

*Shiur L'Yom Shishi*¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Miketz:*** **Genesis 43:1 - 44:17**
 Haftarah: **II Chronicles 6:12 - 7:4**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Corinthians 2:4-5**

How can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves?
[Genesis 44: 16]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 75:1-3, 9-10;
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 7, *Kabatz* [Ingathering]

Sh'mon ben Ya'akov is serving time as a prisoner-of-state in Egypt. His father now grieves for him as well as for Yosef. Unfortunately, the only hope Ya'akov has to rescue Sh'mon is to send all the rest of his sons – including young Binyamin – back to Egypt to try to negotiate with a man who apparently believes all Hebrews are spies. So far, at least, Ya'akov is not willing to risk the loss of Binyamin – the child of his old age – in an attempt to rescue Sh'mon. Ya'akov is going to have to have a better, more pressing reason to send his sons back to the land of the pyramids. No problem for the Holy One. One really good reason, coming right up.

Introducing 'Famine'

Today's final aliyah of parsha *Miketz* begins by telling us *in three Hebrew words* what life was like in Kena'an after Yosef's brothers returned to Kena'an with grain but without *Sh'mon*. Torah describes the situation facing the sons and daughters of the Covenant Kena'an in those days as *ha-ra'av kaved b'aretz*. **Genesis 43:1.**

In some English translations of Genesis 43:1 the *famine* [*ha-ra'av*] is described as being *heavy* [*kaved*] *in the land* [*b'aretz*]. In other versions the famine is described as being '*sore*' in the land. In still others it is described as being '*severe*' in the land. Hmmmmn. What exactly does it mean for a famine to be '*heavy*' or '*sore*' or '*severe*' in the land'? And for that matter what in real, meaningful terms does a *famine consist of* anyway? Most of us in the 21st Century – especially in Western cultures - do not have the slightest clue . . . yet. So let me introduce the concept of *ha-ra'av* – i.e. *famine* - to you as gently as I know how. A famine means *the cupboard is bare* - day after day, week after week, month after month, and year

¹ All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as '*the Rabbi's son*'. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without written permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2015, William G. Bullock, Sr.

² Doctors use the term *metastatic* to describe cancer that spreads to other organs or to lymph nodes other than those near the primary tumor. When cancer is metastatic, cancer cells break away from the primary

after year. A famine means *the marketplace is empty and abandoned*. A famine means there is no fruit, no vegetables, and no grain to be bought or sold. A famine means there is *no grass in the fields for the animals*, hence the milk dries up. A famine means *animals – and their owners – slowly starve to death, or become so weak that diseases run rampant* and steal away the breath of life before the hunger can.

Famine and pestilence, you see, are *twin brothers*. Those of us who live in America – which up to this point in history is perhaps the most pleasant land of exile ever - hardly know the meaning of the word “famine”. Except for pictures of starving children from Africa or central Asia broadcast by aid agencies seeking contributions we who live in this land of abundance would have no concept at all of *what famine is*. Much less *what it does to people*. Famine causes people forget the niceties of life and go into a *survival mode*. It makes people *get desperate* – and *get real*.

So, to understand the situation about which we study today let us look into this phenomenon our Bible calls ‘famine’ a little deeper.

Wrapping Our Minds Around the Idea of ‘Famine’

The English word ‘famine’ is defined as *a severe shortage of food [as through crop failure] resulting in violent hunger and starvation and death*. Those are some strong words. But words can never tell the story. Famine is not, you see, a *concept*; famine is a *malevolent force*. Famine is to a population center or people group what metastatic² cancer is to the human body.

Famine seems to *come from nowhere, spread like wildfire quickly, and destroy everything it touches*.

The first victims of famine are always *the poor* and *the weak*. But in time famine always proves to be an *equal opportunity destroyer*. If a famine lasts long enough the mansions of the strongest, the richest, the most powerful, will collapse under its power just as thoroughly as will the tents and tenements of the poor and outcast.

