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REMEMBER HOW I STOOD!

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Remember How I Stood!



By Asher Intrater

There is an amazing statement about prayer in **Jeremiah 18:20**,

Shall evil be paid back for good?

For they have dug a pit for my soul.

Remember how I stood before You to speak good on their behalf, to turn away Your anger from them!

Jeremiah asks God to remember his prayers. Jeremiah likens prayer to an advocate attorney standing before the Judge's bench pleading a case on behalf of the defendant.

Prayer has a legal aspect to it. There are spiritual principles in prayer that act in a similar way to laws in a courtroom. God is the judge. We come before the judge to plead a case based on God's laws, according to the spiritual rules by which prayer operates. We have to examine the Scriptures like a lawyer studying the law before coming to plead a case. We have to know how to plead the case.

There is an official legal aspect to prayer – in addition to the intimate aspect of talking to a loving Father. We come to make demands before God according to His own laws.

This is not offensive to God. He is delighted for it to happen. Abraham pleaded before God on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. He said, **“Will not the judge of all righteousness do what is right?”** (Genesis 18:23-25). This is just after he had lunch with God in the flesh as a personal covenant friend. Even though God was not able to spare Sodom, I believe He was happy with Abraham for challenging Him as a judge to do right. God is rather *dismayed* that there are not more people coming before Him as advocate attorneys, pleading for Him to act mercifully on behalf of others.

Yeshua taught that we should pray very diligently, as if we were making a case before an evil judge – **Luke 18:2**. (Luke 18 seems to follow up on Genesis 18.)

God wants people on earth to cry out for justice and mercy. God is the heavenly judge; we are His advocates here on earth. Yeshua is an advocate, **parakletos**, on our behalf (**1 John 2:1**). When we pray on behalf of others as in a courtroom, we are acting in the same spirit as Yeshua.

Jeremiah asks God to remember his prayers. Certainly, God remembers our prayers. He takes note and will remember forever. When Jeremiah asks for his prayers to be remembered, he is asking for God to reward him. If we pray with a right heart according to the right rules, we will be rewarded. God rewards prayer (**Matthew 6:6**).

God remembers **what** you prayed and **that** you prayed. He will answer what you pray and reward you that you prayed. It is a double blessing. (What a motivation to pray more and to pray harder!)



Continued on page 7

Weeping Aloud, Weeping Allowed



By Eitan Shishkoff

“Then Joseph could not restrain himself...and he cried out ‘Make everyone go out from me!’ And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph; does my father still live?’” (Genesis 45:1-4)

This is one of the most gripping moments in all of Scripture. Not just this once, but seven times in Joseph’s emotion-packed story the depth of his emotion is expressed in tears. For sheer pathos it’s hard to find a family narrative more touching than that of Joseph, his father, and his brothers.

In their story, God is making a strong statement. Is there a message for us in Joseph’s piercing cries? Was he merely releasing the floodgates of frustration and hurt, or is there added meaning – hidden value – to these seven instances of his heart leaking through his eyes?

Here is a powerful man, the prime minister of the Egyptian Empire. In the first encounters with his brothers coming to get food during the famine, they had no idea they were dealing with the brother they’d sold into slavery twenty-two years before. The first time Joseph wept, moved to see them after so long, he did not want to be seen. Weeping openly would not befit his position. Nor did he want to reveal himself as their brother – yet.

To test them, he put his brothers through nerve-wracking accusation, allowing them more than once to fear the uncertainty of their fate in his hands.



Artist Baruch Maayan*

What told Joseph that his brothers finally “got it?” Perhaps it was *Judah’s* selfless offer to be a sacrifice in the place of young Benjamin that broke open the fountain deep inside Joseph. For at this point he at last wept before them openly.

What is leaking out of his heart, through his eyes? Love, longing, lost years. He’s forgiving them, amazingly! It is the power and grace of God being played out on the stage of a very flawed, yet destined family. Joseph had already achieved greatness, yet this weeping signaled the healing of his family – and prepared the way for Israel’s national history, leading to Messiah’s redeeming the world as the promised king from the tribe of Judah. (For a stimulating examination of the dysfunctionality and eventual healing of Joseph’s relationship with his brothers and his father, I highly recommend Russell Resnik’s book, *A Life of Favor*, Lederer, 2017).

What awaits you and me – that can only be fulfilled when we have born the wounds of life, faced our pain, and summoned the courage to forgive and release?

