

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayigash:*** **Genesis 46:28- 47:27**
 Haftarah: **Ezekiel 37:24-28**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Luke 6:27-49**

Let them dwell in the land of Goshen.

[Genesis 47:6]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 112:1-3;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 8, *Mishpat* [Justice]

V'et-Yehudah shalach lefanav el-Yosef l'horot lefanav Goshnah – Then he sent Yehudah ahead of him to prepare things in Goshen **Genesis 46:28a.**

Road trip, anyone? If you are feeling adventurous, Beloved, you might want to grab a backpack, because another great Ya'akovian Odyssey – one that the world will be talking about for generations – has just gotten underway. A caravan consisting of every Hebrew soul alive (save Yosef who, as we now know, has been sent before us to Egypt), is rumbling steadily westward. Sheep, camels, donkeys, oxen, and sixty-nine souls, together with wagons containing all our possessions, is bound for the land of crocodiles, sphinxes, pyramids, Pharaohs, Potifar-types, magicians, mambas, and monitor lizards. The *Pharaoh-de-jure* has reached out to us, saying: ***I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land.*** Genesis 45:18. What were we to do but take him at his word? Better to be strangers in a land not our own, and servants of a foreign ruler, than die of hunger in famine-stricken Kena'an. It can't be all THAT BAD in Egypt - can it? And even if it turns out that is all THAT BAD – well, at least Yosef will be there to guide us through the worst of it, won't he?

All systems are 'go'. Tent stakes have been pulled up and packed with their canvases onto wagons. Each wagon has been hitched to a beast of burden. Every stray sheep, goat, donkey, camel, and ox belonging to the *moshavs* that Ya'akov established along the road that stretches out between Hebron and Be'er-sheva has been rounded up and formed into one great herd/flock combine. Each of the young Hebrew shepherds has sounded his own unique 'call' or 'whistle. The sons and daughters of the Avrahamic Covenant are on the road again. The *Diaspora* – *i.e.* the long and oft-repeated absence of the sons and daughters of the patriarchs from the Land of Promise – is officially ready to begin! Though abundant room has been left for improvisation in individual situations, the main script has already been

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written². The stage has been set. The backdrops and props have been prepared. All we need now is for the Great Director to shout: *'Israel's Prototypical Diaspora – Take One! Lights ... Camera ... Action!'*

But first – let's talk about the journey itself! The 200+ mile trek from Hebron to the Nile River Delta was long and arduous. The terrain in the Negev was treacherous, water scarce, and vegetation sparse; but those challenges were nothing compared to the gauntlet we encountered in the sandy plains and rugged volcanic rock mountains of the Sinai Peninsula. In the vast Sinaitic desert-scape our little 'wagon train of destiny' had to face not only intense heat but *haboobs*, highwaymen, and hyenas, caracals that hiss, and cobras that hooded and gave chase. Babies cried. Children whined. Mothers fretted. Men sweated and swore under their breath. But we kept going – day after day, week after week – our aging patriarch Ya'akov made sure of that. He was determined to see his long-lost son - and protégé - Yosef again.

Od Avinu Chai – Our Father Lives!

After decades of wallowing in grief-struck despondency and letting his sons run his household into the ground, Ya'akov/Yisrael is 'back' – and seemingly strong as ever. The news about Yosef has brought him back to *joie de vivre*. He is awake, alive, large, and in-charge. He is bursting with energy and enthusiasm. He is smiling, laughing ... even dancing! He is excited about things like sunsets and sunsets, new moons and full moons, and pronouncing Sabbath blessings over his entire family again. He is passionate about the blessed opportunities of life again. He is suddenly thinking, talking, and acting like Yisrael again. He is personally interacting with the livestock again. He is laughing and joking with his grandchildren. He is winking playfully at – and doing little "honey-do's" for – his more-beloved-than-ever wife Leah. Most important of all, he is even having long conversations with the Holy One. He is once again thinking about the future instead of the past. He is once again focusing on the goodness of the Holy One and the protocols of the covenant instead obsessing over the troubles he has seen, the mistakes he has made, and the injustice of it all. He is finally thinking, speaking, and behaving like a son of the Covenant again - and that makes him ... and his seed ... a force-to-be-reckoned-with once more.

