

Session 76

Vayigash – The Tale of Joseph & Judah

12 December 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wl3zCVd0dil>

Ari

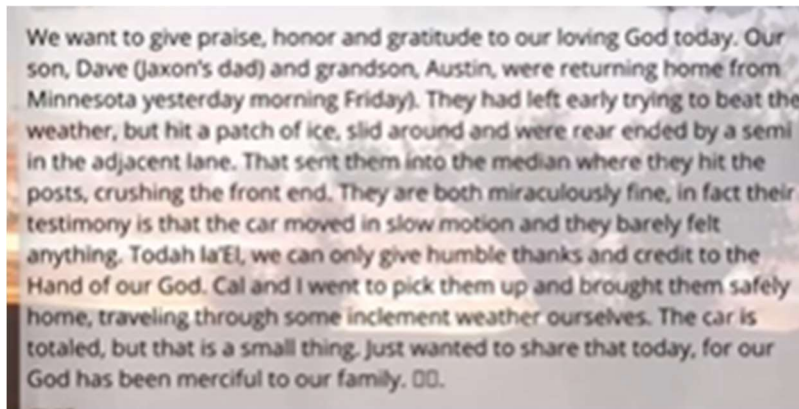
Shalom, my friends, shalom, shalom. Can you hear me? Oh, good, good. Wow, I have been enjoying very much looking through all your pictures and more of you are turning on your videos which I really appreciate, and I get to see your faces. And Rivkah, I see you there. Ezra is not with you. I hope Ezra is able to come. And Judy and Carol and Mark. I really wish I could just go through all the names. Andrea, hi! Richard. Richard, what's your wife's name? She's waving, but I'm not...I don't see her name there. But anyways, love you guys. Doris, hi from Germany. Shalom, Shalom. Brett, brother, good to see you, good to see you. Pat and Rich, you're there.

Ok, I'm at the farm right now. The dogs are going nuts, I don't know if you can hear it, but forgive me for that, there's really nothing I can do about it. But it is so good to see you all again, big time. I'm here in the mountains of Judea, as things just should be. And I'm praying that the reception this cold and windy afternoon is good enough for our fellowship here because I have no choice but to be here. Sometimes when the weather is off, we go to Jerusalem where we have, you know, the ISDN cables and assured internet. But I'm not able to go there for internet or anywhere else because according to the law here in Israel, when you return from abroad, you get Corona checked in the airport. And then, depending on various factors, you're in quarantine for anywhere between a few days and a week. So, I'm in quarantine. I am in quarantine, hopefully I'll get some...hopefully I'll be able to get out soon. I don't know how this is all going to go. And I want to talk a little bit about Corona and my experience with that. Because although the subject is really a minefield, if we can't bring up sensitive subjects here and discuss them respectfully and lovingly, then where can we bring them up? You know, and I hope I have time and if not, I'll try to bring it up soon in the coming weeks. Because I feel like this Corona thing, we really need to dive in a little bit and just discuss it with each other. Just talk about it because it's such a massive issue in America and Israel and around the world. And we all feel like something's happening there.

But there's so much to discuss about this Torah portion, and I don't want it to be at the expense of that. But before I discuss anything, I want to start by praying for our fellowship members that have been threatened by or directly affected by the horrible tornadoes that are slamming throughout the U.S. Have you guys seen this, what's going on? It's just like the wrath of HaShem. HaShem should protect all of you and shelter you and your families. It's just, it looks so fierce. I just pray that you're all safe and protected.

And thank you all, by the way, so many of you for continuing to send your prayer requests. I feel like this is one of the great bonding opportunities we have. And it gives me an opportunity to bless you, even close to the degree that you're a blessing for me. I pray for each and every one of you the moment I get that message I pray. And at the end of this session, we actually have some special prayers for some of our members that I just received right now. Prayer requests, which brings me to some great news. I thought I would start with some good news.

Last night, I received a message from our beloved, Ardelle. Ardelle's right there and she told me about what happened...we all know about her grandson, Jaxon and his very terrible, difficult injury. The boy is like so strong that he's able to be sitting in a wheelchair from being perfectly strong and healthy, but he has really, he has God in his heart and we're praying for me. And so, that's been difficult for their whole family. But this is the message that she just sent to me. She sent this to me:



We want to give praise, honor and gratitude to our loving God today. Our son, Dave (Jaxon's dad) and grandson, Austin, were returning home from Minnesota yesterday morning (Friday). They had left early trying to beat the weather, but hit a patch of ice, slid around and were rear ended by a semi in the adjacent lane. That sent them into the median where they hit the posts, crushing the front end. They are both miraculously fine, in fact their testimony is that the car moved in slow motion and they barely felt anything. Todah la'El, we can only give humble thanks and credit to the Hand of our God. Cal and I went to pick them up and brought them safely home, traveling through some inclement weather ourselves. The car is totaled, but that is a small thing. Just wanted to share that today, for our God has been merciful to our family. ☺☺.

And that's just good news. I was visualizing everything moving in slow motion and HaShem just sheltering them and protecting them. And sometimes we're put through things like that, just to see what HaShem wants to and is able to do in protecting us. It's just such a miracle. Thank you,

HaShem, for that great act of compassion and protection for our holy friends.

Ok, so yes, I am back in the Land of Israel. As I said, the flight was smooth other than an hour of serious turbulence on the plane which Shaena bent over and embraced Dvash with her whole body for dear life while davening to HaShem with great fervor. It was really quite a sight. But now that we're back in the Land for a few days, I can tell you that toddler jet lag is a real thing. If there are any toddler jet lag deniers out there, you're dead wrong. It's a real thing. Shaena and I are falling asleep with Dvash at about three in the morning. Every single day has been brutal. So, if anybody out there has experience and wisdom to share how to overcome the great challenge of our generation, which is the plague of toddler jet lag, please send me a message and let me know. I'm serious. If you've been through this, if you know what to do, tell me. We are just at wit's end.

Anyways, looking back both on my time in America and also at the Torah portion that we just read over the Shabbat, I really have a lot to share with you, but before I even dive into that, allow me to introduce my beloved friend, Jeremy. Jeremy and Tehila, I gotta just say it right here, he'll probably be embarrassed, but not only did they warmly host us for Shabbat lunch so

that we could sleep without worrying about food preparation, getting over the jet lag, but they also went to great length to tend to my psychotic dogs who were creating havoc when I left. I thought I went to sufficient lengths to ensure they were well taken care of when I was gone, but as is often the case, particularly when it comes to dogs, I was wrong. And it fell on Jeremy and Tehila to chase my dogs through the mountains of Judea to nearby villages and settlements. Yes, these are the same dogs that cold-bloodedly murdered their chickens. And they caught them and brought them back and took care of them. So Jeremy and Tehila, thank you for that as well. You are more than just good friends, you are good people, which is probably among the highest of compliments you could give someone in this world. Anyways, before I forget what I'm even talking about, let me introduce Jeremy Gimpel. Jeremy, it's all yours.

