

Parashat MiKetz

- As we continue the story of Jacob's family here in the closing portions of *B'reishiyt*, Genesis, we begin to see the spiritual gifts that G-d has placed within Jacob and his sons. We recognize Joseph's gift for interpreting dreams and the fruit that has resulted in his life and in the lives of the Hebrews, the Egyptians and many other nations as Joseph's elevation to royalty saves the world from famine and hunger. But are there spiritual gifts found within Joseph's brothers?
- The spiritually gifted among the people of HaShem are said to be anointed, and the Hebrew word for the verb "to anoint" is *mashakh*, the same word from whose root we derive the word *mashiakh*, "the anointed one". The ritual of anointing can sometimes, but not always involve the use of an oil native to Israel, such as olive oil, and the person blessed in the ceremony is exhorted to remain consecrated, even dedicated, to the ministry.
- But in addition to specialized ministry appointments involving such areas as outreach and teaching, the *shaliakh* Yochanan, John, wrote in his first letter that there is a general impartation from HaShem that is available to all believers: "You have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know the truth. . . . As for you, the anointing which you received from him remains in you, and you don't need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, you will remain in him."
- Returning to Joseph's brothers, despite the envy and rage directed against their gifted younger brother earlier in the story, within these sons of Jacob there are treasures, visible and hidden, that are revealed in their later actions. Some of these treasures, these anointed spiritual gifts, are recognized in Jacob's blessings over his sons that mark the closing of this first book of the Torah. For example, Judah's demonstrated leadership during the family crisis portends the governmental authority that is bestowed upon his tribe and their descendants, including a mysterious figure or movement known as *Shiloh*.
- In Acts 10 we read that G-d anointed Yeshua with the *Ruach HaKodesh* and with power, and that he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And in 2 Corinthians we are told that HaShem established us in Messiah and anointed us so that we could do works similar to, even greater than Yeshua. If we have faith to believe that we have been anointed for service in the kingdom, how can we learn to develop our gifts to help feed a world that is spiritually hungry?