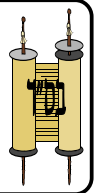




Kinder Torah®

Parashas Miketz



The Ladder of Success

The story of Yosef's rise to power in Mitzrayim is truly amazing. It was unheard of for a lowly slave to become second in command of the world's most powerful nation. Let us try to imagine the story in today's terms.

"Mr. President, you look a little tired today."

"I am tired, Mr. Sneh. I did not sleep well last night. I had a couple of troubling dreams."

"Do you think they mean anything, sir?"

"I am sure that they mean something. The question is who can interpret these dreams for me?"

"I passed by the salon of a palm-reader on my way to the White House this morning, sir. Perhaps she also interprets dreams."

"Be serious, Mr. Sneh. I am the leader of the world's most powerful country. These dreams must have national significance."

Just then, the Chief of the White House security staff enters the room. He hears the President's predicament and offers a solution.

"I was thrown into prison under false charges three years ago. Sitting in jail was a young immigrant worker who was very good with dreams. He seemed honest and sincere."

"Send for him at once!"

And so, the young worker is located. He needs a shave and a change of clothes in order to be made presentable to the President. He is sped to the White House and ushered in to the Oval Office.

"Young man, I dreamed a dream last night. I hear that you can interpret it."

"Mr. President, dream interpretation is beyond my personal capabilities. Hashem will interpret your dream."

"Very well. Here is the dream."

The President explains about the seven fat and lean cows, and the seven ears of grain. The young servant listens to every detail. When he finished, he begins to speak.

"Mr. President, your dreams represent two economic cycles. For the next seven years, the American economy will enjoy unparalleled prosperity. The food sector will break all previous records."

"That is fantastic! I will be re-elected!"

"Definitely. People will also want to spend all of their profits. That is not a wise course of action, because the seven years of boom will be followed by a catastrophic depression. The stock market will crash, and people will not have enough to eat."

"That is terrible. At least my term will be over by then, and they won't blame it on me."

"Blame or no blame, you don't want people to starve, Mr. President, do you?"

"I guess not."

"Here is what you must do. Stop people from selling the excess food during the good years. Instead they must save and store up all of the abundant grain crops."

"Save it? We will forego a huge profit that could be made by selling it to Russia and China. Who says that there will be a crash after that? We have to live for the present, young man."

"Hashem says there will be a famine. Therefore, if you want to save your country, listen to Him, and appoint someone to supervise this grain storage project. Focus the entire agricultural sector of the economy on saving and storage. Then, when the crash comes, you will make big profits."

The President carefully considers the servant's words.

"This young man knows what he is talking about Mr. Sneh. I do not see anyone in this government as wise as he is. He has an 'air of holiness' about him. I am going to hire him to take charge of this project. In



fact, he is so smart that I am going to make him Vice President. He is in now officially in charge of all affairs of state. Now I can go and play golf all day."

Can you imagine such a thing? The President of the United States places control of the entire economy in the hands of a young unknown servant with no political or economic experience. Who would ever do such a thing? Who was this young man? What could he have said or done to convince the President to turn the country over to him?

This is the story of Yosef and Paroh. The verse itself reveals the answer to the question. "Paroh said to his servants, 'Could we find another like him? A man who has the spirit of G-d in him'" (Bereshis 41:38). The Ha'amek Davar explains that Yosef revealed details that only Hashem could know. Therefore, it was apparent that he was speaking with Ruach HaKodesh. How did he get to such a high *madrayga* (spiritual level)? Rebbe Pinchas ben Yair (Gemora Avodah Zara 20b) lists a series of steps in Avodas Hashem that will ultimately bring a per-

son to Ruach HaKodesh. One step is called *anavah* - humility. We see an outstanding example of this in the behavior of Yosef.

"That (interpreting Paroh's dream) is beyond me. Hashem will interpret it..." (Bereshis 41:16). The Shelah comments, "See how Hashem's Name flows out of Yosef's mouth. He ascribes all greatness to The Almighty. 'Who am I? What is my life? Only what Hashem has favored me with His Honor.'" This is a great lesson for all of us. A person must thank The Creator for all of his good traits, and give credit to The One Who Favored him with everything.

Another important lesson is *bitachon* - trust in Hashem. Why did Yosef need to spend an extra two years in prison? Because he asked the Sar HaMashkim to put in a good word for him when he returned to Paroh. This act of placing his trust in a person instead of Hashem revealed a lack of *bitachon*. Rav Dessler points out that Yosef learned his lesson during those two extra years. He realized that everything is from Hashem. His extraordinary ability to interpret dreams is from Hashem. Therefore, when he was called before Paroh to interpret his dreams, he gave all the credit to The Almighty. As the verse states, "That (interpreting dreams) is beyond me. Hashem will answer Paroh's questions about his welfare" (Bereshis 41:16). We can all learn the lessons of *anavah* and *bitachon* from Yosef HaTsaddik.

Kinderlach . . .

Did Hashem bless you with talents and abilities such as intelligence, seichel (common sense), good memory, a beautiful smile, or good health? Realize that it is all from Him. Thank Him and give Him credit for the kindness that He has done for you. This is a sign of anavah - humility - by not taking credit yourself. It also reveals your bitachon - your trust in Him, by realizing that everything is from Him. Strengthen your anavah and bitachon, kinderlach. Become a tsaddik, just like Yosef.

Parasha Questions:

- In whose sack did they find the goblet? (44:12)
- What were the meanings of the names of the ten sons of Binyamin? (Rashi 43:30)
- Where did Yosef cry? (43:30)

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