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**CSH Shabbat Service Schedule**

January 7 – CSH @ Old Whalers 9:30 am  
January 28 - CSH @ Old Whalers 9:30 am  
February 11 - CSH @ Old Whalers 9:30 am  
February 18 - CSH @ Old Whalers 9:30 am

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Candle Lighting Friday, December 31rd 4:13 pm

This week's parashat: Vayigash

Annual: Genesis 44:18-47:27 (Etz Hayim p. 274)
Triennial: Genesis 45:28-46:27 (Etz Hayim p. 279)
Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:15–28 (Etz Hayim p. 291)

Vayigash Musings: *And they told Jacob their father, "Joseph is still alive; yes, he is ruler over the whole land of Egypt." Jacob's heart went numb, for he did not believe them. – Genesis 45:26*

In blithe spirits the sons of Jacob journeyed up to the land of Canaan, but when they reached the boundary line, they said to one another, "How shall we do? If we appear before our father and tell him that Joseph is alive, he will be greatly frightened, and he will not be inclined to believe us." Besides, Joseph's last injunction to them had been to take heed and not startle their father with the tidings of joy.

On coming close to their habitation, they caught sight of Serah, the daughter of Asher, a very beautiful maiden, and very wise, who was skilled in playing upon the harp. They summoned her unto them and gave her a harp, and bade her play before Jacob and sing that which they should tell her. She sat down before Jacob, and, with an agreeable melody, she sang the following words, accompanying herself upon the harp: "Joseph, my uncle, liveth, he ruleth over the whole of Egypt, he is not dead!" She repeated these words several times, and Jacob grew more and more pleasurably excited. His joy awakened the holy spirit in him, and he knew that she spoke the truth. The spirit of prophecy never visits a seer when he is in a state of lassitude or in a state of grief; it comes only together with joy. All the years of Joseph's separation from him Jacob had had no prophetic visions, because he was always sad, and only when Serah's words reawakened the feeling of happiness in his heart, the prophetic spirit again took possession of him. Jacob rewarded her therefor with the words, "My daughter, may death never have power over thee, for thou didst revive my spirit." And so it was. Serah did not die, she entered Paradise alive. At his bidding, she repeated the words she had sung again and again, and they gave Jacob great joy and delight, so that the holy spirit waxed stronger and stronger within him.

While he was sitting thus in converse with Serah, his sons appeared arrayed in all their magnificence, and with all the presents that Joseph had given them, and they spake to Jacob, saying: "Glad tidings! Joseph our brother liveth! He is ruler over the whole land of Egypt, and he sends thee a message of joy." At first Jacob would not believe them, but when they opened their packs, and showed him the presents Joseph had sent to all, he could not doubt the truth of their words any longer.

Joseph had had a premonition that his father would refuse to give his brethren credence, because they had tried to deceive him before, and "it is the punishment of the liar that his words are not believed even when he speaks the truth." He had therefore said to them, "If my father will not believe your words, tell him that when I took leave of him, to see whether it was well with you, he had been teaching me the law of the heifer whose neck is broken in the valley." When they repeated this, every last vestige of Jacob's doubt disappeared, and he said: "Great is the steadfastness of my son Joseph. In spite of all his sufferings he has remained constant in his piety. Yea, great are the benefits that the Lord hath conferred upon me. He saved me from the hands of Esau, and from the hands of Laban, and from the Canaanites who pursued after me. I have tasted many joys, and I hope to see more, but never did I hope to set eyes upon Joseph again, and now I shall go down to him and behold him before my death."

The Legends of the Jews by Louis Ginzberg <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/loj/loj203.htm>



The interchange between God and Ya'akov at Be'er Sheva is interesting -- it is because of the interplay of the names Yisra'el and Ya'akov. It is always interesting to see how the names go back and forth and when he is called Ya'akov, the manipulating, physical being and when he is called Yisra'el, the spiritual, centered being.

With that lens in place, let's look at this vignette in Torah:

45:26. And ... Yosef is yet alive, And Ya'akov's heart fainted, ... And they told him all the words of Yosef, ... and when he saw the wagons ... the spirit of Ya'akov ...revived; And Yisra'el said, "It is enough";46:1 And Yisra'el took his journey ... and came to Be'er Sheva, and offered sacrifices ... And God spoke to Yisra'el in the visions of the night, and said, "Ya'akov, Ya'akov." And he said, "Here am I." ...And the One said, "I am God,... I will go down with you to Mitzrayim...." And Ya'akov rose up ... and the sons of Yisra'el carried Ya'akov their father, and [everything] and came to Mitzrayim, Ya'akov, and all his seed with him;... And these are the names of the people of Yisra'el, who came to Mitzrayim, Ya'akov and his sons; ...