Jeremy

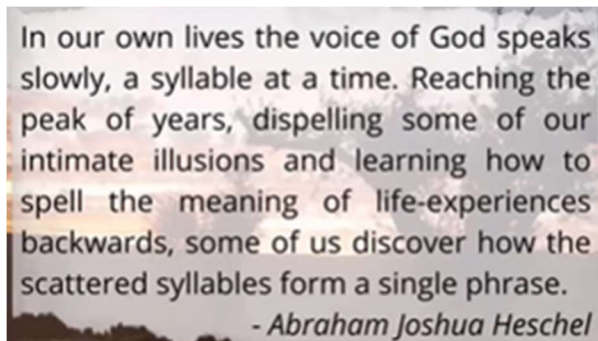
Thank you very much. I'm honored to be named a good person. I appreciate that. But I do want people to know that I was taking care of the same dogs that murdered my chickens. That is a high level of friendship.

Ok, so what I want to do today is I just want to share...I want to continue our journey through learning about Yosef. And so, it's not a part of the soul map series, but it is such a deep lesson we can learn from Yosef. And it's an important lesson right now because as we discussed last week, Joseph was the first of the fathers of Israel to live in a reality where HaShem didn't speak to him directly. All the other patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they had direct revelation from God, they had covenants with God. He never experienced Divine revelation on the level that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did.

And in that way, he's an example for all of us that have never experienced direct prophecy. Really until Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, there was 200 some odd years where the people of Israel lived in a time where God concealed Himself. And Joseph, the first Savior of Israel, is the first example in the mirror of the last generation before the final Savior comes. There's going to be concealment, and people will have to learn how to live with a hidden God. How to learn, how to develop a relationship with the Creator of the world, through this world. And Joseph gives us two models. One, we speak about all the time. It's already a part of the dictionary of our fellowship. Joseph taught us about the spice carts of our life. I think we just heard of one right now. A car is spinning out of control and then somehow it slows down and even though the car is totally crushed, it's just totally out of the ordinary. Like how? The ability to see HaShem's hands, right now. To see providence in our lives, instead of coincidence it's road marks along the way, showing us with all the chaos and all the problems watched, there's a signature of God here. There's a spice cart that's being sent to us. It's to see God's providence in our life as it happens before our very eyes.

And to realize when the Torah describes God creating the world in the physical world being created through speech, that's teaching us that the universe and the physical world are quite literally speaking to us. They are His language speaking to us. But there's another way that Joseph teaches us to see or to hear how God speaks to us even when He's hidden. He speaks to us through our past, and Joseph is an amazing teacher in this. Joseph teaches us to see our life as one journey with one driver. All throughout our lives we've been guided. Lessons learned along the way were really lessons taught along the way. Everything that's happened to us are teaching us constantly, God has been speaking to us the entire time. Just sometimes we need to look back at our life and listen to what He was saying the whole time.

There's a beautiful quote that Abraham Joshua Heschel quotes. I think I've mentioned it at least two times on the fellowship. But I just want to bring it up one more time because I don't think there's a patriarch that expresses this quote better than Joseph. And here's what Abraham Joshua Heschel says:



So sometimes something happens to us. It's just a syllable. And I can't really make out what that syllable did in my life, but it's there. And then a little bit later, another syllable, and then a few years later another syllable. And then a few years later, another syllable. And God is speaking to us through our past really slowly. And at one point in our life, we're able to look backwards and we see, wow, there's a whole

phrase. God is literally speaking to us.

What happens to Joseph and you really need to pay attention to Scripture to really pull this lesson out. Well, he spent some extra time in prison. He spent some extra time in prison, we mentioned this last week. He was missing the mark and he needed to be realigned. He didn't realize that all of the dreams that were happening from his cell mates, that he was interpreting, those were already a set up to get him out of prison and place him at the side of Pharaoh to save the entire world. Well, he spent some extra time in prison, he was corrected, he took the correction, he realigned himself with his mission and reminded himself that nothing happens to him, everything happens for him. And then, finally, Joseph becomes arguably the most powerful man in Egypt. And how did he get there again? It's like we got to go back a little bit. He interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. That was really the kicker that said, "Whoa, this man is so wise, we got to put him in charge of everything."

Now I learned this idea from a dear friend of mine named Rabbi Jesse Horn who teaches in the Old City of Jerusalem at Yeshivat HaKotel. He asked a great question and then he gave an even better answer. And he said, "Well, Pharaoh had dreams about cows and wheat. Big cows, little

cows, big wheat, little wheat. He had the wisest men in the world at his table and I think almost anyone could have figured out that the dreams were about food. I mean it's cows and wheat. Those are like the staples of like a good meal. Like some challah and a steak. I don't know, that's like...that is food. Like, that's not so impressive that Joseph could figure that out. Thin emaciated cows are eating the fat healthy cows. It's not beyond reason to believe that the wisest men in all of Egypt could have known they were talking about good times and bad times, economically. I don't know, it seems like that's not so, you know, not so difficult.

What couldn't they figure out? They couldn't figure out "7." What was the number 7? Because pagans hate the number 7 and pagans hate the number 13. Those until this very day, you know, you don't see 7 in nature. It's a prime number, it can't be divided. Pagans that are superstitious until today, in the Far East, you'll see buildings, they don't have the 7<sup>th</sup> floor and they don't have the 13<sup>th</sup> floor. They'll skip from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>, and they don't like the number 13 and they don't like the number 7. Well, Jews, we love the number 7. Six is just nature, 7 is Shabbat. We love that, that's like God in nature. And 13, that's our Bar Mitzvah. That's when we enter into a real relationship with God. We love those numbers.

So the 7 threw the pagan idolaters off with all of their wisdom. They didn't know what to do with 7. And so what do we see here? We had 7 good....7 good things, good wheat, good cows. And then 7 bad cows and bad wheat. And so, Joseph is saying, "Hmmm....7, 7, where else have I saw two 7's in my life? I just, two 7's...hmmm...two 7's. Well, my father, he worked 7 really good years. It says that those 7 years, they went by like a flash. He worked 7 years for his first wife. And then he worked 7 really miserable years for his second, for his second wife that was really his first wife, but those were 7 years of kind of hard times because those were like 7 years of trickery. Well, it's like, well that's interesting."

Joseph's thinking about that 7 and 7. I had this pattern in my life. Well, let's look up at the phrases here from Pharaoh's dream really quick. Can we get them up on the screen please? Thank you very much.

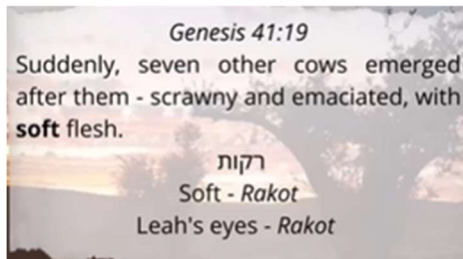


So this is Pharaoh's dream as Pharaoh tells it to Joseph. Now I like cows, I like all animals. I've never seen a "beautiful" cow. I don't know. Cows...I wouldn't describe it as beautiful. But in Hebrew, it's not just beautiful, it's really a unique word that only appears one other time in the Torah. In Hebrew it's called yefat toar. Yafat toar, well that's the only description that we

know about his mother, Rachel. She was "beautiful." She was yefat toar. All of a sudden

Joseph is hearing this word from the stories that were recorded by his father. He says, “whoa, 7 years and then we see another sign about my mother.”

