

*Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi*¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah Miketz:** **Genesis 41:37-52**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 3:16-28**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Corinthians 2:2**

Can we find anyone like this man?

[Genesis 41:38]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 75:4-5;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #7, *Kabatz* [Ingathering]

Vayitav ha-davar b'eynei Far'oh – And that which was spoken [by Yosef] was good in the eyes of Pharaoh ... *uv'eynei kol-avadav* – and in the eyes of all his servants. **Genesis 41:37.**

When challenges loom, attitudes, worldviews, demeanor, and words make a huge difference. Those who come from a place, attitude, worldview, demeanor, and vocalized narrative of fear, greed, and manipulation spread those things into everyone around them. Those who come from a place of *shalom* and *emunah*, on the other hand, have the ability to radiate *shalom* and *emunah* into any situation. Those who know the Creator of the Universe intimately, commune with Him regularly, and serve him humbly can offer wise counsel, hope, and practical wisdom. As our Rabbi explained it: Blessed [Hebrew *ashrei* – i.e. moving forward on the right, constructive, hope-filled, joyful path to establishing the Kingdom of the Holy One on earth as it is in Heaven] are the *poor in spirit*, the *empathetic* (i.e. those who 'mourn'), the *meek*, those who *hunger and thirst for tzedekah*, the *merciful*, the *pure in heart*, the *shalom-asah-ers*, and those *who rejoice and keep doing good even when they are being reviled and persecuted*. See **Matthew 5:5-12**. Putting the kind of people the Master just described in those 'Beatitudes' in strategic positions in every culture and context constitutes the CREATOR'S GRAND COUNTERBALANCE PLAN TO REDEEM HUMANITY AND RESTORE THE EARTH ECOSYSTEM TO EDENIC BEAUTY, FRUITFULNESS, AND SHALOM.

Witness: The Yosefian Way

Egypt – the breadbasket of the world - is in trouble. The climate is behaving strangely. There is either too much rain – or too little. There is either too much heat – or too much cold. As it is said, as goes Egypt, so goes the rest of the nations. Whatever threatens either the Western or Eastern superpower of the age always puts the entire population of earth at risk. If this deviant climatological pattern keeps up, famine is not going to be a possibility to hype so as to control the

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populace, provide a platform for demagogues, and make fortunes for oligarchs, but will pose an existential threat for humanity. What can be done? How can the world survive? Ay, there's the rub. No one in Pharaoh's court seems to have any ideas. They are critical thinkers, spin-masters, data-twisters, scandalmongers, crisis-manufacturers, and public-opinion manipulators - not solution-generators. Their skills are in the areas of gaslighting, fearmongering, division-inciting, and outrage projecting – not dealing effectively with real crises. They are experts at pointing fingers, assigning blame, manufacturing offense, and generating dissatisfaction, envy, and hatred, but they are totally incapable of fixing anything. After all, their population-control, siphon-off-the-wealth-into-our-own-pockets schemes are all dependent upon someone, somewhere, actually working hard, being blessed, and enjoying prosperity. They scan the countryside for someone who is prospering, shake them down with regulations, tax them into poverty, and redistribute the formerly prosperous person or group's wealth as they please – after lining their own pockets, of course. But there is a critical flaw in their approach. If there is no prosperity anywhere to misappropriate, they are exposed as the useless charlatans they truly are. They are not producers of wealth – or anything else that holds the potential for doing good for mankind; they are just glorified gangsters, men, women, and cabals who covet, steal and redistribute whatever wealth they find being produced by others. That is exactly what the coming famine will expose. If no one prospers, they will have no one to shake down, all their schemes and policies will then fail ... and everyone can see it. So, they are worried. All the air has gone out of the divisive racial, national, and ethnic pride movements they have been selling to the populations of the raging nations. The narcissistic arrogance that goes with those movements and the demonic hate speech that their bloodthirsty minions usually spew at anything or anyone associated with the Avrahamic Covenant have all suddenly been relegated to the back burner. The world is suddenly in deep, deep trouble. Call it 'climate change'; call it over-population; call it poor stewardship of the earth; call it the stain of innocent blood on the land; call it corruption in human government; call it what you will. Whatever you call it, and whoever or whatever blame for it, the danger is real. And *only a Hebrew* – a son of the Avrahamic covenant - who walks with and both speaks and walks according to the wise counsel of the Creator of the Universe – will be able to help them overcome this challenge.

