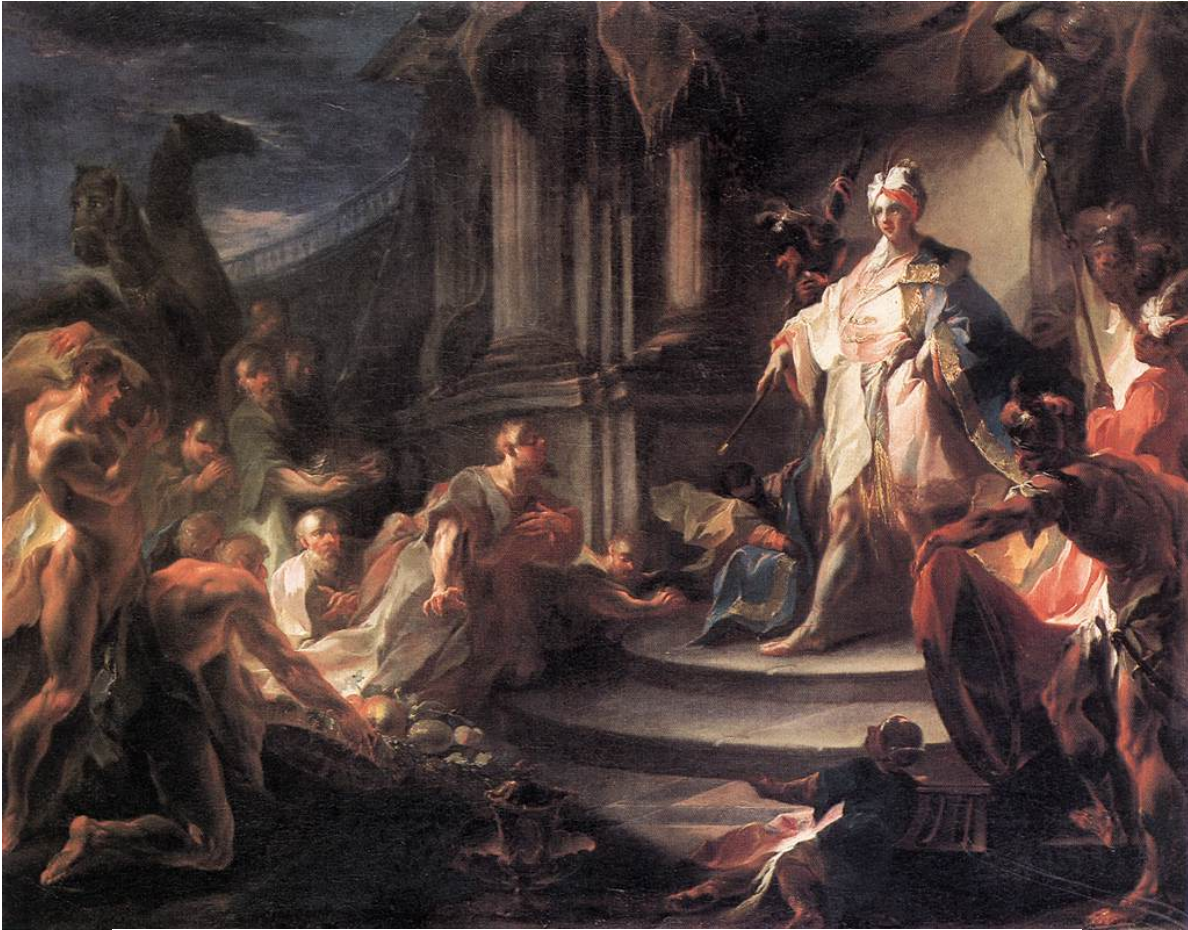


VAYIGASH (*and he drew near*)



Joseph the Viceroy of Egypt reunited with his Brothers –Maulbertsch

Genesis 44:18. Then Judah came close to him and said, Oh my master, let your servant please speak a word in my master's ears and let your anger not burn against your servant: because you *are equal to Pharaoh*. C-MATS

Question: Who sacrificed his life to save Benjamin? Judah

19 My master asked אֶת־ his servants saying, Have you a father or a brother? **20** And we said to my master, We have a father, an old man and a child of his old age and his brother *is* dead and he alone *is* left from his mother and *his* father loves him. **21** And you said to your servants, bring him down to me that I may set my eyes upon him. **22** And we said to my master, The boy cannot leave אֶת־ his father: because if he should leave אֶת־ his father, his father would die. C-MATS

Question: How does verse 22 foreshadow the House of Judah? Jacob (*Israel*) sits in a position of authority over the 12 sons as אֶת־, and eventually they will have to confront Jacob and confess what they have sworn never to tell him under penalty of death to each other that they were responsible for getting rid of Joseph. This is also a type and foreshadow of the House of Judah one day realizing what they did to Yahushua and having to both confess and seek forgiveness before our heavenly Father. C-MATS

23 And you said to your servants, Unless your youngest brother comes down אִתְּךָ with you, you will see my face no more. 24 And it came to pass when we came up to your servant, my father, we told him אֵל the words of my master. C-MATS

Question: Why didn't Joseph correct Judah when he said, "your servant my father"? Torah teachers criticize Joseph for remaining silent when his father was described in this degrading manner. Ten times Joseph heard his brothers refer to his father as "your servant" and he did not protest. Because of this, his life was shortened by ten years. (Joseph lived 110 years.) Joseph would not have revealed his identity by saying that a resident of Canaan was not his servant. (Chumash)

25 And our father said, Go again and buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down unless our youngest brother goes אִתְּנוּ with us, then can we go down: because we cannot see the man's face, unless our youngest brother is אִתְּנוּ with us. 27 And your servant, my father, said to us, אַתֶּם You know that my wife gave birth to two sons: 28 And the one was taken away from me and I said, Certainly he is torn in pieces; and I saw him no more: 29 And if you take also אֵת this from me and harm comes to him, you will bring down אֵת my gray hairs with grief to the grave. 30 Now therefore, when I come back to your servant, my father and the boy is not אִתְּנוּ with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the boy's life; 31 When he sees that the boy is not with us, then he will die: and will bring down your servants אֵת the gray hairs of your servant, our father, with grief to the grave. C-MATS

Question: Benjamin had ten sons. Why didn't Judah mention the grief that Benjamin's children would experience at their father's absence? This shows us that parents have more compassion for their children than children have for their parents. Love flows down. (Chumash)

Question: Judah was ready to put his life on the line and face up to the powerful Viceroy of Egypt in order to prevent him from doing something that would make his father, Jacob, upset. In your opinion, need a person be as careful not to hurt his parents' feelings as he would be for those of a stranger? No. He should be *even more* careful! Our parents, besides causing us to be alive, have given us so much and are deserving of an even higher level of our respect than everyone else.

