

OHR ONLINE

SHABBAT PARSHAT MIKETZ · CHANUKAH SPECIAL · ROSH CHODESH TEVET 5766 · DEC. 31, 2005 · VOL. 13 NO. 10

PARSHA INSIGHTS

DREAMING ALOUD

“...and Pharaoh awoke and behold – it had been a dream!” (41:7)

One of the most uncanny aspects of dreaming is the feeling that the dream is reality. The most bizarre things can happen in a dream and we relate to them as normal: Fish can talk and complain; we can soar into the sky like a jet, or hover over our bedroom like a helicopter; the bank manager can become a walrus (overdraft problems?) and a walrus can make a good cup of tea. And when we awake, there is that strange pivotal moment of emergence when, hanging between two worlds, we are not sure in which reality we are.

“...and Pharaoh awoke and behold – it had been a

dream!” The Torah adds the phrase *“it had been a dream!”* to indicate that the dream was so vivid that Pharaoh thought he had been witnessing real events.

In the Psalm that we recite on Shabbat and Holidays before the blessings after the meal, there is the following phrase, *“When G-d returns our captivity, we will be like (awakening) dreamers...”*

The world as we see it is like a dream. It is as logical as a Mad Hatter’s tea party. Great good seems to go unrewarded, and great evil unpunished. *“Where is G-d?”* people ask.

When G-d finally brings us out of the long night of exile, we will rub our eyes like people emerging from a darkened cinema, and we will then realize that we were only dreaming these two thousand of years.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

It is two years later. Pharaoh has a dream. He is unsatisfied with all attempts to interpret it. Pharaoh’s wine chamberlain remembers that Yosef accurately interpreted his dream while in prison. Yosef is released from prison and brought before Pharaoh. He interprets that soon will begin seven years of abundance followed by seven years of severe famine. He tells Pharaoh to appoint a wise person to store grain in preparation for the famine. Pharaoh appoints him as viceroy to oversee the project. Pharaoh gives Yosef an Egyptian name, Tsafnat Panayach, and selects Osnat, Yosef’s ex-master’s daughter, as Yosef’s wife. Egypt becomes the granary of the world. Yosef has two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Yaakov sends his sons to Egypt to buy food. The brothers come before Yosef and bow to him. Yosef recognizes them but they do not recognize him. Mindful of his dreams, Yosef plays the part of an Egyptian

overlord and acts harshly, accusing them of being spies. Yosef sells them food, but keeps Shimon hostage until they bring their brother Binyamin to him as proof of their honesty. Yosef commands his servants to replace the purchase-money in their sacks. On the return journey, they discover the money and their hearts sink. They return to Yaakov and retell everything. Yaakov refuses to let Binyamin go to Egypt, but when the famine grows unbearable, he accedes. Yehuda guarantees Binyamin’s safety, and the brothers go to Egypt. Yosef welcomes the brothers lavishly as honored guests. When he sees Binyamin he rushes from the room and weeps. Yosef instructs his servants to replace the money in the sacks, and to put his goblet inside Binyamin’s sack. When the goblet is discovered, Yosef demands Binyamin become his slave as punishment. Yehuda interposes and offers himself instead, but Yosef refuses.

SEE PAGE 7 FOR CHANUKAH SPECIAL!

FATHERS AND ORPHANS

“Success has many fathers; failure is an orphan.” This oft-quoted saying summarizes the tone of the current election campaign in Israel.

With relative calm on the security front, the main issue has become the socioeconomic one. One candidate is trying to take credit for bringing Israel's economy out of its slump while his competitors are busy bashing him for widening the gap between the rich and the poor which they propose to narrow.

In all the high-powered claiming of credit and allocating failure, there is no mention of the fact that the affairs of man are determined by Heaven. How sharp this attitude is in contrast with that of Yosef!

In this week's Torah portion we read how this righteous man responded when he was told by the dream-plagued king of Egypt that he had heard of his ability to interpret dreams. “Not me,” humbly replied this prisoner whose successful interpretation would imminently transform him into a potentate,” “but G-d will bring peace to Pharaoh with an interpretation.”

Yosef was not willing to bask in the glory of his brilliant interpretation for even a moment and therefore made his disclaimer even before hearing the dream.

Such an attitude to credit-taking is what is needed to secure and enrich Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE FRUITS

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

BARLEY - THE SECONDARY GRAIN

Although barley plays a secondary role to wheat and was traditionally used more for sustaining animals rather than humans, there were special functions in religious life in which it featured.

Along with its subspecies, rye and oats, barley qualified for use in baking the matzot for Pesach as did wheat. There were two flour offerings in the *Beit Hamikdash* for which only barley could be used.

One of these was the *Omer* flour offering



which was brought to the altar along with an animal sacrifice on the second day of Pesach (16th of Nissan). Once this offering was made it was permitted to enjoy the new grain.

The second use of barley was in the flour offering brought to the *Beit Hamikdash* by a *sotah*, a married woman suspected of adultery. The reason why barley, usually animal food, was designated for this offering is given by Rabbi Gamliel (*Sotah* 14a):

“Her behavior (becoming involved with another man) was like that of an animal, so must her sacrifice be one of animal food.”

לע"נ

ח'יה צירל ע"ה בת צבי נ"ו

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What did the fat cows being eaten symbolize?
2. How did Pharaoh's recollection of his dream differ from Nevuchadnetzar's recollection of his dream?
3. What was significant about the fact that Pharaoh dreamed repeatedly?
4. What does "Tsafnat Panayach" mean?
5. What happened to the Egyptians' grain that was stored in anticipation of the famine?
6. What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain?
7. Did Yaakov and his family still have food when he sent his sons to Egypt? If yes, why did he send them?
8. What prophetic significance lay in Yaakov's choice of the word "redu" — "descend" (and not "lechu" — "go")?
9. Why does the verse say "Yosef's brothers" went down to Egypt (and not "Yaakov's sons")?
10. When did Yosef know that his dreams were being fulfilled?
11. Under what pretext did Yosef accuse his brothers of being spies?
12. Why did the brothers enter the city through different gates?
13. Who was the interpreter between Yosef and his brothers?
14. Why did Yosef specifically choose Shimon to put in prison?
15. How does the verse indicate that Shimon was released from prison after his brothers left?
16. What was Yaakov implying when he said to his sons: "I am the one whom you bereaved?"
17. How did Reuven try to persuade Yaakov to send Binyamin to Egypt?
18. How long did it take for Yaakov and family to eat all the food that the brothers brought back from Egypt? Give the answer in terms of travel time.
19. How much more money did the brothers bring on their second journey than they brought on the first journey? Why?
20. How did the brothers defend themselves against the accusation of theft?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 41:4 - That all the joy of the plentiful years would be forgotten. (Not that the good years would provide food for the bad years.)
2. 41:8 - Pharaoh remembered the contents of his dream but didn't know its meaning. Nevuchadnetzar forgot even the contents of his dream.
3. 41:32 - It showed that the seven good years would start immediately.
4. 41:45 - He who explains things that are hidden and obscure.
5. 41:55 - It rotted.
6. 41:55 - Become circumcised.
7. 42:1 - Yes, but he sent them because he did not want to cause envy in the eyes of those who did not have food.
8. 42:2 - It hinted to the 210 years that the Jewish people would be in Egypt: The word "redu" has the numerical value of 210.
9. 42:3 - Because they regretted selling Yosef and planned to act as brothers by trying to find him and ransom him at any cost.
10. 42:9 - When his brothers bowed to him.
11. 42:12 - They entered the city through 10 gates rather than through one gate.
12. 42:13 - To search for Yosef throughout the city.
13. 42:23 - His son Menashe.
14. 42:24 - Because he was the one who cast Yosef into the pit and the one who said, "Here comes the dreamer." Alternatively, to separate him from Levi, as together they posed a danger to him.
15. 42:24 - The verse says Shimon was bound "in front of their eyes," implying that he was bound only while in their sight.
16. 42:36 - That he suspected them of having slain or sold Shimon, and that they may have done the same to Yosef.
17. 42:37 - He said, "Kill my two sons if I fail to bring back Binyamin."
18. 43:2, 10 - Twice the travel time to and from Egypt.
19. 43:12 - Three times as much, in order to repay the money they found in their sacks and to buy more even if the price had doubled.
20. 44:8 - They said, "We returned the money we found in our sacks; can it be that we would steal?"