Of course, moving from one country to another and having to deal with and adapt

² The 'Script' referred to is the prophetic Word of the Holy One to Avram in Genesis 15:14-16: "***Know for a certainty that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they will come out with great possessions In the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Emori is not yet complete.***"

to a new culture are nothing new to Ya'akov. His grand prophetic odyssey began with a journey in the opposite direction – followed by a long season of ‘trial by exile’ in the land of the north. It now appears that his odyssey will end in a similarly long season of ‘trial by exile’ in a very different part of the world. To everything there is a season ... and a time to every purpose under heaven.

Huff and puff all you want, Pharaoh! Make up all the lies, shout all the slurs, and devise all the genocidal pogroms you want, You Potifarians and Raging Nation Cabals! When this little adventure is all over, and the smoke clears, we will see who is still standing - and who is a mere footnote of history.

***I Will Bless Those Who Bless You;
And Those Who Curse You I Will Curse***

Nations of the world, this is a test. How you relate to and deal with this little band of migrants will determine what role, if any, you and your households will play in the Great Redemptive Drama the Holy One is writing. How significant – and how pleasant - a role you and your nation will be assigned will be determined by how you receive and behave toward these Sons and Daughters of Avraham. Will you offer them a cup of water and a listening ear? Or will you give them the back of your hand and a piece of your mind? Just remember the words that Holy One spoke to Avraham: ***I will bless those who bless you; but those who curse you I will curse.*** I assure you, He will remember these words even when you forget.

Egyptians, you are up first. You think this is Israel’s trial, but you are wrong – it is yours. Get ready! You are about to receive the most important visitors you will ever have. People of the West, be very, very careful how you treat this particular set of foreigners! These simple, ragged souls may not look like much upon first glance. They appear displaced, disoriented, ragged, hungry, overwhelmed and tired. They have no army. They claim no earthly king. They bow before no *shaman*. Ah, but there is much more to these than first appears. Every one of them has been handpicked and trained by the Creator of the Universe. Each one of the families they represent is destined to play a very important role in Most High God’s Great Redemptive Plan for Creation and mankind. These people *never travel alone*. He Who chose them watches over them like a hawk. He Who calls them His own serves them as their Unseen Shepherd – and their Sovereign Protector. They are the apple of His Eye. Ignore this fact –and dare to mock or abuse them – and you will find out soon enough the depth of His care for and commitment to them.

The Real Purpose of – and the Redemptive Plan Behind - the Diaspora

To the casual observer it might appear that the Exile of the children of Avraham is about one of two things: *food* or *Divine disfavor*. It seems to be about food

because multitudes in all nations are anxious to sell their homes, their lands, their possessions – even their very *souls* – just for something to eat. But *do not be deceived*. All this focus on food is just a smokescreen. The Holy One does not send his people begging bread. He does not *need Pharaoh* – or Egyptian granaries - to feed them.

To others the Exile of the sons and daughters of Avraham seems to be about Divine disfavor. They see in the exile evidence of a rejection of the Hebrews as a people, because they have so horribly ‘sinned against God’ - as if all men, of all races, all tribes, all tongues, and all bloodlines have not done so in equal measure!

Some like to imagine the scattering of the Hebrew people to the four corners of the earth as the ‘curse of the Wandering Jew’ – evidence of some presumed Divine judgment in which they take sadistic pleasure. Are they ever in for a shock!

You see, Beloved, what is at stake on planet earth in times of Exile for the People of Covenant is much, much more than food or judgment. The reason the Holy One is sending Hebrews into all the world is not because He has rejected or give up on them. What is really at stake is *the redemptive plan of the Holy One for mankind*. You see, with the Exile the groundwork is being laid for *the greatest deliverance story known to man – yet*, at least. Yes, I am talking about the **Exodus**. Oh, I know, the Exodus is generations away as the mind of man thinks of things. Neither the Hebrews making their way South nor the Egyptians have any idea what stunning things are going to happen just a few generations hence. Ah, but in the mind of the Holy One, the Exile that begins today and the Exodus about which we will read in the second book of Torah are simply two sides of the same coin.

Just Exactly Where Is that ‘Good Land’ in Egypt Pharaoh Promised Yosef’s Brethren?

