



The DRS Weekly Torah Publication



Yosef: The Icon of Faith

By Eitan Eckman, 11th Grade

he opening Pasuk of Parshas Mikeitz says, "After two years' time, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile." (Bereishis 41:1) but why has two years passed, and since when? We know that there is nothing extra in the Torah. Why, then did the Torah see fit to mention the two years?

Most people assume that the two skipped years were the ones between the freeing of the butler and Pharoah having his dream, and that the reason for this passing of time was to punish Yosef. Yosef was punished for asking the butler to mention his name to the Pharoah since he had already been down in jail for a long time and wanted to get out. Based on this information, a new question is formed: why was Yosef punished?

The classic answer is that Yosef was ungrateful and did not possess the proper faith in God and was therefore sentenced to 2 more years in prison. However, this can only be a part of the answer, for most people put in Hishtadlus, or effort, as opposed to completely relying on Hashem. To be a good Jew involves balancing Hishtadlus on the one hand versus relying on Hashem. No faith in Hashem means that one is ignoring a fundamental part of Judaism, and only relying on Hashem means you are also not observing Judaism correctly; as an example, if one sits and learns in shul all day and says "G-d will take care of

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> Parshas Mikeitz 3 TEVET 5781 **DECEMBER 18, 2020**

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Leadership: Modesty and Will

By Ariel Kunin, 10th Grade

ooking at this week's parsha, one particular episode is a bit puzzling: Yosef's ascension to leadership in Mitzrayim. Why did Pharaoh elect Yosef as second-in-command? What qualities did he possess that made him fit for such a role? And what traits eventually enabled Yosef to succeed in that role?

I believe that the answer to these questions lies in two fundamental attributes that Yosef possessed: Modesty and a resolute/unwavering will. These two attributes were the keys to Yosef's successful leadership in Mitzrayim.

After Yosef interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, he told Pharaoh that he would need to choose a leader to guide Mitzrayim before and during the upcoming seven-year famine. Pharaoh responded, "Since God has let you know all this, there is no one as understanding and wise as you" (Breishis 41:39). For this reason, Pharaoh chose Yosef to be the new leader. Later in the perek, the Torah tells us that Pharaoh called Yosef "" ",בֶּעְבֶּהָ פַּעְבֵּהָ Secrets Revealer." The Sfas Emes remarks that Pharaoh should have called him "" "אָפָנֶת, "Revealer of Secrets", because Yosef revealed the secrets of the dream. Why does Pharaoh call him " "יְפַׁנְתַר פַּעְבַּה לַשְׁבַּע What's the significance of the word "secret" coming before "revealing"? The Sfas Emes answers that Yosef's chief middah was his modesty. And due to this middah, Yosef merited to gain insight into God's master plan. Through this, the entire world could see how Yosef was going to be a worthy and successful leader, and that he was the right man for the job.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Mikeitz Questions

- 1. Which two pieces of jewelry are in this parsha?
- 2. Who in this parsha is called a *kohen* (priest)? Who else in the book of Genesis is called a *kohen*?
- 3. What 3 vocations appear in this parsha, but nowhere else in the Torah?
- 4. What object appears in this parsha 15 times, but does not appear anywhere else in Tanach?
- 5. In what context are different types of nuts mentioned?
- 6. How many brothers go down to Egypt the first time? How many brothers go down to Egypt the second time?
- 7. Who washes his feet in this parsha? Where in the book of Genesis are the same feet washed twice in one day?