Yes, Beloved - prophetic images of the Messianic Era are about to unfold! Only a Messiah Prototype can visualize the pathway the Holy One has created to lead the world and all its people out of darkness and into that light.

We Need a He ... BREW!

My, how things have changed! My, how the tables have turned! The endless barrage of tired anti-Semitic stereotypes and slurs has ceased. One of Avraham's seed is about to become the most respected – indeed, beloved - man in the world. Imagine that. The leaders of the nations on earth are about to bow low before and seek counsel from *a Hebrew*. Suddenly no one is talking about pogroms or spewing blood libels at him. Suddenly no one is pointing out that '*Egyptians do not eat with Hebrews, for that is an abomination*'. See Genesis 43:32.

The Holy One of Hosts says: ... Ten men from every language of the nations will take hold of the tzit-tzit of an Ish Yehudi, and say: We will go with you - for we have heard that God is with you!
[Zechariah 8:23]

We Will Go With You

It is as if Yosef the Hebrew has come forth from a *grave* instead of just a prison. Everything is gloriously new. It is as if the old Yosef, the suffering servant, is dead, and a new Yosef, the glorious redeemer, lives. A metamorphosis has occurred, and the transformation is stunning. This 'new' Yosef will not be laughed at; his every word will be *sh'ma*-ed. Never again will he be mocked as 'that dreamer'. This 'new' Yosef will be an object of humble adoration, not a target of arrogant bullies. This Yosef will live in a palace and sit on a throne; he will never again be auctioned off for silver like an animal. This Yosef will carry a signet ring and rule with a scepter; never again will he be accused of crimes did not - and would never - commit. Why? What happened? Yosef has finally been recognized as the brilliant light – and appreciated as the gift to the world - that he was created, designed, and trained up in the house of Yisrael to be. And the time is now right and the conditions in the world are now ripe, for a redeemer to be revealed.

Yosef was once despised for his dreams; but *no more*. He is derided no more for his insatiable commitment to excellence. He is attacked no more for his unswerving loyalty to the teachings – and life instructions - of his father. He is misunderstood and falsely accused no more. He is treated as merchandise no more. He is hidden no longer. He is a debtor no more. He is the tail no more. He is irrelevant no more. He is overlooked no more. He is taken for granted no more. He is taken advantage of no more. He is alone and forgotten no more. All that changed - in one awe-inspiring, exhilarating, obviously Divinely choreographed moment. Was Yosef once hated? Was he once beaten and thrown in a pit? Was he once sold as a slave? Was he once sent to prison for a crime he did not commit? So it is said. But it no longer matters. That was then – this is now. This is no time for – and there is no benefit to be gained from – dwelling on past wounds, scars, traumas, or offenses. It is time to move forward. It is time to move on. It is time to *arise and shine*.

It is, you see, a *new day* – for Yosef, for Egypt, and for the world. And in this new day telltale signs of Divine Choreography are suddenly popping up everywhere. In this new day there is a *clear vision*; there is a *bright promise*; there is a *real inspiration*; and there is a *shining hope*. In this new day there is a mighty rumbling going on – like the sound of a mighty rushing wind that will soon shake the world. The balance of power in the earth is shifting. The situs of wealth in the world is moving. The moneychangers’ tables are turning over. Chains of oppression are falling off. Captives are being set free. The face – and the voice - of influence suddenly belongs to a son of the Avrahamic Covenant, a servant of the Most High God. Shafts of Divine Light are suddenly shining brightly through the deep shroud of darkness that usually engulfs the earth. Ever so slightly – for a season - the force field of dark energy is beginning to dissipate, the armor of rhetoric is beginning to dissolve, and the fog resulting from a clash of pseudo-science and superstition on the one hand and personal concepts of ‘truth’ and self-serving definitions of ‘morality’ on the other hand is beginning to lift. The eyes of the entire world are suddenly focused intently on a passionate lover of the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak and of Ya’akov. Divine light is shining. The focus of human endeavor is changing from the promotion of self-interest to co-laboring with the Creator of the Universe in the execution of His Great Plan for the Redemption of mankind and Creation.