A couple of chapters back when Yosef revealed his true identity to his brethren he made some *pretty amazing promises* to them about where they would get to live and how they would be taken care of if they would come to sojourn with him in Egypt for the rest of the famine. Yosef told them specifically:

V’yashavta v’eretz-Goshen

You will be able to settle in the Goshen district

v’hayita karov elay

and be close to me -

atah uvaneicha uv’nei vaneicha v’tzoncha

you, your children, your grandchildren, your sheep,

uv’karcha v’chol-asher-lach

your cattle, and all that you own.

V'chilkalti otcha sham

I will fully provide for you there,

[Genesis 45:10 –11(a)]

Yosef had the land called **Goshen**³ in mind for his family from the very beginning. But Goshen was of course not really Yosef's land to offer or give. Yosef was, as you will recall, only Second-in-Command in Egypt. The decision as to where Yosef's family would sojourn was really not up to Yosef – it was up to Pharaoh.

If you were paying close attention a couple of days ago, when we read about Pharaoh's invitation to Yosef's family to come and sojourn in his country, you may have noticed that Pharaoh's invitation did not say a word about Goshen. The only commitment Pharaoh made to the patriarchal family was *I will give you **et-tuv erez Mitzrayim** – i.e. a good land in Egypt ... and you will eat **et-chelev ha-aretz** – i.e. the fat of the land.* **Genesis 45:17-18.** Pharaoh was, after all, a shrewd politician. He was careful to make no specific commitment that he might later regret. He left himself a lot of 'wobble room'. All he promised Yosef's family was some 'good land' in Egypt.

The promise of 'good land in Egypt' sounded great, of course, as all politician's promises do – but it was, at the same time, mysteriously vague and subjective. To Pharaoh, of course, all the land in Egypt, including the driest part of the desert, was 'good land'. In his politician's mind, exactly what of Egypt's 'good land' he would allow Yosef's Hebrew family to inhabit, should they really decide to pull up stakes in Kena'an, remained in question – and would be decided, if necessary, by him alone, based upon *political considerations of what he felt was best for Egypt.* And so Yosef developed a bold strategy to make the land of Goshen seem to Pharaoh's mind the most logical place in the world for the Hebrew immigrants to settle.

Yosef's Strategy to Maintain the Separation of the Covenant Nation Yet Insure It Meaningful Opportunities of Influence

Yosef had to arrange it so that *not just his preference, but political considerations of what was best for Egypt,* would favor Goshen as the place where the Hebrew immigrants were allowed to settle. His strategy involved making the land of Goshen, where he wanted his family to settle, an abomination to Pharaoh and Egypt – a place they would not want to go, and would be glad to give to someone

³ It is almost certain that Pharaoh and the Egyptians called the region Yosef called Goshen by a different, distinctly Egyptian name. The Septuagint renders this region by the name *Heroonpolis*, meaning "'city of Heroon". Ancient geographers placed the city of Heroon in the eastern part of Egypt, not far from the Arabian Gulf. No Egyptian etymology for the name "Goshen" has ever been found. Indeed, the name Goshen appears, instead, to be of semitic origin. Strong's speculates that the word means *drawing near*.

else. How could he do this? Yosef's years in Egypt had taught him Egyptian culture and religion. He knew that Egyptian culture considered 'stuff' – i.e. personal belongings – of non-Egyptians to be 'unclean'. He knew as well that Egyptian religion considered sheep to be 'sacred' representatives of the gods. Hence, he told them: *I will go and tell Pharaoh the following:*

Achai uveit-avi asher b'erezt Kena'an ba'u elay

My brothers and my father's family have come to me from Kana'an.

V'ha-anashim ro'ei tzon

These men deal in livestock and are tenders of sheep.

ki-anshei mikneh hayu v'tzonam uvekaram

They have brought along their sheep, their cattle,

v'chol-asher lahem hevi'u

and all their possessions.'

V'hayah ki-yikra lachem Paroh v'amar mah-ma'aseichem

'When Pharaoh summons you and inquires as to your occupation,

V'amartem anshei mikneh hayu avadeicha

you must say, we your servants are dealers in livestock

minei'ureinu v'ad-atah gam-anachnu gam-avoteinu

from youth, we and our ancestors have all done so

ba'avur teshvu b'erezt Goshen

You will then be able to settle in the Goshen district,

ki-to'avat Mitzrayim kol-ro'eh tzon

since all shepherds are considered an abomination by the culture of Egypt.

