

Joseph in Egypt:



Values vs. Success

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London	3:34	Tokyo	4:09
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Weekly Parsha

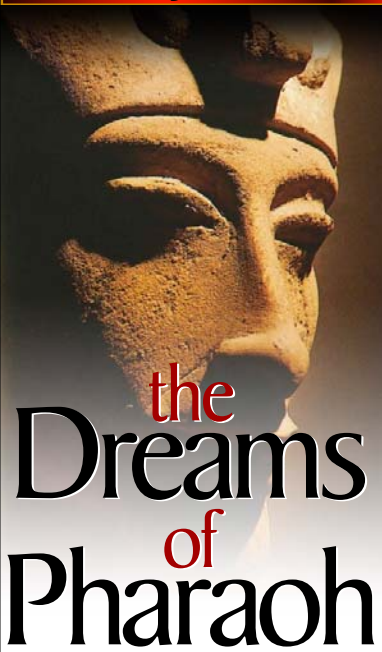
Meketz

RABBI BERNIE FOX

"You shall be [appointed] over my household, and through your command all my people shall be nourished. Only [with] the throne will I be greater than

(continued on next page)

Weekly Parsha



the Dreams of Pharaoh

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Written by student

In the beginning of the book of Exodus Chapter 1 Verse 8 it states, "A new king arose on Egypt that did not know Joseph." There is an argument amongst the Rabbis. Rav says it was literally a new king. Shmuel says it was not a new king but rather the same Pharaoh, who acted as though he did not know Joseph and made new decrees against the Jews. The position of Shmuel seems difficult. A simple reading of the text would indicate it was merely a new king. Why did Shmuel feel compelled to understand the meaning of the verse to such a strained interpretation? This explanation seems to stretch the

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Values



Friday's Angels

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Talmud Sabbath 119b states that as man travels home from shul Friday night, two angels escort him: one good and one evil. If upon his arrival home he finds the lights kindled, and the table and seat prepared, the good angel says, "May it be His will that it should be this way next Sabbath." And the evil angel is forced to agree against its will. But if the man does not find all prepared, the evil angel says, "So shall it be next week", and the good angel is compelled to agree against its will.

What are these angels? Why do they only "appear" on Friday evening as man arrives home from shul? What is the statement about "So it shall be next week" teaching? And why are the angels forced against their will to agree with certain sentiments? Where do we start?!

Looking for Clues

The clues are always those subjects, or verbs, that are exclusive to any given Medrash, or allegory. Therefore, we take note that this occurs Friday evening. This Medrash also concerns preparations for Sabbath. For the state of man's home is truly a reflection upon his activities earlier that day. We also rarely find cases where angels are "compelled".

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(Meketz cont. from pg. 1)

Weekly Parsha

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Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought



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you." And Pharaoh said to Yosef, "Look, I have appointed you over the entire land of Egypt." And Pharaoh removed his ring from his hand and placed it on Yosef's hand, and he attired him [with] raiment of fine linen, and he placed the golden chain around his neck. And he had him ride in his chariot of second rank, and they called out before him, "[This is] the king's patron," appointing him over the entire land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said to Yosef, "I am Pharaoh, and besides you, no one may lift his hand or his foot in the entire land of Egypt." And Pharaoh named Yosef Tzapenat Pa'neach, and he gave him Asenat the daughter of Potiphera, the governor of On, for a wife, and Yosef went forth over the land of Egypt." (Beresheit 41:40-45)

These passages describe the final step in Yosef's ascension to power in Egypt. The Torah's narrative of Yosef's story begins in Parshat VaYeshev. The Torah tells us that Yosef was favored by his father but hated by his brothers. He dreamed that some day he would be the leader of his brothers and that even his father would acknowledge his position within the family. His brothers plotted to put an end to Yosef's visions of glory and sold him into slavery in Egypt. The Torah describes in some detail the vicissitudes of Yosef's fate in Egypt. He rises from a lowly slave to become the household manager of a powerful and influential officer. He was then thrown into jail. But even in jail he prospers and is appointed to a position of responsibility. However, the parasha ends with Yosef's hopes of redemption dashed. Now suddenly, Yosef experiences a complete reversal of fate and is appointed to a position of power second only to Paroh.

Our parasha opens with this final chapter of Yosef's ascension. Paroh has two disturbing dreams. His advisors cannot provide him with an acceptable interpretation. Paroh's butler had been imprisoned with Yosef. In prison, Yosef provided the butler with an accurate interpretation of a dream. Yosef told the butler that his dream foretold his release from prison and his reappointment to Paroh's court. This interpretation was correct in every detail. The butler relates the incident to Paroh and the king summons Yosef to interpret his dreams.

Yosef tells Paroh that his dreams foretell

seven years of plenty to be followed by seven years of incomparable famine. The dreams are intended as a forewarning. Paroh is to use the years of plenty to plan and prepare for the years of famine. Through these preparations Paroh can save his land from destruction. Paroh is impressed with Yosef's ability and wisdom. He appoints Yosef as his prime minister and places the future of Egypt in his hands. Yosef is to supervise the preparation for the famine. During the famine he is responsible for the distribution of food.

Surely, the story of Yosef is a wonderful and exciting adventure. But we must wonder why the Torah provides so much detail. Would it not have been sufficient for the Torah to tell us that Yosef was sold into slavery and to continue with a description of the circumstances of his rescue and appointment as steward of Egypt? Instead, the Torah provides a remarkably detailed account of the vicissitudes of his fate. These details seem superfluous.

In order to understand the purpose and message of this detailed account, some of the elements must be explored and analyzed. As mentioned earlier, Yosef was sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt. However, he did not long toil as a lowly slave. He was purchased by Potifar – an influential member of Paroh's household or government. Potifar's exact position is the subject of debate. According to Rashi, Potifar was in charge of butchering and providing meat to Paroh's household.[1] Unkelus disagrees. He suggests that he was Paroh's executioner. Nachmanides prefers Unkelus' position.[2] However, he does not provide an explanation for this preference.

Yosef rose to a position of prominence in the household of Potifar. Potifar placed Yosef in charge of the affairs of the household and gave him complete responsibility and authority over these affairs. Potifar's wife was attracted to Yosef. She attempted to seduce him. Yosef rejected her advances. But eventually, she attempted to force herself upon him. Yosef fled from her. She accused Yosef of attempting to seduce her. Her husband placed Yosef in jail.

