

Vayechi, Torah

JC Janet Cohen

Genesis 49:27-50:26

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he consumes the foe, And in the evening he divides the spoil.”

All these were the tribes of Israel, twelve in number, and this is what their father said to them as he bade them farewell, addressing to each a parting word appropriate to him.

Then he instructed them, saying to them, “I am about to be gathered to my kin. Bury me with my fathers in the cave which is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

בראשית מ"ט:כ"ז-נ"א:כ"ו

בְּנֵימִין זֶאֵב וְיִטְרֹף בַּבֶּקֶר יֹאכַל

זֶד וְלַזֶּרַח יִהְיֶה זֹלָל:

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כָּל־אֶדְוָה שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנַיִם

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עָשָׂר וְזֹאת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר לָהֶם

אֲבִיהֶם וַיְבָרֶךְ אוֹתָם אִישׁ

אֲשֶׁר כִּבְרַכְתּוּ בִּרְךְ אוֹתָם:

וַיִּצְוּ אוֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אָנֹכִי

נֶאֱסַף אֶל־עַמִּי קִבְרוּ אֹתִי

אֶל־אֲבֹתַי אֶל־הַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר

בְּשֵׂדָה עֶפְרוֹן הַחִתִּי:

בַּמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשֵׂדָה

הַמְּכַפְלָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי־מִמְרָא

בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן אֲשֶׁר קָנָה

the cave which is in the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre, in the land of Canaan, the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site—

there Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried; there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried; and there I buried Leah—

the field and the cave in it, bought from the Hittites.”

When Jacob finished his instructions to his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and, breathing his last, he was gathered to his people.

Joseph flung himself upon his father's face and wept over him and kissed him.

אֲבָרְהָם אֶת־הַשְּׂדֵה מֵאֵת
עֶפְרוֹן הַחִתִּי לְאַחֲזֵת־קֶבֶר:
שָׁמָּה קִבְּרוּ אֶת־אֲבָרְהָם וְאֵת
שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ שָׁמָּה קִבְּרוּ
אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֵת רַבְּקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ
וְשָׁמָּה קִבְּרָתִי אֶת־לֵאָה:
מְקֹנֶה הַשְּׂדֵה וְהַמְעָרָה
אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־חֵת:
וַיְכַל יַעֲקֹב לְצַוֹת אֶת־בָּנָיו
וַיֹּאסֶף רַגְלָיו אֶל־הַמַּטָּה וַיִּגְוַע
וַיֹּאסֶף אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ:
וַיִּפֹּל יוֹסֵף עַל־פְּנֵי אָבִיו וַיִּבְכֶּה
עָלָיו וַיִּשְׁקֶלֶוּ:
וַיִּצֹו יוֹסֵף אֶת־עַבְדָּיו
אֶת־הַרְפָּאִים לְחַנֹּט אֶת־אָבִיו
וַיַּחְנֹטוּ הַרְפָּאִים אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
וַיִּמְלְאוּ־לוֹ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם כִּי כֵן
יִמְלְאוּ יְמֵי הַחֲנֻטִּים וַיִּבְכּוּ

Then Joseph ordered the physicians in his service to embalm his father, and the physicians embalmed Israel. It required forty days, for such is the full period of embalming. The Egyptians bewailed him seventy days; and when the wailing period was over, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's court, saying, "Do me this favor, and lay this appeal before Pharaoh: 'My father made me swear, saying, "I am about to die. Be sure to bury me in the grave which I made ready for myself in the land of Canaan." Now, therefore, let me go up and bury my father; then I shall return.'"

אֶתֹּ מִצְרַיִם שְׁבַעִים יוֹם:
וַיַּעֲבְרוּ יָמָי בְּכִיתוֹ וַיְדַבֵּר יוֹסֵף
אֶל־בֵּית פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר אִם־נָא
מִצָּאתַי חַן בְּעֵינֶיכֶם דַּבְּרוּ־נָא
בְּאָזְנֵי פַרְעֹה לֵאמֹר:
אָבִי הַשְּׁבִיעֵנִי לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה
אֲנֹכִי מֵת בְּקִבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר כָּרַיתִי
לִי בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן שָׁמָּה תִקְבְּרֵנִי
וְעַתָּה אֲעֻלֶּה־נָּא וְאֶקְבְּרָה
אֶת־אָבִי וְאֲשׁוּבָה:
וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה עֲלֶה וּקְבֹר
אֶת־אָבִיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר הַשְּׁבִיעֶךָ:
וַיַּעַל יוֹסֵף לְקַבֵּר אֶת־אָבִיו
וַיַּעֲלוּ אִתּוֹ כָּל־עַבְדָּי פַרְעֹה
זִקְנֵי בֵיתוֹ וְכָל זִקְנֵי
אֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם:
וְכָל בֵּית יוֹסֵף וְאָחִיו וּבֵית
אָבִיו רַק טַפָּם וְצִאֲנָם וּבְקָרָם

And Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you promise on oath.”

So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the officials of Pharaoh, the senior members of his court, and all of Egypt’s dignitaries, together with all of Joseph’s household, his brothers, and his father’s household; only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the region of Goshen.

Chariots, too, and horsemen went up with him; it was a very large troop.

