

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayigash:*** **Genesis 45:1-15**
 Haftarah: **Ezekiel 37:17**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Luke 6:12-16**

I am Yosef, your brother.

[Genesis 45:4]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 111:4-5;

This Week's Featured Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 8, *Mishpat* [Justice]

V'lo-yachol Yosef lehit'apek – Then Yosef could no longer constrain himself Genesis 45:1.

Today is the day of Torah's 'Great Reveal'. Today Yosef's 'Tzafanat-Paneach' make-up will dissolve – and the great masquerade will end. Today the finely woven threads of his 'Egyptian Nobleman' costume will unravel. Today Yosef's half-brothers will have to face with the one they mockingly used to call 'that dreamer' – back when they were strapping young men and he just a boy. Ready or not, here he comes – and they will bow before him – just as he dreamt they would. Today the fear of Heaven will fall. Today the 'bigger picture' will begin to come into view. Today the Divine Hand of Providence will be exposed. Today the cleansing, healing power of forgiveness will be displayed. Today tears of reconciliation will flow, and a pathway forward – a road that will ultimately lead to redemption and *tikkun olam* - will be forged. After twenty-two years of carrying the kind of guilt of Kayin around like a millstone, the brothers will unburden – and find rest. Today the foundational 'micro' temple of the Holy One on earth – *i.e.* the seed of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov - will be cleansed of deception, purged of uncleanness, and rededicated to the Holy One's glory. What happens this day is going to be a game-changer, a status-quo shifter, and a redemption-prototype/template-revealer. Get comfortable, Beloved; this could take a minute – but I assure you it will be worth it!

I Can Feel It Comin' in the Air Tonight

Ever since Dotan Yosef has had to live every moment of every day in 'crisis-navigation mode'. Surrounded by lawless, easy-to-offend foreigners in whom the fear of the Holy One was not present, he has had to walk on eggshells for decades. Ancient Egypt was full of rich, powerful, and correspondingly arrogant people; it teemed with bullies who despised outsiders and delighted in humiliating and subjugating them. Ideas like mercy, grace, forgiveness, tolerance, and inclusivity

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were completely foreign to ancient Egypt. Egyptians were the prototype of the ‘latter day’ people about which Shaul warned: lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. See **II Timothy 3:1-4**. For a Hebrew to be exiled in such a society meant that every encounter, every conversation, and every transaction with a resident of his land of exile was fraught with very real danger. His life – and the Divine mission for which he had been created – was constantly at risk. From the moment of his unceremonial arrival in Egypt, therefore, Yosef had been constantly staring into the teeth of this or that existential dilemma. While he had been given places of authority and treated well by two Egyptians – first Potifar, then Pharaoh – their ‘favor’ was totally dependent upon him doing for them exactly what they wanted – and nothing else. He was their slave, not their friend. He did not mistake their elevation of him with ‘favor’. He knew that their goodwill toward him was illusory, and could disappear in a moment if he didn’t deliver above and beyond what they demanded of him. He had to always be ‘on alert’, and perform with excellence and enthusiasm. He could make no complaints – because no one cared. He could make no mistakes – because none would be tolerated. Above all else, he had to carry his ‘*Hebrew-ness*’ quietly² – being wise as a serpent while harmless as a dove. He had ‘read the room’. He understood the stakes. He knew he had zero room for error. As a result, Yosef’s fleshly emotions, his youthful curiosities and urges, and his likes, dislikes, opinions, and appetites had to be suppressed. He could not let down his guard with and be friends with anyone. He knew He had to trust in the Holy One solely – and he absolutely had to remain cool, calm, deliberate, and focused at all times. He had to keep his emotions in check. He had to speak Egyptian, not Hebrew. He had to endure insults, and hear all manner of slanderous gossip and lies about him – and keep working as if none of it – or anything else - bothered him. Ignore and override – that became his motto. By following this path of least resistance he found a way to survive – even flourish – through the gauntlet of hostile environments and soul-crushing setbacks Egypt threw at him. He let this mature him into a shrewd, patient, and highly effective – albeit somewhat obsessive-compulsive - manager. He attained to and thrived in every position he found himself, including his present, seemingly impossible role as Guardian of the Food Supply For all the Families of the Earth. Ah, but human emotions cannot be suppressed forever. Eventually, they will find – or be found by - a point of release.

