

# DREAMS

*by Shlomo Katz*

## **Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz**

**Miketz: Dreams  
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Today's Learning:

Chullin 9:5-6

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Sanhedrin 87

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Eruvin 44

Dreams play a major role in both this week's and last week's parashot. In this week's reading, Pharaoh says to Yosef (41:15), "I dreamed a dream, but no one can interpret it." R' Nosson Meir Wachtfogel z"l (the Lakewood mashgiach) asks: What did Pharaoh mean by "no one can interpret it"? Rashi writes that Pharaoh's advisers did offer him several different interpretations!

R' Wachtfogel answers: The Gemara (Berachot 55b) teaches that the meaning of a dream depends on the interpretation given to it. Some dreams are neither good nor bad; rather, their fulfillment depends on their interpretation. If a person interprets his dream as a good "prophecy," that good may actually come to him. On the other hand, if he interprets the dream as bad tidings, that bad may befall him.

In Pharaoh's case, his advisers did offer him several interpretations for his dreams. For example, they suggested that he would father seven daughters who would then die. However, Pharaoh did not want to have seven daughters who would die and he did not like the other interpretations either; therefore, he insisted that no one was able to interpret his dreams.

R' Wachtfogel explains further: When Hashem causes a person to dream, He is giving the person raw materials with which the person can "build" a future. This is why there are prayers by which a person asks that a "bad" dream turn "good." One cannot simply wish a dream away, just as one who has his hands full of building materials cannot pretend that his hands are empty. The building materials must be used for something - whether good or bad - and so must the dream.

The Gemara teaches that a person should wait as long as 22 years for a dream to come true. [Twenty-two is the number of years that Yosef had to wait after his dreams until his brothers bowed to him.] Just as a dream may be compared to building materials, so it may be compared to a seed. We know that a person who plants seeds must wait for them to germinate. (Kovetz Sichot II)

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*"Yosef commanded that they fill their vessels with grain, and to return their money..." (42:25)*  
*"Then he instructed the one in charge of his house saying, 'Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack'." (44:1)*

Why did Yosef return his brothers' money, not once but twice? R' Yaakov Yokeyv Ettlinger z"l (see page 4) explains: Our sages teach, "Ma'aseh avot siman la'banim" / "What befell the Patriarchs presages what will befall their descendants." Yosef was hinting to his brothers: Just as you received money from Egypt twice, so your descendants will receive money from the Egyptians twice -- once at the time of the Exodus, and a second time at the Yam Suf. (The Egyptians had decorated their chariots with jewels.)

On this subject: The Gemara (Berachot 9a) records a dispute regarding the interpretation of the verse (Shmot 12:36), "Hashem gave the [Jewish] people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they granted their request - so they emptied Egypt [of wealth]." Rabbi Ami says, "They emptied Egypt as a container is emptied of wheat." Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says, "They emptied Egypt as a pond is emptied of fish." R' Ettlinger asks: About what are these two sages arguing? Also, if Bnei Yisrael had emptied Egypt of wealth at the time of the Exodus, from where did the Egyptians get the wealth that they later carried to the Yam Suf?

R' Ettlinger explains: The difference between a container of wheat and a pond of fish is as follows. A pond is a fish's natural environment, while a container is not wheat's natural environment. Wheat must be brought from another location and placed in the container. The Egyptians had two types of wealth. One, like fish in a pond, was their homegrown wealth, while the second, like wheat in a container, was booty brought from other countries. When Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, they emptied

Egypt's coffers of \*one\* of these types of wealth; Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish disagree which one. In either case, the other type of wealth remained in the Egyptians' hands, only to be lost at the Yam Suf. (Minchat Ani)

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*"The day dawned, and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys. They had left the city, they had not gone far, when Yosef said to the one in charge of his house, 'Get up, chase after the men'." (44:1-2)*  
Why does the verse mention their donkeys? R' Hillel Lichtenstein z"l (Hungary; 1814-1891) explains that these verses and this event may be understood based on the principle of "Ma'aseh avot siman la'banim" / "What befell the Patriarchs presages what will befall their descendants." Our sages teach that even the poorest among Bnei Yisrael left Egypt with donkeys laden with riches. And, just as Yosef's servant chased after Yosef's brothers, so Pharaoh chased after their descendants. (Makrei Dardaki)

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## Chanukah

The Gemara (Berachot 63a) states, "If someone loosens his grip on the Torah, he will be unable to stand at a time of trouble. Some add: Even if he loosens his grip on only one mitzvah." Commentaries explain that if a person has a chance to learn Torah or do a mitzvah, but he puts it off, he will find it more difficult to perform that mitzvah the next time around. This is also true of a person who does study Torah or perform the mitzvah at hand, but in a lackluster way.

