

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Miketz/Chanukah

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on the yahrtzeit of Esty's father, Rabbi Dr. Yisroel Aryeh Frankel zt"l

לעילוי נשמת הרב ד"ר ישראל אריה בן הרב אשר ישעיהו פרנקל זצ"ל נפטר ה' טבת תשל"ה

Chanukah Dreaming

Rabbi Steven Gotlib

Parshat Miketz begins with Pharaoh having a series of bad dreams, which bother him tremendously. Of course, his mood was only exacerbated by the fact that no one in Egypt was able to interpret them for him in a contextually relevant way. (Rashi on Bereishit 41:8) It is only after Pharaoh laments this that his butler recalls the Israelite he met in the dungeon, who was able to accurately interpret the dreams of himself and the royal baker.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Jewish tradition is no stranger to the importance of dream interpretation. In addition to the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 210:2) ruling that a bad dream warrants fasting, the Talmud (Berachot 55b) writes that "a dream that is not interpreted is like a letter that is not read." In addition to the text itself implying that dreams without interpretation are essentially useless, Rashi clarifies that "dreams are neither inherently good nor bad. Rather, they follow their interpretation." Shortly thereafter, the Talmud tells numerous stories of dreams being interpreted for good or bad, and events in the dreamer's life following suit.

Do these Talmudic stories mean that the way we interpret our dreams will determine our reality? Or are these perhaps metaphors about how the directions our lives take are profoundly impacted by our general outlook? In his book on Chanukah, Rabbi Shimon Gershon Rosenberg asks us consider that:

Once a person apprehends the truth as a construction of their

own subjective internal experience, the concept of truth loses its totality and becomes relativized. Truth instead becomes dependent upon one's specific perspective, their emotions, feelings, and personal experiences...susceptible to all kinds of outside influences, and thus there is a subsequent lack of authenticity. (*Leha'ir et HaPetachim*, pg. 54)

We are left, then, with what appears to be a major issue. We human beings perceive the truth of our reality through the lens of our internal experiences, but because those experiences are so subjective it's hard to build an authentic life on that foundation alone. How can we succeed in building something objectively authentic?

Yosef gives us our answer. When Pharaoh noted that the young man's reputation for dream interpretation preceded him, Yosef's immediate response was one of deflection: "It is not me who has the power to interpret your dreams, but G-d!" (Bereishit 41:17) It was thanks to this ability to recognize the Power above him, in addition to the maturity he gained during his time in Egypt, that he could shun the praise of the king of Egypt himself. That then led him to achieve the position of second-in-command, and allowed him to save much of the ancient world from a terrible famine.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik built on this idea, writing that if a leader within the Jewish community "will display humility, modesty, generosity, *ahavat Yis-*

rael, and commitment to ideals; if he will shun publicity, refrain from supervising and criticizing others and instead engage in retrospection and self-examination; if he will pray with zeal and warmth and help others - then the people will follow him, for no one can resist the magnetic quality of the moral personality." (*Halakhic Morality*)

So, too, did Rabbi Eliezer Melamed touch on this concept. Rabbi Melamed wrote that through our commitment to studying Torah even in the face of oppression, "the miracle of the oil manifested the eternal dimension of the Torah, its ability to illuminate the darkness supernaturally. By virtue of the Torah, we managed to survive the long, dark exile. The miracle of the oil showed... that it is impossible to subdue us or extinguish our faith." (*Peninei Halakha*, Zemanim 11:5)

All of us are leaders in our own way and possess the incredible ability to inspire our friends, families, and those we meet in the street to be their best selves. But we can only truly tap into this ability by learning from our forefather Yosef. It is only by humbling ourselves before Hashem's majesty and perpetuating His holy Torah that we will be able to unlock our hidden potential to interpret our dreams, and our lives, in their brightest light.