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as “famine” is **ra’av**³. This Hebrew word connotes a **gnawing hunger** brought on by **a sustained season of deprivation**, and implies **the absence of any prospect of having anything**

² Doctors use the term *metastatic* to describe cancer that spreads to other organs or to lymph nodes other than those near the primary tumor. When cancer is metastatic, cancer cells break away from the primary tumor and travel through the bloodstream or lymphatic system to form tumors in, and destroy, other parts of the body.

³ Ra’av is *resh, ayin, veit*. It is pronounced **raw’-av’**,

whatever to eat. It does not necessarily mean poverty – for *one can have all the gold in the world, and if there is no food to purchase with it, he will still go hungry.*

Today's concluding aliyah of the tenth parsha of Torah brings *ra'av* [i.e. famine] squarely into our consciousness and presents it as a stark reality. Hence our aliyah begins with the words: "*The famine was heavy⁴ in the land*". And the land veritably *groaned* under the burden.

The Seed of Avraham Begging Bread?

Famine was not just heavy in someone else's land far, far away mind you – it was heavy in *our* land. It was heavy in the land of milk and honey which the Holy One had promised to give to Avraham, to Yitzchak and to Ya'akov and their descendants. It was heavy in the land in which Avraham, Sarah, Yitzchak, Rivkah, and Rachel now all lie buried. It was heavy in the land in which Ya'akov now grieves for a favorite son ripped away from him by violence.

The cold, hard reality of the famine in question for the covenant family was not that *someone else's* babies of a different culture and different language were crying and dying with bloated bellies – it was *our* babies who were crying and dying with bloated bellies. *Babies of the covenant. Babies of the patriarchs. Sands of the sea. Stars of the heavens. Promises of the Holy One. The hope of the world for the next generation. Crying. Starving⁵. Dying⁶ slowly and painfully before our eyes.*

Déjà vu?

Those of you who have been studying Torah for any time at all may be experiencing a little *déjà vu*. After all, students of Torah know that this is by no means the first time one of our blessed patriarchs has experienced famine in the blessed land. For our ancestors coming face-to-face with famine seems to be a sort of *Divine rite of passage* - something each generation must face before stepping into the fullness of the blessing the Holy One has promised.

⁴ The word our English Bibles translate as 'severe', or 'sore' [KJV], is *keved, kaf, veit, dalet*, Strong's Hebrew word #3515, in the sense of heavy, or oppressive.

⁵ The process of starvation is as follows: initially the human body responds to food deprivation by processing stored fat. When the body's fat reserves are depleted, the body turns to its own proteins as the major energy source. Muscles, the largest source of protein in the body, are rapidly depleted, sapping the body of strength and energy. One's hair changes color or begins to fall out. One's skin dries out and begins to flake off. The abdomen and lower limbs begin to swell. With the weakening of the body comes apathy, listlessness, withdrawal, and increased susceptibility to infectious disease.

⁶ Few people die directly from starvation because, in their weakened state, they usually contract and succumb to some infectious disease first.

For instance, when the Holy One first called Avram to *lech lecha* [go out for yourself] ‘to a land I will show you’ – *i.e.* the land of Kena’an – the Kena’an that the Holy One led and showed Avram and Sarai was in the very throes of famine. Avram and Sarai arrived, took a quick look around at their new home, and headed off to – where else – Egypt, where there always seemed to be food. They might well have said they were leaving the land *nichyeh v’lo namut* [so that we may live, and not die.]

A generation later when Yitzchak was just beginning to carry the torch of the Holy One’s covenant the Holy One struck the land of Kena’an with a *second famine*. In the midst of this famine Yitzchak sojourned in the land of the Ph’lishtim at Gerar and somehow prospered. By Divine blessing Yitzchak was able to reap a hundredfold in grain in the midst of the famine when no one else’s crops would grow.

Now another patriarchal generation is in place. It is *Ya’akov/Yisrael’s turn* to experience and deal with *ha-ra’av*. Will the crops grow for him like they did for Yitzchak? No, Dear Reader, the Holy One has *other plans*. He will *not* let Ya’akov’s crops grow. Ya’akov’s experience with famine is destined to turn out much more like Avram and Sarai’s experience. This famine is designed to reposition Ya’akov and his entire family – and indeed representatives of many nations - in the land of Egypt.

