

CHEVRAH TORAH...5777

With HEART in MIND

MUSSAR Teaching to Transform the Text & Our Lives

VaYigash—Genesis 47:11-26

MIYUT TA'ANUG—*Limiting Pleasure

...Key KOSHI...

WHAT does Joseph's Egyptian austerity program teach us about fulfilling our earthly needs?
HOW does understanding Egypt's famine foster perspective on life's true/ultimate pleasure?



P'SHAT...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.

47:11] Joseph settled his father and his brothers; he gave them a holding in the land of Egypt, in the part of the land, in the region of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12] Joseph also provided food for his father and his brothers and all his father's household, according to the number of their children.

13] [At this time] no food was to be had in the entire land, for the famine bore down very heavily. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished on account of the famine.

14] Joseph now collected all the silver found in the lands of Egypt and Canaan as payment for the grain that the people were buying, and Joseph brought that silver into Pharaoh's palace.

15] When the silver in the lands of Egypt and Canaan was spent, all Egypt flocked to Joseph, saying, "Let us have food—why should we drop dead in front of you because the silver is exhausted?" 16] Joseph replied, "Bring your livestock, if the silver is exhausted." 17] They therefore brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for horses, holdings of sheep and cattle, and asses; that year he kept them alive with food in exchange for all their livestock.

18] That year ended, and they approached him in the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that the silver is spent and our animal holdings belong to my lord—there's nothing left before my lord but our bodies and our soil. 19] Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our soil? Buy us and our soil in exchange for food; we and our soil will be slaves to Pharaoh. Distribute seed, so we can live and not die, so the land is not deserted!" 20] Joseph then bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, for each Egyptian had sold his field, because the famine had overwhelmed

11 וַיּוֹשֶׁב יוֹסֵף אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אָחָיו וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם אַחְזָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּמֵיטֵב הָאָרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ רַעְמְסֵס כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה פַּרְעֹה : 12 וַיַּכְלִיל יוֹסֵף אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אָחָיו וְאֵת כָּל־בֵּית אָבִיו לֶחֶם לְפִי הַטֶּף : 13 וְלֶחֶם אֵין בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי כָבֵד הָרָעֵב מְאֹד וַתִּלַּח אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן מִפְּנֵי הָרָעֵב : 14 וַיִּלְקֹט יוֹסֵף אֶת־כָּל־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בְּשֹׁבַר אֲשֶׁר־הֵם שֹׁבְרִים וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף בְּיַתֵּה פַּרְעֹה :

15 וַיְתֵם הַכֶּסֶף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּמֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֵאוּ כָל־מִצְרַיִם אֶל־יוֹסֵף לֵאמֹר הִבֵּה־לָנוּ לֶחֶם וְלָמָּה נָגַדְתָּ כִּי אָפֶס כֶּסֶף : 16 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף הֲבֵן מִקְנֵיכֶם וְאֶתְנֶנָּה לָכֶם בְּמִקְנֵיכֶם אִם־אָפֶס כֶּסֶף : 17 וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־מִקְנֵיהֶם אֶל־יוֹסֵף וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם יוֹסֵף לֶחֶם בְּסוּסִים וּבְמִקְנֵה הַצֹּאן וּבְמִקְנֵה הַבָּקָר וּבְחִמְרִים וּנְגַהֲלִם בְּלֶחֶם בְּכָל־מִקְנֵיהֶם בְּשִׁנְהַ הַהוּא : 18 וַתֵּתֶם הַשִּׁנְהַ הַהוּא וַיָּבֵאוּ אֵלָיו בְּשִׁנְהַ הַשְּׁנִית וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ לֹא־נִכְחַד מֵאֲדָנִי כִּי אִם־תֵּם הַכֶּסֶף וּמִקְנֵה הַבְּהֵמָה אֶל־אֲדָנִי לֹא נִשְׂאֵר לִפְנֵי אֲדָנִי בְּלִתֵּי אִם־גּוֹיֵתָנוּ וְאֲדַמְתָּנוּ : 19 לָמָּה נָמוֹת לַעֲיֹנִיד גַּם־אֲנַחְנוּ גַּם־אֲדַמְתָּנוּ קִנְיָה־אֲתָנוּ וְאֶת־אֲדַמְתָּנוּ בְּלֶחֶם וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲדַמְתָּנוּ עַבְדִּים לְפַרְעֹה וְתוֹרָרַע וְנִחְיָה וְלֹא נָמוֹת וְהִאֲדַמָּה לֹא תֵשֶׁם : 20 וַיִּקֶן יוֹסֵף אֶת־כָּל־אֲדַמַּת מִצְרַיִם לְפַרְעֹה כִּי־מָכְרוּ מִצְרַיִם אִישׁ שְׂדֵהוּ כִּי־תָזַק עֲלֵהֶם הָרָעֵב וַתְּהִי הָאָרֶץ לְפַרְעֹה : 21 וְאֶת־הָעָם הָעֶבְרִי אֲתוֹ לַעֲרִים מִקָּצֵה גְבוּל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַד־קֶצֶהוּ : 22 וְכִּי אֲדַמַּת הַכְּהֲנִים לֹא קָנָה כִּי חֵק לַכְּהֲנִים מֵאֵת פַּרְעֹה וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־חֲקֵם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָהֶם פַּרְעֹה עַל־כֵּן לֹא מָכְרוּ אֶת־אֲדַמְתָּם : 23 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־הָעָם הִן קָנִיתִי אֶתְכֶם

*[Life-Pleasure-in-Perspective]

them. Thus the land came into Pharaoh's possession.
21] And thus he made serfs of the people from one end of the Egyptian border to the other. 22] Only the land belonging to the priests did he not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they ate their allotted portion that Pharaoh had given them; they therefore did not sell their land.

