

DREAMS ETC.

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This Shabbos, the final day of Chanukah, we read the parsha of Miketz. "Va'y'hee miketz shnasa'yim yamim u'Paroah cholaim {And it was at the end of two years and Paroah dreamt}. [41:1]" These two years are counted from the time that Yosef had accurately interpreted the dreams of Paroah's butler and baker.

The Ohr HaChaim writes that the term "And Paroah dreamt" indicates that Paroah understood while he was dreaming that it was a dream. This, in turn, indicated to him that this dream was not simply a conglomeration of his thoughts of that day but rather an important message was being imparted to him.

These past few parshios have been filled with dreams. Yaakov had his dream of the ladder ascending to the heavens, Yosef had two dreams, Paroah's butler and baker each had a dream and now Paroah had his dreams.

What are dreams and how can we understand them?

"And Hashem formed man from the earth and blew into his nostrils a living soul. [2:7]" Rashi explains there that man was a double creation-a body from the lower, physical world and a soul from the upper, spiritual world. Two separate beings, two strange bedfellows, co-existing during the extent of their life in this world.

The body has its five senses through which events and stimuli are perceived. The soul, being a spiritual entity, is not bound by the parameters which limit the body. It is not bound by space nor is it bound by time and therefore that which is occurring elsewhere can be revealed to it, as can that which will occur. The vast majority of what our soul is aware of does not pierce through the physical realm and enter our consciousness. However, there are times that the barrier is penetrated. This can be through dreams.

The Nishmas Chaim writes that there are three types of dreams: natural, providential and prophetic.

The most common type, the natural, is often simply a distortion of the day's events or the person's thoughts or aspirations, be they conscious or subconscious. Others come as a result of stimuli that are discerned by the body even as it sleeps. I believe most of us have experienced something along the lines of the following-Ciner, from half court, at the buzzer, YES! Ciner wins the game! -only to realize that the buzzer/alarm clock is still ringing well after the 'game' finished and it's time to get up

to go to school.

The third type, the prophetic, is a dream where Hashem reveals His secrets to loyal servants who have reached the spiritual height of prophecy. The prophet is immediately aware that what he experienced was a message or vision from Hashem. That was the nature of Yaakov's dream.

The second type, the providential, is where there is a more convoluted piercing of the barrier that we described above. These true dreams are either revealed to the righteous, as in the case of Yosef, or to the wicked, as in the case of Paroah and his servants, in order to benefit a deserving individual.

The Ramcha"l in his classic, *Derech Hashem*, explains the mechanics of this transfer of information across the chasm between the spiritual and the physical. He writes that, although we refer to the soul in the singular, it is in fact a chain-like sequence of many parts. The lowest link/s of the chain is in the physical body itself and the highest parts extends upward, far above the angels, to the purest points in the spiritual realm. The amount of the soul's components that are actually in the body varies.

The soul's connection to the physical body limits the association and involvement that it can have with other spiritual entities. When the physical body is active, the soul's associations are more limited. When the body is less active, the soul's ability to associate is enhanced.

During the time that a person is asleep, parts of the soul can, so to speak, detach themselves and associate with different spiritual entities. These entities include those that are in charge of different (seemingly) natural events of this world, angels and demons. The information that is relayed to the soul will either be truthful or false, depending on who relayed this information.

When Providence dictates, either for the benefit of the person himself or for the benefit of others through him, that knowledge gained by the higher parts of the soul will work their way down, link by link, to the part of the soul that is in the body itself. This knowledge can then pierce through the barrier to the physical and can enter the person's consciousness. Upon awakening he can then fulfill that which Providence had in 'mind' when this information was first imparted to his soul.

According to the Medrash, the angels on the ladder that Yaakov saw ascending and then descending represented the different nations under whom we'd be exiled.

Yosef, Paroah and his servant's dreams were all connected to the first angel, the exile of Mitzrayim [Egypt], setting the stage for that exile and our ultimate redemption from there.

As we light the candles of this last night of Chanukah, we are celebrating our delivery from the exile of Yavan [Greece] and the spiritual destruction they tried to bring upon Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Israel].

May we witness the realization of the last part of Yaakov's dream-the casting down of our present exile's angel, with the coming of the ultimate redemption, speedily in our days.

Good Shabbos and a joyous Chanukah,

Yisroel Ciner

This week's Parsha-Insights is in honor of my mother, Mrs. Bea Ciner, on her being honored at the Emunah Women's dinner. May the family share many, many more simchas together.

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