

# THE OPEN BIBLE



## Parasha Miketz

- Genesis 41:1-44:17
- 1 Kings 3:15-4:1
- Matthew 27:15-46

## The Torah Portion at a Glance

Joseph's imprisonment finally ends when

Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows that are swallowed up by seven lean cows, and of seven fat ears of grain swallowed by seven lean ears. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of hunger, and advises Pharaoh to store grain during the plentiful years. Pharaoh appoints Joseph governor of Egypt. Joseph marries Asenat, daughter of Potiphar, and they have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Famine spreads throughout the region, and food can be obtained only in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain; the youngest, Benjamin, stays home, for Jacob fears for his safety. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him; he accuses them of being spies, insists that they bring Benjamin to prove that they are who they say they are, and imprisons Simeon as a hostage. Later, they discover that the money they paid for their provisions has been mysteriously returned to them.

Jacob agrees to send Benjamin only after Judah assumes personal and eternal responsibility for him. This time Joseph receives them kindly, releases Shimon, and invites them to an eventful dinner at his home. But then he plants his silver goblet, purportedly imbued with magic powers, in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers set out for home the next morning they are pursued, searched, and arrested when the goblet is discovered. Joseph offers to set them free and retain only Benjamin as his slave.

(adapted from chabad.org)

## The Messiah in the Torah Portion

Once again the Messiah is clearly foretold in the pages of Torah. Our reading focuses on the life of Yosef and how he is taken from the pit, to the prison, and then to the palace. This is an exact representation of Y'shua HaMoshiach. As Yosef was lifted above his brothers, so too Y'shua rules and reigns. And as Yosef's brothers came to him and did not recognize him, the Jewish people today do not quickly recognize Y'shua. The Torah says that Yosef was clean shaven like an Egyptian. He didn't look like a Hebrew. Yosef also spoke through an interpreter. He didn't sound like a Hebrew. Today, mainstream Christianity portrays a Gentile Jesus with blue eyes and blond hair. It is very hard for Jewish people and other unbelievers to recognize their Messiah because of how he is portrayed by the interpreter of Christianity. Thus, our mission becomes clear. We must present to the world the true representation of Y'shua. And we must show others unconditional forgiveness. In next week's portion we will read of Yosef granting forgiveness

to his brothers AND THEN the 12 sons of Jacob are reunited. It is only through our efforts to worship and witness of the Hebrew Messiah that the lost sheep of the house of Israel will come together. Pray today that YHWH will use you to witness about Y'shua to someone searching for the truth.

Below is another chart that describes the many parallels between Y'shua and Yosef. (Source unknown)

Parallel	Yosef	Y'shua
Most favored of their fathers	Genesis 37:3	Mark 1:11
Brothers hated them because of their special status	Genesis 37:4	Matt 21:33-41 (Y'shua is the "son" of the parable)
Given vision into the future	Genesis 37:6	Matt 24:3
Hated for their teachings	Genesis 37:8	John 7:7
Brothers plotted to kill them	Genesis 37:18	Matt 26:4
Put into the ground	Genesis 37:24	Mark 15:46
Raised three times	Raised up out of the pit(Genesis 37:28)  Raised up to be ruler of Egypt (Genesis 41:41)  Raised up ("made alive" again) when Jacob was told he was still alive(Genesis 45:26-28)	Raised up on the cross(John 19:17-18)  Raised up from the grave (Matt 18:5-6)  Raised up to heaven(Acts 1:9)
Given over to gentiles	Genesis 37:28	Acts 11:1
Sold for the price of a slave	Genesis 37:28	Matt 26:15
Taken into Egypt to avoid being killed	Genesis 37:28	Matt 2:13
Dead to his father	Genesis 37:33	Luke 23:46
Resisted temptation	Genesis 39:8-9	Heb 4:15
Gained the confidence of others quickly	Genesis 39:3	Matt 8:8
Became a servant	Genesis 39:4	Phil 2:7
Falsely accused	Genesis 39:14 (Potiphar's wife)	Mark 14:56 (chief priests)
Silent before their accusers	Genesis 39:20	Mark 15:4
Condemned between two prisoners - one was saved the other was not	Genesis 40:2-3	Luke 23:32
Held for two, and freed on the third	Genesis 41:1	Luke 9:22
Taught by <u>YHWH</u>	Genesis 41:16	John 5:19
The Spirit of YHWH was in them	Genesis 41:38	Luke 4:1