But, Of Course, It is US Who Are Considered Deplorable!

² The idea of keeping/carrying Hebrew-ness ‘quietly’ is offensive to some, especially those who have spent their lives in what they think is an ‘open’ or ‘tolerant’ society’, where freedom of religion is at least legally protected if not respected. This was not the case in Egypt in the 2nd millennia BCE. There was zero legal protection for Hebrews in that society. Every breath taken could be their last.

For almost 3 millennia - from long before the time of Avraham to the time of Alexander the Great – Egyptian armies dominated the Mediterranean basin. They invaded, taxed, and plundered the inhabitants of the region at will. Alas, as the saying goes, *‘power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’*; in other words, as a person or nation’s power increases his or its sense of human decency, moral responsibility and spiritual accountability tends to decrease. By the time of Yosef, therefore, the Egyptians had become a culture of *ethno-snobs*. They viewed themselves as a ‘master race’, and believed that their culture, their appearance, their intelligence, their athleticism, architecture, their form of government, their military prowess, their economic and education systems, their forms of art, architecture, and entertainment, and their ‘enlightened’ *‘whatever feels good, do it!’* approach to sexuality - not to mention as their well-publicized proficiency in the occult arts, made them better than, and gave them free license to enslave, all other people. They dehumanized all outsiders, and enslaved all races, but they reserved a special level of disregard for Hebrews. To them, Hebrews were like circus animals – lions, tigers, and elephants – exotic but inferior creatures with which to amuse themselves for a time with a chair and whip, abuse, and cast aside. Every situation a Hebrew faced that involved Egypt or Egyptians was therefore a potential *‘Potifar’s Wife’ Ambush* or *‘Tzafanat-Paneach Spy Trap’*. In the presence of an Egyptian a Hebrew’s demeanor, body language, tone of voice, words, actions, and reactions had to be submissive and compliant at all times; otherwise he, she, or someone he or she cared about would almost certainly be imprisoned, beaten, or murdered.

But Today ... is Yosef’s day!

Today the release point that Yosef did not even know he was looking for will find him. Today his façade of aloofness will collapse in a great heap. Today his breakthrough will come. Today his wounds will begin to heal. More on that in a few moments; but first, let us pause to consider the bigger picture. After all, the purpose of Torah is not to chronicle Yosef’s personal drama – it is to introduce to the world the Grand Plan of the Holy One for the Redemption of Mankind as a Species, Bloodline by Bloodline, and for the Restoration of Creation, location by location, to its original intended Edenic state of Beauty, Fruitfulness, and Shalom.

How is the Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration Unfolding In the Midst of the Yosef Saga?

The Divinely orchestrated wealth-and-population redistribution program that Pharaoh’s dream presaged is in full swing. Poor people from all nations must be present in Egypt by the time the events of the Great Exodus start to transpire. This program has taken on the disguise of a great famine. Great movements of families desperate for food have already occurred. Many more caravans of migrants are headed to Mitzrayim, however - including one all-important caravan of Hebrews.

Great quantities of silver and gold have already been transferred to Pharaoh's coffers; but Egypt must become the unquestioned economic superpower of the world, upon which all the eyes of all nations on it, before the first plague starts in a few centuries. And there are *five more years of this catalyzing famine* experience yet to go!

Thanks to the aggressive food storage program instituted during the recent years of plenty by *Tzafanat-Paneach*, things in Egypt are actually going pretty well despite the famine. In *Kena'an* – and the rest of the world - on the other hand ... well, let's just say that *things are not going well at all*.

