

LAMPLIGHTER

26 Kislev
Parshas Mikeitz

115

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Mikeitz, it can be noted that there are several essential differences between the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh.

Joseph dreamt that he and his brothers were actively gathering sheaves of grain. Pharaoh, however, was merely a passive bystander, observing the events that transpired around him; any indication of human activity was absent.

Joseph's dreams were in the realm of holiness: G-d bestows His blessings on us as reward for our labours. A Jew has to work to be worthy of receiving them, just as Joseph was actively involved in binding the sheaves in his dream.

Joseph's dreams were characterized by an upward progression in holiness. In his first dream Joseph took individual sheaves of grain and bound them together to create a unified whole. This shows an ascent from separateness and division to a higher level of union and oneness.

The subject of Joseph's second dream also represents an ascent. After he had dreamt about earthly matters, sheaves of grain, he dreamt about the sun and moon, celestial matters.

Pharaoh's dreams, by contrast, were characterized by a downward progression. Pharaoh's first dream was about seven cows, the animal kingdom, but his second dream involved a lower category of life, ears of corn. Also, the dreams themselves were descending in nature. The seven healthy cows were followed by seven sick cows that swallowed them up; the seven robust ears of corn were followed by seven blighted ones.

Moreover, the fulfilment of Pharaoh's dreams came about in a descending order. First came the years of plenty, which were followed by a famine of such magnitude that it was as if the years of abundance had never existed. Every detail connected with Pharaoh's dreams was marked by decrease.

Holiness, the realm of Joseph, is characterized by perpetual ascent: "One must always go up in matters of holiness." Holiness is eternal. Anything that is not holy, the realm of Pharaoh, does not endure, and will only deteriorate and dwindle until there is nothing left.

This contains a practical lesson for every Jew: If we want to merit G-d's blessings, we must work for them, as it states, "If someone tells you he has toiled and found what he was looking for, you may believe him." If a Jew expends the effort he will be more than amply rewarded, and in far greater measure than his actions warrant. The G-dly influence he receives will increase, in an ever-expanding manner.

If, however, a Jew wishes to benefit from G-d's blessings without effort, the influences he receives will be the same type as Pharaoh's: from a source other than holiness. But this type of influence will not last; it will continue to decrease until nothing remains of it at all.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 3

The 2000 Year Dream

By Simcha Levenberg

I have healed the sick, flown through thin air, and conversed with dead people - without leaving the comfort of my bedroom! No, this is not an advertisement for a therapeutic pillow-top time machine that flies, but merely a brief synopsis of the dreams I had last week.

All of us dream. Some of the more common dreams include forgetting children in public, speaking at large public events, hair falling out, or a combination of the above. To date, I never dreamt that sheaves of wheat bowed to me or that celestial beings prostrated themselves to me. I have also never dreamt about bulimic bovines or anorexic agriculture. Then again, I am not the biblical Joseph or Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

When we sleep, our prefrontal cortex lay dormant. This part of the brain facilitates logical and reasoned thinking. Its inactive state causes raw, random and strange thoughts to flow unfiltered into our dreams.

In our dreams, opposites don't attract, they dovetail together. The Talmud writes that the dreamscape is where, "the elephant fits through the eye of the needle." In a dream, the absurd is the acceptable.

Joseph's dreams about his family and himself were a major catalyst to the exile in Egypt. Pharaoh's dreams also played a role in bringing the Jewish people into Egypt. According to Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chassidism, the dreamscape is analogous to exile. This explains why those dreams were a major channel that brought the Jews into Egypt.

Exile, like the dreamscape, is all about the convergence of conflicting ideas. In exile, we feel pulled in divergent directions.

The day started out fabulous, filled with heartfelt prayers and meaningful meditations. But by 10:00 a.m. and that second latte, prayer seemed about as plausible as a ten-day golf excursion in Palm Springs, and so it goes. We become that Talmudic elephant, trying to thrust our head through the eye of the needle of life.

Do not infer that life in exile lacks real substance. This world is real. What then can we learn from all this talk of the dream masquerading as real life?

The world just like the dreamscape is not normal, nor should we approach it that way. Life rarely moves forward in a straight line. In the same vein, we should not feel obliged to follow a logical and direct progression in our spiritual development.

