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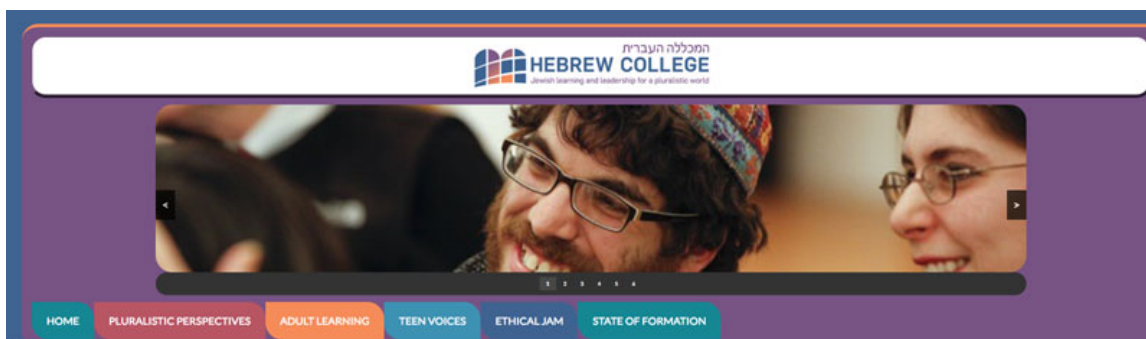
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## NEWS & VIEWS

December 14, 2017 | 26 Kislev 5778



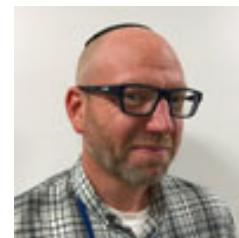
## Hebrew College Blog

### SEVENTY FACES OF TORAH

Posts from this Hebrew College-hosted blog are published weekly in [HuffPost Religion](#) and [Patheos](#).

### Joseph, Pharaoh, and the Perpetual Stranger Parashat Mikeitz (Genesis 41:4-44:17)

By Rabbi Jim Morgan, Rab`08  
Rabbi/Chaplain, Hebrew SeniorLife



This year, as is often the case, we read Parashat Mikeitz on Shabbat Hanukkah, a celebration of light that affirms the durability of our Jewish identity during periods of assimilation and even oppression. In one such period—of assimilation in the United States and of genocide in Europe—Muriel Rukeyser spoke about the gift of being a Jew:

*To be a Jew in the twentieth century  
Is to be offered a gift. If you refuse,  
Wishing to be invisible, you choose  
Death of the spirit, the stone insanity.  
Accepting, take full life. Full agonies:  
Your evening deep in labyrinthine blood  
Of those who resist, fail, and resist: and God  
Reduced to a hostage among hostages.*

*The gift is torment. Not alone the still  
Torture, isolation; or torture of the flesh.  
That may come also. But the accepting wish,  
The whole and fertile spirit as guarantee  
For every human freedom, suffering to be free,  
Daring to live for the impossible. (1944)*

This poem, which later entered Reconstructionist and Reform prayer books, reads as a gloss, not only on the ambiguities of Hanukkah, but also on Joseph’s story in Mikeitz, where he faces the choice of embracing the gift of “torment” and “human freedom” or remaining “invisible.”

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