



### MAKING SENSE OF THE PUZZLE

**F**OR JOSEPH'S BROTHERS EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED TO them in Egypt was a mystery. For no reason they had been accused of being spies. The money they paid for the food had been returned to them. The goblet was planted in Benjamin's sack, and now worst of all, the strange Egyptian Viceroy wanted to keep Benjamin as a slave.

Then at the beginning of our Sedra<sup>1</sup>, Judah stepped forward and offered himself in Benjamin's stead, emphasizing that if Benjamin did not return, their father Jacob would die.

At this point Joseph revealed himself "I am Joseph!". Those few words explained the mystery. Now the brothers understood what had happened. True, they blamed themselves bitterly for selling their brother. But the puzzle was resolved. Joseph urged them to recognize that the whole process was in fact a Divine plan.

This account is an example of many situations in the life of an individual, and of the Jewish people as a whole. When the moment of revelation comes, the whole story suddenly makes sense. A great Torah scholar of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century known as the Chafetz Chaim<sup>2</sup> suggested that the coming of the Messiah will be just such a moment, making sense of the ups and downs of the last few thousand years, and the many paradoxes of the present. At that moment, suddenly, the Divine will be revealed<sup>3</sup>.

117 GEORGE STREET, LONDON W1H 7HF  
cru@lubavitchuk.com - www.chabadresearch.org

Our suffering, our wandering, our peculiar relationship with the nations of the world - all will be seen from a new perspective. Things which previously baffled us will be understood, simply because we will discern the spiritual links which connect everything together. Above all, the Torah and its Commandments will be seen as the key to the fulfilment of the goal for which the universe was created.

The Chafetz Chaim himself deeply yearned for the coming of the Messiah. His writings urged the Torah scholars and leaders of his time to help the Jewish people prepare for the coming of the Messiah<sup>4</sup>.

For many generations, of course, this had been understood as the goal of Jewish life. But in the modern period a process of secularization began to take place, even among the orthodox. Spiritual values were decreasing. Instead of seeing Jewish teaching as a process of history leading towards Redemption for the entire Jewish people and for all humanity, people began to see their only goal as maintaining a status quo in which Judaism would survive its many assailants in the modern world. The Chafetz Chaim and later, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, tried to rectify this situation.

The start of the long process of Exile will be commemorated this Sunday (27 December), with the Fast of Tenth of Tevet, the day the siege of Jerusalem began in the time of the First Temple. This led to the destruction of the First Temple, and later of the Second, after which the Jewish people were dispersed from their land.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe emphasised the spiritual goals of Judaism, the importance of Torah study and of Mitzvot, and the centrality of the theme of Love of one's Fellow. He stated that the Redemption will be brought closer through 'acts of goodness and kindness' throughout humanity. Through the implementation of these values we too yearn for that moment which the Sedra depicts: the moment of recognition that G-d is the author of all that has happened, and that His Divine plan is at last being fulfilled.

1. Gen.44:18-47:27. 2. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838-1933) of Radin. 3. *Chafetz Chaim on the Torah*, sec. Vayigash. 4. See the translated collection of his letters *The Chafetz Chaim on Awaiting Moshiach* (Targum Press, 1993).

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

***SPONSORED BY DR REUVEN JOEL***



SEDRA VAYIGASH

**REUNITED**

It was Leah's turn to visit Grandma Faigy. She was looking forward to this, because Grandma Faigy was a Holocaust survivor, and Leah had decided that she would find out more about the family from before the war, and about her grandmother's experiences. Leah had her new digital recorder which had been a birthday present, and also a notebook and pen.

When Leah got to Grandma she gently introduced the idea of recording her and making notes. Grandma Faigy didn't mind, as long as Leah ate her beautiful chocolate cake, which Leah was quite happy to do. She put the recorder on the table and pressed "record", and opened her notebook. This would be an interesting project!

Grandma started to speak about her family before the war. She told about her parents, and the street in Warsaw where they lived. "You know, I was the youngest in my family. There were three of us, the oldest a girl Rochel, and then a boy Moishe, and then me. My oldest sister got married to a fine young man before the war, but I never saw them afterwards. When the War ended I tried to find them, but they were gone. No one in the whole family survived, except me! But that's all ancient history now. The same thing happened to lots of people. Have another piece of chocolate cake, Leah!" "I want to make a kind of Family Tree," said Leah. "When Rochel got married, what was her family name?"

"You think I should remember a thing like that!" said her grandmother. "Mind you, you know what I think, she was called Schwartz. I remember

now, Rochel and Binyomin Schwartz. But they're all gone, long ago", and she sighed. "You know there is a new girl in school called Schwartz," said Leah. "Maybe she is related to us." "No, they're all gone" said Grandma. "Would you like an ice cream?"

The next day at school Leah went over to Rochel Schwartz and asked her "what is your grandma's name? I mean, your father's mother.."

"Why, are you doing research on family trees or something? Why do you ask? If you really want to know, her name was Rochel, she was a Holocaust survivor, and she passed away many years ago, before I was born, and I am named after her". "Oh really, did she have any brothers or sisters?" asked Leah. "Maybe, but I don't think they survived". "Well could you ask your Mother tonight, if there were any?" asked Leah. "Why?" asked Rochel. "Why do you want to know?"

So Leah told her what her grandmother had said the day before, and Rochel got excited. "Maybe we are cousins?!" she said.

That night Leah's mother suddenly called her: "Rochel Schwartz is on the phone. She was saying something about her grandmother having a sister Fayge and a brother Moishe". Leah took the phone. "And where did they live?" "Warsaw". Leah screamed with delight. Could it really be true? She began crying. Then her mother came, and began speaking to Rochel's mother and father on the phone, and she also began crying. Leah's father got involved, they quickly all drove round to visit the Schwartz family. Then they phoned Grandma Faigy, and even though it was already late, they all went to visit her. They were all laughing and crying. It was TRUE!

Then Grandma Faige said she wants to say a few words: "It is so special to see my long lost relatives, and especially this week, because the Sedra tells us about the reunion of Jacob with his long lost son Joseph. Jacob had been mourning the loss of Joseph for many years was now reunited with his son, and he lived the rest of his years in peace. That is how I feel! I feel like Jacob finding my long lost family."

The story was put in the local newspaper. There were now more children to visit Grandma Faigy who was also Great-Aunt Faigy, and she was able happily to bake more and more chocolate cake...

***Torah teachings are holy –  
please treat this page with care***