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Summary

As we saw in the previous chapter, there has been a terrible famine in Shomron. Elisha predicts that the hunger will stop tomorrow and that flour and barley will be extremely cheap. The king's officer replies that this is impossible; even with extreme rain, there would be no way for the prices of flour and barley to decrease that much. Elisha says that the officer will see the prices decrease, but that he won't benefit from it. (7:1-2, 18-20)

Four residents of Shomron were *metzora'im* (often translated as "lepers"), and they were sitting outside of the town. Because of the famine, the four wanted to surrender to the Arameans who were besieging the town and ask for food. To their surprise, the camp was empty. (7:3-5)

The reason the Aramean camp was empty was because Hashem had made great noise in the camp. The Arameans thought that the king of Israel had hired Egyptians and Hittites to come and fight for them. Because of that, the Aramean army fled and left all of their possessions behind. The *metzora'im* eat, drink, and loot the camp. (7:6-8)

The *metzora'im* recognize that something great has happened to Israel, and they decide to immediately tell the king and his representatives that the Arameans have fled and have left all of their treasures and belongings behind. (7:9-11)

The king hears the news and worries that perhaps the Arameans are deceiving them and want to cause the Israelites to leave their town and then they will strike. The king sends two teams to look for the Arameans. The two teams come back and say they had gone until the Jordan River, and the entire way was full of the Arameans' clothes and the possessions they had left behind while fleeing. (7:12-15)

The people of the city hear about this miracle and go out to plunder the Aramean camp. Consequently, the prices of flour and barley dramatically decrease, just as Elisha had predicted. In addition, the officer who didn't believe Elisha's prophecy was instructed to manage the gates of the city. The crowding of people leaving the town was so severe that they stampeded and killed the officer, just as Elisha had predicted. (7:16-20)

Insight

Many commentators ask why it is that the redemption of Israel came from *metzora'im*, men who weren't on the highest spiritual level, who were even willing to surrender themselves to the enemy. Some suggest that the Israelites weren't really worthy of being redeemed, since they too were on a low spiritual level. Hence their redemption would come via unworthy people. (*Ma'ayanah shel Torah*, Vayikra Page 91)

However, one might suggest the opposite. Maybe we can be inspired by the four *metzora'im*, who felt distant and rejected by Hashem and society. We can learn from them that there is really no such thing as being rejected by Hashem, and that even the most distant person can be a vessel of His Divine plans.

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It Happened in Israel: Revolt in the Beit Midrash**Idan Rakovsky**

How far may students go if they disagree profoundly with the methods of their teacher? The Talmud records disputes between Rabban Gamliel, Rosh Yeshiva of the ancient Yavneh Yeshiva (1st century CE), and his student Rabbi Yehoshua. In these incidents, Rabban Gamliel discovers that Rabbi Yehoshua has publicly contradicted his halachic positions. To demonstrate that the halachah follows his opinion, Rabban Gamliel embarrasses Rabbi Yehoshua in public. [See for example Rosh Hashanah 25a and Bechorot 36a.] The Talmudic passage below begins in the same manner, but ends in a dramatically different manner. (Berachot 27b, translation adapted from Steinsaltz)

A student came before Rabbi Yehoshua and asked him, "Is the Maariv prayer optional or obligatory?" Rabbi Yehoshua said to him, "Optional." The same student came before Rabban Gamliel and asked the same question. Rabban Gamliel answered, "Obligatory." The student said to Rabban Gamliel, "But didn't Rabbi Yehoshua tell me that Maariv is optional?" Rabban Gamliel said to the student, "Wait with me until the students enter the study hall."

When the students entered, the questioner stood and asked in front of everyone, "Is Maariv optional or obligatory?" Rabban Gamliel said to him, "Obligatory." Then, Rabban Gamliel asked everyone in the room, "Is there any person who disputes this matter?" Rabbi Yehoshua said to him, "No." Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua, "But was it not in your name that they told me that Maariv is optional?" Rabban Gamliel then said to Rabbi Yehoshua, "Yehoshua, stand on your feet and they will testify against you." In the meantime, Rabban Gamliel sat and lectured all the while, with Rabbi Yehoshua standing on his feet... The students in the room

said to one another: "How long will Rabban Gamliel continue afflicting him?... Let us remove Rabban Gamliel from his position!"

For the first time, the students who witnessed the public embarrassment of Rabbi Yehoshua intervened. They decided, as a democratic protest, to stop the class from continuing and to remove Rabban Gamliel from serving as Rosh Yeshiva because of his harsh attitude. They consulted with each other and eventually decided to offer the position to Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, who was wise, independently wealthy and of excellent lineage.

In the end, Rabban Gamliel recognized that his approach was problematic. He went to Rabbi Yehoshua to apologize for his behaviour. When he entered Rabbi Yehoshua's house, he was surprised to see that all the walls were stained black. Rabban Gamliel asked Rabbi Yehoshua in wonderment if this was because he was a blacksmith. Shockingly, until then Rabban Gamliel had no idea that Rabbi Yehoshua was forced to engage in that arduous trade in order to make a living.

