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Rav Soloveitchik ZTL Notes (Volume 3)

Notice These are unapproved unedited notes [of R.Y.?] of classes given by Rav Soloveitchik. ... (Rav Soloveitchik did NOT write these notes.) [Thanks to David Isaac for typing these notes]

Lecture delivered by Rabbi Soloveitchik on Saturday night, December 29, 1979

Parsha Vayigash

Today's sedra involves the story of Joseph. Interestingly is the coincidence of Vayigash and the fast of 10 days in Teveth. It is not always together such as this year but, of course, always comes after Chanukah. One thing is obvious; it is not only the story of brothers becoming estranged and then reunited, a story of humanness, but it is the story of the Jewish people. If it were merely the tragedy of a private family, the Torah would not have told it to us. Torah does not engage in private incidents but that which affects the entire community. But this has universal significances for it represent the human destiny.

Today's haftorah is indicative of it. The story reflects our destiny. The haftorah involves the split between Joseph and Yehuda (the ten tribes represented by Menashe and the kingdom of David) and the nation later was not united. The union will occur at the messianic era. The beginning of the catastrophe of the Bais Rishon - this tragedy is the result of the selling of Joseph. "Mechiras Yosef" is responsible for the Churban (one of the chief reasons for the fall of the first Temple was unwarranted dissension amongst the people). When will the people be liberated and redeemed? When Joseph and Yehuda will be reunited. When they will join, the nation will not be split anymore. Therefore, it is the story of salvation - Geulah. The split is equal to Churban - destruction. The Churban of Bais Rishon was the result of the split between Joseph and Yehuda and the healing will come when they unite. Also, this is the story of T'shuvah - repentance. It is the story of Yom Kippur, promotion of sympathy and love. Medrash speaks of messianic redemption when one Jew will rediscover his fellow Jew, his brother. Thus, sedra Vayigash has a message of geulah and T'shuvah.

Joseph was forced by inner compulsion to reveal himself. The perplexing question is: "What did Yehuda tell him that he didn't already know?" What motivated him to reveal himself? Basically, he told him nothing new, nothing so startling. "You asked us, do we have a father or brother! He replied that we do, that he cannot leave his father for father will die if he does. I, Yehuda, am his surety. Let me remain in his place, etc.!" Sometimes, you are moved dramatically by the sudden discovery of something you didn't know before. But here there is nothing new, nothing sensational.

I believe there is something here not explicit but between the lines. He discovered that he must give in because he'll lose anyway. There is something in the wording which disturbs. It should have said, "Vayigash Yehuda El Yosef" - Yehuda approached unto Joseph. It is a new parsha!

Here we have "Aylov". Who is the Aylov - the pronoun? Aylov is used to emphasize. I would place the emphasis on the word Aylov. Otherwise, it would read as before. "Vayigash Yehuda El Yosef." It means: "Yehuda approached the 'strange' Joseph, the man he couldn't understand."

Previously, when they spoke to their father, they called Joseph, "Ish" the man - the Adonai Ha'aretz - the master of the land. The Adonai Ha'aretz is one whom you will not be able to reverse. He is the head; he is irreversible. Sometimes, the expression "Ish Avodoso" means an individual person - each individual. Here, the word Ish means a strange person - not understandable. Why is he strange? Because we don't understand him or his motives. We find the same mysterious Ish in sedra Vayeshev. When Joseph was sent by his father to visit the brothers, there is no need to tell us all the details. It could simply tell us that he went to Dosan where they were. Why all the details that he went from Amek Chevron - the Vale of Chevron to Shechem where he couldn't find them. He is the mysterious man - the Ish who told him that they had moved on. Rashi, in fact, questions "the Vale of Chevron" for Chevron is not located in a vale but on a mountain side. However, it means "conspiracy" involving G-d - to ultimately bring Joseph to Egypt and this could only be effected by selling of Joseph. We are told that the mysterious Ish was the Angel Gavriel. Why was this "man" at all interested? Why was he curious? All the assembled details give us a strange insight. G-d was interested. It is an enigma from above and unexplained.

The same thing was here. Hundreds, perhaps thousands came to buy corn and no one was interrogated, accused, arrested. Here, they are accused of spying. All the details which the "Mitzri" wanted to know -- it was irrational. It is basically the same "Ish", the mysterious figure. However, Yehuda began to feel that there is more to the whimsical Mitzri. When Joseph spoke with them and accused them of spying, it smelled of the "Stalinist trials". They could not infer any conclusions.

The next time they met the Ish was when they returned with Benjamin at Joseph's home. When you compare, it is a startlingly different confrontation. "Wash you hands and feet. You will have a meal with the master." There were all the niceties. The first meeting was only accusations of spying. Often, we do find at a trial: "If you admit your guilt, the penalty will be less." Here we find "G-d be gracious to you my son; they rejoiced, etc." Nothing is mentioned of "Miraglim" - spies. He was a most gracious host! They didn't understand the Ish the first time, nor could they fathom him this time. It is a completely different person, a different change. Here, they suddenly are "old friends" in his own home. It is an intimate relationship which they couldn't understand.

The first one who began to doubt even though he didn't formulate an opinion was Yehuda. This was now in today's sedra - at the new accusation of the stealing of the chalice. It was simply a psychiatric case! Apparently, Yehuda noticed this even at Joseph's home. They thought the problem was resolved but now came a third episode. "Open the sacks." We find complete reversals: Accusations - gracious host, then again not Miraglim - but thieves! Yehuda became suspicious because this was not Egyptian justice. "Far be it from me to do such a thing; the person in whose sack the goblet was found shall be a slave to me and you on in peace to your father."

Here was not merely petty thievery. Here is cultic stealing, the art of a magician. It would have meant death. In antiquity, there was always guilt by association. All would have deserved the penalty. Yehuda reasoned, "This is not an Egyptian official." The problem became more and more complex.

Why does Torah tell us that they were returned to Joseph's house and he was still there waiting for them. They were expected to be killed, not engaged in arguments. They expected a wild irate Egyptian pagan. They found him not angry but just as composed as he was twelve hours ago. The friendship which Joseph radiated before did not change.

Vayigash Aylov Yehuda. To this strange person, full of contradiction - Vayigash Aylov. "Bi Adoni, Yadabar B'OZncho Dovor." - Let me speak a word to your ear. "Let us stop talking nonsense. Your behavioral pattern is not logical. Let us speak sense, that which will penetrate you." What did

Yehuda tell Joseph? "I'll convince you that your policy is wrong! You'll lose anyway so do it graciously." What did he prove that Joseph couldn't resist? Joseph wanted Jacob his father to come to Mitzraim. Joseph had two dreams. The first was of eleven sheaves bowing to his sheave. The second dream was the sun and moon and eleven stars bowing to his star. The first dream declared that the brethren will bow which they did (therefore, it was necessary for Benjamin to come to be amongst the eleven brothers). The second dream was bolder, almost impudent. He wanted the father to come and bow in order to implement the second dream. The first one came exactly. But he wanted to see the second. However the answer was "Yaakov will not come to bow!" Medrash declares that if the second dream will not come about he will not achieve malchus (kingship). "Malchus" was taken from Reuven - the first born but who will be the "Melech"? Joseph realized that he will achieve "malchus" only if Jacob will come and bow at least once (which he would as a courtesy to an "unknown" head of state). However, there is no way to make Yaakov come! The first dream was fulfilled to the highest degree but malchus leading to the messianic realization of all human hopes will not be for Joseph! It was a perfect scheme. Bring Benjamin! If Benjamin is detained. Jacob will be forced to come. He will not know that Joseph is his son and will bow. There is only one person who can make Jacob move -- Benjamin. Yehuda says, "You want father here! He'll never come. He'll die first! It is not that Joseph was touched by Yehuda's devotion but he saw the battle is lost. Immediately, he declares, "I am your brother Joseph."

Interestingly, right after the "mechiras Yosef" - the selling of Joseph, Torah tells us the story of Tamar. Why then? Because the story of Yehuda emerges. This story is the clue as to why Malchus Yehuda and not Malchus Yosef. The answer can be found thus. David is the typical representative of T'shuvah - repentance. We find a posek "I was incubated in the womb of my mother in sin." There are two types of great men! One type of man is just because by nature he is just. He is kind because it is impossible for him not to be kind. He gives "zdakah" because he cannot do otherwise. There is no battle with evil. This is Joseph. He is called (above all his brothers). Yosef Hatzadik - Joseph, the righteous. This is illustrated in the Torah by his relationship with the wife of Potiphar. David was great but he had to change himself. He had to atone for temptation. An illustration of Joseph is that it never occurred to him to take revenge against his brothers for his long years of imprisonment. "Let them taste what I tasted - slavery." It is not simply that he didn't want to do it; he was not addicted to it by nature."

David has to say "Vidu" to confess, to defeat destructive forces. To whom does the "meluchah" belong? To David! The reason is that the "melech" should realize how difficult it is to fight nature and that T'shuvah should be of prime importance. When was the decision reached? On the day that Joseph was sold. Yehuda had committed the biggest crime. Why that very day? Because Yehuda had sinned against the very principles of malchus but he had great potential. He had the weakness of tripping but he had the ability to rise.

We find in sedra V'ychee in the blessings of Jacob concerning Yehuda: "Even when he falls he retains the strength of a lion." How did he redeem himself? By two actions. First, he rose to greatness at the trial of Tamar and secondly, a poor Hebrew stood his ground against a king of Egypt. He saved Tamar's life and it was a tremendous effort to save a poor girl's life for if he so desired, he could have remained silent, saved himself from shame and no one would have cared if she were executed. From this test, he emerged with flying colors. "In this matter, she is more righteous than I for I denied to her Shaloh as I had promised!" Secondly, was his contest with Joseph, the unknown brother. "You have lost the battle anyway!"

