

D'RASH - VAYIGASH - Dec 27, 2014

The story of Joseph covers a lifetime. We read that Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he had been born to him in his old age. When Joseph was sold to a passing caravan by his brothers, he must have been a bit put off. OK . . . so maybe he was more than just a little angry. Although he was sold into slavery, HaShem was with him, and he was put in charge of his master's household. After that, things seem to have gone downhill. When Potiphar's wife lied about him, he was thrown into jail. Eventually, he was not only released, but raised to a position of great honor by the Pharaoh. When the famine that he foretold came to pass, he finally had an opportunity to get even with his brothers. First he accused them of being spies and put them in prison. Then he made the unreasonable demand that they bring the youngest brother, Benjamin, to Egypt. Then he made his brothers squirm even more by planting his silver cup in Benjamin's sack of grain. It sounds like Joseph is just plain mean, but he really was only testing his brothers. Finally, the Scriptures tell us, "Joseph could no longer control himself" so he revealed his true identity to his brothers and there was reconciliation. What they meant for evil, God meant for good.

The *haftarah* reading also speaks of reconciliation. The Prophet Ezekiel is instructed by HaShem to take two sticks, one representing the House of Judah and the other representing the House of Israel, and join them together. Then God declares that they will never again be divided into two kingdoms. The *B'rit Chadashah* is a retelling of the story of Joseph in an abbreviated form that includes the part about Joseph's revelation of his identity to his brothers and ultimately, reconciliation. We read that Joseph fell on Benjamin's neck and wept. He kissed his brothers and wept over them. Although the Scriptures are not specific, I believe that these were tears of joy.

Reconciliation is perhaps one of the greatest joys available to us. If there is anything that keeps you from someone you love, or just an acquaintance, you can either let it eat at you or work it out. Proverbs tells us that it is better to eat a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred. According to Webster's Dictionary, reconciliation is the restoration of friendship. We cannot help but to be thankful from now to eternity that, because of Yeshua's great love for us, and His great sacrifice, we have been reconciled to our God. Now we can walk in friendship with Him.

Hebrew	Genesis 45:14-15
English	Genesis 45:12-18
Haftarah	Ezekiel 37:15-19
B'rit Chadashah	Acts 7:9-13