Still smelling somewhat of the dark dungeon in which he has been locked away for years, *Yosef ben Ya’akov* – the ‘different’ one his brothers disparagingly long ago derisively labeled ‘that dreamer’ - is now the most influential man on earth. The young Hebrew is not intimidated. He knows that the Creator of Heaven and Earth is *with him*. He knows the One and Only True God of the Universe has always been – and will always be – *with him*. The truth of the Holy One’s ‘with-ness’ is indeed written in indelible ink all over the resume of his life – and the resumes of all of his family members back to Avram. So, when the moment came for Yosef to speak the counsel of the Most High, suddenly everyone stopped to listen. When he opened his mouth his voice carried the weight of the Creator of the Universe. His words cut through the darkness like the Holy One’s ‘*Yehi Ohr*’ [Light, BE!] declaration cut through *tohu v’vohu v’choseh* on the first day of Creation². Even Pharaoh stood in awe – while his advisors trembled.

A week ago – indeed a few hours ago – not a living soul on earth would have predicted that anything remotely like this could possibly happen. This is the day the Holy One of Israel has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

² See Genesis 1:2-3.

The Long Road to ‘Suddenly’

Of course, prior to this day, Yosef was a man of many sorrows. He knew many heartbreaks and disappointments. He experienced many humiliations. Thirteen years ago he was mocked, stripped naked, beaten, and sold into slavery by his brothers. More recently he was falsely accused of attempted rape by his master's wife and thrown into prison. Every time it has looked like his long season of deprivation and humiliation was drawing to a close, something happened that prolonged Yosef's agony. But he has never succumbed to either the dark energy pool of offense or the dark energy stream of depression. And now the Holy One's covenant promise to Avraham is coming to fruition in his life. Yosef's long seasons of suffering are at an end. Just as the Holy One planned before Yosef was ever born, the son of Yisrael is about to be elevated 'overnight' from falsely accused sex offender to second-in-command in the most powerful nation on earth. At 30 years of age Yosef ben Ya'akov, the firstborn of Rachel bat Lavan, will be miraculously transformed from a man who cannot even provide scraps for himself to the one entrusted by the Holy One with the responsibility to preserve and dispense food enough to sustain the entire world in the darkest season of famine the earth has ever known.

This reinforces the theme of this week's parsha, which is that *the people of the Holy One must look beyond their past failures, beyond wrongs done to them or by them, past those injustices they have experienced as well as those they witnessed afflicting others, past their present circumstances* (be they pleasurable, prosperous, or painful and oppressive), *to the time "at the end"* [Hebrew, *Miketz*]. Sometime, when it fits best in His Glorious Plan for the Redemption of mankind and Creation, the Holy One Will turn the tables. His righteous judgments, and His grand redemptive plan will all be made manifest, and those who have remained faithful to the Covenant He made with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Ya'akov, and their descendants forever, will be vindicated in a way that will stun the principalities and powers of the world.

Looking Forward to the Final Redemption

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan [*the Chofetz Chaim*] points out that when the time came for Yosef's liberation he was not let out of prison *slowly*. Rather, he was rushed out of his captivity *with the greatest of speed*. This is the way the Holy One brings about redemption. The moment it is the proper time not even one second is lost. "*This is how it will be with the final redemption,*" said the Chofetz Chaim: "*As soon as the right time comes, we will immediately be delivered from our exile.*" May it occur speedily, in our day.

And the Government Shall Be Upon His Shoulders

As yesterday's aliyah of Torah concluded Yosef had just been appointed as Egypt's 'food czar' – the man in charge of overseeing the harvesting, collection, storage, and rationing of Egypt's grain for at least the next fortnight of years.

Vayomer Par'oh el-avadav

Pharaoh said to his advisors,

Ha-nimtza kazeh ish asher ruach Elohim bo

'Can there be another person who has God's spirit in him as this man does?'

But Pharaoh did not stop with putting Yosef in charge of the world's food supply. He installed him as the new head of his household, his people, and his entire nation. He turned over the full reins of government to *a foreigner*. He gave over control over all the assets, the resources, the economy, the army, and the future of Egypt to a man who up until this very moment was both *a slave* and *a condemned criminal*. In the presence of his court of adviser, viziers, and generals Pharaoh declared to Yosef:

Acharei hodia Elohim otcha et-kol-zot

'Since Elohim has informed you about all this,

eyn-navon v'chacham kamocha

there can be no one with as much insight and wisdom as you.

