

Summary

It is two years later. Pharaoh has two ominous and enigmatic dreams. He is not satisfied with any of the interpretations that are offered to explain them. Pharaoh's wine chamberlain belatedly remembers that Yosef accurately interpreted his dream while they were imprisoned together, and Yosef is immediately released. Yosef interprets that within a short time there will be seven years of unusual abundance, followed by seven years of extraordinarily severe famine. Yosef suggests to Pharaoh that he appoint a wise and discerning man to harness the years of plenty in preparation for the years of famine. Pharaoh, recognizing the spirit of G-d in Yosef, appoints him as viceroy to oversee the entire project. Pharaoh gives Yosef an Egyptian name, Tsofnas-Paneach, and selects Osnas, Yosef's ex-master's daughter, as Yosef's wife. As a result of Yosef's plan, Egypt becomes the granary of the world during the famine. Yosef has two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Yaakov, hearing that there is food in Egypt, sends his sons to buy provisions. In Egypt, the brothers come before Yosef and bow down before him, fulfilling his prophecy. Yosef recognizes them immediately, but they do not recognize him in his new incarnation as viceroy of Egypt. Mindful of his prophetic dreams, Yosef plays the part of an Egyptian overlord and acts towards them harshly, accusing them of being foreign spies. After interrogating them, Yosef sells them food, but keeps Shimon hostage until they bring their youngest brother Binyamin to him as a proof of their honesty. Yosef commands his servants to place the purchase-money on top of the food in each of their sacks. On the return journey, when feeding their donkeys, they discover the money and their hearts sink. They return to their father Yaakov and retell everything that has happened. At first Yaakov refuses to let Binyamin go down to Egypt, but when the famine grows unbearably harsh, he accedes. Yehuda guarantees Binyamin's safety, and the brothers including Binyamin return to Egypt. After inquiring about his father's welfare, Yosef welcomes the brothers lavishly as honored guests. However, when he sees Binyamin he can barely control his emotions and rushes from the room and weeps. Yosef secretly instructs his servants to again replace the money in the sacks, and in addition, to put his goblet inside Binyamin's sack. When the goblet is discovered, Yosef demands that Binyamin become his slave as a punishment. Yehuda, remembering his promise to his father, interposes and offers himself instead, but Yosef refuses.

"...we light one candle on the first night -
and that light grows and grows
until it fills the world
and there is no place
left for the darkness..."

Commentaries

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
"And may Almighty G-d
(Kel Sha-dai) grant you
mercy...." (43:14)

When Hashem brought the universe into existence, if left to itself, Creation would have continued to expand *ad infinitum*. Hashem said "Enough!" and Creation stopped expanding. The name of Hashem

that expresses the power of this cosmic limitation is the name *Sha-dai* - meaning: He who said to the world "Enough!" The essential purpose of the world's creation

was for man to recognize the magnitude of its Creator. Thus, when this point was reached, it was *enough* - the creation did not need to be any larger to evoke man's recognition of the power of the Almighty. Similarly, when a person experiences adversity, it is to purify him and to bring him to recognize his Creator. That is why Yaakov uses the name *Sha-dai* in this verse: *Enough! The troubles that I have undergone are enough to bring me to the recognition of the Creator of All...*

(Rashi, Otzer HaChasidus in the name of Admo"r Rabbi Mordechai Yosef M'izbitze, Rabbi Bunim M'Pschiske, in Iturei Torah)

CANDLE IN THE NIGHT

“And Yosef called the name of his firstborn Menashe...and the name of the second son, he called Ephraim.” (41:51,52)

Fire consists of two powers - the power to burn, and the power to illuminate. The *Chashmonaim* in the days of Chanukah used both of these powers. Fire to sear and eradicate the impurity of the Greeks, and the fire of the Torah to light up the Beis Hamikdash once it had been re-sanctified. A fire to burn out Evil, and a fire to illuminate Good. There is a famous dispute between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel how to light the Chanukah candles. Beis Shammai says that you start with eight candles on the first night and work down to one on the last, and Beis Hillel says you start with one and work up to eight. The power to burn always starts with much and reduces it to nothing - to ashes. That's the idea of starting with eight candles and reducing them to nothing: Beis Shammai held that the essential aspect of Chanukah to be communicated to future generations was the eradication of even the smallest particle of evil, for then, automatically, Good must blaze out and shine.

The power of light, however is always something which grows stronger and stronger: Beis Hillel considered that the stress should be on the triumph of the light - for where there is light, necessarily the darkness must flee. So they say we light one candle on the first night - and that light grows and grows until it fills the world and there is no place left for the darkness.

Yosef's two sons - Ephraim and Menashe are these two powers - fire and light - rooted in all Israel. Menashe is the 'negative power' - the power to burn and destroy evil with the result that the light will shine. And Ephraim is the 'positive power' - the power to illuminate, so that darkness can have no place to rule. Just as ultimately the Jewish People will be called by the name Ephraim, the power of illumination, similarly, the Halacha is like Beis Hillel - we start with one candle and add more light every night until the darkness disappears.

(Adapted from Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin in L'Torah ul'Moadim)

AN UNWELCOME GUEST

“And behold seven other cows arose after them... and they stood next to the cows on the bank of the river. And the cows of ugly appearance ate the seven cows of beautiful appearance and robust.” (41:3,4)

The negative impulse comes to you first as a 'sleep-over' guest - someone just passing through. If you allow him to stay, he becomes a lodger; and finally, if you don't kick him out, he takes over, becomes the master of the house and dominates you completely. The seven ugly cows are a representation of the evil powers of the negative impulse. First, like the cows, it *rises up*, appearing out of the distance like a wayfarer on his travels, then it *stands next* to you - on an equal footing - like a guest sharing all the facilities of your home. Lastly, just as *“the cows of ugly appearance ate the seven cows of beautiful appearance”* - so eventually, if you don't stop him, the negative impulse will devour its victim completely...

(In the name of the Sfas Emes in Mayana shel Torah)

Haftorah: Zecharia 2:14-4:7

Please note: Although Shabbos Chanukah this year falls on Rosh Chodesh, we still read the Haftorah of Shabbos Chanukah rather than Isaiah 66:1-24 which is the Haftorah for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh.

MOTHER NATURE'S FATHER

The Prophet Zecharia is shown a vision of a Menorah, made entirely of gold, complete with a reservoir, tubes to bring it oil, and two olives trees to bear olives. A complete self-supporting system. The symbolism is that Hashem provides a system which supports man continuously. However, man has to open his eyes to see from where this support emanates. In other words, Mother Nature has a Father...

(Based on the ArtScroll/Stone Chumash)



Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Yom Zeh Mechubad - scifn vz ohr
“This Day is Honored..”

יום זה מכובד מכל ימים - This day is honored from all the other days

At the threshold of creation there were only six days, each of them 28 hours long, without any leader of their own. When they appealed to the Creator to appoint a leader He asked them to each contribute four of their hours so that a seventh day could be formed, which would be the honored leader they themselves had crowned.

This seventh day, Shabbos, is therefore not only honored **above** all the other days, but is actually **from** the days as well. Shabbos returns the favor by investing every one of the week days with some of its holiness and inspiration.

Parshas Miketz

For the week ending 30 Kislev 5756, 22 & 23 December 1995

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