

# CHEVRAH TORAH...5777

## With HEART in MIND

MUSSAR Teaching to Transform the Text & Our Lives

### VaYechi—Genesis 48:1-20

MIYUT DERECH ERETZ—Limiting Worldly Ways

...Key KOSHI...

**WHAT** does Jacob’s blessing of Joseph/his grandchildren teach us about serving the Sacred?

**HOW** does Jacob’s adoption/blessing realign the *ways of the world*?

**HOW** does Jacob enable US to bestow blessing as well?



### P’SCHAT...Studying Torah—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.

<p>48:1] After these things, they said to Joseph, “Look—your father is fading,” so he took his two sons with him, Ephraim and Manasseh. 2] When they told Jacob, saying, “Look, your son Joseph has come,” Israel rallied and sat up in the bed. 3] Jacob said to Joseph, “El Shaddai appeared to me in Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4] saying to me: ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you; I will make you a multitude of peoples and I will give this land to your seed after you as an everlasting possession.’ 5] Now, then, your two sons born to you in the land of Egypt before my arrival in Egypt—they are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be to me like Reuben and Simeon. 6] But your progeny whom you engender after them are yours; they will be called by their brothers’ names in their family allotment. 7] And I—as I was coming from Paddan, Rachel died in the land of Canaan, on the road, only a stretch of ground before reaching Ephrath. I buried her there on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem.”</p> <p>8] When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he asked, “Who are these?” 9] And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” He [Jacob] said, “Bring them to me, pray, that I may bless them.” 10] Israel’s eyes had grown clouded with age; he could no longer see. Joseph brought them over to him, whereupon he kissed and hugged them.</p> <p>11] Israel then said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again, and here God has shown me your progeny as well!” 12] Joseph then removed them from</p>	<p>1 וַיְהִי אַחֲרַי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ חָלָה וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶת־אֶפְרַיִם׃ 2 וַיִּגֵּד לְיַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בְנֵךְ יוֹסֵף בָּא אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּתְחַזֵּק יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשָּׁב עַל־הַמֶּטֶה׃ 3 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יוֹסֵף אֵל שְׁדַי נִרְאָה־אֵלַי בְּלוֹז בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶתִּי׃ 4 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הַנְּנִי מִפָּרָךְ וְהִרְבִּיתִךָ וַנִּתְתִּיךָ לְקַהֵל עַמִּים וַנִּתְתִּי אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְנֹרְעָךָ אַחֲרַיךָ אַחֲזֵת עוֹלָם׃ 5 וְעַתָּה שְׁנֵי־בָנֶיךָ הַנּוֹלָדִים לָךְ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד־בָּאִי אֵלַי מִצְרַיִמָּה לִיהֵם אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כְּרֵאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ־לִי׃ 6 וּמוֹלַדְתֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר־הוֹלַדְתָּ אַחֲרַיִהֶם לָךְ יִהְיוּ עָלַי שֵׁם אַחֵיהֶם יִקְרָאוּ בְּנִחְלָתָם׃ 7 וְאֲנִי אֲבָאִי מִפָּדָן מִתָּה עָלַי רַחֵל בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּעוֹד כְּבַרְתָּ אֶרֶץ לְבֵא אֶפְרַתָּה וְאֶקְבְּרָהּ שָׁם בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרַת הוּא בַּיַּת לָחֶם׃ 8 וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶּה׃ 9 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אָבִיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־נִתְּנָוּ לִי אֱלֹהִים בָּזָה וַיֹּאמֶר קְחֶם־נָא אֵלַי וְאֶבְרַכֶם׃ [שְׁנֵי] 10 וַעֲיִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּבְדוּ מֵאֲדָמָה וַיִּכַּל לְרַאֲוֹת וַיִּגַּשׁ אֶתֶם אֵלָיו וַיִּשָּׁק לָהֶם וַיִּחַבֵּק לָהֶם׃ 11 וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יוֹסֵף רְאֵה</p>
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his knees, and bowed down before him to the ground. 13] Then Joseph took the two of them, Ephraim with his right hand to Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand to Israel's right, and he brought them close to him. 14] But Israel stretched out his right hand and placed it on Ephraim's head, even though he was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his arms, though Manasseh was the first-born. 15] He then blessed Joseph, saying, "The God before whom walked my fathers Abraham and Isaac, the God who has shepherded me ever since I came into being until this day—16] the angel who has rescued me from all harm—bless these lads! Through them let my name and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac (ever) be recalled, and let them greatly multiply within the land!"