[Genesis 46:31-32]

Yosef intends to keep his kinsmen as far away from Pharaoh's palace as possible. After an obligatory introduction, he wants them tucked safely away from Pharaoh's prying eyes and clever manipulations.

Yosef's plan worked, of course. Goshen is indeed about to become our home-away-from-home! And so, as Tevye said at the beginning of the play *'Fiddler on the Roof'*, regarding the non-Jewish majority that resided in the Russian village of Anatevka, Yosef's brethren could soon say regarding the Egyptian population of the country of their exile: "*We don't bother them, and ... so far ... they don't bother us*".

Yisrael: Meet Pharaoh

Also in today's aliyah we find Ya'akov/Yisrael, son of Yitzchak, worshipper of the Holy One, meeting for the first time with Pharaoh, the man who is – to all outer appearances – the most powerful man on earth. The chronicles the only recorded interaction between Pharaoh and our forefather begins in a strange way: Torah tells

us: *Vayevarech Ya'akov et-Paroh* – i.e. and Ya'akov blessed Pharaoh. The Holy One had promised Avraham that '*in you and your seed shall all families of the earth be blessed.*' Genesis 12:3. He later renewed that promise directly to Ya'akov. Genesis 28:14. The blessing Ya'akov gave to Pharaoh was a down payment on all the blessings he – and we – are called to give to the nations and peoples of the earth. Are you carrying forward this calling wherever you are, Dear One?

Torah then records that Pharaoh asked Ya'akov how old he was. Ya'akov replied: *yemei shnei megurei* – the years of my wandering have been *sh'loshim ume'at shanah* – 30 and 100 years. Ya'akov then went beyond the question Pharaoh had asked, and said: The days of my life have been *me'at v'ra'im* – few and hard. I have not lived as long as my fathers did during their pilgrimage through life. Why did Pharaoh need to know that? For one reason, Ya'akov was declaring that he was *nowhere close to ready to die*. He was not about to *go gentle into that good night*. He had seen hard times – and had transcended them all. He was respectful of Pharaoh – but he was in no wise intimidated by him. He would graciously accept hospitality from Pharaoh – but he was not dependent for his life or his food upon anyone but the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

As you read of Ya'akov's audience with Pharaoh look beyond the characters involved. Ya'akov is *all Israel*. Pharaoh is the ruler of *the one-world order of the end-times*. Like two ships that pass in the night, they meet and size each other up, then go their separate ways – that is, *until the final battle*.

Yosef Institutes Financial Policies in Egypt Resembling Those That Will One Day Be Implemented Throughout the World by the 'Beast' of Revelation

As the famine continued, the earth experienced both mass migration of species (including humans) and a total redistribution of material wealth. People of all nations flooded into to Egypt to find food – and became slaves. Everyone who had money, silver, gold, or any barterable substance gave it to Yosef – on behalf of Pharaoh - to purchase the basic foodstuffs necessary to stay alive. Imagine being totally dependent on a secular government

Torah describes how Yosef went on to totally lock up the world's monetary system – all in the name of benevolence, of course - as follows: *V'lechem eyn* – i.e. *there was no bread ...* *ki-chaved ha-ra'av me'od* – i.e. *for the famine was very severe. The people of both Egypt and Canaan became weak with hunger.* *Vayelaket Yosef* – i.e. *and thus Yosef collected* *et-kol-ha-kesef* – i.e. *all the money that was to be found either in the land of Egypt or in the land of Kena'an,* *vayave Yosef et-ha-kesef beita Far'oh* – i.e. *and Yosef brought the money into Pharaoh's house.* Genesis 47:13.