Taking a Closer Look at the Problem

Please note that the problem faced by our ancestors in connection with the famine in question was not what you might think. The Holy One had in accordance with his Covenant Faithfulness made sure that there was - notwithstanding the famine – an abundant supply of food available for Ya’akov and his sons.

The Holy One had in fact richly provided food enough for the entire world through the wisdom and foresight He imparted to Yosef and thus to Pharaoh. 7 years worth of plenty were therefore now stored up for the world in the storehouses of Egypt. All the food that was necessary was available.

It was there for the taking. All a man needed to get what he needed from the storehouses of Egypt was *a little silver*. And as we learned yesterday, our ancestors still had **plenty of silver** with which to buy grain. So what **was** our ancestors’ problem? The problem was **letting go**. Everyone involved was having trouble **letting something go**. For the ten older brothers what they needed to let go of was their **unconfessed sin and guilt** related to their heinous act of selling Yosef the dreamer into slavery and then deceiving their father to believe wild animals had

killed him. For them the problem was letting go of **pride** and **vanity** and **self-righteousness**. For Ya'akov on the other hand the problem was letting go of a son who had – in his grief over Rachel and over Yosef - come to mean more to him than the Holy One did.

Binyamin had become **the personification of Ya'akov's pain**. Ya'akov had allowed the companionship of Binyamin to become more of an idol to him than Yitzchak's companionship had been to Avraham just prior to the Moriyah experience. Ya'akov was going to have to **let Benjamin go**. And for better or for worse the heaviness of the famine upon the land is about to make that happen. So . . . welcome to Ya'akov's latest *Mount Moriyah Moment*.

Veyehi ka'asher kilu l'echol et-ha-shever

It happened, when they had eaten up the grain

asher hevi'u mi-Mitzrayim

which they had brought out of Mitzrayim,

vayomer aleyhem avihem shuvu shivru-lanu me'at-ochel

their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little⁷ more food."

[Genesis 43:2]

At this point in the narrative Y'hudah steps up and speaks the words no one else wants to speak. Before he heads off to Egypt and faces the man of fierce countenance called Tzafanat Paneach again he wants to make sure Ya'akov understands what going to buy a little more food is going to mean. Y'hudah and his brothers know that going to Egypt again for food means *taking Binyamin with them*.

Y'hudah decides *to see if Ya'akov is ready to face that challenge*. Y'hudah therefore plays historian for a moment and reminds his father that the viceroy of Egypt – the man who now held *Sh'mon captive* – had told them when they left:

lo-tir'u fanai bilti achichem itchem

"Do not come before me unless your brother is with you."

Y'hudah is not being disrespectful to his father by reminding him what Egypt's man of fierce countenance had said. He is instead providing *important counsel* and initiating an *essential discussion*. So Ya'akov allowed Y'hudah to continue - and Y'hudah pressed the issue:

Im-yeshcha meshale'ach et-achinu itanu

If you will send our brother with us,

⁷ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'little' in this verse is Strong's Hebrew word #4592.

nerdah v'nishberah lecha ochel

we will go down and buy you food,

V'im eyncha meshale'ach lo nered

but if you will not send him, we will not go down,

ki-ha-ish amar eleinu lo-tir'u fanai bilti achichem itchem

for the man told us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"

[Genesis 43:3-4]

Alas, the man-made darkness in Ya'akov's soul was too great for him to be able to let go of either Binyamin or his grief quite yet. In anger he lashed out at Y'hudah, saying:

L'mah ha-re'otem li

'Why did you do such a terrible thing to me,

l'hagid la'ish ha-od lachem ach

telling the man that you had another brother?'

Ah, yes, there it is - the infamous unanswerable 'why did you' question⁸. People who are wounded, angry, and bitter throw this question around the way the soldiers of an invading army throw live grenades – and usually with similar effects. The 'why did you' question – often followed by its sister question 'how could you?' – is a sure sign that the conversation is about to turn ugly. And so it was in this instance. For Torah tells us:

Vayomeru sha'ol sha'al-ha-ish

And they replied, "We simply answered the man's questions.

ha-yodoa neda ki yomar horidu et-achichem

How were we to know that he would demand that we bring our brother there?'"