Atah tihyeh al-beyti

You will be in charge of my government

v'al-picha yishak kol-ami

and food will be distributed to my people by your orders.

rak ha-kisei eg'dal mimeika

I will outrank you Only by the throne. '

[Genesis 41:38-40]

This passage is chock full of fascinating things. First, we have Pharaoh of Egypt - a heathen if there ever was one - recognizing in Yosef *ha-ruach Elohim – the spirit of God*. How is it that this heathen ruler is able to recognize, discern, and esteem the spirit of God?³ Secondly, we have Pharaoh immediately recognizing in Yosef, a Hebrew slave, two spiritual empowerments our English Bibles refer to as *insight* and *wisdom*. Let us give some consideration to these two empowerments. May we always walk in them, in abundance, within each sphere of influence that the Holy One sees fit to assign to us!

Of What Do 'Insight' and 'Wisdom' Consist?

The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as *insight* in this passage is *navon*,

³ In fairness, the phrase that Pharaoh used can also be translated '*the spirit of the gods*'

nun, veit, vav, nun sofit. *Navon* involves insight gained by *judgment/discernment, counsel, and diligent study*. This is a noun form of the Hebrew verb root *biyn*⁴ - a verb that includes *intuition, foresight, intellectual comprehension, discernment, and understanding*. *Biyn* carries a connotation of separating one thing from another – recognizing, categorizing, prioritizing, characterizing, and organizing things, and thus involves application of intellectual understanding. Some call this a ‘*gift of administration*’, but it flows out of *vision* – *i.e.* seeing the potential for good, out of *passion* – *i.e.* devotion and dedication to the vision; and intense *focus* – *i.e.* attention to detail, a quest for excellence, and steadfast indistractability.

How are you coming along in the realm of *navon*? Do you have a Divinely breathed *vision* as to the potential of the people, places, and things the Holy One has brought within your sphere of influence? If not, ask the Holy One to give you such a vision! Do you have a burning passion in your heart to see the full potential in the people, places, and things the Holy One has brought within your sphere of influence come forth? If not, ask the Divine Bridegroom to share with you His passion for each! Do you have an indistractable focus on calling forth and cultivating the potential of the people, places, and things the Holy One has brought within your zone of impact? If not, what is hindering you? Ask the Holy One to reveal it to you – and remove it from you!

The other thing Pharaoh saw operating in Yosef was ‘wisdom’. The Hebrew word is *chacham*⁵. *Chacham* involves application of creative energy and physical skill to bring about the desired result – *i.e.* the result envisioned and pursued by *biyn*. *Chacham* is alternately translated as *skill, craftiness, cunning, shrewdness, learning, and prudence*. What *chacham* describes goes beyond vision and zeal, to supply practical, applied wisdom – *i.e.* the kind that *sees solutions instead of problems, generates innovations, overcomes challenges, and always manages to get things done* where the rubber meets the road.

Navon and *chacham* - *i.e.* insight and wisdom - will play a large role in both the narratives we read in the haftarah and the Brit Chadasha this week. In the haftarah we are reading about Sh’lomo. Was his famed ‘wisdom’ of the *navon* variety, or was it more of the *chacham* variety? The answer is that it was both, operating in unity. What the Holy One gave Sh’lomo in response to his famous prayer requesting ‘***an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil***’ was something our English Bibles call a ‘*wise and understanding heart*’. **I Kings 3:12**. The word translated ‘wise’ in the passage is *chacham*. And the word translated as *understanding* in the passage is *biyn* – the

⁴ *Biyn* is *beit, yod, nun sofit*, Strong’s Hebrew word #995.

⁵ *Chacham* is *chet, kaf, mem sofit*, Strong’s Hebrew word #2450, pronounced *khaw-khawm*’.

root word from which *navon* is derived.

The *Ramban*, in his comments, discusses the traits of *navon* and *chacham* as they apply to Yosef's situation. To ensure that Egypt flourished during the upcoming famine, the man who would oversee the food supply needed to have expertise in two areas. First, he needed *navon* – which might more properly be translated as *discernment*; and second he definitely needed *chacham*. As Nachamanides reasoned it, during the years of famine the administrator needed *navon*, because he had to be able not only to foresee how much grain the Egyptians would require to survive, but also had to effectively communicate his vision to others, to choose honest and efficient assistants, to delegate authority wisely and effectively, to organize and motivate the agricultural community, and to administrate and supervise the collection and storage of the excess grain produced. But he would also need *chacham*. He would not only have to be discerning enough to know how to plan to grow and collect enough grain to last through 7 years of famine, *he also would need to have the knowledge, skill, and toughness necessary to physically preserve the grain from contamination, spoilage and theft, and to fairly and effectively distribute the grain to those in need, once the hard times set in.*

What Qualified Yosef for this Unprecedented Elevation?

