

Jacob, Judah, and a Messianic Expectation

In this week's reading from *Parashat Vayigash* (*Shemot / Genesis 44:18-47:27*) the Parashah begins with Benjamin having the cup of Joseph and the sons of Israel trying to explain to Joseph that they must bring their brother back to their father. Judah offers himself in the place of Benjamin (*44:8-34*). Joseph reveals himself to his brothers (*45:1-8*) and says, *45:8 'Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (NASB)* Joseph calls for Israel and his brothers to move to the land of Goshen to live near him since the famine was going to continue for another five years (*45:9-15*). Pharaoh ordered that the best land be given to Jacob and his family (*45:9-24*). Israel makes an offering to the Lord God Almighty and travels to Egypt (*45:28-46:26*). We learn that Jacob is 130 years old (*47:9*) and the people were settled in the land of Goshen and Joseph fed them because of the famine (*47:11-13*). The famine grew very severe and the people gave all their money in order to obtain food to survive (*47:14-15*). After the money was gone, the people brought their livestock and cattle to pay for the food (*47:16-17*). After this the people sold their land and themselves into slavery in order to buy grain for food to survive (*47:18-21*) and the people grew numerous in the land of Goshen (*47:27*).

This week, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, but his emotions were so overwhelming, he broke down and cried out of the love that he had for his brothers.

ספר בראשית פרק מה Bereshit / Genesis 45:1-4

א וְלֹא-יָכַל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכָל הַנֹּצֵץ-
בַּיָּמִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל-אִישׁ מֵעָלָי
וְלֹא-עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוֹדַע יוֹסֵף אֶל-
אֶחָיו: ב וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-קִלּוֹ בְּבִכְי וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ
מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר
יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הֲעוֹד אַבְי חַי
וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ
מִפְּנָיו: ד וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֶחָיו גִּשׁוּ-
נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגָּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֶחֱיָכֶם
אֲשֶׁר-מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרַיִמָּה:

45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, 'Have everyone go out from me.' So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 45:2 He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. 45:3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me.' And they came closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. (NASB)

Following the events and the dialogue that took place between Joseph and his brothers, Joseph brought His entire family to Egypt and to Goshen so that he could take care of them during the great famine. (*Bereshit / Genesis 46-47*) We read according to *Bereshit / Genesis 46:27 and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy. 46:28 Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out the way before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. (NASB)*

(גִּשְׁנָה וַיִּבְאוּ אֶרְצָהּ גִּשְׁן: These Scriptures are tell us that Jacob sent Judah before him to Joseph. What is the significance of this passage? The rabbis discuss this verse from a messianic perspective according to *Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, Parashat 45, Part 1* (מדרש רבה בראשית פרשה מה סימן א):

Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar, Parashat 45, Part 1

And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph (Bereshit / Genesis 46:28). This illustrates the verse, The wolf and the lamb shall feed together (Isaiah 65:25). Come and see how all whom the Holy One blessed be He, has smitten in this world He will heal in the future that is to come. The blind will be healed, as it says, Then the eyes of the blind will be opened (Isaiah 35:5); the lame, Then will the lame man leap as a hart (Isaiah 35:6); the dumb, And the tongue of the dumb will sing. Thus, all will be healed, save that as a man departs this life so will he return resurrected. If he departs blind, he will return blind; if he departs deaf, he will return deaf; if he departs dumb, he will return dumb; if he departs lame, he will return lame. As he departs clothed, so will he depart clothed, as it says, It is changed as clay under the seal; and they stand as in a garment (Job 38:14). Now from whom do you learn this? From Samuel the Ramathite. When Saul brought him up from the dead, what did he say to the woman? What form is he of? And she said, an old man comes up; and he is covered with a robe (1 Samuel 28:14). For even so was he clothed in life, as it says, Moreover his mother made him a little robe (1 Samuel 2:19). Why does a man return as he went? So the wicked of the world will not say, After they died God healed them and then brought them back! Apparently, these are not the same but others. If so, says God to them, let them arise in the same state in which they went, and then I will heal them. Why so? That you may know that before Me there was no God formed, neither will any be after Me (Isaiah 43:10). After that animals will be healed, as it says, The wolf and the lamb will feed together. (possibly healed, in this context is to be understood to mean, from their evil bent; thus the wolf will be healed from its predatory instincts.) But the one that brought the blow upon all will not be healed, as it says And dust (earth) will be the serpent's food. Why so? Because it brought all down to the dust (the earth). Another interpretation of "wolf" and "lamb" is that wolf alludes to Benjamin, as it says, Benjamin is a wolf that raveneth (Bereshit / Genesis 49:27), while lamb alludes to the tribes, as it says, Israel is a scattered sheep (Jeremiah 50:17). Shall feed together, when is that? When Benjamin goes down with them. Jacob indeed said to them. My son will not go down with you (Bereshit / Genesis 42:38); yet when the hour came that they went down and Benjamin with them, they watched over and guarded him. And thus of Joseph too it says, and he lifted up his eyes and saw Benjamin with