17] When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, it seemed wrong to him, so he took hold of father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head onto the head of Manasseh. This is the first-born; put your right hand on his head! 19] But his father refused, saying, "I know, my son, I know! He too shall become a people, and he too shall be great. Yet his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." 20] So he blessed them that [their] blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'" And he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

פָּנִיךָ לֹא פָלַלְתִּי וְהִנֵּה הִרְאָה אֶתְּי אֱלֹהִים גַּם  
 אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ: <sup>12</sup> וַיּוֹצֵא יוֹסֵף אֹתָם מֵעַם בְּרָכָיו  
 וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לְאִפְּיוֹ אֶרְצָה: <sup>13</sup> וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת־  
 שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם בְּיַמִּינוֹ מִשְּׂמָאל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל  
 וְאֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה בְּשְׂמָאלוֹ מִיְּמִין יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו:  
<sup>14</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יָמָיו וַיִּשֶׁת עַל־רֹאשׁ  
 אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הִצְעִיר וְאֶת־שְׂמָאלוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ  
 מְנַשֶּׁה שֶׁכַּל אֶת־יָדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר:  
<sup>15</sup> וַיְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר  
 הִתְהַלְכוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אֲבָרְכֶם וַיְצַחֵק הָאֱלֹהִים  
 הָרַעָה אֹתִי מֵעוֹדֵי עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: <sup>16</sup> הַמַּלְאָךְ  
 הַגָּאֹל אֹתִי מִכָּל־רָע וַיְבָרֵךְ אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים וַיִּקְרָא  
 בָּהֶם שְׁמֵי וְשֵׁם אֲבֹתֵי אֲבָרְכֶם וַיְצַחֵק וַיִּדְגֹּו  
 לָרֶב בְּקָרֵב הָאָרֶץ: [שְׁלִישִׁי] וַיִּרְא יוֹסֵף כִּי  
 יָשִׁית אָבִיו יָדָיו מִיְּמִינוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּרַע  
 בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּתְמַךְ <sup>17</sup> אָבִיו לְהַסִּיר אֶתְּהָ מֵעַל רֹאשׁ־  
 אֶפְרַיִם עַל־רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה: <sup>18</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־  
 אָבִיו לֹא־כֹן אָבִי כִּי־זֶה הַבְּכוֹר שֵׁים יְמִינֶךָ עַל־  
 רֹאשׁוֹ: <sup>19</sup> וַיִּמָּאן אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר יָדְעֵתִי בְּנִי יָדְעֵתִי  
 גַּם־הוּא יִהְיֶה־לָּעַם וְגַם־הוּא יִגְדֹּל וְאוֹלָם אָחִיו  
 הַקָּטָן יִגְדֹּל מִמֶּנּוּ וְזָרְעוֹ יִהְיֶה מְלֹא־הַגּוֹיִם:  
<sup>20</sup> וַיְבָרְכֶם בְּיָוִם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּךָ יְבָרֵךְ  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יִשְׁמַךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה  
 וַיִּשֶׁם אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם לְפָנָי מְנַשֶּׁה

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

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v.5 Now your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came shall be mine; Ephraim & Manasseh no less than Reuven & Shimon shall be mine.

ZORNBERG... “*Li Heym—they are mine*” Jacob includes the “first fruits” of fragmentation and exile within the envelope of his own identity as Israel.