When the 'why did you' question leads to the 'How was I/were we to know?' response, well . . . the conversation is pretty much over Beloved. Problem solving has pretty much been thrown under the bus. Nothing is going to change for the better, and everyone is just going to walk away offended, scarred and hurting.

I call this kind of toxic approach to communication the *accusation-justification off-ramp from the problem-solving process*. Through this kind of Serpentine method of communication - which is so horribly unproductive because it *focuses solely on*

⁸ The kind of 'why did you' question the author is referring to is the exact kind found in this particular context – where the purpose of the speaker is not to obtain information or instruction, but simply to release toxic emotion. There are proper contexts for a 'why did you' question, obviously. For instance, if an apprentice while watching his master to a task asks his master 'why did you [do that particular task that way?]', what the apprentice is seeking is instruction, not an emotional release.

rehashing the offenses and reopening the wounds of the past, rather than what needs to be done in the present and the future, no problems are ever solved, no offenses are ever resolved, and no obstacles are ever dissolved.

And so the brothers continue to feel unloved and condemned by their father. And Ya'akov continues to serve a wicked taskmaster in his private prison of grief. And the unhealthy codependency between Ya'akov and Binyamin continues to grow. And Sh'mon continues to sit in *Mitzrayim* waiting for his long lost brothers to come and redeem him.

Sh'mon is waiting for a **ga'al** – a *kinsman redeemer*. But he will have to wait *yet a little while* longer. Meanwhile, the bellies of the sons of Y'hudah, and Yissakhar, and Reuven, and Levi, and the others - great grandsons and granddaughters of Avraham – continue to bloat, and the sounds and stench of starvation continue to pierce the *façade* of **shalom** that lies over Ya'akov's little village outside Hebron.

That We May Live and Not Die . . .

When the babies cries of hunger reach the point where they cannot be comforted however Y'hudah knows he can wait *no more*. At long last this successor to the covenant assumes the role of leadership for which he - along with Yosef - was born. He will not allow Ya'akov's paralysis of fear – a paralysis that he knows he himself helped to bring about - to destroy the family any longer.

Y'hudah's response to the crisis is not perfect by any means. He does **not**, even at this critical moment, own up to or confess to his father either *his own sin* or the *conspiratorial acts of his brothers*. He does **not** lead the family in repentance, in rededication to worship, or even in prayer. He is **not** and will never be the priest of the household.

In *this moment -in this crisis -* however, despite all his imperfections, Y'hudah is the one who steps forward to fill the total leadership vacuum that has existed in the covenant family now for over twenty years. By what *appears* to be default - but is really *Divine calling* as yet unrecognized – Y'hudah finally *takes a step in the direction of becoming the crown prince of the nation* that he was created to be.

The government of Egypt may indeed be upon Yosef's shoulder; but the government of the Covenant Community rests from this point forward upon the shoulder of Y'hudah. This is *Y'hudah's moment*. He was born for 'such a time as this'. And he is at long last finally *up to the task*. He steps up and tells his father:

Shilchah ha-na'ar iti v'nakumah v'nelechah

"Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go,

v'nichyeh v'lo namut
so that we may live, and not die,

gam-anachnu gam-atah gam-tapenu
both we, and you, and also our little ones.

Anochi e'ervenu miyadi tevakshenu
I will be collateral⁹ for him. From my hand will you require him.

im-lo havi'otiv eleycha v'hitzagtiv l'fanecha
If I don't bring him to you, and set him before you,

v'chatati lecha kol ha-yamim
then let me bear the blame forever.

Stirred by Y'hudah's powerful prophetic declaration, Ya'akov – referred to in this particular narrative by the name *Yisrael* – finally *surrenders*. He *relents, lets go of Binyamin*, and *sends the brothers on their way*.