Ever true to His covenant with Avraham, of course, the Holy One has arranged for ample – indeed *abundant* - provision to be stored up for this moment. The seed of Avraham through Yitzchak and Ya'akov now number 70 souls. When the smoke clears, not one of them will be found to have starved to death – or, for that matter, died from any cause. But they don't know that yet. Until the plan of redemption is revealed, 67 of the 70 souls of the house of Ya'akov are experiencing a season of *prophetic disconnect*'. They know the Holy One has provided plenty of food for them; they are just presently unable to access the supply. Something is definitely 'off'. The status quo is just not working out. Something dramatic is going to have to happen – and soon. The long season of prophetic disconnection is going to have to come to a close.

The 'prophetic disconnect' about which I am speaking is, of course, the broken line of communication between *Yosef* [a/k/a *Tzafanat Paneach*] and his father *Ya'akov/Yisrael*. For over twenty years now dark energy has infected and debilitated the camp of the Redeemed. Its first manifestation was the shocking episode of vigilante 'justice' at Shechem. Then came an outbreak of inter-family jealousy so severe that the sons of Ya'akov could not even speak a word of peace to one of their own brothers. Then came a horrendous season where jealousy turned to hatred, hatred to violence, violence to human trafficking, and human trafficking to the 'great lie' - the lie that *Yosef was dead* instead of sold into slavery for 20 pieces of silver. This lie has been reinforced daily for over 20 years by an elaborate conspiracy of silence between all of Yosef's half-brothers. This lie has succeeded in doing what nothing else could - breaking the bond between Ya'akov and his beloved 'dreamer' son. For the Covenant family the fruit of this lie has been very much like the aftermath of Adam and Chava's consumption of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their nakedness exposed, they have resorted to hiding from their Creator, ignoring His Glorious Calling, and dodging their magnificent destiny.

Despite all this, the Holy One has never turned His back on Avraham's progeny.

The role in His Grand Redemptive Plan they are called to ply is not conditioned upon good behavior. The Covenant cannot be eradicated by anything – including our sin. The Holy One will never forget or forsake, any of Avraham’s descendants – no matter what breaches of the Covenant they commit, or how disgusting they behave. He has not condemned them; nor will He ever abandon them. With the Holy One there is no shadow of turning. All His gifts and callings are irrevocable. So the Holy One has not in any way discarded the Covenant Family. But what He has done - as *phase I of a redemptive judgment starting with the covenant household* - temporarily *lifted His hand of supernatural blessing off of them and blinded their eyes to His Presence*. They are, as a result, surviving *naturally* - according to the wisdom and the ways of man. But they have, by their own choice, for a season become *spiritually blind*. The patriarch Ya’akov’s wholesale surrender to the dark energy of grief, depression, and despair, combined the un-atoned bloodguilt of his ten eldest sons, presently prevent the family from seeking what they need most – *i.e. the back-to-Beit-El kind of teshuvah process* necessary to re-connect them with God.

The famine of bread that is currently affecting the world is, you see, by no means the only, or for that matter even the most destructive, famine that is going on. Preceding the famine of bread in the world by several years has been *a famine for the Word of the Holy One*. For over 20 years now, the blind have been leading the blind. Oh, there are a good number of people who are cognizant of, and who love to hear themselves and others talk about, God – but there are none who actually seek Him with their whole hearts. There are plenty of people who believe staunchly in His existence and His power – but none who will *sh’ma* His Voice, joyfully yield to His Words, and humbly follow Him wherever He leads. There are many who claim to serve Him – but there are none who know and love Him for Who He is. A myriad delights in pronouncing judgments on His behalf - but few gladly subordinate the attitudes and opinions of their own putrid flesh to the prompting of His pure, Holy Spirit so as to accurately reflect His Character and Attributes to the world.

Ah, but Dear Reader, that is all about to change. And with the change that is about to come, the innocent blood that cries out ‘*How long ...?*’ is finally going to receive an answer from Heaven. Unbeknownst to Ya’akov or any of his kin, you see, the Holy One is about to *repair the prophetic disconnect*. He is about to rebuild the entire infrastructure of *Divine With-ness*. A dramatic shift is about to occur, as the Holy One moves His chosen family to a very special place that He has prepared for them – the fascinating place of fruitfulness that is called *Goshen*. At that very special ‘*place prepared for you*’ the Holy One will *preserve His covenant people*. *He will nurture them back to health*. And He will, through *great trials*, *prepare them to become His ‘kingdom of priests’ and ‘holy nation’*, that will change the

face of planet earth forever.