What was Yehuda's "Chet" - sin? It was not so much to sell his brother into slavery but to agree to the desires of the majority, wrong as it was. He didn't exercise leadership. If he said, "What right do you have to sell a brother," they would have listened. Instead, he agreed to the majority. For this he had to redeem himself in two experiences. He knew that by admitting to Tamar, he'd lose his leadership and yet he did. Secondly,

"Hashgocha" - providence - wanted him to have the courage to disagree with the Melech Mitzraim. Therefore, when Jacob came to Mitzraim, he sent ahead Yehuda. The reason was because he was a leader.

Chazal says everyone was busy at that moment. G-d was involved in weaving the mantle of the personality of Melech Hamoshiach. Reuven was repenting of his sin about Bilah. No one protested Joseph. But "Mechiras Yosef" left its mark on Jewish history.

from TorahWeb.org <torahweb@torahweb.org> subject Rabbi Yonason Sacks - Aschalta Degeula: Harmony and Reconciliation www.torahweb.org/torah/2006/parsha/rsac_vayigash.html

Rabbi Yonason Sacks

Aschalta Degeula: Harmony and Reconciliation

After years of separation the Torah describes the emotional reunion of Yosef and Binyamin, "vyapeil al tzavarei binyamin achiv vayeifk uBinyamin bacha al tzavarav - then he fell upon his brother Binaymin's neck and wept, and Binyamin wept upon his neck." The tears shed by Yosef and Binyamin were not merely tears of joy. The Gemara (Megillah 16b) explains that Yosef was crying over the destruction of the first and second Beis Hamikdash which were located in Binyamin's portion of Eretz Yisroel, and Binyamin wept over the destruction of Mishkan Shilo which was found in Yosef's portion. What, however, is the link between this moment of reconciliation and the future destruction of the Beis Hamikdash?

The Ramban explains that the very purpose and essence of the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash was to capture and preserve the exalted moment of kabbolas haTorah. Just as maamad Har Sinai represents a time of intense hashroas haShechina and unity of Klal Yisroel, so too the Beis Hamikdash embodied these qualities. Without hashroas haShechina and achdus the Beis Hamikdash could not exist.

The reconciliation of Yosef and his brothers marks a period of harmony and unity. Yet Yosef and Binyamin knew through ruach hakodesh that this ideal condition would not endure. Klal Yisroel would once again exhibit sinas chinam which would result in the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Accordingly, even at this moment of intense joy, Yosef and Binyamin cry over the future destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

The theme of unity and redemption is highlighted in the hatorah. Yechezkel hanavi who experienced the churban and joins Bnei Yisroel in Bavel declares,

"hinei ani lokeach es eitz Yosef asher beyad Ephraim vshivte Yisroel chaveiro nosati oasm alav es eitz Yehuda voasisom le-eitz echad vehayu echad beyodi - behold I take the wooden tablet of Yosef which is in Ephraim's hand, and one of the Tribes of Israel his comrades, and shall place them with it together with the wooden tablet of Yehuda, and I will make one wooden tablet and they shall become one in my hand" (37:19)

"vehaya mishkani aleihem vehayisi lahem le-Elokim veheima yeheyu li le-am - My dwelling place shall be upon them and I shall be for a G-d unto them, and they shall be unto me for a people" (37:27).

A poignant illusion to this reconciliation can be found in the majestic prophecy of Yeshaya Hanavi who describes messianic times, "vesamti kadmokad shimshotayich veshaaarecha leavni ekdach - I shall make your windows of rubies and your gates of garnets" (54:12). The Gemara (Bava Basra 75a) explains:

"vesamti kadmokad shimshotayich', amar Rav Shmuel Bar Nachmeini, pleegee trei malachai borokia Gavriel uMichael, veamri lei trei amorai bemaarava uman inun? Yehuda veChizkiya bnei R' Chiya, chad amar shoham vecahd amar yashfei. Amar lehu Hakadosh Baruch Hu lehavi kedien ukedein - I will make your windows of adkod stone. Rav Shmuel bar Nachmeini said, two angels in heaven disputed the meaning of kadmokad, Gavriel and Michael, and some say two Amoriam in the west, and who are they, Yehuda and Chizkiya, the sons of R'

Chiya. One of them says it is shoham and the other says Jasper. The Holy One Blessed is He said to them let it be both opinions"

What is the significance of the stones shoham and yashfei which would be used to build the walls of Yerushalayim? The choshen of the kohein gadol contained twelve stones which represented the twelve tribes of Israel. Shoham and yashfei were the stones which represented Yosef and Binyamin. Perhaps the choice of these stones, "lehavi kedien ukedein", reflects the harmonious reunion of Yosef and his brothers, a prerequisite for the building of the Beis Hamikdash.

May we merit the fulfillment of this glorious prophecy bemeheira beyameinu.

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From **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> date Dec 27, 2006 3:07 AM subject Rabbi Frand on Parshas VaYigash mailed-by torah.org

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayigash -
Alas! The Therapeutic Anguish Could Not Be Completed

The narration in this week's parsha is one of the most compelling and dramatic chapters in all of Chumash. The verse says, "Now Yosef could not endure in the presence of all who stood before him, so he called out, 'Remove everyone from before me!' Thus no one stood with him when Yosef made himself known to his brothers. He gave forth his voice in weeping. Egypt heard, and Pharaoh's household heard. And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef, Is my father still alive?'..." [Bereshis 45:1-3]

I had always gotten a sense of relief from this pasuk. "Baruch Hashem, the ordeal is over!" The drama has been going on for two weeks now. The brothers are pleading and all these traumas befell them. It is a charade. We know what is really happening and we can imagine the anguish of the brothers. They did not know why this was happening to them. The paths stir the heartstrings. And now, it is finally over! Baruch Hashem, Yosef could not take it any longer – neither could I! There was always the sense, that now at last the tension is broken.

The Sefas Emes has a different reaction. He understands the fact that "Yosef could not endure it any longer" as a tragedy in and of itself. If only Yosef had been able to hold out longer, the face of Jewish history would have been different. According to the Sefas Emes, we should groan a tremendous sigh when we read this pasuk "And Yosef could not endure any longer".

Why is this so? The Sefas Emes calls our attention to a pasuk just a few lines later: "Then (Yosef) fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. [Bereshis 45:14] Rashi explains why Yosef cried: He knew prophetically that the two Temples would be in the portion of the Tribe of Binyamin in Eretz Yisrael. He cried over their (future) destruction.

Why did Yosef think about that now? What is the reason for this sudden preoccupation with tragedy, destruction, and churban? Why spoil this long-awaited reunion with his beloved full brother?

The Sefas Emes writes that Yosef thought about the churban now for a very good reason. This entire story of Yosef "toying" with his brothers and putting them through the whole charade and anguish was not out of sadism. It was not for revenge. Rather, Yosef realized that the brothers had to receive atonement (Kaparrah) for the selling of their brother. This entire two week narration was for the purpose of removing this terrible stain from the Divine Tribes. The goal of causing the personal anguish that his brothers were suffering was to save future generations of their descendants from much worse anguish as punishment for this very sin. Had he been able to hold out longer, to keep it going further, and put them through some more tragedy and suffering (as further Kaparrah) – the future atonement demanded from Klal Yisrael would have been much less significant. Our "debt" for the sin of the sale of Yosef might have been totally expiated.

We read the story of the Ten Martyrs as part of our liturgy two times during the year: Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur. What is the connection? The destruction of the Temple and the exile from our Land is all because of the sin of the sale of Yosef. We are at the end of the book of Bereshis. As we have said many times, this book champions the idea of "The actions of the fathers foreshadow the actions of the children." Bereshis is the blueprint of history.

If we want to know why Jews can't get along with each other and why there is so much "hatred between brethren" it is because of the episode of the sale of Yosef. This incident had a significant impact on Jewish history. When Yosef saw his brother Binyamin and cried because of the future destructions, he was crying because he now felt that his plan for saving this fate was foiled. "I could not hold out as long as I wanted." He could not complete the prescription for therapeutic suffering that would have spared them from the later suffering. Therefore, the atonement was not complete. Therefore, future kaparah would yet come in the form of the destruction of the Temples.

The pasuk "Yosef could hold out no longer" must be a source of anguish for all of us as we read it.

The Shagas Aryeh Explains To His Congregants The Pharaoh-Yaakov Dialog

The end of the parsha, when Yosef brings his father Yaakov into Pharaoh, contains one of the strangest dialogues in all of the Torah [Bereshis 47:8-9]: Pharaoh said to Yaakov, "How many are the days of the years of your life?"

Yaakov said to Pharaoh: "The days of the years of my sojourns have been a hundred and thirty years; few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my forefathers in the days of their sojourns."

Yaakov meets the most powerful man in the world and the King asks him "How old are you?" This is a question that we stop asking when a person turns ten years old. This is usually seen as a rude question to ask an adult.

The answer is almost as strange. Yaakov does not simply state that he is 130 years old. He adds an unsolicited commentary: "few and bad have been the days of the years of my life..." Why did Yaakov say that?

I would like to relate a story in the name of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik.

The Shagas Aryeh became the Rav of the community of Metz. The Shagas Aryeh was an outstanding genius. He became the Rav when he was 70 years old. One can imagine the reaction of the community, the first time the Shagas Aryeh spoke and gave a Torah lesson: They were amazed.

On his way out, he overheard two of the community members talking. The first said to the second, "It is a shame. He is such a wonderful scholar, such a wonderful Rabbi, such a wonderful asset to our community. It is a shame – how long will he be able to be with us? (Life expectancy then was not what it was now and even today the life expectancy of a male is somewhere under 75 years old.) It is too bad that we could not have gotten him when he was 40 or 50!"

