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PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE FAT CATS

“...so he sent and summoned all the necromancers of Egypt and its wise men; Pharaoh related his dream to them, but none could interpret it for Pharaoh.” (41:8)

The hallmark of a truthful answer is that once you hear it you wonder why you ever had the question in the first place.

In this week’s Torah portion Pharaoh summoned all the necromancers and the wise men to interpret his dreams; yet they failed to convince him with their interpretations.

The butler remembered that he had once been in similar circumstances, and that Yosef had interpreted his dream in such a way that as soon as he heard the interpretation he knew it to be true.

The word in Hebrew for a necromancer is *chartum*; its root is *Charat*, which means an engraving. The *chartumim* were experts in hieroglyphics. A hieroglyphic is a symbol, it is not the thing itself. The *chartumim* tried to understand Pharaoh’s dream emblematically. Yosef interpreted Pharaoh’s dream not as a hieroglyphic, not as an obscure symbol, but using the simple and clear meaning of the dream itself. For example, the Nile dispenses its gifts only once a year, so the seven cows that rise up from the river are clearly an indication of seven years.

Even though G-d uses metaphors to communicate with us, the plain meaning is always contained within the metaphor. The word in Hebrew for interpretation is *drash*, which means to bring out from the inside — in

other words, to ‘read out’ the meaning, not to ‘read in.’

In addition to the necromancers, however, Pharaoh also summoned his wise men. Why was it so difficult for them to interpret his dream? Their expertise was not locked into symbolic, hieroglyphic understanding. Why didn’t their great wisdom lead them to the correct interpretation?

The Egyptians denied the existence of G-d. Their wisdom was dictated by human logic. Logically, the weak can never defeat the strong, the few cannot vanquish the many — life’s emaciated cows cannot eat the fat. This is what baffled the wise men of Egypt.

Yosef introduced his interpretation by saying that G-d would interpret Pharaoh’s dream, for there exists a higher logic beyond the grasp of man. *“My thoughts are not like your thoughts, and My ways are not like your ways.”* (Yishayahu 55:8) According to G-d’s logic, the weak can overcome the strong.

The Torah portion of Miketz is always read on Chanukah. The Greeks also denied the existence of G-d. Thus, in their world-view too, the weak cannot vanquish the strong, or the few, the many.

The miracles of Chanukah revealed that there is a logic beyond the mind of man, in which *“the mighty were given over into the hand of the weak, the many into the hands of the few.”*

If G-d wills it, the fat cats of history can find themselves as a mere snack for the skinny.

• Sources: Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch; *Davsha shel Torah in HaDrash v’ha’lyun*

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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.

ISRAEL Forever

A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

A light at the end of the tunnel! The Torah portion that will be read this Shabbat, the last day of Chanukah, begins with the above message, as does Chanukah itself.

The righteous Yosef, imprisoned for years on false charges arising from his refusal to compromise his morality, is finally released from his dungeon to serve as the interpreter of Pharaoh's dream. Thus comes to an end the darkness he endured for so many years while maintaining his faith.

The suffering of Jews under the Greeks, in what is known as the third of the four exiles of history revealed to the Patriarch Avraham, is characterized as "darkness". This is so because, unlike the Babylonians before them

and the Romans after them, the Hellenist idolaters did not seek to destroy the Jewish people or their *Beit Hamikdash*, but rather to compel them to abandon their faith by darkening their eyes to the truth.

That darkness as well came to an end with the miraculous victory of the Hasmoneans. It was only fitting that this triumph over spiritual darkness should be followed by the miracle of the little bit of pure oil providing light to dispel physical darkness.

The darkness now threatening Israel will also come to an end. That end can be brought closer by first dispelling the self-imposed spiritual darkness and thus bringing light and life to Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

THE TOMB OF THE MACCABEES

East of the Ben Gurion International Airport at Lod, near the Arab village of Medeah, is the assumed site of the graves of the Hasmonean heroes of Chanukah, popularly known as the Maccabees.