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, Beloved - *all Yisrael will be saved*. And if the prophetic disconnect that I have been describing with the people of the covenant provides an opportunity for a prophetic connecting by the Holy One with men who are strangers to the covenant, what will the repair of the prophetic disconnect be but *life from the dead? Yosef's life*, that is. He who has an ear, let him hear.

The Reparation/Redemption Process

How will the Holy One go about repairing the prophetic disconnect between Himself and the household of Ya'akov/Yisrael? How will He repair the breach and redeem the covenant household? I will tell you how He will do it - He will *raise up another nation and bless them* so richly that he will *provoke the household of Ya'akov/Yisrael to jealousy*.

To bring this to pass, the Holy One is about to shake everything that can be shaken. Let me be a little more specific. At present, though all 12 of Ya'akov's sons are in Egypt temporarily - to retrieve Sh'mon from prison and buy grain - neither Ya'akov nor any of Yosef's brothers have any intention of moving to Egypt. They have no idea that a place called *Goshen* even exists, much less where it is or what it is like. They may be jealous of Egypt's prosperity – but they want nothing to do with Egypt itself. They are in Egypt only to purchase another year or so's worth of food, retrieve Sh'mon if possible, and head home - hopefully *never to have to return* to this surreal and downright unfriendly place called Egypt.

How is the Holy One going to get these guys' attention, let them know their whole world is about to radically change, and convince them to move to Egypt – the last place in the world they want to be? *Oy vey* ... does the God of their forefathers have a surprise in store for them!

Yosef: Redefining 'Success' in Life

Yosef, Rachel's firstborn, the despised dreamer of Ya'akov's family, the one who was sold into slavery by his own brothers, has become Prime Minister of Egypt – the *second most powerful human being on the face of the earth*. This is truly an amazing turn of events. And yet as we begin today's aliyah the situation in Ya'akov's household is not in the least improved by Yosef's rise to power and influence. In fact it is in many ways worse than it has ever been. First let us look at Yosef. Yes, he has power and influence. Yes, he has riches, a palace to live in, a beautiful, high society wife, and two strapping young sons. But look closer, Dear Reader. Who has he *become*? He is now *Tzafanat-Paneach*, Prime Minister of Egypt. The most gifted of all Ya'akov's sons, the man who once wore his father's

‘coat of many colors’ so proudly, is now far *more Egyptian than Hebrew*. He has an *Egyptian name*. He speaks *Egyptian words*. He wears *Egyptian clothes*. He eats *Egyptian food*. He lives in an *Egyptian palace*, serving an *Egyptian monarch* who thinks he is a god. He has even taken as a wife the daughter of a priest of the Egyptian form of pantheistic idolatrous paganism. He is *so Egyptian* in fact that he is *unrecognizable to his own brothers*.

The question deserves to be asked therefore, *is Yosef’s new life* – however successful it may appear to the world around him – *truly the life for which he was created and formed by the Holy One as the firstborn of Rachel’s womb?* Please note that though now approximately 40 years of age Yosef has not once in his life had a ‘God-encounter’ – the spiritual lifeline and heritage of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya’akov. In fact he apparently hasn’t even dared *to dream* for a long, long time. He has cut himself off from his heritage, his birthright, and his destiny. *Lo, hu lo Yosef* - no, he is not Yosef!

What indeed has become of Yosef, the passionate young dreamer of Israel, Rachel’s firstborn, the heir apparent to Ya’akov’s dream of angels ascending and descending on God’s holy mountain? Alas, he *is no more*. He has *assimilated*. He has *responded to his circumstances by blocking out the memory of who he is* and of all the things of which his purpose and his destiny in life consist.