It is notable that Potifar placed Yosef in jail. This was a rather tempered response. Yosef was accused of seducing Potifar's wife. Yosef was his servant. It seems that he was remarkably lenient in his response. Nachmanides offers a number of possible explanations for this

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response. He suggests that Potifar's great love and admiration for Yosef may have influenced his decision to spare him. He also suggests that Potifar may have suspected that his wife was not completely truthful in her characterization of her encounter with Yosef. As result of either or both of these considerations, he decided to spare Yosef and imprison him rather than seek his death.[3]

The Torah tells us that he placed Yosef in the "beit ha'sohar – the place in which the prisoners of the king were imprisoned." Rabbaynu Avraham ibn Ezra is concerned with the term *beit ha'sohar*. The term is unusual and has does not have an obvious meaning. He explains that actually the term is derived from the Egyptian language. Therefore, the Torah explains the meaning of the term. The Torah tells us that it is the prison in which the prisoners of the king are placed.[4]

Nachmanides disagrees. He explains that *beit ha'sohar* is a Hebrew term and he explains its origins. It means "prison". However, the Torah adds that Potifar did not place Yosef in the prison provided for typical crimes. Instead, he was placed in a special prison reserved for prisoners of the king.[5] According to this interpretation of the passage, the Torah is telling us that although Yosef was placed in prison, he was not treated as a common criminal. He was not placed among the general body of prisoners. Instead, he was placed in a special institution reserved for the prisoners of the king. As we shall see, this apparent nuance of fate had important ramifications.

We can now understand Nachmanides' preference for Unkelus' interpretation of Potifar's position. According to this interpretation, Potifar was Paroh's executioner. In this position he was in charge of Paroh's personal prison. When he was faced with the decision of how to punish Yosef, he had the authority to place Yosef in the special prison under his authority. In other words, were Potifar not Paroh's executioner, he would have handed Yosef over to the civil authorities. They would have placed Yosef in a common prison. But because of his position, Potifar had the option of placing Yosef in this special prison reserved for the prisoners of the king. Potifar took advantage of this option and placed Yosef in the prison under his control.

There is a deeper message in Nachmanides' position. He seems to maintain that every trial and travail Yosef experienced was actually the seed, or antecedent, to his eventual ascension and redemption. Yosef was sold into slavery in Egypt. He was ripped away from his home and his father. Yet, this tragedy was also the



antecedent to his eventual emergence as one of the most powerful political leaders of his era.

Yosef was condemned to prison for an alleged crime he had not committed. This was another tragedy. But again, this tragedy was an antecedent to his eventual rise to power. Potifar respected Yosef. He had the authority to place Yosef in the king's prison. He exercised this authority. As a result, Yosef came into contact with the individual who would eventually recommend him to Paroh and propel him into prominence.

Nachmanides provides another example of an apparent tragedy serving as an antecedent to Yosef's ascension. In prison Yosef came into

contact with Paroh's butler. He interpreted the butler's dream and foretold his release and reappointment to Paroh's household. He asked the butler to remember him and, upon his release, to use his influence to rescue him. What measures did Yosef hope would be taken by the butler? Nachmanides offers a number of possibilities. Perhaps Yosef hoped the butler would recommend him to Paroh as a servant. Perhaps the butler would ask Paroh to allow him to take Yosef as his own servant.[6] Yosef did not have lofty aspirations. He only hoped to be freed from prison and restored to servitude. However, the butler forgot about Yosef and did not make any effort to free him. Again, Yosef experienced a tragedy.

Yet, this tragedy led directly to Yosef's ascension. Our parasha opens with Paroh dreaming two disturbing dreams. He does not receive an acceptable interpretation of these dreams. Now, the butler remembers Yosef and his uncanny skill in interpreting dreams. He recommends him to Paroh at this crucial moment. Yosef's interpretation of these dreams leads to his appointment as Paroh's minister.

In summary, according to Nachmanides, each tragedy experienced by Yosef was also the seed, or antecedent, to Yosef's redemption. These tragedies did not represent Hashem's abandonment of Yosef. Instead, each was a step in a complicated series of events that would lead to Yosef's ascension. The apparent significance of each of these tragedies was misleading. Superficially, they were expressions of Hashem's abandonment. But within the overall design of Hashem's providence, each served a role in bringing about Yosef's emergence as a powerful leader and as savior of Bnai Yisrael. ■

[1] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 37:36.

[2] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 37:36.

[3] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 39:19.

[4] Rabbaynu Avraham ibn Ezra, Commentary on Sefer Beresheit, 39:20.

[5] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 39:20.

[6] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 40:14.

It would appear that these angels must be understood as they are throughout Torah: man possesses a Yetzer Tove (intellect) and a Yetzer Ra (instincts). There is no reason to seek an alternative understanding here. So we first posit that we are dealing with an opposition between man's intelligence, and his emotions. But do we not already know that these two forces exist, and oppose each other? This is where Friday evening comes in.

What conflict exists in man, specifically on Fridays? It is the unique conflict aroused by man's disengagement from his business week, where he is abruptly obligated to suspend all work, and even suspend his manner of talking, as the prophet teaches us: we are to not engage in business discussions. This is frustrating for many men, and women. People are most concerned with earning their livelihoods. This is teamed with man's desire for conquest, his ambition, and his ego, which is greatly satisfied through monetary success. Put them all together, and we have a man who must be quite frustrated upon Friday evenings.

This Talmudic section exposes a frustration, cloaking it as two battling angels in this specific conflict.

Benefits of Longer Commitments

If man truly enjoys Sabbath, and he recognizes this 25-hour period as a blessing...a time to fully immerse himself in Torah, then his table, lights and seat will be prepared. But why does the evil angel agree "against its will"? Why aren't his instincts equally compelled to agree (follow man's intellect) when he performs any other mitzvah? The answer is because Sabbath is unique: it spans a 25-hour period. If man acts properly, and readies his home for Sabbath on Fridays, this means he has expressed a far greater attachment to Torah, as his commitment to Sabbath is not a 10-minute act of donning Tefillin, shaking a Lulav, or a 2-minute act of Menora lighting on Chanukah. No, the commitment to Sabbath is of such duration, that man usurps his instinctual tendencies to a far greater degree. The evil instincts agreeing "against their will", means just that. He has overpowered the instincts through such an enduring commitment to Torah, as if the instincts "agree". He has in fact broken away from his instinctual pull to a far greater degree through his Sabbath commitment, than through all other Mitzvahs.

Now, what does it mean that his good angel says, "So shall it be next Sabbath"? This

means that such a person is so perfected, and this perfection concerns what man's preferred day should be...that he anticipates another day, another Sabbath. "So shall it be next Sabbath". He is not looking to rush through Sabbath and return to business life. He realizes business is a means, and the objective of his labor is to provide the necessary stage where he may indulge in his true purpose: Torah. Sabbath is his preferred day. We describe the Messianic Era as a "Complete day of Sabbath". This means in those times, man will be far more involved in Torah.


Instinct Intensifies without Intellect

But the reverse does not work quite the same way, psychologically speaking. If man dreads Sabbath, and expresses this sentiment by not preparing his home, then upon his arrival, his instincts say, "So shall it be next week". And his intellect is forced to agree. This means that the mere inactivity in his lack to prepare due to instinctual drives is sufficient to sink man further into his instincts, to the point that his intellect suffers, as if it agrees with the instincts. In this case, inactivity propels man further away from Torah.