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Late Responder?



By Guy Cohen



“Yet when He heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.” (John 11:6 NIV)

Many times in our lives we can feel discouraged and hopeless. We turn our eyes to our Lord longing for His full redemption. Like Lazarus' sisters we sometimes ask, “Where are you and why aren't you here? **When will you answer?**” However, that line of thinking often brings us to a place of discouragement.

We can find ourselves in the John 11 story of Lazarus. (Please take a moment to read it now if you can.) Each of us has a bit of Martha and Miriam in our personality. We even see examples of this in how the disciples understood and responded to the situation when they thought it was good for their sick friend to “sleep” (See John 11:11-12). Our faith has borders; our understanding has limits. For example, Martha understood Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection at the last day. However, it was beyond her ability to comprehend by faith that the one standing in front of her, Yeshua, could be THE resurrection and the life NOW.

Miriam, in the midst of her sorrow, was full of questions.

- Why didn't Yeshua come before Lazarus died?
- Where was He and what took Him so long?
- Why were others touched by Yeshua but her brother died?

Friends were mourning Lazarus' death. Even today here in Israel there are people whose job it is to mourn at a funeral. This expression of pain and grieving is good for processing, but not a good place to remain. Yeshua's grief over Lazarus' death was partly tied to the people around Him. He grieved with those who were stuck there in a dark corner – unable to look forward, beyond the grief and mourning – feeling hopeless and devoid of a future.

As we imagine rolling away the stone blocking the burial cave where Lazarus was laid, our first thought is about the smell of a body decaying for four days. However there are obviously a host of biological roadblocks to consider in a dead body – such as the brain, heart, lungs and other organs which have ceased to receive blood or oxygen. Then there is the cause of death. Was it a virus, cancer or other disease? When Lazarus came out of the cave, returning to life included healing and restoration of body, senses, memory and mind.

We can take this example of Lazarus coming back from the dead and use it as a parallel to those who have come to know the Lord and *walked with Him for a period of time, but one day find themselves feeling like they are trapped in a dark corner or like a corpse in a cave.* Some may have become discouraged. Some may have issues with other believers or leadership within the congregation. Some may have separated themselves or allowed the enemy to separate them from other believers, from fellowship and from worship in the house of God. Perhaps there is disagreement over doctrine or theology or everyday principles of living.

Are we like Lazarus, asleep or even dead?

Lazarus' sisters thought Yeshua was *LATE* in coming to help their sick brother. However, God is never late in anything. **Take heart. Believe. His purposes will come to pass according to His plan and timing.**

Or, as the Tomlin song goes,

“From Age to Age He Stands
And Time is in His Hands
The Beginning and the End...”

Joy to the World & Happy New Year!



By Leon Mazin

As you may already know, I come from a "Russian-Jewish" background. Growing up under Communism, I was unfamiliar with both Hanukkah and Christmas. However, the holiday celebrating the **NEW YEAR** still meant something to the Russian-Jewish population and even had a quasi-spiritual tone. **So I want to wish you a Happy New Year with Heavenly Blessings!** May the grace of the Lord Yeshua Ha-Mashiach, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Sadly, 2021 has not been an easy year, but rather one that held much uncertainty, hopes, fears, and illness (in my case, heavy Covid symptoms). For some, Israel's official vaccination campaign has awoken memories of the oppressive Soviet regime. The pressure brought to bear by the authorities carries echoes of despotism. At times there is a feeling that we are being given an ultimatum: "If you don't do what we ask, then we will use force."

And yet through it all, **I have immeasurable feelings of gratitude to God for His abundant mercy!** And I thank my wife, children, and friends who "did not abandon me in sickness." I gratefully received YOUR prayers, support and good wishes!!!

This year also brought me *much joy*:

- The birth of our first grandchild
- Seeing my children strive for more in the Lord for themselves and for others.
- Seeing our congregation grow – this Hanukkah we celebrated our 20th anniversary!
- The transformation of those who began as young and immature but today are already adults in Messiah, knowing the voice of the Spirit and following His guidance.

There are many reasons for joy, and we aim for yet more!

I believe that the day is not far when the voice of God will be known to more people in Israel and in the entire world!

In the past we had countless events with large gatherings. Even with Covid we have resumed gatherings, and the quality of our times together has greatly increased!

