draw them together, so that ultimately the Almighty can forge their unity for eternity!

* PARSHA Q&A * In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Parshas Vayigash For the week ending 11 Teves 5757 20 & 21 December 1996

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Parsha Questions 1. Why did Yehuda say his missing brother died? 2. Why did Yosef send everyone away before revealing his identity to his brothers? 3. Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck? 4. Where did Pharaoh offer to settle Yaakov and his family? 5. Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov? 6. What did Yosef mean when he told his brothers "Don't dispute along the way?" 7. What was the last subject Yaakov taught Yosef before Yosef was sold? 8. Why did Hashem tell Yaakov, "Do not fear going down to Egypt" (46:9)? 9. Hashem told Yaakov that He would bring him out of Egypt (46:4). To what did this allude? 10. What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram? 11. Name Yaakov's two granddaughters. 12. Shaul ben HaCanaanis is listed as one of Shimon's sons. Who was his mother? 13. Where was Yocheved born? 14. Yosef himself harnessed his own chariot, instead of letting a servant do it. Why? 15. What did Yaakov do when Yosef appeared before him? 16. Why were shepherds an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians? 17. What blessing did Yaakov give Pharaoh when he left his presence? 18. How many years did the famine last in Egypt? 19. Yosef resettled the land of Egypt, forcing the inhabitants to move from city to city. What were his two motives for doing so? 20. Who were the kohanim whose fields were not bought by Yosef (47:22)?

Bonus QUESTION: Last week we read that Yehuda said: "Behold, we are slaves to my lord; we, as well as the person in whose hand the goblet was found." Yosef replied: "G-d forbid I should do such a thing! Only the person in whose hand the goblet was found shall be my slave.." This week we read: "And Yehuda approached.." (44:16-18)

Yehuda first offers all the brothers - including Binyamin - as slaves. But when Yosef declares his intention to free all of them except Binyamin, Yehuda protests, even speaking harshly. What accounts for this change in Yehuda's attitude?

I Did Not Know That! "And Yosef provided his father, his brothers and his

father's entire household with food enough for even the little children."(47:12)

Little children need lots of food, because they crumble up more than they actually eat! Sforno

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= Recommended Reading List

Ramban 44:19 Yehuda's Diplomacy 45:16 Egyptian Reaction to Yosef's Brothers 45:26 Yaakov's Disbelief 45:27 The Lifetime Secret 46:15 Hidden Miracles 46:29 Who Cried? 47:9 Yaakov's Age 47:18 The Seven Lean Years Sforno 45:16 Pharaoh's Invitation 46:3 The Advantage of Exile Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh 45:26 Why Yosef Didn't Tell Yaakov 46:4 The Shechina in Mitzrayim

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Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 44:20 - Yehuda was afraid that if he said that his missing brother was alive, Yosef would demand that he be brought to Egypt. 2. 45:1 - He didn't want his brothers to be shamed publicly. 3. 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of Mishkan Shilo built in Yosef's territory. 4. 45:17 - In Goshen. 5. 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine. 6. 45:24 - He warned that if they engage in halachic disputes they might not be alert to possible travel dangers. 7. 45:27 - The laws of the eglah arufa (the calf that has its neck broken). 8. 46:3 - Because Yaakov was grieved to leave Eretz Canaan. 9. 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan. 10. 46:6 - He gave it to Esav in exchange for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah. 11. 46:7 - Serach bas Asher and Yocheved bas Levi. 12. 46:10 - Dina bas Yaakov. 13. 46:15 - Yocheved was born in Egypt. 14. 46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father. 15. 46:29 - He recited the Shema. 16. 46:34 - Because the Egyptians worshipped sheep. 17. 47:10 - That the waters of the Nile should rise to greet Pharaoh when he approached the river. 18. 47:19 - Two years. 19. 47:21 - In order to remind them that they no longer owned the land, and to help his family by removing the stigma of being 'strangers.' 20. 47:22 - Egyptian priests.

Bonus ANSWER: At first, Yehuda thought Hashem was punishing the brothers for their part in selling Yosef 22 years earlier. He reasoned that although Binyamin took no part in that sin, yet he was nonetheless included in the punishment being part of the group. Seeing Yosef's actions as part of a Heavenly decree, Yehuda felt intervention was useless. But when Yosef declared his intention to free everyone except for the innocent Binyamin, Yehuda realized Yosef's actions could not possibly be the result of a Heavenly decree, but rather were a direct result of Yosef's free will. Therefore, Yehuda took action. Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh

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From jr@sco.COM Fri Dec 20 00:20:49 1996
vayigash.96

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Vayigash
12/24/74

(Breishis 45:26-27) Upon being told that Yosef was still alive, the Torah says that Jacob refuses to believe his sons. Finally, after seeing the Agalos that Yosef sent to carry them he believes them and Ruach Hakodesh again rested on him.