Arose into a new life	Genesis 41:41	Mark 16:6
Began ministry at 30 years of age	Genesis 41:46	Luke 3:23
Saved people from certain death	Genesis 41:55, 42:1-2	John 10:27-29
Everyone (both Jew and Gentile) came to him for their provision	Genesis 42:5-6	Acts 4:12
Gave bread to hungry people	Genesis 41:57	Mark 6:41
Not recognized by their own brothers	Genesis 42:8	Luke 24:37
Tested people to reveal their true nature	Genesis 42:25	Mark 11:30
Brothers bowed down before them	Genesis 44:14	Phil 2:10
Humble and unspoiled by wealth	Genesis 45:7-8	John 13:12
Became lord/Lord	Genesis 45:8	Rev 19:16
Loved people freely	Genesis 45:15	John 13:34
Returned to their father/Father	Genesis 46:29	Mark 16:19
Seeing them was a "prerequisite" before the death of a person	Genesis 46:30	Luke 2:26
Returned good for evil	Genesis 50:20	Matt 5:44

## **Applying the Portion to Life Today**

What happened to Joseph and what happens in your life occurs to expose the light of YHWH. One author has written that “humans were created with two distinct aspects to their nature – darkness and light. The darkness is in the human ego – as in Everybody’s Got One. This is also where the light hides. Light is in the human soul, which is obscured by the ego. The purpose of your existence is to allow the full intensity of light to shine in your life and in this world. You have two ways to conduct your life:

- 1) Through your ego, doubting or oblivious to the truth of the Light, considering only yourself.
- 2) Through the humility of your soul, constantly finding the Light and considering the needs of others

Your career, your family, and your friends are here for one purpose – to provide the opportunity for you to carry out your personal transformation, they give you the chance to let go of your ego, selfishness, and envy, and in turn, find the Light.” These two aspects of the human nature are the flesh and the spirit, the yetzer hara and the yetzer tov. Believers in Messiah are not to live in darkness but walk in the Light. “You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness,” 1 Thessalonians 5:5.

The events of your life shape your character and personality into what it is today. "In every sorrow there is profit," says Mishlei (Proverbs) 14:23.

This week's parasha is called "miketz" which literally means "at the end." This portion begins with the verse that says, "at the end of two years." It had been two years since Yosef had correctly interpreted a pair of dreams from the chief cupbearer and the baker. These were two full years of imprisonment, darkness, and loneliness. During this time Yosef learns to control his selfish, sinful nature and release the Light of YHWH. Yosef discovers that it's the events of your life that make you who you are. Yosef now understands that it is not anything in him that can interpret the dreams; rather it is the Almighty's power working through him.

When Yosef is brought out of the pit of prison and before Pharaoh it is like déjà vu all over again.

Pharaoh reveals his two nightmares and then says the same exact words the cupbearer and baker used. Pharaoh said, "no one can interpret" his dreams in Beresheet 41:15. What is amazing about this event is that though the situation is the same Yosef responds differently. He does not respond as he did in the past. No, Yosef has changed. Yosef has learned to release the Light. He does not say "relate it to me" like he done so in the past to the cupbearer and the baker. This time Yosef tells Pharaoh "Elohim will answer." Instead of hiding the Light with ego and selfish ambition Yosef points Pharaoh to the Light.

In the Scriptures, Light is the Hebrew word "ore." According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary "ore" literally means "to be luminous literally and metaphorically: break of day, glorious, kindle, set on fire, shine." The word "ore" appears 5 times on the first day of creation, representing the 5 books of the Torah that bring Light to the world. Light is also used as a synonym or Hebrew idiom for the Torah. So when the scriptures speak of Light they are in fact many times speaking of the Word of YHWH, the Torah. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light (Torah) unto my path," says Tehillim (Psalm) 119.

Light is also symbolic of the Messiah Y'shua. "When Y'shua spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life," Yochannan 8:12. So, light symbolizes Torah and light symbolizes Y'shua. This makes since because Y'shua is the living Torah!