The Ya'akov part of him faints and then, when he revives, sees the wagons and stuff and realizes that Yosef is pretty well off. The Yisra'el part of him says (probably to the Ya'akov part...), "It is enough that Yosef is alive" -- (it is great that I will again see this son of mine -- he doesn't have to be wealthy and successful....) And the spiritual Yisra'el offers sacrifices and the Holy One talks to that spiritual being, but he calls to the Ya'akov part -- twice, to get his attention. Now most of the time, a person only has to be called by name once -- other notable repeats include the Akedah as Avraham's hand is poised with the knife above Yitzkhak's head.

<http://rabbishafir.homestead.com/RCSDvayigash2.html>



There are rare and special moments when the world changes and a new possibility is born: when the Wright brothers in 1903 made the first man-made flight, or in 1969 when Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon, or when, almost 6,000 years ago, someone discovered that marks made in clay with a stick could, when the clay dried, become permanent signs and thus writing, and civilization, were born.

There is such a moment in this week's parsha, and arguably it has had a greater influence on the course of history than any of the above. It happens when Joseph finally reveals his identity to his brothers and then, while they are silent and in a state of shock, goes on to say these words:

"I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God." (Gen. 45: 4-8)

This is *the first recorded moment in history in which one human being forgives another.*

To read this commentary in its entirety: <http://www.chief Rabbi.org/ReadArtical.aspx?id=1850>



Happy New Year 2012

It was approximately twenty-five hundred years ago that the Prophets of Israel roamed the countryside preaching about the goodness of humanity and how it could be found in each of us. In fact they emphasized that the most enduring force known to man was the power of our ability to conquer the wrong doing we witness every day.

There are many ways we can accomplish what was suggested so long ago. For example: Supporting institutions that give others the ability to survive and even carry themselves with dignity. Every day we witness the poverty and misery of those less fortunate. And there are those among us who were more independent but somehow became victims of the terrible nightmare we have been exposed to for these many years.

It is not enough to acknowledge the problems. We are obligated, as partners with God, to ensure that the tear in our society is repaired to the best of our ability. Each tear in the fabric of our existence should bring us closer to understanding our place in the journey we are embarked upon. Age should not be a deterrent to reaching out to lend a helping hand. Rather it should encourage us to do more because we have been there and have seen what nothingness brings.

Perhaps, given what has transpired this past year, we can reach for the unreachable with deeds. We are nothing without purpose and only when we lift a person who has fallen, can we with pride, declare who we are and truly comprehend the connection of Heaven and Earth.

This time of the year enables us to recollect as well as plan for tomorrow. There is the custom of New Year's resolutions – a wish list of things yet to be accomplished and with good intentions attached. But it shouldn't end there. The act of making a wish should be connected to the action necessary to see them completed. Some will falter and some will see their dreams come true. There is no shame in failing but rather in not making an honest attempt. That is the beauty of trying.

Our religious New Year encompasses these thoughts but also includes a desire to complete the journey with God as a partner. The secular New Year enables us to recall the past with the intention of trying harder through our own efforts of will power and determination. When you think about it they are similar.

Yes, the Prophets were right when they declared that goodness can be found in each of us. And it takes a little push called New Year to bring out the best in each of us. This to me is the true meaning of a New Year.

My prayer is that we will all find 2012 a year that will give us the ability to celebrate those things that give us comfort and joy; that each of us will join in creating an even better life filled with wishes and dreams, contentment and good health; that God will look favorably upon us and bless us with long life and most of all, quality of life.

<http://rabbiwiener.blogspot.com/2011/12/new-year-message-2012.html>



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Yom Huledet Sameach

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End Quote

A philosophy professor stood before his class with some items on the table in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, about 2 inches in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

He then asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous “Yes.”

“Now,” said the professor, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The rocks are the important things – your family, your partner, your health, your children – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter – like your job, your house, your car.

The sand is everything else. The small stuff.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued “there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your

children. Take your partner out dancing. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal.

Take care of the rocks first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”

Wishing you a happy, healthy, fulfilling New Year.

Shabbat Shalom.

Stacy