And let us look, as well, at *Yosef’s brothers*. The dark shadow of the crime Yehudah, Levi and company conspired to commit and cover-up *haunts them everywhere they go*. The silver for which they sold their little brother into slavery keeps re-appearing, accusing, and testifying against them. Moreover, every one of them has, upon arrival in Egypt just to purchase a little grain for their family, been falsely accused of a serious crime. Yosef, who in his early years in Egypt found himself falsely accused of attempted rape, has now, as *Tzafanat-Paneach*, unleashed *false accusation* upon all of his brothers – accusing them of being *meraglim* [i.e. footmen for another kingdom; scouts; spies]. Based upon this false accusation, Sh’mon has been thrown into prison - just as Yosef was thrown into prison a few years previously. And now Binyamin, the youngest, finds himself in the stranglehold of *Egyptian custody* as well, falsely accused of stealing the Royal Prime Minister’s silver cup, and condemned to a lifetime of slavery to *Tzafanat-Paneach*.

All of the brothers, it seems, are still under the curse of the young man Yosef’s *dibbah ra* – negative report.

Finally, let us look at Yisrael/Ya’akov – the successor-in-interest to the all the wonderful promises the Holy One made to Avraham and Yitzchak. The Holy One had promised Avraham and Yitzchak that they would *have descendants as numerous as the stars of the heavens and the sands of the earth*. But it *hasn’t*

happened yet.

The Holy One also promised both Ya'akov's grandfather and father that their descendants would have full possession of the land then known as Kena'an, every place the feet of Avraham had trod. All Ya'akov presently has to show for it, however, were two very small parcels: the field and burial plot at *Machpelah*, near Hebron, which Avraham had purchased from the sons of Chet, and a tract he himself had once purchased near *Sh'chem* [present day Nablus]. Unfortunately, neither of those parcels of land was producing enough food for the 70 members of the covenant family to eat – much less enough to *feed a prospering nation*.

So, Yisrael/Ya'akov - who had once seen visions of angels too wonderful to describe, had heard the Voice of the Almighty, and had survived an all-night match with a Divine Wrestler - sits in his tent alone. Day after day, night after night, immobilized by grief, he mourns - for the wife who 'died on him' and for a beloved son of whom a blood-smeared coat of many colors was the only evidence remaining. This is *success? By what standard?*

To complicate all these things, the famine continues to hold both Egypt and Kena'an in its grip, such that food is getting more and more hard to find every day. And as today's aliyah begins, Ya'akov's sons have been gone from home far too long. *If Yosef were still alive, Ya'akov must have said to himself, I would send him to check on them!* Oh, what Ya'akov does not know!

“Ani Yosef!” – i.e. ‘I am Yosef!’

Somewhere along the vast continuum of the never-ending mercy of the Holy One that corresponds to the life of every true son and daughter of the covenant there comes a point at which a beam of Divine Light shines into the person's soul. In the brilliance and splendor of this light, the son or daughter awakens to – and finally has a chance to accept and embrace - his or her true identity. Then, like a sleeping beauty brought to life by a prince's kiss, even the most assimilated sons and daughters, the most hardened atheists, and the most hopeless prodigals, can quickly become, *burning and shining lamps of righteousness*.

In today's aliyah such a moment arrives for the Viceroy of Egypt. Even as Y'hudah speaks to him of a father's grief, a perfectly aimed Beam of Divine Light pierces Tzafanat-Paneach's Egyptian façade, cuts through it the way a knife cuts through butter. That powerful light saber penetrates all the way to Yosef's Hebrew soul ... and sets that soul aflame.

V'lo-yachol Yosef l'hit'apek l'chol ha-nitzavim alav
Yosef could not hold in his emotions. Since all his attendants were present,

vayikra hotzi'u chol-ish me'alai

he cried out, 'Have everyone leave my presence!'

v'lo-amad ish ito b'hitvada Yosef el-echav

Thus, no one else was with him when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers.

Vayomer Yosef el-echav Ani Yosef *'I am Yosef!*

Yosef said to his brothers,

ha'od avi chai

Is my father still alive?'

