

PARSHAS

Mikeitz

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Yitzchak Yiranen

Rosh Yeshiva Torah

Power of Shuckling | A Shiur by Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg
Compiled by Aryeh Kaminetsky, Y.C. '19

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In a critical scene in *Parshas Mikeitz*, Yaakov is faced with the decision whether or not to comply with Yosef's demand to send Binyamin down to *Mitzrayim*. Yaakov is very upset and asks his sons why they ever bothered to reveal Binyamin's existence to Yosef. The brothers explain that Yosef had seemed to know impossible details about their lives and had asked them if they had another brother. Rashi quotes a *medrash* that Yosef even revealed to the brothers the type of wood with which their cradles were made.

This seems like an odd detail for the *medrash* to focus on. What is the significance of the wood of the cradles of the *shevatim*? The *Karan Ohr Pnei Moshe* explains by quoting a *medrash* in *Bereishis Rabbah* that Avraham Avinu was the first person to rock his baby in a cradle. The Zohar in *Parshas Pinchas* explains that Jews constantly shuckle and sway back and forth when they *daven* because Jewish souls are particularly lofty and holy. These holy souls are compared to a candle, as the *passuk* says "*Ner Hashem nishmas adam*" (*Mishlei* 20:21). Just like a candle can never sit still and constantly flickers, a Jewish soul infused with *kedushah* cannot stay still and must constantly move about.

"We rock our children in their cradles to infuse them with a spirit of *zrizus* and *hislahavus*."

The *Mesilas Yesharim* in the seventh *perek* describes how a person who is energized by his *avodas Hashem* is constantly in a state of motion. He moves around like a fire and is never lethargic. *Chazal* tell us that when Yaakov Avinu was in his womb and his mother passed by a *beis medrash*, Yaakov would kick to get out. Yaakov was not content to sit around passively when there was Torah to be learned.

The *Karan Ohr Pnei Moshe* explains that the practice of rocking a child in a cradle is a Jewish *minhag* which is deeply rooted in this idea. We rock our children in their cradles to infuse them with a spirit of *zrizus* and *hislahavus*. Our children must be moved to action and seek to maximize their spiritual potential. They must become like candles, constantly shuckling, constantly moving.

This explains the significance of Yosef revealing the details of his brothers' cradles to them. He was telling them that he knew that they were products of a different environment than that which was prevalent in *Mitzrayim* and *Canaan*. Yosef revealed that he knew that lying in the depths of his brothers' souls was a raging, restless fire. After such a personal and specific revelation, how could they hold anything back from him?

Shuckling can also be seen as an expression of emotion. At the giving of the Torah, the Jews are described as trembling profusely in awe. Baal Haturim says that we shuckle when we learn as a recreation of this moment. The Torah was given with great trembling and fear to remind us of how daunting a feat it is for us to understand the words of Hashem. We sway when we learn to recapture that sense of awe and infuse our learning with the required dignity and respect.

Rav Shimon Schwab explains that shuckling during prayer is actually an expression of the combination of *ahavah* and *yirah* that we feel toward Hashem. We move forward to try to get close and then retreat in awe.

Im yirtzeh Hashem, we should continue to shake, rise up, and improve the world, and through our efforts we will see the *Binyan Shel Aish*, the *Beis Hamikdash*, *b'mheira b'yameinu*.



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A Nice Vort

Preparing for Galus

Written by Yoni Kram, Y.C. '19

Almost every year *Parshas Mikeitz* coincides with Shabbos Chanukah and there have been many attempts to understand the connection between the two. To this end, Rav Betzalel Rudinsky of Monsey offers a fascinating insight.

In *Parshas Vayeshev*, Shlah HaKadosh teaches that Yosef's brothers' contempt for his dream was rooted in their belief that he was a *moreid b'malchus*. We learn in *Parshas Vayeichi* that "*Lo yasur shevet m'yehuda* – the monarchy shall always belong to Yehuda" (Bereishis 49:10). Yosef was seen as unlawfully vying for this position. As the brothers protest: "*Hamaloch timloch aleinu!*" (Bereishis 37:8).

A similar claim can be made against the *Chashmonaim*. Ramban in *Parshas Vayeichi* writes that the *Chashmonaim*, of *Shevet Levi*, were held responsible for taking the throne which did not belong to them. A close look at Rambam in *Hilchos Chanukah* (3:1), however, presents an alternative perspective. He ends the *halachah* describing the various miracles of Chanukah by saying, "And they established a king from the *Kohanim*, and the kingship was returned to Israel for over 200 years, until the Second Destruction." Rambam treats their ascension to the throne as one of the miracles! Why was this not a violation of *lo yasur shevet m'yehuda*?

