



MASSA UMATTAN

**A LITTLE GIVE-AND-TAKE
ON THE WEEKLY PORTION**

November 27, 2021



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

Torah Stats

Weekly Portion: vaYeishev
Consists of: Genesis 37:1-40:23
Sequence—
in annual Torah-reading cycle: 9th of 54
in the Book of Genesis: 9th of 12



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Genesis 37:3-11

Context: *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the founder of the Israelite people.*

Content: *This week's portion initiates the story of Joseph, the longest single sustained narrative in Genesis. Even though Jacob has finally secured title to and permanent residence in Canaan, we see here the roots of his family's ultimate relocation to far-off Egypt, from whence their long-distant descendants will return to The Promised Land only in due course, in the fulness of God's Own Time.*

37:3] - Now Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons, for he was the designated heir for his old age. So he made him a long-sleeved caftan. [37:4] - When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his other brothers, they hated him to the point that they were unable even to greet him.

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-בָּנָיו
כִּי-בֶן-זִקְנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ
כְּתֹנֶת פָּסִים וַיִּרְאוּ אֶחָיו כִּי-אֵתוֹ
אֶהָב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל-אֶחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ
אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם

37:5] - Then Joseph dreamed a dream—and when he told his brothers they hated him all the more. [37:6] - He told them: “Hey, listen to this dream I had! [37:7] - Here we all are, binding sheaves in the middle of the field, when suddenly my sheaf arose and stood upright, at which all of your sheaves gathered ‘round and they bowed low to my sheaf!’”

וַיַּחְלֹם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיַּגִּד לְאֶחָיו
וַיִּוְסְפוּ עוֹד שְׁנֵא אֹתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמְעוּ-נָא הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר חָלַמְתִּי וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי
מֵאֲלֵמִים אֲלֵמִים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה
וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלַמְתִּי וְגַם-נִצְבָּה
וְהִנֵּה תִסְבְּיָהּ אֲלַמְתֵּיכֶם
וּתִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאֲלַמְתִּי

37:8] - His brothers demanded of him: “Are you truly, then, to rule over us, and to have absolute dominion over us?!?” At which **they hated him all the more.**

37:9] - **Then he dreamed again, a different dream,** which he recounted to his brothers: “Hey, I dreamed a dream again— and here are the sun and the moon and eleven stars, **bowing down to me!**”

37:10] - **When he recounted this to his father and his brothers, his father rebuked him,** telling him: “What is **this** dream which you have dreamed? Are we in fact to come— I, and your mother, and your brothers— to bow low to the ground before you?” [37:11] - But while his brothers **envied him,** his father kept the matter quietly in mind.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אָחָיו הַמְלֹךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אִם-מִשׁוֹל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ וַיֹּסֶפּוּ עוֹד שָׂנֵא אֹתוֹ עַל-חֲלֹמֹתָיו וְעַל-דִּבְרָיו

וַיַּחְלֵם עוֹד חֲלוֹם אַחֵר וַיְסַפֵּר אֹתוֹ לְאָחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלֹמְתֵי חֲלוֹם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשְׂרֵה כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי

וַיְסַפֵּר אֶל-אָבִיו וְאֶל-אָחָיו וַיִּגְעַר-בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חֲלַמְתָּ הֲבֹא נְבוֹא אֲנִי וְאַמְךָ וְאַחֶיךָ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְךָ אֶרְצָה וַיִּקְנְאוּ-בּוֹ אָחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת-הַדָּבָר

A) Genesis 40:5-6 -

וַיַּחְלְמוּ חֲלוֹם שְׁנֵיהֶם אִישׁ חֲלֹמוֹ בְּלַיְלָה אֶחָד

The two of them dreamed a dream on the same night—

אִישׁ כְּפָתְרוֹן חֲלֹמוֹ הַמִּשְׁקָה וְהָאֹפֶה אֲשֶׁר לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר אֲסוּרִים בְּבַיִת הַסֵּהר

each one his own respective dream, with its respective significance, that wine-steward and that baker to the Emperor of Egypt, who were imprisoned in the ward-house—

וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיהֶם יוֹסֵף בְּבֹקֶר וַיֵּרָא אֹתָם וְהָנֶם זֹעֲפִים

so that when Joseph came to them the next morning, **he found them agitated.**

B) Genesis 41:1, 41:5, 41:8 -

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וּפְרָעָה חָלַם וְהִנֵּה עֹמֵד עַל-הַיָּאֵר

At the end of another two years, **Pharaoh was dreaming**— and here he was, standing by the Nile. . . .