The simple explanation of these verses is that upon inspecting the chariot sent by Yosef, Yaakov verified that they were indeed Egyptian products and because of this he was convinced that Yosef was indeed alive. Apparently Egyptian chariots were well known for their quality as we find mention of Rechev Paroh, the chariot of Paroh, which were unique and highly prized. Egypt must have supplied the military chariots to the ancient world armies.

What was the significance attached to Yosef sending chariots? Rashi says

that the chariots were meant to remind Yaakov of the last thing that he and Yosef studied together before Yaakov

sent him on his fateful journey. Rashi derives this because the Torah describes them as the chariots that Yosef sent and not Paroh. In the previous verses the Torah says that Paroh was the one who ordered Yosef to send the chariots to transport his father and family. The Torah again repeats that Yosef gave them chariots according to Paroh, again indicating that Paroh was responsible for sending them. Apparently, Yosef sent his father a spiritual chariot, to buoy his spirit by hinting to him that he remembered the last topic they studied together, Eglah Arufa.

Why does the Torah describe in such great detail that these were the chariots that were sent to transport Yaakov to Egypt? Why not simply say that these were the chariots that Yosef sent? The Torah also says that Yosef sent chariots for the women and children and you shall transport your father and come down to Egypt. Finally, when they departed for Egypt, it says that they carried Yaakov their father. The word Unesasem, to carry, is used in each of these verses.

Paroh insisted that Yaakov be transported in the coveted chariots that he sent. He did not care about the mode of transportation used by the rest of the family to arrive in Egypt. The importance of Yaakov demanded that he ride in comfort in the chariots and transported by his sons. The Torah characterizes Paroh here as a very unusual person who had great respect for Yaakov and his family.

The Rav explained this portrait of Paroh. Paroh was very pleased to learn that these 11 people from Canaan were Yosef's brothers. Some explain that he was so happy to learn that Yosef did indeed come from royalty and that he was not merely a servant by heritage. The Torah indicates that Paroh was intrigued by the fact that Yosef was so brilliant. Not only did he correctly interpret his dreams, but he provided him with the idea of how to prepare for the coming famine and he designed and implemented an unprecedented food collection and storage program as well as the intricate distribution network. Yosef introduced the first recorded rationing plan in history. According to the Radak, Shever refers to food as the "hunger breaker". The Rav noted that perhaps Shever can be interpreted rationing of food, in that it is distributed in pieces.

Paroh had a great appreciation of genius. He recognized that if one brother was so brilliant the others must also possess the genes of brilliance. He was thrilled to learn that these were his brothers and that he had such a large family. Paroh handled Yaakov and his children with the utmost respect and care and he wanted very much that Yaakov and his family should come to Egypt to join Yosef.

The Rav explained the significance of the use of the term Unesasem. Paroh wanted very much that Yaakov should come down to Egypt. He realized that Yosef derived his brilliance from his father. One can imagine that Yosef must have told Paroh about his background and his father. So Paroh was intrigued to meet Yaakov. Also, Yosef left a lasting impression on Egypt. The Torah tells us that the people of Egypt were desperate for food due to the famine and that Yosef gave them seeds to plant and he demanded that they contribute a mere twenty percent to Paroh. In times of antiquity through the middle ages it was unheard of that a ruler would restrict himself to a twenty percent tax on the produce of the country. Yet, Yosef enacted just such a fair tax system in Egypt thousands of years ago.

We also find that the famine affected other nations besides Egypt. The Midrash says that it was affecting 3 lands: Kaputkiya, Arava, and Palestiya (interesting that the Midrash refers to Eretz Yisrael as Palestine). If we use modern Arab countries as an example, we would see that those that exercise complete control over a highly desirable resource will typically exact a high price for it, and an even higher price from foreigners. It would not be to far-fetched to imagine that in times of scarcity, the supply to foreigners would be cut off entirely. One could well imagine that Paroh must have had advisers who agitated for the use of food as a political weapon. Yet Yosef overcame them and insisted that the food stores of Egypt be open to all, Egyptian and foreigner alike. Paroh was impressed with Yosef and realized that his strong sense of Chesed and Yosher were inherited from his parents and would be

very excited to meet the father of such a fair and wise individual.

This is why Paroh insisted that Yosef make sure that his brothers carry down his father to Egypt, Unesasem. You must show him the utmost respect in this move. For the tradition that you learned in your father's house must never be lost.

