



Joseph, surrounded by the unsuccessful Egyptian dream-interpreters, explains the meaning of Pharaoh's dream. The painter James Tissot shows Joseph as completely Egyptian-ised. No wonder Joseph's Hebrew brothers failed to recognise him.

Circa 1896

In reviewing the documents below, it is not without reason that we see this Joseph operates out of fear -- and for the record, he comes by it naturally and he acts accordingly. It should then come as no surprise that when we meet Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus Chapter One -- he will do the same. He is the exact same type . . . he is one who purposely does not know Joseph . . .

Is it any wonder why the new Pharoah out of fear, would seek genocide?

Contextually, let's just for now look back at Joseph through a lens we are not often given to: Joseph was of the Egyptian royal court, Joseph was of the Egyptian priesthood and Joseph was both a son and father of the Land of Egypt -- is this the Joseph **we** know and importantly, was he really forgettable.

No . . .

In the beginning it would appear that Joseph would attempt to alleviate his brother's guilt in selling him off to Egypt . . . are we convinced? No. What was his objective in bringing his family to Egypt -- a family he couldn't trust, nor could they trust him.

We might even say, with brothers like Joseph, who needs enemies?

We know that Joseph begins to place distance between himself and brothers long before they will meet each other again in the *Land of Egypt*. We know that Joseph, even before he ventures down into Egypt, as he sits in his pit, penultimately awaiting either death or servitude in Egypt, wonders how he has gotten to this point.

And then again in Egypt, *first in the House of Potiphar* and then later in the infamous dungeon, Joseph will cease his dreaming and now begin to wonder, '*how did I get here?*' '*Who has placed me here?*' '*Who has shined so much light in my eyes that I no longer am able to see?*' *Who am I (now)?*

Perhaps he thinks it was his father who had doted on him and brought the enmity of his brothers down upon him. It makes no difference, especially as he soon forgets both his father and his *patrimony*, and begins his rise to the top, quickly becoming either second to Pharaoh in all of Egypt -- or perhaps becoming one-with-Egypt -- i.e. *the people, the religion, the royalty all wrapped up into one*.

And all the while he struggles with his identity, essentially struggling in no small part with who he is. He will even vacillate, going back and forth, first as an Israelite and then ever more strongly as an Egyptian. We see this especially in the way he acts, the way he dresses, the way he speaks, who he marries, and then, both in the names and the descriptions of the names he gives his children. We see this in the way he represents himself upon reunification with his father and we especially see this upon his death when he, in keeping with Egyptian mourning practises, is embalmed according to the Egyptian custom. All this is true, and yet he insists by force of oath, that the Children of Israel, upon leaving Egypt, must take his 'bones' home with them and return his body to the very land -- a land whence he once originally came forth from and yet was never able to get back to during his lifetime



Joseph in Prison, Frans Francken the Younger, (Flemish, 1581–1642)

<p>כח וַיֵּשֶׁבּוּ יוֹסֵף, אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאמֹר: פְּקֻדָּה יְפֻקָּד אֱלֹהִים אֲתֶכְם, וְהַעֲלִתֶם אֶת-עָצְמוֹתִי מִזֶּה.</p>	<p>Gen 50: 25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying: 'God will surely remember you, <u>and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.</u>'</p>
<p>כו וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף, בָּרוּמָאתָה וְעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים; וַיִּחְנְטוּ אֶתְתוֹ, וַיִּשְׂמַח בָּאָרוֹן בְּמִצְרָיִם. { ש }</p>	<p>26 So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. {P}</p>

Before he forces an 'oath' on the Israelites, we also see what he forces upon the Egyptian people as a whole; all this to the benefit both of Egyptian royalty and Egyptian Priesthood, two markers of Egyptian society that he comes to increasingly identify with. And yet, he remains in memory, an Israelite -- more than possibly due to the 'Oath' he forces upon the Israelites.

Here we'll see in Genesis 47 something which will help us understand the first chapter of Exodus a little more clearly . . . especially in reference to the increasing racism and hatred being espoused by the new Egyptian Pharaoh we will meet more intimately in **Exodus Chapter 1, verse 8**. First let's have a look at the way in which our rather-royal-religious-Joseph 'accommodates' Egypt during the very height of 'the famine.'

Genesis 47:11

First . . .