RASHI... “*just as Reuven and Shimon*” ...They are counted among all my other sons to likewise inherit a portion of the promised land. [TALMUD, Ketubot 72a]

ETZ HAYIM... “*Li Heym*”—Jacob formally adopts his two grandchildren through a legal process that elevates them to full membership in the Israelite tribal league.

v.8 Then Israel saw the children of Joseph and said: “Who are these?”

RASHI... He said “*Mi Eyleh?!*” Where did these kids who are unfit for such blessing emerge!?

GUR ARYEH...It seems from this verse that this is the first time Jacob sees the sons of Joseph. Surely he has seen them earlier, and often...If the verse says “Israel saw Joseph’s sons,” it means that he perceived at this point something about them ...[TANCHUMA]

ETZ HAYIM... “*Mi Eyleh?*”—Jacob, who has just spoken so extravagantly about his closeness to Ephrayim & Manasseh does not recognize them. Has his vision begun to fail, as happened to his father Isaac, in similar circumstances? Or did he fail to recognize Ephraim & Manasseh because, having been born and raised in Egypt, they were indistinguishable from Egyptian youth?

v.9 Joseph said to his father, “*They are my sons whom God has given me with this/here.*”

RAMBAN... “*BaZeh—as you noted*” In keeping with Jacob’s earlier statement[v5] these are the ones God has given me before you ever came to Egypt. W/gratitude to God, even in exile, these children are worthy of blessing.

RASHI... “*BaZeh—with this*” Joseph showed Jacob “*this*”—the marriage document with which he married his wife, stating all the obligations a husband takes out of respect for a daughter of Israel...Thereupon Jacob continued: “*Bring them to me, and I shall bless them.*” ...[TANCHUMA]

v.13-16 Joseph took the two of them, Ephraim with his right hand—to Israel’s left and Manasseh with his left hand—to Israel’s right, and brought them close. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head, though he was the younger, and his left on Manasseh’s head, although he was firstborn. And he blessed Joseph saying, “*The God in whose ways my fathers Abraham & Isaac walked bless these lads. In them may my name be recalled...*”

SARNA Joseph stations the lads before their grandfather in such a way as to ensure that Jacob’s right hand, the symbol of power, will naturally rest on Manasseh. The high importance that this has for Joseph is conveyed by the precision of language, the repeated use of “right” and “left” seven times in vv 13-17....The present episode provides an explanation for the reversal, with Ephraim becoming the more powerful, even to the extent that its name became synonymous with the Kingdom of Israel.

CHIZKUNI... “*he directed his hands with wisdom...*” Jacob merely crossed his hands because he did not wish to slight Manasseh who was the firstborn by moving him to the left. Manasseh merited that honor, so rather than reposition him he maneuvered his hands to reverse the promise of family privilege.

v.18-19 And Joseph said to his father, “*Not so father, for this one is firstborn; place your right hand on his head.*” His father refused, saying, “*I know, my son, I know. He too will become a great people; yet his younger brother shall become greater than he*”

ARTSCROLL...In saying that Ephraim would be greater, Jacob meant spiritual greatness...He could not have meant numerical superiority because the tribe of Manasseh was 60% larger than Ephraim when they entered Eretz Yisrael. [Num 26:34,37] In spirit, however, Ephraim was preeminent because Joshua, the leader of Israel, and Jereboam, the first king of the 10 tribes, were Ephraimites. The entire kingdom of the 10 tribes was called *Ephraim*

HaEMEK DAVAR... Torah prominence takes priority over worldliness. This is an essential component of *K’vod HaTorah*, and the preservation of Israel’s spiritual mission. This is not comparable with the case of Zebulun and Issachar, where Zebulun, who engaged in commerce, is noted before Issachar [49:13] In their case, Issachar’s spiritual accomplishments were made possible only by virtue of Zebulun’s support, while Ephraim received no help from Manasseh....Such is the rule *l’dor va-dor*: the older serves the younger if the spirit reigns supreme.

## D'RASH...*Helping the Heart feel what the Mind understands ...*

Alan MORINIS...