This is because man can operate in only one of two capacities: intellect or emotion. And as long as man is not engaging his intellect, he is remaining in an emotional state, where this strengthens his evil impulses. The Rabbis teach, "If you abandon me for one day, I will abandon you for two days". This is a metaphor quoting a personified Torah. Torah "speaks" and says that as long as man distances himself from study, he in fact is not merely losing that one day, but he has reinforced his instincts, that now, it will take double the effort – 2 days – to reengage Torah. He first must undo the stronger attachment to his instincts, and then redirect his energies back to Torah.

We also note that this conflict arises at the 'outset' of Sabbath, and not midday on Sabbath. For it is upon the Sabbath's commencement that man is faced with the 'transition' between work and rest.

With a brief allegory, the Rabbis communicate insight into our human natures. In this case, we learn the benefits of Sabbath, the nature of our duel between emotion and intellect...and reiterate the primary goal of a life of Torah, where business life is praised, but viewed only as a means, and not an end. ■



This Talmudic section exposes a frustration, cloaking it as two battling angels in this specific conflict.

simple meaning of the verse. It is obvious that Shmuel detected something in Pharaoh's personality that indicates that he pretended as though he did not know Joseph.

In order to properly analyze the personality of Pharaoh and his relationship with Joseph, we must examine Pharaoh's dream and how Joseph's interpretation led to his ascendancy to power. The dreams of Pharaoh can help us examine his personality. There are two causes of dreams. One is a dream of divine origin, a prophetic vision. Another cause is the person's wishes or the thoughts of his unconscious. Pharaoh had two dreams. By analyzing and contrasting both dreams we should be able to determine the portion of the dream, which is prophetic, and the part, which is an expression of his personality. The aspects of his dreams, which are duplicative, are obviously of divine origin. However, if we examine the portions of one dream, which are not common to the other, said portion is not prophetic. It would understandably be an expression of Pharaoh's unconscious.

By analyzing the dreams we note one striking difference with respect to the dreams concerning the cows. Pharaoh sees himself as part of that dream. Genesis Chapter 41 Verse 1 states at the end thereof "...and behold I was standing above the river." Another unique aspect of this dream is that it states the origin of the cows. The cows were coming up out of the river. However, the dream of the bundles of wheat does not state their origin. We must understand; why does Pharaoh include himself in the first dream, and why does he envision the cows appearing from out of the river?

Another clue to Pharaoh's personality would be an analysis of his actions. Upon Joseph's interpretation of the dreams, Pharaoh's response seems overwhelming. He immediately appoints a despicable "Jewish lad, a slave" as his viceroy, the second most powerful position in Egypt. He dresses Joseph in ornate clothing and extends him a regal coronation. Furthermore, when his subjects come to ask his advice when they were starving, he replies "go to Joseph and whatever he tells you to do, abide by it". It would seem rather unlikely that Pharaoh was willing to relinquish all control and credit, and suddenly bestow it upon Joseph. His response, besides being overwhelming, seems incongruous to Shmuel's interpretation of his later actions. At this juncture he seems to be a righteous individual capable of appreciating and recognizing the good of Joseph. However, later, after Joseph's death, there is a complete transformation of his personality and he denies Joseph's existence and in fact, acts ruthless to his people the Jews.



An understanding of the extraneous portion of his dreams can give us an insight into his personality and can demonstrate why seemingly incompatible actions are actually consistent with his character.

In his first dream the cows arose from the river. The Hebrew term for river that the Torah uses is "ye-or". Rashi explains that this term is used because it is referring to the Nile. The Nile was the source of sustenance for the land of Egypt. Egypt is a dry climate and the Nile overflows and irrigates Egypt. The Nile thus represents the source for the fulfillment of the Egyptians' basic needs. However, in Pharaoh's dream he was standing "al ha ye-or", above the Nile. This signifies that Pharaoh felt that he was 'above' the Nile. In his own mind he was more powerful than the powers of nature. Pharaoh considered himself a god. In fact, the Medrash tells us, that he even emptied his bowels without anyone knowing, so as the feign divinity in front of his people, never needing to relieve himself. He professed to be above the laws of nature. Thus, the most threatening occurrence to Pharaoh would be if he were not in total control. It would shatter his self image as a god. Thus, the occur-

rence of a drought was a fearful event to Pharaoh. The Torah tells us "vatepaem rucho", his spirit was troubled. Unconsciously, he feared losing control. That is why in the dream he envisioned the cows coming out of the river. He feared a natural event that would be beyond his control. He thus sensed that Joseph's interpretation was accurate. He therefore had to come to grips with the possibility of losing control. However, Joseph presented him with the ability to maintain control. He realized that through Joseph he would be able to retain control and keep intact his image as a god. However, in order for him to view his reliance on Joseph as a situation akin to being in control, he was coerced into viewing Joseph as an extension of himself. Psychologically there was total identification with Joseph. Therefore, his response to Joseph was overwhelming. The deification of Joseph was not an abnormal response, but on the contrary it was necessitated by his identification with Joseph. It was an expression of his vision of Joseph as his alter ego. This relationship reinstated his threatened view that he was not the most powerful force in the world: with Joseph, he now resumed his self-image as a god. Therefore, when people asked him what to do, he quite naturally responded, "whatever Joseph says, do". It bolstered his image of being in control. Joseph's actions were merely expressions of his own power. Pharaoh and Joseph together, in his mind, were one entity.

We can now understand Shmuel's explanation. After Joseph's death, Pharaoh, because of his psychological make-up, faced a terrible problem. Narcissism, the love of oneself, was a key characteristic of Pharaoh's personality. A narcissistic individual's psychic energies are directed towards the love of the self. However, when a person like Pharaoh, strongly identifies with another individual and views him as his alter-ego, that other person becomes a source of his narcissistic, psychic energy. Therefore, upon Joseph's death, the excess psychic energy could no longer be channeled towards his alter ego. He began to confront the same emotions that he previously experienced. He felt threatened by the fact that he was really not in control. However, he could not use the defense mechanism of identification but instead resorted to denial. He was unable to confront the fact that Joseph really allowed him to retain control. Therefore, psychologically, in order to function without feeling threatened, he had to act as though he did not know Joseph. Any remembrance of Joseph or acknowledging Joseph's value was painful to his self-image of being all-powerful. Accordingly, not only did he have to act as though he did not know Joseph, but that denial coerced him to act in the opposite