Let’s look at the emaciated cows. Let’s look at the next verse:



“Soft flesh,” like that’s just a bizarre description also. Basar rakot? Like rakot means soft. But that’s the only other description that we know about his other mother, Leah. Leah had soft eyes, anyim rakot, the same exact word. All of a sudden Joseph sees not spice carts this time, but syllables that were spoken to him. He saw without ever seeing God, without ever hearing God

directly, he was able to see that God was speaking to him through the stories of his father. His life lessons, his life experiences, his family history, and his family’s story was speaking to him, and he had the ability and faith to realize that everything comes from the same source. It is pointing back to my parents, to my mother’s and that was seven years of work. That’s what it means. It’s economy, but it’s 7, it’s not 7 nations it’s not 7 days, it’s 7 years. And with that, Joseph became the wisest man in Egypt.

Everything in this world is here to guide us to where we’re meant to be. Even the stories of our fathers. And you can hear God in the present with spice carts, you can hear God speak to us slowly over our lives by putting the syllables together over time. But in order to do that, Joseph teaches us one of the most important lessons. He had stars and moons in his dreams. That was his closest thing to Divine revelation. He had a dream that he wasn’t really sure was prophecy because his brothers didn’t accept it, his father was upset, but in his heart of hearts, he really felt like that was his guiding light. And he felt somehow the stars, they’re all gonna come out, they’re gonna bow to me. This whole universe is here to support me. It’s here to help me fulfill my mission and my destiny in the world. Joseph held on to that belief, and no matter what happened to him, he was betrayed by his brothers, he was sold into slavery, he never left that belief. That everything that’s happening to him is actually happening for him. You have a dream, the world around you will unfold in the most amazing, unexpected ways to help you fulfill your dreams. When hard things happen, it’s not the devil acting independently, it’s not just random acts that are happening in the world, it’s all for a purpose. It’s all from the same source, and it’s all to bring you along your journey to where you were always meant to be.

And so, I want to bless us all that we follow in the footsteps of our father, Joseph. That we can see spice carts in the now, and we can hear God’s Voice in our past, and we can see God’s dream materialized before our eyes in the future. And that will happen if we live with the belief that the stars, the universe, the world around us is supporting us in creating the life that we want. That HaShem is literally using everything around us and sometimes, it’s in the most peculiar unexpected, sometimes even hard and challenging ways. But all of it is to bring us to

where we're meant to be. And that is the blessing of Joseph. So may we all walk in his footsteps.

Ari

Jeremy, that was beautiful, really, truly beautiful. And that...really, like you said, that was the essence of Yosef. He really was like the embodiment of faith in the orchestration of his life by HaShem. I think about Yosef very frequently, exactly in that way. How would Yosef see this thing that's happening to me. He didn't only believe that HaShem runs the show, right? But he actually put his money where his mouth was, and he lived that truth even when it really mattered. When he had the opportunity to actually avenge this vicious crime against him. Although, I do have a question that I don't exactly have the answer to. Jeremy, maybe you have the answer. But you know, Joseph looked at his life through that prism that everything was happening for him, and so he had a very positive narrative of his life. But it's difficult for me to understand Ya'akov when he stood before Paro and he said, "the years of my life have been few and bad." Ra'ot. He said they had been bad. I didn't understand that, right? Did Ya'akov not have the eyes of faith that Yosef had? I'd love to hear your thoughts about that. Maybe next week we could talk about that together. I would love to hear from all of you, if you want to reach out to me and tell me what your thought are because I don't have the answer to that. It does perplex me. That sentence that Ya'akov said to Paro always did perplex me. So I thought maybe we could discuss that together.

But anyways, one thing I wanted to tell you, Jeremy, and maybe it's because I'm from Texas, but I definitely have seen my share of "beautiful" cows. That did not strike me in too strange a way. But either way, point made and it was a beautiful, beautiful idea you shared. And second of all, I want to thank everybody in this fellowship for all the advice that you are showering upon me regarding the term that I think I made up – toddler jet lag. You...but the issue is that you cannot give melatonin to a child under four, ok? We don't need to get into it too much, Jeremy's gonna be like, "You and Dvash. Talk about Dvash the whole time and Dvash's jet lag. It's Dvash's this." I know, I know, but Dvash isn't even two yet, so the melatonin is not an option, but Audrey, I will look into the catnip tea. Maybe we can have a Judean catnip tea party in the hills of Judea. We could prepare for when we have a fellowship experience out here in the Arugot Farms. We can have catnip tea then. I wonder what catnip tea is in Hebrew.

But anyways, ok, I'm back on track. I'm running on very little sleep here. So, I've returned from America, and some of you may remember that I was not super excited to go there to begin with. It was a hard decision for me, but ultimately, I'm very happy I did it. I'm happy that we did it. Because family is family and there's little that is more important in this world than family. And Dvash had uncles and aunts and cousins that she never even met. And seeing them all like fawning all over her and loving on her made the whole thing worth it. And you know Shaena has waited many years to be able to have children. Now she has this daughter that this family's been waiting for and they've never met her. I feel selfish that I gave any

pushback to that at all. And I've apologized profusely to Shaena who of course graciously accepts my apologies, always.

Anyways, but not only that, not only Dvash, but I encountered so many holy people, Jews and non-Jews, people in this fellowship. People who really shared so much love and light with me during our time together. But there are other reasons that I think HaShem sent me on that journey. And as I was reading through the parsha and preparing for the fellowship, some of those reasons started revealing themselves to me in a clearer way. And so, yes, I'm on very little sleep right now, so if my ideas are a little convoluted and dreamlike, that's maybe because they came to me in a sleep-like state. So maybe they're prophecy, maybe they're unintelligible, maybe they're both, right Jeremy? Mystics and prophets swim in the same waters. You always tell me that.

Anyways, so what is our Torah portion? Vayigash. I've never been able to finish reading the last parsha, Miketz, without reading the first verses of Vayigash, even though I know what happens, I just have to read it. It's such a cliff-hanger. I really think it may be the best parsha cliff-hanger in world history. The other night I was actually catching Dvash up on this powerful moment in the parsha, talking to her about the whole backstory of last week's parsha that led to this one. And before I even got to the dramatic moment, she fell asleep for the night, lying right on top of me. I mean, what else was she supposed to do at two in the afternoon if not fall asleep for the night, just not Israel's night.

Anyways, very briefly, the back story. Let's just review it. The brothers were sent to Egypt to buy food because the famine was fierce. They were accused of being spies which is an accusation to which they responded with the truth, which is that they had a brother and a father that they left behind. And Joseph, right, maybe I don't need to tell this whole backstory. You are all up for it. But anyway, Joseph, he was the viceroy of Egypt and they didn't recognize him. He sends them back with food and tells them to return with their younger brother, which they did not want to hear. But in the meantime, he takes Shimon and imprisons him as collateral to ensure their return. And by the way, out of everyone, has anyone thought why Shimon out of all the brothers, why did Yosef put Shimon in that prison? So, I've heard it suggested and it makes a lot of sense that Joseph knew his brothers well and he knew the damage that Shimon and Levi can do when they are not happy. And he just wanted to make sure that they didn't try to destroy all of Egypt together because he wouldn't put that past them. Anyways, he knew exactly who he was dealing with.

So, the family ran out of food in Canaan, and they had no choice but to fulfill this viceroy's command and return with Binyamin, with Benjamin, to prove their story is true. So Judah is finally able to convince his father Ya'akov to let him go by taking complete and total responsibility for Benjamin and his welfare. So they go off to Egypt and when they do, Shimon is released, they're treated as honored guests and they're pampered with this delicious feast,



and they were given even more food to bring back. They were sent home in these great spirits of the unexpected kindness of this mysterious, Egyptian, king-like figure.