As Binyamin and the 9 elder sons prepare to leave their wives and children behind, Ya'akov calls them together and imparts to them a little of the wisdom he had garnered during his years as brother to Esav and as a servant in the house of Lavan. He says:

im-ken efo zot asu kechu mizimrat ha-aretz b'chlechem
"If it be so now, do this. Take from the choice fruits of the land in your bags,

v'horidu l'ish minchah me'at
and carry down a present for the man,

tzari ume'at dvash
a little balm¹⁰, a little honey,

nechot v'lot bot'nim ush'kedim
spices and myrrh, nuts, and almonds;

V'chesef mishneh kechu v'yedchem
and take double money in your hand,

v'et ha-kesef ha-moshav b'fi amtechotechem
with the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks

⁹ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as 'collateral' [KJV 'surety'] in this verse is Strong's Hebrew word #6148.

¹⁰ Sometimes translated 'balsam', this is the Hebrew word *tzari*, *tzade*, *resh*, *yod*. It is the same material mentioned in Genesis 37:25 as being what was carried the caravan that took Joseph to Egypt. It is ironic, to say the least, that the brothers' gift to Yosef should have consisted of the same substances that accompanied him 22 years previously.

tashivu v'yedchem
carry again in your hand.

ulai mish'geh hu
Perhaps it was an oversight.

V'et-achichem kachu v'kumu shuvu el ha-ish
Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.

Why did Ya'akov propose that his sons take to the mysterious Egyptian Viceroy – who, after all, lacked nothing - precious quantities *of the few edible things the family had left?* Perhaps this was just the same old Ya'akov – the one who had once kept himself and his family alive by sending droves of the livestock and goods with which the Holy One had blessed him in Charan as gifts of tribute to Esav. Or *perhaps, just perhaps,* there is a subtle prophetic message in the substances Ya'akov selected.

Gifts For The Viceroy Who Holds Sh'mon Captive?

Note for instance that the gifts the brothers were to take with them for the viceroy who appears, to the world, to hold Sh'mon's life and the family's future in his hands, included ***tzari*** [*spices*] . . . ***nechot*** [*balm*] ***v'lot*** [*ingredients for incense and perfume*].

Do you remember seeing that combination of things before in Torah's narrative? You should. Those are the exact three things the mysterious group of Yish'maeli traders that appeared at Dotan (Dothan) 22 years ago just in time to purchase and thus preserve from death a young man thrown into a pit by his brothers.

Yosef had ridden to Egypt with ***tzari, nechot v'lot***. These had been his companions on the journey. Their sweet aroma had permeated his senses. They were the last sensation he had experienced in the land of his fathers. And now he would smell them again. Perhaps, despite what he said at the birth of his second son, he has not forgotten everything he thinks he has.

Ya'akov's Blessing

Whatever Ya'akov's reason for making this 'gift' to Pharaoh's second-in-command, his sons complied. And Ya'akov gathered them all around him as they prepared to depart, and not knowing if he would ever see them again, he spoke the following blessing over them:

v'El Shadai yiten lachem rachamim l'fnei ha-ish
May El Shaddai give you favor/mercy in the eyes of the ish,

v'shilach lachem et-achichem acher v'et-Binyamin
that he may release to you your other brother and Binyamin.

And as they walked out of his sight, Ya'akov turned his gaze Heavenward, and uttered the following poignant words of surrender:

v'ani ka'asher shacholti shachalti
And if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

I believe that is called **surrender**. This is, you see, Ya'akov/Yisrael's 'Mount Moriyah' experience. Look up, Yisrael. *See the ram!*

The Table is Set For A Prophetic Banquet

At this point the focus of the narrative of Torah shifts back to Egypt, to the house of *Tzafanat Paneach*, formerly known to us as Yosef. The brothers from Kena'an still do not know who he is under that Egyptian disguise. But they know *he is in charge* and that whether they like it or not *it is to him they must go*.

When the brothers return to Egypt, this time with Binyamin in tow as they had been instructed, they find the attitude of this strange man called *Tzafanat Paneach* toward them has totally changed. They find themselves *invited to a special dinner party* prepared for them at of all places the prime minister's private palace. There they are *reunited with Sh'mon* and *treated like dear friends*.