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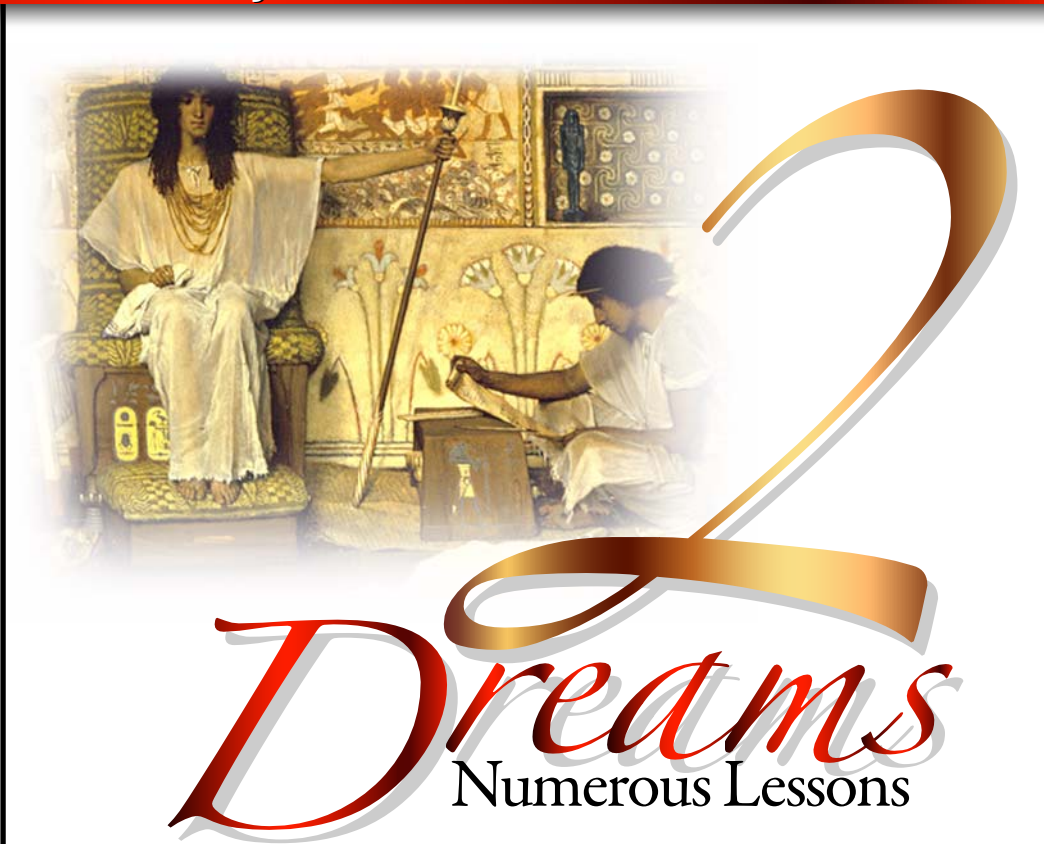
fashion. His remembrance of Joseph was so painful; it served as the source for his oppression towards Joseph's people, the children of Israel.

Therefore Shmuel stated that "a new king" is only viewed as new, in terms of his actions. However an analysis of Pharaoh's personality indicates that on the contrary, it was the same Pharaoh. That is why the Torah specifically articulates that the new king did not know Joseph. If he were truly a new king the statement would be redundant. The Torah is really offering us an insight into his nature.

An example of this type of psychological mechanism is evident in Christianity. The Christian hates the Jew for ostensibly killing his G-d. However, this is indicative of a psychological defense mechanism. The Christian cannot admit that we gave them their G-d, since Jesus was Jewish.

Jacob upon meeting Pharaoh was keenly aware of Pharaoh's true nature. His response to Pharaoh's inquiry with respect to his age seems rather lengthy and irrelevant. Genesis Chapter 49 at Verse 9, "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my sojourning are 130, few and bad were the years of my life and I have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my fathers, in the days of their sojourns." Nachmanides questions this rather lengthy response. However, based upon our insight into Pharaoh's personality, it is understandable. A person, who perceives himself as all-powerful and god-like, feels threatened by someone who possesses something that is desirable, which he does not have. Jacob realized that Pharaoh had such a personality. He sensed that Pharaoh, when questioning his age, noted he was an elder and was asking more, out of a sense of envy rather than curiosity. He sensed that he possessed something that Pharaoh desired: old age. Accordingly, Jacob who was old, at a time when people were not living so long, responded based upon this perception. He stated that he was not so old, and that he did not have a good life nor live as long as his fathers. He attempted to dispel any envy that Pharaoh may have had. He did not want to entice Pharaoh's anger by giving him any cause for jealousy. Therefore, his lengthy response was appropriate and warranted, considering the circumstances.

It also explains the blessing that Jacob bestowed upon Pharaoh. Rashi tells us that he blessed him that the Nile should rise to greet him whenever he approaches it. Jacob was aware of Pharaoh's personality. This blessing Pharaoh truly cherished. It represented that even the most powerful phenomenon of nature would be subordinate to his control. ■



Dreams

Numerous Lessons

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

When studying Joseph's dreams and interpretations, the analogy of a genius painter comes to mind. This painter would arrange millions of paint specks on a single paintbrush. Then, using only one stroke, he would move his brush across a blank canvas. Suddenly, a beautiful scene would emerge; trees with colorful leaves, birds in flight, sun and clouds, mountains, and streams. A passerby witnessing the picture-perfect scene emerge with one stroke, would be in awe of how with one action, this painter anticipated how all the paint specks would fall into place and create a perfectly harmonious and picturesque scene. God's two dreams granted to the young Joseph paint such a picture.

When he was 17, Joseph dreamt of eleven sheaves bowing to him. And then in another dream, he saw eleven stars and the sun and moon bowing to him. Even after seeing his brothers' dismay at his retelling of these dreams, Joseph nonetheless felt compelled for some reason, to repeat his second dream first to his brothers, and then again, to all of them and his father, in a second recounting. It was due to these dreams that the brothers conspired to kill Joseph...eventually selling him instead. It was his father who suggested and rejected an interpretation that they would all bow to Joseph: the eleven stars being his eleven

brothers, and the sun and moon representing Joseph's parental figures. At this stage, it does not appear that Joseph offered his own interpretation. Yet, thirteen years later, Joseph accurately and astonishingly interprets not only the dreams of Pharaoh's stewards, but also Pharaoh's dreams. All three dreams came true exactly! But how did Joseph know their interpretations? This question is strengthened by Joseph's apparent lack of interpretative skills with regards to his own two dreams. And many of the Torah commentaries including Ramban and Klay Yakkar do not suggest Joseph was divinely inspired with the interpretations: he succeeded in unraveling each dream solely through his own wisdom.

Later on, when his brothers descended to Egypt to purchase food during the famine, the brothers do not recognize the now 39-year-old, bearded Joseph standing before them. It is suggested that a further denial of this Egyptian viceroy truly being Joseph, was generated from the brothers' rejection of any success Joseph would attain; having been humiliated by his brothers, they were sure Joseph would be psychologically crippled.