This world also has the same absurd potential as a dream. The juxtaposition of opposites opens the door to fundamental change. We are not locked into a caste system of social hierarchy. We can be movers and shakers, on Main Street, in a pink bathrobe, changing the lives of others and our own. We are not confined to our psychological quirks but can shed them as quickly as I manhandled a gorilla last week. It is all possible. If you can dream it, then you can do it.

Slice of LIFE

TRAVEL - BUT NOT NOW

Tuvia Natkin

Reb Yitzchak Nemes of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, is a businessman-philatelist specializing in rare stamps. In the winter months his work takes him throughout Central America - Nicaragua, Honduras, Ecuador - where he maintains close connections with postal authorities as well as noted collectors.

A faithful chassid, he always sought the Rebbe's assent and blessing before embarking on trips. One year he made preparations to travel to Nicaragua in December. He called up his contacts there, made hotel reservations, and crammed his suitcases with canned kosher food; his exotic destinations were short on kosher restaurants.

As usual he wrote a short note about his trip and destinations and, a few days before traveling, went to the secretaries' office in "770" to deliver his note to the Rebbe.

The departure date approached as he made final preparations but, surprisingly, there was still no answer from the Rebbe. Reb Yitzchak called "770" to find out what was causing the delay. The secretary had no explanation: he had submitted the letter as usual immediately upon receiving it. The Rebbe had the letter and they were not accustomed to, as he put it, "pressure" him to answer correspondence.

The days came and went. It was now forty-eight hours before his departure and still no answer. Ill at ease, he asked to meet with Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's personal secretary (and a close acquaintance of Reb Yitzchak). He explained his dilemma: he was scheduled to fly in two more days and had not yet received a response. Rabbi Hodakov promised to ask the Rebbe when he went to his office later. Reb Yitzchak waited anxiously.

"The Rebbe wants you to submit an exact itinerary," Rabbi Hodakov told him, "every location where you will spend time and your lodgings."

Reb Yitzchak sat down at once and wrote a detailed account. Thursday afternoon he was to arrive in Managua, Nicaragua's capital, reserve his centrally located hotel room, and remain until after Shabbos.

The Rebbe's answer came quickly. Four short words:

"Travel - but not now."

Reb Yitzchak was dazed. What could it mean? Now was the time he could acquire large stocks of stamps at reduced costs; his meetings with key figures in the stamp world had already been coordinated. This new turn of events would wreck his carefully drawn plans for the whole year. But most startling of all: the Rebbe had never before instructed him to postpone his travels.

Of course, as a loyal chassid, he immediately cancelled his flight, telephoned abroad to call off his appointments, and... updated his wife to add some more chicken for Shabbos: he would be staying home.

That Saturday night, Dec. 23, 1972, he turned on the radio to hear what was new. His heart froze. "An earthquake... enormous... lethal... has struck... Managua, capital of Nicaragua." Precisely on Shabbos evening when he was to have stayed in a hotel in the heart of the city. Entire sections of the city had been obliterated. Tens of thousands of dead and injured; hundreds of thousands left homeless. A nationwide state of emergency had been declared and rescue teams from around the globe were mobilizing.

Reb Yitzchak and his family were overwhelmed by their great miracle.

A short time later he decided to carry out the second part of the Rebbe's reply: "Travel - but not now."

When his family and friends learned of his intentions they did their best to dissuade him: "The destruction, the devastation is enormous; after-shocks are still pounding the area; looting is widespread, paramilitary forces are patrolling. Border Police are blocking people from entering the country without special permits. Reports are circulating that people's lives are in danger - especially tourists."

Reb Yitzchak was undaunted. From the Rebbe's answer it was plain that, after a time, he should travel - and that's what he was doing. He readied himself for the trip without, of course, any coordination with his Nicaraguan contacts; he had no clue if they were even alive. He submitted a note to the Rebbe informing him of his plans and asked for a blessing. The Rebbe's assent and blessing followed shortly.

The plane to Nicaragua was filled with relief workers and worried relatives with well-placed connections coming to inquire after their families' fate.

On arrival the passengers passed through thorough security checks. Thanks to the

authorization he received earlier through contacts in the Nicaraguan Consulate in New York, Reb Yitzchak was soon on his way.

