CHEVRAH TORAH...5777

With HEART in MIND

MUSSAR Teaching to Transform the Text & Our Lives

Miketz—Genesis 43:15-34

MIYUT S'CHOK—Limiting Levity

...Key KOSHI...

HOW does the gamut of emotions play out in the exchange between Joseph & his brothers? WHAT do we learn from the revealing/hiding of feelings about the family/God of Israel?



P'SHAT...StudyingTorah—Encountering The Word—The Will—The ONE

The truly wise individual is not one who has achieved wisdom but a *talmid chacham—a wise student...*one who is constantly learning—including by observing and reflecting on what can be learned from other people.

43:15] The men then took this offering, and taking in hand the double portion of silver, along with Benjamin, they got going and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. 16]When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the one in charge of his household, "Bring the men into the house and slaughter an animal and prepare [it], for [these] men are going to eat with me at noon." 17] The man did as Joseph said; the man brought the men into Joseph's house. 18] The men were frightened when they were brought into Joseph's house; they thought: "It is on account of the silver that came back in our bags the first time that we're being brought [here]—in order to fall upon us, to pounce on us, to take us as slaves, along with our asses." 19] They therefore approached the man in charge of Joseph's household and spoke to him at the entrance of the house, 20] saying, "By your leave, my lord, the last time we came down to buy food, 21] when we go to the night lodging and opened our bags, each one's silver was in the mouth of his bag—the exact amount that had been weighed out, and we have brought it back with us. 22] And we have brought other money to buy food—we don't know who put our silver in our bags." 23] He replied, "You're

את הַמַּנְחַה הַאַנָשִׁים את־הַמַּנְחַה הַּוֹּאַת בּיֹּאַת בּיִּ וּמְשָׁנֵה־בֶּסֶף לֶקְחָוּ בִיָּדָם וְאֵת־בִּנִימֶן ויַלְמוּ ויִרְדוּ מִצְרִים ווּעַמִדוּ לְפַנֵי יוֹסֵף: ָใששׁי] ¹⁶ וַלַּרָא יוֹסֵף אָתַּם אָתַם אַת בּנְיַמִין [וּלּאמֶר לַאֲשֶׁר עַל־בֵּיתוֹ הָבֵא אֵת־הַאֵּנִשִּים הַבַּיִתָה וּטְבָּחַ טָבַחֹ וָהַכֶּן בִּי אַתֵּי יִאַכְלַוּ ַהאָנשִׁים בַּצַּהַרִיִם : ^{זֹי} וַיִּעֲשׁ הַאְּישׁ כַּאַשֵּׁר אַמֵר יוֹסֵף וַיַּבֵא הָאֵישׁ אֶת־הָאַנָשִׁים בַּיתָה יוֹםֶף: 18 נֵיּירְאָוּ הָאֲנַשִּׁים בַּי ֹחובאוֹ בֵּית יוֹסֵף וַיִּאֹמְרוֹ עַל־דְבַר הַכֶּּסֶף השב באמתחתינו בתחלה אנחנו מובאים להתגלל עלינו ולהתנפל עלינו וַלַקַחַת אֹתֵנוּ לַעַבַדִים וְאֶת־חַמֹרֵינוּ: יוֹסֶף אַל־הַאִּישׁ אֲשֵׁר עַל־בֵּית יוֹסֵף 19 ויִדַבְּרָוּ אֵלֶיוּ פֵּתַח הַבֵּיִת: 20 וַיִּאמְרוּ בִּי אַדני יַרָד יַבֶדְנוּ בַּתִּחָלֵה לִשְבַּר־אָבֶל: יַנְיָּהָי בָּי־בָאנוּ אֱלֹ־הַמַּלוֹן וַנְּפָתָּחָה אֱתֹּ אַמַתּחתינוּ וְהָנֵה כֵסֶף־אֵישׁ בַּפֵי אַמְתַּחְתוֹ כַּסְפֵּנוּ בִּמְשְׁקַלָּוֹ וַנַשְׁב אתו בַּיַבֵנוּ : 22 וְכֵסֵף אַחֵר הוֹרֵדְנוּ בִיַבֵנוּ

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶדְ הָעוֹלֶם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצוֹתָיו וְצְנֵנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדְבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzyotav v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvoth, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

all right; have no fear. Your god and your father's god has given you a hidden treasure in your bags—your money reached me!" And he brought Simeon out to them.

24] The man then ushered the men into Joseph's house; he supplied water and they washed their feet, and he gave fodder to their asses. 25] They laid out the offering for the arrival of Joseph at noon, for they had heard that they would eat there. 26] When Joseph entered the house they presented to him the offering they had brought into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground. 27] He asked them how they were, and said "How is your aged father of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" 28] They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." And they knelt and bowed down.