In the Sermon on the Mount Y'shua told his followers to let their light shine. He was saying to let their Torah observance shine as a witness to everyone that the Messiah has come. Y'shua was reminding them of the principle that inside man is the darkness of the flesh yet inside man was ability to choose Light. "Let your light (Torah) so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Mattitياهو 5:16

When Light/Torah/Y'shua penetrates through the darkness, lives are changed, hurts are healed, and people understand their purpose in life. Yosef went through many trials, which in turn brought forth much Light. The trials you are going through now are happening for the same reason. What happens in your life occurs to bring forth Light. This doesn't mean YHWH has caused the events that are occurring but He has allowed it. It occurs to provide you an opportunity to grow. Hardships and suffering fan the flame of Light in the darkness of your world.

Light and darkness cannot coexist at the same time. Remember that in the beginning the Father said "let there be Light" and from the darkness came Light. Well, by simply understanding how Light shines you will discover your destiny as a person and find fulfillment in your life. How does the Light of Messiah shine?

First of all, don't immediately ask YHWH to remove a sickness, hardship, trial, problem, or area of conflict when they occur. When you have a bad day, don't go into super rebuking mode and cast out everything including the demon of wrinkled clothes. Before you pray to the Father to release you from a sickness, hardship, or circumstance, first ask Him what you are supposed to learn from it. Maybe you are going through something just to learn a specific lesson in the process. "Trials and difficulties mark the beginnings of darkness, but there is always the Light of salvation to look forward to even as the sons of Israel were brought out of Egypt at night in Devarim 16:1," wrote Avi Ben Mordechai. Remember that Y'shua knew about the trials of Kefa (Peter). Y'shua knew in advance that Kefa would be tempted to deny the Messiah but Y'shua did not pray that the trials would be removed. Instead Y'shua prayed that Kefa's "faith would remain." Kefa needed the trials to prove his faith!

Light also comes forth when a person goes through either a spiritual transformation or suffering. Light is blocked when a person walks in the flesh and fulfills the lusts of the soul.

One Rabbi teaches that, "when we suffer we experience pain, when we undergo grief and heartache, the hurting actually purges ego and self-interest from our nature. The soul- our true self – shines brighter at that moment. This is why we suddenly feel a sense of love and unity with others when planes crash into buildings and those buildings collapse on national television. This is why we feel a shift in our priorities when the rubble of human remains litters the landscape as a result of war, terror, or tragic accidents. Our egos diminish from the emotional pain and our souls suddenly blossom." Suffering brings people to the revelation and understanding that life is not all about satisfying selfish desires and ambition. The Almighty uses suffering to call people back to Himself, to humble people to the realization that life is not all about self.

Pain brings revelation of human nature but the pain lessons over time. The pain is forgotten and forsaken for selfishness, sinful actions and thought. Don't you know that churches are full of people when there is a national tragedy? Many spend time at the altar confessing a "spiritual" renewal but a few weeks later those same people are nowhere to be found when the church bell rings. Nothing lasting has taken place because the truth of the Light, the Torah is not taught. The light of suffering will soon diminish and people will return to their old ways.

Suffering is temporary and so the light of suffering is temporary. A person stays humble for only so long. Darkness soon overtakes the light as the pain of tragedy is forgotten and there is a return to walking in the flesh and looking out for self.

To turn the Light switch on indefinitely you must experience a spiritual transformation akin to the caterpillar transforming into the butterfly. "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light (Torah/Y'shua). Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with Adon Moshiach Y'shua, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature," Romans 12:12-13. Your life must change from going with the flow of the flesh to submitting to the Torah if you want the Light of Messiah to shine for good.

To keep the power of the light shining you should be like Yosef – you should learn from your pain and experience the life-changing presence of the Almighty.

You must deny yourself and follow the Messiah; follow the Torah; follow the Light. “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: YHWH is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Y’shua, his Son, purifies us from all sin,” 1 Yochannan 1:5-7.

Pain is evitable. The experiences of life cannot be stopped. What happens to you happens for a reason – so your life can show forth the Light and glory of YHWH. If you don’t believe this, just ask Yosef. Or ask the Messiah. “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through YHWH,” Yochannan 3:19-21.