When they came to Goren ha-Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they held there a very great and solemn lamentation; and he observed a mourning

עָזְבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ גִּשׁוֹן:
וַיַּעַל עִמּוֹ גַם־רֶכֶב גַּם־פָּרָשִׁים
וַיְהִי הַמַּחֲנֶה כְּבֹד מְאֹד:
וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־גֹּרֵן הָאֲטָד אֲשֶׁר
בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסְפְּדוּ־נַשְׂם
מִסִּפְּד גָּדוֹל וְכָבֵד מְאֹד וַיַּעַשׂ
לְאָבִיו אֲבֵל שְׁבַע־יָמִים:
וַיֵּרָא יוֹשֵׁב הָאֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי
אֶת־הָאֲבֵל בְּגֹרֵן הָאֲטָד
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲבָל־כְּבֹד זֶה
לְמִצְרַיִם עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ
אֲבֵל מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר
הַיַּרְדֵּן:

וַיַּעַשׂוּ בָנָיו לוֹ כֵּן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּם:
וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֹתוֹ בָנָיו אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן
וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ בְּמַעְרַת שְׁדָה
הַמְּכֹפְלָה אֲשֶׁר קָנָה אַבְרָהָם

period of seven days for his father.

And when the Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw the mourning at Goren ha-Atad, they said, “This is a solemn mourning on the part of the Egyptians.” That is why it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

Thus his sons did for him as he had instructed them.

His sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, the field near Mamre, which Abraham had bought for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite.

After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who

אֶת־הַשָּׂדֶה לְאַחֲזֵת־קֶבֶר מֵאֵת
עֶפְרוֹן הַחִתִּי עַל־פְּנֵי מִמְרָא:
וַיָּשָׁב יוֹסֵף מִצְרַיִם הוּא
וְאָחָיו וְכָל־הָעֲלִים אֹתוֹ לְקַבֵּר
אֶת־אָבִיו אַחֲרֵי קֶבְרוֹ
אֶת־אָבִיו:
וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶחָי־יוֹסֵף כִּי־מֵת
אֲבֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ יִשְׁטַמְנוּ
יוֹסֵף וְהָשֵׁב יָשִׁיב לָנוּ אֵת
כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר גָּמְלָנוּ אֹתוֹ:
וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶל־יוֹסֵף לֵאמֹר אָבִיךָ
צִוָּה לְפָנָי מוֹתוֹ לֵאמֹר:
כֹּה־תֹאמְרוּ לְיוֹסֵף אֲנִי שָׂא
נָא פֶשַׁע אֲחִיךָ וְחַטָּאתָם
כִּי־רָעָה גָּמְלוּךָ וְעַתָּה שָׂא נָא
לְפֶשַׁע עַבְדֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ וַיִּבֶךְ
יוֹסֵף בְּדַבָּרָם אֵלָיו:

had gone up with him to bury his father.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrong that we did him!"

So they sent this message to Joseph, "Before his death your father left this instruction:

So shall you say to Joseph, 'Forgive, I urge you, the offense and guilt of your brothers who treated you so harshly.' Therefore, please forgive the offense of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph was in tears as they spoke to him.

His brothers went to him themselves, flung themselves

וַיֵּלְכוּ גַם-אֶחָיו וַיִּפְּלוּ לְפָנָיו
וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִנְנּוּ לְךָ לְעִבָדִים:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף אֶל-תִּירָאוּ
כִּי הִתַּחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי:
וְאַתֶּם חָשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה
אֱלֹהִים חָשַׁבָה לְטוֹבָה לְמַעַן
עֲשֶׂה פָּיִם הַזֶּה לְהַחַיֵּת
עִם-רַב:

וְעַתָּה אֶל-תִּירָאוּ אֹנְכִי
אֲכַלְכֵּל אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת-טַפְכֶם
וַיִּנַּחֵם אוֹתָם וַיְדַבֵּר עַל-לִבָּם:
וַיֵּשֶׁב יוֹסֵף בְּמִצְרַיִם הוּא וּבֵית
אָבִיו וַיְחִי יוֹסֵף מֵאָה וָעֶשְׂרִי
שָׁנִים:

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי
שְׁלֵשִׁים גַּם בְּנֵי מָכִיר
בֶּן-מְנַשֶּׁה יְלָדוֹ עַל-בְּרֵכִי
יוֹסֵף:

before him, and said, “We are prepared to be your slaves.”

But Joseph said to them,

“Have no fear! Am I a substitute for God?

Besides, although you intended me harm, God intended it for good, so as to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.

And so, fear not. I will sustain you and your children.” Thus he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

So Joseph and his father’s household remained in Egypt. Joseph lived one hundred and ten years.

Joseph lived to see children of the third generation of Ephraim; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אָחָיו אֲנֹכִי
מֵת וְאֱלֹהִים פִּקְדוּ יִפְקְדוּ
אֶתְכֶם וְהָעֵלָה אֶתְכֶם
מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק
וְלִיעֶקֶב:

וַיִּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת־בָּנָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֵאמֹר פִּקְדוּ יִפְקְדוּ אֱלֹהִים
אֶתְכֶם וְהָעֵלְתֶם אֶת־עַצְמוֹתַי
מִזֶּה:

וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף בֶּן־מֵאָה וָעֶשְׂרִים
שָׁנִים וַיַּחְנֹטוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּישָׂם
בְּאֲרוֹן בְּמִצְרַיִם:

likewise born upon Joseph's knees.

At length, Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. God will surely take notice of you and bring you up from this land to the land that He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

So Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "When God has taken notice of you, you shall carry up my bones from here."

Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.