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## CONCERT IN ARGENTINA

This year we organized just before Chanuka a concert. The pianists Mariana Wainz Bollero and Cynthia presented this concert, a group of visitors attended to it. During the meeting we had very special visitors: Billy Biaggi, president of the Euro-Asia Division and his wife Nita. Pastor Biaggi gave a spiritual devotional mentioning the need for the world of genuine hope. He also reminded us that the messengers of hope must keep their objectives in mind.



Pastor Biaggi was very happy that there will be a meeting of Jewish Adventist leaders communities in Kiev, a former Soviet Union country and part of the Euro-Asia Division in July 2012. It is in these East European countries that the Jewish Ashkenazic identity was forged, the largest Jewish culture in the world and also in Argentina.

## CHANUKAH IN NEW PORT RICHEY

One of the Jewish ladies in our New Port Richey FL congregation questioned whether we were going to have a good turn out for Chanukah since she knew that not all of those



who attend our congregation are Jewish and our celebration was scheduled for Christmas eve. By faith I told her I thought we would have a good turn out even though about 10 of our regular people had told me that they would be traveling and not able to be with us for Chanukah. I was surprised when close to 100 people came. We even had to put out more chairs.

Our local State Senator, Mike Fasano, accepted our invitation to light our giant menorah. It was a privilege to have him join us.

One Jewish visitor reminded me that he was at our very first service, a Chanukah service, 12 years ago. He commented (as he often does when he comes) that he really needs to come more often. His adult daughter said she would like to come with us to Israel. She said she has the passport and the money and would really like to come. We still have a few reserved seats for our tour of Israel, if you would like to join us let us know.



# OVERVIEW

## VAYIGASH

### Genesis 44:18 - 47:27

**W**ith the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead.

As a result of this act of total selflessness, Yosef finally has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and so he now reveals to them that he is none other than their brother.

The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of G-d's plan.

He sends them back to their father Yaakov with a message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. At first, Yaakov cannot accept the news, but when he recognizes hidden signs in the message which positively identify the sender as his son Yosef, his spirit is revived.

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

The Torah lists Yaakov's offspring and hints to the birth of Yocheved, who will be the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu.

Seventy souls in total descend into 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 be presented to 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 his 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.

## TORAH' STUDY PRIMACY

**T**he Torah states: "Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen." (Gen. 46:28)

The Jewish tradition asked the question, why Yaakov sent Judah ahead, the text says "to get direction" or "to prepare for him the way" in Hebrew it is "lehorot", word which could mean to teach or to instruct. We have this expression 5 times in the Torah (Gen. 46:28; Ex. 24:12; Ex. 35:34; Lev. 10:11; Lev. 14:57) In all these texts it is about teaching the instructions of G-d, that is why the Rashi interpreted the text of Genesis saying that "preparing for him the way" refers to Yaakov's instructions that Yehuda establish a house of study where he would be able to learn and teach Torah. To study the Torah has always been in priority for the Jewish people, even when they are in Exil, or close to go to Exil, they first think about establishing a Bible school or Yeshiva.

The Shelah HaKadosh derives from Yaakov's actions and priorities that wherever a person goes, he should first ensure that his spiritual needs are in place and afterward attend to his more mundane concerns. Although Yaakov clearly had a number of important tasks to attend to on his momentous journey, the Torah records his focus on establishing a house of study prior to his arrival to show us his true priorities so that we may learn from them.

## TRANSLATION & MISCOMMUNICATION

**R**abbi Ozer Alport says in the name of the Bait HaLevi explains that Yehuda realized that the brothers' original interactions with Yosef seemed bizarre and inexplicable. They told him that they came to buy grain, and he responded that they were spies. They answered that they were honest, and he told them that now they had proven his claim that they were spies. Since Yosef's responses didn't seem to correspond to the brothers' statements, it occurred to Yehuda that perhaps the miscommunication was

## TRUE WARMTH, RESPECT AND LOVE

due to the translator, who wasn't accurately relaying to Yosef the content of what the brothers had said, but was instead fabricating statements which they had never made.