Anyways, they were stopped on the way by the Egyptian officials who caught up with them and accused them of stealing Yosef's divination cup. They of course denied it, but as we know, the goblet was found in Benjamin's bag. Now Joseph, his identity was still concealed, condemns Benjamin to slavery and allows the other brothers to return. And they're devastated and they're distraught and they rip their clothes in grief. And they're told that only Benjamin will have to stay behind as a slave and the rest of them can return to their father in peace. And this is where the parsha begins. Jeremy, you're furrowing your brow. It's getting in my head.

Anyways, the parsha begins:

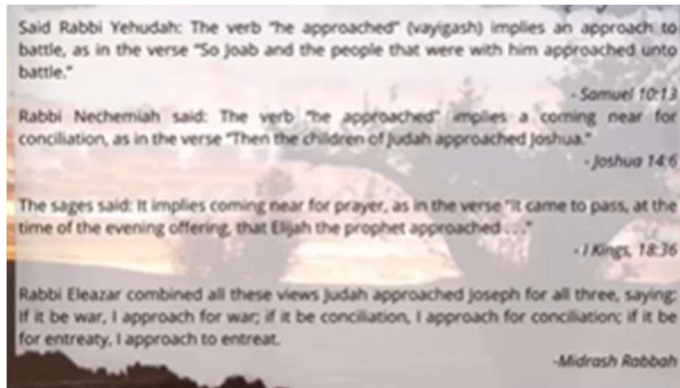
Then Judah approached Joseph and said "If you please, my Lord, may your servant speak a word in my Lord's ears and let not your anger flare up at your servant - for you are like Pharaoh."  
- Genesis 44:18

Ok, so the Midrash Rabbah brings together a number of different commentaries on this really dramatic and powerful verse and the clash between these two literally larger than life personalities of Yosef and Yehudah. Because depending on how you look at it, these were not just men, I mean yes, they were also just men, flesh and blood. But they were also prototypes, personality prototypes that were very different in their approach to the world, in their service of HaShem, in their role in the nation of Israel and in their role of redemption. And as many of you know, there are even two Messiahs that emerge from them. Have you guys heard of this idea? Mashiach ben Yosef, and Mashiach ben David, the Messiah, the son of David and Joseph. I'd really be interested to hear your thoughts about that, where you're at on that whole issue. But anyways, that's for another discussion.

There is no question though, that throughout all of Jewish history and all of world history, it's influenced and impacted by this moment, when Judah goes forth to Joseph. As we see in this interaction, a manifestation of the biblical principle, the actions of the fathers are a blueprint, or a sign for the children. This entire fellowship could be based on that idea alone. This Torah portion, so filled with those premonitions, with those foreshadowing's.

Ok, so I remember actually learning in yeshiva, a teaching that truly captured my imagination, and I actually think it's the best conveyed in this midrash which I'm going to share with you now which delves into the real meaning of that first word of the parsha – vayigash.

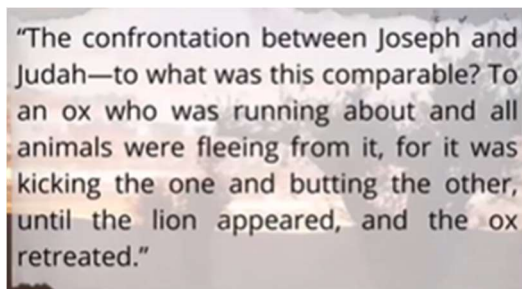
Ok, so it's from the midrash it says:



So we see vayigash there being used with a reference to battle. It also implies a coming near for conciliation. Also, coming near for prayer. Rabbi Eleazar combined all three of these views. Judah approached Joseph for all three, saying if it be war, I approach for war, if it be conciliation, I approach for conciliation, if it be for prayer, I approach for prayer. Meaning Judah was approaching Joseph,

prepared for anything, including the possibility of attacking the viceroy of Egypt. Just think about that. The most powerful empire in the world. Judah was a lion. That's actually my name. I really feel like I've been influenced and shaped by it, right? My name is Ari Yehudah, which means lion of Judah. Because as you know, in Genesis 49, the 12 tribes are each compared to different animals, or most of them. Benjamin to a wolf, right? Dan to a serpent, Issachar to a strong, boned donkey. You know, if you go to many synagogues, throughout the world, the synagogue I was raised in, it said the tribes on the stained glass on the walls of the synagogue with their animals, their corresponding animals.

So Joseph was compared to an ox and Judah to a lion. And by the way, the lion and the ox are two of the faces seen by Yechezkel on God's chariot for exactly this reason. To represent Joseph and Judah on God's own throne of glory. But that's another discussion, for I think a more mystical fellowship. Anyways, the midrash says:

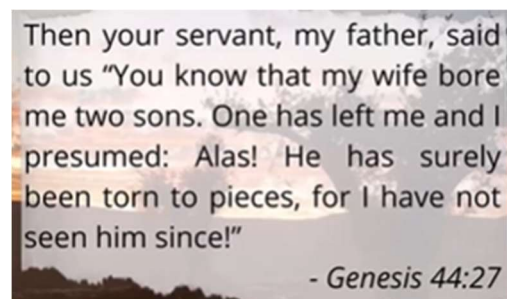


That's just...I shared that with you because it's just such a strong visual. Just the sheer power of Judah's presence, of his words, of his very essence. Like the lion-like ferocity that Joseph saw in his eyes was, I think, it was more than he could bear. He can no longer keep up the façade, perhaps there was no reason left really to keep it up.

Now, there are two different reasons given why Joseph could no longer contain himself. The first one, I honestly don't connect to that much and was torn about whether to share with you. But we all know I'm not good at filtration. But I want to share it with you because of how powerful and compelling it is. And also by the way, how beautifully it answers the question that many of us have asked ourselves as to why Joseph never sent word to his father that he was alive and well during all those years that he was in Egypt, at least after the years that he became viceroy, he could have sent word. He had the ability to reach out to his father, and not doing so even seemed cruel and neglectful.

So, according to this approach, Joseph spent the last 22 years reliving the trauma of his sale into slavery and the entire series of events that led to it, right? For years he remembered and reflected on the night before he was sent to his brothers. When he shared his dreams that disturbed everybody, right? His father included. For the first dream was about the sheaves and that was just his brothers bowing down to him. But in the second dream, right? What is in addition to that? There was the sun and the moon and the stars. But the sun and the moon bowing down to him, that alluded to his father and his mother, which was already brazen and disrespectful. Nobody liked hearing these dreams. His father, Ya'akov actually appeared to reprimand him saying to him, "What is this dream that you've dreamt? Are we to come, your mother and your brothers and I to bow down to you? Bow down to the ground?" So Ya'akov seemed like he was joining the brothers and rebuking Yosef. Although it does say in his heart that Jacob, he reserved judgment, right? He kept the matter in mind.

But Joseph didn't know that. According to this perspective that we're sharing right now, Joseph thought that his father intentionally sent him to be killed by his brothers, or at least he suspected it. Have you guys heard of this perspective on it? After all, Ya'akov knew what sibling hatred was, whether it was between his father Isaac and his uncle Ishmael, or him and Esau, right? His brother wanted to kill him, or even going back to Cain and Abel. You know, he knew what that could cause, and he thought that his father Ya'akov may have intentionally sent him into an ambush. And so, when Judah was giving this impassioned plea or threat or prayer or whatever it was to Yosef, he says one thing after which apparently Joseph just breaks down, right after this one verse, verse 27.

