

In the year 2964 - 797 b.c.e, following the death of Shlomo Hamelech, the nation was divided between Rechavam ben Shlomo and Yiravam ben Nivat. Rechavam ruled over Yehudah and Binyamin, and Yiravam ruled over the other 10 Tribes. Rechavam was a direct descendant of Dovid Hamelech, and Yiravam was a descendent of Ephrayim. In this week's Haftorah, Yichezkel Hanavi prophesied the time when the divided kingdom's of Yehudah and Yisroel would unite beneath the single banner of the family of King David.

The connection to our Parsha is obvious. Our Parsha begins with a confrontation between Yehuda and Yoseph. Both were destined to be Kings over the Jewish people. However, Yoseph's reign was limited to necessity and circumstance while Yehuda's would be as eternal as the Jews themselves. It is important to note that the close relationship between Yehuda and Binyamin, even though they were not from the same mothers, was maintained throughout history. It gives additional meaning to the Rashi on pasuk 40:14 that explains why Yoseph and Binyamin cried for each other at the time of their reunion. Rashi explains that the tears were for the eventual destruction of the Mishkan and the Bais Hamikdash. In truth, the removal of Hashem's presence from our midst occurs when there is hatred and divisiveness. The Tribe of Binyamin should have been closest to Ephrayim and Menashe. Instead, the division of the Land placed Yehudah closest to Binyamin, allowing for a singular unity between the two tribes that would allow them to share the actual structure of the Bais Hamikdash. It

Minyan Schedule	
Erev Shabbat Parashat Vayigash	
Kabbalat Shabbat	6.30 pm
Candle lighting 17/12/15	7.45 pm
Shabbat Parashat Vayigash	
Shacharit 18/12/15	9.15 am
Children's Service	10.00 am
Mincha (Mizrachi)	7.37 pm
Shabbat ends	8.47 pm
Fast of Tevet 22/12/15	
Fast starts	4.09 am
Fast ends	8.34 pm

Erev Shabbat Parashat Vayechi	
Kabbalat Shabbat	6.30 pm
Candle lighting 25/12/15	7.40 pm

### Announcements

**Kiddush is sponsored by  
The Charak-Seemann family  
celebrating Davi's recently  
becoming Bar Mitzvah  
Mazal Tov to Davi and  
the extended Charak and  
Seeman family**

was as if Hashem was telling us that Yehuda's willingness to sacrifice for Binyamin at the beginning of Parshas Vayigash is the kind of unity that will maintain Hashem's presence in our midst. The coming of Mashiach can only happen when a divided nation reunites. May it happen soon, and in our life times! *R. Aron Tendler and torah.org.*

You are welcome to take this bulletin home if the eruv is operational.

# Or Chadash

קהילת אור חדש

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

**Shabbat Parashat Vayigash**  
7 Tevet 5776; 19 December, 2015  
**Shabbat Torah reading:** Stone Chumash  
page 250 and Haftarah page 1144.

**President** Jonathan Erlich  
**Rabbi-in-residence** Rabbi Franklin  
**Dvrei Torah**

### Resolving an Identity Crisis

**Rabbi Marc D. Angel**

"And Joseph said to his brothers: I am Joseph. Does my father still live?" In re-uniting with his brothers, Joseph asked if his father was still alive. Yet, the brothers had already told him that Jacob was alive. Indeed, the rest of Joseph's words make clear that he knew Jacob was alive. So what is the significance of his question "does my father still live?" We need to understand Joseph's dilemma.

We gain insight into Joseph's inner life by the names he gave to his sons. He named his first-born Menasheh "for God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." Joseph was

proclaiming himself an Egyptian. He was a ruler in Egypt, he had an Egyptian name, an Egyptian wife; he wanted to forget his father's house. Yet, he named his second son Ephraim, "for God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction." He described Egypt as a land of his affliction--he still wasn't at peace in Egypt in spite of his efforts to be a full Egyptian. Who was Joseph? Was he a fully assimilated Egyptian, or was he still tied to his ancestral home? Joseph had a serious identity crisis.

Joseph concealed this inner struggle until he actually was faced with his brothers, who had come to Egypt to buy food. Now Joseph was forced to decide who he was.