<p>יא וַיַּשְׁבַּט יוֹסֵף, אֶת-אָבִיו וְאֶת-אָחִיו, וַיִּתְּנוּ לָהֶם אֶחָזָה בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, בְּמִינְבָּה הָאָרֶץ בָּאָרֶץ רְעִמָּס--בָּאָשָׁר, צֹהָה פְּרֻעָה.</p>	<p>11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, <u>in the best of the land</u>, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.</p>
<p>יב וַיַּכְלֶל יוֹסֵף אֶת-אָבִיו וְאֶת-אָחִיו, וְאֶת בְּלֵבִית אָבִיו--לְחַם, לְפִי הַטָּר.</p>	<p>12 And Joseph sustained his father, and his brethren, and <u>all his father's household</u>, with bread, according to the want of their little ones.</p>
<p>יג וְלֹחֵם אִין בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ, פִּי-כְּבֻד הַרְעָב מַאֲדָד; וְתִלְהָ אָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, וְאָרֶץ בְּנֵנוּ, מִפְנֵי, הַרְעָב.</p>	<p>13 And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine.</p>

<p>ד וַיְلַקֵּט יוֹסֵף, אֶת-כָּל-הַכְּסָר הַנִּמְצָא בָּאָרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ כְּנָעָן, בְּשָׁבָר, אֲשֶׁר-הֵם שְׁבָרִים; וַיִּבְאָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-הַכְּסָר, בִּיתָה פְּרֻעה.</p>	<p>14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.</p> <p>and now his program begins to unfold . . .</p>
<p>טו וַיִּתְمַמֵּן הַכְּסָר, מִארֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּמִארֶץ כְּנָעָן, וַיִּבְאָוּ כָּל-מִצְרַיִם אֶל-יוֹסֵף לְאמֹר הַבָּה-לָנוּ לְחַם, וְלֹמַה נִמְוֹת נִגְדָּךְ: כִּי אַפְסָס, כְּסָר.</p>	<p>15 And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, <u>all the Egyptians came unto Joseph</u>, and said: 'Give us bread; for why should we die in thy presence? for our money faileth.'</p> <p>And then . . . (please read the fine print . . .)</p>
<p>טו וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף הַבּוּ מִקְנִיכֶם, וְאַתָּנָה לְכֶם בִּמִקְנִיכֶם--אַמ-אַפְס, כְּסָר.</p>	<p>16 And Joseph said: 'Give your cattle, and I will give you [bread] for your cattle, if money fail.'</p>
<p>יז וַיִּבְאָוּ אֶת-מִקְנִיכֶם, אֶל-יוֹסֵף, וַיִּתְנוּ לְהֶם יוֹסֵף לְחַם בְּסָוסִים וּבְמִקְנָה הַצָּאוֹן וּבְמִקְנָה הַבָּקָר, וּבְחַמְרִים; וַיִּנְהַלֵּם בְּלַחַם בְּכָל-מִקְנֶהם, בְּשָׁנָה הַהוּא.</p>	<p>17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph. And Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year.</p>
<p>יח וַתָּתַם, הַשָּׁנָה הַהוּא, וַיִּבְאָוּ אֶלְיוֹן בְּשָׁנָה הַשְׁנִית וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוּ לֹא-נִכְחַד מִאָדָנִי, כִּי אַמ-תִּפְסֶם הַכְּסָר וּמִקְנָה הַבָּהָמה אֶל-אָדָנִי, לֹא נִשְׁאַר לִפְנֵי אָדָנִי, בְּלֹתִי אַמ-גִּנְוִיתָנוּ וְאַדְמָתָנוּ.</p>	<p>18 And when that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him: 'We will not hide from my lord, how that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord's; there is nought left in the sight of my lord, <u>but our bodies, and our lands</u>.</p>
<p>יט לְמַה נִמְוֹת לְעֵינֶיךָ, גַּם-אַנְחָנוּ גַּם אַדְמָתָנוּ--קְנָה-אָתָנוּ וְאֶת-אַדְמָתָנוּ, בְּלַחַם; וְנָהָיה אַנְחָנוּ וְאַדְמָתָנוּ, עֲבָדִים לְפְרֻעה, וְתַּזְרַעַ וְנִחְיָה וְלֹא נִמְוֹת, וְהַאֲדָמָה לֹא תִּשְׁמַם.</p>	<p>19 Wherefore should we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and <u>we and our land will be bondmen unto Pharaoh</u>; and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land be not desolate.'</p>
<p>כ וַיָּקֹנוּ יוֹסֵף אֶת-כָּל-אַדְמָת מִצְרַיִם, לְפְרֻעה, בִּי-מִכְרָוּ מִצְרַיִם אִישׁ שְׂדָה, כִּי-חַזְקָעַלְהָם הַרְעָב; וְתַּהֲיֵה הָאָרֶץ, לְפְרֻעה.</p>	<p>20 So Joseph bought <u>all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh</u>; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was sore upon them; and <u>the land became Pharaoh's</u>.</p>
<p>כא וְאֶת-קָעַם--הַעֲבִיר אֶתָּו, לְעָרִים: מִקְצָה גְּבוּל-מִצְרַיִם, וְעַד-קָצָהוּ.</p>	<p>21 And as for the people, he removed them city by city, from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof.</p>
<p>כב רַק אַדְמָת הַפְּהָנִים, לֹא קָנָה: כִּי חַק לְכָהַנִּים מִאת פְּרֻעה, וְאֶכְלָו אֶת-חַק אֲשֶׁר נָתָנוּ לְהֶם פְּרֻעה--עַל-כֵּן, לֹא מִכְרָו אֶת-אַדְמָתָם.</p>	<p>22 Only the land of the priests bought he not, for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their land.</p>