This special period of favor was something, I suppose, like Yosef experienced in the house of Potifar before the lady of the house falsely accused him of a crime and had him thrown into prison.

Is Yosef taking the brothers making his brothers *re-live, in microcosm, the things he has experienced over the past twenty plus years?* If so, the brothers had better not get too comfortable just yet. If Yosef's history is any indicator this '*Potifar's House*'-like experience is probably not going to end nearly as well as it begins. For the moment however the brothers have every reason to be optimistic. Here is how Torah tells the story:

Vayesh'vu l'fanav ha-bechor kivechorato
When [the brothers] were seated before [Joseph],

V'ha-tza'ir kitze'irato vayitmehu
they were placed in order of age, from the oldest to the youngest.

ha-anashim ish el-re'ehu
The brothers looked at each other in amazement.

Vayisa mas'ot me'et panav alehem

[Joseph] sent them portions from his table,

vaterev mas'at Binyamin mimas'ot kulam chamesh yadot

giving Benjamin five times as much as the rest.

vayishtu vayishkeru imo

They drank with him and became intoxicated.

Watch out, folks. It does not pay for Hebrews to get too cozy with the royalty of foreign nations. And does anyone remember what happened the last time Torah tells us someone in covenant with the Holy One drank enough to get intoxicated¹¹?

Let This Cup Pass From Me . . .

The drama of the visit becomes even more compelling the next morning. Yosef plans one last test for the brothers. Here is how it unfolds:

Vayetzav et-asher al-beyto l'emor

Then Yosef gave his overseer special instructions.

male et-amtechot ha-anashim ochel ka'asher yuchlun set

'Fill the men's packs with as much food as they can carry,' he said.

v'sim kesef-ish befi amtachto

'Place each man's money at the top of his pack.

V'et-gevi'i gevia ha-kesef tasim befi amtachat ha-katon

And my chalice - the silver chalice - place it on top of the youngest one's pack –

v'et kesef shivro

along with the money for his food.'

vaya'as kid'var Yosef asher diber

He did exactly as Yosef instructed him.

The 'Potifar's wife'-type trap is now set. It remains only to be sprung at the appropriate moment. As soon as the brothers get their caravan back to Kena'an underway, thinking everything has turned out wonderfully, *Tzafanat Paneach* sends men to stop them. His instructions are to accuse the brothers of stealing the silver cup from which he drank with them.

The brothers are shocked at the accusation. They deny it vehemently. In unison they say to Yosef's servant:

¹¹ The reference is intended to be to Noah – as Lot was never in direct covenant relationship with the Holy One. Noah drank too much of the fruit of the vine, became intoxicated, and was 'uncovered/exposed in his tent'. One of his sons, Cham, came, saw, and debased him. His other two sons, Shem and Yafet, covered him and restored his honor. Look for something similar in the narrative that is about to unfold.

Asher yimatze ito me'avadeycha vamet
If any of us has it in his possession, he will die.

v'gam-anachnu nihyeh l'adoni la'avadim
And the rest will serve you as slaves.'

Hmmmmn. Does that sound a lot like something Ya'akov said to Lavan on the hills of Gilead to anyone besides me? Unlike Ya'akov however these men will come to *regret uttering those words*, Dear Reader.

Yosef now has all the cards. He has arranged it such that he knows not only exactly that the silver cup of *Tzafnat Paneach* will be found, but knows exactly *where* it will be found. The cup will be found *in Binyamin's pack*.

Just as Yosef was falsely charged by Potifar's wife on the evidence of Yosef's garment, so Binyamin is about to be falsely charged on the evidence of Tzafanat Paneach's silver cup. Torah tells us:

V'yemaharu vayoridu ish et-amtachto artzah
Each one quickly lowered his pack to the ground,

vayiftechu ish amtachto
and they all opened their packs.

Vayechapes b'gadol hechel uvakaton kilah
[The overseer] inspected each one, from the oldest to the youngest.

vayimatze ha-gavia b'amtachat Binyamin
The chalice was found in Binyamin's pack.