The Shagas Aryeh, upon hearing this comment quoted an insight from this week's parsha: He explained the dialog between Pharaoh and Yaakov. When Yaakov arrived in Egypt, even though they were in the midst of a famine, the famine stopped in his merit! Good times returned to Egypt. Pharaoh was thrilled with having Yaakov in Egypt. But he looked at him and saw that he was an old man.

The question "How old are you" was in effect a different question: "how many more years of boom can we expect?" Yaakov Avinu told Pharaoh not to worry: "I'm ONLY 130 years old. The reason why I look so old is because I had a difficult life, but, in fact, I am not nearly as old as the life expectancy in my family. My father and grandfather lived until way past 130!"

The Shagas Aryeh told his congregants: "I am 70 years old, but don't worry, I will be your Rabbi for the next 20 years." And so it was. He was Rabbi in Metz for 20 more years and died when he was 90 years old!

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org
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Air Travel on a Fast Day - Part One - Part 1

by **Rabbi Chaim Jachter**

In pre-modern times, it was relatively easy to determine the end of a fast day. The advent of airplane travel, however, has raised a host of questions as to when the fast should end. In this series, we shall discuss four common scenarios: traveling east and not crossing the international dateline (nightfall arrives earlier), traveling west and not crossing the dateline (nightfall arrives later), traveling west and crossing the dateline (potentially curtailing the fast by many hours or even avoiding the fast altogether), and traveling east and crossing the dateline (possibly encountering the fast day twice).

Traveling East Without Crossing the Dateline

The classic responsum that addresses the question of the impact of the changing time zones on Halachic matters was authored by the Radbaz (Teshuvot 1:76) in the sixteenth century. The Radbaz writes that the end time for Shabbat is determined by the advent of Tzeit HaKochavim (the appearance of three medium sized stars) in the specific place that a person finds himself on Shabbat, even if Shabbat has not yet ended in the individual's usual place of residence (see Seforno to Vayikra 23:3 who adopts a similar approach).

A proof to this approach may be derived from the Gemara (Shabbat 118b) that praises those who begin Shabbat in Tiberius and those who end Shabbat in Tzipori (located in the lower Galilee almost at a midpoint between Haifa and Tiberius). Rashi (ad. loc. s.v. MiMachnisei) explains that Tiberius lies on a low altitude and the sun appears to set early there, so its residents begin Shabbat early. Tzipori, on the other hand, rests on a mountain where the sun appears to set late, and its residents observe Shabbat until quite late (my cousin Meir Rotem, an engineer who resides close to Tzipori, informed me that Tiberius lies 212 meters below sea level and estimates that Tzipori lies between 70 and 100 meters above sea level).

Rav Akiva Eiger (Gilyon HaShas ad. loc.) cites a responsum of the Ri Migash (number 45) who explains that the praise refers specifically to those who begin Shabbat in Tiberius and walk on Shabbat to Tzipori and complete the Shabbat in Tzipori. The Ri Migash clarifies that Tzipori is within the Techum Shabbat (Shabbat boundary in which one is permitted to walk on Shabbat) of Tiberius, and Meir Rotem informs me that one could walk from Tiberius to Tzipori in one day, although it would be a challenging journey since he would be walking uphill. The people who begin Shabbat in Tiberius and end it in Tzipori deserve praise because they place themselves in a situation in which they would be obligated to observe Shabbat longer (in general, Halacha encourages us to create situations where we are obligated to perform a Mitzvah, such as the practice of men to wear a four cornered garment that requires Tzitzit, see Menachot 41a and Tosafot Pesachim 113b s.v. VeEin Lo).

This interpretation of Shabbat 118b seems to teach that even if one is a resident of Tzipori, he must accept Shabbat when it begins in Tiberius, even though it has not yet begun in Tzipori. Similarly, a resident of Tiberius must wait until Tzeit HaKochavim in Tzipori to end Shabbat even though Shabbat has already ended in Tiberius. This seems to conclusively prove the assertion of the Radbaz that the beginning and end of Shabbat is determined by one's location on Shabbat and not by his usual place of residence.

Rav Zvi Pesach Frank (Mikraei Kodesh II:215) questions this proof from the Gemara in Shabbat. He suggests that this passage merely proves that one must be strict in case in which Shabbat ends later than it does in one's hometown, as the Gemara mentions only one who travels from Tiberius to Tzipori. The Gemara does not, however, discuss whether a resident of Tzipori visiting Tiberius may end Shabbat earlier than it ends in Tzipori. It is possible, writes Rav Zvi Pesach, that Halacha requires both that Shabbat end in one's location and his residence. Thus, Rav Frank questions the ruling of the Radbaz (see the comments of the Harerei Kodesh) and remains unsure whether an American who lands in Israel may count the Omer at a time when it is nightfall in Israel but not yet Tzeit HaKochavim in the United States.

Nearly all contemporary Poskim accept the Radbaz's ruling in both a strict and lenient direction. For example, Dayan Weisz (Teshuvot Minchat Yitzchak 6:84),

Rav Wosner (Teshuvot Sheivet HaLevi 2:93 and 6:129:26), Rav Ovadia Yosef (Taharat HaBayit 2:277-280) and Rav Feivel Cohen (Badei HaShulchan 196:1, Beurim s.v. Shivat Yamim) all rule that an individual who begins counting seven clean days in the United States and subsequently travels to Israel may immerse at nightfall in Israel even though it is not yet Tzeit HaKochavim in America. This is a striking example, since Poskim are normally quite strict about the seven clean days (see, for example, Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 196:4 and my Gray Matter 2:98-100), yet they rule in accordance with the Radbaz even in a lenient direction.

These authorities rely to a great extent on an important early twentieth century ruling of Teshuvot Chavatzet HaSharon (1:Y.D. 47). This great authority adopts the approach of the Radbaz in both a strict and lenient direction, and asserts that it applies to all Halachic concerns. The Chavatzet HaSharon cites as proof the common practice to regard a boy as Bar Mitzvah immediately at Tzeit HaKochavim on his thirteenth birthday without inquiry as to the location of his birth to determine if it is already Tzeit HaKochavim in that locale.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that Rav Aharon Felder (Moadei Yeshurun page 109) cites Rav Moshe Feinstein's ruling that one who travels east may end the fast when it becomes Tzeit HaKochavim in his location, even though his fasting time will be reduced as a result. Rav Hershel Schachter told me that we should follow this ruling of Rav Moshe. Moreover, Rav Schachter rules that if the plane turns back west after one has reached Tzeit HaKochavim, one is not obligated to continue fasting. We should add that it is not proper to deliberately schedule one's eastbound plane travel for a fast day in order to avoid the obligation to fast, since Halacha wants us to place ourselves into situations of obligation, not avoid them, as we discussed above.

Traveling West without Crossing the Dateline

Those who travel west on a fast day are faced with the opposite problem. Their fast will be lengthened, as they will encounter nightfall much later than they would at home since they are traveling in the same direction as the sun (so to speak). The question is whether westbound travelers must continue their fast until they encounter Tzeit HaKochavim.

The initial question that must be addressed is the status of the obligation to fast on Shiva Asar BeTammuz (when travelers are most interested in not extending this long summer fast), Tzom Gedaliah, and Asarah BeTeiveit (the status of Taanit Esther is addressed in an essay that appears at www.koltorah.org). If it can be determined that we observe these fasts as Minhag (custom) and not rabbinic law, Poskim might suggest an approach to justify ending these fasts earlier. Tisha BeAv, though, undoubtedly constitutes a rabbinic obligation, and one must wait until nightfall to end the fast. Chazal are quite strict about Tisha BeAv (see Rosh HaShanah 18b and Taanit 12b), as they even treat it with the severity of Yom Kippur in some instances (see Pesachim 54b).

The primary source for this discussion is the Gemara (Rosh HaShanah 18b) that asks why the three aforementioned days are described in Zechariah (8:19) on one hand as fast days and on the other hand as days that will eventually be a time of joy. The Gemara cites Rav Papa who resolves this contradiction by distinguishing between three different situations.

When peace prevails, these days will be a time of celebration. Rashi explains this refers to a time when Nochrin do not control us. I sadly recall a comment made by Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik in Shiur at Yeshiva University in 1983. He remarked that Israel today is controlled to a great extent by the United States State Department in a manner not very different from the way the Jews were controlled by the Persian Empire during the early Bayit Sheini period. According to this approach, our times cannot be described as a time of peace despite the establishment of Medinat Yisrael.

The Gemara continues that if we suffer from government persecution, the three days will be obligatory days of fasting. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited by Rav Hershel Schachter in Nefesh HaRav p.197) related that there were Gedolim in Europe who ruled that the Holocaust years were times of government persecution and that we were obligated to fast on these three days according to rabbinic law. Rav Schachter clarified (in a personal conversation) that this ruling applied only to those suffering directly under Nazi rule and not those who lived in the United States.

The Gemara concludes that in a time of neither peace nor government persecution, fasting is optional. The Gemara clarifies, however, that one must fast on Tisha BeAv even if there is no government persecution, due to the severity of the tragedies that occurred on that day.

In our times, when neither peace nor government persecution prevails, there is no rabbinic obligation to fast. However, the Maggid Mishneh (commenting to Rambam Hilchot Taanot) records that "now" (the time of the Rishonim) the common practice is for everyone to fast on these three fasts even if there is no government persecution. The Maggid Mishneh's assertion is codified as normative Halacha by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 549:1 and 550:1) and Mishnah Berurah (550:1). In other words, even though we are not (in most situations) obligated to fast on these three days, the custom adopted during the time of the Rishonim to fast on these days even when there is no government persecution is accepted.

Next week, we shall (IY"H and B"N) explore the possibility of westbound travelers ending a fast before nightfall based on the fact that today it is merely a custom to fast Shiva Asar BeTammuz, Tzom Gedaliah, and Asarah BeTeiveit.