Stop and try for a moment to imagine what it would be like if all the money in your world was possessed by only *one man* – a man who had no need whatever to spend any of it. Do you know what that would *do* to the economies of the nations of the world? Imagine what people would with absolutely no money with which to buy anything – especially if you know that your neighbors and any potential customers you might meet have nothing with which to buy anything you could find to sell. Such was the economic situation in the days of the famine. And such will be the economic situation in the days of the *Beast* to come. But even this was not as bad as things were destined – are destined in the end days - to get. As the famine hung on in the Middle East in the days of Yosef, after the money was all gone the people still had to find some way to eat. Torah describes what happened next as follows:

Vayitom ha-keseif me'erezt Mitzrayim ume'erezt Kena'an

When the money in both Egypt and Kana'an was used up,

vayavo'u chol-Mitzrayim el-Yosef l'emor havah-lanu lechem

Egyptians from all over came to Yosef. 'Give us bread!' they cried

V'lamah namut negdeicha ki afes kaseif

'Why should we die before you just because there is no money?'

Vayomer Yosef havu mikneichem

'Bring your livestock,' replied Yosef.

v'etnah lachem b'mikneichem im-afes kaseif

I will give you food in exchange for your animals if you have no more money.'

Vayavi'u et-mikneihem el-Yosef

They brought their livestock to Yosef

vayiten lahem Yosef lechem basusim uveimi, k'neh ha-tzon

and Yosef gave them bread in exchange for horses, flocks of sheep

uvemikneh ha-bakar uvachamorim

herds of cattle, and donkeys.

vayenahalem b'lechem b'chol-mikneihem b'shanah hahi

He saw them through that year with bread in exchange for all their livestock.

[Genesis 47:15-17]

In the days of Yosef, after everyone ran out of *money* they traded their *means of making money* – their teams, their milk animals, their draft animals, and their beasts of burden – to Yosef in exchange for another year's worth of food to eat. In today's world that would be equivalent to all people trading not only all their livestock, but also all their cars and their trucks and their boats and their tractors and their heavy equipment and their supplies and their tools and their stocks, bonds and marketable securities for food. Imagine now not only having no money to purchase anything – but also having *no means whatever of making money if and when the famine lifted*. It was so in the days of Yosef. It will be so again in the days of the *Beast* to come.

But there is more.

Social Engineering Phase I: 'Imagine No Possessions'

Torah tells us that when the people ran out of money, livestock, luxury items, and collectibles, and consumables to purchase food, they had no choice but to leverage their real estate.

Vayavo'u elav b'shanah ha-shenit vayomru

They [the people of Egypt] came to him the next year, and said

lo lo-nechached me'adoni

'We are not holding anything back from you, your highness.

ki im-tam ha-kesev umikneh ha-behemah el-adoni

But since the money and animal stocks are used up

lo nish'ar lifnei adoni bilti im-gviyateinu ve'admateinu

there is nothing left for you besides our dried-up bodies and our land.

Lamah namut l'eyneycha gam-anachnu gam-admateinu

Why should we die before your very eyes - us and our land?

K'neh-otanu v'et-admateinu balachem

Buy our bodies and our land in exchange for bread.

venihyeh anachnu v'admateinu avadim l'Far'oh

Let us become Pharaoh's serfs, and let our land [also be his].

veten-zera venichyeh v'lo namut

Give us seed grain! Let us live and not die!

V'ha-adamah lo teisham

Let the land not become desolate.'

Vayiken Yosef et-kol-admat Mitzrayim l'Far'oh

And so Yosef acquired all the farmland in Egypt for Pharaoh.

ki-machru Mitzrayim ish sadeihu

Every man in Egypt had sold his field,

ki-chazak aleihem ha-ra'av

for the famine was too much for them,

vatehi ha-aretz l'Far'oh

and the land became Pharaoh's property.

[Genesis 47:18-20]

Social Engineering Phase II: Population Displacement & Relocation

After acquiring all the real estate in Egypt for Pharaoh, Yosef relocated the rural population in Egypt's cities.

V'et-ha-am he-evir oto l'arim miktzeh gvul-Mitzrayim

[Yosef] moved the people to the cities in all Egypt's borders

v'ad-katzeihu

from one end to the other.

[Genesis 47:18-21]

The process Torah just described for us is called 'urbanization'. It results in cramped/overcrowded housing, the breakdown of the nuclear family structure, flare-ups of ethnic and cultural animosity, joblessness, substance abuse, increases in both violent and nonviolent crime, the proliferation of crime syndicates/cartels, drastic class divisions, civil unrest, and general discontent. If you take away a person's 'homestead'/family heritage, you see, you take away his/her sense of belonging and mattering – and he/she starts looking for meaning, purpose, and enjoyment of life in other, more toxic, and far less productive, things.