This is *not good*. This is exactly the kind of thing Ya'akov feared, and is why he refused for so long to allow Binyamin out of his sight.

The brothers know that this is probably *more than their father will be able to bear*. Twenty something years ago they did not give a second thought to how traumatic the loss of a favored son would be to their father. Twenty something years ago they were selfish, and wanted only to rid themselves of 'that dreamer' who spied on them for their father. But that was twenty something years ago. Now they are all *fathers themselves*. They now have an idea what *losing a child* might mean. And so this time, when they think of the loss and the pain their father will feel if he loses Binyamin after already having lost Yosef, they *cannot bear to see it*.

Vayikre'u simlotam vaya'amos
[The brothers] tore their clothes in grief

ish al-chamoro

. Each one reloaded his donkey,

v'yashuvu ha-irah

and they returned to the city.

* * *

Vayomer Y'hudah mah-nomar l'adoni

'What can we say to my lord?' replied Y'hudah.

mah-nedaber umah-nitztadak

'How can we speak? How can we prove our innocence?'

ha-Elohim matza et-avon

God [or the gods] uncovered our old guilt.

avadeycha hinenu avadim l'adoni

Let us be your slaves –

gam-anachnu gam asher-nimtza ha-gavia b'yado

we and the one in whose possession the chalice was found.'

Tzafanat Paneach was not expecting this. He does not know quite how to handle it. This does not sound like the brothers he knew twenty something years ago.

Vayomer chalilah li me'asot zot

'Heaven forbid that I do that!' said [Tzafanat Paneach]

ha-ish asher nimtza ha-gavia b'yado hu yihyeh-li aved

'The one in whose possession the chalice was found shall be my slave.'

v'atem alu l'shalom el-avichem

[The rest of] you can go in peace to your father.'

The rest of you can go **in peace to your father**? Are you kidding, Yosef? That is *not an option* any more. Unlike the situation twenty something years ago, going *in peace* to their father while their younger brother entered a life of slavery to a cruel taskmaster was simply *not within the realm of possibility*. Times have *changed*. You have changed. Your brothers have changed. And it is just *not that easy* any more for any of you to *forsake a brother*.

Questions For Today's Study

1. Remember that the name - and theme - of this week's parsha is **Miketz**, meaning "at the end", or "at the conclusion". Remember as well that the events described in this week's parsha are not just historical, but prototypical, pre-saging, and giving warning to the people of the Holy One concerning, events that will occur "at the end", at the conclusion of history. As such, we see the parallel to these events - and the events of next week's parsha - in the prophetic books of the TaNaKh and

in the book of Revelation, “at the conclusion” of the B’rit Chadasha.

Finally, remember that the context of these events is the finalization of the *redemptive judgment of the Holy One*, designed to bring his people to repentance, accomplish their redemption, and establish them in righteousness as a kingdom of priests.

[A] Why did Ya’akov finally consent to sending Benjamin to Egypt with his other sons?

[B] Which of Ya’akov’s sons spoke to his father on behalf of the brothers?

[C] What seven things did Ya’akov instruct his sons to take with them?

[D] Today we are introduced to a new “character” in the end-time drama - the “steward” in Yosef’s house. List the things that the “steward” of Yosef’s house does in today’s parsha.

[E] For what did the brothers think they were brought into Yosef’s house?

[F] What explanation did the “steward” of Yosef’s house have concerning the presence of silver in the sacks of Ya’akov’s sons?

[G] How did Yosef react to the sight of Benjamin?

[H] What two things besides grain did the steward of Yosef’s house put in the sack of Benjamin?

[I] What was the accusation the steward made against the brothers?

[J] What was their response?

[K] When confronted by Yosef, which of the brothers acts as the spokesman?

[L] What response does this spokesman make to the accusations of the accuser?

[M] What do you think it meant (to the brothers) to become Yosef’s slave?

