

## Parashat 11- Vayigash- The road of Return (Teshuvah)

Bereshiyth (Gen) 44:18-47:27

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Aliyah- Bereshiyth (Gen) 44:18- 45:7



**Introduction:** In this great epic tale of the Chronicles of Yoseph the most favoured son of Father Ya'acov we now come to the climax.



We have seen Yoseph plunged into the deepest pit in despair & last week we saw him miraculously lifted to a most exalted position of being the viceroy of the world's greatest empire & ruling all the affairs of Mitsrayim (Egypt) being second only to Pharaoh himself.

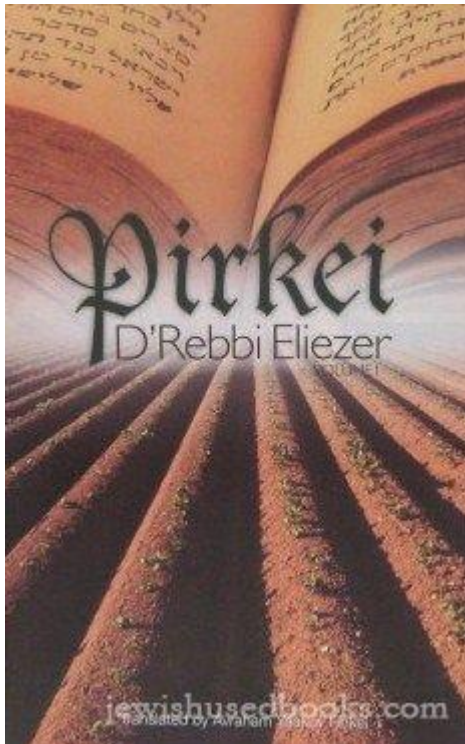


We have seen Yoseph test the genuineness of the love, his brothers have for Benjamin his beloved brother & in this climactic episode we can now see demonstrated what a real change of heart really looks like.

### **The Road to Return [Teshuvah]:**

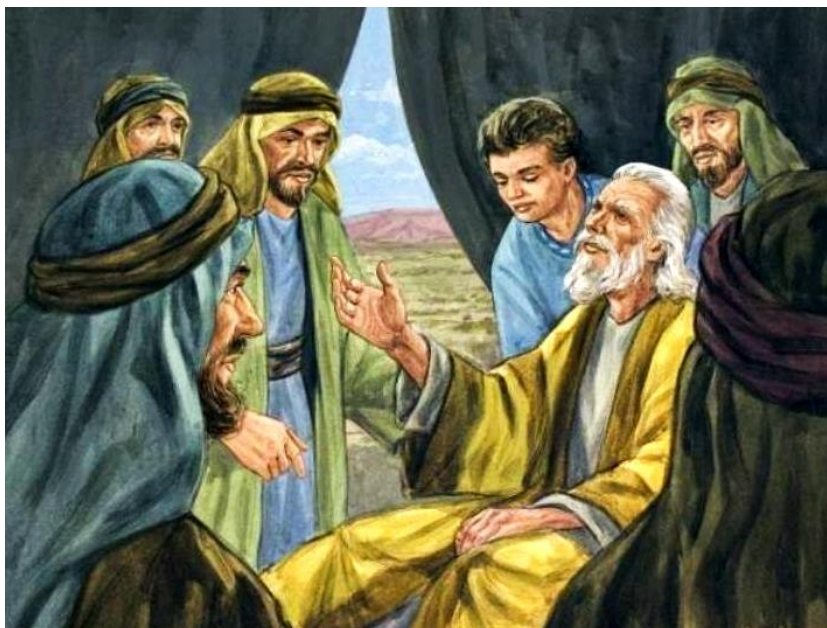
The true Survival & destiny of the family of Yaakov & the Nation of Yisrael did not really lie in the acquisition of food but it lay forged in the brotherhood of the 12 sons of Ya'akov united as an impregnable Rock. This thought maybe be best derived from a commentary on Ya'akov in an earlier event when he stopped to rest at the place he called Bethel and took of the stones with the Midrash making this comment in:





**Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 835** Midrash states that Ya'akov (Jacob) took twelve stones from the Altar upon which his father Yitschaq (Isaac) had been bound and when these stones coalesced into one unified stone he perceived that all tribes were destined to be one people.

However, we saw in last week reading, that in fact the family was indeed fracturing and beginning to fall apart. Even Ya'akov initially declares this when they return the 1<sup>st</sup> time from Mitsrayim (Egypt) in:



**Bereshiyth 42:36** "I am the one you bereaved! Yoseph is gone, Shimon is gone and now you would take away Benjamin? Upon me has all this befallen!"

