



Parshat Vayigash

For the week ending 9 Tevet 5760
17 & 18 December 1999

Overview

With the discovery of the goblet in confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions lease, offering himself instead. As a result of this act of selflessness, Yosef has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and he now reveals his identity. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of G-

message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. Yaakov together with all his family and possessions sets out for Goshen. Hashem communicates with Yaakov in a night vision, telling him not to fear going down to Egypt and its negative spiritual consequences, because it is there that Hashem will establish the Children of Israel as a great nation, even though they will be dwelling in a land steeped in immorality and

Seventy souls in total descend to Egypt, where Yosef is reunited with his father after 22 years of separation. He embraces his father and weeps, overflowing with joy. Yosef secures the settlement of his family in Goshen. Yosef takes his father Yaakov and five of the least threatening of his brothers to present before Pharaoh, and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh. Yosef instructs that in return for grain, all the people of Egypt must give everything to Pharaoh, including themselves, as slaves. Yosef then redistributes the population, except for the Egyptian priests who are directly supported by a stipend from Pharaoh. The Children of Israel become settled, and their numbers multiply greatly.

Insights

WITNESSES

Once there was a tramp standing by a traffic light. Suddenly, a big Rolls Royce limousine, about half a block long, pulls up next to him. One of the tinted windows in the back of the limo rolls down with an expensive electronic purr. From inside the car emerges a hand wearing a white silk glove. The hand is waving a crisp \$50 bill, beckoning to the tramp with the money. Like a silent Charlie Chaplin comedy, the tramp does a double take and looks behind him, convinced that the hand must be beckoning to someone else. Then he realizes the \$50

from ear to ear, walks up to the car and takes the money. Just as quietly and mysteriously as it arrived, the Rolls Royce glides away and disappears in the traffic. He stands there gazing after it for a long time.

The next day, the Rolls Royce again draws up next to him. This time, the tramp is somewhat less surprised, but no less grateful. Overjoyed, he again takes the money.

The next day the same thing happens, and the next day, and the next...

After about a month, the Rolls Royce draws up few seconds the tramp knocks on the glass, but there is no response. So he knocks harder and harder, but there is no response. As the car pulls away, the tramp

Gratitude is proportionate to the extent that we due. If we think that something is due us, why should we be grateful?

The name Jew (Heb. *Yehudi*) comes from the name Yehuda. We are not called Jews by

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coincidence. In Hebrew, a name defines the very essence of a thing. If the name Yehuda means to thank, that must be the essence of being Jewish. We

However, there is another meaning to the word

between giving thanks and admitting?

To the extent that we admit we received something to that extent will be our gratitude, to that degree we will give thanks.

We are Jews because we thank G-d for everything we have, however big or small. A Jew admits that everything comes from G-d. That is how *Yehuda* the Jewish People are able to *approach*, to come close to G-d.

The job of the Jewish people in this world is to be
- (Not to be confused with

Brand X who would also like to claim this job as their own.) Our job is to testify by the way we live our lives and, if necessary, with our lives that there is a G-d in the world. As it states in the prophetic writings:

So if our job is to be the Witnesses, why are we called the Thankers, or the Admitters?

The foundation of all belief in G-d is to admit that life is one gigantic he was given anything, he will never look for G-d, he will never look further than his own nose. If I sensitize myself to the gift, I will sensitize myself to the Giver. Atheism is not the root of ingratitude. Ingratitude is the root of atheism.

Source: *Sfat Emet, Isaiah 43:10*

Haftarah: Yechezkel 37:15 - 28

ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE

Imagine a twig pulled from both ends. If enough force is applied, the twig will eventually snap in two.

After the death of King Solomon, Israel split into two kingdoms that of Yehuda and Binyamin, and that of the other ten tribes whose king was from Ephraim. As each kingdom pulled in its own direction, the two became further and further apart.

G-d tells the Prophet Yechezkel to take two

these sticks together in his hand, and G-d will fuse them into one. He is to tell the Children of Israel that G-d will eventually gather us from amongst the nations and bring us home to Israel. There we will become one nation, with one king, and one G-d.

When the whole nation strives towards the lofty goal of fulfilling G-

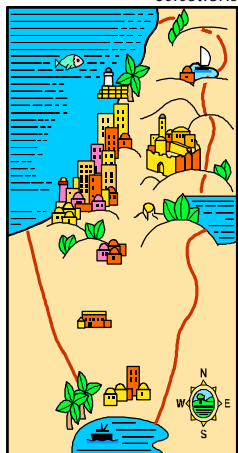
shalom

shalaim

that peace is possible only when all the components unite into a cohesive unit. When there is one aim, to serve one G-d with one Torah, then Israel becomes a unified nation.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



SHILOH

Site of the *Mishkan*-Sanctuary for 369 years (1258-889 BCE), this location was referred to in the Torah (*Devarim 12:9*) as *menucha* the *Beit Hamikdash* *Mishkan* land.

This was a major turning point in *Mishkan* history, for here the boards which served as the walls of the *Mishkan* during the wandering in the wilderness were replaced by a stone structure covered with skins, a sort of blend between the past and the future.

The *kohen gadol*, Eli, was in Shiloh when the news arrived that the Philistines had defeated the Israelite army, slain his two sons and captured the Holy Ark (*Shmuel I 4:12-17*). His death as a result of this shock was followed by the destruction of the Shiloh Sanctuary and the transfer of the *Mishkan* to the city of Nov.

There is today a small Jewish settlement and a Hesder Yeshiva in the Judean site bearing the name of this historic site..

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