them, they watched over and guarded him. And thus of Joseph too it says, And he lifted up his eyes and saw Benjamin his brother; and he said, God be gracious unto you, my son (Bereshit / Genesis 43:29). The lion (Isaiah 65:25) alludes to Judah, as it says, Judah is a lion's whelp (Bereshit / Genesis 49:9); like the ox, to Joseph, as it says, And of Joseph he said, His beauty is that of his firstling bullock (Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:13, 17). All these were found eating together, as it says, And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and portions were taken, etc. (Bereshit / Genesis 43:33). And the lion will eat straw like the ox, therefore, we read, And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph.

The Hebrew text states that Judah was sent before Jacob להֹרֹת לְפָנָיו גִּשְׁנָה “to direct his face to Goshen.” The midrash takes *Bereshit / Genesis 46:28* and uses Jacob sending Judah ahead of him to illustrate the “*wolf and the lamb*” feeding together (*Isaiah 65:25* “*The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,*” says the LORD. NASB). The wolf and the lamb grazing together and the lion eating straw like the ox, these words point to the discord in the harmony of Nature in the sense of the fall of creation into sin and the resulting pain of death, survival, and suffering. These Scriptures are describing different classes of animals living together and even laying side by side. Note that the serpent will not strike at the heel at this future time, however, its food will continue to be the dust of the earth, the serpent’s food does not change as we see occurring for the lion and the wolf. These verses in Isaiah draw in a picture of the messianic era in which the Lord in heaven will change the world that we know it and every creature will be at peace with one another. What is interesting is how the rabbis connect a prophecy of a future expectation of the redemption of all creation and peace to Jacob sending Judah before him to Joseph. The rabbis make a connection with the peace between Judah and Joseph with the messianic expectation of all of creation.

The midrash continues saying that the eyes of the blind will be healed, the lame will walk, and the deaf will hear in the world to come. On the other hand, another rabbi interprets this that the previous interpretation is a problem for the wicked who are raised and God heals them. The second interpretation says that a man will be raised in the world to come just as he was in the world today. The reason is so that the unrighteous cannot say that God has performed for him a miracle. The midrash continues saying “*The wolf and the lamb will feed together. (Possibly healed, in this context is to be understood to mean, from their evil bent; thus the wolf will be healed from its predatory instincts.) But the one that brought the blow upon all will not be healed, as it says And dust (earth) will be the serpent’s food.*” The midrash is describing the righteous in the world to come will be changed, the wicked on the other hand will remain the same. This is similar to John’s writing in the *Revelation 22:11* 22:11 ‘*Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.*’ (NASB) The midrash appears to be discussing the resurrected state of the righteous verses the unrighteous. The