The actual place where they were buried is shrouded in mystery. In the past some thought it



was at Tzova near Jerusalem, while others believed that it was at Latrun. It is only in the last century that researchers have decided that it is near the city of Modi'in, and since then it has become one of the most popular sites for Jewish visitors and for the IDF swearing-in ceremonies.

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?"

- Four times of Heavenly judgment
- When man is judged and when the sentence is sealed
- How we influence each of these judgments
- The shofar – why a ram horn and why sounded two times
- The danger of inviting judgment and the merits which can annul an unfavorable sentence
- Visiting a teacher and maintaining spiritual purity during the Festival
- Three books of judgment on Rosh Hashana and three groups after Resurrection
- Gaining Heavenly forgiveness by forgiving others
- The thirteen attributes of Divine mercy
- The impact of Teshuva, Torah and Gemulat Chasadim on judgment
- The ten days of repentance from Rosh Hashana to Yom

- Kippur
- When messengers are sent to inform about the new month
- The four fast days related to destruction of *Beit Hamikdash*
- The special days in the days of the *Beit Hamikdash*
- The demonstration in Rome that saved the day
- Full months and leap year
- Why certain holidays cannot be on certain weekdays
- Sighting of the new moon and testifying about it
- Those who fasted two days on Yom Kippur
- When Shabbat may be violated to establish the new month
- When testimony is required and who is eligible to testify
- Steps taken to combat the sect which tried to prevent the new moon procedure

PRAYER BEFORE AND AFTER

Is there a difference between praying to be spared from illness and praying for recovery? This question arises in regard to the efficacy of our prayers for Torah scholars to enjoy good health. Rabbi Yosef suggests that such prayers make sense only according to the opinion of Rabbi Yossi that man is judged every day. What purpose, he asks, is there in such prayers according to the opinion of the other Sages that man is judged on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur for the entire year?

The problem with this approach is that those other Sages certainly agree that we include in our regular daily prayers the *tefilah* of *refuainu* in which we appeal to Heaven for the recovery of all Jews from their illness. How does this make sense if everything is decreed at the beginning of the year?

Tosefot cites the solution offered by Rabbeinu Tam who distinguishes between prayers to prevent illness and prayers for recovery. On Rosh Hashana it is indeed decreed whether one will become ill during that year, but there is no decree as to when one will recover from that illness, so that prayer can truly make a difference.

This is the meaning of the *gemara's* explanation of the prayers mentioned by Rabbi Yosef. These prayers “for the sick and the weak” are intended for the recovery of the ill and for the continued good health of the Torah scholars whose intensive study weakens them. While the prayer for the latter to remain healthy may be effective only according to Rabbi Yossi that judgment takes place daily, the prayers for recovery — such as in *refuainu* or in any prayers offered for the sick — are effective according to all.

• *Rosh Hashana 16a*

WHAT THE Sages SAY

“Four things are capable of abolishing a harmful judgment: charity, prayer, a change of name and a change of deeds.”

• *Rabbi Yitzchak - Rosh Hashana 16b*

חנה אשכנז
Happy Chanukah to all our readers

RESURRECTED MARRIAGE

From: Amy in WI

Dear Rabbi,

I was wondering whether, according to the Jewish belief of resurrection, a resurrected couple would remain married. I know this may sound morbid on the one hand, but if they have a good marriage in this life, it might be nice to know if the honeymoon will continue.

Dear Amy,

The *halachic* authority and kabbalist Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, known as the *Ben Ish Chai*, raised your question and answered that death and decay completely severs and dissolves the physical connection between husband and wife. Therefore, he maintains, a new marriage will have to be contracted between them after resurrection (Rav Pa'alim, Vol. II, Sod Yescharim, ch. 2). This implies, however, that they will continue to be married after resurrection.

When is this so? When this was each spouse's *only* marriage. The issue becomes more complicated if either was married to someone else as well. For example, what about a woman who was married twice? After resurrection will she be married to the first husband or the last?

Here, there may be a distinction between whether she was a widow or a divorcee by her first husband before marrying the latter.