There. It is done. Yosef has finally both admitted to himself and acknowledged to his brothers who he really is. His Egyptian façade has melted away. He has been re-awakened to his Hebrew roots. He has ordered the room cleared of all Egyptians, cried like a baby, and blurted out the stunning 'true confession': ***Ani Yosef*** – i.e. *I am Joseph!*

The truth has finally hit him squarely in the face. He is *Yosef* – not *Tzafanat-Paneach*. He is Yosef, the dreamer of Divinely inspired dreams - not a two-bit Egyptian nobleman who happens for the time being to have a knack for saying just what Pharaoh wants to hear. He is Yosef, the heir to all the promises, and the successor-in-interest to the covenant, of the Holy One – not the politically connected husband of the priestess of On.

The Groaning Heard Round the World

The power of this self-revelation is overwhelming. Listen to what Torah tells us happened as the revelation came upon Yosef.

Vayiten et-kolo bivechi vayishme'u Mitzrayim

He began to weep with such loud sobs that the Egyptians heard.

Vayish'ma beit Par'oh

And it was heard [even] in Pharaoh's palace.

As the walls Yosef has erected for his own protection crumble before the revelation of who he is, and why he was selected to go through these things, Yosef cries out with great groanings, veritable screams, which echo still down the hallways of the palace – and, indeed, the corridors of time - for all to hear.

Another Fine Mess

The brothers were left *totally speechless*. They were *totally unprepared* for this. It was – for 10 of them at least – their *worst nightmare* come true. Not only was Yosef – he whom they had conspired to kill, thrown in a pit, and sold into slavery – alive and well - he now had *absolute power to avenge himself on them* any way he saw fit. And they were *absolutely at his mercy*.

v'lo-yachlu echav la'anot oto ki nivhalu mipanav

His brothers were so startled, they could not respond.

If the brothers could have run, they would have. But there was no place to run, and nowhere they could hide. The moment was Yosef's. The tables were completely turned. And then Yosef spoke again:

Vayomer Yosef el-echav Gshu-na

And Yosef said to his brothers: 'Come close to me,'

elay vayigashu v'yomer Ani Yosef . . . achichem!

When they came closer, he said, 'I am Yosef . . . your brother!'

asher-mechartem oti Mitzraymah

You sold me to Egypt!

The wheels of the *ba'al t'shuvah*'s memory of his early days as a Hebrew prince, stored data discs containing images and memories which an Egyptian named *Tzafanat-Paneach* long ago intentionally locked away, have now been spun like a roulette wheel - and have, of course, landed on *the most painful moment imaginable: You sold me to Egypt!*

Well, there it is. Good-bye denial! Good-bye cover-up! Good-bye flimsy façade of self-righteousness! Hello, you huge, monstrous, potentially deadly elephant-in-the-room!³

All The Difference in the World

Years previously, when Yosef was being mocked, stripped of his robe, beaten, thrown into a pit to die, and then sold as a slave to barbarian Ishmaelites by these very men he was oblivious to the purpose of the Holy One in all the *anger, rejection, and harsh treatment* he received at the hand of his brothers. Ah, but that was *a lifetime ago*. By finally acknowledging and reclaiming his Hebrew roots, Yosef has tapped back into something priceless – the *b'rit*, or covenant, his great-grandfather Avraham cut with the Holy One. And the life-giving breath of that covenant with the Creator of the Universe, Who lives outside of time, and works all events and circumstances of life into good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose, upon Yosef has brought to him something few men ever allow themselves to experience – PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE.

It is prophetic perspective, you see, that lets one see through even unbearable pain - to the beneficent purposes of the Holy One. It is this kind of perspective that is needed by the Yosefs, the Moshes, the Samuels, the Davids, the Hosheas and Isaiahs and Daniels and Jeremiahs and Ezekiels of this world. It is, in fact, the kind of perspective needed by all those who are hated, and slandered, and persecuted,

³ In Western Culture, to say there is an '*elephant in the room*' is to suggest that there is an obvious problem or difficult situation facing the people in a location that they have been ignoring, but that needs to be acknowledged and dealt with.

and martyred. It is the perspective, you see, of none other than the Messiah. It is the essence of the '*mind of Messiah*' spoken of by Shaul of Tarsus in I Corinthians 2:16.