***Social Engineering Phase III:
The Death of Freedom/Collapse of Autonomy***

After all the farmland and familial homesteads were surrendered to Pharaoh, people had nothing left to give Pharaoh in exchange for food but their *bodies*. These they soon wound up having to surrender those to the government as well. They had to give up their freedom, their autonomy, and their dreams and become slaves and minions. There were so many poor, so many hungry, so many willing to do anything for food, that human life became cheap – even dispensable. Everyone was eventually ordered out of what had previously been private homes and herded into Communal 'work camps' where they served at the State's beck and call until they were no longer useful to Pharaoh. Human life was worth virtually nothing. As Torah puts it:

Vayomer Yosef el-ha-am hen kaniti etchem

Yosef announced to the people

hayom v'et-admatchem l'Far'oh

'Today I have purchased your [bodies] and your lands for Pharaoh

he-lachem zera uzratem et-ha-adamah

Here is seed grain for the fields.

Vehayah batvu'ot untatem chamishit l'Far'oh

When grain comes forth, you must give a fifth to Pharaoh

v'arba hayadot yihyeh lachem l'zera ha-sadeh

The other four parts will be yours, as seed grain for the fields

ul'ochelchem v'l'asher b'vateichem v'l'echol l'tapchem

and as food for you, your wives and your children.'

Vayomeru b'cheyitanu nimitza-chen b'eynei adoni

You have saved our lives, 'they responded. 'Just let us find favor in your eyes

vehayinu avadim l'Far'oh

For we are slaves unto Pharaoh.'
[Genesis 47:23-25]

Keep in mind that Yosef, who implemented these policies in response to a great famine, had a benevolent redeemer's eye. As long as he was in charge, the social changes he implemented remained well-meaning strategies designed to save lives. But his successors will not share his benevolence. Woe to Egypt when Yosef dies, for despots will arise in his stead! New Pharaoh's will rise to power that share neither his grand vision for redemption nor his 'good eye'. The changes he has implemented will then be used to forge a cruel, evil kingdom of Biblical proportions – a great Beast nation which will dominate the world.

It was so in the days of Yosef. It will be so again in the days of the great *Beast* to come.

Safe (For the Time Being) in Goshen, Israel Settles In For a Long Night of Exile

There were only two groups of people in the world who were spared the worst part of the nightmare that afflicted the whole earth in the latter years of the famine. The first group of people who was exempt from the Draconian economic policies of the Prototypical Beast was *the State-sponsored priesthood*. The sycophants of 'acceptable religion' were both courted and supported by Pharaoh. He felt he needed them to control the masses. For this reason, they were provided a daily ration of food, and got to retain their homes, their land, their personal property and money - in exchange, of course, for their zealous service to the Beast and the demonic forces with whom he was naturally aligned.

The second group of people that was spared the worst effects of the latter half of the seven years of famine was the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. The sons and daughters of the Covenant were strategically sheltered and provided for by Yosef, from Pharaoh's own granaries and coffers, in the land called Goshen. Torah tells us, concerning them:

Vaye'achazu vah vayifru
They acquired possessions, and were fruitful
vayirbu me'od
and they increased/prospered greatly.
[Genesis 47:27]

It was so in the days of Yosef. But will it be so in the days of the Beast that is to come?

Questions For Today's Study

1. Why did Ya'akov/Yisrael send *Yehudah* ahead of him to Egypt?

2. Yosef prepared his brothers to meet with Pharaoh, whose ways and whose thoughts were strange to them.

[A] What did Yosef tell his brothers to say was their occupation when Pharaoh asked?

[B] Why do you think this was important?

[C] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the words translated as "shepherd" and "abomination" in verse 34. Write each Hebrew word and its verb root, and describe the Hebraic word picture each word presents.

[D] Why do you think a shepherd was an "abomination" to the Egyptians?

3. Regarding Ya'akov's meeting with Pharaoh:

[A] What do you think Genesis 47:7 and 47:10 mean when they say that Ya'akov/Yisrael "blessed" Pharaoh? Look up "blessed" in Strong's and write a definition that will explain what happens when one person "blesses" another.