Yosef's spiritual gifts – particularly his ability to interpret prophetic dreams - have served him well in life thus far. But those gifts do not begin to qualify him for the position to which Pharaoh is about to appoint him. After all, in his new position Yosef is not going to be interpreting dreams, but is going to be *coordinating and administrating a series of harvests*. For this task what will turn out to serve Yosef best was the experience he gained through two very unpleasant life experiences – namely the years he spent upon his arrival in this foreign land as a slave/steward of Potifar's house and the more recent years he spent as prisoner/deputy administrator in the dungeon of the very Pharaoh who is about to appoint him viceroy.

Isn't it amazing how the Holy One somehow manages to turn even the worst life experiences we suffer into good?

But Why a Hebrew Slave, of All People?

Pharaoh's motives in appointing Yosef to this extremely important position – upon the shoulders of which rested his nation's well being and future - are not specifically mentioned. Did he understand *the gravity of the situation*? Did he grasp the importance of the position to which he was appointing this foreign-born slave and accused criminal? Was Pharaoh perhaps just *playing mind-games with his advisors* – insulting them by elevating a slave boy – and a foreigner to boot - to be their superior? Or was he really that impressed by Yosef? Or by the tangible

presence on Yosef of the ‘spirit of *Elohim*’? We don’t know. It really doesn’t matter. What matters is that *the Holy One’s will was done*.

Pharaoh thinks he made the decision to elevate Yosef. But he is wrong. The Holy One just *pulled rank on him* - and no one even noticed.

Yosef’s Prophetic Coronation Day

Pharaoh then held a public coronation/inauguration ceremony for Yosef, declaring to all the people of Egypt that Yosef was now their leader – second only to Pharaoh himself. He had a flurry of symbolic covenant signs - a ring, a robe, a chariot, a title, and a dominion – in mind to seal the deal.

V’yasar Par’oh et-tabato me'al yado v’yiten otah al-yad Yosef
Pharaoh took his ring off his own hand and placed it on the hand of Yosef.

V’yalbesh oto big’dei-shesh
He had him dressed in the finest linen garments,

V’yasem revid ha-zahav al-tzavaro
and placed a gold chain around his neck.

V’yarkev oto b’mirkevet ha-mishneh
He had [Yosef] ride in his second royal chariot,

asher-lo vayikrei'u l’fanav avrech
and [those going] ahead of him announced, 'The Viceroy!'

v’naton oto al kol-eretz Mitzrayim
[Yosef] was thus given authority over all Egypt.

[Genesis 41:41-43]

Look at the elements of this coronation ceremony – the *signet ring* from the king’s own hand, the finest *linen garments*, a *gold chain* for the neck, a *royal chariot*, a *herald to go before him* and declare the nearness of his coming. Yosef’s experience is of course prophetic of things to come. As the sages declare: "*Ma'aseh Avot Siman L'Banim*" – *i.e.* the events of the lives of the forefathers foretell future events that will happen to their children. A few hundred years after the events we read about in today’s aliyah we will get a taste of what that means. What will the descendants of Yosef and his brothers eat when they make their exodus from Egypt? *Matzah* (unleavened bread). Why? According to Torah, it was because their departure was so sudden and hurried – like Yosef’s departure from prison – that their dough did not have time to rise. Their redemption – like Yosef’s - happened in just a few moments time.

Slavery to freedom, *microwave style*. This is how the future redemption will happen as well. In a moment. In *the twinkling of an eye*.

Yosef's Prophetic Name Change

Pharaoh cannot have a foreigner rule over his people. So, he decides to make Yosef an Egyptian. He gives him an Egyptian name and has him marry an Egyptian princess - the daughter of a priest of Egypt's state religion.

Vayikra Far'oh shem-Yosef Tzaf'nat Paneach

Pharaoh gave Yosef the name Tzaf'nat Paneach.

[Genesis 41:45(a)]

Yosef joins a growing number of Torah heroes to undergo a name change. *Avram* became *Avraham*. *Sarai* became *Sarah*. *Ya'akov* became *Yisrael*. Later, Hoshea (son of Nun) will become Y'hoshua. But the name of *Yosef ben Yisrael* changing to ... *Tzafanat Paneach*? A fine Hebrew name like Yosef changing to ... something not just totally foreign, but blatantly pagan? Sounds like what will happen centuries later to cloud the identities of Daniel and his friends in their captivity in Babylon, doesn't it? Daniel was assigned the name *Beltshazzar*. His Hebrew friends Hananyah, Misha'el, and Azariah were given the names *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abednego*.