- Respect for the wealthy
- Status of home whose resident left for Shabbat
- The water cistern between two courtyards
- Status of the hanging separator and the incident of the Sefer Torah in Tzipori
- Drawing water from a stream running through a courtyard
- Porches above the river
- Pouring water on the floor of the courtyard
- Carrying from one roof to another and on the roof itself
- Carrying from the roof to a *carmelit*
- Virtual walls creating private domains
- Interaction of big roof and little one, a big courtyard and little one
- Ramifications for planting, praying and divorcing

LEAVING HOME FOR SHABBAT

Does the failure of one resident of a courtyard to participate in an *eiruv* affecting the ability of his neighbors to carry in that courtyard on Shabbat apply only if he resides in his home on that day? What if one resident decided to spend Shabbat in another city?

A wide variety of opinions exists in regard to this question.

Rabbi Meir's position is that a home is considered a

residence whose participation is crucial to the effectiveness of the *eiruv* even if the owner is absent from it on Shabbat. Rabbi Yehuda takes an opposite view. Rabbi Yossi distinguishes between a Jew and a non-Jew. Since there is a possibility that the non-Jew will return to his home on Shabbat, his residence is considered as occupied, a possibility which does not exist in regard to a Jew who cannot travel on that day.

Rabbi Shimon goes even further in ruling out the likelihood of the absent Jewish resident returning to his home. Even if the Jew went to the home of his married daughter in the same city, we can assume that he has made up his mind not to return to his own home on Shabbat.

The Sage Rav rules like the position of Rabbi Shimon but stresses the fact that his statement in the *mishna* was in regard to spending Shabbat with his daughter. He concludes that the assumption that a man will remain for the entire Shabbat in the home of his offspring is limited to his married daughter and does not apply to his married son. This is because one is usually more comfortable living with his son-in-law than he is with his daughter-in-law. When he visits his son's home he does not entirely abandon the idea of returning to his home on Shabbat since there may be some conflict with his daughter-in-law which will move him to do so.

• *Eiruv* 86a

WHAT THE Sages SAY

"When King David spoke of what sustains the world (*Tehillim* 61:8), he was referring to the wealthy people supplying food for the needy."

- *Rava bar Mori* in explanation of why great Sages give honor to the wealthy
Eiruv 86a

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ILLUMINATING THE INNER “LAMED VAVNIK”

From: Dave

Dear Rabbi,

What is the difference between “Lamed Vavniks” (the thirty-six secret righteous Jews in each generation) and the generic “Tzadik nistar” (hidden righteous person)?

Dear Dave,

The thirty-six are referred to as “lamed vavniks” according to the numerical equivalent of the letters ‘lamed’ (thirty) and ‘vav’ (six). The idea is based on the verse Isaiah 30:18 which praises those who faithfully trust in Him - “Lo” in Hebrew - spelled lamed vav (Succah 45b).

Our Sage Abaye taught that there are at least thirty-six of these secret, righteous Jews in every generation who receive the Divine Presence. However, Rava counters with a source that suggests there are eighteen thousand hidden righteous Jews. The Talmud reconciles this apparent contradiction by stating that only thirty-six see the Divine Presence with completely illuminated vision (‘aspaklaria meira’) whereas all the others see with occluded vision (Sanhedrin 97b).