[B] Why do you think Ya'akov/Yisrael told Pharaoh that his years had been "few"?

[C] Why do you think he described his years as "evil"?

4. In the concluding aliyah of *Vayigash* the Holy One uses Yosef's position in Egypt to redistribute all the wealth and wealth-producing properties of the world. This prophetic wealth-redistribution process is described as occurring in three stages.

[A] What were the three stages?

[B] What verses discuss each stage?

5. Yosef decided how much of each harvest should belong to Pharaoh. How much did he say had to go to Pharaoh?

6. What happened to *B'nei Yisrael* while the famine went on in Egypt? Describe how *B'nei Yisrael* survived when they first arrived, and how they fared as the famine continued.

7. In Ezekiel 37:24 and 25 the Holy One says that His "servant" David will be "king", "shepherd" and "prince" over the reunited descendants of Yehudah and of Yosef. Here are these two verses as they transliterate from the original Hebrew:

V'avdi David melech aleyhem

My servant David will be king over them

V'ro'eh echad yihyeh l'chulam uv'mishpatai

and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my judgments,

yelechu v'chukotai yishmeru v'asu otam

will walk in My statutes, and lovingly, carefully make/build/do them.

V'yash'vu al ha-aretz asher natati l'avdi l'Ya'akov
They will dwell in the land which I gave to Ya'akov My servant

asher yashvu-vah avoteichem
in which your fathers dwelt,

v'yash'vu aleyha hemah uveneihem uv'nei v'neihem ad-olam
they, and their children, and their children's children, forever;

v'David avedi nasi lahem l'olam
and David My servant will be their prince forever.

[A] Look up the definitions of each of these words and tell how they are alike and how they are different.

[B] How will David become king, shepherd, and prince?

8. In the last few verses of this week's Haftarah aliyah Ezekiel speaks forth the prophetic word of the Holy One regarding the spiritual regeneration and physical restoration which will occur in the descendants of Yosef and the descendants of Yehudah in the 'last days'.

V'charati lahem b'rit shalom
In addition, I will make a covenant of shalom with them

B'rit olam yihyeh otam
(it will be an everlasting covenant);

unetatim v'hirbeiti otam
and I will establish them and multiply them,

v'natati et-mikdashi b'tocham-l'olam
and I will set My sanctuary in their midst for all time.

V'hayah mishkani aleihem
My dwelling place will be with them;

vehayiti lahem l'Elohim v'hemah yihyu-li l'am
I will be their God, and they will be my people.

V'yade'u ha-goyim ki ani Adonai m'kadesh et-Yisra'el
Then nations will know that I, the Holy One, sanctify Israel,

bihyot mikdashi b'tocham l'olam
when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.

[A] Describe in your own words the "B'rit Shalom" covenant that the Holy One promises to make with B'nei Yisrael. Remember to state what part B'nei Yisrael will perform as well as what part the Holy One will perform.

[B] What is the Holy One's purpose in establishing this "B'rit Shalom"?

[C] According to Ezekiel 37:28 when will the nations know that the Holy

One is “God”?

[i] What has to happen first?

[ii] What do you think that means?

9. Our English translations of the Bible employ the word *sanctuary* [Hebrew, *mik'dash*] twice in today's Haftarah aliyah. In fact it could be argued that the regeneration and restoration prophesied by Ezekiel cannot take place without re-establishment of the *sanctuary*.

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the words our English Bibles translate as *sanctuary*. Write the Hebrew word and its definition(s).

[B] Reread verses 26-28. What do you think the Holy One is talking about when he uses the word we translate as *sanctuary*?

10. In today's aliyah from the apostolic writings Messiah teaches concerning the Torah lifestyle in practical application. If Torah is real in your life, and you love the Holy One with all your heart, soul, and mind; if you fear Him more than you fear any man, or any loss, or any pain; and if you treasure Him and His covenant more than you treasure any possession or tangible thing on earth, or even your own life; THEN you will *sh'ma*, *sh'mar*, and *asah* His Words, and your life will look like what Messiah describes. Here is a more or less common English translation of His teaching:

But I tell you who sh'ma [hear]:

love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you, and bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.

To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other; and from him who takes away your cloak, don't withhold your coat also.