Answers

- 1. Pharaoh gives Yosef "his ring" and places "a golden chain" upon his neck (Genesis 41:42).
- 2. Poti-Fera, the father-in-law of Yosef, is the "the priest of On" (Genesis 41:45). In Genesis 14:18, Malkei-Tzedek is called a *kohen*.
- 3. Yosef is called the *Shalit* (ruler/viceroy) and the *Mashbir* (provider) (Genesis 42:6). Later on, a *Maylitz* (interpreter) translates the conversation between Yosef and his brothers (Genesis 42:23).
- 4. An *amtachat* (sack) in which the brothers carry back the grain appears 15 times in this parsha but nowhere else in Tanach.
- 5. Pistachios and almonds are part of the gift that Yaakov sends to Yosef (Genesis 43:11).
- 6. The first time, ten brothers go down to Egypt, since Yosef was already there and Benyamin did not go. The second time as well, ten brothers go down although Benyamin went down, Shimon did not, since he was imprisoned in Egypt.
- 7. The brothers wash their feet when arriving at the house of Yosef (Genesis 43:24). In Genesis 18:4, Avraham tells the angels who visit him to wash their feet, and then when the angels visit Lot, he too tells them to wash their feet (Genesis 19:2).

"I had a dream that one day..." - David Nisanov, DRS GO President

ALIYAH SUMMARY

First Aliyah: Pharaoh had a dream of seven fat cows and seven skinny cows that came out of the Nile. In this dream, the fat cows proceeded to consume the skinny ones. Pharaoh then had another similar dream, in which seven healthy ears of grain were eaten by seven thin ears. None of Pharaoh's wise men were capable of interpreting the dreams to his satisfaction. Pharaoh's wine butler then informed him about Yosef, and how he had correctly interpreted his dreams while in prison. Pharaoh ordered Yosef's release and he came before the king.

Second Aliyah: Pharaoh recounted his dreams to Yosef. Yosef told him that the dreams had the same message: there would be seven years of plentiful crops and harvests, immediately followed by seven years of severe famine. Yosef proposed a plan to save the surplus from the seven years of plenty for the seven years of famine.

Third Aliyah: Pharaoh appointed Yosef as viceroy of Egypt, and placed him in charge of collecting food, just as he had suggested. The seven years of plenty arrived and Yosef implemented his strategy to save food for the years of famine. Yosef then married Osnas, the daughter of Potiphera, and she bore him two sons: Menashe and Ephraim.

Fourth Aliyah: The years of famine then arrived. Yosef sold the stored food to all who needed. Due to the widespread famine, Yaakov sent all of his sons, with the exception of Binyamin, to buy food in Egypt. The brothers arrived and stood before Yosef, but did not recognize him. When the brothers asked for food, Yosef dealt with them harshly, accused them of espionage, and incarcerated them all for three days.

Fifth Aliyah: On the third day, Yosef released everyone except for Shimon, who he kept as a hostage. He told the rest of the brothers to go back to Kanaan and return to Egypt with their youngest brother, Binyamin. The brothers recognized that this was their punishment for the sale of Yosef, and expressed regret for their deed. They then arrived back in Kanaan and recounted the entire episode to Yaakov. He initially refused to send Binyamin, but after Yehudah personally guaranteed Binyamin's safe return home, Yaakov allowed him to go.

Sixth Aliyah: The brothers arrived in Egypt. Yosef instructed his palace supervisor to invite them to join him for a meal. When the brothers came, they were reunited with Shimon. Yosef arrived, and they presented him with the gift that they had prepared.

Seventh Aliyah: Upon seeing his brother Binyamin, Yosef was overcome with emotion, which he concealed. The brothers sat down and enjoyed a feast, culminating in Yosef presenting them all with gifts. Being that Binyamin was his only full brother, he gave him more gifts than the others. Yosef had his royal goblet planted in Binyamin's sack of food unbeknownst to him. After the brothers left, Yosef sent his officers to chase after them and "discover" the goblet. The brothers were all brought back to Yosef, who demanded that Binyamin remain behind as his slave.

Adapted from Chabad.org



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O-Minute Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz on yutorah.org Halacha Shiut Transcribed by Joseph Cohen

Throwing Food

Brachos 50b:

- Brasia: You may not throw bread. The Gemara brings down a story in which many Rabbeim were eating together and one of the rebbeim threw a piece of food to another. They asked him, "don't you know the Braisa that says you can't throw food?" He responds that the Braisa only singled out bread; other foods you are allowed to throw. The Gemara, however, brings down another Braisa that says, "just as you may not throw bread, so too, you may not throw other foods." He responds that there is a third Braisa that says you may not throw bread but other foods are permissible. How do we reconcile between the three Braisas? The Gemara answers that it all depends on whether the action of throwing makes the food disgusting or not. If it makes it disgusting, it is prohibited to throw any food. If not, then it is permissible to throw everything except bread.
- The Gemara further tells us that they would throw nuts and candies at a Chasan and Kallah at their wedding. This only took place during the summer; however, it did not take place during the winter. And, they wouldn't throw cakes/cookies in either season because they would get ruined no matter what.
- The Bais Yosef quotes the Rashba who quotes Rav Hai Gaon who does not distinguish between bread and other foods. He holds that throwing any food is prohibited if it will become disgusting. But more critically, all foods are permissible to throw if they will not become disgusting. This even includes bread.
- Rashi: You are not allowed to throw cakes/cookies because it would always become disgusting.
- Why didn't Rashi say that cakes/cookies have the same din as bread and throwing it is prohibited no matter what. From here you see that Rashi is holding like Rav Hai Gaon: it all depends on if the food will become disgusting or not.
- There are those who distinguish between bread and other foods by saying that bread is a holy food. And since bread is a holy food, the punishment for throwing bread will be different than the punishment for throwing other foods.
- Rambam says that you may not throw bread or any food. This is because when you throw the food it becomes disgusting.
- But, if it does not become disgusting you are permitted to throw anything.
- Tosfos asks: Why did the Gemara decide to use the example of nuts? Nuts have shells around them and won't easily become muddy/disgusting. Because even if the shell becomes muddy/disgusting a person is still disgusted by it, and will no longer want to eat it.
- An Adam Chashuv would not eat a nut with a muddy shell even if it is still good on the inside.
- Shulchan Aruch: Someone who cuts the Challah must give a piece to those at the table.
- Rama: You may not throw the pieces of bread.
- Mishna Brurah: There is a double prohibition in throwing bread: 1) The throwing of bread. 2) Disgrace of the mitzvah of *Lechem Mishnah*.
- Grach Sanzer: Everyone holds you can throw bread as long as it doesn't get ruined. And the entire issue of throwing bread is only a rabbinic decree. Therefore, there should be room to be lenient.

דברים היוצאים מן הל"ב



The Shelah HaKadosh writes that a day in which a Yid doesn't do a single act of chesed is not considered a day. Tehillim 52 alludes to this as well, saying, "Chesed Keil kol hayom." Chesed is so important that a person cannot say that he has lived a day without doing at least one act of kindness.

The Saba Kadisha of Slonim, or Rabbi Yissocher Ber Baron, expresses a similar thought. A day in which a Jew does nothing to anger the yetzer hora is not a proper day. Should a Jew let an entire day pass without focusing attention on ways in which to subjugate and break the force within him that works to push him to evil, he cannot be said to have "lived" that day.

Taken together, the lesson is even greater: There is no such thing as a day without its own goals, without being productive. Furthermore, such productivity must contain elements of the two main forms of avodah: sur mera – escaping evil – and aseh tov – embrace of good. Battling the yetzer hora on one front, and performing chesed on the other. Subjecting our lives to a Torah lifestyle, it is sad to note how many of our days pass empty of significance, as if these days had been snatched away from our lives. Each day has its own mission; all missions amount to glorifying and sanctifying HaKadosh Boruch Hu's Name.

The beginning of our parshah alludes to this, and further amplifies its message. "And it was after sh'na-sayim yamim (2 years)." Sh'nasayim evokes the word sheinah, sleep. Man contemplates his life – the full set of his days, and finds that he has slumbered through so many of them. U'Phaoroh Choleim – choleim in turn evokes chalim, to be strong. The black holes in our lives are not simply cut out of our personal calendars, but inevitably strengthen the Pharoh - the personification of yetzer hora - within us. When we fail, the yetzer hara rises. In a way, the seven skeletal cows devour the strong, healthy ones, and nothing is left to show for them, just like Pharaoh's dream. They leave nothing behind, as unchallenged evil swallows up the good around it. A result of this is that when some remainder of the good we have done does survive, it is a sure sign that we had to have stopped our yetzer hara in the process.

What should the "comprehending and wise person," which is how the pasuk describes Yosef, do to weaken the yetzer hora? The Saba Kadisha of Slonim taught us what would NOT work. We cannot battle it in the world of ideas. The yetzer hora takes up residence in our very life force. We must resist it with action, not arguments. As we always say, actions speak louder than words. Our parshah provides the model for this idea. Hashem allows us good times of clarity. We also experience times of spiritual shakiness and darkness. During our good times, when Hashem assists us in discovering new facets of truths, it is not enough to bask in the warmth of the illumination we feel. It is imperative for us to save for this feeling for the "lean" years when that clarity is not available. We do this by moving from thought and contemplation to firm action, which pierces the armor of the yetzer hora and leaves it weaker. Chazal tell us that in order for a person's wisdom to last, his actions need to be greater than his wisdom. We insure a lasting place for our wisdom by opposing the yetzer hora with positive actions that combat its power. To achieve our daily minimum of some chesed activity joined with focused yetzer hora opposition, we are forced to actively involve our chochmah. The action, in turn, raises our chachmah to the next level.

Chazal tell us that the food that the Egyptians had stored rotted. This too may allude to our theme. Storing up moments of enlightenment within us may be pointless. The good will all come to naught, if not converted to action that subjugates and weakens the yetzer hora. People can labor for a lifetime without ever attending to this. Without a strategy to counter it directly, people can pass through this life with their yetzer hora unscathed, as real as when it was placed within them. Our parshah warns us that we cannot allow this to happen. We must commit ourselves to a sustainable, frontal attack on the yetzer hora that relentlessly weakens and gets rid of it. With us just ending the holy yontif of Chanukah, let's take all of the chizuk and inspiration that we got and use it to help fight off the yetzer hara within us. When that happens, we should be zoche to return to the place where the Macabiyim were victorious, Yerushalayim Bimheira B'Yameynu!

Av or Shevet

By Ari Saffra, 10th Grade

When looking at Parshat Mikeitz, Rav Hutner points out that each of the twelve brothers represents one tribe, yet Yosef represents two tribes because of his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe. He also points out that Yosef's death is mentioned twice, once at the end of Bereishit and once in the beginning of Shemot. This is unlike all the other brothers whose deaths are mentioned only once, at the beginning of Shemot. This leaves us with an obvious question: Why is Yosef getting this special attention from the Torah?

Rav hutner explains that this is because Yosef is on a level higher than a Shevet, but lower than an Av (in the middle). He defines an Av as a role that helped define the essence of Klal Yisroel and made sure that Judaism would last forever. Avraham was the first convert, and created the very existence of a Jew. Yitzchak was the first person born Jewish and was Tahor his entire life due to the fact that he never left Israel. This provided holiness and purity for the Jews that would last forever. However, these two Avot weren't quite enough for the Jewish people because they both had non-Jewish kids. Therefore, it would still be possible for their offspring to become unworthy to be part of the Jewish nation. However, Yaakov was the first to have all Jewish kids. This proved to us that once you are born from a Jewish mother, you're always Jewish no matter what actions you take.

Rav hutner points out that even with the three Avot, it still isn't enough. We have a Halacha that someone who is born from a non-Jewish mother is Halachically considered a non-Jew even if their father is Jewish. Yosef set an example of exactly how to make sure that this happens. He provided the Jewish people with the ability to withstand assimilation and other challenges in exile because of what happened to him in Mitzrayim. Yosef was an outsider in Mitzrayim, and with that came many temptations, specifically that of Potiphar's wife. By resisting those temptations, he guaranteed the Jewish people the ability to withstand these challenges. Yaakov assured that anyone born from a Jewish mother is Jewish, but Yosef completed that by ensuring that we have the strength to resist intermarridge.

We can now explain why Yosef's death is mentioned in both the end of Bereishit and the beginning of Shemot. The Ramban explains that Sefer Bereishit is called the book of the fathers, and Sefer Shmot is called the book of the children. The deaths of the other brothers are only mentioned in Shemot because they were simply the children of the Jewish nation. Yosef is mentioned in Shemot because he was still a Shevet, but he was also mentioned in Bereishit because he was considered half an Av. We can then use this logic to explain that Yosef merited two tribes because he is really more than just a Shevet. Have a great Shabbos!



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YOSEF SCHAFLER

he stature of the leader is the measure of the people. Without a unified nation, there is no King. Once the Holy Ba'al Shem Tov was praying with a minyan of his closest disciples. The Ba'al Shem Tov used to pray at great length with intense dvekus, longing and yearning for his Creator. His disciples would finish their prayers much earlier and then wait, sometimes for hours, for the Rebbe to finish.

Once the Ba'al Shem Tov extended his prayers even longer than usual and the disciples grew weary of waiting. They decided that each one would attend to whatever he had to do and then gather in the Shul an hour later. After an hour, they had all returned and they waited some more until the Ba'al Shem Tov had finished his prayer. He then turned to them and accused, "You've created a great disunification in that you went out to attend to your private needs and left me here alone!" Then he told them the following parable.

It is known that the nature of birds is to migrate to the warm countries during the winter months. Once, the inhabitants of one of those countries spotted an unusually beautiful and unusual bird with feathers of every color in the universe, and he was perched at the crest of a very high and mighty tree that was impossible to climb.

When the King of the land heard about the bird, he decided that he must capture it. He ordered many, many people to be brought to the forest where the tree was located. One was to stand on the shoulders of the other until they were able to reach the perch of the beautiful bird, and then to bring it to the King.

The procedure of reaching the heights of the tree was very arduous and time consuming. Some of those at the bottom of the human ladder lost sight of the task at hand. Weary and disgruntled with the amount of time it was taking, they began to disperse. It goes without saying that the whole ladder toppled to the ground, injuring those on the highest sections. The King wanted that his people should be banded together with a common purpose, but this time nothing was gained.

"It was good", concluded the Ba'al Shem Tov, "when you were bound together with me in my prayer. But when you disbanded, each going his own separate way, everything fell. What I had hoped to achieve, was lost."

Adapted from Chabad.org

(Eitan Eckman-Continued from page 1)

my needs" will not have their needs taken care of. Yosef, in asking the butler for assistance, seems to be doing all he possibly can to gain his freedom. If, as it seems, Yosef is trying to strike the balance between Hishtadlus and Emunah, then why is Yosef punished for asking for help?

The answer is that Yosef is no ordinary person; no ordinary person has "HaTzaddik" added to their name. As a result, while most people balance their Emunah and Hishtadlus, Yosef is held to a higher standard and is expected to go above and beyond in his Emunah in Hashem. Yosef generally goes above and beyond, as seen when he was sold into slavery and brought to Egypt, a foreign land. However, in this instance, he lost faith, and so Hashem punished Yosef on his level.

The lesson is fairly obvious. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, and no two people are the same. As a result, Hashem doesn't reward or punish me or you on the same scale; we all are judged in comparison to what we could be versus what other people are. Yosef, too, wasn't judged the same way an average person might, for Hashem knew that Yosef's strength of Emunah was far above that of an average person. May we all be zocheh to reach our greatest potential, and in doing so, be viewed on the highest level by Hashem.

(Ariel Kunin- Continued from page 1)

Rabbi Mordechai Willig explains that the Gemara in Berachos (20a) teaches that Yosef didn't have a "עִינָא," an "evil eye," on him, because he didn't "flaunt his blessings." Rabbi Willig further explains based on a Sforno (37:7) that Yosef ruled for 80 years which was "the longest tenure in biblical history." "The longevity of his rule can be attributed to his modesty. He served Pharaoh loyally and sought neither primacy nor honor. Thereby, he avoided the evil eye for himself and his descendants" (Rabbi Willig, torahweb.org). Because of the modesty Yosef displayed, he was able to become a long-lasting and successful leader.

The second middah of Yosef is that of a resolute will. He didn't get bogged down in the obstacles of the present, but instead realized that he was blessed with great potential. Rabbi Label Lam explains the reason why Yosef was chosen to be the leader despite his seeming lack of leadership skills by quoting a parable from the book "Duties of the Heart": "A child washed up one day on the shore of a country. To his surprise, a committee welcomed him and promptly crowned him 'king.' They then proceeded to provide him with his favorite food, royal garments, and attend to his every need. A cabinet of wise advisers surrounded him at all times. Eventually, the young king asked his advisors how long he will rule. The wise men informed him that he will remain king until a new king washes up on shore. Through a telescope, they showed him a deserted island, which would be his future home. Shocked, the king immediately began to prepare the desert island for his eventual arrival. Over the years, he built beautiful buildings, established libraries, and planted lush gardens and orchards on the island. When a new child washed up on shore, the old king graciously yielded his reign and departed in joyful anticipation for his treasure-full island. The new king however, was not so wise as his predecessor. He became intoxicated with power, and forgot to ask some basic questions. When he was suddenly confronted with the end of his reign, he resisted violently, was forced into a small boat and set adrift" (Rabbi Label Lam, Partners in Torah). Yosef was ready to become a leader when Pharaoh appointed him. Any time Yosef faced an obstacle (i.e being sold by his brothers, tempted by Potifar's wife, or thrown in Jail) he was able to overcome it with sheer will. After Pharaoh appointed him, the Torah tells us, "and Joseph went out from before Pharaoh and passed through the entire land of Egypt" (41:46). Rabbi David Stav explains that "He did not have time to deal with finding himself a wife, and he clearly wasn't hanging out at parties and having a great time. He was focused on one thing only: how to save the kingdom from the terrible famine that was sure to come" (Rabbi David Stav, Parsha to the Point). This resolute will of Yosef along with his modesty are the primary reasons why Yosef's reign was so success-

In the book "Good To Great," researcher Jim Collins explains what factors transform a good company into a great one. One of the few factors is a "level-five executive." A "level-five executive" is a leader who "builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will." Collins explains that an individual with humility/modesty and a resolute will will be the most effective leader. This blend of modesty and an unwavering will is what made Yosef the right man to lead Mitzrayim through the seven years of famine.

Hashem created Bnei Yisroel as the leaders of all the nations of the world to follow the will of Hashem. To be the great leaders that we are supposed to be, we should look at the qualities of Yosef - modesty and a resolute will - that made him a great and successful leader and attempt to emulate them in our own lives.

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דברים היוצאים מן הל"ב

HIIJABIL SCHEIN

DEMMS

10TH GRADE

shev, we read about Yosef's dreams interpreted it in a completely differin which his brothers bowed down to ent way than what Pharaoh feared him. This week, in Parshat Mikeitz, would be true, saying that it reprewe read about Pharaoh's dreams, in sented seven years of plenty folwhich the weak corn stalks eat the lowed by seven years of famine. strong ones and the weak cows eat This answer presented incredible the strong ones. Rav Schwab z"l news to Pharaoh that even caused asks a fascinating question: What is him to appoint Yosef to handle the so upsetting to the Pharaoh of Egypt coming famine. about seven lean cows swallowing seven fat cows?

swer this question, we must look at cides with Parshat Miketz every Pharaoh's dominion. It was, like any year; this is a constant of the Jewish dictator, based entirely on the prem- calendar. It is not just a coincidence ise that the mighty will dominate the that Mikeitz shares one of the main weak. Pharaoh was so bothered by themes of Chanukah, a theme menthis dream, not simply because of tioned in Al Hanisim — "the mighty the illogical characteristics, but be-fell into the hands of the weak, the cause of its representation. He saw many into the hands of the few." The this as an omen from heaven that de- message of both Chanukah and Parspite his immense power, the weak shat Miketz is that quantity and can still overthrow the might.

satisfaction Pharaoh had when he compassion.

Last week, in Parshat Vaye- heard Yosef's interpretation. Yosef

Furthermore, Rav points out that this idea directly con-Ray Schwab tells us that to an- nects to Chanukah. Chanukah coinstrength do not matter and Hashem This can also explain the incredible rules the world with kindness and

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