29] He looked up and saw his [full] brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and he said, "is this your youngest brother you told me about?" And he added, "God be gracious to you, my son!" 30] Joseph hurried [out], for he was so deeply stirred with tender warmth toward his brother that he wanted to weep; he went into an [inner] chamber and there he wept. 31] He washed his face, and when he came out, he held himself in check and said, "Serve food!" 32] They served him separately and them separately and the Egyptians who usually ate with them separately, for the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, since it was an abomination to the Egyptians.

33] As they were seated before him, the first-born according to his seniority and the youngest according to his youth, the men looked at each other in amazement. 34] He presented portions [of food] to them from what was in front of him—Benjamin's portion exceeded all of theirs fivefold—and they drank and grew drunk with him.

לשבר־אכל לא ידענו מישם כּספּנוּ בַּאֲמַתְּחֹתֵינוֹ : 23 וַלֹּאמֵר שׁלום לַכַּם אַל־ תיראו אלהיכם ואלהי אביכם נתן לכם מַטְמוֹן בָּאַמְתָּחָתֵיכֶּם כַּסְפָּכֵם בֵּא אֱלֵי וַיּוֹצֵא אֵלֶהֶם אֶת־שָּׁמְעוֹן: 24 וַיָּבֵא הָאֵישׁ אַת־הַאַנִשִּׁים בֵּיתַה יוֹסֵף וַיִּתֵּן־מַּיִם וּיִרחַצִּוּ רַגְּלֵיהֶם וַיִּתֵּן מִסְפַּוֹא לַחַמְרִיהֵם: יוֹסֵף עד־בּוֹא יוֹסֵף 25 וַיַּכַּינוּ אַת־הַמַּנְהֵה עד־בּוֹא בַּצֵּהַרֶיִם כִּי שָׁמְעוֹ כִּי־שָׁם ׁיִאכִלוּ ֹלֵחֵם: ַנַבָּא יוֹסֶף הַבַּֿיִתָה וַיַּבֵיאוּ לֵוֹ אֵת־ 26 הַמִּנְחָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּיַדָם הַבַּיִתָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחַווּ־לִוּ אַרְצַהֹּ : ^{לֹג}ַ וַיִּשְּאֵל לַהֶהם לְשַׁלוֹם וַיֹּאֹמֵר ָהֲשָׁלָוֹם אֲבִיכֶם הַזָּקוֹ אֲשֵׁר אַמַרתַם הַעוֹדֵנוּ חֵי: 28 וַיִּאמְרוּ שְׁלֵּוֹם לְעָבִדְּהָ לאַבִינוּ עוֹדֵנוּ חֵי וַיִּקְדוּ וַיִּשׁתַּחוֹ רא את־ [וַיִּשָּׁא עִינַיוֹ וַיַּרָא אַת־ 2º : [יִשָּׁא עִינַיוֹ וַיַּרָא אַת־ בּניַמֵין אַחִיוֹ בּן־אַמוֹ וַיֹּאמֵר הַזֶה אַחִיכֵם הַקָּטוֹן אַשֶּׁר אֲמַרְתָּם אָלֵי וַיֹּאמַּר אֱלֹהִים ַיַחְנָדָּ בָּנֵי: [שביעי] ³⁰ וַיִּמְהָר יוֹסֶׁף בֵּי נָכְמַרָוּ רָחֲמֵיוֹ אֱל־אַחִיוֹ וַיְבַקֵּשׁ לְבַכְּוֹת ויבא החדרה ויבד שמה: 31 וירחץ פניו ַנַיָּצֵא וַיִּתְאַפַּק וַיִּאמֶר שִימוּ לַחֶם: 22 וַיָּשִימוּ לֵוֹ לְבַדְּוֹ וְלָהֵםׁ לְבַדָּם וְלַמְצְרִים הַאָּכָלֵים אַתוֹ לַבַּדַּם כִּי לֹא יִוֹּכְלוּוְ הַמְצַרִּים לַאַכָּל אַת־הַעָבְרִים לַחָם כִּי־ תועבה הוא למצרים: 33 וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לְפַנֵּיו ַחַבָּכֹר כָּבָכָרָתוֹ וְהַצַּעֵיר כָּצְעַרָתוֹ וַיִּתְמְהוּ הַאָנשִים אִישׁ אַל־רַעָהוּ : יֹּי נַיִּשְׁא מַשְּאֹת מֵאֵת פָנִיוֹ אַלֶהֶם וַתֹּרֶב מַשְאַת בּנְיָמֶן מְמַשְאָת כַּלֶם חָמֵשׁ יַדְוֹת וַיִּשְׁתִּוּ וַיִּשְׁכָּרִוּ : עמו

REMEZ...Acquiring Torah... When Torah penetrates our entire being, not just our seichel/intellect, this is the acquisition of Torah. - R' Avi Fertig

