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*Learning the  
value of equality*

*Rabbi Alon Meltzer*

*A New Page of Talmud*

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*Vayechi 5782*

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Now Israel's eyes were dim with age; he could not see. So [Joseph] brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see you again, and here God has let me see your children as well." Joseph then removed them from his knees, and bowed low with his face to the ground. Joseph took the two of them, Ephraim with his right hand—to Israel's left—and Manasseh with his left hand—to Israel's right—and brought them close to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head—thus crossing his hands—although Manasseh was the first-born.—

**Bereshit 48:10-14** I had never dared to cherish the thought that I would again see your face. **Rashi on Bereshit 48:10<sup>2</sup>** At the creation, we find no evidence that birthright was part of the rules guiding the affairs of man. Proof lies in the random order the names of Noach's sons are referred to on different occasions. This was changed when Abraham appeared on the stage of history. His descendants were to play a leading role due to their being descendants of Abraham. In effect G-d had said, "Until now I have bestowed blessings, henceforth I grant Abraham the authority to bestow and direct blessings"— **Akeidat Yitzchak 23:1:8<sup>3</sup>** The head of Efraim is the spiritual side of Mashiach ben Yosef who is aided by the abundance of Lovingkindness from the right side.— **Kol ha Tor 2:142<sup>4</sup>** In

I never expected to see  
you again...

**רָאָה פְּנֵיךָ לֹא פָלַלְתִּי**  
**Bereshit 48:11**

order to bless Joseph; out of his love for him, he blessed his sons." And the 17th century scholar and kabbalist Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz comments: "[Jacob blessed Joseph] in order to show that there is no greater blessing for a father than the wish that his children should take after him and become good people." Ramban emphasizes the deep love that Jacob had for his long-lost son Joseph, and Rabbi Horowitz tells us that the greatest blessing Joseph could receive was knowing that his children would become

good people.— **Melissa Crespy** <sup>5</sup> The classical formula for justice according to which an action is just when it offers each individual his or her due took on a substantively egalitarian meaning in the course of time: everyone deserved the same dignity and respect. This is now the widely held conception of substantive, universal, moral equality. — **Equality in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**<sup>6</sup>

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