In order to clarify whether this was the case, Yehuda asked for permission to review the entire dialogue directly in the ears of Yosef, without the involvement of the translator. In order to preempt Yosef from responding that he didn't understand the Hebrew language that they spoke, Yehuda stated that Yosef was like Pharaoh. If Yosef would now claim to be unfamiliar with their language, this would imply that Pharaoh didn't know it as well, an inference which would be disrespectful to Pharaoh and therefore forbidden to make

### DON'T EMBARRASS OTHERS

**R**abbi Abba Wagensberg reminds us that in this week's parasha, Joseph reveals his true identity to his brothers. After Yehuda's impassioned plea for Binyamin's release, the Torah tells us (**Genesis 45:1**) that Joseph could not restrain himself any longer. Rashi explains that Joseph could not bear the thought of embarrassing his brothers in front of the Egyptians in the room. The revelation of his true identity would mean revealing that his brothers had sold him, and that this would be intensely humiliating for them. Therefore, Joseph ordered all his Egyptian servants to leave the room, before he stated, "I am Joseph."

The Iturei Torah counters this claim by pointing out that Joseph, immediately after sending out his servants, raised his voice and cried so loudly that all of Egypt and everyone in Pharaoh's palace heard his sobbing (**Genesis 45:2**). Clearly, Joseph was not concerned with maintaining his own dignity if this is how he behaved. Therefore, he must have dismissed the Egyptians only in order to prevent his brothers' public humiliation?

Joseph's behavior teaches us how far we must go to keep from embarrassing others. Shortly after Joseph breaks down in tears, he tells his brothers, "**I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold down to Egypt**" (**Genesis 45:4**). The Ohr HaChaim comments that the word "**your brother,**" which seems superfluous in this context, actually conveys an important message. Through the intentional addition of this word, Joseph is telling his family, "**Even when you sold me down to Egypt, I was still your brother. Even in the midst of that incredibly challenging time, I still loved you and still felt connected to you.**"

**D**o we have resentment and anger when we have been hurt or cheated? Joseph was a great man. Although he is sold by his brothers, Joseph goes to great extent to treat his brothers respectfully. Not only is he concerned with their possible humiliation, but he even thanks his brothers for selling him! We can learn from Joseph's story; he does not allow himself to be dominated by feelings of bitterness about the past. Rather, he emphasizes the positive aspects of the situation, to where he is able to relate to his brothers with true warmth and respect.

May we learn to cultivate a warm, and loving attitude toward everybody. May we learn to overcome resentments about the way we were treated in the past, rising above our own hurt so that we can see the ultimate good in every situation.

To the ancient Egyptian nation God made Joseph a fountain of life, and through his integrity the life of that whole people was preserved. Joseph reunited his family, which brought about redemption for all of the Jewish people at that time. Joseph, through his bondage in Egypt, his suffering and the success of his life became a savior to his father's family. In the same way God's people of the time of the the end will get a final redemption through Mashiach who will come one day to establish the kingdom of G-d. At that time the two sons of Yaakov, Yosef and Yehudah will be united for ever as one people of G-d, that is also the lesson of the text of the haftara "For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with it"; and join them together into one stick, so that they may become one in your hand." (Ezekiel. 37:16-17).

**Sources:** These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ozer Alport, Rabbi Ari Kahn, Rabbi Noson Weisz, and Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, from Aish HaTorah (Aish.com). By Rabbi Naftali Reich, Rabbi Berel Wein and Rabbi Yochanan Zweig, Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Torah.org (Project Genenis). By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair from Ohr Somayach, by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky. and Rabbi Zalmen Marozov.

## WHATEVER YOU WANT

In the city where Rabbi Bunim lived there was a communal charity distribution fund. Each request for help was evaluated and an amount allocated.

Once, a poor man who was a distinguished Torah scholar had to marry off his daughter. He approached the charity treasurer for help with the wedding and related expenses. As the man in need was a scholar, so the treasurer, a very compassionate person, gave him more than the normal amount.

At the next board of directors meeting, the members angrily berated the treasurer for giving so much. Some even demanded that he be removed from his position. Rabbi Bunim, who couldn't stand the anger expressed against the wonderful treasurer, said, "My friends, before you make any decision, I want to tell you a story."

Once a plague broke out in the forest and thousands of animals died. The animals gathered to see what could be done to stop the plague. "The plague must be the result of a sin committed by one of us. We must find and punish the sinner, so the plague would stop!" The lion, king of the forest, called together a panel of friends to act as judges and every animal of the forest was to come forward and confess their sins.

First, the leopard came and made his confession, "My lord, king of the forest, I was once very hungry, when I saw a human in the forest. I killed him and ate him." The judges debated the case and ruled, "The leopard is not guilty! He killed only due to his hunger pangs and that is normal for a leopard..."