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-4 Everything has its season, and there is a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to uproot...A time to take life and a time to heal...A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance. SONCINO...One interpretation of this section is that it is wisdom to do the right thing at the right time, but it does not fit with the train of thought *Kohelet* is pursuing. More acceptable is the view that...he finds in determinism. All the events of life are part of a fixed scheme; they happen to a human being whether he wills them or not; therefore individual effort is abortive. H.BRONSTEIN...Everything is in flux; it comes and it goes. Only the world abides...The cycles repeat. Yet this knowledge can lead us to wisdom, of that which unites humanity with the cosmos and one another; the experience of the moment joined to the awareness of the universality of human fate. [The Five Scrolls, CCAR Press, 1984.]

v.18 But the men became frightened at being brought into Joseph's house. "It must be," they thought, "because of the money replaced in our bags..."

ONKELOS... Read not "and they saw—VaYirr'u" but rather "they grew frightened..."

RASHI... It was not the practice of others who came to buy grain to lodge at Joseph's house, but rather in the hostels that were in the city. Therefore "they became frightened" because they thought this was done to transport them to prison

ETZ HAYIM... The brothers are probably aware that Egyptian officials had private dungeons in their homes. ALTER... Their last encounter with Joseph was in an open field, where he was entirely in their power. Now, crossing the threshold of his house, they will be entirely in his power—whether for evil or for good, they cannot say. Pointedly, their actual sitting at Joseph's table is prefaced by a literally liminal moment: they stand at the entrance, expressing their anxiety to Joseph's steward.

v.23 He replied: All is well with you; do not be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the treasure in your bags. Your payment has come to me." And he brought Shimon out to them.

AKEIDAH...That your money found its way back into your sacks after I received payment must have been a miracle...It was certainly not placed there to implicate you. No one is accusing you of foul play.

ETZ HAYIM... Joseph has taught the steward to see the hand of God in life's unexpected blessings.

SARNA... The reassuring reply is intelligible only on the assumption that he is privy to Joseph's scheme. His purpose is to lull them into a false sense of relief, reinforced by the release of Simeon.

v.27-8 He greeted them asking, "How is your aged father of whom we spoke? Is he still alive?" They said: "All is well with your servant our father; he still lives." And they bowed and made obeisance.

HIRSCH... This is more than a general question...His question related to Jacob's emotional and spiritual well-being...Is he at peace within and with himself?

ARTSCROLL... They could only answer "shalom l'Avinu, he is at peace," externally. Internally, he is worried & fearful v.29-30 Looking about, he saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and asked, "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke?" And then said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." With that, Joseph hurried out, for he was overcome with feeling toward his brother and wanted to cry. He went into another room and wept there.

HaEMEK DAVAR... The intent is that he saw Benjamin as his brother, resembling his mother Rachel's features, the mother who'd died when he was but an 8-year old boy. Thus, we understand his desire to weep. ABARVANEL... The question directed about the 30 year-old Benjamin was both sarcastic and humorous: Is this the one you call "little," the one you were afraid to bring on account of his tender age?...He is a grown man! SARNA... The Hebrew "nichmeru rachamav" occurs elsewhere only in I Kings 3:26 where it means "to have compassion for." Here however Benjamin is not an object of pity. The sight of him arouses overwhelming

compassion for..." Here, however, Benjamin is not an object of pity. The sight of him arouses overwhelming feelings of tenderness and affection in Joseph. He can find relief only through tears.

ALTER... This second weeping is much more elaborate, including flight to his private chamber, bathing his face to remove evidence of the tears, as well as his efforts at self-restraint when he returns to his brothers. v.33-34 As they were seated by his direction, from oldest to youngest, the men looked at each other in astonishment. Portions were served, but Benjamins was five times that of anyone else. And they drank their fill with him.

ETZ HAYIM... The Egyptians are astonished that the vizier should invite foreigners, especially shepherds; the brothers are astonished at the seating arrangements—in order! Who else but Joseph would know? SARNA... Joseph is testing his brothers to see whether the favoritism would arouse envy or hostile feelings that they might harbor against the youngest...now their father's favorite.

D'RASH...Helping the Heart feel what the Mind understands ... Alan MORINIS...

...Humor can be a safety valve for the pressures of life. It releases the tensions that come from living within restrictive boundaries...So is release from the strict parameters and the inevitable tensions a good thing?...The answer, it appears, is that a little is beneficial, while too much is dangerous...The caution is that release from boundaries has become a way of life in modern society...The media glory in every egotist who shows up on reality television to parade his or her further debasement of public standards...Humor works well in spiritual life when it is a pinch of spice added to the main course of serious endeavor...The sensitive soul recognizes the truth we find in Ecclesiastes 3:4: "There is a time to weep and a time to laugh..." The sensitivity comes in knowing which is which, and how to respond in a whole and holy way that is appropriate to the situation. [With Heart in Mind, pgs 107-108]

SOD...Helping the soul-light shine...