Discerning when to say, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do,” and when it is right to be unbending in pursuing your own personal curriculum of growth and finding the balance between these dual obligations are difficult challenges faced by the spiritually sensitive person who engages with the modern world...Indeed, it is acknowledged that “there is no wisdom like the wisdom of derecho ertz.” Yet one thing is certain: Sometimes personal growth demands that we limit our engagement with the general ways the people around us behave...

The core of the issue is revealed by asking yourself, which master do I serve?

In the modern world, many masters vie for our allegiance...In the final words that the Torah gives to describe Moses, we read, “And Moses, the servant of God, died.”

This could be taken to be Moses’ obituary. When all was said and done and his life needed to be summed up, the Torah tells us that the essential thing we must know about him was that he was a servant of God. When the time comes that someone will write your obituary, what will it say about whom you served?

[[With Heart in Mind](#), pgs 116-119]

Prof JAMES KUGEL...

Modern scholars see behind this incident a midcourse correction in Israel’s list of tribes. The idea that there were precisely 12 tribes seems to have become, at an early stage, a fixity; it could not be changed. But, as we shall see presently, reality changed. At one point Levi was apparently a tribe like any other...Later, however, this tribe essentially became landless; the Levites became a scattered people of priests and other religious functionaries...Simeon, too, appears to have disappeared. So what was to become of the number 12? To compensate...the territory attributed elsewhere to a single figure, Joseph—a territory that included the lands called Ephraim and Manasseh—was counted as two territories, each with its own ancestor figure...After adopting Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob then asks to bless his two new sons, making another midcourse correction...Apparently—as in the case of Jacob and Esau—this patriarchal blessing portends the future dominance of the originally less power people. Perhaps indeed the land of Manasseh originally dominated Ephraim; in any case, we know that an Ephraimite, Jereboam, eventually took control of the whole population of the North [I Kings, 12:1-14:20]. That, modern scholars say, is really what is being enacted by Jacob’s promotion of Ephraim to firstborn status...Counter to the way of the ancient world, this whole incident was reminiscent of similar cases of the younger son displacing the older—Isaac supplanting Ishmael, and Jacob Esau.

[[How to Read the Bible](#), pgs 186-187]

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

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

### **Rabbi SHLOMO RISKIN...**

...Of all the profound questions Genesis raises, I think that the two words “*Mi Eyleh—Who are these?*” contain a library of existential philosophy...for in it lies a question that could have implication for the entire destiny of the Jewish people....How does the dream of Abraham cling to generation after generation of Jews who never lived in the promised land?

When Jacob asks Joseph to give him his sons, his true intention can be deduced from the fact that Jacob asks for them in the midst of recounting his own history—the blessings God has given and the promise of descendants who will inherit the land...Jacob wants these two boys to be his, not Joseph's. He wants their first allegiance to be to Abrahamic culture and not to the Egyptian; he wants them to at least yearn to live in Israel, not to be content about remaining in Egypt.

Hence Jacob insists on that question which must confront every Jew in every generation:

“*Who are these?*” Do these children belong to Joseph, grand vizier of Egypt, or to Jacob, that old bearded Jew? Do they belong to the civilization of the pyramids or do they identify with the “Covenant Between the Pieces?”

...Later in the portion, Jacob will inform Joseph that all future generations will use Ephraim and Manasseh as a paradigmatic blessing: “*May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh,*” which is how parents bless their sons every Friday night. Ephraim and Manasseh were children of Egypt who were nevertheless claimed by and chose to adopt Jacob-Israel as their true father. “*Who are these?*” It could well be the question that Grandfather Israel is asking each and every one of us, his descendants...

[Torah Lights, Riskin, Ohr Torah Stone, 2005, pages 286-288]

### **...PRACTICE...**

HOW will you bestow blessing on the succeeding Generations of Israel?

Consider the generations of your family [adopted or natural] and ask yourself:

HOW does the “*sechel*” I bring enable me to share the blessings most needed?

HOW will I/do I...extend my hands/heart in blessing?...