

December 22, 2012

VaYigash

The human eye always covets more than it has. No matter how much we possess, it is never enough. One philosopher described life as nasty, brutish, and short because of the inevitability of human greed and the violence that it breeds.

What a difference to see a role model who teaches the necessity of setting limits to our own desires and also demonstrates that restraint is within our grasp. After Joseph had spent years in prison without his freedom, he finally had an audience with the Pharaoh, and revealed the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams. Although he wasn't looking for a position of high rank, he still made it to the big time. Being second in command had its perks, and yet, after having been in prison for years, his freedom would have been enough. He wasn't interested in becoming rich and famous. He was just an unassuming shepherd boy with a gift from HaShem. For Joseph, it was enough to serve HaShem and save lives during the famine. But wait! This isn't about Joseph.

Throughout the long years that Joseph was away from his father, we can feel the pain of Jacob's loss. Without his favorite son, the one he loved the most, he felt the kind of emptiness that has no end. When Jacob learned that Joseph was still alive, he said, "It is enough. Joseph, my son, is still alive." Those brief words, "It is enough," emphasize for us that there really is such a thing as "enough." The restoration of a relationship between a parent and child, or between spouses, or between friends - surely that is enough. A life lived with morality and purpose: that must be enough. An individual or community who worship and serve HaShem passionately is clearly enough. The Mishnah asks, "Who is rich?" and then answers: "One who is happy with his portion."

Contentment brings of peace of mind, and satisfaction is still our only wealth. The Beatles searched far and wide for satisfaction, but ultimately concluded that "all you need is love." For without love, there is no satisfaction. God is love, and that is enough.

Theme: It Is Enough

Hebrew reading: Genesis 45:27-28

English reading: Genesis 45:25-28

Haftatah: Ezekiel 37:26-28

B'rit Chadasha: Acts 7:9-14