Rabbi Yehoshua responded, "Woe unto a generation that you are its leader, as you are unaware of the difficulties of Torah scholars, how they make a living and how they feed themselves..."

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Biography The Chalban

Rabbi Adam Friedmann

Chaim Cohen was born in Yafo, Israel in 1935. His father, Rabbi Ezra Eliyahu Cohen, had moved to Israel from Turkey in 1904. Rabbi Cohen's family was descended from Rabbi Eliyahu Cohen, an important rabbinic and Kabbalistic figure in Izmir in the 18th century. In Israel, Rabbi Ezra Cohen opened a cheese factory in Tel Aviv.

On one level, Rabbi Chaim Cohen lived a very normal and seemingly non-rabbinic life. He studied in public schools, served in the IDF, married and had four children. At roughly the age of 20 he began working in the family business of cheesemaking, opening a factory with his brother David. He continued running this factory, eventually with the help of his own children, until his death in 2019. Rabbi Cohen did not appear to be a rabbi at all, wearing neither a beard nor a suit.

However, in addition to his cheesemaking career, Rabbi Cohen became one of the foremost Kabbalists of his day, and certainly one of the most prominent. He picked up this field of study from his father who also studied Kabbalah and who would routinely host scholars at his home. By his own description, Rabbi Cohen began studying Kabbalah at the age of 9, by sneaking off to the roof of his home with some of his father's books. Later, he joined a secretive study group of Kabbalists who were peculiarly nicknamed after their professions. It was in this context that Rabbi Cohen came to be known as the "Milkman" or *Chalban*.

Rabbi Cohen taught regular classes in Talmud and Kabbalah at the HaShalom Kollel in Givatayim near his cheese factory. He was also sought out for blessings, and as a miracle worker.

Rabbi Cohen published over a dozen books on a variety of topics. The series *Talelei Chaim*, co-written with Rabbi Reuven Sasson of the Ramat HaSharon Hesder Yeshiva, has become widely read in Israel, especially in Religious Zionist circles. The books unpack the Kabbalistic teachings of latter-day thinkers such as Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook and Chassidic writers, by explaining them clearly and rooting them in earlier Kabbalistic sources.

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Torah and Translation The Two Aspects of a Jew

Rabbi Chaim Cohen, *Hakitzu v'Raninu 1*

Translated by Rabbi Adam Friedmann

כל איש ישראל נחלק בקרבו לשתי בחינות, בסוד חיצונית ופנימיות.

החיצונית היא סוד חייו האישיים, כפי שמכיר עצמו מיום שנולד ועד עתה, שתופס עצמו כישות שלמה והוויה העומדת לעצמה, והוא סובב סביב עבודת ד' שלו בתיקון עצמו.

הבחינה הפנימית היא נקודת זיקתו ושייכותו אל השכינה, סוד כלל נשמות ישראל. והיינו שישאל כולם נערכים כגוף אחד שלם, שכל אחד הוא בחינת תא בגוף זה, ניצוץ מתוך אבוקה גדולה, וטיפה בים רחב ידים. בבחינה זו אין האדם ישות לעצמו, אלא אבר ותא בגוף. וכמו שכל תכלית התא וכל פעילותו מיועדת לתפקוד כל הגוף ולא בשביל עצמו, כן האדם מישראל ביחס לכללות ישראל.

במצב השלם והמתוקן, הבחינה החיצונית נערכת כמו לבוש לבחינה הפנימית. באופן שכל אחד מישראל מגלה מתוך מסגרת חייו האישיים, את האור הגדול שמאיר בכללות ישראל, אור השכינה, סוד הנשמה של עם ישראל.

והנה אף שהבחינה החיצונית בולטת וניכרת מאוד, באמת הבחינה הפנימית היא עיקרו ומהותו של האדם, אף שהיא נסתרת ונעלמת בקרבו. כי אמת הדבר, שהנסתר הוא העיקר תמיד, כידוע. ומי לנו גדול מאלקינו יתברך שמו, והוא הנסתר ביותר, סתרא דסתרון, סתימא דסתימין, נעלם מעיני כל חי, והוא בוודאי עיקר ושושן כל העולמות.