When Joseph sees his brothers, he "recalls the dreams". This means that Joseph would use the Divine license provided by these dreams to subjugate his brothers into repentance. Creating a

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situation where the youngest Benjamin would be imprisoned on false charges, Joseph orchestrated a replica of his very own sale to force his brothers into a parallel dilemma. Would they abandon the accused Benjamin now, who ostensibly stole Joseph's goblet, as they had done 20 years earlier when they abandoned Joseph? Or, would they display complete repentance, and sacrifice themselves for their brother? Normally, one is not permitted to place anyone else under such a trial, but Joseph recognized his dreams as Divine in origin, and as a license to perfect his brothers. As a wise Rabbi taught years ago, the first dream of the brothers' sheaves bowing to his – physical dominance – was the precursor for Joseph's dominance over them in the spiritual realm – symbolized by the eleven stars, sun and moon bowing to him. Then first dream was meant by God to teach Joseph that when the brothers would bow to him for food, Joseph thereby received permission to rule over them in regards to their perfection, symbolized by higher bodies: the luminaries.

Subsequent to his dreams, Joseph understood their meaning; and not necessarily 39 years later when he first saw his brothers...but perhaps much earlier. The Torah only tells us that he recalled the dreams upon seeing his brothers, to teach that this was when he would act upon those dreams. But their interpretation may have preceded this by many years.

We must now ask: when did Joseph become such a great interpreter? He was in prison most of the time in Egypt, and he didn't seem to offer interpretation to his own dreams at 17 years of age. From where did Joseph obtain such knowledge of dreams, that he would eventually interpret the dreams of Pharaoh's stewards and Pharaoh himself, with such precision? We are aware of the Torah's description of Joseph as "Ben Zekunim" or as Unkelos translates, "a wise son". Jacob taught Joseph all his knowledge attained at the Yeshiva of Shem and Aver. Perhaps this included lessons Jacob learned from his own dream of the ladder, and maybe others. So at the very outset, Joseph was a wise individual.

We also wonder why God gave these two dreams to Joseph, as they apparently contributed, if not caused, Joseph's sale. But we cannot approach God's true intent without His saying so. However, we can study, and perhaps suggest possibilities.

God's Dreams: Altering History and Offering Perfection

God is perfectly just. He would not jeopardize Joseph's life or well being, had Joseph nature not warranted this sale. We learn that Joseph beautified

himself. He also reported his brother's wrong doings to his father. He had an egoistic tendency, which was rightfully corrected as God humbled him in prison for many years. He publicized his dreams attracting unnecessary jealousy upon himself, which culminated in his sale and ultimately, his imprisonment. Thus, with Joseph's dreams, God clearly intended to perfect him. But that was not the only reason for the dreams. As we mentioned, the genius painter performed one stroke of his brush, and created a perfect picture with tremendous detail. God's dreams prophetically sent to Joseph also had many ramifications.

We mentioned that the dreams also provided perfection for the brothers, as Joseph was licensed through the dreams to place them into this trial regarding Benjamin. Simultaneously, this forced Jacob to part with Benjamin, perfecting Jacob as well, by helping him restrain his excessive love for Benjamin, displaced from his beloved wife Rachel. And we see that Joseph's plan is successful. As Rashi states, when Joseph embraced his father after all those years, we would think Jacob equally embraced his son Joseph. But he did not: he was preoccupied "reciting the Shema". Of course the Shema (Torah phrases) did not yet exist, but this metaphor means Joseph's plan to perfect his father worked: Jacob no longer directed his excessive love towards man, but now, towards God. He re-channeled his passions towards the Creator, as should be done.

So the dreams perfected Joseph by contributing to his sale and refinement of his ego; they enabled Joseph to perfect his brothers by forcing them to defend Benjamin; and they perfected his father as well, forcing him to break his bond to Rachel expressed in her son Benjamin. We might think these matters alone are amazing, that two dreams might offer so much good for so many. However, there is a great deal more to Joseph's dreams. Something even more astonishing.

Dream Instruction

We asked earlier how Joseph transformed into such a brilliant dream interpreter. How did he know that the dreams of the stewards and Pharaoh were true and Divine? What did Joseph know about dreams? All he had were his two dreams years earlier! Soon thereafter he was cast into prison for over a decade. However, those dreams offered Joseph more than we think.

What was Joseph doing in prison this entire time? Of course he must have had chores, and he was promoted to oversee the other inmates. But he had his solitude as well...time to think.

Having received tremendous knowledge from his father, the teachings of Shem and Aver, Joseph

gained deep insight into how God rules the world, and interacts with mankind. He knew the concept of repentance, for he was the conductor of his family's repentance. He too must have reflected on his own state seeking repentance, "Why am I in prison? What is my sin?" He soon realized his dreams precipitated his descent into slavery, and that God gave him these dreams. He analyzed his dreams, and must have spent many hours, days, and weeks studying God's precise communications of the night. What did he discover?

Pharaoh and His Stewards

Ten years elapsed in prison. One day, Joseph saw the wine and bakery stewards were troubled by their dreams, and invited them to recount them before him. Joseph interpreted both dreams exactly in line with what happened: the wine steward was returned to his post, and the baker was hung. Two more years go by, and Joseph finds himself before Pharaoh. Pharaoh heard of Joseph's interpretive skills, and he too told Joseph his dreams. Again Joseph interprets the dreams with exact precision, and they come true. But if God did not tell Joseph the future, how did he know it? We now arrive at the core of the issue...

2 Divine Signs: Dreamer & Duplication

God's dreams granted to Joseph contained content, but they were also "instructive". I believe God gave Joseph two dreams, for objectives in addition to perfecting his family and himself. What do I mean? Besides the 'content' of the dreams, prophetic dreams also have a 'style': there is the chosen dream recipient, and dream duplication.

Joseph received these dreams, and none other. He also received "two" dreams. Ramban states that two separate but similar dreams are unnatural: Pharaoh could have naturally seen both of the dreams' content concerning the cows and the ears in one single dream. (Ramban, Gen. 41:32) Pharaoh didn't wake up and dream similar content again...unless it was Divinely inspired. The same rule applies to the two stewards who dreamt similar dreams. And Joseph knew this. Joseph too had two separate dreams with similar content. (Gen. 37:9) In Numbers 12:6 Ibn Ezra teaches that duplication in dreams indicates their Divine origin: "[Divine] dreams are doubled, as is the manner of prophecies".

Joseph had many years to ponder his situation in prison, and much of what he may have pondered, was the last event leading him into prison: his dreams. He knew they were from God, as he tells his brothers years later: "God sent me before you to

(continued on next page)

place for you a remnant in the land and to sustain you..." (Gen. 45:7)

What did Joseph determine were indicative of Divine dreams? He recognized dream duplication was unnatural. He also recognized that his dreams affected his perfection, so the "recipient" also indicates Divine intent. These two elements were contained in the stewards' dreams, and in Pharaoh's dreams. The stewards' dreams' duplication was a variation, but no less telling of their Divine nature, since they both occurred the very same night, to two individuals. Pharaoh also had two dreams, and of additional significance, it was "Pharaoh" – the man with the wherewithal to address the forecasted famine – who received the dreams.