Air Travel on a Fast Day – Part Twp - Part 2

by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Last week, we began our discussion of the implications of airplane travel on the concluding time of fast days. We mentioned the consensus view that eastbound travelers who encounter Tzeit HaKochavim (nightfall) earlier than they would have had they remained at home may end their fast even though their fasting time is shortened. We began our discussion of the problem of westbound air travelers who find their fasting time to be extended. We noted that we fast today on Shiva Asar BeTammuz, Tzom Gedaliah and Asarah BeTeiveit because of a custom dating back to the Rishonim, not due to rabbinic law. Therefore, there might be potential for a lenient ruling excusing westbound travelers from extending their fast until they encounter nightfall.

The Stockholm Precedent

Rav Yosef Cohen (the grandson of Rav Zvi Pesach Frank who authored a commentary entitled Harerei Kodesh to his grandfather's work Mikraei Kodesh) presents such a lenient ruling (Harerei Kodesh to Mikraei Kodesh; Pesach volume 2 p.214). Rav Cohen cites the precedent of the Jewish community of Stockholm that concluded their fasting on Shiva Asar BeTammuz at 9:30 P.M., even though nightfall arrives much later in that city. The Nachal Eshkol (commentary to Sefer HaEshkol, Hilchot Tisha BeAv), writing in the nineteenth century, justifies this practice by noting that at the time the Jewish People accepted the practice to fast on Shiva Asar BeTammuz, Tzom Gedaliah and Asarah BeTeiveit in all circumstances, no Jewish community extended as far north as Stockholm. Thus, he argues that the original acceptance to fast never applied to fasting later than 9:30 P.M., since no Jewish community at that time fasted any of these three fasts later than 9:30 P.M.

Rav Cohen rules that the same can be said for westbound travelers on these three fasts. The original acceptance did not apply to such an extended fast. It is not clear, though, when Rav Cohen would permit a westbound traveler to end his fast. Rabbi David Pahmer (a leading student of Rav Hershel Schachter, writing in the Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society Spring 1991 p.78), though, presents this opinion as permitting westbound air travelers to conclude their fast at 9:30 P.M., regardless of when nightfall arrives.

Rav Feinstein and Rav Vosner

Not all authorities agree with this approach. Rav Moshe Feinstein (cited by Rav Aharon Felder, Moadei Yeshurun p. 109) rules that westbound travelers must continue their fast until they encounter nightfall. Rav Moshe is not cited as making special exemptions no matter how long the fasting time is increased. This is not an exceptional ruling, since we explained at length last week that a person's Halachic status is determined by his location, not by his residence. Thus, if one is located in an area at a time that is still the seventeenth of Tammuz or the third of Tishrei, he must continue fasting.

Rav Shmuel Vosner (Teshuvot Sheivet HaLevi 7:76) adopts somewhat of a compromise approach between Rav Cohen and Rav Moshe. He expresses considerable reservations about the Stockholm-precedent and even questions its validity. His basic concern is that there is no source for the Nachal Eshkol's assertion in the Gemara or Rishonim. Moreover, he reasons that it seems that when the Jewish People accepted upon themselves the obligation to fast on the aforementioned three fasts, they accepted the obligation to fast in accordance with the rules of fasting. Since the Gemara (Taanit 12a) states, "Any fast that does not conclude with sundown is not considered a proper fast day," a fast day by definition means fasting until nightfall, regardless of how late it is.

Accordingly, Rav Vosner reasons, when we accepted the obligation of these three fasts, we accepted the obligation to complete the fasts regardless of how late they end. Indeed, I was told that observant communities in the sections of England where Tzeit HaKochavim is quite late in the summer end their fast long after 9:30 in the evening. Moreover, Rav Hershel Schachter told me (in a personal conversation) that when he once discussed the practice in Stockholm, a Talmid in the Shiur whose father served as a Rav in Stockholm mentioned that the Jewish community there no longer ends the fast at 9:30 P.M.

Nonetheless, Rav Vosner allows westbound travelers to conclude their fast at sundown (Shekiat HaChama) rather than the usual Tzeit HaKochavim. Rav Vosner notes that the proper time to end a fast was already disputed in the time of the Rishonim, and he permits relying on the lenient opinion in case of great need in combination with the Nachal Eshkol's reasoning.

Although the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 562:2) rules in accordance with the Rosh (Taanit 12a) that even the three fasts conclude at Tzeit HaKochavim, other Rishonim (such as the Rabbeinu Yonah cited in the Rosh, Shabbat 2:23) believe that they end at sundown. Tosafot (Avodah Zara 34a s.v. Mitamin) note that the straightforward reading of the aforementioned Gemara (Taanit 12a) indicates that

these three fasts end at sundown, but they record that the common practice was (and remains until this day) to conclude even these three fasts at nightfall.

Nonetheless, the Aruch HaShulchan (O.C. 562:9) believes that both the Rambam and the Vilna Gaon (O. C. 562:1 s.v. Ad Tzeit HaKochavim) rule that these three fasts end at Shekiah, and therefore concludes that a Rav who rules that one may conclude these three fasts at sundown is not to be denigrated. In practice, some Rabbanim will rely on these lenient opinions for someone who experiences an unusually difficult fast (other Rabbanim will not rely on these opinions even in case of need, as the Mishnah Berurah does not even cite these lenient opinions). Accordingly, Rav Vosner permits westbound travelers who are experiencing an extraordinarily long fast to rely on the lenient opinion.

Moreover, Rav Vosner writes that if one feels that it is too difficult to fast the extended hours to the extent that he feels overwhelmed by the fast, it would be permitted to eat enough to restore his well being, even before sundown. However, Rav Vosner writes that the rules of the Taanit remain in effect, even though he ate a bit to restore his well-being (see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 568:1). Citing Teshuvot Chatam Sofer (O.C. 157), he writes that in such circumstances one should eat only what is necessary, not more. Rav Vosner does not mention a requirement that one eat less than a Shiur as is required on Yom Kippur (see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 618) and, according to some Poskim, on Tisha BeAv (as we discuss in an essay that is available at www.koltorah.org).

Westbound Travelers who Cross the Dateline

Although most westbound air travelers will find their fasting time extended, some potentially have the fast shortened or even avoid it altogether. One would avoid the fast if he begins his travel on the evening of the seventeenth of Tammuz and flies west, and before dawn crosses the dateline when it becomes the eighteenth of Tammuz (recall that one who crosses the dateline from east to west "loses" a day). In such a case, one will not encounter the (day) time "Shiva Asar BeTammuz" when one is obligated to fast. The question is whether a person in such circumstances is completely excused from observing the fast.

Rabbi David Pahmer (ad. loc. p.77) writes the following (echoing the views of Rav Hershel Schachter):

Consider someone crossing the dateline from Tuesday 3 P.M. into Wednesday 3 P.M.... Even if he has already davened Mincha, he must daven again because his first Mincha is for his obligation to daven on Tuesday, and he now has an obligation to daven on Wednesday (he must also be sure to recite Mincha for Tuesday before crossing the dateline- C.J.). Similarly, he must put on Tefillin.... If he crosses the line during the 49 days of the Omer, he must count for the new day. A woman in the midst of her seven clean days of Niddut has just jumped into the next day. Generally (Pidyon HaBen might be an exception), the dateline affects any issue which depends on the calendar day.

This approach is hardly surprising, as we saw last week that nearly all of the contemporary Poskim have concluded (based on rulings of the Radbaz and Chavatazelet HaSharon) that one follows the standards of the community in which he finds himself. For example, almost all Poskim agree that if one began the seven clean days in America and subsequently flies to Israel, the immersion may take place in Israel after nightfall even though it is still day in America. Indeed, the Encyclopedia Talmudit (22:405 and see note 620 as well as p.403 note 608) notes that this approach is endorsed by many Acharonim, including the Chazon Ish and Teshuvot Eretz Zvi (number 44; Rav Schachter is fond of quoting this Sefer, which was written by the Rav of Kozhiglov).

Accordingly, one is not obligated to fast if he is located in a place in which it is not the seventeenth of Tammuz or the third of Tishrei, even though it is Shiva Asar BeTammuz or Tzom Gedalia in their place of residence. Thus, one would either avoid the fast altogether or end the fast as soon as he crosses the dateline. Indeed, Rav Hershel Schachter told me that this is his opinion. He remarked that this is analogous to the situation described by the Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim chapter 152, where further details are presented) of one who spends the fourteenth of Adar in Yerushalayim and the fifteenth in Tel Aviv. The Chazon Ish rules that such a person is not obligated to observe Purim on either day. We should note, though, that one certainly should not schedule a trip to dodge or limit the obligation to fast (or observe Purim), as noted by Teshuvot Eretz Tzvi (number 44, based on Menachot 41a) in the specific context of crossing the dateline.

Next week we shall (IY"H and B"N) conclude our discussion of air travel on fast days with a discussion of eastbound travelers crossing the dateline.

Air Travel on Fast Days – Part Three - Part 3

by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

For the past two weeks, we have been examining the fascinating questions regarding air travel on a fast day. We mentioned that eastbound travelers who encounter nightfall will have their fast day shortened, and westbound air travelers will find their fasts extended, though there might be a potential for such travelers to conclude their fasting before nightfall. We also noted that one who crosses the

dateline has entered the new day in accordance with his new location. Thus, westbound travelers who cross the dateline will have their fast day shortened and possibly avoid it altogether. This week, we shall complete this series with a discussion of the location of the dateline, the possibility of eastbound travelers reentering the fast after crossing the dateline, and an eastbound plane that encounters nightfall and then returns westward and reenters the fast day.

