



SHABBAT ZEST

Parshat Vayigash 9th Tevet 5777

Torah Reading / Haftara:

Artscroll – p.250/1144

Living Torah – p.222/1086

SHABBAT TIMES:

Candle Lighting:
3:48pm

Kabbalat Shabbat
Davening: 6:30pm

Shabbat Morning
Davening: 9:15am

Mincha: After Kiddush

Shabbat Ends 5:06pm

NEXT SHABBAT
VAYECHI

CANDLE LIGHTING
@ 3:58 PM

This week the
Haftorah will be
read by
Phillip Leigh

Mazel Tov to
Suki and Gary
Grant on the
birth of a
Granddaughter

Parsha In a Nutshell

Genesis 44:18-47:27

Judah approaches Joseph to plead for the release of Benjamin, offering himself as a slave to the Egyptian ruler in Benjamin's stead. Upon witnessing his brothers' loyalty to one another, Joseph reveals his identity to them. "I am Joseph," he declares. "Is my father still alive?"

The brothers are overcome by shame and remorse, but Joseph comforts them. "It was not you who sent me here," he says to them, "but G-d. It has all been ordained from Above to save us, and the entire region, from famine."

The brothers rush back to Canaan with the news. Jacob comes to Egypt with his sons and their families—seventy souls in all—and is reunited with his beloved son after 22 years. On his way to Egypt he receives the divine promise: "Fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."

Joseph gathers the wealth of Egypt by selling food and seed during the famine. Pharaoh gives Jacob's family the fertile county of Goshen to settle, and the children of Israel prosper in their Egyptian exile.

Haftorah

Ezekiel 37:15-28.

This week's haftorah mentions the fusion of the kingdoms of Judah and Joseph during the Messianic Era, echoing the beginning of this week's Torah reading: "And Judah approached him [Joseph]."

The prophet Ezekiel shares a prophecy he received, in which G-d instructs him to take two sticks and to write one on each, "For Judah and for the children of Israel his companions" and on the other, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions." After doing so he was told to put the two near each other, and G-d fused them into one stick.

G-d explains to Ezekiel that these sticks are symbolic of the House of Israel, that was divided into two (often warring) kingdoms: the Northern Kingdom that was established by Jeroboam, a member of the Tribe of Ephraim, and the Southern Kingdom, that remained under the reign of the Davidic (Judean) Dynasty. The fusing of the two sticks represented the merging of the kingdoms that will transpire during the Messianic Era -- with the Messiah, a descendant of David, at the helm of this unified empire.

"So says the L-rd G-d: 'Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side, and I will bring them to their land. And I will make them into one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be to them all as a king...'"

The haftorah ends with G-d's assurance that "they shall dwell on the land that I have given to My servant, to Jacob, wherein your forefathers lived; and they shall dwell upon it, they and their children and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever."

UPCOMING EVENTS

17th January – Shiur 8pm
 Venue TBC ‘Tefillin – What’s
 in them and why wear them?’

29th January 2017 - The
 return of Shir. The fabulous
 klezmer band are coming back
 for an encore. Reserve Tickets
 with the Office now.

Recurring Events

Cheder OPEN

Mummy and Me Resumes
 Wednesday 11th January

Yahrzeits for the coming
 week 9th – 15th Tevet:

10. Lois Cohen – Mother

14. Bernard Irwin – Mother

A Little Deeper – Critical Love

In this week's Torah portion, Joseph goes through a whole song and dance with his brothers to give them rebuke. Giving rebuke is one of the 613 commandments and is considered part and parcel of any loving relationship. A relationship without rebuke, the Sages tell us, is not one of true love.

Let's notice for a moment that our experience confirms this. Those who love us the most are our parents and spouses. Yet often they are also usually the ones who criticize us the most!

But why do criticism and love go together?

If someone you really loved was walking off a cliff, you would scream and shout at him to stop. So too, if he is falling off a spiritual cliff, we feel the need to scream and shout for him to stop. If we see someone we love not treating his parents properly, for example, or being dishonest or getting involved with a bad crowd, we feel a need to intervene - for his good, not for ours. We want people who we love to be happy. And we know that these modes of behavior will ultimately take them in the opposite direction. So we point out where they are going wrong. Often, we'll get an earful for our efforts. But when rebuke is given out of love, we are willing to accept any backlash, and indeed that is something the commentaries make us aware of in discussing the parameters of this mitzvah.

There is another reason why rebuke is related to love. Usually, it's only from within a loving relationship that we feel the confidence to give rebuke. In a lesser relationship, we might be afraid that rebuke will drive the other person away from us. I often find with unmarried couples that they are afraid to say what they actually think of their partner, for fear of losing the other person. So they skirt around the issues and sweep them under the carpet, only to get a nasty shock when these same real issues reoccur once they are married.

True love requires rebuke. We may not always know how to give it productively and sensitively. In fact, most of the time we seem to get it horribly wrong. But when we are on the receiving end of messed-up rebuke from those who love us, we might do well to remember: The criticism is not coming from a lack of appreciation, but rather the opposite is true: It's because they love us so much. Giving rebuke is certainly not an easy mitzvah to do, but like all things difficult in life, we cannot afford to shy away from doing so, as the consequences may be prove much more difficult indeed if we fail to nip it in the bud!

Shabbat Shalom.