



Parshas Miketz & Chanukah 2022, see the light

This Chanukah Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna and Shaul Ben Berta.

This Chanukah Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

The fascinating story of Yosef and his brothers is always read during the holiday of Chanukah, and there is an important reason why!

Our Parsha begins with Pharaoh having two bizarre dreams that no one but Yosef could interpret. He first dreamt of seven fat cows being swallowed up by seven skinny cows.

He then dreamt of seven big bundles of grain being swallowed up by seven skinny bundles of grain. In both dreams, neither the cows nor the bundles of grain grew due to devouring the others.

When Pharaoh heard that Yosef could interpret dreams, he commanded that he be taken out of prison and brought before him. Pharaoh then tells Yosef about his two vivid dreams and asks for his interpretation.

Yosef interprets the dreams as meaning there will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of hunger and starvation. Each dream Yosef tells Pharaoh hints at the magnitude of the plenty but also of the famine. He advised Pharaoh to store food and grain during years of plenty to sustain them during the famine.

Pharaoh agrees and understands that Yosef is a man of G-d and will successfully implement his plan. He appointed Yosef as the viceroy of Egypt and gave him the responsibility of storing food and distributing it when necessary.

However, a question comes to mind: At that time, Egypt was known to have the greatest sorcerers and magicians who could interpret dreams. Yet, they all **failed** to decipher and explain to Pharaoh what his dream meant successfully. What was so tricky and complicated about the dreams that confused some of the greatest magicians and sorcerers?

Rashi (*Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading Torah commentary*) gives a simple answer. He writes that Pharaoh saw both the dreams along with their interpretations. Hence, when they came with their interpretations, Pharaoh knew they weren't correct as he had seen them the night before. When they saw the Pharaoh was rejecting every explanation, they began to worry about Pharaoh's reaction to their ignorance. As a result, they stopped evaluating the dreams or exploring different interpretations.

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the confusion and perplexity of the dreams was **a specific detail**. At one point during Pharaoh's dreams, both abundance and famine were present, which is an inherent contradiction.

During the first dream, the fat cows and skinny cows were together right before the fat cows were swallowed. In the second dream, the large bundles of green and lean bundles of grain were together right before the lean bundles devoured the big bundles.

The Magicians couldn't comprehend how it was possible to simultaneously have abundant food with a famine. Either there is plenty of food or a lack thereof, but it is impossible to have both together. The Rebbe points out this detail was the perplexing point that the magicians couldn't understand.

The Rebbe explains that the magicians couldn't get past that point because they came from a fundamentally physical position. Meaning that physically, it's unfeasible for both of these contrasting elements to be present together. But Yosef did not come from that standpoint; his position stemmed from a spiritual realm. This sphere allows for differences, contradictions, and opposing ideas to be correct simultaneously.

The most obvious and simple example of this is our existence. For the entirety of our history, rulers and kings attempted and sought out our extermination. Whether through physical annihilation or religious abandonment, there has always been someone seeking our termination.

But as our existence demonstrates, they have yet to be successful or effective. Yes, our history is filled with tragedy and pain, yet, we still walk with our heads held up high. Yes, we are less than 1 % of the population, yet we are the leaders of each industry we enter. Yes, the darkness of this world is powerful, but it is no match for our soul's light and capacity to illuminate its surroundings.

The flickering flames of the Menorah are telling us a story, a tale as old as time itself. There is an opportunity for light, contentment, and joy whenever there is hardship, pain or darkness. Yosef understood this idea in prison, and when the moment appeared, he took the G-dly position and saw the light.

As we light the Menorah and celebrate Chanukah with friends and family, take advantage of the holiness the candles are sharing. Yes, the darkness of our exile is significant and strong, but your ability to illuminate and transform our world is far greater!

**"There is always light. If only we were brave enough to see it.
If only we were brave enough to be it."**

*Have a meaningful Chanukah,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*