Regarding a widow who remarried, the author of *Sefer HaNitzachon* argues that she could only remarry the second husband. His reason is that if she returns to the first husband, it would be similar to his remarrying his divorcee after she married someone else, which is forbidden: "When a man marries a wife and...it happens that she does not find favor in his eyes...and he writes for her a bill of divorce...and she leaves his house and goes and marries another man, if the latter husband...writes her a bill of divorce...and sends her away from his house, or if the latter husband...dies, her first husband...who sent her away, may not take her again to

be his wife, since she was known by another man" (Deut. 24:1-4) [Anaf Yosef, Sanhedrin, 128].

However, as mentioned above, the *Ben Ish Chai* posits that death entirely dissolves the physical connection between husband and wife. Therefore, he argues, while a husband could not remarry his divorcee if she married afterward – that is only in that same lifetime. But after death and resurrection, when the physical connection between her and the second husband has been completely severed, she can return to her first husband. And even though death dissolves the physical connection with the first husband as well, we might ask why she should marry the first any more than the second, or, for that matter, why she should marry either. According to the Zohar, even though death terminates the physical connection, in the World of Souls she remains spiritually connected to the first, not the second, and therefore upon resurrection she should marry the first:

"When Jacob died, his body was buried in the Holy Land...But for Moses, no part of his body was buried in the Holy Land. Why? Because Jacob was the first husband of the Queen [the Divine Presence], but after Jacob died, she mated with Moses. While Moses was in this world, he visited her as was proper and he became her second husband...[But when he died], Moses remained outside, neither his body nor his bones entered the Land. Instead, the Shechina entered the Holy Land after Moses died and she returned to her first husband, who was Jacob. From this we learn that a woman who was married to two men [in this world], in the World to Come she shall return to her first husband. Moses was buried outside because the first husband of the Divine Presence (Jacob) was in the Holy Land [and a woman remains with her first husband]" (Zohar I, 21b).

Regarding a divorcee who remarries, both opinions would agree that after resurrection she would remarry the second husband. Since *Sefer HaNitzachon* maintains this regarding a widow, in a case where the first couple's marriage terminated in divorce all the more so she should remain married to the second husband. And here, even the *Ben Ish Chai* would agree that since divorce severs the spiritual connection with her first husband, in the World of Souls she would remain spiritually connected to the second, and therefore revive the marriage with him after resurrection.

CHANUKAH CANDLES FOR PESACH USE

It was the evening before Pesach when Jews go searching for chametz with a candle. In the home of a prominent resident of Bnei Brak it was decided that one place they would not have to search was the new cabinet that had been installed in the kitchen only a short while ago. After all, they had not yet used it to store any food and it was too high for any of the children to reach.

When the head of the family was about to begin searching the rest of the house he suddenly realized that he had forgotten to prepare a candle. He then recalled that the only thing that had been stored in that high new

cabinet was a box of colored Chanukah candles. Unable to locate any other candles at that hour he decided to take a ladder in order to reach those Chanukah ones which were on the highest shelf.

And what did he find on that shelf? A package of chametz wafers!

It turned out that one of the children had wanted to hide those wafers and had also used a ladder to get up to that shelf.

Only then did he realize how Heaven had saved him from sinfully harboring chametz in his home.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

BABYSITTING THE BABYSITTER

Question: My daughter has reached the age at which neighbors have begun asking her to serve as a babysitter. She is flattered by this recognition of her maturity and enticed by the financial reward available for such a relatively easy effort. We are very protective parents, however, and are somewhat hesitant about giving our approval. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: Your fears for your daughter's physical and spiritual safety are not unreasonable. Before you allow your daughter to take on a babysitting offer you should ascertain a few matters.

First of all, limit the hour until which your daughter may be away so that going to bed very late does not harm her

ability to function in school the next day. (It goes without saying that bringing her home is the responsibility of those who hire her!)

You should also make sure that she would not be exposed to any influences that you do not permit in your own home, such as books, magazines, TV and films.

Your babysitting daughter should be limited to the company of one girl who has been approved by both you and her employers. There is a tendency among some young people to turn a babysitting responsibility into a social evening. This must be firmly discouraged because such gatherings without adult supervision can degenerate into frivolity or worse.

In conclusion, remember that you are still the "babysitter" for your grown-up babysitter.

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