A few questions to stimulate our thinking as we enter into the New Year:

- Who you are and how do you live?
- What values define you?
- How can you reflect the Light of the Messiah?
- What is He achieving in and through you?

I pray for open borders to be able to meet international friends, and a joyful 2022!

Please be in prayer for the projects of Shavei Tzion. *We desire to preach to all Israel, that the Messiah was crucified for our sins and has risen for our justification.* By His power may we continue to do good to all!

Peace and blessings to you and your loved ones in Yeshua Ha-Mashiach.



Weeping Over Relationships and Emotional Health

Have you ever wept over a relationship? I have. Relationships are the stuff of life. They can be exhilarating and unnerving, deeply satisfying and dreadfully complicated. *But, unless we adopt a hermit's lifestyle, we will always be involved with people.* What can Joseph teach us about relationships?

Joseph's tale includes all of the above and more. He began with the extreme favor of his father, Jacob. That led to jealousy, compounded by his own youthful enthusiasm over his future. The ensuing series of trials tested his heart. He easily could have chosen bitterness and enduring anger. I'm sure unplumbed wells of regret, loss, and perplexity lay within Joseph's soul. But he chose to move forward, somehow placing the past on hold – hoping for a better future.

In Peter Scazzero's insightful and challenging book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, he reveals his own painful journey of finally facing the impact of un-dealt-with emotions. He notes “*God made human beings to feel a wide range of emotions. When we deny our pain, losses, and feelings year after year, we become less and less human*” (page 69).

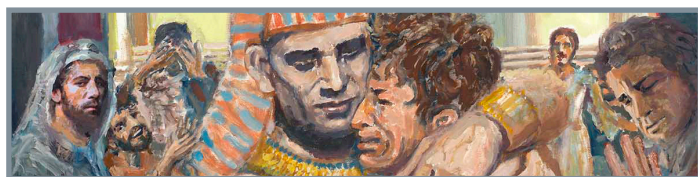
I am a person who feels things deeply. Sometimes that's a *liability*. I can get consumed with those feelings. But reading the story of Joseph, and the writings of Resnik and Scazzero, I'm realizing that everyone has deep feelings. It's just that some of us are not as in touch with them, or live a cauterized existence. So, how can we deal with our emotions in a healthy, godly way?

Scazzero gives the following list as a starting point:

1. Don't ignore the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear.
2. Stop denying the past's impact on the present.
3. Resist covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure.
4. Refuse to crawl along with unresolved conflict.

A New Calendar Year: Time for Inventory?

This past year has been undeniably difficult. Covid still rages. Many of us have lost loved ones. Suffering and loss take a heavy toll on us emotionally. What have you accumulated this year (or longer) in the way of emotional baggage? Can you respond as Joseph did?



Joseph wept. Jeremiah wept. Jesus wept. You don't have to weep physically to be emotionally healthy (though it sure can help). But it should not escape our notice that these great, spiritual men (including the Son of God) expressed such depth of emotion. They did not agree with the false, damaging saying: “Big boys don't cry.”

His brothers' emotions are also explored in the Genesis account. Their jealousy turned to murderous resentment. Yet, upon seeing Joseph, before knowing who he was, they felt the weight of guilt and remorse for the crime against their brother. “*We saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us and we would not hear*” (Genesis 42:21). Ultimately, when he revealed himself, they were shocked, stunned, dismayed, and at last bathed in Joseph's tears and kisses (Genesis 45:14).

Joseph's Response to Rejection

Joseph experienced decades of potentially crippling emotions. At the time of reunion with his brothers, he had traveled through rejection, bitterness, anger, loneliness, grief, sadness, and anguished bewilderment. How was Joseph able to reconcile the injustice he suffered at the hands of his brothers, with the goodness of God? This may be a question you're asking too.

At the end of Joseph's Genesis story he says, in effect “*Even though I passed through many grinding trials after you rejected me, God was with me and even authored my journey in order to save you.*” At the profound moment of Joseph's “reveal” he reveals the mystery of his suffering. “*Now do not grieve or be angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.*” For emphasis, he repeats this startling conclusion. “*And God sent me before you...to save your lives...So now it was not you who sent me here, but God*” (Genesis 45:5,7,8, my emphasis).

