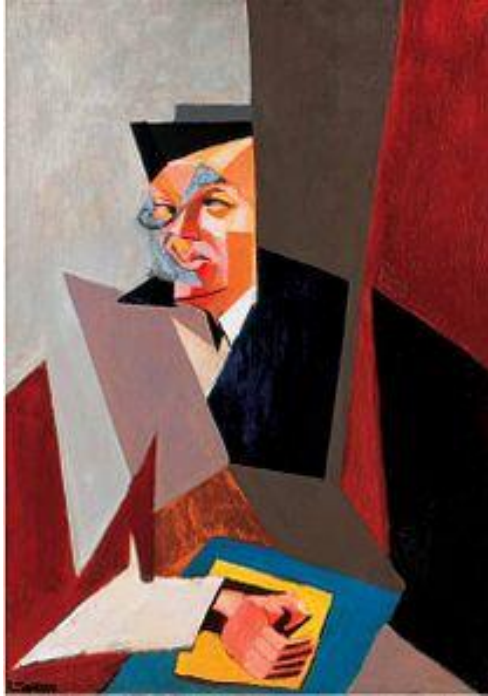


PARSHAT VAYIGASH
9 TEVET 5781/24 DECEMBER 2020



Tristan Tzara
Painting by Lajos Tihanyi

ESTRANGEMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION

1. Mute Autumn aromas.
The marguerite, unbroken, passed
between home and chasm
through your memory.
A strange lostness was
palpably present, almost
you would
have lived.
(Paul Celan, "Mute Autumn Smells")
2. "Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs..." (Genesis 15:13)
"I am a stranger and a resident among you..." (Genesis 23:4)
Joseph named his first-born Manasseh, meaning God made me forget...my parental home."
(Genesis 41:51)
"...Joseph made himself strange to them..." (Genesis 42:8)
He named him Gershom, "I have been a stranger in a strange land." (Exodus 2:22)

3. “Joseph could not restrain himself...Joseph made himself known to his brothers” (Genesis 45:1). Apparently, Joseph had previously not been Joseph at all! (Sefat Emet)
4. It is in exile from home that the home is first disclosed as such. (Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*)
5. “Then Judah approached him” (Genesis 44:18). “The design in a person’s mind are deep waters, an individual of understanding can draw them out” (Proverbs 20:5). “The design in a person’s mind are deep waters” refers to Joseph. But as much as Joseph was wise, Judah approached and overcame him, as it is said, “Then Judah drew near.” What does this resemble? A deep pit into which no one could climb down. Then a clever person came and brought a long rope that reached down to the water so he could draw from it. So was Joseph deep, and Judah came to draw the water. (Midrash Tanhuma)
6. “Vayigash eilav” (Genesis 44:18). To Joseph. But also to his own self. And also to God. He made no legal plea. Yet, since he accessed the reality of his narrative, salvation came to him, as in “Truth springs up from the earth” (Psalm 85:12). (Sefat Emet)
7. I shall make them a single nation in the land...
 Never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms.
 Nor ever again shall they defile themselves by their fetishes (*geluleihem*)...
 (Ezekiel 37:22-23, haftarah Parshat Vayigash)