unrighteous will raise and are said to be in the same state as they left this world (midrash rabbah), the Scriptures say the wicked will suffer “*shame*” and “*everlasting contempt*” (Daniel 12:2, בַּיּוֹמִים מִיְשָׁנֵי אֲדָמַת-עֶפְרָיִם יִקְיָצוּ אֵלֶּה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם וְאֵלֶּה לְחַרְפוֹת לְדָרָאוֹן, עוֹלָם). Exactly what this effect will be is easy to speculate about, however, one cannot say precisely; it does seem that the shame and contempt is connected to the fate of the body. The Hebrew term for “*shame*” is harapot (לְחַרְפוֹת), signifying “*reproaches*,” in the sense of being victim of the reproaches of others. The word “*contempt*” suggests the idea of “*something abhorrent*” (Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon). Think about this for a moment, there will be no “*handsome men*” and “*glamour girls*” in hell. This text illustrates a nightmare scenerio with images of Dante’s Inferno and of the most horrid environment of suffering, shame, and dispare. The midrash states that in the world to come, the Lord will change the bent towards evil, that is illustrated in the wolf being healed from its predatory instincts. Judah is described as the lion, and Joseph the ox, where both will eat together side by side, and this is synonymous to Judah being sent before him unto Joseph, both men being at peace with one another, this is interpreted from the text in *Bereshit / Genesis 46:28*.

These Scriptures from Parashat Vayigash this week provide for us a sort of messianic salvation expectation of a future time that is illustrated in Joseph providing for his brothers, saving his entire family, and being at peace with his brothers. Notice within this expectation the nations are included too (*Bereshit / Genesis 46:27 “... the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy”*). Those who had joined themselves to Israel also were counted worthy and took part in the salvation of Israel. The rabbis find a messianic hope in this week’s portion by interpreting the words that Judah went before them to Joseph. Joseph’s response breaking down and crying over his brothers illustrates how Joseph had a strong desire to have a personal relationship with each one of them. He functioned as a type of messiah, after having revealed himself to them, they accepted him and also accepted his help that is demonstrated in their all moving to Egypt and to Goshen. In addition to this, when the brothers went before Joseph to buy food, it appeared as if Joseph functioned as a judge to decide who was worthy to receive reward (food, life, salvation). Based upon all of these things, Parashat Vayigash’s description of Joseph is a foreshadowing of Yeshua the Messiah, who takes care of, provides for, and protects, gives salvation, and makes peace, and who will one day return to judge the world. The interesting point is that when Yeshua the Messiah came, he revealed who he was in the works that he performed and his people rejected him. Another parallel to the Messiah is originally Joseph was rejected by his people (family) and accepted by the goyim (Egypt), and only later on his brothers (family) accept him. In a similar manner manner, Yeshua’s people rejected him, while many goyim (non-Jewish peoples) accepted him. The Apostle Paul appears to view this same progression in the history of Israel, Yeshua, and the nations in *Romans 11:21-26*.

Romans 11:21-26

11:21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. 11:22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in

His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 11:23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery so that you will not be wise in your own estimation that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 11:26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.' (NASB)

Based upon Paul's words to the Romans, the natural branches, because of their unbelief will be cut off. If they believe, they will be grafted in again. The non-Jewish believers are described as a wild olive tree and the grafting of God into Israel is contrary to nature, the grafting of an uncultivated olive tree (branch) into a cultivated olive tree. Paul is suggesting that the wild and uncultivated branches will be grafted into the cultivated tree. The cultivation is paralleled to Israel, the Torah, and the Lord working on His people to cause them to grow. Paul goes on to say that a partial hardening has occurred to Israel for the purpose of the Gentiles coming into the fold. A day is coming however that all Israel will be saved in the Messiah Yeshua, that the Lord will remove the ungodliness from Jacob. The joyous part of this week's portion, is that the Lord has provided a wonderful salvation for His people throughout history, and in these last days in and through His Messiah Yeshua. In addition to this, we find the Lord's desire for all peoples (non-Jewish person) are being brought into the family of God. These people who are described as uncultivated, in the Messiah are able to take hold of the promises, and are expected to obey the commands and live one's life according to the way of God, all for the love of God and for His glory. Like Joseph who desired a close relationship with his brothers (e.g. his weeping), Our heavenly Father desires a close relationship with us. That end goal has been achieved in His Messiah Yeshua. What an awesome God we serve!