Question: The Chumash describes יהוה as being our 'parent.' How do you think that description is applied? A parent gives us our life. In a more ultimate sense, so does יהוה. A parent loves us more than anyone else - so does יהוה. A parent's greatest pleasure is when we are genuinely happy - so is יהוה's. (Chumash)

32 Because your servant gave a guarantee for אֵת the boy to my father saying, If I do not bring him to you, then I will bear the blame to my father forever. 33 Now therefore, please, let your servant stay instead of the boy and be a bondman to my master; and let the boy go with his brothers. C-MATS

Question: Why did Judah offer himself as a slave in place of Benjamin? יהוה deals with man measure for measure: because Judah had sold Joseph into slavery, he was now compelled to offer himself to Joseph as a slave. (Chumash)

34 How will I go up to my father and the boy is not אִתִּי with me? Then perhaps I will see the evil that will come on אֵת my father. C-MATS



Joseph Converses with Judah, His Brother (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Question: How did Joseph know that his brothers had repented? So Judah, being very willing to undergo anything whatever for the deliverance of his brother, cast himself down at Joseph's feet and earnestly labored to pacify his anger. All his brethren also fell down before him, weeping, and delivering themselves up to destruction for the preservation of the life of Benjamin. (Josephus)

Question: Judah thought that the Viceroy of Egypt was being unfair to him and his brothers. What thoughts can a person have at the time he feels he is being cheated or taken advantage of that can help him react in a spiritual way? There is a powerful two-part secret that we can all use to help us in this situation. The secret is that (a) יהוה set up the world in a way that nobody can take advantage of us in any way unless יהוה allows him to do so, and (b) if יהוה is allowing him, it must mean that in some hidden way it is for our ultimate best that this happens. This thought will immediately calm us down and give us a fresh perspective to handle whatever comes our way.

Question: Does this mean that whatever anyone tries to do to us, we should 'just take it' no matter how wrong or unfair it seems? Absolutely not. יהוה wants us to try to take care of our own needs and interests in the best way we know how, as long as it isn't in a way that is unfair to others. However, if people treat us in a way that doesn't seem fair, we should draw upon the perspective mentioned above to help us remain calm and centered, to react in a spiritual and respectful way and know that if despite our best efforts we don't succeed in making things happen the way we want, that it is ultimately for the best.

Spiritual Exercise: The next time you feel like you are being treated unfairly or taken advantage of, stand up for your rights but in a calm and respectful way.

Question: How long did Joseph have to wait before his dreams came to pass? Joseph's dreams that his brothers would bow to him took 22 years to come true. Therefore a person should thus wait for as much as 22 years for a positive dream's fulfillment.



Joseph Recognized by his Brothers, 1789. Oil on canvas. Paris, Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried, make every man go outside *away* from me. And there stood no man אִתּוֹ *with him* while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. C-MATS

Question: How did Joseph make himself known to his brothers? But Joseph, as overcome now with his affections, and no longer able to personate an angry man, commanded all that were present to depart, that he might make himself known to his brethren when they were alone; and when the rest were gone out, he made himself known to his brethren; and said, "I commend you for your virtue, and your kindness to our brother: I find you better men than I could have expected from what you contrived about me. Indeed, I did all this to try your love for your brother; so I believe you were not wicked by nature in what you did in my case, but that all has happened according to יהוה's will." When Joseph had said this, he embraced his brethren, who were in tears and sorrow; but the generous kindness of their brother seemed to leave among them no room for fear, lest they should be punished on account of what they had consulted and acted against him; and they were then feasting. (Josephus)



Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers

Question: The powerful Joseph is about to reveal his true identity to his brothers who had sold him as a slave, but first he makes sure that everyone else leaves the room, so his brothers won't feel any more embarrassment than necessary. Why do you think that rebuking someone in front of others might be wrong? Even if someone gets us mad or makes us feel hurt, although it's fine to let him know, we should still be considerate of his feelings and self-respect by making sure to tell him how we feel in private and in a calm way.

Question: What exactly do we hurt in another person if we shame him? While it might not wound his body, it can deeply wound his soul. A person's sense of self-esteem and desire to be seen as good in others' eyes is one of the deepest and most basic human emotions. Being sensitive to that in others is a sign of a spiritual person, and a lack of it reveals the opposite.

Question: Is there ever a time it would be justified to rebuke someone publicly? If we've tried in private and he hasn't listened or changed his ways ... or if we can reasonably assume he won't, in some cases public rebuke could be warranted. However, this is the rare exception and should be carefully considered and only used as a last resort.

Question: Granted, we shouldn't go out of our way to embarrass someone, but if he is embarrassing himself, need we step in to help him preserve his dignity? Part of caring about others is caring about their reputations and sense of self-esteem. Anything we can reasonably do to help save others from embarrassment is a very great deed.

Question: Do you think it is acceptable to embarrass someone from time to time in the spirit of humor or to make a good joke? Humor is only a positive thing when it doesn't come at someone else's expense. As tempting as it might be, if there is any chance it will embarrass someone, the joke should be left unsaid.



Joseph Reveals Himself

2 And he wept aloud **אתו** and he wept aloud: and *the* Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *him*. **3** And Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph. Does my father still live? And his brothers could not answer **אתו** *him*, because they were terrified in his presence. C-MATS

Question: Is everything that happens to you in your life part of a meaningful plan? Most of the time life makes sense. Things go on as usual as we ride the ups and downs of life's roller coaster. But there can be times in life that may seem more uncertain and topsy-turvy. Things we always thought we could count on may not seem that way anymore. But there is always an underlying meaning to the most confusing situations even if we don't see it at first. Jacob's sons experienced this when they innocently went to Egypt to buy a supply of food to bring back to their home. Thousands of others were doing the same thing. One after the other, people lined up, paid, and brought their food home. But when the brothers' turn came everything seemed to turn upside down. First they were accused of being spies. Then they were let go, only to be called back again and accused of stealing. Then their brother was taken as a hostage! One thing after another after another. Nothing made sense. In the end, as the confused brothers found themselves alone with the fearsome looking Egyptian leader, an amazing thing happened. The leader started to cry and told them that he was really their long-lost brother, Joseph! They hadn't recognized him. Suddenly all the pieces fell into place, and everything made sense. All the strange things that had been happening were really part of **יהוה**'s great plan to reunite the brothers! When we remind ourselves that everything in life is part of a meaningful plan, even the most confusing situations won't seem to be quite so confusing anymore.