With difficulty he found a taxi to bring him to town. The views from his car window were terrifying and wrenching. Residential tracts were reduced to piles of rubble; buildings had collapsed. Boulevards and woodlands looked as though giant ploughs had torn through them. Worst of all was the stench of rotting corpses. Tragedy filled the air. The taxi jerked along makeshift roads that replaced the ravaged highways. Military checkpoints, police, and civil guard units were everywhere, adding their melancholy to the prevailing chaos and anarchy.

Reaching the city he gazed in disbelief at an alien landscape, though he had visited there often in the past. Refugees' tent cities surrounded by wire fences stood where there had once been thoroughfares and handsome buildings. Workers were still clearing debris and searching for bodies. The taxi reached the government complex. Reb Yitzchak got out and walked toward the gate where the Postal Ministry was supposed to be.

He couldn't believe his eyes. The Central Post Office stood facing him in all its glory, intact and nearly unscathed. His steps quickened; hurrying inside to the office of the Director of Philatelic Services, he opened the door. The director stood up, overcome with emotion, and hugged and kissed him. "Welcome! Welcome! What a surprise to see you here! I wasn't expecting this!"

Reb Yitzchak managed to extract himself from his friend's affections, and the director thanked him warmly, praising him for his visit in their darkest hour. When Reb Yitzchak attempted to steer the conversation toward business, the director stood: "Look, you see the catastrophe and the confusion here; it will take a long time before we can rebuild. Stamps are the last thing on our mind. As our dear faithful friend, allow me to invite you into the vaults: take whatever you wish from there, whatever fits into your briefcase. In return, you can make a small token payment."

When he realized the man was serious, he went at once and filled his suitcases with rare and precious items he had never been able to trade before.

"Never," Reb Yitzchak Nemes recollected, "had my business been so profitable as in that trip. 'Travel - but not now,' the Rebbe instructed."

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Editor: Yisroel Leib Lester
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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ISSUE 1115

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The candles we light on Chanukah are lit after sunset and in an increasing manner; one on the first night, two on the second etc. The candles of the Temple were always the same in number and lit during the day. Then, the world was one of light and G-dly revelation, while the present time of exile is of darkness. It is the duty of the Jewish people to light up this darkness in an ever increasing manner to bring the world to its ultimate illumination with the light of Moshiach. When light alone is revealed, darkness can come. But when darkness is turned to light, it is eternal.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

7th of Teves, 5740 [1979]

[...]

It is significant that the Chanukah Menorah has eight lights, although it reflects the miracle of the oil which occurred in connection with the rekindling of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdosh [Holy Temple], which had only seven lamps. As explained in our sacred sources, there is an inner symbolic significance in the number seven versus eight. Seven represents the natural order, since G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, thus completing the natural order in seven days and imbuing it with the holiness of Shabbos. Eight, on the other hand, represents the supra-natural, the extraordinary.

Thus, the seven-lamp Menorah, corresponding to the seven days of the week, symbolized the natural world order, which is geared to, and must be perpetually illuminated by, the light of the Torah and Mitzvos [commandments] during each and all of the seven days of the week. Chanukah, on the other hand, recalls a very extraordinary situation in Jewish history, when the Jewish people faced a crucial challenge that threatened them not with physical, but with spiritual extinction, to be engulfed by the pagan Hellenistic culture that had swept the world at that time. The danger was all the more insidious because it happened while the Jewish people were in their own land, the Holy Land, and the Beis Hamikdosh was in existence; and the enemy did not aim to destroy the Beis Hamikdosh nor put out the Menorah, but "merely" to contaminate them with their own ideas and mores.

This extraordinary situation therefore called for an extraordinary response in terms real Mesiras Nefesh [self-sacrifice].

Hence Chanukah is celebrated for eight days, and the lighting of eight lights, in a manner of increasing them in number and brightness each night of Chanukah until all the eight lights of the Chanukah Menorah shine brightly on the eighth night of Chanukah.

We find the same thing in other aspects of Torah and Jewish life. For example, the dedication of the Mishkon [Sanctuary] and the Mikdosh [Temple], because the idea of a House of G-d, a House for the Divine Shechinah [Presence] within the confines of a measured and limited space, is most extraordinary, as King Solomon, the builder of the first Beis Hamikdosh, expressed it: "Surely, the earth and all the heavens cannot contain You, yet this House will!"