Location of the Dateline

Although we concluded that one enters the new day when crossing the dateline, Poskim vigorously debate the location of the dateline according to Halachic standards (see the no less than thirteen opinions outlined in the appendix to volume 22 of the Encyclopedia Talmudit). The three basic opinions (outlined in an essay that appears at www.koltorah.org and in the appendix to volume 22 of the Encyclopedia Talmudit) are that it lies 90 degrees east of Yerushalayim (Chazon Ish), 180 degrees from Yerushalayim (Rav Yechezkel Michal Tukachinsky) or that we may follow the international dateline located 180 degrees from Greenwich, England (Rav Zvi Pesach Frank). Rav Hershel Schachter is strongly inclined to follow the opinion of the Chazon Ish (Belkvei HaTzon page 67), while Rav Elazar Meyer Teitz told me that Rabbanim of the previous generation regarded the Chazon Ish's view as a minority opinion. Thus, one must consult his Rav for a ruling regarding this matter.

We should also add that Rav Schachter (ad. loc.) rules that the dateline for air travelers differs from the dateline for those on land. The Chazon Ish rules that the dateline hugs the eastern coastline for those continents through which the Halachic dateline passes according to his opinion (Asia and Australia). He reasons that "Ein Mechalkin HaYabashot," we do not split a continent as partly on one side of the dateline and partly on the other side. Accordingly, the Chazon Ish regards Sydney and Melbourne (located on the eastern coast of Australia) as being west of the dateline even though they are located further than ninety degrees east of Yerushalayim.

Rav Schachter reasons that this logic applies to one who is located on land, not to one traveling in the air. Thus, according to Rav Schachter, one who embarks on a plane trip from Melbourne or Sydney on Sunday enters Shabbat immediately upon takeoff! One should consult his Rav about this matter, and specifically regarding how air travelers should manage the crossing of the dateline. Fortunately, it is common today for planes to display on a screen precisely where the plane is located, thereby making it easier for one to determine a Halachically appropriate course of action.

Traveling East and Crossing the Dateline

Most eastbound air travelers will find their fast curtailed, as we discussed two weeks ago. However, one who has completed the fast of Shiva Asar BeTammuz in a community that lies west of the dateline, such as Singapore or Hong Kong, and boards an eastbound flight will again encounter the seventeenth day of Tammuz once he has crossed the dateline (as one who crosses the dateline from west to east "gains" a day).

We should note that there is a precedent for observing a holiday twice in one year. If one is located in Tel Aviv on the fourteenth of Adar and Yerushalayim on the fifteenth of Adar, the Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim chapter 152 where further details are presented) writes that in such a situation one would be obligated to observe Purim on both days.

It seems, though, that those who follow and further apply the ruling of the Nachal Eshkol that we cited last week justifying the practice in Stockholm to conclude Shiva Asar BeTammuz at 9:30 even though nightfall is yet to come would rule that we never accepted an obligation to fast Shiva Assar BeTammuz twice within a 24-hour period.

Rav Asher Bush (Teshuvot Sho'el BeShlomo number 40) addresses this question in the context of Taanit Ester (which, admittedly, is treated more leniently by Poskim, see Rama to 686:2 and the essay discussing Taanit Esther available at www.koltorah.org). He cites the Beit Yosef (O.C. 686 s.v. UMah SheKatav), who writes that we do not commemorate Ester's three day fast with three days of fasting "in order not to impose too much of a burden on the community," and criticizes as excessive (ad. loc. s.v. Katuv, citing the Shibolei HaLeket) those who fast Taanit Ester on both Thursday and Friday when Purim falls out on Sunday. Rav Bush considers these to be precedents for not requiring an eastbound traveler to resume fast when he reenters the thirteenth of Adar. He argues that we never accepted the custom to fast Taanit Ester for two days.

It seems that the same can be said for Shiva Asar BeTammuz, Tzom Gedaliah, and Asara BeTeiveit, which we in current circumstances observe due to custom (as we explained last week). Rav Hershel Schachter told me that he agrees with this ruling. Furthermore, Shiva Asar BeTammuz, Tzom Gedaliah and Asara BeTeiveit are described in the Navi Zechariah (8:19) as Tzom HaRevii, Tzom HaShevii, and Tzom HaAsiri (the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the seventh month, and the fast of the tenth month), respectively. Rav Schachter infers that by definition there is

an obligation (stemming from the Pasuk in Zechariah) to fast only once in the fourth month (i.e. Tammuz), seventh month (Tishrei), and tenth month (Teiveit).

The Gerrer Rebbe (in a responsum that appears in Piskei Teshuvot, number 252, which was published in 5697) discusses one who embarks on Motzaei Yom Kippur and reenters Yom Kippur in the air. He writes that on a Biblical level, one is not obligated to resume fasting. He bases his assertion on the Pasuk (Vayikra 23:32) that presents the obligation to fast on Yom Kippur as "Mei'Erev Ad Erev," "From evening to evening." Thus, it seems that one does not enter Yom Kippur that already is in progress if he was not in that location in the evening at the beginning of the fast. The Gerrer Rebbe, though, implies that rabbinic law requires one to resume fasting if he has reentered Yom Kippur. This does not imply that rabbinic law requires one to fast upon reentering Shiva Asar BeTammuz, Tzom Gedaliah, or Asara BeTeiveit, since these fasts are not rooted in Biblical law and are not treated nearly as strictly as Yom Kippur.

Teshuvot Eretz Zvi (number 44) believes that an air traveler does not join Shabbat in progress, since the Halachic status of many items is determined by its status at the beginning of Shabbat. This applies to a variety of areas, including the laws of Muktzeh and Eruvei Chatzeirot and Techumin (see Eretz HaTzvi chapter seven where Rav Schachter develops this at length). Rav Schachter (Eretz HaTzvi ad. loc.) believes that nonetheless, rabbinic law obligates one who has entered Shabbat in progress to observe Shabbat.

These exceptions of not joining Shabbat or Yom Kippur in progress do not seem to apply to all other areas of Halacha (both have unique considerations that preclude entering them in progress). Thus, it would seem that if one who was traveling westward on the sixteenth of Tammuz or ninth of Tevet crosses the dateline, he must join the fast in progress. Indeed, Rav Schachter believes that such an individual enters the new day, thereby requiring him to don Tefillin and daven Mincha, as we noted last week. Thus, it would seem that he should also begin to fast once he has entered the dateline.

An Eastbound Plane that Returns Westward

I was told of a situation where a plane that headed east on a fast day encountered nightfall (whereupon the observant Jewish passengers ended their fast) and then, due to engine trouble, needed to return to New York. The passengers were consequently returned to daylight and the date of the fast. The question was whether they were obligated to return to the fast that they had begun. Perhaps one could say also say, similar to the Nachal Eshkol, that we never accepted an obligation to fast in such a situation. Rav Schachter told me that he agrees that once the fast has terminated, one is not obligated to begin it again (even if one does not accept the Nachal Eshkol's justification of the practice in Stockholm).

Conclusion

From our discussions of the past weeks, several points emerge. Eastbound air travelers who do not cross the dateline may end their fast when they encounter nightfall according to nearly all Poskim. There is, however, considerable dispute regarding when westbound air travelers (who do not cross the date line) must conclude their fast later. Fasts appear to conclude (or begin) when crossing the dateline from east to west, but there is considerable dispute regarding the location of the dateline as defined by Halacha. One who has already observed these three fasts does not return to the fast when crossing the dateline from west to east. One should consult his Rav for a ruling regarding the points of dispute. We should conclude by noting that except for the question regarding eastbound travelers who do not cross the dateline, Poskim are considerably stricter regarding Yom Kippur and Tisha BeAv.

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

Sir Jonathan Sacks - Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

[From 2 years ago - currently 5765] <http://www.chiefrabbi.org/tt-index.html> Vayigash Three Steps for Mankind

In his introduction to the Rabbinical Council of America's version of the Artscroll Siddur, Rabbi Saul Berman has a lovely essay on the opening word of today's sedra, Vayigash, "And he drew close." Because the work is not widely available outside America, I summarise the essay here.

It is our custom to take three steps forward before beginning the Amidah, the "standing prayer." These steps symbolise a formal approach to the Divine presence. It is as if we had been ushered into the innermost chamber of the palace, and we "draw close" to present our petition to the supreme King of kings.

R. Eleazar ben Judah (c.1165-c.1230), author of the Sefer Rokeach, made the fascinating suggestion that these three steps correspond to the three times in the Hebrew Bible where the word Vayigash, "and he drew close," is used in connection with prayer.

The first is the moment when Abraham hears of G-d's intention to destroy Sodom and Gemorah and the cities of the plain. "Abraham approached [vayigash] and said: Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked? . . . Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" (Gen. 18: 23-25).

The second occurs in today's sedra. Joseph's silver goblet has been found in Benjamin's sack. Joseph - whose true identity is still unknown to the brothers - says that Benjamin will now be held as his slave. The others may go free. Judah, having given Jacob his personal guarantee of Benjamin's safe return, now pleads for his release. "Then Judah drew close [vayigash] to him and said: Please, my lord, let your servant speak a word to my lord" (Gen. 44: 18).

The third appears in the great confrontation at Mount Carmel between the prophet Elijah and the 450 false prophets of Baal. Elijah proposes a test. Let each side prepare a sacrifice and call on the name of their deity. The one that sends fire is the true G-d. The 450 prophets do so. They prepare the sacrifice and ask Baal to send fire. Nothing happens. They cry all day, shouting, gyrating, lacerating themselves and working themselves into a frenzy but no fire comes. Then "Elijah stepped forward [vayigash] and prayed: O Lord, G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are G-d in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command." Fire descends, and the people fall to the ground, saying: "The Lord, He is G-d. The Lord, He is G-d" (I Kings 18). We recite this sentence seven times at the climax of Neilah on Yom Kippur.

Three approaches, three prayers, but very different from one another. Abraham prays for justice. Judah prays for mercy. Elijah prays for G-d to reveal himself.

Abraham prays on behalf of strangers - the people of the plain. They are, we know, wicked. The Torah told us this long before, when Lot first separated from Abraham to make his home in Sodom (Gen. 13: 13). Yet Abraham is concerned with their fate. He pleads in their defence. Abraham speaks out of the covenant of human solidarity.