Every Jewish person is divided internally into two aspects, after the manner of the concept of externality and internality.

The externality of a person is the secret of his personal life as he identifies himself from the day of his birth until the present. He considers himself a complete existence and an independent being, and his life revolves around his service of G-d in the pursuit of self-perfection.

The internal aspect of a person is his point of connection with and relation to the Divine spirit, which is the secret of the totality of the souls of all Jews. This is to say that all Jews are organized as one large body with each individual being like a cell in this body, a spark within a large flame, or a drop in an expansive ocean. In this aspect a person is not a separate existence but rather an organ or cell in a body. And just as the purpose of a cell and all its activities are intended to support the proper function of the body and not for the cell itself, so too is a Jew in relation to the Jewish People overall.

In an ideal and proper situation, the external aspect functions like "clothing" for the internal aspect. Such that each individual Jew, from within the context of his personal life, reveals the great light which shines from the Jewish people overall. This is the light of the Divine presence, the secret of the soul of the Jewish People.

And even though the external aspect stands out and is very noticeable, in truth the internal aspect is the main part and the essence of a person, even though it is concealed and hidden within him. Because the truth of the matter is that what is hidden is always the main part of something, as is known. And who is greater than our G-d, may His Name be blessed, and He is exceedingly hidden, the most secretly hidden, and the most closed off, hidden from the eyes of all that lives. And He is certainly the main part and root of all the worlds.

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All times ET. Classes are free & open to all, unless otherwise noted.

All in-person indoor classes require vaccination and other protective measures

Monday-Thursday

10:00 AM - Noon: Adult Seder Boker with Rabbi Moshe Yeres on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/sederboker> (men)

Monday/Wednesday: Talmud Succah, Orot haTeshuvah of Rav Kook

Tuesday/Thursday: Parshah, Tanach: Sefer Melachim

Shabbat December 3-4 Rosh Chodesh, Day 6 of Chanukah

After 8:00 AM shacharit R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah from the Parshah, Clanton Park

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT: Simcha Suite (men) *not this week*

After minchah Idan Rakovsky, Parshah: A Textual Study, Shaarei Tefillah *not this week*

Sunday December 5 Rosh Chodesh, Day 7 of Chanukah

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver Program, Clanton Park (men)

9:15 AM Idan Rakovsky, Postmodernist Jewish Thought, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10 AM R' Aaron Greenberg, Talmud Eruvin, YOC or ZOOM: <http://bit.ly/jliczoom> 613613 (univ) *not this week*

Monday December 6 Day 8 of Chanukah

NEW SERIES!

Our Parshah Podcast! Apple Podcasts <http://tiny.cc/apodcast>, Spotify <http://tiny.cc/spodcast>

Parshat Vayigash: "On a Mission From G-d" Rabbi Jared Anstandig, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

8:30 PM R' Moshe Yeres, Talmud Shabbat (Chap. 15), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/talmud>

NEW SERIES!

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Food Fight in the Beis Din, Week 1 of 3, Shomrai Shabbos (3rd Floor) (Men)

Tuesday December 7

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, King Solomon's Arc (Melachim I 2-3), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

7:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 9), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men)

Wednesday December 8

6:15 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Beitzah, Shaarei Shomayim and ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/beitza>

NEW SERIES!

10:00 AM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Jewish Numerology, #1 of 3 ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt>

8:15 PM R' Chaim Metzger, Artscroll Through the Ages, BAYT and ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/translated>

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah Chabura, Clanton Park

Thursday December 9

8:30 AM R' Chaim Metzger, Trei Asar, Yeshivat Or Chaim or ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/trei> (university)

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 22-23), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women)

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Beitzah, email ymanntorontotorah.com for location (advanced, men)

8:00 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Gemara Bava Batra, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/torontowbm> (university women)

Friday December 10

8:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Bava Batra Perek 2 *advanced*
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on Zoom at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>

Coming Up!

9:30 AM Sunday December 12

Legal Ethics: Shepherding Jewish Families Through Family Litigation

CPD Professionalism Credit / Register at <https://torontotorah.com/cpd> / ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>

9:30 AM to 4:00 PM Sunday December 26

A TANACH TOUR OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL!

In person at Yeshivat Or Chaim and ZOOM in the morning / ZOOM-only in the afternoon

For the full program and registration: <https://torontotorah.com/tour>