וַיִּישָׁן וַיַּחְלֵם שֵׁנִית

When he got back to sleep, **he dreamed a second time**

וַיְהִי בְּבֹקֶר וַתִּפְּעֵם רוּחוֹ

So when he awoke in the morning **he was deeply disturbed.**

וַיֹּסֵף הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט עַל-הָאָרֶץ הוּא הַמְּשַׁבֵּיר לְכָל-עַם הָאָרֶץ

C) Genesis 42:6-9 - Now Joseph was viceroy over all the land; as such, it was he who was responsible for distributing rations to the people of the land.

וַיָּבֹאוּ אֲחֵי יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ-לוֹ אַפְּסֵי אֶרְצָה

When it was the turn of Joseph's brothers to approach, **they bowed low, face down to the ground, before him.**

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-אֶחָיו וַיִּכְרָם . . . וַיִּכְר יוֹסֵף אֶת-אֶחָיו וְהֵם לֹא הִכְרָהוּ
וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת הַחֲלֻמוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָלַם לָהֶם

Upon seeing them, Joseph at once recognized them. . . . Joseph recognized his brothers, while they did not recognize him— **and Joseph was reminded of the long-ago dreams he had dreamed about them.**

D) Genesis 45:5, 45:8 -

וְעַתָּה אֵל-תִּעַצְבוּ וְאֵל-יַחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם
כִּי-מִכְרַתֶּם אֹתִי הִנֵּה כִּי לְמַחְיָה
שָׁלַחֲנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֵיכֶם

“Do not punish yourselves, nor see it as a bad thing that you sold me here— for it was to save lives that God send me here before you.

וְעַתָּה לֹא-אַתֶּם שָׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הִנֵּה
כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁיִמְנִי לְאָב לְפָרְעָה
וּלְאֲדוֹן

“For it was not you who sent me hither, but rather God, in order to make me an advisor to Pharaoh and the lord over all his house and the governor over all the land of Egypt!”

E) Genesis 50:19-20 -

אֵל-תִּירָאוּ כִּי הִתַּחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנִי
“Do not be afraid; for am I in God’s
place, to judge?”

וְאַתֶּם חֲשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֱלֹהִים
חֲשַׁבָה לְטֹבָה

“You intended me harm, but God meant it for good,

לְמַעַן עֲשֶׂה כִּיֹּם הַזֶּה לְהַחֲיִית עַם-
רַב

“in order to bring about the present situation of saving many people!”

Parashah	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>vaYeisheiv</i>	24 Kislev	21 Kislev	23 Kislev	23 Kislev	26 Kislev	23 Kislev
<i>miQeitz</i>	02 Tevet	28 Kislev	30 Kislev	30 Kislev	04 Tevet	30 Kislev
<i>vaYigash</i>	09 Tevet	05 Tevet	07 Tevet	07 Tevet	11 Tevet	07 Tevet
<i>vaY'chi</i>	16 Tevet	12 Tevet	14 Tevet	14 Tevet	18 Tevet	14 Tevet

F) James Ponet (1946-), *CCAR Voices of Torah*, 1998 - We always re-meet Joseph at **Chanukah, the time when historical (and hemispherical) darkness is illuminated by a memory of what may yet be possible in history.** Chanukah's strange mixture of the historical and the messianic* is reflected in the Joseph narrative, where ambition and *chutzpah* combine with the miraculous to establish a career path.

* The Feast of the Rededication of the Altar” not only commemorates the historical consecration of the Jerusalem Temple (I Maccabees 4:36-60), but also implicitly points to the messianic future when the construction of The Third Temple— as the symbol *pars pro toto* the restoration of Jewish national autonomy— is the measure of a world order of peaceful cooperation.