## **Portion Points to Ponder**

1. The Hebrew name for this portion is “Vayeshev.” What does this mean?
2. Read Amos 2:6-3:8. How does this relate to the story of Genesis this week?
3. Consider the words found in Matthew 1:1-6 and verse 16-25. What did you learn from studying this passage?
4. How is Messiah Y’shua pictured in this Torah portion?
5. Explain how you can apply this week’s study to your life?
6. How does this Torah portion speak of the Messiah Y’shua?
7. The portion begins with a specific reference to "two years" having passed. The Jewish sages comment that these were two years that YHWH added to Joseph's prison term for not trusting Him fully and instead appealing to the chief of cup bearers (imprisoned along with him at the time) to "put in a good word for him to Pharaoh." Do you agree? Why or why not?
8. What was the meaning of Pharaoh’s dreams of the corn and cows?
9. Did Pharaoh sin by going to the magicians?
10. The chief butler confessed his faults, proclaimed his sin, and held true to his word to remember Joseph. How were his actions an acceptable pattern of true Biblical teshuvah / repentance?
11. Before Yosef could appear before Pharaoh he had to be smoothly shaven. How is the bald shaved look of the Egyptians different than the bearded Hebrew custom?
12. When given the opportunity to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, Yosef said "it is of YHWH." How was this statement of faith different than when Yosef interpreted previous dreams?
13. An east wind devoured the corn in Pharaoh’s dream. What is significant about a wind from the east?
14. Yosef said that "Elohim has showed Pharaoh what he about to do." In your opinion, does YHWH speak to pagan unbelievers? Can unbelievers easily understand YHWH's revelations?
15. Pharaoh dreamed two dreams on the same subject and Yosef interpreted the dream. How did these actions line up with the Torah provision that everything must be established by two or three witnesses?

16. In what manner are Pharaoh's dreams similar to Yosef's dreams (at the beginning of Parasha Va'yeshuv)? [Note primarily their 'double' nature.] Does this help explain how Yosef is able to solve Pharaoh's dream
17. Pharaoh acknowledged that the Ruach / Holy Spirit was upon Yosef? How did he sense this?
18. Yosef was made "ruler over all the land of Egypt." Explain how Yosef went from the pit to the prison and then to the palace.
19. Yosef's name was changed by Pharaoh. How did taking an Egyptian name help Yosef assimilate into the pagan culture? How is this similar today?
20. Did the exile of the Hebrew people start with Yosef or later?
21. How old was Yosef when he stood before Pharaoh? Why is this number significant?
22. Yosef took the daughter of Potipher as a wife. Was she a Hebrew?
23. Who were Joseph's sons? What is the meaning of their names as given in the Torah?
24. Who are Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, today?
25. Since Yosef's wife was not Hebrew, are her children full-blooded Israelites? Does the Biblical bloodline run from the mother or the father?
26. How did Pharaoh use the famine to grow the power of Egypt?
27. Who was kept in Egypt as a hostage?
28. Joseph made known to his brothers a way of deliverance through substitution. Who in the last two thousand years have been making known to the world the way of deliverance through the substitutionary work of Messiah Y'shua the Son of Joseph?
29. Jacob sent 10 sons to Egypt but held back Benjamin. How is this similar to Jacob splitting his family into two camps as he approached Esav?
30. Jacob sent 10 sons to Egypt but held back Benjamin. How is this similar to the splitting of the two houses of Israel into Ephraim and Judah?
31. Why did Joseph speak roughly to his brothers and then accuse them of being spies? How did this behavior help?
32. Yosef put his brothers in prison for three days. Who was left behind? How is this like how his brothers treated Joseph when they through him in prison?
33. What language did the 10 sons of Joseph speak?
34. Who offered to be surety for Benjamin?
35. Why was it an abomination for Hebrews and Egyptians to eat together?
36. Was Joseph being deceptive by hiding his cup in the bags of his brothers?
37. Judah laid down his life for his brother. Why? What is this prophetic of?
38. Prophetically, would YHVH accept children of mixed marriages to be grafted in to the olive tree of Israel to become full citizens with equal standing and rights as full-blooded Israelites? (Read Romans 11:13–24.)
39. Who does Paul say these Gentiles are? (See Rom 9:25–26 and then read the Hosea passage Paul is quoting from Hosea 2:23. Also read Eph 2:11–19; Rom 4:16; 9:8, 11; and Gal 3:7, 9, 14, 28, 29.)
40. This Torah portion reading occurs every year at the time of Chanukah. Why? What does this story have in common with the account of the Festival of Lights?

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