It even sounds a little bit like what will happen to cloud the identity and Hebraic essence and message of Yeshua of Natzret, and his closest associates, in the 'times of the Gentiles'. Yeshua's name was changed to 'Jesus' and 'Isus' and 'Yesu', depending upon which culture he was being introduced into or discussed in. Sh'mon Kefa's name was similarly changed to 'Simon Peter'. Ya'akov's name was likewise changed to 'James' [English] and 'Santiago' [Spanish]. Yochanan's name was changed as well to 'John'.

Note the pattern – each time the Holy One has chosen to open a new fount by which to release the blessing of the Avrahamic covenant over the nations of the world, the world's leaders have looked for ways to cloud the true Hebrew identities and Hebraic essence of that fount. Just *look what Pharaoh started*. So, what on earth does the name Pharaoh chose for Yosef – *Tzaf'nat Paneach* - mean, anyway? Speculative translations I have read - none particularly convincing - include:

Revealer of secrets
savior of the land;
and
wise man fleeing from pollution

Hebrew legend considers the Egyptian name as containing a hidden Hebraic message – teaching that the Hebrew letters corresponding to the individual sounds of Joseph's Egyptian name paint a Hebraic picture. There are 8 Hebrew letters in all used to transliterate Yosef's Egyptian name. The first such letter, *tzade*, pictures a son or heir bowing down reverently in submission under the Hand of God. The

second letter, *feh*, pictures a mouth opening in speech, declaring something. The third letter, *nun*, pictures a son or heir standing upright, independently. The fourth letter, *tav*, pictures a *covenant sign* or a mark of redemption and special consecration. The fifth letter, a *peh*, again pictures a mouth open in speech, declaring something. The sixth letter, *ayin*, pictures a man's innermost being or soul. The seventh letter, another *nun*, again pictures a son or heir, standing upright. The eighth and final letter, a *chet*, pictures a *chuppah* [canopy, outdoor shelter], under which a marriage or other covenant-cutting ceremony is transacted.

The reality is that we do not really know what the name *Tzafanat Paneach* meant to Pharaoh or to the Egyptians of his day. But we can feel confident that, in this surreal *parsha*, the name change has much more to do with the future – and the things that will happen *miketz* [at the end], than it has to do with the events of Yosef's life two millennia BCE.

We can also be confident the name *Tzaf'nat Paneach* means much more than meets the eye, and almost certainly has multiple layers of prophetic meaning attached to it. So, keep this strange name in your memory banks, Beloved. Torah recorded it for a reason. Meditate on it when and to the extent the Holy One brings it up in your thoughts. And at the right moment in your life – or that of your children – perhaps the meaning and prophetic import of that name will suddenly become clear. Just look for someone in your day and time whose life and experiences look a lot like those of Yosef, the son of Ya'akov/Yisrael.

Yosef's Prophetic Arranged Inter-Marriage

An Egyptian title and an Egyptian name are not the only Egyptian things Pharaoh gave to Yosef. He also gave him an Egyptian *bride*. As Torah describes it:

V'yiten-lo et-Asenat bat-Poti Fera kohen On l'ishah

He gave him Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera, the priest of On, as a wife.

[Genesis 41:45(b)]

In the Egyptian language the name of the woman given to Yosef/*Tzafanat Paneach* was *Asenat*, meaning '*belonging to Nat* [an Egyptian goddess]. Who *is* this woman? Since Torah does not specifically tell us who this woman was Hebrew legend makes some suggestions. One line of Hebrew midrash says that *Asenat* was *really the daughter of Yosef's former master, Potifar*. She was, according to the midrash, given to Yosef as a wife to prevent Yosef's former master, Potifar, or his wife, from claiming that the Prime Minister of Egypt was really their slave. After all, under ancient law, when a master married off his daughter to his slave, it was proof that he had emancipated the slave. Another *midrash* goes a step further, identifying *Asenat* as *Yosef's niece!* According to the Midrash, when Yosef's half-sister Dinah was abducted and raped by the Kena'ani prince Shechem she became pregnant

with a daughter. Ya'akov, to protect the infant from the sword of Sh'mon and Levi, and the animosity of her other brothers, supposedly put an amulet around the child's neck identifying her as his descendant and sent her down to Egypt. Once there she was adopted by Potifar's family – the same family into which Yosef was initially accepted as a slave. Years later, the midrash says, after Yosef was elevated by Pharaoh, when he traveled around the country of Egypt in his chariot tending to his official duties, the legend has it that all the young women of the country became infatuated by the young and handsome new leader, and tried to attract his attention by throwing amulets and jewelry at him. Supposedly, when Asenat threw her amulet at him Yosef noticed on it the inscription of his father, so he consented to marry her.