Therefore, what great turn of their fates would it take to restore this family that one day it could be the nation as promised to their forefathers. Could not even this great famine be within the plan of Elohim to cause this family to

come together again. The answer truly must reside in what is referred to as **"teshuvah"** often called repentance, though it can more accurately be rendered as return. To understand this, we need to see repentance as a progressive journey and since our reading is highlighting **Yahudah** [Judah] we need to see how it applies to him. Firstly, it is appropriate to know that it was indeed him that was establishing himself as a leader for it was his leadership that convinced the brothers to sell Yoseph into slavery in the first place

though that decision was surely **guided by YHWH** to preserve the life of Yoseph, so repentance needed to begin with him. When then did it begin with him? Was it not when he was confronted with the decision concerning **Tamar** whom he thought had played **the harlot**?

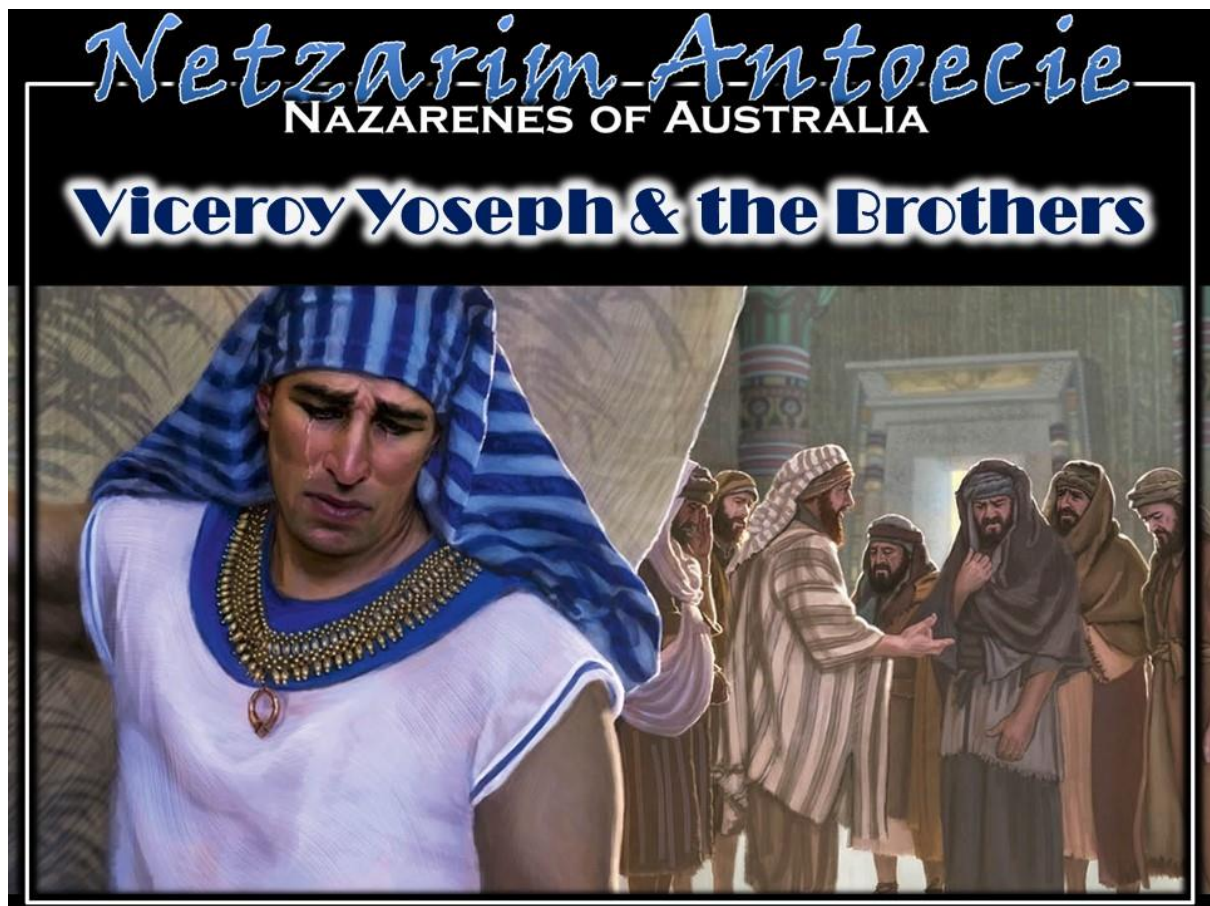


We read in:

**Bereshiyth (Gen) 38:24-26** So Yahudah (Judah) said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" **25** When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine who's these are—the seal this wrap, and this staff." **26** So Yahudah (Judah) recognized them and said, "They are from me. She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son."