Question: What tools can help a person deal successfully with difficult or confusing life situations? One of the most important things to remember is that nothing happens by chance. No matter what is happening, **יהוה** is on top of the situation, and is available to give us the guidance and strength to deal with it successfully. On our part we need only to be willing to see it that way, and ask Him to help us out. Patience is another key. Often things that don't make sense right away will become clear with the passage of time.

Question: Do things ever 'just happen', or is there a meaning to everything? Although we may not always be able to discern the reason behind everything, the reality is that there is nothing in our lives that does not contain within it a deeper lesson. Our lives, and the entire world, are an incredibly organized and complex laboratory to bring us to spiritual growth in order to reap the unmatched pleasure. As we strive to see the hidden meaning in life, we fulfill our highest purpose as human beings.

Question: Is there anything positive that can come out of confusing times and experiences? These situations, though perhaps uncomfortable, can serve to open our minds to accept that there may be more to life than we thought. Any new skill we ever learned was strange and confusing the first time we tried it. Rather than fear uncertainty, we can view it as part of life's learning process.

Question: One of the most satisfying feelings a person can experience is the resolution of a doubt. Why do you think this is so? An aspect of human nature is that we want things to make sense and be clear. It can feel quite unsettling to find ourselves in a situation that we simply don't understand. The drive to explain and understand is in essence quite healthy. But care should be taken not to settle for over-simplistic answers in our desire to make sense out of things. Look for **יהוה**'s fingerprints on the situation and ask Him to provide insight to difficult situations.

Spiritual Exercise: Can you think of a difficult, confusing situation that turned out to be positive in the end?



Question: Are you really happy? Ps 144:15 Happy, blessed people are the people who are consumed by יהוה as their Elohim. Are you consumed by יהוה?

4 And Joseph said to his brothers, come near to me, please. And they came near. And he said I *am* Joseph, your brother, whom you sold אֶתִּי *me* in Egypt. 5 Now therefore, *do* not be grieved or angry with yourselves that you sold אֶתִּי *me* here: because Elohim sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For two years the famine *has been* in the land: and *there are* five years in which there will *be* neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And Elohim sent me before you to preserve the future generations on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now *it was* not אֶתֶּם *you that* sent אֶתִּי *me* here, but Elohim: and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and owner of his entire house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. C-MATS

Question: "Everything is in the hands of heaven except for the recognition of heaven". How do you understand the meaning of this statement? Many things happen to us in our lives. Some we perceive as fortunate and some as unfortunate. But in a deeper sense everything that happens is for only one purpose -- to help us develop a more spiritual outlook and to realize that יהוה is directly and lovingly involved in every aspect of our lives. The many things that we experience are given to us as tests and opportunities to apply this perspective.



Joseph weeps over his brothers

Question: Foresight is a sign of wisdom. Why do you think that might be so? A wise person is one who can see and live with the 'big picture' while still paying attention to details. Foresight is a powerful way to do both.

Question: What is the difference between foresight and hindsight? Foresight is the ability to think of future possibilities and be prepared. Hindsight is the ability to learn from the past. Both are powerful tools of effective living.

Question: Does the knowledge that everything is in יהוה's hands give us permission to be insensitive and unresponsive to others in need? May we justify ourselves by assuming that the difficulties they are experiencing must be for "the best"? Although it may be true that the difficulties others experience are for their best, it is not for us to judge how and why. Instead, the Torah directs us to help others and try to make their lives as pleasant as possible. By doing so we actually "volunteer" ourselves to become one of יהוה's instruments and to bring more of the good into people's lives which they have coming to them. For example, just as it may be יהוה's will that somebody loses his wallet, it is also His will that somebody else finds it and returns it to him. We should feel grateful if we have been given the privilege to be that "somebody else".



Question: Why did Joseph say that his brothers should rejoice that Elohim sent him to Egypt to save the world? Joseph was saying that praise was due to יהוה for orchestrating the events that led to the salvation of Egypt and the world. We are obligated to praise יהוה for the goodness he bestows, and also we must praise Him for that which appears evil (but in reality is a blessing). (Chumash)

Discuss: Has anything happened to you that seemed horrible to you at the time, but then it turned out to be a blessing for you?

9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him that I said, Elohim has made me owner of all Egypt: come down to me, *do not delay:* **10** And you will live in the land of Goshen and you will be near me, אלה you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. C-MATS

Question: Why did Joseph choose Goshen as the place for his brothers to live? Joseph wanted to keep them segregated from the mainstream of Egypt's idolatrous, immoral life, and to allow them to freely pursue their shepherding, an activity that was hateful to the Egyptians. (Chumash)

11 And there will I nourish אלה you; because *there are five years of famine coming;* otherwise אלה you and your household and all that you have will come to poverty. **12** And your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. C-MATS

Question: How did they recognize Joseph? He showed them that he was circumcised, and that he speaks the Sacred Tongue Hebrew. (Chumash)

13 And you will tell my father of אלה all my glory in Egypt אלה and of all that איתם you see; and you will hurry and bring down אלה my father here. **14** And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. C-MATS



Joseph Recognized by His Brothers (1863 painting by Léon Pierre Urbain Bourgeoi)

15 Also he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them: and after that his brother's talked **אתו with him.**

Question: Joseph wanted to reconcile with his brothers. It's a positive quality to 'pursue peace.' What do you think that means? It means not just waiting around for the 'other side' with whom we've had a quarrel to come forward to patch things up, but to take the initiative ourselves to patch things up.

