

Reconciliation

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

Judah's speech in which he repeats the whole saga and reiterates his concern for father and sons, so moves Joseph that he can no longer keep the pretense up. He sends all the Egyptians out and reveals himself. He also emphasizes that all that has happened is part of a Divine plan "You did not send me down to Egypt. God did." Now he can save them all. And he commands them to come, to bring their families and their father. And he offers them settlement in Goshen, the fertile Nile Delta.

He loads them up with gifts, provisions and transport and tells them to hurry back. In the famous phrase "Do not argue on the way." The Midrash amusingly says he meant them not to tarry studying Torah and argue about its finer points but hurry up. More likely he is concerned about recrimination, blame and guilt again.

They return to their father and bring him the news that Joseph lives and he is the master of Egypt and the mastermind of this whole episode. Jacob did not believe them. The Midrash again has opposing opinions. He always really knew that Joseph was alive. Or he really did not and that was why his heart missed a beat. Only when he saw all the stuff they had brought did he believe. He needed empirical evidence because they had not told the truth up to now.

On his way south, he passes through Be'er Sheva. God appears to him and reassures him that he can go down to Egypt and guarantees his descendants will return. Judah goes on ahead to pave the way and the reconciliation between Jacob and Joseph is one of the most moving episodes in the Torah. Indeed, Judah now becomes Joseph's main guy for arranging things. And the saga that will lead to slavery begins.