During this period of time, we had previously seen that **Yahudah** had strayed from the path of his family since he had divested himself of the rest of the family & became friends with the Canaanites since the idea that Tamar should be burnt as a **Harlot** seemed very foreign to Yisrael but

was in accordance with Canaanite custom. Since the Yoseph story relates to the unification of the Family of Ya'acov we hopefully can begin to see why the Tamar story is placed in the middle of the Yoseph story because the goal of this Divinely orchestrated epic saga is in fact the return to the ways of YHWH and this truly began when Yahudah no longer covered up his sin but admitted his wrongdoing. This then was the beginning of his **Teshuvah** [his return] though the sin of Yoseph was still putrefying in all their souls and had been for 22 years. Surely this example is truly needed for us too who find many of our problems based on an inability to admit our failings towards one another.



**Vayigash** which means “**And came near**” exemplifies how in the process of returning to YHWH we are required to sacrifice, forgive, and be renewed.

**According to the Midrashim a dialogue between Yoseph & Yahudah Ensues:**

Yahudah says to Yoseph, “I took responsibility for the safety of my brother.”

Yoseph replies, “Why then did you not take responsibility for your other brother when you sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver and grieved your old Father.

When Yahudah came near it was his time to demonstrate how his heart had truly been changed and that his desire was that of repentance over misdeeds of the past.

When we observe the ministry of **Yahuchanan Ha Matbil** (John the Immerser) & then **Yeshua Ha Mashiach** (the Messiah) what we clearly see is that the central message of both was that of **Repentance**, but repentance is not just a thought of being sorry to misdeeds and failings but rather it is about action which is why we read **Yahuchanan** (John) rebuking the **P'rushim** [The Pharisees] that came to be immersed by Him where he passionately declares in:





**Luke 3:7-8** “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’”

True repentance is the sacrificial nature that Yahudah exhibits. Yahudah is now willing to take Benjamin's place as Yoseph's prisoner. Clearly this is an act of **repentance** for Yahudah. Yahudah was the brother who wanted to sell Yoseph to the Ishmaelites. Yahudah's heart had truly returned to the **will of YHWH**. As a result, Yahudah now placed the needs of other individuals above his own. Yahudah wants to substitute himself for Benjamin. Yahudah is concerned about the ill effects that leaving **Benjamin** in Mitsrayim (Egypt) would have on his father. Yahudah is also demonstrating his repentance through his works, by protecting his father from the grief of losing Benjamin. Yahudah's desire to sacrifice his own needs shows how strong his love has grown.

From his response we also can see a clear picture of **Messiah** who would also come from the place of absolute glory & perfection to take the place of the sinner.



It is therefore so appropriate that **Yahudah** was divinely chosen to bring forth our highly esteemed Messiah. Is not the human race the fractured family of YHWH and Yeshua the one who sacrificed it all to restore the lost & broken family?

Yeshua in the **Briyth chadashah** (the New Testament) gives us this same theme of sacrificial love in:



This truly is the most critical turning point in this story and reveals the central message of the good news demonstrated by Yeshua as declared in:

**Yahuchanan Aleph (1 John) 3:16** "By this we know what love is: Yeshua laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

