

Parshas Miketz Shabbos Chanuka

This week's Parsha is Miketz, which usually falls out on or around Chanuka. In this Parsha, we are introduced to Paroah's dreams, for which he had no interpretation, until the wine butler demandingly remembered the "eved ivri" (Hebrew slave) who had correctly interpreted his dream a few years prior. When the Torah recounts the initial dream, the order of the nice-looking cows is "yefos ma'areh" (nice looking), then it says "briyos basar" (they were meaty). When Paroah recounts the dream to Yosef, he changes the order to "briyos basar" then says "yefos ma'areh". Rabbeinu Bachaya ponders the difference in the retelling of the dream. Rabbeinu Bachaya quotes Tanchuma on Miketz, that in fact Yosef corrected Paroah on the events of the dream, which ultimately convinced Paroah that Yosef's interpretation will be correct, and against the nature of Egypt, will institute Yosef as viceroy over the land. (Rashi explains that the wine butler called him a slave, to degrade Yosef in the eyes of Paroah, that Yosef will never rise in ranks, because it wasn't in the realm of a slave to achieve greatness in Egypt.)

We clearly see Rashi is explaining the subtext of the pesukim, which shows how great the miracle of Yosef's ascent to greatness is, and not happenstance or luck—it was by divine design and will. Yosef credits Hashem's power in this, and when Yosef says "biladay" (41:16) Rashi explains that Yosef is saying the wisdom of dream interpretation is "beyond me", rather Hashem will answer and put the response in my mouth, "lishalom Paroah" for Paroah's

good. Yosef corrected Paroah according to Rabbeinu Bachaya, for which Paroah was shocked, and by attributing Hashem to the interpretation, Paroah recognized Hashem (posuk 38,39), and Yosef was instated as viceroy in the land "with no one wiser".

What we see is that Hashem is behind everything. Lishalom Paroah is an interesting choice of words by Rashi, and we can posit that perhaps, this means that Paroah here becomes a true supporter of Yosef, not just a silent enemy. Paroah becomes convinced of Hashem and Yosef's greatness, and therefore supported the safety (for the time being) of the land, and ultimately welcoming Yakov and his family to Egypt (which we know the Jews lived in harmony with their neighbors for years before slavery took place in early Shemos—where a "new" king arose "who didn't know Yosef"). The Rebbe in Mamarim (such as Pada Bishalom) explains what "shalom" and shleimus (completion) means in an adversarial and antagonistic relationship, and when true peace is achieved (i.e., when the enemy becomes the friend).

How this connects to Chanuka, is that the Hellenists wanted the Jews to assimilate, which in some capacity occurred, except we prevailed, and the Jews survived. The optics of the Hellenists mission didn't look bad (secularize, Torah secondary etc.) but that has extreme destructive power¹. Which is why the singular bottle of pure oil stood for more than just being pure oil, it stood for the fact that the Jewish people will push back and prevail even when the outside forces are strong to push everything away². Yosef, in his moment of ascent could have

¹ Hayom Yom 29 Kislev

² One can ask, if the nation was all impure, they wouldn't have necessarily required pure oil. But the

been quiet and tried to interpret the dreams himself, rather, he told Paroah, I am not the interpreter, I am a conduit for Hashem's word. And we see that a miracle took place, where Yosef correct Paroah on his own dream, something Yosef could not have known if not for divine intervention. In order to push back the destructive forces of spirituality around us, we must be a light in a dark place, as Yosef was in Paroah's palace, and recognize Hashem in everything that happens, and tell people of the same. The message of Chanuka is to do that, spread the light of Hashem's greatness to the world. In this way, the light of truth and Hashem's greatness will shine forth, and we will usher Mashiach into our lives in the truest sense.

Good Shabbos and a Freilichen Chanuka

Jews insisted on finding a vial of pure oil. This is akin to Avraham seeking a single Tzadik in S'dom in order to avert destruction. The vial of oil represents something greater than the oil itself. The oil

represents Mesiras Nefesh, which is what was and is required for Teshuva, and daily service to Hashem (as the Rebbe points out in Hayom Yom from 29 Kislev).