This also the inner significance of Shemini Atzeres, the Eighth Day (following the seven days of Succos), which is the culmination and retention of the Divine service of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the essence of which is Teshuvah [repentance] - that extraordinary Divine gift whereby a Jew breaks through all natural limitations, both within and without, and rises to the highest degree of spiritual achievement.

In all these instances (and others too numerous to mention here) the number eight is not just one more than seven, or an additional twenty-four hours, it symbolizes the extraordinary, the supra-natural and Infinite, as distinct from the ordinary and natural, hence limited, as symbolized by the number seven.

[...]

With esteem and blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

This week's Parsha continues an account of stories that involve dreams: Joseph dreamt of his ascension to power, Pharaoh's steward and baker dream of their separate fates, and Pharaoh dreams about years of plenty and famine.

All these dreams were messages from G-d. In fact, dreams are a medium through which G-d would often communicate to the prophets.

Generally though, unless an individual is of exemplary piety, his dreams are not messages from G-d, and should not be considered important. If one is troubled by a dream he should simply not think about it.

Nevertheless, if a person is very troubled by a dream, our Sages have provided various ways to avert any evil decree that the dream may have portended. They include fasting and reciting special prayers (included in many prayer books) written for the "transformation of dreams" (from bad to good).

Additionally, the Rebbe wrote that if a person is nervous because of a dream, he should interpret it positively, give charity, check his Tefillin and Mezuzot to ensure that they are kosher, and/or strengthen his faith in G-d and the observance of His Torah.

A WORD

from the Director

This week's Parsha is called "Mikeitz", which means "the end", as the Torah describes what happened at the end of the two years that had just passed (in the story of Joseph). The connotation of the word here is a discussion amongst the commentaries. Some commentators maintain that the meaning is "that it (the event described in the Parsha) was at the end of two years" while others contend that the verse should be read as meaning "at the point in time that was after two years and the beginning of the next period in time..." - one focusing on the past and the other on the future.

In the context of our Parsha, 'the past' would refer to Joseph's time spent in jail in Egypt, and 'the future' to the beginning of the process which led him to become the viceroy there.

Rashi, a most famous commentary on the Torah, seems to indicate that the two explanations are really one, with Joseph's jail sentence being his catapult to royalty.

In a similar vein, following the dictum of the word "Torah" which means directive, we can derive a personal lesson from this narrative. In our lives we constantly have a past and a future. At first glance these can be viewed at two separate elements - like the commentaries say - each with a different opinion on how we should live in the present. Each of these - the experience of the past and our vision of the future - may at times be independent or even conflicting. However, being that both of these ideas are fused together by the Torah in the same word, the Torah here is teaching us that our future must be built on our past; though the adversity of the past the strength and the focus of the future is born - in our own lives and in the world in general.

May we see this light and strength revealed on a global scale with the coming of Moshiach now!

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Chanukah in the American Revolution

General George Washington and the menorah of inspiration.

It was December 1777, when the American forces under General George Washington were awaiting the famous battle at Valley Forge. The future president was deeply concerned about the welfare of his troops. The bitter cold and the poor provisions with which his soldiers of the revolutionary army had been provided did not bode well for the outcome of the critical battle that awaited them.

Wrapped in his officer's cape and clapping his three- cornered hat down hard on his head against the chilling wind, Washington went out to see at firsthand how his men were faring. As he went from tent to tent, he saw the men dressed in rags and huddling around small fires, trying to get together a meal of something hot. As he went on, he suddenly encountered a single soldier, bent over a small metal apparatus in which he had lit a few very small, tallow candles.

Intrigued, Washington asked him what he was doing. Startled, the man jumped to his feet and saluted. Just at that moment, he had little expected to find his commander so near. But again Washington repeated his request: to understand why he had lit those little candles here, in the middle of nowhere.

The soldier, who of course was Jewish, began to unfold the age-old tale: of foreign Greeks who, upon conquering the holy land of Israel, had entered the Temple and had placed their idols in the most sacred place of worship. And he told how the valiant Maccabees, no longer able to bear the evil degrees forbidding the performance of Jewish ritual and the learning of Torah, rose up against their lords even though they greatly outnumbered them and were better armed - "Just like here, only more so, he interspersed." Nevertheless, through the grace of Heaven, they succeeded in removing them from their land.