When the Torah tells us that Yaakov was shown the Agalos that were sent Lasays Oso, to carry him, it is not important to relate who actually sent them. They succeeded in lifting Yaakov's spirit by telling him that Yosef was still alive. Chazal noted the significance of the Agalos as symbolic of of Eglar Arufa. Eglar Arufa symbolizes the responsibility of a leader to his people. One can imagine the picture of a poor person who arrives in town with no place to turn and nothing to eat. It is late at night and no one pays attention to him. After all it's late at night and one can't expect the people of the city to care for every indigent person who arrives in town. He leaves and probably dies while trying to find food. Not only is he homeless but nameless as well. He is simply a dead body in a field. Yet Beis Din must bring a Korban and proclaim that they had nothing to do with the death of this person. Chazal ask why Beis Din should have to make such a proclamation. After all would anyone even think that the members of Beis Din would possibly have killed this person? Chazal explain that Beis Din did not see the plight of this person and sent him away without food and shelter. Chazal say that this paradox is correct in that Beis Din is considered as if they were blood letters. They have a tremendous responsibility to the people.

In sending the Agalos to Yaakov, Yosef was saying that I have learned well and have become the type of leader that you taught me to be, a leader who understands the importance of Eglar Arufa. I have remembered the lessons of Chesed that you taught me and that a leader is responsible for all, just like the Beis Din that proclaims it is innocent over the Eglar Arufa. Yaakov knew that Yosef's dreams would come true one day and that he would be the leader of Bnai Yisrael.

When Yaakov saw the Agalos that Yosef sent he realized that his Mesorah could have a Nesiah, would carry through in exile. When Yaakov realized that, he was enveloped by Ruach Hakodesh - Vatechi Ruach Yaakov. This summary is Copyright 1996 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. Permission to reprint and distribute, with this notice, is hereby granted. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur given by Moraynu V'Rabbeinu Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveichik ZT'L over many years. .

INTPARSHA - PARASHAT VAYIGASH YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)
INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA
by Zvi Shimon
PARASHAT VAYIGASH

The following is an abridgement of an article written by Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, a teacher in the Herzog Teachers' College affiliated with Yeshivat Har Etzion, which originally appeared in Hebrew in the Megadim Torah Journal (volume 1).

A Tragic Misunderstanding

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, Spain, 1194-1274) poses a fascinating question, one which continues to puzzle all who study the book of Genesis:

"How is it that Joseph, after living many years in Egypt, having attained a high and influential position in the house of an important Egyptian official, did not send his father even one message to inform him (that he was alive) and comfort him? Egypt is only six days' travel from Hebron, and respect for his father would have justified even a year's journey! (It would) have been a grave sin to torment his father by leaving him in mourning and bereavement for himself and for Shim'on; even if he wanted to hurt his brothers a little, how could he not feel pity for his aged father (Ramban to Gen. 42:9)?"

The Abarbanel (Don Isaac Abrabanel, Spain, 1437-1508) poses the same question, but more bluntly:

"Why did Joseph hide his identity from his brothers and speak harshly to them? It is criminal to be as vengeful and recriminating as a serpent!... How is it that as his brothers were starving and far from home, having left their families and small children and, above all, his aged, worried and suffering father waiting for them, did he not show compassion, but rather intensified the anguish by arresting Shim'on?" (chap. 4, question 4)

The Ramban's answer to his question is that Joseph's goal was to guarantee the fulfillment of his two dreams (see chapter 37).

"He did everything in its proper time in order to fulfill the dreams, for he knew they would be fulfilled perfectly (ibid.)."

Rabbi Yitzchak Arama (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Moshe Arama, Spain, 1420-1494) in his commentary Akedat Yitzchak, finds Ramban's solution puzzling:

"What did he stand to gain by having his dreams fulfilled? Even had there been some advantage, that would not have justified sinning toward his father! And as for the dreams, let the Giver of dreams provide their solutions. It seems very silly to strive to fulfill dreams, as the fulfillment does not depend on the dreamer's will." (Akedat Yitzchak 29:9; see also Abarbanel, 41:6)

Clearly, Joseph's dreams are prophetic, and not mere nonsense. However, they are a form of ruach ha-kodesh (holy inspiration), rather than pure prophecy. Dreams like this are precisely the kind of experience about which the Akedat Yitzchak writes, "let the Giver of dreams provide their solution." These dreams are not granted in order to be put into action by the dreamer. It is clear, however, that the Ramban disagrees and considers these dreams to be full-fledged prophecies.

Even if we accept the Ramban's position on this point, his explanation of Joseph's behavior is untenable. The first dream was fulfilled when the brothers arrived in Egypt the first time.