Judah pleads with Joseph for the sake of his brother Benjamin and his father Jacob who, he knows, will not be able to bear the loss of yet another beloved son. He speaks on behalf of the family and its integrity, the bonds of emotion that bind those who share a common ancestry.

Elijah speaks to G-d, as it were, for the sake of G-d. He wants the people to renounce idolatry and return to their ancestral faith - to the one true G-d who rescued them from Egypt and took them to Himself in love. His primary concern is for G-d's sovereignty over the people. Later, when G-d reveals himself on Mount Horeb, Elijah says, "I have been very zealous for the Lord G-d Almighty." He speaks for the honour of G-d Himself.

Their respective stances, too, are different. Abraham, in the course of his prayer, calls himself "nothing but dust and ashes." Judah describes himself as a "servant" in the presence of a ruler. Elijah describes himself as a prophet, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left." Abraham represents our sense of awe in the presence of infinity, Judah our humility in the face of majesty, Elijah the grandeur and dignity of those who are bearers of the Divine word.

There are echoes of these encounters in the first three paragraphs of the Amidah. The first is about the patriarchs. G-d "remembers the good deeds

of the fathers." This reminds us of Abraham's prayer. The second is about Gevurah, G-d's governance of the universe, "supporting the fallen, healing the sick, setting free the bound and keeping faith with those who lie in the dust." When we recite it, we are like Judah standing before Joseph, a servant/subject in the presence of sovereignty and power. The third is about Kedushat Hashem, "the holiness of G-d's name," meaning the acknowledgement of G-d by human beings. When an act makes people conscious of G-d's existence, we call it a Kiddush Hashem. That is precisely what Elijah sought to do, and succeeded in doing, on Mount Carmel.

These three prayers - each an historic moment in the unfolding of the human spirit towards G-d - together represent the full spectrum of emotions and concerns we bring to the act of prayer. Each is introduced by the word vayigash, "and he approached, drew close, stepped forward." As we take three steps forward at the start of each prayer, we are thereby retracing the footsteps of three giants of the spirit, Abraham, Judah and Elijah, re-enacting their great encounters with G-d.

On 21 July 1969 Neil Armstrong, the first human being to set foot on the moon, uttered the famous words: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Behind our three small steps towards heaven lie three no less historic leaps for mankind.

From **Rabbi Goldwicht** <rgoldwicht@yutorah.org> date Dec 28, 2006 5:49 PM subject Parashat VaYigash 5767

Parashat VaYigash

When Yosef meets Binyamin for the first time in two decades, Rashi writes, quoting Chazal, that he asks Binyamin as to whether he has children. Binyamin replies that indeed he has ten sons, all of whom are named in some way related to Yosef. For example, Bela, because Yosef was nivla (swallowed up) among the nations; Becher, because Yosef was the bechor of his mother; Chupim, because Binyamin and Yosef were not present at each other's chuppah. When Yosef heard this, he could not restrain himself and fell upon Binyamin's neck in tears.

This outburst is certainly a natural release of Yosef's pent-up longing for his brother. Were Yosef not to burst out in tears, we would probably be quite surprised. These tears need no explanation. Yet Rashi explains that Yosef cried not because of this emotional reunion, but because he foresaw the future destructions of the First and Second Beit HaMikdash, which would be built in Binyamin's portion in Eretz Yisrael.

The Sfat Emet poses the obvious question: Why does Yosef cry over the Churban at this exact moment? Why can't he cry because of the emotional reunion with his brothers? The Churban hardly seems relevant.

The answer is that Yosef had a goal to unite his brothers. He understood that the only way to realize this goal given the current circumstances was to cause them tzarot - through the tzarot they would bond together and come to the realization, as they did, that the current stressors were punishment for the sale of Yosef. The genius of Yosef is apparent in the parallelism between the tzarot he causes them and their cruelty to him twenty-two years prior:

1) At first, Yosef imprisons all of the brothers and declares that one brother will go home to bring Binyamin while the rest remain behind. He then changes his mind and sends nine of the ten brothers who came to Mitzrayim back to bring Binyamin while one remains behind. The brothers immediately declare, "Aval asheimim anachnu al achinu, We are truly guilty concerning our brother" (Bereishit 42:21), recognizing the first parallelism: twenty-two years earlier, ten brothers had left home and only nine returned from the bor (pit), leaving Yosef behind; now, ten brothers had left home for Mitzrayim and only nine would return from the bor (prison), leaving Shimon behind.

2) When Yosef's brothers find their money in the sacks of grain they had purchased, they have their second sign. Nine brothers had returned home with money from the sale of Yosef as well.

When Yosef's brothers return home and Yaakov sees their money, he doesn't say a word. But when they tell him that they must bring Binyamin to Mitzrayim, he adamantly opposes them. Twice, he says, you've come home with money and without a brother: first Yosef, now Shimon. Would I let the same fate befall Binyamin? What convinced him to let up and allow Binyamin to be brought down to Mitzrayim was Yehudah's personal guarantee – when Yaakov saw that a son of Leah, indeed the most important son of Leah, was prepared to guarantee the safety of a son of Rachel, he was prepared to let them go.

When Yosef heard from Yehudah that he had personally guaranteed the safety of Binyamin, Yosef understood that his mission was nearing its end. Yosef only needed to hold a little longer in order for the achdut to become complete before revealing himself to his brothers. But for some unknown reason, the Torah tells us that Yosef was unable to hold back his emotions, despite the fact that he knew he was revealing himself before the right time, that the brothers' achdut was not 100% perfect. If there is a flaw in the "foundation," it would become apparent once the "building" was built – at some point, the building would fall to ruins because of this tiny flaw in its foundation. This was the Churban Bayit, and this is why Yosef mourned its destruction at this moment, showing his brothers that the key to future generations' strength and completeness in our land is achdut. Against our achdut, none can stand.

The more we feel true areivut, responsibility for one another—the more we fulfill Yehudah's promise to Yaakov, which resulted in the proclamation of "Ani Yosef, I am Yosef" (Bereishit 45:3)—the sooner we will hear the proclamation of "Ani Hashem, I am God" speedily in our days.

Shabbat Shalom!

Meir Goldwicht

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<http://www.anshe.org/parsha.htm#parsha> Parsha Page by Fred Toczek
A Service of Anshe Emes Synagogue (Los Angeles)

Parsha Page by Fred Toczek VAYIGASH

This outline is dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother, Ida Toczek (Yehudit Bas Shimon), z"l, whose Yartzeit is 13 Tevet. Ida Toczek personified kindness, compassion and selflessness. Despite adversity, she always maintained a smile, a zest for life and an ever-present awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others. She gave of herself to build a house filled with love, cheer and an appreciation of Yiddishkeit. May the words of Torah contained herein be an Aliyah for her Neshamah.

A. Summary

1. Yehudah Pleads For Binyomin's Freedom. Yehudah pled with Yoseph to free Binyomin. Yehudah told Yoseph of Yaakov's love and affection for Binyomin; that returning to Canaan without Binyomin would cause Yaakov's death; and that he had personally guaranteed Binyomin's safe return. Yehudah asked to remain in Egypt as a slave in Binyomin's place.

2. Yoseph Reveals Himself. Unable to restrain his emotions, Yoseph revealed himself to his brothers and asked if Yaakov was really alive. The brothers, ashamed at their actions, were speechless. Yoseph comforted them, telling them that Hashem had caused him to be sent to Egypt to enable them to remain alive during the famine. Yoseph urged them to return home and bring Yaakov (and their entire households) to Egypt, where they would live in Goshen and be supplied with food by Yoseph.

3. Pharaoh Learns Of Yoseph's Brothers' Arrival. Pharaoh instructed Yoseph to tell his brothers to bring Yaakov and their households to Egypt, offering them wagons to assist their journey. Yoseph gave them sets of clothing (Binyomin received 5 sets) and provisions, plus donkeys laden with gifts for Yaakov.

4. The Journey Back To Egypt. After the brothers recounted the story and Yaakov saw the provisions which Yoseph sent, he exclaimed "there is still much joy in my life for Yoseph is still alive". Yaakov and the seventy members of his household began the journey to Egypt. On route, Yaakov offered sacrifices to Hashem at Be'er Sheva, where Hashem appeared to him in a vision and told him not to be afraid to go to Egypt for it was there that Hashem would make him into a large nation. Hashem

promised to accompany Yaakov to Egypt and later return him (to be buried) in Israel.

5. Yaakov and his household arrive in Egypt. Yoseph personally harnessed his chariot and went to greet Yaakov. Yaakov wept when they met and said "If I die immediately after having seen you now, I would be consoled, for you are still alive". Yaakov told his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they were herdsman, so that they would be sent to the fertile land of Goshen.

6. The Famine Intensifies. Yoseph continued to amass a fortune (including cattle and land) for the grain held in Egypt's storehouses, which he brought to Pharaoh. The Israelites lived in Goshen, where they acquired more property and increased in number.

B. Divrei Torah

1. Lil'Mode U'lilamed (Rabbi Mordechai Katz)

A Gift of Old Wine. Chazal teach that, prior to their reunion, Yoseph sent Yaakov a gift of old wine. Why? To show Yaakov that: (a) just as old wine remains the same in a new bottle, so too had he remained intrinsically pure despite his new outward appearance; and (b) just as wine improves with age, so too had he improved his personal traits.

2. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

a. To influence someone, speak with deep sincerity and make certain that he/she is really "hearing" you. When Yehudah approached Yoseph, he asked to "speak in his ears", although he thought that Yoseph didn't understand Hebrew. Why? Yehudah wanted Yoseph to hear the depth of feeling behind his words ("words that come from the heart enter the heart of the listener"), and also hoped that Yoseph would keep his ears and mind open to his plea.

b. Finding meaning in difficult life events makes them easier to cope with. The Chofetz Chaim commented that from the time the brothers first came to Egypt to get food and Yoseph accused them of being spies, they were puzzled about what exactly was happening. However, once the brothers heard the words "I am Yoseph", their questions about the chain of prior events in Egypt were immediately clarified. Similarly, when the world hears the words "I am Hashem", all of our questions and difficulties will be answered. Realizing that Hashem has a "master plan" -- even if it beyond our comprehension -- gives meaning to our hardships and suffering. Even if you don't know the exact meaning of a particular event, the knowledge that there is an ultimate meaning will enable you to view the situation in a positive, albeit painful, manner.

c. Try to lessen others' guilt when they ask for forgiveness. "So now it was not you that sent me here, but the Almighty, and he made me a father to Pharaoh and a master over all of his house and ruler over all of the land of Egypt." Rabbi Yerusham Levovitz notes the nature of many people is that when they do an act of kindness, they don't want to receive anything in return. This isn't necessarily because they want to do kindness; the opposite may be true. They want others to feel indebted to them forever; therefore, they don't want anything in return which would allow the other person to feel that he has already repaid the debt. The obligation to do kindness requires that when we do someone a favor, we allow them to do something for us in return. In this manner, we free the other person from this debt of gratitude. Similarly, when one wrongs us, there is a tendency to want such person to feel guilty forever. This gives us a feeling of being "one up" and the other person a feeling of being "one down." However, kindness requires that we allow a person to make amends. Yoseph wanted to do his brothers an act of kindness so that they would not feel guilty for what they had done to him. Therefore, he said to them that it was Hashem, not them, who had sent him to Egypt. When someone asks us for forgiveness, we should be sensitive to his/her feelings of guilt and regret and try to soften their pain.

d. Channel feelings of love to increase your love of Hashem. "And Yoseph harnessed up his chariot and went up to Goshen to greet Yisroel [Yaakov], his father, and he appeared to him and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck continuously." Rashi notes that Yaakov didn't fall on Yoseph's neck because he was then reciting the Shema. Why did Yaakov choose this moment to recite the Shema? The answer is that after not having seen Yoseph for many years, he was overwhelmed by love and joy, which he channeled into love and appreciation for the Almighty. This is why he

chose this moment to recite the Shema. Moreover, reciting the Shema thereafter would evoke these feelings. We, too, should use loving moments and good times to enhance our love and appreciation for Hashem.

e. Identifying with a cause or project influences one to make a greater effort. Sforno brings down that Pharaoh was pleased with Yosef's family coming to Egypt, since he thought that Yosef's supervision of the land would now be greater. Before he was a "stranger"; now he would be a regular citizen in the land along with his entire family. This would give him even greater motivation and concern for the welfare of the country and its inhabitants. We learn from this when one identifies with a place (or a person, organization, shul, etc.), he/she will devote greater efforts for its welfare.

f. By having a greater appreciation for life itself, you'll be free from complaints. When Pharaoh asked "how many are the years of your life?," Yaakov replied, "I have lived 130 years. The years of my life were few and bad and they have not reached the years of my father." Daas Zkainim cites the Midrash that Yaakov was punished for this statement. Because of the lack of appreciation for life manifested in his words, he lived 33 years less than his father, Yitzchak. (These 33 years correspond to the 33 words in the two verses in the Torah in which this exchange took place.) Rabbi Chaim Schmuelevitz cited this Midrash to explain that we should gain such a great appreciation of life itself that even if we have great difficulties in life, we will still live a life of joy. Peninim on the Torah notes that this judgment of Yaakov serves as a great moral lesson for us. Imagine one who has suffered enormous pain and suffering and has undergone being cut off from his beloved son, and even mourned him as dead. Yet, somehow he survives these tragedies to be reunited in his homeland with his son. By Heavenly grace, he is able to aspire to a future of health, happiness and tranquility. This person has experienced both aspects of life -- pain and suffering, as well as joy and serenity. When this individual begins to retroactively complain about his pain and suffering, he is soothed by the current reality. True, he suffered greatly, but he is alive and should be happy with his lot. He shouldn't prolong the past, but should focus on the satisfaction of the present. Yaakov endured suffering, but now he was at peace with his family. Rather than reminisce about his past pain, he should have rejoiced in his survival. How important it is for us to open our eyes and experience the goodness which Hashem grants us! Everyone has his/her emotional "baggage"; to allow ourselves to be completely overwhelmed by our troubles and not think about the good moments we are accorded is wrong. A malcontent attitude to life is not only self-destructive, but it is not a Jewish orientation.

3. Love Thy Neighbor (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

a. Even when overcome by emotion, try not to cause another person embarrassment. Before Yosef revealed his identity to his brothers, he cleared the room, so as not to cause his brothers shame by recounting their sin in the presence of others.

b. One should try to do all s/he can to prevent grievances between others. As he saw his brothers off on their journey to Canaan, Yosef told them not to quarrel on the way; not only did he do anything to prevent their quarreling in his presence, but he even took steps to prevent their quarreling when they were far away.

c. A child should strive to give his/her parents pleasure. "And Yosef appeared to Yaakov" -- i.e., his only initial thought was to give Yaakov the pleasure of seeing him.

By Rav Yaakov Medan

At the beginning of our parasha, Yehuda and Yosef clash over Binyamin's fate. The Midrash, in addressing this tension, teaches: "They [the brothers] said: Kings are negotiating with each other; of what concern is it to us?" (Bereishit Rabba 93, 2). If the brothers refer to Yehuda and Yosef as "kings," these two tribes must clearly be special in some way. This will be the subject of our shiur.

A. "These are the generations of Yaakov; Yosef was seventeen years old when he was a shepherd with his brothers..." (37:2)

The commentators have a difficult time with this expression at the beginning of parashat Vayeshev, for a list of Yaakov's children appears nowhere in the parasha. Various explanations have been offered to resolve this problem. Among the better known are the following: i. "Generations" (toldot) is meant here in the sense of "events of his life," as in "What the day will bring forth (yeiled)" (Ibn Ezra, Radak, Seforno, Abarbanel, Malbim and others); ii. "Toldot" refers here to "sons," and the sons of Yaakov are indeed Yosef and his brothers, who are referred to in the parasha, although not listed by name (Ramban, in his first explanation); iii. The heading ("the generations of Yaakov") refers to chapter 46: "These are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt," where Yaakov's children and grandchildren are all listed (Rashbam, and Ramban in his second explanation); iv. The word "dwelled" in the previous verse is carried into this verse; what the Torah means is, "These are the DWELLING PLACES of the generations of Yaakov" (Rashi). I shall not discuss in detail the difficulties presented by each of these interpretations; suffice it to say that I find them unsatisfactory. I prefer to adopt the midrash quoted by Rashi, with a slight change which, in my view, enables it to sit more squarely with the literal sense of the text: "These are the generations of Yaakov: Yosef..." - What the text should have said here is, These are the generations of Yaakov: Reuven... Why, then, does it say Yosef? To tell us that all that happened to one of them likewise happened to the other." (Bereishit Rabba 84:6) The Midrash regards Yosef the most important of Yaakov's offspring, for it was to Yosef that Yaakov passed down "the image of his face," and similar events happened to both of them (see Rashi).

In my understanding, the "generations of Yaakov" are Yosef and Yehuda, to whose lives and families the next few chapters of Sefer Bereishit are devoted. It appears that this is the fundamental explanation for why the story of the establishment of Yehuda's family is interwoven with the establishment of Yosef's family. The two stories even parallel one another: 1. Yehuda: Ill-fated marriage to Bat-Shua Yosef: Ill-fated relationship with the wife of Potifar 2. Yehuda: True, lasting marriage to Tamar Yosef: True, lasting marriage to Osnat 3. Yehuda: Birth of Peretz and Zerach Yosef: Birth of Menashe and Efraim 4. Yehuda: the younger bursts forth (paratz) and takes the birthright Yosef: the younger is blessed with power and royalty

B. The story of Yaakov's "generations," then, concludes with chapter 41, and the beginning of the years of famine, when the respective families of Yehuda and of Yosef are fully established. I have proceeded from the assumption that just as each of the initial matriarchs - Sara and Rivka - had one son who was most important, so did the latter matriarchs - Yaakov's wives. Leah's most important son was Yehuda, while Rachel's most important son was Yosef. The fact that Yaakov had two principal heirs - Yehuda and Yosef, rather than one principal heir, as his forefathers had, results from Yaakov having had two wives of full status (as opposed to maidservants or concubines), while Avraham and Yitzhak each had only one wife of full status.

Let us elaborate on this matter of Yosef and Yehuda as being the most important of Yaakov's sons. Some of the points that make Yosef and Yehuda stand out among their brothers are well known; the following is a brief summary of them: 1. After Reuven's violation of his father's privacy, the birthright was given to Yosef, and the leadership to Yehuda. Only Yosef (aside from Reuven) is worthy of the birthright, since only he is a firstborn of a wife of Yaakov. The leadership, on the other hand, passes naturally to the eldest among the brothers. Since Shimon and Levi had lost their chances of being considered worthy candidates because of what they had done in Shekhem, the leadership passed to Yehuda. The verse tells us: "...Because he violated his father's bed, his birthright was given to the children of Yosef, son of Israel - but not to have the birthright attributed to him by genealogy. For Yehuda prevailed over his brothers; the chief ruler came from him, but the birthright was given to Yosef" (Divrei ha-Yamim I 5:1-2).