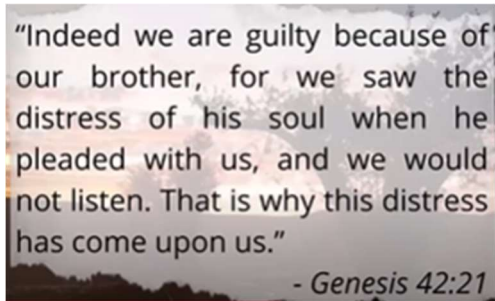


Now according to this perspective, this piece of information was new. Joseph never heard what his father thought happened to him. He never knew what the story was. Now at this very moment, he learns that his father thought he was devoured by wild animals and he's been mourning for him ever since and at that, he couldn't restrain himself any longer.

Now that doesn't speak to me fully. I just feel like Joseph had to know his father, Ya'akov better than that. So just to think for 22 years that he thought such a thing. Anyways, what touched my heart so deeply was the profound repentance and rectification that Yosef saw in his brother, Judah, who initially led the brothers to sell him into slavery to begin with, right?

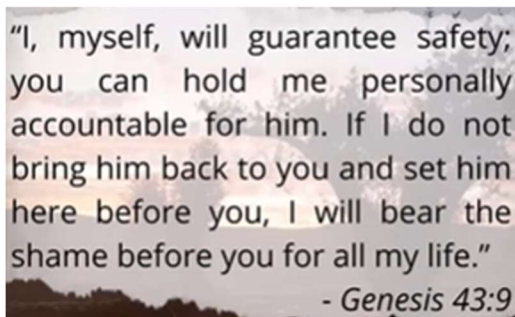
So there's an essay called "In Search of Repentance," by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. And he actually details the events the Joseph orchestrated and how perfectly they parallel Rambam Maimonides Laws of Repentance that we actually went through before Rosh Hashanah. And he showed that Judah and the brothers were true ba'alei tshuvah, that they were true repenters.

So the first stage of the confession was the acknowledgement of the sin that we saw happen in last week's Torah portion and we catch when the brothers admitted their sin, saying to one another in Genesis chapter 42, verse 21. They said:



"Indeed we are guilty because of our brother, for we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us."  
- Genesis 42:21

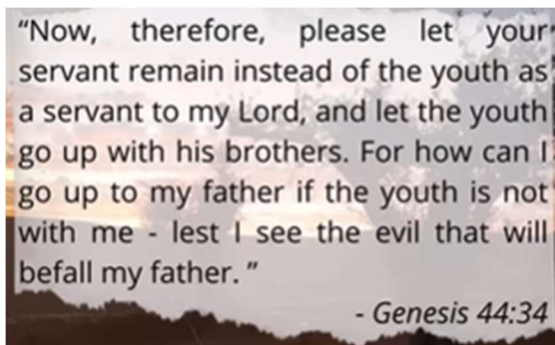
Actually, the same words from the confession (we are guilty because of our brother). So that's just, it's a clear and unequivocal admission of guilt, right? So stage one, completed. The second stage of the repentance process is committing to never repeating that sin again, which we see happen in chapter 43, verse 9 when Judah says,



"I, myself, will guarantee safety; you can hold me personally accountable for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the shame before you for all my life."  
- Genesis 43:9

So Judah's saying here in the clearest way possible that if he's confronted with a brother right? Particularly a brother that's the son of Rachel, and he's in harm's way...a brother that he should protect, that this time he will do exactly that. Even if it would cost him his life, no matter what, he would do that. So stage two, resolving never to commit the sin again – completed.

So the third condition, we see here in the first verses of this Torah portion. The third condition is when the opportunity of the sin presents itself again, the sinner takes a different course. Not for any reason other than for teshuva, for honest repentance. And so, this we see in verse 33:



"Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the youth as a servant to my Lord, and let the youth go up with his brothers. For how can I go up to my father if the youth is not with me - lest I see the evil that will befall my father."  
- Genesis 44:34

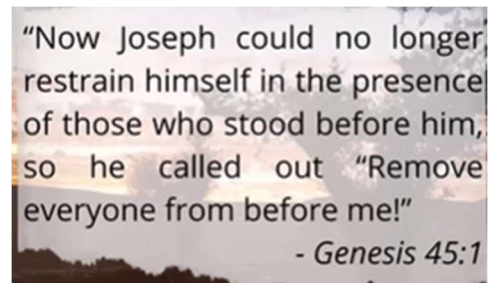
This is just, it's just so powerful because for the first time in the Torah, we're witnessing...the first time in history, that we actually see repentance play out before our eyes. None other by the father of the kingly dynasty of Israel, of Judah. And at that final complete teshuva, Joseph couldn't restrain himself any further. This feels the truest to me. Because he couldn't restrain himself. And this is the Yosef who was the model of self-restraint

and self-control, but he couldn't hold back even another moment.

And really whichever approach speaks truth to you, finding out that his father loved him, or seeing his brother's repentance, or maybe even both. At that moment, the deepest fixing had been done and it was time for the mask to come off. It couldn't stay on even another moment. The veil had to be removed. It was time for the brothers to realize that the something that we will all come to realize at some point, whether it's in this world or the next, that what we

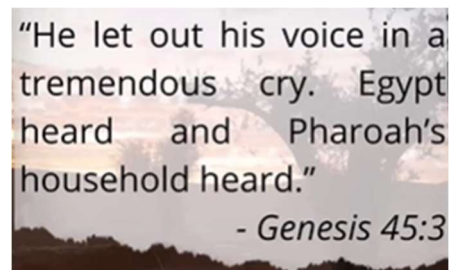
thought was the greatest source of our troubles and the greatest source of our pain, is actually in truth the very key to our salvation and redemption. And the brothers realized that just then.

Let's take a look inside. I just had to go straight to the verses, chapter 45, verse 1, let's open up inside:



"Now Joseph could no longer restrain himself in the presence of those who stood before him, so he called out "Remove everyone from before me!"  
- Genesis 45:1

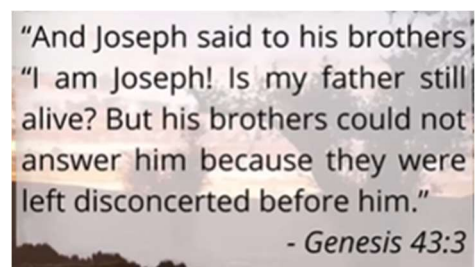
Now the sages say here that Joseph did this in order to spare his brothers the shame and the embarrassment in front of the Egyptians in the room, which is just so Joseph, right? It's so beautifully consistent with Joseph's inner strength and his sensitivity, that a moment like this, that he was able to be sensitive to the shame and the feelings of his brothers. Who the last time they saw him, nearly murdered him and sold him into slavery. Talk about rising above. Now, the next verse:



"He let out his voice in a tremendous cry. Egypt heard and Pharaoh's household heard."  
- Genesis 45:3

So Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, shared how much this moment actually shook the foundations of the entire Egyptian empire, and the power structure. So after all, think about it, Joseph was the Messiah figure for the Egyptian empire as well, and for the whole world who depended on him for sustenance. And in Egypt for sustenance. And in their minds, their very lives were being shaken to the core.

