

Parshas Miketz

This week's parsha is Miketz, which regularly falls out as Shabbos Chanuka. One of the most significant themes of the parsha are Paroah's dreams, and Yosef interpretation of them. We know that this is the link taking Yosef from jail to royalty in one action, that makes no logical sense, other than by divine intervention. Hashem is connected at all points to this happening. In last week's parsha we saw that Yosef was able to interpret the dreams of the wine butler and baker with Divine intervention, resulting in an actualized outcome.

In this week's parsha the wine butler (who was saved) remembered that he encountered Yosef in jail and bore witness to the dream coming to fruition. The assumption of Paroah's court was that he had plenty of dream interpreters (called the chartumim), and yet he was dissatisfied with any of their answers, until paroah was told Yosef had the right outcome. The reason, seemingly, is that dream interpretations are difficult to make sense of. In fact, when the gemara talks about dreams (in Berachos), although certain imagery is interpreted, the emotional result is what the Rabbanan tell us to deal with. That means for example if we were scared by a dream we ought to repent and give charity. Paroah was so sold on Yosef's interpretation, that he headed the division responsible for stockpiling and distributing the food, based on the recommendation of Yosef. The dream didn't come to fruition yet, only theoretically at the end of 14 years (7 years of good times, and 7 years of bad) should Yosef have been rewarded with the royal position. As an example, if I work in a company, and have a suggestion of how to

make the company (more) profitable, without a track record, I won't be promoted to an executive position, until after my strategy comes to fruition, especially, if the strategy involves time, and an investment. Whereas Yosef circumvented standard process, based on his in-jail track record. Logically, it doesn't make sense, except to see the Divine intervention.

The haftora from Melachim (not the Haftora we read if Shabbos is Chanuka and Rosh Chodesh), begins with Shlomo Hamelech having a dream (which is the simple connection to the parsha), and then the posuk pivots to what seems like a completely unrelated story. The encounter is 2 women who claim they are the mother of a baby. Shlomo's solution was based on logic. He suggested they cut the baby in half and give each mother one part of the baby. One mother cried out and said that the baby should go to the other mother, and the second mother, accepted Shlomo's response. Shlomo Hamelech knew the mother who cried to not have the baby killed was the true mother. This episode is one of the key methods by which we see Shlomo Hamelech's genius. The connection, therefore, is that with dreams, they don't follow any logic, but in our world, and in our practice as Yidden, we need use rational sound thinking to be Oivdey Hashem, and not just go after what is in our heart. There is Halacha, and a way of practicing that cannot just be like the content of a dream, disparate and irrational.

There is a theme of the past Parsheos that use dreams as the primary theme (beginning with Yakov and the ladder, to Yosef, to the butler and butcher to Paroah). Dreams are often the method by which the

prophets prophesied and received Divine communication. The Alter Rebbe explains in a Mamer, the depth and loftiness of dreams, in which anything can happen. Much in the same way that Mashiach is a dream, whereby it will come in a way that supersedes rational methodical system.

Ultimately there are 2 lessons here. The first is that dreams are the essence of why and how we can believe that Mashiach is coming. Because just as in a dream anything can happen, so to Hashem can make anything happen, in a way we least expect it. The second lesson is that in our day-to-day practice as Yidden, we must follow logic and order, and not live off the whim of a dream (which we will have difficulty interpreting properly without Divine intervention).

The connection to Chanuka is that the miracle of Chanuka didn't make sense logically (as we say in the Al Hanisim), that a small army defeated a large army. As well the miracle of the oil defied logic. So much that even though they found a single jug of oil, that would have lasted 1 day, they lit the Menorah, this is what they had to do. Hashem then defied nature, which resulted in 7 more days of the oil burning (and there are many explanations about when the miracle started). The story and miracle of Chanuka reflects what can take place like in a dream, which is still relevant to us today, where we will be redeemed in an illogical, Divine way.

Good Shabbos and Happy Chanuka