Malbim in *Daniel* (9) writes that the period of *Bayis Sheini* was not considered a time of *geulah*. There were no prophets, no *Urim V'tumim*, no *Shechinah*, and no king from the House of David. Rather, explains Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, the true defining characteristic of *Bayis Sheini* was that it was a time of great expansion of Torah *She'baal Peh* which would serve to anchor the Jewish people through a long, dark *galus*. This all-important mission required proper leadership. As such, the motivation behind the *Chashmonaim's* ascension to power was not for the purpose of establishing the monarchy in their hands, but rather it was a "*hora'as sha'ah*" to promote the proper religious leadership to champion this campaign. (Ultimately, later generations of *Chashmonaim* emphasized their position in the monarchy, which elicited Ramban's rebuke.) It is this very goal that Yosef undertook as well. His dreams of leadership were not focused on usurping the monarchy from David's descendants; rather they were reflecting his role in providing the framework that would guide *Bnei Yisrael* through *galus Mitzrayim*.

Major Machloksim in the Parsha

Written by Moshe Weinger, RIETS

"If only you would think of me... and mention me to Pharaoh..." (Bereishis 40:14)

Stuck in prison for ten years, it's understandable that Yosef *HaTzaddik* wanted out. Even so, Yosef *haTzaddik* - to whom the *Medrash Rabbah* (89:3) ascribes the *passuk* of "praiseworthy is the man who places his trust in Hashem" (Tehillim 40:5) - seems to have violated his lofty level of *bitachon* by asking the *Sar haMashkim* to intercede on his behalf! Indeed, this understanding of Yosef's request is found in the *Medrash Tanchuma* (9:6) describing Hashem as having said "you abandoned your trust in Me... thus you shall be forgotten in prison for two more years."

Strangely, the *Medrash Rabbah* continues to praise Yosef for his *bitachon* even after referencing this request. The Maharil Diskin explains that the *Medrash Rabbah* is actually extolling Yosef for his *hishtadlus*! Yosef acted with a perfect balance of *hishtadlus* and *bitachon*. Indeed, Yosef got the ball rolling for events that would ultimately unfold into the best possible results. Yosef left prison just in time for a new year and a rising Nile, which lent great credibility to his interpretations. Thus, by balancing his *bitachon* with appropriate *hishtadlus*, Yosef was *zocheh* to set the stage for the fulfillment of his dreams and our sojourn in *Mitzrayim*.

Indeed, though the immediate results of our actions may seem less than perfect, when balanced with *bitachon*, it could be that they are leading to the exact scenario that Hashem intended.

Why didn't Yosef send word to Yaakov?

- **Ramban:** Yosef ascribed great significance to the dreams of his family bowing to him. Feeling that the dreams would never be fulfilled in Canaan, he forwent the opportunity to write home and summon his brothers in the anticipation of becoming royalty to which his family would bow. Even when his brothers came and did bow, Yosef disguised himself in order to bring Binyamin and fulfill the dream in its entirety.
- **Kedushas Levi:** Upon first meeting Yosef, the brothers bowed and Yosef recognized the partial fulfillment of his dreams. Sensitive to the possibility of his brothers feeling defeat having been wrong about his dreams, he didn't reveal himself then. As viceroy, before his brothers came, why didn't Yosef write? Even had his brothers come upon his summons, they would have bowed. Thus, Yosef avoided their embarrassment.

Foursquare

Before the brothers return to *Mitzrayim* with Binyamin, Yaakov tells them to bring him delicacies of the land as a gift. Further, Yaakov blesses the brothers that Hashem should grant them mercy in the eyes of Yosef and send them home with all of their brothers. Why does Yaakov bless the brothers that Hashem should have mercy on them? Rashi explains that Yaakov was telling the brothers that beyond their normal preparations, they were missing one major factor. They were missing *tefilah*. Yaakov Avinu is teaching us a critical lesson. Even when we do our *hishtadlus*, we can't forget that in order to succeed in anything, we need *siyata d'shmaya* because everything comes from Hashem.

Akiva Hochbaum, Syms '20

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After being introduced to Yosef in last week's *parshah*, we can begin to understand who Yosef really is. He was the first person in history to be labeled as a *tzadik*, a righteous person. Why? The main reason was due to his *yiras Hashem* and strength in overcoming his *yetzer hara*. But Yosef's secret to success in life can really be labeled in one way: live with God 24/7. We see this in our *parshah* when Yosef reminds Pharaoh that Hashem is the only One who has the answers to his or anyone else's problems (Bereishis 41:16). Yosef simply understood the ways of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Hashem runs the world, and it is our job to try and cleave to the *Ribono Shel Olam* as much as possible.

Tyler Hod, Syms '20

Yosef reveals to Pharaoh that Egypt will experience seven years of harsh famine that will make everyone forget about the preceding seven years of plenty. Immediately thereafter, he develops a plan to offset the harshness of the famine. How can both be true? The *Gemara* in *Rosh Hashanah* (16b) says, there are four ways to tear up a *gzar din*: changing one's name, changing one's actions, *tze'akah* (crying out in prayer), and *tzedakah*. Yosef knew that the *gzar din* had been set. However, he advised Pharaoh that perhaps through *tzedakah* – by collecting and distributing the land in such a way that everyone would be giving and receiving – the *gzar din* could be torn up.