Perhaps this is the basis of the difference between “lamed vavniks” and other hidden righteous individuals. Another difference might be that the “lamed vavniks”

cannot be discerned at all, whereas the others may be recognized by those who know them well.

Interestingly, another source reckons forty-five righteous Jews upon whose merit the world continues to exist - thirty in the Land of Israel and fifteen elsewhere. There are also thirty hidden righteous gentiles upon whose merit the nations subsist (Chullin 92a).

The Talmud teaches, “The Light that G-d created on the first day was a special, spiritual light with which Adam could see from one side of the world to the other. When G-d considered the misdeeds of the generations of the flood and of the tower of Babylon, He hid the light from mankind and preserved it for the future righteous” (Chagiga 12a). This light shone for thirty-six hours from midday Friday when Adam sinned through the departing of Shabbat at nightfall. The thirty-six hours that this primordial Divine Light shone served as a precedent for the thirty-six secret righteous Jews in each generation to behold the Divine Presence.

What about the rest of us, have we no glimpse of this hidden light? The answer is in the Chanukah menorah. As we light an additional light each night, we contemplate how G-d helped the forces of light overcome those of darkness: “You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many to the few, the impure to the pure, the wicked to the righteous, and the wanton to those faithful to Your Torah”. Night after night, the darkness of exile is expelled with the light of redemption, until on the last night of Chanukah we have lit a total of thirty-six lights. This, then, is our opportunity to behold the Divine Presence emanating from the Chanukah menorah, enabling us to illuminate the little “lamed vavnik” within us.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

A NOBLE NOBEL LAUREATE

In preparation for his appearance at the Nobel Prize presentation ceremony in Stockholm on December 10th to receive his award, Prof. Robert J. Aumann, faced a problem he never encountered in all his years of developing the game theory which made him famous.

The professor of mathematics, who is a founding member of Hebrew University’s Center for the Study of Rationality, is an Orthodox Jew who wanted to make sure that everything about his participation in the ceremony was kosher. He arranged kosher food and

Shabbat provisions for the many relatives and guests he brought along. But that wasn’t enough. He began to wonder whether the formal white tie and tails outfit which all male attendees must wear was free of *shatnez*, the mixture of wool and linen forbidden by the Torah. A sample suit that was flown to Israel and tested in a laboratory confirmed his suspicion.

The happy ending was that a source was found in Stockholm to have the alterations made in time for Prof. Aumann to receive the Nobel Prize in truly noble attire.

A TIP TO DOERS

Question: As one very much involved in initiating and leading communal projects like school, synagogue and charity drives, I often wonder whether I am not foolish in taking on seemingly impossible challenges and if I am not guilty of demanding too much from the people whose help I solicit. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: How fortunate are you to be counted among those whom all Jews pray for every Shabbat in the synagogue for being “faithfully involved in the needs of the community”!

Your question has already been answered by the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Gamliel, the son of Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi, in *Pirkei Avot* (2:2) in his counsel to those who strive for the welfare of the community. Following are the

points he made, as explained in the commentary of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura:

Be sure that your motivation is only for Heaven's sake and not to gain glory from your success.

Be confident that you will succeed in your endeavors for the community, not because of your talents but thanks to the merits of the community and their ancestors.

Don't hesitate to demand more help from the people you solicit for your cause than it appears they are capable of giving because the merit of their ancestors will enable them to meet your challenge.

Remember that even though it is not your talents that are achieving success and not your own money that is achieving your goal, Heaven will reward you as if you did it all by yourself.

PUBLIC DOMAIN _____

Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous Ohrnet features

Tehillim Online

I built a web site, that makes possible to people from all over the world to read Tehillim together and complete the whole Tehillim book in Hebrew, English and Russian. Please take a look at <http://Tehilim.tz4.com>

I'd appreciate it if you would inform your site visitors and readers about it.