And last of all, the soldier explained how they purified the sanctuary and, finding only one container of oil which remained undefiled, they used it to light the Menorah. Yet miraculously that one container of oil, which should have been enough for only one day, instead lasted for eight -- until new oil could be made. And this, he told the general, is why he was lighting those little lights.

General Washington stood enthralled. He looked at the little flames, and at the face of the Jew. Then, he laid a firm hand on the man's shoulder. "You are a Jew," he exclaimed, "from the nation of prophets! I treat what you just said as a message from the Al-mighty Himself! With your little lights and your inspiring story, you have struck new courage in my troubled heart." The General shook the young soldier's hand, saluted, then turned to continue on his rounds.

What happened the next day is history: Washington's forces scored a victory over the British, and this proved to be the beginning of their total success. Eventually it led to the independence of the United States of America from England.

But what is less known is the following. That Jewish soldier survived the war and returned to his home in Boston.

One evening, some two years later, he was sitting with his family around the dinner table when there was a knock at the door. He was astonished to see two very official-looking men standing there, but after a moment he recovered his poise and invited them in.

After introductions, one of the men stepped forward and took out a small box covered in velvet, from his inside coat pocket. With a cheerful smile, he handed it to the Jewish host, saying, "Here, take this. It is for you."

The veteran soldier looked from one face to the other for some sign of what was going on. Slowly he opened the box. It was lushly lined, setting off a brilliant gold medallion. On it was engraved picture of a Menorah with the words inscribed: "With admiration, from George Washington."

One of the visitors then handed him a letter from the first president himself. "This will explain everything," he said.

"My dear friend," was the salutation. "You don't know what you accomplished that night at Valley Forge. I couldn't sleep that night because I was sure that we had no chance of winning. We lacked ammunition. We were outnumbered ten to one. We didn't even have food or bedding for the soldiers. When I saw those boys lying asleep in the freezing cold under those thin blankets it took away my resolve.

"I made up my mind then and there... to surrender.

"But your lights and your words changed all that. If it wasn't for you and your Menorah, I don't know if we would be standing here today as free men. So we decided to present this medallion to you as a testimonial to that night, which was a turning point in our struggle for freedom."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And Pharaoh was dreaming (41:1)

Should it not say, "and Pharaoh dreamed"? But this is to teach us that for those two years Pharaoh would see this dream each and every night, but would not remember it, until the time came for Joseph to come out of prison; that morning, he woke up and remembered it. (*Midrash HaGadol*)

And [Joseph] collected the food... the produce of each city's surrounding fields he placed within it (41:48)

Each part of the land preserves its own produce; one mixes from the local dust into the grain and this keeps it from spoiling. (*Rashis commentary*)

Also the produce of man requires some "local dust" as a preservative, lest it rot.

The greater a person's achievements, the more susceptible they are to corruption. A fruitful yield in life--material or spiritual--may breed an arrogance that corrodes all that is good and G-dly in it. The solution is a dose of dust. One, who saturates his successes with humility and self-effacement, guarantees their preservation as positive and constructive forces in his own life and the lives of his fellows. (*From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 29 NOVEMBER 2013

BEGINS	ENDS
8:06MELBOURNE	9:12
7:54ADELAIDE	9:10
6:09BRISBANE	7:07
6:40DARWIN	7:33
6:08GOLD COAST	7:06
6:48PERTH	7:48
7:30SYDNEY	8:32
7:42CANBERRA	8:45
8:07LAUNCESTON	9:16
8:04AUCKLAND	9:08
8:16WELLINGTON	9:25
8:11HOBART	9:22
7:09BYRON BAY	8:07
6:36SINGAPORE	7:28



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS MIKEITZ
26 KISLEV • 29 NOVEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:06 PM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:45 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILIM:	8:00 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	8:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:12 PM
	The Molad for month of Teves is Tuesday, December 3 at	12:58 and 5 chalakim AM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	MAARIV: SUN-FRI:	9:10 PM
	SUN-WED:	9:30 PM