2. We have already mentioned that even the brothers themselves (according to the Midrash) referred to Yosef and Yehuda as "kings." Yaakov also recognized this; he chose to send Yehuda, specifically, to Yosef, "to show the way before him to Goshen" (46:28). 3. When the kingdom split, following the death of King Shelomo, Rechavam and his descendants, of the house of David, ruled in Jerusalem, while Yeravam, of the house of Yosef, ruled in Tirtza. Later on, too, most of Yeravam's successors - up until the Destruction of the Temple - were from the house of Yosef, and the kingdom of the ten tribes is very often referred to by the prophets by the name "Efraim." 4. The Mishkan resided in the portion of

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This parasha series is dedicated in memory of Michael Jotkowitz, z"l. The html version of this shiur is available at: <http://vbm-torah.org/archive/parsha65/11-65vayigash.htm> PARASHAT VAYIGASH

Yosef and Yehuda

Yosef and the Temple in the portion of Yehuda. The tribe of Binyamin was part of both of them - both in Jerusalem and in the strip emerging from their portion towards Shilo. 5. In the days to come, the prophecy of Yechezkel (chapter 37) is destined to be fulfilled, concerning the joining of the branch of Yehuda and the branch of Efraim into a single royal house. According to tradition and Kabbala, two messiahs are destined to arise: Messiah son of Yosef and Messiah son of David. What is common to all of these points is that all are related to the royalty and to the Temple. These points are the basis for the tradition that the two messiahs that will arise in the days to come will be from the descendants of Yosef and of Yehuda.

C. In this section, I shall address the importance of Yosef and Yehuda from other perspectives, not only that of royalty:

1. The Torah refers to the tribes as "Yehuda and his brothers" (44:14) and "Yosef's brothers" (42:6). Nowhere is the group ever referred to as "Reuven and his brothers," "Dan's brothers," etc. 2. The details that the Torah provides concerning Yehuda's family and Yosef's family are far more numerous than those provided with regard to all the other brothers and their families. We know that Yehuda's wife's name was Tamar, and that Yosef's wife's name was Osnat. We are also told of the circumstances in which Yehuda married Tamar, and of the circumstances surrounding Yosef's marriage to Osnat. Likewise, we know the reasons for the names that Yehuda chooses for his sons and the circumstances of their birth, as well as the reasons for the names of Yosef's sons and when they were born.

From this perspective, Yosef and Yehuda resemble the forefathers, concerning whom the Torah details the circumstances of their marriages, the names of their wives, the circumstances of their children's births, and the reasons for the names given to them. As for the rest of the tribes, we have no idea what Yissakhar's wife's name was, or why Zevulun called his children Sered, Elon and Yachle'el.

3. The phenomenon discussed in (2.) may be related to another one: all the brothers married Canaanite wives [1], deviating thereby from the practice of the forefathers and from the oath that Avraham made his servant swear: "You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell" (24:3). The only brothers who did not marry Canaanite wives were Yosef and Yehuda. Admittedly, Yehuda's first marriage was to the daughter of a Canaanite (38:2), but the failure of this marriage (the premature death of his wife and the death of her two sons, both childless) appears to prove that it was not proper for him to have married a Canaanite wife, for he was the most important of the "generations of Yaakov." This may be the reason why the Canaanite woman's name is not mentioned explicitly, nor are we told about the circumstances of their marriage, the birth of their children or the meanings of their names [2]. In marrying the daughter of Shua, Yehuda resembled the rest of his brothers, not Yosef. When Yehuda married the daughter of Shua, the Torah says, "Yehuda DESCENDED from among his brothers" (38:1) - i.e., his status became diminished; only when he married Tamar did he regain the level of "the generations of Yaakov" [3].

Yehuda and Yosef, then, are the only two sons who establish families like the forefathers.

4. Like the forefathers, Yehuda and Yosef are the only two of Yaakov's children concerning whom the Torah recounts at length what happened during their lives, and especially the challenges they faced. They are the only brothers whose good deeds are recorded in the Torah: Yosef is depicted as a righteous man for standing firm against the advances of Potifar's wife, while Yehuda is described as stumbling and later repenting in the story of Tamar. Likewise, Yosef is righteous for forgiving his brothers, while Yehuda stumbles in selling Yosef but then repents and is ready to sacrifice himself for Binyamin [4].

5. The special Divine providence that rests upon Yehuda and Yosef seems to be hinted at in their very names. These two are the only ones among Yaakov's children who have God's Name within their own names: Yehuda's name includes the original form of God's name [5], as does Yosef's name in its form in Tehillim 81 ('Yehosef'). Their names are also the only ones that include an inherent appeal to God: Yosef - in the prayer, "May G-d add (yosef) for me another son," and Yehuda - in praise (hoda'ah) to God.

6. It is not difficult to see that in Yaakov's will to his sons (chapter 49), he blesses his other sons in brief language, while the blessings to Yehuda and Yosef are lengthy [6]. It is likewise clear that the size of the inheritance of Yehuda and of Yosef, larger than that of their brothers, is directly linked to the "size" of the blessing they received from their father.

D. We shall now turn our attention to some more general issues, related not only to Yehuda and Yosef personally, but to the tribes that descended from them. By their nature, the scope of these issues exceeds the bounds of Sefer Bereishit.

1. The tribe of Yehuda and the combined House of Yosef are the largest of the tribes in both of the censuses that are conducted in the desert. 2. In the war against Amalek (Shemot 17), four leaders emerge: Moshe and Aharon - the permanent leaders, and also Chur of the tribe of Yehuda (at the top of the mountain) and Yehoshua of the tribe of Efraim (on the battlefield). Throughout the forty years in the desert, we find no other instance of additional or auxiliary leaders on the national level. 3. In the story of the spies, the only two who do not fail are

Yehoshua (tribe of Efraim) and Kalev (tribe of Yehuda). 4. In addition to their inheritances in the land, Yehuda and Yosef are each given a special city from among the cities of the forefathers, in special circumstances. Moreover, both earn their special city even before they receive their inheritance.

Yosef is given Shekhem, as Yaakov tells him - "I have given you one portion (shekhem ehad) more than your brothers" (48:22). Apparently, Yosef earns Shekhem as reward for his courage for going off to Shekhem at his father's bidding, although he is aware of the dangers awaiting him. Kalev, the prince of the tribe of Yehuda, is awarded the city of Chevron for his courage in going there at the bidding of Moshe, although he knew of the dangers involved in this mission and despite the four giants that threatened the city [7]. It is in Chevron that the royal house of Yehuda starts out (Shemuel II 2), while the royalty of the house of Yosef begins in Shekhem (Melakhim I 12-13).

5. We have already noted that the inheritances of Yehuda and of Yosef are considerably larger than those of their brothers; they occupy most of the area of Eretz Yisrael. It should also be noted that in Sefer Yehoshua, their inheritances are given special attention: we find a list of their cities, their borders, and many other details. The number of verses devoted to their inheritances attests to this fact [8]. We may also note that the children of Yehuda and the children of Yosef were the only ones who possessed "the inheritance at its [proper] time" - at the time when they were commanded to conquer and possess the land. The children of Gad and Reuven carry out a "hurried inheritance," before its time; they are rebuked by Moshe and are even punished by being the first of the tribes to go into exile. The other seven tribes have a "delayed inheritance," they are rebuked by Yehoshua (chapter 18) for their feebleness, and are punished by being deprived of their inheritance.

It should also be remembered that stories of selfless love for Eretz Yisrael are found only among the children of Yehuda - who demand to receive Chevron and to conquer it (Yehoshua 14) - and the children of Yosef, who claim for themselves an additional inheritance (Yehoshua 17). Yehoshua also makes mention of the love of the women who inherited the land: the daughters of Tzelofhad, of the tribe of Menashe, and Ikhsa, daughter of Kalev, from the tribe of Yehuda.

E. Let us conclude with the two messiahs: Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. The image of these two figures may be seen in Yehoshua (as Mashiach ben Yosef) and David (as Mashiach ben David). The primary task of the king is to destroy the seed of Amalek. The war against Amalek was initiated by Yehoshua in Refidim (Shemot 17) and was successfully completed by David (Shemuel I 30), unlike Shaul, who failed in this respect. Yehoshua, who initiated the war, was ultimately the conqueror of Eretz Yisrael. David, who concluded the war, was ultimately the conqueror of Jerusalem - may it be established and rebuilt speedily in our days [9].

NOTES:

[1] This is the opinion of R. Nechemia, which seems more likely than the interpretation of R. Yehuda, who maintains that the twin daughters were born with them. According to R. Yehuda, we must assume (as Rashi does) that all the women died at the age of about forty, prior to the descent to Egypt, and therefore they are not listed there (see Rashi on 37:35). [2] The third son - Shela - has a separate unit devoted to him. It is possible that we do have an explanation for his name (see Ramban), but the scope of the shiur does not allow for elaboration. [3] I elaborated a little on this in my article in Megadim #2 (<http://www.herzog.ac.il/main/megadim/2medan.html>). The story of this marriage may be regarded as a parallel to the stories of Sara and Hagar, Yishmael and Yitzhak, but I shall not elaborate here. [4] I expanded on this idea in the above-mentioned article in Megadim 2, and in my shiur last week. [5] I assume that in order to express the idea of praise and thanks (as Yehuda's name is explained at his birth), the name did not necessarily need the three first letters as they appear. [6] Admittedly, Yaakov speaks at length also to Shimon and Levi, but what he conveys there is not a blessing. It should also perhaps be mentioned that among the six tribes that are compared to various creatures in the blessings of Yaakov and Moshe, Yehuda (lion) and Yosef (ox) are the only ones whose representative animals form part of the basis of the celestial chariot (Yechezkel chapter 1). [7] See my article in Megadim 10, where I elaborate on this. [8] Concerning this point, we may say the same of the inheritance of Binyamin. [9] There are many other points that are unique to Yehuda and Yosef; I have omitted them here for the sake of brevity. Translated by Kaeren Fish

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH ALON SHEVUT, GUSH ETZION 90433 E-MAIL: YHE@ETZION.ORG.IL or OFFICE@ETZION.ORG.IL Copyright (c) 2004 Yeshivat Har Etzion. All rights reserved.