Next came the wolf, "My lord, king of the forest, I was once very hungry. I hadn't had a morsel of food all day long. I was about to give up on eating that day, when I noticed a cow and its calf grazing in the field.

I killed the mother and calf and ate them both." The case was deliberated and the verdict came back, "Not guilty! It killed because it was hungry and that is the way of a wolf."

One after the other each animal came forward relating of their killing and maiming people and animals in the forest and each was found not guilty.

The last to come forward with its confession was a little lamb. It got up and said, "My lord, king of the forest, I have the following confession to make. Once on a bitter cold night, my master had pity on me and took me into the house for the night. That night, while my master was asleep, I saw that the holes of his shoes were filled with straw. I was very hungry and couldn't resist the temptation. I pulled the straw from the shoes and ate it. The next day, my master had to walk with those shoes through the puddles and got his feet wet. I confess and feel terribly sorry for what I did."

"You wicked animal," they all screamed at the little lamb! "It is because of your sin that the plague befell us!" They immediately attacked the little lamb as punishment for its horrendous crime.

"All of you here are acting just the same as the animal-judges of the forest," concluded Rabbi Bunim. "Some of you may be guilty of violating the laws against taking interest. Others may have false weights. Still others may be mistreating your workers. Each person knows his own faults. Yet, you can only see the sin of the charity director who distributed a little extra to help a poor man!"

## HAFTARAH

### Ezekiel 37:15 - 28

Yosef and Judah are the two leaders of Israel. Yosef ruled in Egypt, Judah was the leader of Israel listed as the first and the one who defended his brothers and especially Benyamin: "Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house." (Genesis 44:14). "Then Judah stepped up to him and said, "O my lord, let your servant please speak" (Gen. 44:18).

## EDITOR

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In the Haftara a schism has divided Israel in two kingdoms, Judah in the South and Israel in the North. The Lord does not like this situation. He would like to see Israel, his people, to be united again. Yoseph and Judah are the symbol of this unity. "Mortal, take a stick and write on it, "For Judah, and the Israelites associated with it"; then take another stick and write on it, "For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with it"; and join them together into one stick, so that they may become one in your hand. (Ezekiel. 37:16-17). This text is clearly a Messianic text, that's why some commentators have seen Judah as the representative of Israel and Yosef or Ephraim as representative of the kehilah (assembly) of the Mashiach.

The unity between Israel and Judah will protect them against apostasy and idolatry: "I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their G-d" (Ezekiel. 37:23).

David is presented as the future king: "My servant David shall be king over them;" (Ezekiel. 37:24). But David died long time before Ezekiel, that's why we understand that "David" is the Messiah, who Son of David and therefore is called after the name of his ancestor David.

The spiritual leader of God's people will be the Messiah. "and they shall all have one shepherd" (Ezekiel. 37:24). The Lord give many promises: 1) They shall live in the land ... forever. 2) David shall be their prince forever. 3) I will make an everlasting covenant of peace with them; 4) I will bless them and multiply them, 5) I will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. 6) My dwelling place shall be with them; 7) I will be their God, and they shall be my people... forevermore. (Ezekiel 37:28) The key word here is "forever".

## BRIT HACHADASHA

### Matthew 24

Yosef is the type of the Messiah. After all his sufferings he saved his people from famine and death. "And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.." (Genesis 47:12). In the Besorat Mattayahu, we are told that just before the Mashiach will

come there will be some difficult time for G-d's people and for the world. "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me." (Matt 24:6-9.) Then we have the description of the second coming of Yeshua as the ultimate realization of what we read in the haftara "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. " (Matt 24:30.) This Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory is the "David" who will reign over Israel forever.

The parallel between Joseph and the Messiah is clear: As Joseph was sold to the heathen by his own brothers, so Messiah was sold to His bitterest enemies by one of His disciples. Joseph was falsely accused and thrown into prison because of his virtue; so Messiah was despised and rejected because His righteous, self-denying life was a rebuke to sin; and though guilty of no wrong. As Yoseph forgave his brothers, Yeshua will forgive his "brothers" (Israel) for what they have done to him and will introduce them, with all the believers to the new kingdom of G-d, the new Jerusalem that will come down from heaven and will stand on the month of Olive, near the Old City of Jerusalem.

Then Israel and Ephraim (Israel and the qehila) will be saved forever and As Shaul the Shaliach said: "And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob." "And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:26-29). Yeshua said: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Luke 21:33.)