Practice focuses on recalibrating the soul-traits that are obstructing your soul's light from shining into your life.

Prof LEON KASS

The brothers must now be thoroughly bewildered. First, they believed that they were being held as thieves. Now, reassured on that score and reunited with the liberated Simeon, they are treated as honored guests, yet for no apparent reason. ...When Joseph arrives home at noon, the brothers present their tribute and prostrate themselves before him.

And he asked them of their welfare, and he said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spoke? Is he still alive?"

Eleven brothers bowing down at his feet, in a position of worship. But where is his father? Did he really send Benjamin of his own volition, or did the brothers wait until he died: "Is the old man still alive?" "Yes," the brothers answer, "our aged father is alive and well. Though absent, he is your servant by proxy, a sender of tribute to your lofty self." Joseph's boyhood dream of domination has come true. Nothing is said about his feeling any relief at the news that his father is still alive and well. While his brothers look down, Joseph looks up and scans the group for the only person of real interest to him. And he lifted up his eyes and saw Benjamin, his brother, his mother's son.

Seeing Benjamin, Joseph sees not only a brother, but his only full brother and alter ego, the son of his mother, Rachel, who died while giving birth to Benjamin when Joseph was himself but a boy. He does not wait for a confirming answer from the brothers—and addresses him with paternal, not to say godlike, solicitude. Though he had coolly manipulated the brothers precisely to deliver up Benjamin, the consummate master of the drama is unprepared for his own emotional response to the sight of his brother. His eyes grow misty and his sight grows dim. Joseph, for the second time, is overcome with the need for weeping and hastily removes himself to shed his tears unseen.

Joseph's tears are, the text makes clear, born of compassion or pity, based on brotherly identification: rachamim, usually translated "mercy" or "compassion," originally meant "brotherly feeling" (or "Motherly feeling"), based on it derivation (according to many scholars) from rechem, "womb". But Joseph's brotherly feeling is not directed to all of his brothers; he is not moved by their trustworthiness with Benjamin or the indication of their remorse and reform. Joseph's compassion is rather reserved for the one brother born

from the same womb, from Rachel. But what inspires Joseph's tears? Is it merely that Benjamin is, as Joseph once was, in the hands of the ten unloved and unloving brothers? Or does Joseph weep, in addition, to see Benjamin suffering on account of Joseph's own actions...Could there be tears of tenderness mixed with tears of pity, as Joseph contemplates his next moves in a plan that could get Benjamin to stay with him, thus to complete the integration of the line of beautiful Rachel into the beauty-loving land of Egypt?

Whatever its cause, Joseph's impulse to tears makes clear, both to him and to the reader, that his feelings for Benjamin and his lack of self-command are incompatible with his lofty position as Egyptian viceroy and consummate manager of the present drama. Fittingly, Joseph must weep in private, shedding tears also for himself and the divisions within his soul.

His face washed to hide the evidence of tears, and struggling for self-control, Joseph returns and resumes command, giving an order to set on the food. But the meal that follows only corroborates Joseph's deep dilemma.

Imagining the scene, we see that Joseph eats alone, separated both from his native Hebrew brethren and his adopted Egyptian compatriots. Because of his elevated Egyptian status, he may not eat with his brothers. Yet despite his power, his Egyptian underlings will not eat with him, because he is a Hebrew, whose food is an abomination in Egypt.

Joseph, an Egyptianized Hebrew, is simultaneously both and neither. Because his relation to these Hebrew visitors is known only to Joseph himself, only Joseph feels the poignancy of his self-isolation and emptiness at the very moment in which he enjoys his long-dreamt-of-greatness via-a-vis his brothers. Joseph has what he wished for, but it turns out to be not exactly what he wanted. Joseph learns what the reader has learned from earlier stories in Genesis: supremacy and the equality of brotherliness are incompatible.

Joseph (and the reader) may very well remember the last time his brothers ate in his vicinity, when, after they had planned to kill him and claim that a wild beast had eaten him, they cast him into a pit without food and water and sat apart eating their lunch. Now, acting either from impulse or calculation, Joseph sends portions of food from his table to his brothers, seemingly confirming some kind of link between them. The brothers are delighted by this turn of events and conviviality reigns...Joseph, perhaps much in sorrow as in joy, leads the partygoers to lose themselves in drink, satisfying at once his desire both to forget and to celebrate. One can readily understand that he has much he would rather forget.

[The Beginnning of Wisdom,, pg 588-590]

...PRACTICE...

Be AWARE of the feelings inside over the course of the coming week...

How often this week did you hide your feelings? To What end?

HOW did your emotions guide/impact/reflect your actions?

...Journal on: HOW your "laughter" & "tears" inform life-perspective?