This teaches us, says R' Gedaliah Schorr z"l (1911-1979; rosh yeshiva of Torah Vo'daas in Brooklyn), that if a person does not take advantage of his spiritual strengths, he will lose them. This is why Hillel said (in Pirkei Avot), "Don't say, 'When I have time, I will learn,' because perhaps you will never have time." The same learning will be harder tomorrow, because today's strength is lost if it is not used.

As its name implies, Chanukah is a time of rededication. (The root of Chanukah is "chinuch" / "dedication.") It is a time to combat our tendency to perform mitzvot in a lackluster fashion, merely out of habit. This, says R' Schorr, is alluded to in the statement of the Gemara (Shabbat 23b) that the Chanukah candles must burn "until the last foot ('regel') leaves the street." Literally, this means until the streets are empty and there is no one left to see the Chanukah lights. Homiletically, though, "regel" is related to "hergel" / habit. Our task on Chanukah is to work on rededicating ourselves until hergel / habit is banished. (Ohr Gedalyahu: Chanukah)

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R' Shneur Kotler z"l (Lakewood rosh yeshivah) taught: When the Greeks issued decrees against our observance of the Torah, it was not that they were primarily interested in oppressing us and attacking the Torah was a convenient method of doing so. Rather, their very goal was to divest us of

our unique character as a nation of the Torah; for this reason, they wished to introduce us to Greek wisdom.

As part of their plan to create a new kind of Jew, the Greeks also wanted to translate the Torah into Greek -- the Hellenist. Hellenists were Jews who took on the appearance and the character of the Greeks, and they were a greater thorn in our side than were the Greeks themselves.

R' Kotler continues: Our redemption from the Greeks was different from our salvation from other oppressors. In this instance, unlike all other redemptions, it was not necessary to build a new Bet Hamikdash. It was, however, necessary to purify the interior of the Temple. What is the significance of this fact?

When G-d commanded the building of the mishkan (the forerunner of the Temple), He did not say, "I will dwell in it," but rather (Shmot 25:8), "I will dwell amongst them." We are the "Temple"; purifying the interior of the Bet Hamikdash is merely evidence of the fact that we have purified ourselves.

The Torah reading on Chanukah tells of the dedication of the mishkan by the twelve Princes of the Tribes. Perhaps, suggests R' Kotler, it was specifically necessary that the mishkan be dedicated, not by the whole nation, but by individuals who had already purified their souls. (Noam Siach p.106)

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### **R' Yaakov Yokev Ettlinger z"l**

R' Ettlinger was born on 29 Adar 5558 / 1798 in Karlsruhe, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Baden, in southwest Germany. In his youth, he studied under the local rabbi, R' Asher Wallerstein (son of R' Aryeh Leib of Metz, author of Shaagas Aryeh). From the age of 18, R' Ettlinger studied in Wurzburg under R' Avraham Bing, from who he received semichah / ordination. R' Ettlinger also attended the University of Wurzburg, where he studied philosophy.

In 1825, R' Ettlinger was appointed rabbi of Mannheim, a community of about 1,500 Jews. In Mannheim, R' Ettlinger also headed a yeshiva of about 70 students, one of the last advanced yeshivot in Germany. In 1836, he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Altona and Wandsbeck and of the principalities of Schleswig and Holstein. Reportedly, the bet din / rabbinical court in Altona was the last one in Western Europe to enjoy official government recognition. Until 1863, the court's decisions in money matters had the force of a civil court judgment and were enforceable by the police. During R' Ettlinger's tenure, Altona also was unusual in that its customs were completely untouched by the Reform movement that was sweeping Germany. When R' Shlomo Eiger (son of R' Akiva Eiger) visited Altona, he complimented the prayer service there as being "word for word, and at a much slower pace than all the shuls in Poland."

When R' Ettlinger moved to Altona, he took his yeshiva with him. Among his students in Mannheim and Altona were the two foremost leaders of Torah Judaism in 19th-century Germany, R' Samson Raphael Hirsch and Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer.

R' Ettlinger's Talmud commentary Aruch La'ner is a classic that is widely studied today. R' Ettlinger also wrote Bikkurei Yaakov, an important work on the laws of lulav and sukkah, and a Torah commentary Minchat Ani. He also founded two periodicals: Der True Zionsw"chter, a journal of public affairs devoted in large part to battling the Reform movement, and Shomer Zion Ha'ne'eman, a Torah journal. Each of these journals continued to be published for about 11 years.

R' Ettlinger passed away on the first day of Chanukah 5632 / December 7, 1871. (Source: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch pp. 40- 42)

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