• Benzion K

The Campus of Ohr.edu

Does Ohr.Edu have a campus, or is it done online or throughout different colleges with Ohr.Edu material?

• Yaakov

Ohr replies: *Ohr.edu is the “virtual campus” for the physical campus of Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem and worldwide branches (see Ohr.edu for further information.)*

Secret of the Dreidel - Reprint

I would like to get permission to reprint an article from Ohr.edu in an upcoming Chanukah supplement in The Jewish Press.

• C. Friedman

Ohrnet replies: *Permission granted with credits attributed as discussed..*

חַנּוּכָה שִׂמְחָה
Happy Chanukah

Freedom of / from Religion

By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

Freedom of religion is certainly a privilege for which we all have to be thankful. Chanukah is the perfect occasion for celebrating this freedom.

In the special “*Al Hanissim*” prayer that we add on Chanukah to our regular daily prayers and grace after meals we recall what the wicked Hellenist Greeks tried to inflict upon our ancestors. They made an effort to force assimilation upon them by causing them to forget the Torah and to follow this by abandoning their fulfillment of the G-dly commands.

We thank G-d for enabling Matityahu, the *Kohen Gadol*, and his courageous sons to lead a small band of faithful Jews to achieve a miraculous victory over superior forces and to thus regain freedom to practice their religion.

This triumph over human enemies to achieve spiritual security was followed by a triumph over natural limitations in the miracle of the Menorah. Regaining control of the *Beit Hamikdash*, the triumphant Macabees rushed to perform the sacred service of lighting the Menorah. The enemy, however, had managed to desecrate the entire supply of olive oil in the area by affecting it with ritual contamination. One miracle then followed another. A small vessel of concealed olive oil with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol* was discovered in a spot which escaped enemy eyes, and, although it had only enough in it to fuel the Menorah for one night, the oil burned for eight nights until a new supply of pure oil would be available.

We thus see that when our ancestors gained freedom of religion the first thing they did was to utilize it for practicing their religion – and their efforts were blessed with success.

How does this relate to the situation of our times?

On the one hand, Jews in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world must be thankful to G-d that we are not subservient to any enemies like those Hellenist Greeks who used their power to turn us away from our religion. But what are millions of our brothers and sisters

doing with this great opportunity? Is there less assimilation today than when it was imposed on us? Or are we exploiting freedom of religion as an escape hatch for freedom *from* religion? Here is how Emanuel Ottolenghi, writing in the November 23rd issue of the *Jerusalem Post*, described the situation of European Jewry: “The prosperity and privilege characterizing this golden Jewish age has coincided with perhaps the greatest level of Jewish illiteracy in recorded Jewish history. Our great success and integration has come at the expense of our identity and awareness of our heritage and destiny as a people. And while in the past assimilation, the cost of success in Christian societies, was forced on Jews as the inevitable price of acceptance, today Jews who snub their roots do so by choice.”

What this observer says about European Jewry can unfortunately be extended to secular Jewry everywhere.

As we celebrate Chanukah as a gift of freedom of religion, it is our hope and prayer that there will be no need for Jews to be awakened to their identity and their destiny through a rise in the anti-Semitism which has been the catalyst for such soul-searching throughout history.

The way back to our roots must follow the route chartered by the Hellenist Greeks – only with an opposite goal. We must first overcome “the greatest level of Jewish illiteracy in recorded history” by introducing more and more Jews to the wealth of Torah study. This will inevitably lead them to the fulfillment of G-d’s commands which is the essence of religious freedom.

In conclusion, the message of Chanukah is to show our appreciation of our freedom of religion by practicing it rather than escaping from it. Only thus will we merit to rekindle the Menorah of a rebuilt *Beit Hamikdash* and fulfill our mission of being a “light unto the nations”.

Happy Chanukah!