<p>כג וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֲלֵיכֶם, הִנֵּה קְנִיתִי אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם וְאֶת-אֶדְמֹתֶכֶם לְפָרֻעַה; הַא-לְכֶם זָרָע, וְרֹעֵתֶם אֶת-הָאָדָמָה.</p>	<p>23 Then Joseph said unto the people: 'Behold, I have bought you this day and your <u>land for Pharaoh</u>. Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.</p>
<p>כד וְהִי־ּה, בַּתְבּוֹאות, וַיִּתְפַּתַּח חַמִּישִׁית, לְפָרֻעַה; וְאֶרְבַּע הַיּוֹתֶרֶת יְהִי לְכֶם לִירֻעָה הַשְׂדָה וְלְאַכְלָכֶם, וְלֹא-שֶׁר בְּבָתִּיכֶם-- וְלֹא-כָל לְטַפְּכֶם.</p>	<p>24 And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings, that ye shall give a fifth unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.'</p>
<p>כה וַיֹּאמְרוּ, הַחִתְּנוּ; נִמְצָא-חַנוּ בְּעִינֵינוּ אֱדֹנִי, וְקִיּוּנוּ עֲבָדִים לְפָרֻעַה.</p>	<p>25 And they said: 'Thou hast saved our lives. Let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be <u>Pharaoh's bondmen</u> (<u>my note: slaves to Pharaoh</u>).'</p>
<p>כו וַיִּשְׁמַע אֲתָה יוֹסֵף לְחֵק עַד-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל-אֶדְמָתֶכֶם, לְפָרֻעַה--לְחַמֵּשׁ: וּךְ אֶדְמָת הַפְּהָנִים, לְבָדֵם--לֹא חִתָּה, לְפָרֻעַה.</p>	<p>26 And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; <u>only the land of the priests alone became not Pharaoh's</u>.</p>
<p>כז וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, בָּאָרֶץ גָּשֹׁן; וַיַּחֲזֹזֵה בָּהּ, וַיִּפְרֹא וַיַּרְבֶּה מְאֹד.</p>	<p>27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they got them possessions therein, <u>and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly</u>.</p>

And we now turn to the Book of Exodus, to the week's portion we currently find ourselves, both literally and figuratively . . .

Exodus Chapter 1, verse 7 thru 13 . . .

ז וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׁרָצּוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ וַיַּעֲצִמוּ-- בָּמָדֹד מַאֲדָד; וַתִּמְלָא הָאָרֶץ, אֲתֶם. {פ}	Ex 1:7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. {P}
ח וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חַדֵּשׁ, עַל-מִצְרַיִם, אֲשֶׁר לَا-יִדְעָ, אֲתִ-יּוֹסֵף.	8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. (My note: he definitely knew Joseph)
ט וַיֹּאמֶר, אֶל-עֲמֹם: הִנֵּה, עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל-- רַב וּעֲצֹום, מִמֶּנּוּ.	9 And he said unto his people: 'Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us;
י הִנֵּה נִתְחַכֵּם, לֵוָה: פֻנוּ-ירְבָה, וְהִיה כִּי-תִקְרַא אֹנוֹ מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסֶר גַּם-הָוָא עַל-שָׂנָאינוּ, וְגַלְחָם-בָּנוּ, וְעַלְהָ מוֹ-הָאָרֶץ.	10 come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there befalleth us any war, <u>they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.</u> '
יא וַיִּשְׁלַמּוּ עַלְיוֹ שְׁرֵי מִסִּים, לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסֶבֶלְתָּם; וַיִּבְנֹו עָרִי מִסְכָּנוֹת, לְפְרָעָה-- אֲתִ-פָּתָם, וְאֲתִ-רְעַמְסָס.	11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses.
יב וְכָאֵשֶׁר יִعְנוּ אֲתֶן, כִּי יַרְבָּה וְכוֹ יִפְרֹץ; וְיִקְצֹה, מִפְנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.	12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were adread because of the children of Israel.
יג וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֲתִ-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּפִרְאָה.	13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour.