

SHABBAT LASHEM

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THE MOST WIDELY
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DANI JACOBSON | BOGERET DVAR TORAH

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Shabbat
Times

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PARASHAT MIKEITZ | ISSUE 10

In this week's parasha the dominant theme is that of dreams and their fulfilment. Having interpreted correctly the dreams of the Sar haMashkim (Chief Butler) and Sar Ha'Ofim (Chief Baker) at the end of last week's parasha, Yosef's only plea to the former is that "If only you would think of me with yourself when he benefits you, and you will do me a kindness, if you please, and mention me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." (Bereishit 40:14) The butler, however, forgets, until Pharaoh has dreams of his own and needs somebody to explain them to him, leading to Yosef's rise to power as he correctly predicts the agricultural success and then hardship that will befall Mitzrayim. When Yosef's brothers bow down to him as they come to buy food, we read that "Yosef recalled the dreams that he dreamed about them" (42:9): he sees before him the dreams that he had as a youth falling into place.

Rabbi Sacks comments beautifully that here we can see the incredible partnership between the human protagonist and God to bring the dreams in question to fruition: "Looking back in middle or old age, we can often discern, dimly through the mist of the past, that a story was taking shape, a destiny slowly emerging ... Nowhere is this clearer than in the life of Yosef as told in Bereishit, and nowhere more so than in the sequence of events told at the end of last week's parasha and the beginning of this. Without Yosef's acts – his interpretation of the steward's dream and his plea for freedom – he would not have left prison. But without divine intervention in the form of Pharaoh's dreams, it would also not

have happened." God was helping Yosef at every step of the way, but God wanted him to play his part as well. As Rabbi Akiva teaches, "All is foreseen yet freedom of choice is given." (Avot 3:15)

In this week's haftarah for Shabbat Chanukah, Zechariah describes his vision – another dream, some might say – of an argument between Yehoshua haCohen Gadol and the Satan, said by the Radak to represent the tension between the Jews who were trying to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash and the local chieftains trying to halt its construction, as described in Sefer Ezra. After purifying Yehoshua, HaShem addresses him, promising that God's servant will complete the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash. Zechariah wakes up from this 'dream' "as a man is awakened from his sleep" (Zechariah 4:1) and immediately has another: that of a beautiful golden menorah, the link between this week's parasha and the chag we are currently celebrating. The Chanukah story is another example of the cooperation needed between human beings and God. Thanks to God's miraculous help, we beat the Greeks, but only because we went out and at least tried to fight them ourselves. In the same way, Zechariah's prophecies about the glory of the Second Beit HaMikdash only came true because Jews were willing to fight for them to do so. If we want to see their fulfilment once more in our lifetime, we must learn from the themes of Mikeitz not to be complacent. We always say that we're waiting for God for the Third Beit HaMikdash – but equally, God is waiting for us
Shabbat Shalom.



RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH

After Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dreams to be referring to seven years of bounty and then famine, Pharaoh turns to Yosef saying (41:39):

ויאמר פרעה אל יוסף אחרי הודיע אלוקים אותך את כל זאת אין נבון וחכם כמוך

“And Pharaoh said to Yosef: After God has told you all this, there is no one as understanding or as wise as you.”

What is it that causes Pharaoh to believe that Yosef is exceedingly wise? We might be tempted to think that it was Yosef's advice to Pharaoh regarding how to deal with the years of famine (41:33-36):

“Pharaoh should appoint a man who is very understanding and wise, and put him in charge of all the land of Egypt... and they should gather all the food of the seven good years...and the food will be a deposit for the land for the seven years of famine that will be in the land of Egypt, and the land will not be destroyed due to famine.”

This advice is put into practice by Yosef (at Pharaoh's command), and indeed it is very successful in ensuring the survival of the Egyptian people and strengthening Pharaoh's status as king of the land (48:13-26). It seems like it was indeed wise and understanding!

However, the Ramban explains that this was not advice that Yosef came up with himself, but rather was his interpretation of the fact that the bad cows swallowed the good cows: in other words, the food of the good years was supposed to be “consumed” by the bad years. This is what allows the bad cows to survive (though barely) instead of collapsing from hunger. According to this interpretation of the Ramban, Yosef's advice is not actually his own advice at all, but rather Hashem's directive to Pharaoh in his dream! The question remains: what made Pharaoh believe that Yosef was wise and understanding, capable of being put in

charge of Egypt's food production?

Rabbi Yitzchak Twersky suggests that Pharaoh's assessment of Yosef's wisdom was based on a certain conception of “חכם” “wisdom”: wisdom comes not from amassing large amounts of experience or information, but from being able to listen to others. As Chazal teach us in Pirkei Avot (4:1):

איזהו חכם? הולמד מכל אדם

Who is wise? One who learns from everyone.

Reviewing the story of Pharaoh's dreams helps us see that Pharaoh was telling all of his potential dream interpreters a critical piece of information: though I dreamt two dreams, really the dreams were one and the same. However, all those who attempted interpretations, seemingly the best and the brightest, were not attuned enough to Pharaoh's words to understand this, viewing the dreams as separate units (41:8):

“And it was in the morning and Pharaoh was shaken, and he sent and called all of the sorcerers of Egypt and all its wise men, and Pharaoh told them his dream and there was no one able to interpret them for Pharaoh.”

They were unsuccessful because despite the fact that he was clearly telling them “I had one dream” they kept trying to interpret them as separate ones.

It is for this reason that Yosef twice stresses this point, as it is a key part of the correct interpretation (as pointed out by the Ramban; 41:25-26):

“And Yosef said to Pharaoh: the dream of Pharaoh is one...it is one dream.”

This ability to key in on Pharaoh's words and realize that Pharaoh believes he has had one dream (and clearly describes them as such) not only allows Yosef to correctly interpret the dreams, but also

shows Pharaoh that Yosef is indeed חכם - wise.

The Haftorah for this week's parasha (though not often read, due to the reading of Chanukah's haftorah instead) is the story of the two women who come to Shlomo HaMelech for judgment regarding a baby they both claimed. The story is the continuation of the episode in which Hashem appears to Shlomo in a dream, granting him one request. Hashem, in response to Shlomo's request, gives Shlomo a לב חכם ונבון, or "a heart that is wise and understanding" (using the same words Pharaoh does to describe Yosef; Melachim I 3:12). But what did Shlomo actually request? He asked for a לב שומע "a heart that can hear" (ibid v.9). As mentioned above, these two "hearts" strongly overlap: for

one's heart to be wise and understanding, he or she must learn to truly hear.

A careful reading of the continuation of the story in the haftorah, intended to act as an expression of Shlomo's wise and understanding heart, shows that his proposed solution of cutting the baby in half is merely intended to show for others who the baby's true mother is: Shlomo has already figured out the truth by listening to the claims of the two mothers. This is the power of learning to truly listen and hear.

May we all be blessed (and work hard!) to learn to listen to and hear each other.

Shabbat Shalom and Chanukah Sameach!

DVAR HALACHA: WEEKLY QUESTION

Have a question? Please email rav@bauk.org or call Rav Aharon at 07976642135.

Question from Rafi Cohen: If over the course of Chanukah I will be eating dinner at different people's homes but sleeping at my own house, where should I light candles?

Answer: There is a discussion in the Gemara and poskim as to how a guest (אכסניא) is supposed to fulfill his or her obligation to light Chanukah candles. Two possibilities mentioned are to rely on a lighting taking place in the guest's home (i.e. that the family's lighting will fulfill his or her obligation) or fulfilling the obligation through the host's lighting

by participating in the costs of the oil/candles. Additionally, it is possible that a guest should light as well, either where sleeping or eating (see Shulchan Aruch 677 and the acharonim there for a full discussion).

However, this discussion is relevant specifically for a guest that will not be sleeping in their own home. In other words, a guest who has travelled away from their home and is being hosted by others over the course of Chanukah. The Mishnah Berurah (677:12), quoting many other acharonim, writes that someone who merely happens to eat at a friend's house, but has a home in the city, must light in their own home. For this reason, you should light in your own home.

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COMMUNITY UPDATES

Our **Rav Shaliach** visited Yavneh College where he spoke about at Candle Lighting about being proud of one's Jewish identity. He also visited Hasmonean Boys school where he spoke to years 7-10 about a variety of Chanukah themes.

Our **Sviva** in Pinner had a very special Chanukah party with dreidel competitions, treasure hunts and more! **Naomi Brookarsh, Rosh Pinner Bnei Akiva** wrote:

In Pinner, last week we had our annual Chanukah party. We had loads of donuts and played donut bobbing, attempting not to lick our lips. We did dreidel spinning, treasure hunts, quizzes and much more! To conclude Shabbat, our Rabbi joined us and played guitar for a musical havdallah. Looking forward to next term at Pinner Bnei Akiva! Chanukah sameach

Winter Machane 2017 starts next week with pre-camp for all the madrichim! Madrichim and the Senior Tzevatim will be working hard to prepare an amazing Machane for over 250 chanichim. Over the course of 7 days our chanichim will explore all sorts of fascinating and contemporary themes, have so much fun, make new friends and learn all about what it means to a member of Bnei Akiva.

On **Aleph** (Years 6-7) chanichim will be learning about human values and morals. A particular focus is on mitzvot ben adam

l'chavero. For many Aleph is the first camp experience and we know they'll enjoy it!

On **Maapilim** (Year 8) chanichim will be learning about the mitzvot relevant to the journey to Jewish adulthood. This Machane the focus is on the many different forms each chanich's Bayit Yehudi takes.

On **Haroeh** (Year 9) chanichim will be learning about the foundations of Religious Zionism and one of it's key figures: Rav Kook. It's all about the great personalities who dreamed of rebuilding the Jewish homeland and the chanichim being inspired to make a difference in the world.

On **Gimmel** (Year 10) chanichim will be learning about contemporary and relevant discussions looking at the basis of a Modern Orthodox identity. This Machane also sees the reveal of your Shevet name!

On **H-Course** (Year 12) chanichim will be taking part in our community's advanced leadership course! The H stands for Hadracha and chanichim on this Machane start the journey to becoming madrichim in their own right. They also get opportunity to run tochniot for the younger chanichim!

Winter Machane 2017 is set to be such an amazing time - we wish all the Tnuva participating a wonderful winter!

A huge and congratulations to all our Sviva Tzevatim around the country on an amazing past term! With thanks to our Roshim! Barnet: Zevi Lerer and Sam Rothstein. Borehamwood: Natalie Maurer. Brondesbury Park: Abi Laderman. Bushey: Sam Jayes. Cheadle: Jake Frieze, Eli and Reuven Atlas. Chigwell: Rabbi Goodwin. Edgware: Elisheva Hersh and Liora Rabinowitz. Finchley: Avital Nevies and Leora Blitz. Golders Green: Shevi Goodman, Michal Kelly, Rebecca Woolich. Hale: Abi Elias. Hendon: Daniella Wieder. Leeds: Kobi Wiener and Shira Collins. Mill Hill: Jason Lipowicz. Pinner: Naomi Brookarsh. Radlett: Joshua Benjamin. Salford: Daniel Davis and Anoushka Goldman. South Hampstead: Louisa Stagni and Sam Bray. Woodside Park: Jordan and Ronnie Passe.