*(My dear friend, artist Baruch Maayan has captured the pathos of Joseph and his brothers in the above painting which he has been so kind as to let us publish here. See more of his work at www.baruchmaayan.com)



Pray on behalf of those who are against you

Jeremiah prayed to bless people who were planning to murder him. That took a lot of faith and a lot of grace. Yeshua may have had this in mind when He taught us to bless those who persecute us (**Matthew 5:44**). That is easier said than done. Many people do us wrong. When that happens, we must forgive (**Matthew 6:14-15**). Praying to bless someone who has done you wrong is putting forgiveness into action. It is going beyond forgiveness.

Forgiveness says not to desire something bad to happen to one who has hurt you. Yeshua's prayer asks for something good to happen. That is grace: undeserved favor. When we request good for someone who has done us bad, we are acting in grace. That is the God kind of love.

This kind of prayer seems rather "counter-intuitive." It goes contrary to a natural selfish reaction and demands overcoming human self-centeredness. It is an exercise of spirit overcoming flesh, of good overcoming evil (**Romans 12:21**).

When you intercede for someone else, you are exercising yourself in godliness, *eusebeia* (**1 Timothy 4:8**). You are becoming sons and daughters of your heavenly Father (**Matthew 5:45**). You are becoming like Yeshua.

Jeremiah prayed to stop God's anger from punishing the people plotting to murder him. That required a profound understanding of justice and of mercy. It also implied a super confident faith that would almost seem arrogant. Jeremiah knew that if someone did him wrong, God would be angry at that person and punish him. Ironically, that is somewhat comforting. We never have to be offended, because we know that God will be angry toward anyone who tries to hurt us.

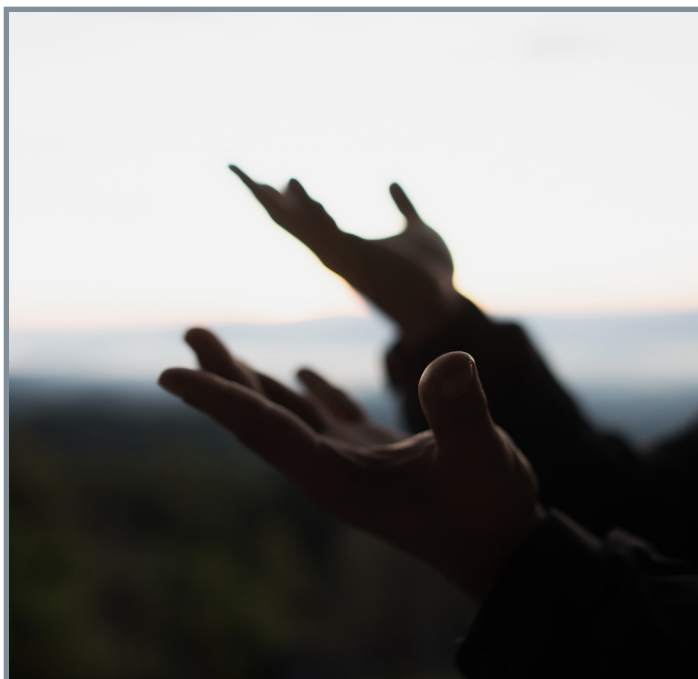
Don't worry - God is the vindicator

We can be so confident of God's defending us, that we will be more concerned for the other person's safety than for our own. Yeshua said in effect, *"Don't weep for Me; weep for yourselves. God will take care of Me. But you are bringing wrath upon yourselves. You are concerned about Me being tortured, crucified, and murdered? I'm more concerned for you"* (paraphrased **Luke 23:28-29**).

No matter what evil happens to us and around us, God can defend us (**Isaiah 50:8**). He will be angry with those who do wrong. We should have no concern for our safety. God is all powerful, and He is for us. We should have merciful concern for those around us.

The people around Jeremiah did not repent. He prayed and preached for a quarter of a century. Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem, just as Yeshua did (**Luke 19:41**). Yeshua preached in the generation before the destruction of the *Second Temple*; Jeremiah preached in the generation before the destruction of the *First Temple*. Yeshua followed in the footsteps of Jeremiah. He was so similar to Jeremiah, that some people thought He was Jeremiah (**Matthew 16:14**).

May we have the same spirit of intercessory prayer! Remember that your prayers will be remembered – and answered. God will defend you and reward you.



New Disciples' Report



By Tal Haroni

At the end of November 2021 we completed another two month session of the discipleship program for young Israelis and sent the students forth to continue their journey with the Lord. We felt that the time together was like an introduction to each one's book of his or her life journey. Now they will continue to write their unique stories together with God.