Question: Is it ever 'too late' to reconcile with someone? As time passes after a quarrel and things remain unresolved, we can begin to feel 'stuck' in the situation and as if it's too late to put things right. But we should know that no matter how far things have gone and how much time had passed, it's always possible - and worth our while - to reconcile.

Question: Joseph had a perfect chance to get revenge on his brothers, but he chose not to seek revenge. Sometimes people say that "revenge is sweet." Do you agree? Revenge never solves anything; it just makes people more angry and bitter. Forgiving people and not holding grudges against them is not only good for them -it's also good for us. Sometimes the anger we hold inside against someone who has treated us unkindly hurts us even more than what they did to us in the first place. **יהוה** says, "Vengeance and payback are Mine." **Deuteronomy 32:35**



Question: Forgiving can be hard; how can we do it? Joseph realized the amazing truth that everyone in our lives is, in a deeper sense, **יהוה**'s 'messengers.' Whatever they say or do is only because **יהוה** is sending us some sort of a message, and what's the point of getting angry at the messenger? Not only that, since the message is coming from **יהוה**, ultimately it's for our best. Once we learn to live with this outlook, we will lead much happier lives filled with forgiveness and free from the pain of grudges.

Question: Why does **יהוה** send us messages? One of our main purposes in life is to grow into better and kinder people. Therefore, **יהוה** sends us hidden messages along the way to help us reach our goal. Once we realize that **יהוה** is truly sending us messages, we are well on the way to becoming more aware of them. **Psalm 37:23 A man's goings are established from **מיהוה**; and He delights in his way. 24 Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down; for **יהוה** upholds him with His hand.**

Question: How does יהוה speak to us?

יהוה speaks to us through His Word. 2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of Elohim, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of Elohim may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for all good works. Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish אה that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. The Bible records יהוה's words, everything we need to know in order to walk in righteousness. 2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and righteousness through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness. C-MATS

יהוה speaks through Prophecy. I Thessalonians 5:19-21 Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good. C-MATS

יהוה speaks through visions and dreams. Joel 2:28 And afterward it shall come to pass, that I will pour out אה My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out אה My Spirit. C-MATS

יהוה speaks through Circumstances and Timing of events. יהוה allows events to occur in our lives to direct us, change us, and help us to grow spiritually. A lost job, illness, and a hundred other problems are often a secret message to turn us back to יהוה. James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials; 3 Knowing this, that the testing of your faith works patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Hebrews 12:11 Now no discipline for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are trained by it. 1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, you suffer grief through various temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might result in praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Y'shua haMashiach. C-MATS

יהוה speaks through His Spirit. John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: 28 And I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. Isaiah 30:21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it" when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left. יהוה is in the process of conforming our minds to think His thoughts. Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of Elohim. יהוה helps us to discern right from wrong through our conscience. 1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. 1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Mashiach. C-MATS

Question: How can you confirm that He has spoken to you?

Wise Counsel. Proverbs 11:14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. C-MATS

Confirmation of others. Matthew 18:16. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. Deuteronomy 19:15 One witness cannot convict a man of any offense or **חַטָּאת** *sin* of any kind: the matter will be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. C-MATS

The peace of Elohim: Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of Elohim rule in your hearts, to which you are called to one body; and be thankful. C-MATS

Spiritual Exercise: Look for the messages from יהוה that are around you every day. What is He telling you today?

16 And the report of *this* reached Pharaoh's house: Joseph's brothers have come and it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Say to your brothers **אֵת** *this* do you; load **אֶתְכֶם** your beasts and go to the land of Canaan; 18 And take **אֶתְכֶם** your father **אֶתְכֶם** and your households and come to me: and I will give you **אֶתְכֶם** the good of the land of Egypt and you will eat **אֶתְכֶם** the fat of the land. 19 **אֶתְכֶם** And you are commanded **אֵת** *this* do you; take your wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives and bring **אֶתְכֶם** your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your possessions; because the good of all the land of Egypt *is* yours. 21 And *the* Children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh and gave them provisions for the way. 22 To all of them he gave changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes of garments. 23 And to his father he sent *this*: ten donkeys laden with the good things of Egypt and ten she-donkeys laden with corn and bread and meat for his father along the way. C-MATS

Question: What gifts did Joseph give to his brothers? Joseph rose up and gave to them eleven chariots from Pharaoh, and Joseph gave to them his chariot, upon which he rode on the day of his being crowned in Egypt, to fetch his father to Egypt; and Joseph sent to all his brothers' children, garments according to their numbers, and a hundred pieces of silver to each of them, and he also sent garments to the wives of his brethren from the garments of the king's wives, and he sent them. And he gave to each of his brothers ten men to go with them to the land of Canaan to serve them, to serve their children and all belonging to them in coming to Egypt. And Joseph sent by the hand of his brother Benjamin ten suits of garments for his ten sons, a portion above the rest of the children of the sons of Jacob. And he sent to each fifty pieces of silver, and ten chariots on the account of Pharaoh, and he sent to his father ten asses laden with all the luxuries of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and nourishment for his father, and to all that were with him as provisions for the road. And he sent to his sister Dinah garments of silver and gold, and frankincense and myrrh, and aloes and women's ornaments in great plenty, and he sent the same from the wives of Pharaoh to the wives of Benjamin. And he gave to all his brethren, also to their wives, all sorts of onyx stones and bdellium, and from all the valuable things amongst the great people of Egypt. (Jashar)

24 So he sent away **אֶתְכֶם** his brothers and they departed: and he said to them, See that you *do* not quarrel on the way. C-MATS

Question: What advice did Joseph give his brothers? And he said unto them, "Do not quarrel on the road, for this thing was from יהוה to keep a great people from starvation, for there will be yet five years of famine in the land. " (Jashar)



25 And they went up out of Egypt and came *into* the land of Canaan to Jacob their father, 26 And told him saying, Joseph is still alive and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart stood still, because he *did* not believe them. C-MATS

Question: Why couldn't Jacob believe the words of his sons? This is a fate of a liar. He is disbelieved even when he tells the truth! Jacob believed his sons when they came and showed him Joseph's bloodstained tunic, indicating that a wild beast had devoured him, but now even though they were telling the truth, he did not believe them. (Chumash)

27 And they told him **את all the words that Joseph *spoke*, which he had said to them: and when he saw **את** the wagons, which Joseph had sent to carry **אתו** him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: 28 And Israel said, *It is enough*; Joseph my son is still alive: I will go and see him before **אמרת** *I shall die*. C-MATS**

Question: How did Jacob celebrate the good news that Joseph was alive? And Jacob rose up and put on the garments, which Joseph had sent him, and after he had washed, and shaved his hair, he put upon his head the turban, which Joseph had sent him. And all the people of Jacob's house and their wives put on the garments which Joseph had sent to them, and they greatly rejoiced at Joseph that he was still living and that he was ruling in Egypt, And all the inhabitants of Canaan heard of this thing, and they came and rejoiced with Jacob that he was still living. And Jacob made a feast for them for three days, and all the kings of Canaan and nobles of the land ate and drank and rejoiced in the house of Jacob. (Jashar)



Genesis 46:1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beer-sheba and offered sacrifices to the Elohim of his father Isaac. C-MATS



Reconstructed horned altar at Beer-sheba where Jacob worshipped

**2 And Elohim spoke to Israel in the visions of the night and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here I am.
3 And he said, I am El (*G-d*), the Elohim of your father: do not be afraid to go down to Egypt because I will make a great nation of you there: 4 I will go down with you into Egypt; and I will also bring you up *again*: and Joseph will put his hand upon your eyes. C-MATS**

Question: What does it mean, **and Joseph will put his hand upon your eyes?** Elohim promised Jacob that Joseph would place his hand on his eyes or close his eyes after he died. Elohim told Jacob that Joseph would outlive him relieving him of the fear that he had that Joseph would die in Jacob's lifetime. (Chumash)

Question: Is יהוה always with us-even in exile? Come and see how beloved Israel is in the sight of יהוה! To every place to which they were exiled, the Divine Presence went with them. They were exiled to Egypt and the Divine Presence was with them; they were exiled to Babylon, and the Divine Presence was with them; and when they will be redeemed in the future, the Divine Presence will be with them. (Chumash)

Question: Why was Jacob afraid to go to Egypt? When he came to the Well of the Oath, (Beersheba,) Jacob offered a sacrifice to יהוה. He was afraid that the happiness there in Egypt might tempt his family to fall in love with it, and settle in it, and no longer think of moving into the land of Canaan, and possessing it, as יהוה had promised them. He was also afraid that if this descent into Egypt was made without the will of יהוה, his family might be destroyed there; and he may depart this life before he saw Joseph once again. He was afraid that his family would go into slavery there as Abraham had prophesized. (Josephus)

5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and carried, the Children of Israel את- Jacob their father את- and their little ones ואת- and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry אתו him. 6 And they took את- their cattle ואת- and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his children אתו with him: 7 His sons and his son's sons אתו with him, his daughters and his son's daughters and all his children he brought אתו with him into Egypt. C-MATS



Jacob's family journeys to Egypt

8 And these *are* the names of *the* Children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. 9 And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Phallu and Hezron and Carmi. 10 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. 11 And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. 12 And the sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Pharez and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. 13 And the sons of Issachar: Tola and Phuvah and Job and Shimron. 14 And the sons of Zebulun: Sered and Elon and Jahleel. 15 These *are* the sons of Leah, who she gave birth to Jacob in Padan-aram, אֵת and with Dinah his daughter: all of his sons and his daughters *were* thirty three. 16 And the sons of Gad: Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli. 17 And the sons of Asher: Jimnah and Ishuah and Isui and Beriah and Serah, their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber and Malchiel. 18 These *are* the sons of Zilpah: who Laban gave to Leah his daughter and she gave birth to אֵת these for Jacob sixteen persons. 19 The sons of Rachel, Jacob's אִשָּׁה wife: Joseph and Benjamin. 20 And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born by Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On, אֵת Manasseh אֵת and Ephraim. 21 And the sons of Benjamin *were* Belah and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard. C-MATS

Question: What are the meanings of the names of Benjamin's sons? When Benjamin was brought before Joseph, Joseph questioned him: "Have you a brother?"

"I had a brother, but I do not know where he has gone."

"Have you a wife?"

"I have a wife and ten sons."

"What are their names?"

"I named them all after my brother," said Benjamin. "*Bela* -- he was swallowed up from me; *Becher* -- he was his mother's firstborn; *Ashbel* -- he was taken away captive; *Gera* -- he became a stranger in a strange country; *Naaman* -- his deeds were seemly and pleasant; *Achi* -- he was my brother; *Rosh* -- he was my superior; *Muppim* -- he was exceedingly beautiful; *Chuppim* -- I did not see his *chupah* (marriage canopy) and he did not see mine; *Ard* -- he was like a rose-bloom." (Chumash)

22 These *are* the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: all together *were* fourteen. 23 And the sons of Dan: Hushim. 24 And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem. 25 These *are* the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter and she gave birth to אֵת these to Jacob: all together *were* seven. 26 All those who came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his body, besides Jacob's son's wives, all together *were* 66. 27 And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, *were* two sons: all together *the* House of Jacob, which came into Egypt, *was* 70. C-MATS



28 **וַיִּשְׁלַח** And he sent Judah before him to Joseph to point out *the way* to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. C-MATS

Question: Who did Jacob send ahead of the family to prepare a place for them in the land of Egypt? Judah

29 And Joseph *prepared* his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen and presented himself to him; and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. C-MATS



Joseph and Jacob Reunited

Question: How did the Egyptians gather to meet Jacob? And Joseph harnessed the chariot, and he assembled all his mighty men and his servants and all the officers of Egypt in order to go and meet his father Jacob, and Joseph's mandate was proclaimed in Egypt, saying, "All that do not go to meet Jacob shall die." And on the next day Joseph went forth with all Egypt a great and mighty host, all dressed in garments of fine linen and purple and with instruments of silver and gold and with their instruments of war with them. And they all went to meet Jacob with all sorts of musical instruments, with drums and timbrels, strewing myrrh and aloes all along the road, and they all went after this fashion, and the earth shook at their shouting. And all the women of Egypt went upon the roofs of Egypt and upon the walls to meet Jacob, and upon the head of Joseph was Pharaoh's regal crown, for Pharaoh had sent it unto him to put on at the time of his going to meet his father. And when Joseph came within fifty cubits of his father, he came down from the chariot and he walked toward his father, and when all the officers of Egypt and her nobles saw that Joseph had gone on foot toward his father, they also came down and walked on foot toward Jacob. And when Jacob approached the camp of Joseph, Jacob observed the camp that was coming toward him with Joseph, and it gratified him and Jacob was astonished at it. And Jacob said unto Judah, "Who is that man whom I see in the camp of Egypt dressed in kingly robes with a very red garment upon him and a royal crown upon his head, which has come down from his chariot and is coming toward us?" Judah answered his father, saying, "He is your son Joseph the king", and Jacob rejoiced in seeing the glory of his son. And Joseph came near his father and he bowed to his father, and all the men of the camp bowed to the ground with him before Jacob. And behold Jacob ran and hastened to his son Joseph and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and they wept, and Joseph also embraced his father and kissed him, and they wept and all the people of Egypt wept with them. (Jashar)