What is going on that Joseph let out this tremendous cry? You can almost imagine the drama throughout the entire kingdom. And then comes the verse that changes everything. Possibly the most dramatic verse in the entire Torah, verse 3:



"And Joseph said to his brothers "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him."  
- Genesis 43:3

It was right before their eyes the whole time and they didn't see it. Now Joseph goes on to speak to their hearts, as Jeremy said, and he comforts them with words of forgiveness and recognition that HaShem was behind all of this for a blessing. But we'll get into that in a second.

I just want to spend a few moments now looking at that moment of embrace between Joseph and his brothers and his brothers in general, but between Joseph and Yehudah in specific. Because this is a moment of the deepest recognition and the deepest healing in which we can see how this same conflict will resolve itself in the future, right? We can see how this moment foreshadows Messianic times. How this moment sheds light on what we're even going through right now. And this is a source of serious discussion among a lot of us, among a lot of rabbis here in Judea. How this is all playing out right now. Even though, I have to admit that personally I don't fully understand it yet. I can't see all the parallels. I know there are a lot of

people who say that they do and maybe they're right. But I don't fully get it all yet. And I'm not sure that we're supposed to fully get it yet, right? We're not supposed to peek behind the mask. We're not supposed to know it's Joseph before we're supposed to know it's Joseph, right? It's almost like we're in a time where the masks are starting to come off, but we can't see the identities yet. But the discerning eye, I'm sure we can all feel it, we can tell that the masks are coming off. Something is happening now.

Ok, so this clash between Yosef and Yehudah, this tension, it's not just sibling rivalry. It goes so much deeper than that. It cuts to the core of two facets of the Jewish mission in the world, right? Jewish nationalism and the particular, the Jewish particularism of Judah and this sort of cosmopolitan globalism of Joseph. I hope that makes sense to you. I'll try to explain a little bit more. But even beyond those identities, it also just does go back to the very beginning in the simplest way to the jealousy and the tension between Rachel and Leah, which carried over to their children and to all of their descendants.

Now we're going to get into a lot of Tanakh here, so I hope that you're with me. So we can see this tension, even today by the way in Israel playing out between the Jews of Judea, right? My kin out here in these mountains, who are just so fiercely Jewish. You've seen them, you've met them, maybe just virtually. They speak and act and dress and behave differently than the rest of the world. They're just so authentically and indigenously Judean. They highlight those differences between them and the world and they embrace them, right? With pride and with strength. And that's in contrast to the Jews of Tel Aviv, right? The Joseph Jews who engage internationally with technological innovations and startups and globalism. But that's only today now it's manifesting today. And some people would agree or disagree with that assessment. But one thing that everyone would agree about is that this tension does weave itself throughout all of Jewish history.

And that there's so many examples and manifestations that it's difficult to know where to start. But for me, I'll share with you the verse that really stands out in my mind that I remember which was after the destruction of Shechem, right? Just a few parshas ago by Shimon and Levi. We've discussed it at length in the past. And when I read it, it really stayed with me. So remember Dina was raped and the prince wants to marry her and Shimon and Levi lead them to believe that if they circumcise themselves and convert, that they could become one with the nation of Israel. But they really just took advantage of their post-circumcision weakness and they destroyed and wiped out the entire city. And Ya'akov was upset about this and feared the response of the surrounding nations to which Shimon and Levi responded, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?" It was an issue of principle for them, right? And to them the consequences and the practicalities didn't matter. But what stood out so strongly is that they did not say, "Should he treat your DAUGHTER, Ya'akov, should he treat your daughter, father, like a harlot?" No, it was more cutting than that. Dina was their sister, right? The daughter of Leah. And they

felt that she was much more of their sister than she was of Ya'akov's daughter. You can feel the pain there.

They felt second tier their whole lives, they felt unloved. And this was a deep source of pain throughout the whole journey for them. And of course, it culminated in the sale of Joseph into slavery. And you can actually see where it carries over, right? That moment where it carries over intergenerationally. And in a real way with Reuben, right? The first born. So after Rachel died, the children of Leah expected Jacob to move the default location of his bed to their mother Leah's tent. But instead, he moved it to Rachel's maidservant's tent, right? To Bilhah's tent. Reuven in specific, the first born, he was so deeply hurt by what he perceived as this terrible affront to his mother's honor that he went in and he moved his father's bed into his mother Leah's tent.

And this was just such an overstepping of the boundaries that the Torah actually phrases it as if he had actually laid with Bilhah, which he literally did not do. All of the Rabbinical Judaism, all of our rabbis agreed that that did not actually happen. But that's what it was likened to. That was the degree of trespass there. And for this act of rash impetuosity, he loses his first-born status, right? There's different facets of the first-born status which are transferred to three of the other brothers, right? The priesthood goes to Levi, the kingship goes to Judah, and the birthright and the double portion it entails, goes to Joseph, right? In the form of both of his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim being considered independent tribes of Israel and receiving two territories worth of Land.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe goes into this whole thing. He actually lays it out in detail which we won't go into because of time constraints. But just skip ahead, right? To the end of the Egyptian exile and that tension, it continues. Right? There's Moshe and Aaron who are like Messianic figures. Moses and Aaron, right? The leaders of Israel, they're Levites, the children of Leah. So they're leading, the children of Leah are leading. But then Joshua, who actually conquered the Land, he was from Ephraim, right? He was a descendant of Rachel. And it continues to the Judges of Israel, all the way to the first king.

Now Saul is the descendant of who? Of Benjamin, the son of Rachel. And he loses the kingship for his weakness and his disobedience regarding killing the Amalekite, King Agag, and his refusal to take ownership and responsibility for the mistake, which is a quality that his successor, a descendant of Judah, King David does possess. And here, just allow me to open up a parenthesis, I just had to share this with you. Because here we see this brief moment of healing and heartwarming beauty in what is otherwise this ongoing rivalry throughout all of Jewish history. That at this moment, this beautiful moment takes place between Jonathan, Saul's son who is next in line for the kingship and David, who is going to be the next king and who is threatening to take his place and his power and his position and his authority.

Now Rabbi David Fohrman, I don't know if you know him, but he touches on this in great detail and how this whole relationship played out. And he points out the connection between Judah's recognition that his father's soul was kashur, right? Intertwined with the soul of Benjamin. And the same words, right? Were with Jonathan and David. Why was that so difficult for Judah to say that his father, Jacob was intertwined with the soul of Benjamin? Because implicitly he was admitting that he was less loved than Benjamin. That his father was more afraid of Benjamin not returning than he not returning. But now, he man's up, right? He selflessly comes to terms with that truth. And he offers to take Benjamin's place of lifelong servitude, regardless of that jealousy.

And so, just as Judah selflessly offered himself up in some ways even more beautifully, King Saul's son, Jonathan, descendant of Rachel loves David so selflessly with all of his heart, and he offers to willingly sacrifice everything for him. And it's almost as if like HaShem didn't want to make sure we wouldn't miss this reference. The whole incident is encapsulated when Jonathan removes his cloak and gives it to David. That's right. Now think about it. Generations before, Judah violently ripped the cloak from Joseph, and in blood and in tears and in jealousy. And now, Joseph's descendant is voluntarily and lovingly removing his own cloak and giving it to the descendant of Judah. Then it was right, it was taken with force and jealousy then. And now, it's given with love and selflessness. It was just such a beautiful healing.