23] Joseph then said to the people, "See, now that I've bought you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you—sow the land. 24] When harvest comes, you must give Pharaoh a fifth, and the other four portions will be yours for seeding the field and to be food for you and your households, and for your little ones to eat." 25] And they said, "You have given us life! May we find favor in my lord's sight and be serfs to Pharaoh!" 26] Joseph made this a law to this day for Egypt's soil—one-fifth is Pharaoh's; the priests' land alone did not become Pharaoh's.

הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־אֲדָמַתְכֶם לְפָרְעֹה הָאֵלֶּכֶם זֶרַע וּזְרַעְתֶּם אֶת־
הָאֲדָמָה : ²⁴ וְהָיָה בְּתֵבוֹאֹת וּנְתַתֶּם חֲמִישִׁית לְפָרְעֹה
וְאַרְבַּע הַיְדֹת יִהְיֶה לָכֶם לְזֶרַע הַשָּׂדֶה וְלֹא־כִלְכֶם וְלֹא־שָׂר
בְּבִתְיֵכֶם וְלֹא־כֹל לְטַפְכֶם : ²⁵ [מִפֶּטִיר] וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֶחֱיִתָּנִי
נִמְצָא־חַךְ בְּעֵינַי אֲדֹנָי וְהֵינֹנִי עֲבָדִים לְפָרְעֹה : ²⁶ וַיֵּשֶׁם
אֶתָּה יוֹסֵף לְחֹק עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־אֲדָמֹת מִצְרָיִם
לְפָרְעֹה לְחֶמֶשׁ רֶק אֲדָמֹת הַכֹּהֲנִים לְבָדָם לֹא הָיְתָה
לְפָרְעֹה :

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

Alan MORINIS...

If there is no objection to pleasure, why the caution to limit it?...

The Jerusalem Talmud [actually] says: "On Judgment Day, a person will be called to account for every permissible thing he might have enjoyed in life but did not."

...The Jewish way is to enjoy the pleasures of this world within the context of a spiritual life...We are being asked to make wise and conscious choices about where we direct our desire for pleasure...If you are less attached to gratification, external circumstances will have less power to throw you off the inner calm that is so necessary for spiritual growth.

We find this idea echoed in another teaching of the Maharal. He asks why Matzah is the symbol of freedom on Passover? He answers that Matzah is made of only flour and water, just the bare necessities, and no more. The more one establishes physical needs, the more a slave one becomes. But if one can subsist on the bare necessities, one can truly be free.

[With Heart in Mind, pgs 110-112]

Prof E.A. SPEISER...

The increasingly acute effects of the prolonged famine highlight the importance of Joseph's precautionary measures. More than one modern writer has found in this report of the enslavement of the Egyptian peasantry shocking proof of Joseph's inhumanity. But, as has been stressed repeatedly by more objective students, such censorious comments show little understanding of either history or world literature. The Egyptian concept of state, whereby the king was viewed as a god, made the pharaoh an absolute ruler from the start, and hence, the owner of all he surveyed...Private ownership of land appears to have been sanctioned in the Middle Kingdom...The need for stronger centralized government, which the Hyksos experience was bound to accentuate, may have brought with it corresponding curtailment of individual privileges.

To that extent, therefore, the agrarian changes that are here described may reflect actual positive socio-economic developments. There is no evidence that the Egyptian society would have found such changes to be anything other than constructive. That they should be credited in this narrative to Joseph is part and parcel of his idealized historical image...His legacy was regarded as "life-saving."

[The Anchor Bible--Genesis, pg 353]

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.

HA LACHMA ANYA is essentially the story of the Matzah.

Told in Aramaic, once the everyday language of Talmudic Jews, this story has three parts: a memory, an action and a hope. First we point out the Matzah—the bread of poverty we ate in Egypt. Then, remembering our poverty in the past, we invite all needy persons to join our table tonight. Finally, we express the hope that while this year human beings are still enslaved in many ways, next year we will all be free people...

Rabbi JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK...

Although they may initially seem redundant, the two invitations we issue in Ha Lachma Anya—“Let all who are hungry—KOL DFICH'FIN, enter and eat” and “Let all who are in need—KOL DITZ'RICH, come and celebrate” in reality, are not. KOL DITZ'RICH means all who are in need, but not in need of bread. Whoever is in need of bread, DICH'FIN, is hungry. KOL DITZ'RICH refers to one who is alone, who has lots of matzah and wine but no home or family....The invitation to “all who are in need” is not “YETEI V'YEICHOL—to eat with us;” rather, it is to spend Pesach with us, “YETEI V'YIF'SACH—to celebrate with us.” It is an invitation addressed to unfortunate and lonely people. They might be billionaires; it is completely irrelevant...

HA LACHMA ANYA is the renewal of a pledge of solidarity among the Jewish people—solidarity between individual and individual, and between the individual and the Jewish community as a whole. It is a proclamation that we are one people, and that we are ready to help one another...to open our doors and our hearts. Pesach night is a time of sharing. If the sense of solidarity, responsibility, unity and readiness to share are not manifested and demonstrated, the whole Seder becomes meaningless.

[[A Night To Remember Haggadah](#), Zion, pgs 21-22]

...PRACTICE...

HOW can re-balancing life's pleasures help you grow in appreciation?