30 And Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die since I have seen אה your face, because you are still alive. C-MATS

Question: Whose face does Israel see in Joseph's face? Jacob finally sees Joseph again, whom he thought was dead and says now he can die because he has seen the face of אה in Joseph's face, who has saved Jacob and the Children of Israel and all Egypt from starvation. C-MATS



Joseph Presents His Father and Brothers to the Pharaoh (1515 painting by Francesco Granacci)

31 And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's house, I will go up and show Pharaoh and say to him, My brothers and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, have come to me; 32 And the men are shepherds, for their trade has been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have. 33 When Pharaoh calls you, he will say, What is your occupation? 34 That you will say, Your servant's trade has been cattle from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers: so that you may live in the land of Goshen; because every shepherd (sheep herder) is an abomination to the Egyptians. Genesis 47:1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh and said, My father and my brothers and their flocks (sheep) and their herds (cattle) and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and they are in the land of Goshen. 2 And he took some of his brothers, five men and presented them to Pharaoh. C-MATS

Question: How did Joseph present his brothers to Pharaoh? Joseph gave to each of his brethren a change of garments of gold and silver, and three hundred pieces of silver, and Joseph commanded them all to be dressed in these garments, and to be brought before Pharaoh. Pharaoh saw that all Joseph's brethren were valiant men, and of beautiful appearance, so he greatly rejoiced. (Jashar)

3 And Pharaoh said to his brothers, What is your occupation? And they said to Pharaoh, Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers. 4 They said also to Pharaoh, We have come to live in the land; because your servants have no pasture for their flocks; because the famine is severe in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we ask you, let your servant's live in the land of Goshen. C-MATS

Question: Why did Joseph have his brothers introduce themselves as herdsmen knowing that the animal worshipping Egyptians detested shepherds? Joseph wanted to guarantee that his family would live in Goshen, where they would be apart from the corrupting influence of Egyptian society. Knowing that Pharaoh would wish to recruit officials and courtiers from the brilliant and talented family that had produced his viceroy, Joseph counseled his brothers on how to respond to the king. They should be truthful but in a way that would deter him from associating with them. Thus, Pharaoh would shun them and let them settle in the relative isolation of Goshen. (Chumash)

5 And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph saying, Your father and your brothers have come to you: 6 The land of Egypt is before you; in the best of the land let אֶת־ your father אֶת־ and brothers live; in the land of Goshen let them live: and if you know any competent men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle for me. 7 And brought in Joseph אֶת־ Jacob his father and set him before Pharaoh: and blessed Jacob אֶת־ Pharaoh. 8 And Pharaoh said to Jacob, How old are you? 9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years: they have been few and difficult and I have not attained to אֶת־ the days of the years of the life as my fathers did in the days of their pilgrimage. 10 And blessed Jacob אֶת־ Pharaoh and went from before Pharaoh. C-MATS

Question: Why did Pharaoh ask Jacob how old he is? Pharaoh was struck by the appearance of the man, who seemed to be older than anyone he had ever seen before. In reply, Jacob said that he had not yet lived nearly as long as Abraham or Isaac, but he had aged due to his life filled with travail (troubles). (Chumash)

Question: How did Jacob bless Pharaoh? He blessed him that the Nile should rise at his feet and water the land; thus the famine ended two years after Jacob came to Egypt instead of five. (Chumash)

Question: How many years did Jacob live in Egypt? 17 years



Jacob blesses Pharaoh

11 And placed Joseph אֶת־אָבִיו and his brothers *in the land* and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. **12** And provided Joseph אֶת־אָבִיו and his brothers אֶת־אָבִיו and all his father's household *with bread*, according to *the number* in their families. C-MATS

Question: How did Joseph care for his family once they were in Egypt? And Joseph gave them the best part of the whole land; they had the best of Egypt all the days that Joseph lived; and Joseph also gave them and their entire father's household, clothes and garments year by year; and the sons of Jacob remained securely in Egypt all the days that their brother lived. And Jacob always ate at Joseph's table, Jacob and his sons did not leave Joseph's table day or night, besides what Jacob's children consumed in their houses. (Jashar)

13 And there was no bread in all the land because the famine *was* very severe, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. C-MATS

Question: How was Joseph's leadership over Egypt during famine different from later famines in Egypt's history? Joseph had preserved food in sufficient quantity to feed the masses, but historical descriptions of similar famines in Egypt recorded that Egyptians practiced cannibalism and the route from Syria to Egypt resembled a vast field strewn with corpses. (Chumash)

14 And gathered up Joseph אֶת־ all the money *that* was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, from the grain which they bought: and brought Joseph אֶת־ the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And when *the* money was gone in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, Give us bread: why should we die in your presence because our money is gone? 16 And Joseph said, Give *me* your livestock; and I will give you *grain* for your livestock, if your money is all gone. 17 And they brought אֶת־ their cattle to Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses and for the flocks and for the cattle of the herds and for the donkeys: and he fed them with bread for all their livestock for that year. 18 When that year *had* ended, they came to him *in* the second year and said to him, We will not hide *it* from my master that our money *is gone*; my master also *has* our herds of cattle; there *is not* anything left in the sight of my master, but our bodies and our lands. C-MATS