But then it goes right back in only two generations later. This rift opens up again when Solomon's son, Rechavam foolishly takes the advice of his friends over his father's advisors and he raises taxes and the northern tribes break off to their own kingdom that's led by Yeravam ben Nevat, who is, that's right...what tribe is he from? A descendant of Joseph. I really wanted to go throughout all of Jewish history, but we'd be here all night. This division leads ultimately to exile and to the destruction of the temple. That is how devastating the consequences of this sibling rivalry can be, how horrible are the fruits of the jealousy over Ya'akov's love. Really, it's enough to make you just want to marry one woman and avoid this whole thing. But anyways, as destructive as the rivalry is between the children of Leah and the children of Rachel, it is their reconciliation that will bring about peace. Not only for Israel, but for the entire world. As we see in the prophecy in the book of Yechezkel, which is the Haftarah of this portion, with your blessing, I sort of want to read it in its entirety, even though it's going to take us over time. Is that ok? Give me a yes if that's ok. It's just such a powerful haftarah. Ok.

The Word of HaShem came to me saying, this is what Yechezkel was saying. Now you son of man, take yourself one wooden tablet and write upon it for Judah and the children of Israel, his comrades. And take another wooden tablet and write upon it, for Joseph, the wooden tablet of Ephraim and all the children of Israel, his comrades. And bring close to yourself, one to the other, like a single wooden tablet and they shall become one in your hand. Now when the children of your people say to you, will you not tell us what these are to you? Speak to them, thus says Hashem, the Lord Hashem Eloheinu, behold, I will take the wooden tablet of Joseph



which is in Ephraim's hands and the tribes of Israel his comrades, and shall place them together with the wooden tablet of Judah. And I will make them one wooden tablet and they shall become one in my hand. And the wooden tablets upon which you write shall be in your hand in their sight. They shall be one. Then speak to them, thus says the Lord HaShem Elohim, behold, I take the children of Israel from among the nations to which they went and I shall gather them from around and I shall bring them to their soil. I shall make them into a single nation in the Land upon Israel's hills. And a single king shall be for them as king and they shall no longer be two nations, no longer divided into two kingdoms again. They will no longer be contaminated with their idols and their abhorrent things or their rebellious sins and I shall save them from their habitations in which they sinned. And I shall purify them and they shall be for a people unto me and I will be for a God unto them. My servant David will be king over them and there will be a single shepherd for all of them. They will go in my ordinances and they will observe my decrees and perform them. They will dwell on the Land that I gave my servant Jacob within which your forefathers dwelt. And they shall dwell upon it. They, their children, and their children's children forever. And my servant David will be a prince, a nasi for them. I shall seal a covenant of peace with them and an eternal covenant shall be with them and I shall increase them, and I shall place my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place shall be upon them and I shall be for a God unto them and they shall be for people unto me. Then the nations shall know that I am HaShem who sanctifies Israel when my sanctuary is among them forever.

You see why I had to read that? I just feel like in the times that we're living right now, we need to read that, we need to see how this is all going to play out. The beauty and the light and the love and the spirituality and the godliness that's gonna come to the world. And as we see the prophet Yechezkel say, it's only when both Judah and Joseph are brought together that the exiles will be ingathered and redemption will come. And he actually takes two sticks and acts in the physical world and brings them together to ensure that his prophecy will manifest itself in the physical realm. That's why he does it in the physical world. Joseph and Judah will come together, Yechezkel is saying.

And the exiles will be ingathered and redemption will come, which is one of the reasons I have to say that my trip to America was very painful for a lot of reasons. It was beautiful and light, but there's also pain there. Because you know for any of you who have been with the fellowship for any significant amount of time, you've seen how heavy the state of diaspora Jewry weighs on my heart. I often try to constrain myself from talking about it, because I don't think I make any friends shouting from the rooftops, that I believe wholeheartedly that America in specific, and really the exile in general is a black hole for the Jewish people. That there's no future for Jews outside of Israel, particularly in America where the lion's share of Jewish people outside of Israel live. And I'm not just talking about intermarriage and assimilation that is ravaging American Jews, well over 70%. I don't have the statistics, but it's undoubtedly higher than that. But looking at the level of vitriol and hatred and instability in the country as a whole,

I don't see how American Jews can possibly feel physically safe there. A number of the Jews who I spoke to about this, just comes up. They admit it, they admit that they don't feel safe. But most aren't facing the truth of their situation at all. And it is the truth. According to the FBI statistics, Jews are by far the most attacked and assaulted minority in America. Something like three times more hate crimes than the second most attacked minority. And with the inflation and the rise and economic instability looking just inevitable, well don't get me started. Historically, that's when the worst of it all comes to the surface, when there are bread lines, when there's not a roof over their head, where that security is gone, every day. Now, every day, I receive news of attacks against Jews in America, videos that I see of vicious, unprovoked assaults, almost none of which are receiving media coverage in America. It just doesn't fit the narrative that interests them. Not to mention by the way, the barely veiled, the Jew hatred within universities around the country. Here's a sign just hung up in a synagogue parking lot, just where I was a couple of days ago in New Jersey.

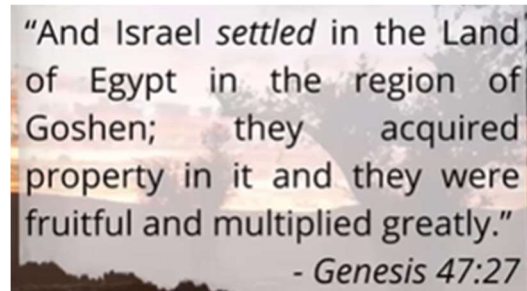


That sign, "we're everywhere," I don't know if necessarily they, the neo-Nazis, the Nazis are everywhere, but hatred of the Jews indeed is. And it's coming in from both sides, from the right and the left. And so I find myself periodically breaking down and shouting from the rooftops.

But it was important for me to go there and see in America and see the situation with my own eyes, to see how deeply rooted and how deeply entrenched American Jews really are. Really. Like on the one hand, I had waves of hopelessness, and then I just had these waves of compassion. And I understand why they're sticking their heads in the sand and explaining it all away. Leaving your home and your job and your community and your culture and your family, everything. Leaving it all, it's scary. It's an overwhelming proposition. They're walking around in fear. I'm telling you, I'm going through these Jewish neighborhoods and I'm seeing these Jews are putting up Black Lives Matter signs, BLM signs - overtly anti-Israel and really anti-Semitic organization that really has nothing to do with the welfare of black people, African-Americans at all. The Jews are putting these signs up in their front yards, it really struck me like a mezuzah, like a mezuzah, in the false hope that they'll be loved or even spared in times of riots or of danger. If they really wanted to help the blacks of America, there are other real ways to do that. But it's not about that. They're driven by fear.

And I see the same fear being stoked and harnessed around this pandemic. Not only around America, even though there it's bad, around the whole world. But in America, that fear is far more crippling than anything I've seen anywhere else, ever. And this fear is being used to control people and to justify things that just a couple years ago would have been unimaginable. And now we're seeing it happen before our eyes.