Edon Pinchot, Y.C. '21

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The *pssukim* say "Yosef named the first-born Manasheh, meaning, 'God has made me forget completely my hardship and my parental home.' And the second he named Ephraim, meaning, 'God has made me fertile in the land of my affliction'" (Bereishis 41:51-52). How was Yosef able to name his sons like this after such a tough childhood? Yosef was able to see through his struggles to all the good that came in the end. He stuck it out through all the hard times and was able to move past it all. All of Yosef's struggles brought him tremendous growth, and we can also achieve higher levels if we, like Yosef, view each trial as an opportunity for growth.

Jonah Ganchrow, Y.C. '21

Bottom Line Halacha

Shmoneh Esrei on Shabbos

Written by Menachem Gans, Y.C. '20

On Shabbos, the normal text of *Shemoneh Esrei* is omitted, and in its place, a shorter version is recited. However, there are times when one finds himself saying the weekday *Shemoneh Esrei* on Shabbos. What is the correct procedure in such a case? The *Gemara* in *Brachos* (21a) states that really we should be saying the normal *Shemoneh Esrei* on Shabbos, and making mention of the day in the *brachah* of *retzei*, similar to *ya'ale v'yavo*. Due to the potential discomfort of an elongated *tefilah* and it's possible contradiction to the calm Shabbos atmosphere, *Chazal* instituted a shorter text. Since there is nothing technically wrong with saying the normal *tefilah*, the *Gemara* concludes that in a case in which one began saying the weekday *brachos*, one should finish the *brachah*, and then begin with the normal Shabbos davening. The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 268:2) codifies this and quotes an argument whether the same is true for *mussaf*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (268:2-5) writes that the predominant approach among *acharonim* is to stop mid-*bracha*. What if one remembers right after saying "*ata*," before saying "*chonen*?" The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 268:3) says that if one did not know it was Shabbos when beginning to daven, he should conclude with the normal weekday *bracha*. However, if one simply began the *bracha* by rote recitation, one can continue with *ata kidashta* or *ata echad*.

Sugya from the Parsha

Dreams with Meaning

Written by Eitan Kazsovitz, Y.C. '21

Parshas Mikeitz opens up with the incident of Pharaoh's dreams and the follow up of Yosef's interpretation of them. This is just one example of many places that dreams come up in the Torah; Hashem telling Avimelech to return Sarah to Avraham, Yaakov seeing *melachim* on a ladder, Yosef dreaming about the constellations, etc. To better understand this episode with Pharaoh, it is key to first understand the greater context of Judaism's view on the significance of dreams.

A large issue, raised by Abarbanel (Bereishis 41:1), is the inconsistency in our *mesorah* regarding dreams. For example, the *Gemara* in *Brachos* (55a) describes dreams as things that simply replay man's thoughts to him, even thoughts of no significance. Additionally, the *Gemara* says that dreams always follow their interpretation, implying that dreams don't have inherent significance, but just follow whatever the interpreter says. However, there is also an indication that there is significance in dreams themselves. In *Parshas Va'eschanan*, the Torah describes a *navi* that gets *nevuah* through a dream. Moreover, the *Gemara* in *Brachos* says that a dream is one sixtieth of *nevuah*. Similarly, many other *Gemaras* in *Brachos* seem to treat dreams with much significance, going as far as saying, "anyone who sleeps for seven nights without a dream is called evil" (*Brachos* 55b). At the end of the day, between all the conflicting sources, are dreams relevant or not?

Abarbanel explains that dreams are both significant and insignificant, depending on the type of dream. There are two distinct categories of dreams in the Torah. The first category includes dreams that are just seemingly odd and require interpretation. These include Yosef's dreams about his success over his brothers and Pharaoh's dreams about the cows and wheat stalks. All of these dreams contained a certain hidden message, and a proper interpretation would explain them. The second category includes dreams that have a direct encounter with Hashem - a *gilui shechinah*. For example, Avimelech's dream about abducting Sarah and Lavan's dream about chasing Yaakov (where Hashem told Lavan not to speak badly to Yaakov). Abarbanel explains that the first category contains dreams whose significance is solely dependent on their interpretation, but don't contain anything inherently significant. However, the second category contains dreams whose content is significant in and of itself - dreams that have legitimate self-contained *divrei* Hashem. It is these dreams that don't need an interpretation to be meaningful, for whatever Hashem reveals in the dream itself is pertinent to the dreamer.

Gilui shechinah dreams aside, dreams in category one also have the potential for inherent significance. Abarbanel explains dreams in category one with no order to them, containing completely random events are insignificant. These dreams, he says, can just stem from something you ate or drank, even if an interpreter can spin it meaningfully. For example, Pharaoh's dream had cows eating cows, nonsense on the surface. Yosef, however, infused meaning into it. However, a dream in category two that has a very specific and clear order and gives the dreamer a feeling that he needs to take immediate action, is a dream of significance, one that gives off a strong sense of urgency.

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