Question: What did Joseph do with all the money he collected from the Egyptians? And Joseph took all the silver and gold that came into his hand, about seventy two talents of gold and silver, and also onyx stones and bdellium in great abundance, and Joseph went and concealed them in four parts, and he concealed one part in the wilderness near the Red sea, and one part by the river Perath, and the third and fourth part he concealed in the desert opposite to the wilderness of Persia and Media. And he took part of the gold and silver that was left, and gave it unto all his brothers and unto all his father's household, and unto all the women of his father's household, and the rest he brought to the house of Pharaoh, about twenty talents of gold and silver. And Joseph gave all the gold and silver that was left unto Pharaoh, and Pharaoh placed it in the treasury, and the days of the famine ceased after that in the land, and they sowed and reaped in the whole land, and they obtained their usual quantity year by year; they lacked nothing. (Jashar)



Onyx



bdellium



gold and silver

19 Therefore, will we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy אֶת־ us אֶת־נוֹ and our land for bread and we and our land will be servants to Pharaoh: and give us seed that we may live and not die and that the land will not be desolate. C-MATS

Question: Why did the Egyptians say their land would die? When the land is allowed to lay waste, without being plowed and planted, it is the same as its death. The same is true of people who squander their potential. In regard to the sinner, the wicked are called dead even in their lifetimes. Life is synonymous with productivity. (Chumash)

Discuss: Are you living to your full potential-serving יהוה in all your ways?

20 And bought Joseph אֶת־ all the אֲדָמָה land of Egypt for Pharaoh, because every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them: so the land became Pharaoh's. 21 וְאֵת־ And as for the people, he moved אֶתָּהּ them (him) to the cities from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end of the borders. 22 Only the אֲדָמָה land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had a portion assigned to them מֵאֵת־ from Pharaoh and ate אֶת־ their rations which Pharaoh gave to them: therefore, neither did they sell אֶת־ their lands. 23 Then Joseph said to the people, I have bought אֶתְכֶם you this day וְאֵת־ and אֲדָמָתְכֶם your land for Pharaoh: here is seed for you and you can sow אֶת־ the land. 24 And it will come to pass from the harvest that you will give a fifth part to Pharaoh and four parts will be your own for seed for the field and for your food and for them in your households and for food for your little ones. 25 And they said, You have saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my master and we will be Pharaoh's servants. 26 And Joseph made אֶתָּהּ it (her) a law over the אֲדָמָה land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except for the אֲדָמָה land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's. C-MATS

Question: What is really important in your life? Sometimes what people consider being the least important things in their lives are really the most important, but they don't realize it until things get tough. The citizens of the mighty Egyptian Superpower seemed to have it all-wealth, jewels, land. But when famine struck, they soon realized that all of it was worthless if they didn't even have basic food to eat. Little by little, they came to trade away all the fancy things they owned, just for a little flour to make bread to eat. We can learn from this the valuable lesson of trying to keep our priorities and values straight even without having to learn it the hard way.

Spiritual Exercise: As difficult situations arise in your life, look at your priorities. What do you need to change to put your life in a better perspective? What is really important in your life?

Question: What did Joseph do for the people after the famine? But when this misery ceased, and the river overflowed the ground, and the ground brought forth its fruits plentifully, Joseph came to every city, and gathered the people together, and gave them back entirely their land, which the king might have possessed alone, and alone enjoyed the fruits of it. He also exhorted them to look on it as every one's own possession, and to work the land with cheerfulness, and to pay as a tribute to the king, the fifth part of the fruits for the land, which the king restored to them. These men rejoiced upon their becoming unexpectedly owners of their lands, and diligently observed what was asked of them; and by this means Joseph acquired for himself a greater authority among the Egyptians, and greater love to the king from them. Now this law, that they should pay the fifth part of their fruits as tribute, continued until their later kings. (Josephus)

27 And Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. C-MATS

Scriptural Comparisons between Joseph and Yahushua

Both were taken into Egypt to avoid being killed.

Both became a servant.

Both began their ministry at the age of thirty years old.

Both were filled with the Spirit of יְהוָה.

Both returned good for evil.

Both were humble and unspoiled by wealth.

Both were taught by יְהוָה.

Both loved people freely.
Both gave bread to hungry people who came to him.
Both resisted the most difficult temptations.
Both were given visions of the future.
Both tested people to reveal their true nature.
Both were sold for the price of a slave.
Both were falsely accused.
Both were silent before their accusers.
Both were beaten without cause.
Both were condemned between two prisoners.
Both arose into a new life.
Both were not recognized by their own brethren.
Both returned to their father.
Both became royalty.

Question: Where did Joseph's sons live after Jacob came to Egypt? Jacob was very old, advanced in days, and Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, remained constantly in the house of Jacob, together with the children of the sons of Jacob their brethren, to learn the ways of יהוה and his law. (Jashar)

Do you know?

1. _____ begged Joseph to release Benjamin in his place.
2. Judah offered to be a _____ so his brother can go free.
3. Jacob believed that Joseph was alive when he saw the ___ from Pharaoh.
4. Jacob offered sacrifices at _____ to thank יהוה for saving Joseph.
5. יהוה told Jacob that he would make him a great _____ in Egypt.
6. Occupation of Joseph's brothers
7. Joseph presented only _____ of his brothers to Pharaoh.
8. Jacob was _____ years old when he came to Egypt.
9. Jacob lived in Egypt _____ years.
10. A total of _____ people from Jacob's family came down to Egypt.
11. Benjamin had _____ sons.
12. Jacob and his family went to live in the land of _____
13. The Egyptians had to give Pharaoh one-_____ of their crops.
14. Joseph is symbolic of _____

Answers:

1. Judah
2. slave
3. wagons
4. Beer-sheba
5. nation
6. shepherds
7. five
8. 130
9. 17
10. 70
11. 10
12. Goshen
13. fifth
14. Yahushua

Haftorah

Ezekiel 37:15 The word of יהוה came again to Me, saying, 16 וְאַתָּה And you, וְאַתָּה son of man (*Adam*), take you one stick and write upon it, for JUDAH and for *the* CHILDREN OF ISRAEL and HIS COMPANIONS: then take another stick and write upon it, for JOSEPH, the stick of Ephraim and for ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL and HIS COMPANIONS: 17 And join אֹתָם *them* one to another into one stick; and they will become one in your hand. 18 And when the children of your people will speak to you, saying, Will you not show us what you *mean* by these? 19 Say to them, so said Adonai יהוה; See, I will take אֶת־ stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his fellows and will put אֹתָם *them* with him, *with* אֶת־ stick of Judah and make them one stick and they will be one in My hand. 20 And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. 21 And say to them, so said Adonai יהוה; See, I will take אֶת־ Children of Israel from among the heathen, where they have gone and will gather אֹתָם *them* on every side וְהֵבֵאתִי and I will bring אֹתָם *them* into their own land: 22 And I will make אֹתָם *them* one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king to them all: and they will be no more two nations, neither will they be divided into two kingdoms anymore at all: 23 Neither will they defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save אֹתָם *them* out of all their living places, where they have sinned and will cleanse אֹתָם *them*: so will they be My people and I will be their Elohim. C-MATS