I do not wish to express an opinion, one way or another, as to whether this midrash is or is not historically true. It is clearly *legend, not Torah*. Historically true or not however I believe the legend may very well speak truth *prophetically*. I believe, you see, that is the purpose of most Hebrew *midrash*.

There is *a wedding* yet to come. There is to be a Bridegroom, and there is to be a bride. Both Bridegroom and bride will be of holy seed. But the identity and Hebrew essence of both will be concealed to the outside world. She will be considered as the daughter of uncleanness, the fruit of improper advances made by profane men upon holy things. She will be adopted by those who misunderstand and abuse Him. But she will keep the amulet – the sign or mark – of the *avot* [patriarchs], though she does not grasp or understand a fraction of its meaning. And it will, in time, be that by which He will identify her as *the bride prepared for Him*. His appearance on the stage of world events will be *sudden* and *stunning*. And His coronation and His wedding will occur the same day.

Think about these things. Meditate concerning them. There is much more to the story we are reading than meets the eye.

The Prophetic Names Yosef Gives to His Sons

The first test of how Yosef's elevation to Egyptian ruler-status were going to affect the loyalties and worldview learned by Yosef in his youth comes when he becomes a father. What one names his or her children, you see, is a great indicator of how he or she views the world. As children entered the new Egyptian ruler's world, which of the two people he had become would step forward? Would *Tzafanat Paneach*, the right-hand man of Pharaoh, with an eye toward acceptance in Egyptian society, give the children Egyptian names? Or would *Yosef*, staring at another generation descended from Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, connect, despite the years, the miles of desert, and the betrayals that lay between him and

his heritage, with his Hebrew roots, and give them Hebrew names, declaring the Hebrew worldview?

Od Yosef chai! [Yosef is still alive!] The children born to Egypt's new prime minister will be named not by *Tzafanat Paneach*, but by Yosef. And the names given will not be Egyptian names, but Hebrew ones.

Vayikra Yosef et-sheim ha-b'chor Menashe

Yosef named the first-born Menashe (Manassah),

ki-nashani Elohim et-kol-amali v'et kol-beit avi

For Elohim has displaced me from all my hardships and my parental home.

[Genesis 41:51]

The name chosen by Yosef for his firstborn was a Hebrew name. While most English Bibles associate this name with *forgetting* [*i.e. The Elohim has caused me to forget*], let me suggest another possibility. The name Ya'akov chose for his firstborn, *Menashe* [*mem, nun, shin, hey*] is a form of the Hebrew verb root *nasha*⁶. Rashi - the premier Hebrew Torah Commentator of all - defines the verb instead to mean, in its purest form, *to displace* – to move something or someone from its proper place. The picture drawn by Rashi's interpretation is of something or someone being *disconnected and dislocated*. The first usage in Torah is found in Genesis 32:33 to describe what the Divine Wrestler did to Ya'akov's hip socket. Of course, the effect of displacement or disconnection in the brain is forgetting – but that is just one manifestation of the displacement, disconnection, and dislocation described by the verb root *nashaw*. *Forgetting* is, thus, merely a symptom of a far more sweeping and sometimes violent process.

Under this analysis the literal translation of the name Menashe would thus seem to be *disconnection/dislocation/displacement*. Yosef would be declaring not that he has been made to *forget* his heritage – which he obviously hasn't, or he would not be giving his son a Hebrew instead of an Egyptian name – but would be declaring instead that he recognizes that *it is the Holy One who has displaced, disconnected, and dislocated him from his Hebrew roots and his father's household*. This would mean that, with the birth of his firstborn son, at least, Yosef had begun to understand what he would declare to his brothers a few years later: ***“... do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. Genesis 45:5.***

Yosef's lapse into Hebrew thoughts and language at the birth of his firstborn son was not a fluke. When his second son is born Yosef again turns to the Hebrew language and worldview to find a name for his child.