Joseph understood from his own experience that dream duplication, and a strategic dream recipient point to the dream's Divine nature. So convinced was Joseph of their Divine origin, that the recipient is of a telling nature, Joseph says to Pharaoh, "What God plans He has told to Pharaoh". (Gen. 41:25) Joseph meant to say, "Your reception of this dream as opposed to another indicates its Divine nature". And Joseph repeats this in verse 28.

Had God not granted Joseph these two Divine dreams, Joseph would not have pondered dreams. He would not necessarily have studied their style, to the point that he was able to facilitate the good outcome God desired, by emancipating himself through the stewards' interpretations, and rising to viceroy applying his wisdom to Pharaoh's dreams.

Amazing!

God used dreams not only to perfect Jacob's household, but also to train Joseph in dream design and interpretation...the very matter essential for carving our Jewish history. The design of Joseph's dreams contained the blueprint for determining the Divine nature of the other dreams he would confront. In other words: his dreams were actually dream instructions, not just messages. This is akin to a coded message in an alien language, where the message content is one lesson, but the textual arrangement also contains hints to decipher this new language. Joseph's dreams' "content" contained a message for directing his perfecting of his family. But the dream "design" (selected recipient and duplication) taught him how to unravel dreams in general.

God, with a single brush stroke of Joseph's dreams, 1) placed Joseph in prison to humble him; 2) He caused the brothers to repent, this time not abandoning their youngest brother; 3) He caused Jacob to perfect his excessive love; and 4) He trained Joseph in the art of dream interpretation...the science essential for the aforementioned perfections of Jacob, his sons, and Joseph!



The very dreams that caused Joseph's imprisonment, also provided his escape, and helped sustain that generation.

We appreciate God's wisdom: with one action He effectuates the greatest good for so many. We also realize that without Joseph's appreciation that God teaches man with sublime wisdom, Joseph would not have engaged his own wisdom to discern God's will, nor would Joseph acquire the dream interpretation skills he discovered while in prison. But since Joseph had such deep knowledge of how God works, he turned all his efforts while in prison to analyzing his dreams, using wisdom to 1) uncover God's message, and 2) study dream style so as to determine which dreams are Divine, and how to interpret them.

A Fifth Message

Additionally, dreams are – by definition – a manifestation of "hidden" material. Understanding this, Joseph knew that if God communicates to His prophets in dreams as stated in Numbers 12:6 it is for this reason. God wishes to indicate that just as dreams conceal deeper ideas, so too do God's dreams, and even more so. God's selected mode of communicating with His prophets via dreams, is meant to underscore the principle that God's words too must undergo man's interpretation, if the intended message is to be learned. With that appreciation, Joseph delved into the study of dreams, both prophetic and mundane. He also determined that dreams of Divine origin contain a code, and once detected, can be understood. Joseph knew that wisdom is how God designed the world. Therefore, it is only with wisdom that man succeeds.

Relevance to Us

Does this lesson have any relevance in our lives? Without witnessing a miracle, we certainly cannot determine with any certainty that a given action is

the hand of God. Maybe it is, maybe not. We do not know. We must review our successes and failures with the possibility that God's education of man can take one of two roads: 1) Divine intervention for the individual, as with Joseph's dreams; or 2) natural laws of general providence, such as "boredom" with new acquisitions. God designed man's psyche to be frustrated with overindulgence in the physical pleasures, so as to redirect our energies back to the world of Torah wisdom. This is not individual providence, but a law of nature that applies equally to all members of mankind. Our consideration of our travails must straddle both spheres of God's workings. And since the Talmud teaches that prophecy has ceased, our dreams are not prophetic. However, there is a primary lesson that does apply to us all.

A Life of Wisdom

Joseph's approach to life was based on his knowledge that God created all. Thus, the world "naturally" functions according to God's wisdom. Despite the fact that God did not reveal Pharaoh's or his stewards' interpretations; Joseph secured perfection and sustenance for his family and all of Egypt using wisdom alone. Since he guided his actions purely based on wisdom, he was not in conflict with God's world that functions according to that same, singular wisdom. Rather, he was perfectly in line with it, as his successes teach. We too can perceive God's wisdom if we earnestly seek it out from His Torah. Wisdom is the key to success and happiness in all areas. We do not need God telling us anything more, or sending signs, just like Joseph did not need God to interpret the dreams. In fact, God has already intervened by giving His Torah to us all.

Responding to our misfortunes with safe-sounding beliefs that "it's all for the good", man deceives himself, and will repeat his errors that caused him to say that the first time. It is only through analyzing our ways and seeing if they match Torah ideals, that we will terminate our need to falsely pacify ourselves with "it's all for the good". Using reason in all areas, and admitting our errors with a responsible analysis and internal change, we can engage wisdom to steer us to the truly good path, one that God wills for all mankind, and is readily available without further intervention.

The Torah has all we need. No quick fixes, amulets, or blessings will address what God says requires wisdom and personal perfection. "For only with this may one glorify himself: understand and know Me; for I am Hashem who does kindness, justice and righteousness in land, for in these I desire, so says Hashem." (Jeremiah, 9:23) ■

Let Our Loving Light Radiate Throughout the World

LAURA KOSTER

Sweet voices of children sing "Chanukah, Oh Chanukah, Come Light the Menorah" while watching the rainbow colored candles light up the home. They dance and spin around like twirling dreidels. The mother smiles as she carries & places home made potato latkes onto the table. The father hands out gold chocolate candy coins and kisses each child on the forehead. Sounds of laughter and joy are heard from outside as the glowing candles shine from the window sill.

If only we could feel this pure love and happiness in our daily lives. We face the challenges of earning a living, fighting chaotic rush hour traffic, maintaining our homes and dealing with stress. What appears to have the most impact on us is dealing with difficult relationships with our bosses, co-workers, parents, friends and spouses. The media corrupts minds with violence, immorality and negative events.

The holiday of Chanukah commemorates the victory of Judea winning the battle over the Greeks. Imagine a small group of Jews combating the strongest Hellenist army. Today with mass destruction and lethal technology, we must defend our nation by eliminating bombs and nuclear weapons. We pray to G-d to protect our country as well as Israel. We remember our loved ones whom we lost in 911. So many people devoted their time and lives to helping others during this tragic event.

Our world is filled with tremendous pain and suffering. From another perspective life is also filled with beauty, nature, love, excitement and harmony. We have the power to choose how we think, feel and behave. G-d gave us free will to make decisions on where to work, what clothes to wear, whom to develop friendships with, and most importantly how to treat our fellow man and woman!

Thus, our sages have said: If the student of Torah is meritorious, the Torah becomes an elixir of life for him; if he does not merit, it becomes a death-potion for him (Talmud, Yoma 72b). The Hebrew word zechut (merit) also means refinement. If the student of Torah refines himself, the Torah becomes an elixir of life for him; if he does not refine himself, it becomes a death-potion for him.

Rabbi Laibl Wolf conducted a workshop "Extreme Make Over- Body & Soul" at the JCC of Manhattan. His powerful workshop focused on human behavior and relationships. The Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, of righteous memory said, "The purpose of the soul's descent into this realm is to change our very nature." G-d granted every person free choice to do evil or good. When we're stuck in major traffic, heading home from an exhausting day at work, instead of displacing our frustration and swearing at other drivers, take a few deep breaths, count to 10 and be grateful for having a warmly heated car. Hey, would you rather stand outside in the freezing cold and wait for a long time until the bus or train arrives? It's easy to take what we have for granted - our health, homes, clothing, food, computer, money,

People often complain, "This is the way I am and I can't change who I am." G-d gave us the mind to choose our thoughts and body to take action. We are like mechanical robots emoting and reacting to events and people whom we

associate with. For example, a man comes home from a business trip after 4 days. As soon as he walks into his home, Mr. Macho shouts at his wife, "Ida when will dinner be ready? I've had a tiring plane ride where they served mashed potatoes which tasted like rubber and fermented apple juice". Ida rolls her eyes as she rushes to heat up matzoh ball soup. She feels like knocking him with a frying pan and yells, "Sam, maybe if you greet me nicely like a stranger, you'll be lucky to be served dinner!" Ida needs to feel loved & appreciated by her husband, especially after they've been apart for several days. Sam could change his attitude and treat his wife kindly by greeting her with a big smile and gently affirming, "Hello honey, I'm so happy to see you! Your soup smells delicious and would love some after such a long trip. How was your week?"

According to Judaism, expressing anger is compared to idol worship. Anger is known as the #1 destroyer of relationships and negatively affects the body. A person becomes angry in an attempt to control or dominate the other, or environment; so as to alleviate one's own fears and insecurities. When he or she reacts with anger, the divine presence is removed. G-d never gets angry, although He gives us challenges in order to learn and develop our character.

Rabbi Pliskin, author of Conversations With Yourself says, "The quality of your life depends on the way you talk to yourself. The quality of your ongoing self-talk is the foundation of how you experience your present moment. It is the foundation of how you think about the future, and it is the foundation how you think about your past. People who think positive thoughts and interact harmoniously with others, create more happiness and joy, more accomplishments and achievements, more refined character traits, and greater spirituality"

Jack Canfield, author of "Chicken Soup for the Soul Books" & "The Success Principles", teaches how to change negative self-talk into positive self-talk. We are prisoners of our negative thoughts which impact our decisions and behavior. Jack teaches, "Our limiting thoughts create images in our minds, and those images govern our behavior which in turn reinforces that limiting thought. By continually talking about, thinking about, and writing about the way things are, you are reinforcing those very same neural pathways in your brain that got you where you are today. And you are continually sending out the same vibrations that will keep attracting the same people and circumstances that you have already created."

A powerful technique called "affirmations" is used to change old negative thought patterns and replace them with positive ones. An affirmation is a positive statement that describes a goal in its completed state, for example, "I am creating loving and peaceful relationships and feeling happiness." "I am working in my own business and enjoying helping people."

Positive affirmations can help people achieve improved relationships, better job performance, greater health and material things (car, house or money).

Here are some guidelines for developing affirmations:

1. Begin each statement with "I am..."

2. Use the present tense.
3. Write and state it in the positive. Affirm what you want, not what you don't want.
4. Be specific.
5. Include an emotion or feeling word.

In addition, visualize specifically what you want to have in life. Jack states, "Visualizations make the brain achieve more". Sports psychologists and peak performance experts have been popularizing the power of visualizations since the 1980's. Almost all Olympic and professional athletes now employ the power of visualizations. If you're dissatisfied in your present job, imagine yourself working at a company or place where you are successful and happy. Describe what it looks like, feels like, and sounds at your new job. To use affirmations effectively, read and visualize them every day for at least one month as well as take action steps to achieve your desired goal. Your dream job, soul-mate, million dollar check will not magically appear at your door, you need to break through your comfort zone and JUST DO IT! Although, it would be great to receive big bucks in the mail.

When I was a little girl, I walked with metal braces, crutches and wore a helmet to protect me from falls. Despite neurologists' proclamation that I would never walk independently or live a productive life due to mild cerebral palsy (malpractice), I always believed that I would be able to walk without devices. I entered the Special Olympics in elementary school and won medals for being one of the fastest runners. By continually visualizing myself walking with erect posture, improved balance and confidence, I achieved my goal with great joy! It entailed a life-time of therapy, swimming, dancing, intense chiropractic and cranial-sacral treatments. I am grateful to G-d for answering my prayers and granting me the ability to live a fulfilling life. Now I am able to devote my life to helping others achieve their goals.

The most important way of changing our thinking, behavior and achieving goals is to pray and ask G-d for assistance. Connecting with the One above is essential, especially when He provides all that we are granted in life. We need to express gratitude for the wonderful blessings G-d has lovingly bestowed upon us. During the joyous holiday of Chanukah, let us show our Creator gratitude by affirming:

"I am grateful and appreciate each moment of life"

"I am grateful for every breath"

"I am grateful for the ability to walk"

"I am grateful for the opportunity to teach others affirmations"

G-d gives us many opportunities to change our lives as long as we are willing to do the work. When we choose to maintain our old negative habits, our attachment to G-d is obstructed. At any moment in time, we have the ability to imitate G-d by acting kind and loving to people around us. Initially, it may be challenging to think and behave differently than we're accustomed to. With the support of a counselor, coach, or rabbi, anyone can learn to overcome the evil inclination and transform into a more positive, happier and grateful person. We can be the candle which shines brightly and shares warmth. May G-d bless everyone with the ability to achieve their goals, dreams and become a glowing light throughout the world. Happy Chanukah! ■

Laura Koster (Rafaela Chana Leah) is a life coach, motivational speaker and writer. Feel free to email her Inspiretheworld@aol.com for more information.



Mennashe & Ephraim

Family First

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

This week's Parshas Miketz describes Joseph's ascension to power. Upon his appointment, the Torah describes the 7 years of plenty and the 7 years of famine. But midstream in the Torah's narration of those years, the Torah states the following:

"And unto Joseph were born two sons prior to the years of famine, whom Asnas, daughter of Poti Phera priest of Ohn bore to him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Mennashe, "For God has caused me to forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of his second

he called Ephraim, "For God has made me prosperous in the land of my affliction".

Then, without a beat, the Torah continues right where it left off, "And the 7 years of plenty ended in the land of Egypt".

For what reason did God deem it proper to interrupt the description of the years of plenty and the years of famine? What are the ideas contained in Joseph's sons' names? And why mention them here?

Family First

Joseph called his firstborn Mennashe. The root refers to "forgetting". Evidently, Joseph shouldered his pains of home life for over 13 years after being sold: he was sold at 17, and rose to power at 30. But clearly, his sibling rivalry only 'ended' at his sale at 17 years of age. However, his troubles preceded that age. And it was not until he had sons that he expressed a reprieve from his concerns with his toil, and his home life.

It appears that Joseph's life's focus was not shifted upon his ascension to power. He expresses – at that point – a release, in the form of "forgetting his past troubles". And as he mentions this release in connection with his firstborn, we learn that this release came from starting his own family.

Joseph was not one to become ecstatic with power. He tells his brothers this later, when he states, "God sent me to Egypt to provide". He takes no credit, nor does he indulge in his power. Joseph always placed family first. The reason being that his interpersonal life defined him – not his successes or his monetary life. Interpersonal affairs are where man is engaged in correct morality,

education, and perfection: both for himself, and others. It is where he can draw close to God, through perfecting his morality. True, man must be moral in business, but there is the element of ulterior motive. But interpersonal life provided no other motive to Joseph. This sphere of life is where he helped others, learned from them, and taught them. Even when in power, Joseph's mindset was relating to the release of his focus on home life and its pains, but he didn't shift into a power mode. He immediately named his firstborn in relation to interpersonal life. It was precisely because he now commenced his own home life through a first son, that he expressed a release from his former home life. Only a new interpersonal life would remove him from his former one. Now, Joseph was embarking upon a new facet of his interpersonal life – the life he valued over success or power.

Interruption: for Contrast

This is why God interrupted the narration of the affairs of the state of Egypt. It is to contrast for us – the Torah reader – the great level of Joseph. Power did not shift his attention from the real value of interpersonal life. We decipher this section's apparent interruption like this, "All the while Egypt prospered, and suffered, Joseph's mindset was focused firmly on his family life".

Even during all that time before rising to power, Joseph's focus was his previous home life. From where did his pains emerge? I would surmise that he felt troubled for himself, and for his brothers' sins. And he addressed this when they descended to Egypt. We know he cared greatly to reenact their sale of him, by imprisoning Benjamin. This was done so as to offer the brothers a duplicate case where they could now fully repent. Full repentance is only when we act properly, in a new, duplicate case in which we previously we erred. (Maimonides)

Joseph named his second son based on his newfound success. For this, it is truly worthy to praise God. Success is a blessing. Joseph was a slave for 11 years at Poti Phera's home, and a prisoner in jail for 2 years. This he referred to as "the land of my affliction". He then was promoted to viceroy. But we see that this praise of his success came after his address of his interpersonal sphere. Joseph prioritized his praises to God. Although success is not the ends, but the means; nonetheless, it is praiseworthy. And we see that it was not success per se that Joseph praised, since he says he was successful, "in the land of my affliction". He was thankful for the removal of pain, not for the power as an end.

What is your focus? Determine it by comparing the amount of time you spend in each pursuit. ■

Letters



Letters

from our

READERS



Letters

Mesora invites your questions, letters in response to articles, your own thoughts, or your suggestions for the JewishTimes.

"The only poor question is the one not asked."

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Give Me a Sign

Reader: I need your help with this. You did talk about the subject of Rabbis teachings and students and having the correct idea. But this one blew me away yesterday. My 8 year old came home with an extra credit assignment from his Rebbe asking him to please write down in Ivrit of a nes, miracle, that happened to him. Luckily, my son is not very interested in extra work, so he chose not to do it. What if this were an assignment that was mandatory? How do I handle it with the Rebbe and what would I tell my son in terms a child can understand.

Mesora: The response is that man cannot know if a miracle occurred...unless it violates natural law. But escaping a near car accident or the like...may, or may not be God's actions. We cannot know for sure, since it could just be nature.

When God wanted Pharaoh to know HIS hand made the miracles, He created something unnatural. God doesn't want us to be in doubt when He makes miracles. Chanukah is a perfect example: He created the miracle of the oil lasting 8 days to teach that the military success was via miracle. ■

Sole Souls

Reader: So as far as I can see, transmigration of souls (gilgul or reincarnation) is "part" of Judaism, since its glorious times in Europe. Do you deny this is part of Judaism? So, what about what is written in the Talmud, like Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, a contemporary of Josephus, who alludes to the practise of exorcism by saying: "Has an evil spirit never entered into you? Have you never seen a person into whom an evil spirit had entered? What should be done with one so affected? Take roots of herbs, burn them under him, and surround him with water, whereupon the spirit will flee." (Pesik, ed. Buber, 40a) And also Rabbi Akiva (d. 132), in speaking of diseases, uses the technical terms of exorcism. ('Avodah Zarah 55b).

And of course, a Rabbi drove out the demon called Ben Temalion from the daughter of a Roman emperor?

How do you explain the seemingly belief of the Rabbis in those Dibbukim rites?

Mesora: Saadia Gaon spoke harshly against transmigration of souls. Please look up that term on our website for my response. We explained that this belief violates Torah fundamentals of each person living their own life, and not paying the price for a "previous" soul's errors. Regarding exorcism, Torah fundamentals reject the fact that anything but man's free will cause him to act. Such beliefs are baseless and violate Torah principles.

Moses also told the people that they might choose life or death...death being a terminal result. Now, if death is final, reincarnation was not Moses' belief...and God endorsed Moses' words, by recording them in the Torah. Moses did not say one's soul has another chance.

When you will find conflicting opinions, what do you do: follow what you see in print? But opposing ideas are written! The authoritative sources must be accepted, and other opposing views rejected. Certainly, when reason tells us that it is unjust for the Creator to poison one alive today, with the sins of one who died. Why should an innocent person today pay for the sins of an evildoer? "Each man in his own sins shall be killed" is also a Torah verse. Torah verses must be your starting point. Do not be troubled that great reputations in history argue on Torah, for no reputation competes with Moses.

Additionally, and think about this: there can be no "physical" evidence of "metaphysical" occurrences of this type. One does not "see" a spirit entering another person. One only sees a person acting deviantly. Therefore, all Talmudic cases of demons must refer to one's unruly instincts, or psychological diseases. Perhaps the treatment of "roots of herbs" you cite, mean to say that pleasant odors will ease the troubled person. The Rabbis also teach that whomever is depressed, should cure himself by walking in the park. Visual pleasantries ease the heart and soul. ■

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Kidney Needed *(Reprinted from an email list)*

I am writing to appeal to all of you to help me with the following two items. My dad is in desperate need of a kidney transplant and I need everyone's help. One please keep Ephraim be Esther in your tfillot and if you say thillim please keep him in mind. The next item is harder and I am asking your help to post in shul or community email message boards. He needs a kidney donor with type A or O blood for a transplant. If you know of anyone who wants to donate a kidney or have any information at all that could help please contact me asap. The recipient will pay all expenses and lost wages associated with the donation. Please distribute this information as word of mouth is the best networking. I can be reached 24 hours a day by email or at any of the numbers below. Tizku lmitsvos.

–Marc Hoschander

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