And so, on that day, in the halls of Egyptian justice, through rivers of tears, the man known previously as *Tzafanat-Peneach*, the Viceroy of Egypt, finally sees clearly what has happened, and why. The next words out of Yosef's mouth are, therefore, not words of accusation, or of bitterness or of woundedness or of rage. They are among the most sublime words of compassion and selflessness ever spoken. Here is Yosef's *song of love* to his brothers:

V'atah al-te'atzeivu v'al-yichar
And [so] don't worry or feel guilty now

b'eynechem ki-mechartem oti
because you sold me.

henah ki l'michyah shlachani Elohim lifneychem
Look! Elohim has sent me ahead of you to save lives!

V'atah lo-atem shlachtem oti henah ki ha-Elohim
Now it is not you who sent me here, but Elohim.

Perhaps the only words more graciously spoken than these in all of history were those of Yeshua when, as His life was ebbing away, He prayed: ***Father forgive them ... for they know not what they do.***

The Prophet Speaks

Suddenly alive again to his true identity, spiritual heritage, and destiny Yosef proves himself as a true prophet and friend of the Holy One. He will interpret the events that have occurred in his life and in the lives of his brothers *through the eyes of the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov*. The season of prophetic disconnection is over. The famine for the Word of the Holy One has come to an end.

What did the prophet say? The first part of the prophetic message – for Yosef's brethren as well as for us today - is that *the worst wounds a brother [or anyone else] can inflict upon a person who has a personal covenant with the Creator of the Universe, are no basis to sulk, to take up offence, or to adopt a self-righteous attitude of "I'm right/good and he's wrong/bad"*.

The events and circumstances of our life, you see, are, in reality, merely tools in the Hands of the Master Sculptor - Who is simultaneously shaping not only the events of world history, but also each of our individual characters. This is *not a time for sulking*. God is *calling forth a holy, supernatural nation*. We are all in a construction zone. A hard hat and some steel-toed shoes are definitely in order.

And here is the remainder of the prophetic message the brothers needed to hear:

Ki-zeh sh'natayim ha-ra'av b'kerev ha-aretz

There has been a famine in the area for two years,

v'od chamesh shanim asher eyn-charish v'katzir

and for another five years there will be no plowing or harvest.

V'yishlacheni Elohim l'fneichem lasum lachem she'erit b'aretz

Elohim has sent me ahead of you to ensure that you survive in the land

ulehachayot lachem lifleitah gedolah

and to keep you alive through such extraordinary means

V'yashavta v'erezt-Goshen v'hayita karov elay

You will be able to settle in the Goshen district and be close to me -

atah uvaneicha uv'nei vaneicha v'tzoncha

you, your children, your grandchildren, your sheep,

uv'karcha v'chol-asher-lach

your cattle, and all that you own.

V'chilkalti otcha sham

I will fully provide for you there,

ki-od chamesh shanim ra'av pen-tivareish

there will still be another five years of famine. I do not want you to lack,

atah uveitcha v'chol-asher-lach

You, or any of your house and anything that is yours.'

With that it was Yosef's turn to fall silent. First the groans, then the prophecy, had burst forth from him like water pouring forth from a broken dam. But now, for the first time in at least 22 years, he was *at peace* with both *who he was* and *why he was here*. The tears that followed would not be tears of anguish; they would flow out of immeasurable joy.

Vayipol al-tzavrei Vinyamin-achiv

[With that, Yosef] fell on the shoulders of his brother Binyamin

v'yeivk u'Binyamin bacha al-tzavarav

and he wept. Binyamin [also] wept on [Yosef's] shoulders.

V'yenasheik l'chol-echav vayeivk aleihem

[Yosef] then kissed all his brothers and wept on their [shoulders].

v'acharei chen dibru echav ito

After that, his brothers conversed with him.