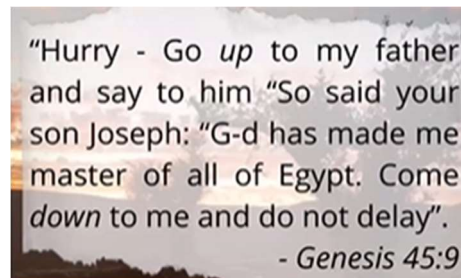
But in this week's Torah portion, we see the seeds planted for the repeated cycles of Jewish acceptance in the exile, assimilation, and eventual rejection and persecution that has happened to every single diaspora Jewish community since the destruction of the Temple and the exile that followed. And so as we spoke about before, the Torah portion, we saw in chapter 47 that the brothers told Paro that they wanted to come to Egypt to "sojourn," right? The word in Hebrew is la'gur, to live. The word la'gur has a transient connotation, that it's a temporary situation. But what do we see in the very last verse of the portion?



"And Israel *settled* in the Land of Egypt in the region of Goshen; they acquired property in it and they were fruitful and multiplied greatly."  
- Genesis 47:27

And Israel "settled," not la'gur, vayeshev, they settled. What does this mean? It means that they originally went down to sojourn until the famine ended. But in not so much time, they settled so deeply that they didn't want to leave. They bought big homes, permanent homes, settled in, bought cars and planted roots. They forgot themselves, they

forgot who they were. They forgot the very essence of the message that Joseph was teaching them when he told them to come to Egypt in the first place. Last verse, chapter 45, verse 9, Yosef says:



"Hurry - Go *up* to my father and say to him "So said your son Joseph: "G-d has made me master of all of Egypt. Come *down* to me and do not delay".  
- Genesis 45:9

Do you hear those verses? Do you hear those words? Go up to Israel, come down to Egypt. That was always the terminology that was used regarding Israel. That is why immigrating to Israel is called what? It's called aliyah, and emigrating from Israel is called yeridah. Not because of geographical altitude or anything, but because of the spiritual elevation. That the Land of Israel is the only place

that the nation of Israel can truly elevate ourselves and come close to HaShem, the only place that we can really ascend.

You can ask Shaena actually, in the car on the way back from the airport, it was so crazy. I turned to Shaena and I said, "Oh yeah, HaShem." That's what I said, it was hard to explain why, but even after just two weeks in America, my spiritual sensitivity and my yirat shamayim, fear of heaven or awareness of heaven or seeing God, it was so dulled, that HaShem ceased being the same part of my integrated thinking, of my holistic essence, that I experience here in Israel just naturally. And I didn't even feel it happening. I didn't realize it. I didn't notice it until I came back and then I started being like, Oh, this challenge, that, oh yeah, Hashem!

And as we see in next week's Torah portion, a new pharaoh arises that knows Joseph not. The Egyptians, they became afraid of the attack by foreigners. Things changed, right? And they were in a difficult geopolitical situation and they were afraid. And fear can make you do a whole lot of things that you wouldn't do otherwise. And they thought the Israelites would

betray them and join their enemies. And slowly but surely, like a lobster in boiling water, we've seen it so many times, the Israelites became persecuted slaves in a land that they had brought so much goodness and prosperity, in a place that they thought it could never happen to them. But it can happen, slowly, and it can also happen quickly. And I saw it happening in America. Things are shifting and the winds are changing course. And it's hard to see where exactly this is all going. But there's no question that fundamental shifts are happening there. Everybody feels it. But not everybody is brave enough to look it in the eye. And the great fear that our sages teach is that the final redemption will parallel the first redemption. And just as the first redemption we learned that 80% of the Jewish people died in Egypt, the great fear is that such a thing could God-forbid, happen in our days. It isn't impossible to imagine, we've seen it not before too long ago, right?

Anyways, my friends, the masks are coming off, right? And it's happening in so many different ways, but they're not all bad. One of the most beautiful ways it's happening, at least in my life I think, is in this fellowship. Because by now, I've had an opportunity to spend quality time with quite a few of you. Not enough by any means. It's always my greatest desire to meet more of you personally, but something happens in these meetings, right? It's hard to describe, but it's almost like we are really seeing each other. And starting to recognize each other. That for so many years there's been fear and animosity and now, among all of you among this holy remnant of the nations, which so many of you are, we have many Jews in this fellowship, but also many non-Jews, that we're starting to recognize each other as brothers, right? And as family. The masks we have been wearing are coming off. Again, I don't know who's what. I don't. Often people tell me that they're from a lost tribe of Israel or from this tribe or from that. And each person has to look within to the truth of who they are. I don't know these things.

But I think even more important than who we are is what we do. That reveals our essence much more than seeking our genealogical origins, which by the way, there's nothing wrong with doing. I've always felt that I'm from the tribe of Judah, maybe because my name is Lion of Judah and I live in the mountains and the hills of Judea. But ultimately none of that really matters, what matters is that we're turning our hearts to HaShem and that we're seeking His words and His guidance and that we're coming together. What matters is that we hold each other tightly and we support each other and love each other. What matters is that we stand with Hashem and we stand with Israel. What matters is also that we have the courage to see the masks that are being removed and to let them go. To let the masks go no matter how scary that may seem because people grasp onto these masks, on these illusions. Because the moment will come for the entire world when HaShem will remove His mask on that great day and say, "Ani Hashem, I am God." And we'll all see, the whole world will see at that moment, that just like, just like Joseph's brothers saw, how all of history was necessary to bring about the redemption that we've been praying for.

Ok, now I know that we're over time, but I just needed to take this opportunity to pray for some of our fellowship members. This is a very difficult time, so bear with me and pray with me here. Because I just received this message from our beloved sister Esther from Germany, she sent me this message. She said –

A screenshot of a text message from Shalom Ari. The text reads: "Shalom Ari, I ask for prayer. I had an attack on Monday night, became very dizzy, my blood pressure went very, very high, although my blood pressure is usually low. Since then I have been to various doctors trying to find out what is going on. I have to go to the university clinic for further examinations soon. My life is in the hands of HaShem, he has a good plan. Nevertheless, I ask for your prayer that the doctors will find what is going on. And please pray for healing.🙏"

I fear what's going on there. I fear what's going on and as long as we're at it, before we pray for Esther, let's also pray for Ken. I just got this message right now. Ken is our friend in Greeley, Colorado. And we just heard from my brother, Michael Gale, that Ken is in the ICU with Covid and that he's been on a ventilator for two weeks. And he's unconscious. And that his mother actually just passed away just

yesterday. So this is a very, difficult time. Oey.

Hashem, please, send a miraculous and immediate healing for our sister, Esther. As Moses prayed for his sister, Miriam, El na refa na la ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l\\_Z-RNeyp08](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_Z-RNeyp08)), please HaShem, heal her. And please HaShem, heal our holy brother, Ken. Bring him a miraculous and a complete healing. Heal Ken and heal Esther and heal all of our brothers and sisters in this fellowship from all that is ailing them, all that is ailing all of you. All of your ailments, physical and spiritual. Hashem should bless you and HaShem should protect you and your families and your communities. And HaShem should allow all of you to be a source of light and love and blessing in this world that is feeling very dark. HaShem, Abba, please remove the masks and expose the illusions and shine Your light of truth and redemption on Israel and on the world.

And now, allow me the great honor my friends, of blessing you with the Cohanic prayer, although of course as you know, I'm not a Cohen, I'm not a descendant of Aaron, but we are an am Cohanim, a nation of priests.

Aaronic blessing (Hebrew)

May HaShem bless you and protect you. May HaShem allow His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May HaShem lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Love you, my friends, stay in touch, stay connected, see you, please God, bizrat HaShem, next week.