Give to everyone who asks you, and don't ask him who takes away your goods to give them back again.

"As you would like people to do to you, do exactly so to them.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them.

If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners do the same.

If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive back as much.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of Ha'Elyon; for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.

Therefore be merciful even as your Father is also merciful.

Don't judge, And you won't be judged.

Don't condemn, And you won't be condemned.

Set free, And you will be set free. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be given to you.

For with the same measure you measure it will be measured back to you."

[A] What does loving enemies have to do with Torah? What does it have to do with your relationship with the Holy One?

[B] List the ways Yeshua teaches that our “love” of enemies is to be acted out.

[C] Is what the Master is teaching contrary to the Torah of Moshe (for instance, Exodus 21:24-25)? Explain your thoughts. [**Hint**: be careful in interpreting Exodus 21:24-25; you might want to read that verse in context- read Exodus 21:22 - 22:9 to get a feel for what is being discussed].

[D] What is the Master’s explanation as to why people who are truly Torah observant will do the things mentioned in verses 27-31 of Luke 6?

[E] In verse 35 the Master uses a group translators call “the sons [from the Greek “*huios*”] of God [from the Greek “*hupsistos*” – *i.e.* the “**Most High**”]. What does characteristics/signs does the Master associate with these “sons of God”?

[F] To follow through with this ‘new’ concept of “*Sons of God*”, see Psalm 82, Hoshea 1:10, Luke 20:34-36, John 1:12, John 11:52, Romans 8:13-30, Galatians 3:26-29, Galatians 4:6, Philippians 2:15, Hebrews 2:10, and I John 3:1-10. Write a paragraph explaining who you think the “*sons of God*” are and what they will *do*.

[G] Relate Yeshua’s teaching on dealing with those who hate and mistreat you to what Yosef did in regard to his brothers. Did Yeshua institute something new? Or did He bring back into focus something that had been there all along?

11. Yeshua continues to explain the Torah lifestyle in practical, everyday terms to the multitude of Jews who have come to hear Him. His subject matter in these verses is the way in which an individual, seeking to be a *tzaddik* [righteous person], is to look at and relate to other people. He is pointing out that being a *tzaddik* means concentrating on living out Torah in one’s own life, and resisting the temptation to set oneself up as a moral policeman or “personal trainer” for others. Yeshua then launches into a series of parables. We will look first at the parable of *the blind leading the blind*:

***Can the blind guide the blind? Won't they both fall into a pit?
A talmid is not above his teacher,
but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.***

***Why do you see the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye,
but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye?
Or how can you tell your brother,***

***'Brother, let me remove the speck of chaff that is in your eye,'
when you yourself don't see the beam that is in your own eye?***

***You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye,
and then you can see clearly to remove the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye.***

[A] What does *the parable of the blind leading the blind* [*i.e.* the blind guide]

mean to you? Who is a “blind” man?

[B] How does *the man with a plank in his eye* relate to the blind guide?

[C] How does this parable relate to the warning to “**Judge not, that you be not judged ...**”?

12. Yeshua concludes His Great Discourse on the Torah lifestyle with a *parable about a wise (and a foolish) builder*.

Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say?

*Everyone who comes to me, and hears [Hebrew, *sh'ma's*] My words,
and does [Hebrew, *asah's*] them, I will show you who he is like.*

*He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock.
When a flood arose, the stream broke against that house,
and could not shake it, because it was founded on the rock.*

*But he who hears [Hebrew, *sh'ma's*] and doesn't do [Hebrew, *asah*],
is like a man who built a house on the eretz without a foundation,
against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.*

[Luke 6:46-49]

What basic teachings is Yeshua referring to which must be heeded if one is going to be able to remain a **tzaddik** in the midst of the flood and torrent that is coming? [Warning: Don't answer based on doctrines you have been taught or have accepted or taught yourself, but on what Yeshua **says**, in this aliyah!]

*As your stories unfold, according to the Master's Plan,
may you become – and serve the world as – true sons and daughters
of the Maker of the Heavens and the earth.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 112:1-3

Praise the Holy One!

*Blessed is the man who fears the Holy One –
who delights greatly in his mitzvot.*

His seed will be mighty in the land.

The generation of the upright will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in his house.

His righteousness endures forever.