Should he be an Egyptian and reject his brothers, or should he be an Israelite and identify with them. This uncertainty might explain his cruel treatment of his



brothers. He strove to remain an Egyptian, to avoid re-connecting with his brothers. Yet, he could not succeed. At last, he broke down crying: I am Joseph. Does my father still live?

The question about his father was rhetorical, since he already knew Jacob was alive. The question can be understood as Joseph speaking to himself: I thought I could assimilate and become a full, true Egyptian. I tried very hard to forget my father's home, my connection with my people. But I cannot keep up the charade any longer. Does my father still live within me, do my ties to my people continue to bind me to them, is this connection so powerful as to be able to draw me back to my roots?

When Joseph finally realizes that his father is still alive within himself and that he cannot break away from his family and traditions, he is able to reconcile with his brothers. Joseph, the archetypal "assimilated Jew", returns to the fold. He regains his true identity. I am Joseph your brother. I reclaim the ideas and ideals of my father's home.

The Joseph story foreshadows so many other stories of assimilated Jews who have found their ways back home. They had left their families and traditions, trying to adopt an entirely new identity. Yet, something happens in their lives, triggering a return to Judaism and the Jewish

people. They are often perplexed by this return. They ask in amazement: "does my father still live?" And they answer: yes, the Jewish teachings and traditions and peoplehood still live within me. I will not run away any longer. I finally know who I am, and have made peace with myself, my family and my God. *Rabbi Marc D. Angel and the Institute of Jewish Ideas and Ideals.*

## Human Greatness: Admit Wrong and Change Direction

### Rabbi Berel Wein

As the Torah's narrative of the story of Yosef and his brothers reaches its dramatic climax in this week's parsha, one may feel justifiably surprised that the brothers were so shocked at Yosef's revelation to them. After all, there was no shortage of revelatory hints strewn by Yosef throughout the unfolding story. But the brothers, convinced of the rectitude of their actions and behavior, remained insensitive to Yosef and his words, dreams and vision to the end. This fact of willful blindness, no matter what facts are unfolding before one's eyes, is not a rare occurrence in life. It is unfortunately a very common human characteristic.

The combination of self-

righteousness, so-called ideological purity, human stubbornness and the reluctance to admit past error is a lethal mix. It corrupts thought and behavior and blinds the eyes, even of the righteous. The Torah describes the effects of venal monetary corruption thusly: "For graft will blind the sight of the otherwise righteous and pervert the utterances of the wise." There is no greater graft or corruption than the self-righteousness of the ideologues amongst us. The brothers disbelieved Yosef's dreams from the onset and hardened their hearts and justified their behavior towards him. They convinced themselves that they could not have been wrong regarding such an important matter.

Blinded by their own convictions and worldview, of their exclusive role in creating the Jewish people without Yosef's participation, the brothers were blind to the facts that unfolded before their eyes. I am reminded of the sign that I once saw on the desk of a noted professor of law that said "Don't confuse me with the facts. My mind is made up!" Even the greatest among us fall into that trap.

There is a portion of the Jewish people who sincerely believe, whether for religious or ideological reasons, that the state of Israel should never have been created. Great rabbinic leaders of the past assured their followers that the state could not last longer than fifteen years or fifty years at the most. The facts thankfully belie those dark predictions and certainties. There were ideologues on the left who said that by abandoning Marxism the state of Israel was doomed, as was the world of the Western democracies generally. Once again the facts of the matter have arisen to deny this

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*We have operated since 1995. During the year we arrange special activities including: learning, shiur/lecture series and social events.*

skewed and dire viewpoint. All of the naysayers of the past still deny the present and continue to fight against the raging sea of facts that appear before their very eyes.

Twenty years after the Oslo agreements, it is apparent to all that somehow this process failed to bring even a modicum of peace to Israel and its Arab antagonists. Yet, having committed themselves to and having invested so much effort in a failed process there are still many who refuse to face the facts and recognize that their worldview and assessment of the situation was wrong.

So even when Yosef stands before you, one is blinded by one's own prejudices and previous mindset. This is a very important lesson to be learned from the narrative of the Torah. The ability to admit wrong and change direction is one of the true hallmarks of human greatness. It certainly is necessary in our time and in our circumstances. *Rabbi Berel Wein and torah.org.*

**Haftarah Summary**  
**Rabbi Aron Tendler**

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