"Joseph was the ruler of the land; it was he who provided for all the inhabitants and Joseph's brothers came and bowed to the ground before him (42:6)."

The ten brothers, excluding Benjamin who was at home, had come to Egypt to obtain grain - the sheaves in Joseph's first dream (37:7). As predicted by the dream, the brothers needed to bow down before his sheaf, his wealth. The Ramban believes that the ten brothers' bowing down at the first meeting was not the realization of the first dream, as the eleventh brother, Benjamin, had not yet bowed down to him. However, careful analysis of Joseph's first dream reveals that the number of brothers binding sheaves is not specified. Benjamin could not have been in the fields with them at the time, as he was

eight years younger than Joseph and hence only nine years old! Even in a dream, Joseph could not have seen Benjamin working in the fields. It is therefore more plausible that the first dream was fulfilled when the brothers arrived in Egypt the first time without Benjamin.

The second dream is fulfilled when they bring Benjamin, and meet with Joseph at his palace for a meal, honoring him and offering him gifts:

"Joseph came home, and they brought him the presents they had with them to his house, and bowed down to him (43:26)."

The eleven stars (37:9), eleven brothers, bowed down to Joseph due to his own importance as second to the king of Egypt, without any direct connection to the grain; now, it was their father's turn:

"He greeted them and said: 'Is your old father, whom you mentioned, at peace? Is he still alive?' They said: 'Your servant our father is at peace; he is still alive.' They bent down and bowed (43:27-28)."

This painful scene in which Joseph's brothers prostrate themselves before him in their father's name and refer to him as "your servant our father," is the fulfillment of the second dream in which the sun and the moon bow down to Joseph. The entire family (other than his mother, who was no longer alive) bowed down to Joseph - albeit indirectly in Jacob's case - without realizing the full significance of their actions. This scene is repeated when Judah begs for Benjamin's safety and refers to Jacob repeatedly (four times) as "your servant our father (44:14, 24, 27, 30-31)." The dreams had all come true BEFORE Jacob's arrival in Egypt.

In support of his contention that Joseph did not contact his father all these years in order to fulfill his dreams, the Ramban cites a verse that actually contradicts his theory:

"Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. He remembered the dreams he dreamt and told them: 'you are spies (42:8, 9).'"

Clearly, only at this point does Joseph remember his dreams, as he suddenly realizes that the first dream has been fulfilled (see Rashi to 42:9). Since it is only at this stage that Joseph remembers his dreams they could not have guided his behavior throughout his years in Potiphar's household or while in prison. Since Joseph only remembers his dreams when his brothers arrive in Egypt, why did he not send word to Jacob before that? As ruler of Egypt, it was certainly within his capacity to do so.

Ramban himself apparently realized the difficulties inherent in attempting to coordinate the story of the goblet (chapter 44) with the dreams. He therefore proposes a second motive for Joseph's actions at this point:

"The second affair, which he caused by means of the goblet, was not intended to trouble them. Joseph was afraid that they hated Benjamin, or were jealous of their father's love for him as they had been jealous of (Joseph) ... perhaps Benjamin had realized that they had harmed Joseph and this had led to acrimony between them. Joseph did not want Benjamin to go with them lest they harm him, until he had verified their love for him." (Ramban 42:9)

Abarbanel agrees:

"Even after Joseph tested his brothers by accusing them of espionage, he was still not certain whether they loved Benjamin or whether they still hated Rachel's children, so he focused on Benjamin to see whether they would try to save him." (chap. 42, quests. 4, 6)

In the words of Akedat Yitzchak:

"Joseph's intentions were evidently to see whether they still hated him or whether they regretted their actions" (chap. 42, question 2).

This second solution is no less problematic than the first. First of all, we cannot avoid the feeling that the exegetes are attempting to explain away what seems to be an accidental outcome as a preconceived plan of events. The Torah itself indicates that Joseph simply wanted to keep Benjamin behind, after their brothers had gone home "only the one with whom it [the goblet] is found shall be my slave; but the rest of you shall go free" (44:10). It might be that Joseph simply wanted to hear from Benjamin all that had transpired since he was sold. He may have wanted Benjamin's cooperation in establishing the tribes of Rachel as a separate entity. But it seems utterly far-fetched that Joseph planned the affair of the goblet to test his brothers' attitude toward Benjamin. What would he have done if, as was quite

possible, they had accepted the situation as God's will, as punishment for their sin, and left Benjamin with him as they had left Shim'on? Would this have proven either that they were not sorry for what they had done to Joseph or that they did not love Benjamin? Does submission to the power of a tyrant prove anything?