[Genesis 45:14-15]

Keep this picture – the picture of Yosef and his brothers reunited in warm embrace - firmly entrenched in your mind. It is a prophetic picture. You and I will see it again, God willing. For as it says in the book of Zecharyah:

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
the spirit of grace and of supplications:
and they will look upon me whom they have pierced,
and they will mourn for him as one mourns for [his] only [son],
and will be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.*

*In that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David
and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.*

*And [one] will say unto him “What [are] these wounds in your hands?”
Then he will answer, Those with which I was wounded [in] the house of my friends.*

[Zecharyah 12:10; 13:1, 6]

Questions For Today’s Study

1. Let’s look in more depth at the reconciliation of Yosef and his brothers.

[A] Looking back at verses 18-34 of the last chapter (chapter 44) what was it that caused Yosef to “no longer control his feelings” and opened the door to the reconciliation? Explain why you think this effected Yosef the way it did.

[B] Why do you think Yosef ordered all the Egyptians to leave the room before he had his reconciliation with his brothers?

[C] Why do you think Yosef’s first question was about Ya’akov/Israel?

[D] Why do you think not one of Yosef’s 11 brothers had an answer for Yosef’s question?

[E] Which of the brothers initiated intimacy and reconciliation?

[F] In what language do you think Yosef conversed with his brothers about the purposes of the Holy One in the events of their lives?

[G] For what *two purposes* did Yosef say that the Holy One had sent him to Egypt?

[H] When, and how, was the second of these two purposes accomplished?

[I] In Strong’s and Gesenius, look up the word translated as “**Goshen**” in verse 10. What is the Hebrew root word, and what does it mean?

[J] Who was the first brother to weep with Yosef?

[K] What did Yosef do that finally resulted in his brothers speaking to him?

2. In today’s aliyah from the haftarah we have only one verse, representing the instructions of the Holy One to Ezekiel regarding the “two sticks” the Holy One had shown him and told him to hold in his hand. Ezekiel is told to “bring them together”. That is the task of the prophet - be it Ezekiel or Yosef or Messiah. The rest - what happens when the estranged brothers/houses come together - is in the hands of the Holy One. Only He can make the two become one.

V’karav otam

... and join them

echad el-echad lecha l'etz echad

for you one to another into one stick,

v'hayu la'achadim b'yadeicha
that they may become one in your hand.
[Ezekiel 37:17]

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the Hebrew word translated as "join" in verse 17. Write the Hebrew word and its meanings.

[B] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the Hebrew translated as "become one" in verse 17. Write the Hebrew words and their meanings.

[C] What is the difference between the first process you looked up (subpart A) and the second (subpart B)?

3. In the B'rit Chadasha reading for today Messiah leaves the synagogue and heads for the hills.

*It happened in those days that he went out to the mountain to pray,
and he continued all night in prayer to the Holy One.
When it was day, he called his talmidim, and from them he chose twelve,
whom he also named apostles: Shim'on, whom he also named Rock;
Andrai, his brother; Ya'akov; Yochanan; Pilipos;
Bar-Talmai; Mattityahu; T'oma; Ya'akov, the son of Halfai;
Shim'on, who was called the Zealot;
Y'hudah the son of Ya'akov; and Y'hudah from K'riot, who also became a traitor.*

[A] When Yeshua "went out to the mountain to pray" what prayer(s) do you think He prayed?

[B] Remember that Yeshua has just left the synagogue. Why do you think he did not choose to pray *there*, with the *minyan*?

[C] Look up the words "disciple" and "apostle" in a Bible dictionary and in Strong's Concordance – and in Richard's or Vine's expository Dictionary of Bible Words if you have it;

[D] Write the Greek words for the word "disciple" and the word "apostle";

[E] Write Hebrew words which would most closely correspond to the Greek word "disciple".

[F] Write the Hebrew word which, in your opinion, would most closely correspond to the Greek word "apostle".

[G] Write Hebraic-mindset descriptions of a "disciple" [*i.e. talmid*] and an "apostle", explaining the differences and similarities between the two.

*May you have the perspective of Yosef regarding the events and circumstances of your life,
and regarding the differences you have experienced with your brothers and sisters.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 111:4-5

He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered.

The Holy One is gracious and merciful.

He has given food to those who fear Him.

He always remembers his covenant.