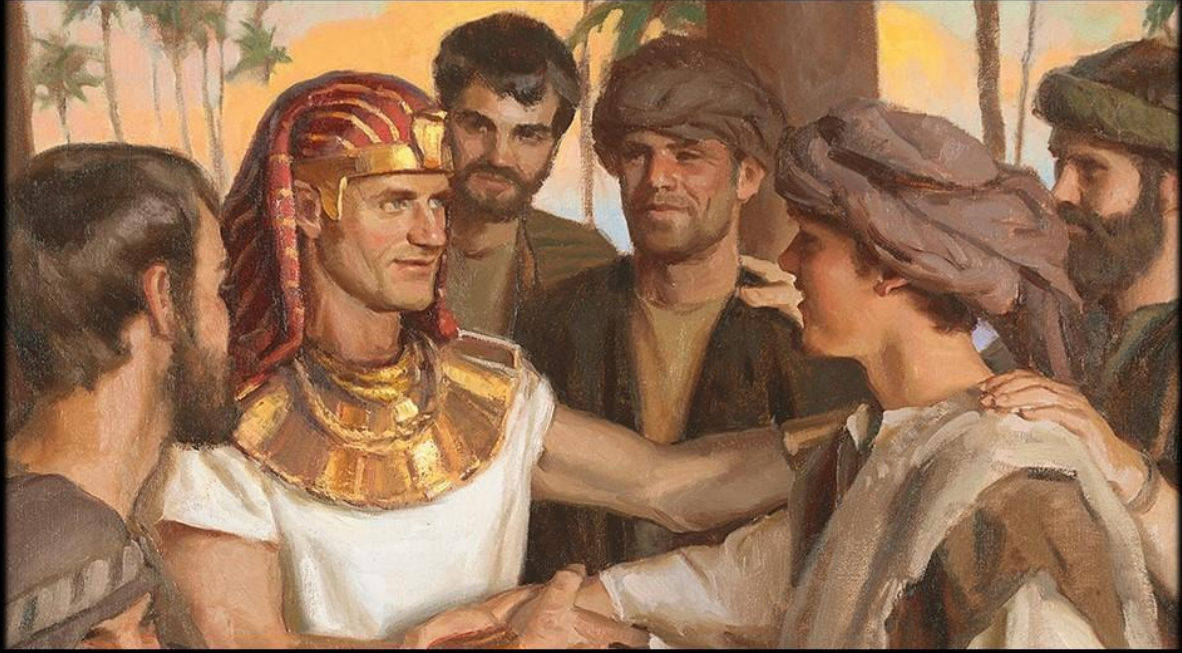
### **Teshuvah births Forgiveness:**

As Yoseph experiences the great sacrificial love he sees from Yahudah towards his beloved brother Benjamin he is totally overwhelmed to the point of tears:

Yoseph now is finally able to release the floodgates & reveal himself to his brothers and knowing the exceedingly great love he has for his father he can now enquire as to his health after all these long years of sorrow which now can come to an end. We do however begin to see why Yoseph had held back his identity for so long.



## Yoseph Revealed



Finally, this fractured family that had faced so much sorrow as displayed daily by their Father together with the brothers unfading guilt now had the opportunity to be restored through forgiveness which by the mercy of YHWH would instigate a great renewal. How much do we need this lesson for ourselves today? This is definitely, not a message of the past but is truly needed today.

After the bitterness of being sold into Slavery we see Yoseph declaring the most profound words of forgiveness which also reveal such prophetic wisdom in:

**Bereshiyth (Genesis) 45:4-5** And Yoseph said unto his brethren, come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Yoseph your brother, whom you sold into Mitsrayim (Egypt). 5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, for having sold me here: for Elohim sent me before you to preserve life."

Yoseph had discovered the mystery of life in that he understood behind everything that had happened to him no matter how terrible it had seemed there was the ever-present hand of **YHWH** working out his mysterious plan to preserve many from certain death & destruction. This thought is echoed in the words of Shaul (Paul) too when he says:

**Romans 8:28** And we know that all matters work together for good to those who love Elohim, to those who are called according to His purpose.



### **The far-reaching Message of salvation:**

In placing Yoseph in charge of the food supply of all Mitsrayim the Eternal One preserved the lives not only of his family but of **Mitsrayim** and all **the lands** surrounding, but even greater, YHWH fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham by making Yisrael a blessing to the Nations and their survival would finally bring the Messiah to the world through the line of Yahudah.

It has been suggested that Yoseph is truly a picture of the Messiah both through his suffering & also through his reigning as 2<sup>nd</sup> only to Pharaoh. What is interesting is how Yoseph was rejected by his brothers, suffering unjustly and then rising to power among the Gentiles, given another name & was unrecognized by his own & then at the set-apart time is revealed to them.

Surely this is a picture of Yeshua the Messiah as we read in:

**Yahuchanan (John) 1:11** He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

What we also find is just as Yoseph brought salvation to the pagan Nation of Mitsrayim we find the Messiah under the disguise of a foreign name being found by the gentiles as we read in:



**Romans 9:30-32** What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; **31** but Yisrael, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. **32**

**Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.**

The Messiah even today remains concealed to his brethren, but the truth is he will be revealed to his brothers at the appointed time. Just as Yoseph & his brothers wept at his revelation when they repented, he willingly forgave them and so there will be a time when the house of David will experience great weeping as declared by the prophet in:



**ZecharYah (Zechariah) 12:10-11** “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

All this is reminiscent of the story that we are reading of Yoseph in the natural & that of Yeshua in the spiritual.

### **The Personal Lesson for Us Today:**

There is for us in this story a real practical lesson. All that happened was guided by the hand of YHWH to see his promises fulfilled. Through the hatred of the brothers the dream that Yoseph had could become real. Yoseph understood that so much, that finally he could say that what the brothers meant for Evil YHWH meant for good.

Truly we see this expressed with many of the heroes of Scripture.



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**David  
needed His  
Goliath**

David needed his Goliath to establish his role as King over the people of Elohim.

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**Yeshua Needed His Judas**



Even Yeshua needed his betrayer to fulfil his purpose as prophesied in the Scriptures.

If we are indeed the called of YHWH then we may need our opponents to launch ourselves into the purposes of Elohim. If we can see all our failures, difficulties, traumas and opposition as working together to build our character in preparation for our true purpose then we can begin to respond to them as **Yoseph** did.

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# What is True Repentance



The road of life is not filled with success because that does not lead to the character of Holiness but if our journey leads to **Teshuvah** the road of Return it will lead to true character and a nature that is in accord with the **Kingdom of YHWH**.