Brit Chadasha

Luke 6:12 One of those days Yahushua went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to יהוה. **13** When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: **14** Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, **15** Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, **16** Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Jacob had 12 sons and Yahushua had 12 disciples.) C-MATS

Acts 7:9 Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But יהוה was with him **10** and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and his entire palace. **11** Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food. **12** When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit. **13** On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. **14** After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy in all. **15** Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died. **16** Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money. C-MATS



The Secret to Forgiveness

Forgiving people and not holding grudges against them is not only good for them -it's also good for us. Sometimes the anger we hold inside against someone who has treated us unkindly hurts us even more than what they did to us in the first place. But forgiving can be hard; how can we do it? This week's portion reveals the secret. Joseph's brothers had treated him very unkindly and sold him into slavery. Yet when he met them again many years later, he didn't hold any grudge whatsoever against them. How was that possible? Because Joseph realized the amazing truth that everyone in our lives are, in a deeper sense, **יהוה**'s 'messengers.' Whatever they say or do is only because **יהוה** is sending us some sort of a message, and what's the point of getting angry at the messenger? Not only that, since the message is coming from **יהוה**, ultimately it's for our best. Once we learn to live with this outlook, we will lead much happier lives filled with forgiveness and free from the pain of grudges.



"ESCAPE FROM THE DUNGEON"

The kids in Mrs. Kaplan's history classes felt like they had stepped back into the Middle Ages. As a special class trip she had taken them to Manor Castle, a history museum inside a real 800-year-old castle that had been brought, brick by brick, from overseas and reconstructed just as it had been. "This place is absolutely amazing, isn't it Ellen?" said Naomi, with wide open eyes, as they made their way through the stately, candle-lit halls and chambers. "Yeah, I guess so," muttered the girl under her breath. Even though the unheated castle was pretty cold, Ellen was boiling. "Hey, what's the matter with you?" asked Naomi, surprised at her usually bubbly friend's curt answer. "I'm sorry Naomi," she said, "I'm just really upset". "Why?" "You mean to tell me you're *not* upset about how all those kids from the older class just pushed ahead of us like we didn't exist and took all the good seats on the bus? I'm lucky I didn't have to sit in the baggage compartment!" Naomi shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, that? Yeah I guess it wasn't so nice, but forget it, and let's enjoy the trip. What's the point of letting a couple of minutes of unpleasantness ruin our whole day? Anyway, they were only 'messengers.' Hey, did you hear that? The guide just said we're going down to the dungeon next!"

The dungeon was just where those pushy kids belonged as far as Ellen was concerned. How could her friend just forgive and forget like that? And what in the world had she meant by 'messengers'? But before she had a chance to ask, the guide began leading everyone down a thin, curving stairway. Ellen tried to calm down as she held tight to the metal railing. But she was also holding tight to her grudge. How could she just forgive those thoughtless kids? "Now nobody get scared..." bellowed Tom, the big, redheaded guide who looked like he fit right into the medieval setting", but this is the chamber where the master of the castle would take his prisoners. You know, back then the kings were very cruel. They would even punish, or kill, a messenger that brought them bad news!" The kids gasped. "Wow, wasn't that dumb?" commented Ellen to Naomi. "What was the point of getting mad at the *messenger*?" "So why do you do the same thing?" Ellen was taken aback by her friend's strange comment. "Do the same thing? What are you talking about?" Naomi smiled. "Like I said, those kids on the bus were also just messengers - from יהוה." "Messengers from יהוה? What are you *talking* about?" " Nothing happens for nothing. Whatever happens is really just יהוה's way of talking to us and giving us a message that somehow we need to hear." " Like what kind of messages?" " There are lots of different messages. Maybe we had once done something similar to someone else, and יהוה sends us a messenger to teach us how it feels so we won't do it again..." Ellen blushed, remembering how she had jumped in front of a little kid to grab a seat on the way to school just that morning. Naomi went on. "Or maybe the messenger is coming to stop us from doing something we think will be good for us but really isn't, or to get us to do something we didn't know that we should. Sometimes the message is pretty clear, and other times we may not understand the message, or why it's good right away, but the message is always there." Ellen nodded. "Okay, let's say that those kids on the bus really were 'messengers,' but wasn't it still wrong of them to act that way?" "Maybe it was, but that's their business to work out. What matters for us is that we had to hear a message, and one way or the other יהוה was going to tell it to us. If those kids hadn't been the ones to deliver the message, someone or something else would have. So why not just forgive and forget instead of feeling angry and miserable by holding a grudge? "It's like we learned in Torah class about how Joseph met up with his brothers who sold him as a slave. That's how he was able to forgive them, by realizing they were יהוה's messengers. And that's why staying mad at people doesn't make any more sense than one of those medieval kings who used to kill their messengers." In his booming voice, Tom announced, "Now follow me upstairs to the royal banquet hall!" Ellen thought about what Naomi said. It would certainly make it easier to drop a grudge and go on with life. She breathed easier as she climbed the stairs and felt ironically like she had begun to climb out of the 'dungeon' of grudge-bearing, and entered the 'banquet hall' of forgiveness.

Question: Why did Ellen feel better after talking with Naomi? Naomi helped her realize that whatever people do or say to us isn't just by chance. יהוה is watching over us and wouldn't let anything happen to us unless it was to give us a message and teach us something we needed to know. Once she heard this, she was able to drop her grudge against the big kids, and that felt good because the only ones that holding grudges hurt - are us.

Spiritual Exercise: Look for יהוה's messages that will teach us something that we need to know.

Resources: "Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Works of Flavius Josephus- famous Jewish historian

The Book of Jashar. Joshua 10:13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar.

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com