This session was attended mainly by new and young believers. The group consisted of five students doing the program for the first time, four of whom came to faith in Yeshua in the past year, plus four students who had done programs with us in the past and were joining a second session to grow stronger and to have the opportunity to take on more responsibility during the program.

A special thanks to each one of you who stood with us in prayer during the program. We have seen the Lord work in an extraordinary way, in no small part due to the prayers of the saints.

Here are some testimonials from students:

God has given me hope.

I received a "toolbox" for dealing with the different things that happen to me in life.

Thanks to the program, God gave me a different perspective on the world. I started to look at things differently.

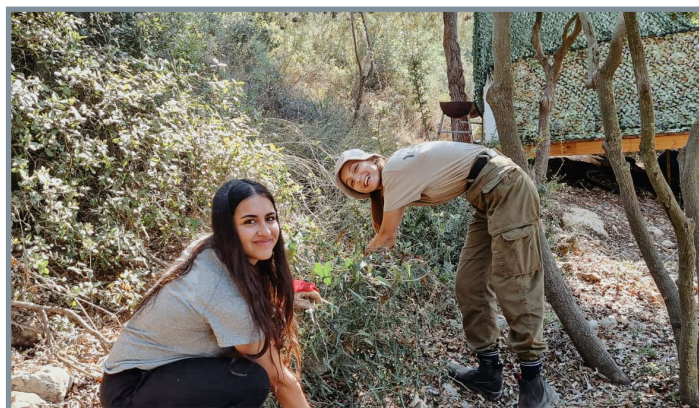
God took my anxiety and fear of people and set me free to be who I am.

In the program, I was able to release toxic aspects of my life and conquer other parts that the Lord had prepared for me.

We were privileged to see a real and significant change in the lives of the students and staff. God softened our hearts, and we discovered more of His love. Thank you for your continued prayers for the students who just completed this session, that the Lord will complete the work He has begun.

Now is the time to prepare for upcoming activities. This year we are organizing two extended sessions, one for 40 days during the Spring and another one for three and a half months in the Autumn. In addition, we are planning a women's program that will take place one day a month for 9 months – from March to December. We believe that God wants to continue to help the body of Messiah deepen our connection with Him, to learn to hear His voice and to walk with Him (and with each other) in the light (1 John 1:7).

We are also praying and considering the possibility of putting together an outreach in Europe this summer with those who have gone through the program.



I AM WITH
ISRAEL

Widows/Orphans/Fatherless

At the start of every new year, a lot of people make “resolutions”—to lose weight, save money, and eat healthily. While these resolutions can be a good thing, I believe that a **great way** to put our best foot forward into 2022 is to follow in the footsteps of Yeshua... **and take care of “the least” of His brothers and sisters.**

Jacob (know as James today), the apostle of the first congregation in Jerusalem and brother of Yeshua, reminds us as followers of Messiah:

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)

That is why for **this month**, we—the Tikkun pastors and leaders throughout Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to the Galilee—want to **focus on responding to the needs of the widows, fatherless, and single-parent families in the congregations.**

In Israel, the cost of living is high and incomes are often low. **Israel is the most expensive place to live in the Middle East**, and Tel Aviv was recently awarded the dubious honor of being the most expensive place to live on the planet!

A single-parent household in Israel often earns as little as \$1,600 a month. That may sound decent, but when you consider that the average rent is about \$1,300 a month, you can **see the realities single parents face** as they try to keep their children clothed and fed. **The same is true for widows and other elderly believers** on a fixed income.

The “least” of Yeshua’s brothers and sisters are often overlooked and forgotten in Israeli society. **But in the kingdom of God**, Yeshua said the first shall be last, and **the last shall be first.**

We want to reach out to the poor, the vulnerable, the widows, and the orphans **FIRST in 2022.** So, please join us in blessing these Israeli brothers and sisters in Yeshua! Your gift to a single parent or fatherless child is like water in the desert.

It’s not much different than in the days of Paul. When the Jewish believers in Israel were suffering, he turned to believers in the nations...and they came through.

“Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord’s people there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.” (Romans 15:25-27)

Let’s stand together and say I Am With Israel. Let’s bless those in need! Thank you.

Until all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26),

Ron Cantor

Director, #IAmWithIsrael

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