Furthermore, at no point in Judah's long speech is there any mention of the brothers' feelings towards each other or towards Benjamin. Judah's expressed concern is with his "old father" whom they left behind, and who seemed to interest this "ruler" so much. Jacob is Judah's last resort, and it is on this point that Judah focuses, hinting all the while at Joseph's responsibility for any outcome.

Finally, Joseph had already heard his brothers express regret at their behavior towards him when they arrived in Egypt the first time. Their confession was elicited freely without any pressure whatsoever; they never imagined Joseph could understand them "because the interpreter was between them" (42:23). Their regret is coupled with the realization that all that is befalling them is a result of that behavior:

"They said to each other: 'This is our fault, because of our brother; we saw his suffering when he cried out to us and we did not listen; That is why this misfortune came upon us (42:21).'"

At no later time does Joseph acquire new insights into their character. Therefore the motivation behind Joseph's behavior and his framing of Benjamin with the stolen goblet could not have been the desire to test whether or not the brothers repented for their sin.

Thus, in our attempt to understand Joseph's motivation for waiting so many years, and then deceiving his brothers, we have ruled out the desire for forcing the dreams to come true - as "dreams come to us without our consent" - and certainly do not justify torturing old and suffering parents. Furthermore, as we saw earlier, Joseph remembers his dreams only when his brothers appear before him in Egypt. Testing their regret could also not have been the reason, as he had already heard them express repentance in his presence.

The Solution

Our entire outlook on this story changes if we understand that Joseph did not know that his brothers had fooled his father with the coat, the blood, and the lie that Joseph had been devoured by wild animals. Such thoughts never occurred to him! So, it was Joseph who spent thirteen years of slavery in Egypt and the following years of greatness wondering: "Where is my father? Why has no one come to look for me?" All the factors are now reversed when seen from Joseph's point of view. Egypt is, after all, close to the land of Canaan, and Jacob was a rich, important and influential man with international familial and political connections. The Midianites or Ishmaelites (37:28) who brought Joseph to Egypt were his cousins; is it possible that no one from that caravan could be located in all those years? We know that Jacob did not search for his son because he thought Joseph was dead, but Joseph had no way of knowing this.

Joseph's wonder at his father's silence is joined by a terrible sense of anxiety which grows stronger over the years, as seasons and years pass and no one comes. Joseph's anguish centers on his father: the voice inside him asking "where is my father?" is joined by another harsh voice: "Why did my father send me to my brothers that day?(see 37:13) Perhaps, his brothers had succeeded in convincing Jacob to disown Joseph! Years later, when Joseph rides in the viceroy's chariot, when he shaves his beard and stands before Pharaoh, it is clear to him that God must have decreed that his life would be lived separate from his family. He expressed this feeling in the name he gave his eldest son, born of an Egyptian wife:

"...he called him Menasheh, because God has made me forget (nashani) all my labor and my father's house" (41:51).

To forget his father's house!

Apparently, then, Joseph's entire world is built on the misconception that his father had renounced him, while Jacob's world was destroyed by the misconception that Joseph was dead. Joseph's world was shaken when his brothers stood before him, unaware of his true identity, and bow down to him. At that moment, he questions this new reality:

"...he remembers the dreams he dreamt about them..."(42:9)

He is thrown back into the past. Stalling for time, he begins a line of inquiry - and action - which is geared to one end: to find out why his father had rejected him, if at all. He aims to keep Benjamin behind so that his maternal brother can tell him all that has transpired. This was Joseph's plan to find out what had happened and to deal with it.

Moreover, Judah's response was an attempt to obtain Benjamin's release by appealing for mercy for his aged father. In so doing, he tells Joseph - totally unintentionally - exactly what he wanted so desperately to hear, thereby freeing him and eventually Jacob, from their mutual errors.

"Your servant our father said to us: 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. One has left me; I said he was devoured and I have not seen him since. (If) you take this son too and tragedy befalls him you will bring my old age down to she'ol in agony'" (44:24-30).

Joseph needs to hear no more. He finally realizes the naked truth: No one has cut him off at all! He has not been forgotten!

Joseph could no longer restrain himself before all who were standing before him, and cried: 'Have every one leave me!'... and he cried out loud... and he told his brothers: I am Joseph: is my father still alive.?' (45:1-3)

Does he live? Is he yet my father, who loves me and has not forgotten me? Is it possible? All these years Joseph thought he was rejected by his father. Finally, that sense is exposed as a tragic misunderstanding.

For direct questions or comments to Zvi Shimon, please send email to intparsh@etzion.org.il .

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