

*Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi*¹

[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, whom you sold into Egypt."

[Genesis 45:4]

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

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

As we begin today's Torah reading we discover that the *economic and agricultural catastrophe* about which the Holy One warned Pharaoh in a dream is rampaging through the world on its black horse. The rider on the black horse is named *Tzafanat Paneach*. He holds a set of scales in his hand, and as he rides through the streets he declares whatever price he thinks the market will bear for his master's storehouses of grain.

"A liter of wheat for a day's wages. Three liters of barley for a day's wages. And do not disturb the oil or the wine."²

Can you believe that this economic and agricultural catastrophe is only in its *second year*, while a full *seven-year global famine* has been forecast. That means that there are *five more years of extremely difficult times* yet to go! This is SERIOUS.

Things in Egypt are tense but pretty well in hand despite the famine - thanks to the aggressive food storage program instituted during the recent years of plenty by Pharaoh's charismatic new prime minister *Tzafanat-Paneach*. In *Kena'an* on the other hand . . . well, let's just say that *things are beginning to look very, very bleak*.

The Holy One, of course, ever true to His covenant with Avraham, has arranged for ample – indeed *abundant* - provision to be stored up in Egypt for the seed of Yitzchak, now numbering 70 souls. There has however been a '*prophetic disconnect*' between 67 of those 70 souls and the storehouses which the Holy One has established.

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² The reference is to the end-times scenario depicted as the second installment of the second seal judgment, namely the rider on the black horse. **Revelation 6:5-6.**

The Season of Prophetic Disconnect Draws 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*. *Ya’akov* has been deceived into believing that *Yosef* is dead – torn apart by wild beasts in his 17th year of life. An elaborate conspiracy between *Yosef*’s 10 elder half-brothers has succeeded in breaking the communication lines between *Ya’akov* and his ‘dreamer’ son. As a result of this conspiracy the well of Divine communication has completely ‘dried up’ for the household of *Yisrael*.

Innocent blood *pollutes the ground in Kena’an* and cries out to the Holy One for **Divine Truth** and for **Divine justice**. Both will come . . . but only according to **Divine timing**. In the meantime Heaven has *hidden His Face* from the bloodstained household of *Ya’akov*.

Do not misunderstand what I am saying. The Holy One has not left *Ya’akov* and his family, nor has He in any wise forsaken them. He has not condemned them nor has He in any way abandoned them. He has not divorced them, nor has He in any way discarded them. 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 surviving *naturally*, according to the wisdom and the ways of man. But they are *spiritually blind*. Deception and despair on the part of *Ya’akov* combined with un-atoned bloodguilt on the part of his ten eldest sons has thus far prevented the family from the *back-to-Beit-El* kind of ***t’shuvah*** which necessary to re-connect the covenant family with the prophetic word, with the prophetic blessing, and with the prophetic ‘***with-ness***’ of God.

The famine for bread affecting the world is, you see, by no means the only famine going on. Preceding the famine of bread in the world by several years, and continuing unabated through its first year, was *a famine for the Word of the Holy One in the household of faith*.

The *blind are leading the blind* in the Covenant Household and . . . well you can all guess what the result is, can you not? But all that is about to change. And with the change that is about to come, the innocent blood which cries out ‘***How long, O Holy One?***’ 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.*** From *the famine* of Yosef’s generation, I mean. 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.***

And 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.

Let me explain. 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 Y'hudah, 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 *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. But all Ya'akov presently has to show for it 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 little tract of land he himself had once purchased near *Shechem* [present day Nablus]. And neither of those parcels of land was even producing enough food for the 70 members of the covenant family to eat – much less enough to *feed a nation*.

And so Yisrael/Ya'akov, who had once seen visions of angels too wonderful to describe, heard the Voice of the Almighty, and survived an all-night match with a Divine Wrestler, now sits in his tent, day after day, night after night, immobilized by grief, mourning constantly for the wife who 'died on him' and for a long lost favorite 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 very, very scarce. And as we begin today's aliyah, Ya'akov's sons have been gone from home far too long.

Yosef's Self-Discovery: "Ani Yosef!"

There is a point somewhere along that vast continuum of the never-ending mercy of the Holy One which extends to every true son and daughter of the covenant, where a beam of Divine Light suddenly shines into the person's soul, and the son or daughter is awakened to his or her true identity. And 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 *a burning and shining lamp of righteousness*.

In today's aliyah of Torah 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 like a knife cuts through butter, and 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

Yosef said to his brothers,

Ani Yosef

'I am Yosef!'

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 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*.

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*. Yosef is now a ***ba'al t'shuvah***. In the last few moments Yosef has, by finally acknowledging and reclaiming his Hebrew roots, 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, 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'atzevu 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 Messiah Y'shua, when He said, as His life ebbed away:

“Father forgive them . . . for they know not what they do.”

The Prophet Speaks

Yosef – suddenly alive again to his true identity, spiritual heritage, and destiny - proves himself as a true prophet and friend of the Holy One, interpreting the events which have occurred in his life, and the lives of his brothers, *through the eyes of the Holy One*. The prophetic disconnect is over. The famine for the Word of the Holy One has come to an end.

What did the prophet say? *What declareth Yosef – to us?* 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 any one 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’yishlatcheni Elohim l’fneychem lasum lachem she'erit b'aretz

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

ulehachayot lachem lifleytah gedolah

and to keep you alive through such extraordinary means

* * *

V’yashavta v’eretz-Goshen v’hayita karov elay

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

atah uvanecha uv’nei vanecha 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-tivaresh
there will still be another five years of famine. I do not want you to lack,

atah uveytcha v'chol-asher-lach
You, or any of your family and anything that is yours.'

And 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, he was, for the first time in at least 22 years, *at peace* with both *who he was* and *why he was here*.

The tears that would follow would not be tears of anguish, but would be tears of immeasurable joy.

Vayipol al-tzavrei Vinyamin-achiv
[With that, Yosef] fell on the shoulders of his brother Binyamin

v'yevk u'Binyamin bacha al-tzavarav
and he wept. Binyamin [also] wept on [Yosef's] shoulders.

V'yenashek l'chol-echav vayevk alehem
[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 comes together - is in the hands of the Holy One. Only He can make the two become one.

V'karav otam echad el-echad lecha l'etz echad

... and join them for you one to another into one stick,

v'hayu la'achadim b'yadecha

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 these day 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-Talmi; 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 Y'shua "went out to the mountain to pray" what prayer(s) do you think He prayed?

[B] Remember that Y'shua 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*".

[F] 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.