⁶ *Nasha* is *nun, shin, hey*, Strong's Hebrew word #5382.

V'et sheim ha-sheini kara Efrayim

and the second he named Efrayim,

ki-hifrani Elohim b'erezt Mitzrayim ...

for the Holy One has made me bear fruit in the land of Egypt."

*Efrayim*⁷ is a plural noun form of the Hebrew verb root *parah*⁸. The Hebraic message of this name is that, in association with displacing and disconnecting the Holy One from his family, the Holy One has caused him to fulfill his purpose in life in the land to which he was displaced.

The Holy One had in fact delivered into Yosef's hand all the fruit of the land of, and that fruit – the fullness of the harvest - was *his to bear*. And so will it be in the end of days.

Questions For Today's Study

1. Let's begin our study with a few questions.

[A] Why did Pharaoh choose Yosef to administer his kingdom?

[B] The word translated "God" in verse 38 is *Elohim* [Strong's Hebrew word #430]. Write the definitions/meanings Strong's gives for that word. In Richards' (or Vines') Expository dictionary, look up "God" and summarize what he says about the meaning of the word *Elohim*.

[C] In Strong's look up the words translated as "discreet" and "wise" [KJV] in verse 39. Write the Hebrew words and their meanings.

[D] What physical things did Pharaoh bestow on Yosef in order to let everyone know that Yosef was now the lord of Egypt?

[E] What name did Pharaoh give to Yosef, and what does that name mean?

[F] What was the name of the wife given to Yosef by Pharaoh. What did her name mean?

[G] What were the names of the children born to Yosef? What does each of their names mean?

[H] List the things that happened "at the end" [*Miketz*] of the seven years of plenty.

[I] Read verse 55. Then read John 2:1-5 from the B'rit Chadasha. What was Miryam [Mary] saying to the servants of the Bride and Bridegroom?

[J] Consider (and list) the ways in which what happened to Yosef in today's aliyah is representative of what happened to Messiah Yeshua 'at the end' [*Miketz*] of his incarnation among the sons of men. It might help to make two columns on your paper. List the things that happened to Yosef on the left side, and any corresponding things that happened to Yeshua on the right side.

⁷ *Efrayim* is a Hebrew name written *alef, fey, resh, yod, mem*. It is pronounced *ef-rah'-yeem*.

⁸ *Parah* is *peh, resh, hey*. Strong's Hebrew word #6509, it means *to bear fruit*

2. In the Haftarah selected for today Shlomo [Solomon] displays the wisdom for which he asked the Holy One at the beginning of his reign.

[A] In today's world what do you think would happen if the President of the United States or the Prime Minister of Israel issued the decree that the child in today's story be cut in half with the sword?

[B] Why does the Scripture record that this seemingly evil and nonsensical decree was a manifestation of the Holy One's wisdom?

[C] Why did Shlomo decide to give the child to the woman who begged him not to kill the child, but to give it to the other woman?

3. In today's thematically connected verse from the B'rit Chadasha Shaul reminds the troubled Messianic Community in Corinth of the attitude and manner in which he came to them to present the essential life-changing truths about the Messiah. Shaul says:

*I determined not to know anything among you
except Yeshua Ha-Mashiach - and Him crucified.*

[I Corinthians 2:2]

[A] In Strong's look up the word translated as "know" in verse 2. Write the Greek word and its meaning. What Hebrew word do you think Shaul was thinking about which we would translate into English as "know"?

[B] What was the one thing Shaul said he resolved to "know" in connection with his dealings with the Corinthians?

[C] What did Shaul have to resolve to "not know" in order to do this?

*May the Lights of Chanukah refresh
your recollection of what He has promised will happen 'at the end' [Miketz]!*

The Rabbi's Son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 75:4-5, 16-24

*There are no pangs in their [the boastful and wicked's] death,
But their strength is firm.
They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men.*

*If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.
When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me-
Until I went into the sanctuary of the Holy One,
then I understood their end.
Surely You set them in slippery places;
You cast them down to destruction.*

*Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
As a dream when one awakes, so, HOLY ONE, when You awake,
You will despise their image.
Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind.
I was so foolish and ignorant;
I was like a beast before You.
Nevertheless I am continually with You;
You hold me by my right hand.
You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Whom have I in heaven but You?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.
My flesh and my heart fail;
But the Holy One is the strength of my heart - and my portion forever.*