2. In today’s Haftarah Shlomo prays a prophetic prayer at the dedication of the *Mik’dash* [Temple].

*He stood before the altar of the Holy One
in the presence of all the assembly of Yisra'el, and spread forth his hands*

* * *

*and kneeled down on his knees before all the assembly of Yisra'el,
and spread forth his hands toward heaven;
and he said, O Holy One, the God of Yisra'el, there is no God like you,
in heaven, or on erez;*

*who keep covenant and lovingkindness with your servants,
who walk before you with all their heart;*

* * *

*But will God in very deed dwell with men on the erez?
behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens can't contain you;
how much less this house which I have built!*

*Yet have you respect to the prayer of your servant,
and to his supplication, O Holy One my God,
to listen to the cry and to the prayer which your servant prays before you;
that your eyes may be open toward this house day and night,
even toward the place whereof you have said
that you would put your Name there;
to listen to the prayer which your servant shall pray toward this place.*

*Listen you to the petitions of your servant, and of your people Yisra'el,
when they shall pray toward this place:
yes, hear from your dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when you hear, forgive.*

** * **

*whatever prayer and supplication be made by any man,
or by all your people Yisra'el,
who shall know every man his own plague and his own sorrow,
and shall spread forth his hands toward this house:
then hear from heaven, your dwelling-place and forgive,
and render to every man according to all his ways, whose heart you know;
(for you, even you only, know the hearts of the children of men;)
that they may fear you, to walk in your ways,
so long as they live in the land which you gave to our fathers.*

*Moreover concerning the foreigner,
who is not of your people Yisra'el,
when he shall come from a far country for your great name's sake,
and your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm;
when they shall come and pray toward this house:
then hear from heaven, even from your dwelling-place,
and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you for;
that all the peoples of the eretz may know your name, and fear you,
as does your people Yisra'el,
and that they may know that this house which I have built
is called by your Name.*

** * **

*Now, my God, let, I beg you, your eyes be open,
and let your ears be attentive, to the prayer that is made in this place.*

*Now therefore arise, O Holy One my God, into your resting-place,
you, and the ark of your strength:
let your Kohanim, O Holy One my God, be clothed with yeshu`ah,
and let your holy ones rejoice in goodness.*

- [A] In what posture did Shlomo pray?
- [B] How does Shlomo describe the Holy One as he opens his prayer?
- [C] What promise does Shlomo ask the Holy One to keep/fulfill?
- [D] What does Shlomo ask the Holy One to do concerning the Mik'dash [Temple]?
- [E] What does Shlomo ask the Holy One to do when He hears the prayers of

His people toward the Temple?

[F] What does Shlomo ask the Holy One to do when He hears the oaths of His people at the altar?

[G] What other situations does Shlomo address in his prayer?

[H] For each of the situations Shlomo addresses, state what he asks The Holy One to do in that situation.

[I] Beginning in verse 41 of chapter 6, Shlomo asks for some very specific manifestations of the Holy One's presence. List the things he asked for in verses 41-42.

[J] What happened when Shlomo finished praying?

[K] What did the people of Israel do and say when this occurred?

3. In today's B'rit Chadasha reading Shaul of Tarsus concludes his description of his approach when he first came to Corinth to tell them that the promised Messiah had come.

*My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of human wisdom,
but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
that your faith wouldn't stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of the Holy One.*

[A] What two things did Shaul say his "message" and "preaching" did not consist of?

[B] In Strong's, look up the words translated as "message" and "preaching" in verse 4. Write the Greek words and their definitions.

[C] What did Shaul say accompanied his "message" and "preaching"?

[D] What reason does Shaul give for this?

[E] What is to be the basis of our faith - that on which it is grounded?

[F] What is the difference between faith based on the Holy One's power and faith based on men's wisdom?

*May the Holy One's presence illumine your home
as you rededicate your temple to His service this Chanukah.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 75:1-3, 9-10

We give thanks to you, O Holy One. We give thanks, for your Name is near.

Men tell about your wondrous works.

When I choose the appointed time, I will judge blamelessly.

The eretz and all its inhabitants quake. I firmly hold its pillars. Selah.

** * **

But I will declare this forever: I will sing praises to the God of Ya'akov.

***I will cut off all the horns of the wicked,
but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.***