

# NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF *נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה*.  
MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM  
FROM THE PARSHAH

## Dreaming for Two Years

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וַפְרָעָה חֲלֹם (בראשית מא, א)

**And it was at the end of two years that Pharaoh is dreaming. (*Bereishis* 41:1)**

Yosef was languishing in Pharaoh's dungeon for two full years. It did not have to be this way. *Hashem* could have released him from imprisonment earlier than that, but Yosef's release depended on Pharaoh having a prophetic dream that neither he nor his wise men could solve, which is why they called for Yosef.

Now, it does not say that Pharaoh dreamed, it rather says that "Pharaoh is dreaming." The *Ohr Hachayim* learns from here that Pharaoh had this dream over and over for two years straight, but he kept forgetting it. At the end of two years, he

dreamed and did not forget.

*Chazal* say that during the course of these two years, Yosef remained in prison, as punishment for relying on the promise of *Sar Hamashkim* to mention him to Pharaoh. This implies that Pharaoh's dream, which caused Yosef to be released from prison, really should have occurred two years earlier. In fact, Pharaoh did have the dream during these two years, but *Hashem* caused him to forget it, so Yosef would remain imprisoned. When the time arrived for Yosef to be released, Pharaoh remembered the dream. ●

This week's publication is dedicated to *ilui nishmas*

**יעקב לייבל בן ישראל יוסף ז"ל**

in honor of his *yahrzeit* which will fall on 5 Teves.

# Wisdom Comes from Above

וַיִּכַּר יוֹסֵף אֶת אָחָיו וְהֵם לֹא הִכְרָהוּ. (בראשית מב, ח)

**Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. (*Bereishis* 42:8)**

Yosef's brothers did not recognize him because he grew a beard. This explanation of *Chazal* seems strange. How could they not recognize their own brother, despite the fact that he grew a beard, after seeing him and speaking with him at length? It seems impossible that they would not recognize him after a while.

It says in *Mishlei*: כִּי ה' יִתֵּן חֵכְמָה מִפִּי דַעַת וְיִתְּבוּנָה – “*Hashem* gives wisdom; knowledge and understanding are from His mouth.” This means that our faculties of intellect come straight from *Hashem*. We can't know anything without Him. Just as prophesy is not a natural phenomenon, but comes straight from *Hashem*, so it is with all our intellectual awareness.

*Chazal* say that Yosef's brothers placed a ban on anyone who reveals what they did to Yosef, and they brought *Hashem* to join them in this ban. This is why *Hashem* did not reveal to Yaakov what happened to

his beloved son, as Rashi explains.

Now we can understand why Yosef's brothers did not recognize him. In order to recognize them, they needed to utilize mental faculties and compare the person presently speaking to them to their memories of Yosef as a young man. *Hashem* did not grant them the understanding to make this comparison because He participated in the ban on anyone who reveals anything about what happened to Yosef.

If so, why did *Chazal* say that Yosef's brothers failed to recognize him since he grew a beard? Because if he looked just the same, they would not need the power of understanding in order to know that it was him. They would simply recognize him at first sight. But since a beard covered his face and changed his appearance significantly, in order to recognize him they needed mental capabilities that *Hashem* did not grant them. ●

## PARSHA TOPIC

## Putting Yehudah and Yosef Together

### How Greece Got a Hold on Us

The eight days of Chanukah are an appropriate time to think about the period we went through called *galus Yavan*, the Greek exile. Many Torah sources connect the advent of this exile to the issue between Yehudah and Yosef, who figure prominently

in the *parshiyos* that we read during Chanukah.

[The tension between Yehudah and Yosef was not just when Yosef was sold to *Mitzrayim*. A rift between these two leading tribes carried on. After *Shlomo Hamelech* passed away, the Jewish nation split into two kingdoms, the northern one led by the tribe of

### לעילוי נשמות

מוה"ד משה בן אליעזר המבורגר ז"ל  
ומוה"ד ברוך זאב בן נפתלי קראוס ז"ל

נדבת נכדיהם ~ עטרת זקנים בני בנים ותפארת בנינים אבותם

Yosef and the southern led by the tribe of Yehudah.]

We see from the prophecy of *Yechezkel Hanavi* that the Jewish people suffers exile only because of the split between Yehudah and Yosef. Thus Yechezkel was commanded:

קח לך עץ אחד וכתב עליו ליהודה ולבני ישראל חבריו, ולקח עץ אחד וכתוב עליו ליוסף עץ אפרים וכל בית ישראל חבריו. וקרב אתם אחד אל אחד לך לעץ אחד והיו לאחדים בידך – Take a piece of wood and write on it, “For Yehudah and for his compatriots the people of Yisrael,” and take another piece of wood and write on it, “For Yosef, the tree of Efrayim and his compatriots the whole House of Yisrael.” And bring them close to yourself, one to the other, like one piece of wood, and they will be united in your hand.<sup>1</sup>

When the Jewish people saw that *Yechezkel Hanavi* picked up these two symbolic pieces of wood which miraculously became one in his hand, they asked him what it means. Yechezkel told them:

הנה אני לקח את בני ישראל וגוי ועשיתי אתם לגוי אחד בארץ בהרי ישראל ומלך אחד יהיה לכלם למלך ולא יהיו עוד לשני גוים ולא יהיו עוד לשתי ממלכות עוד – Behold, I am taking the people of Yisrael... and making them into one nation on the mountains of Yisrael, and one king will rule over them, and they will no longer be two nations and will no longer be divided into two kingdoms.<sup>2</sup>

Yechezkel was saying that the future *Geulah* depends on the unification of Yehudah and Yosef, on the coming of *Mashiach ben Yosef* and *Mashiach ben David* (from the tribe of Yehudah). As Yechezkel goes on to say, *David Hamelech* will rule over them and be their one shepherd.<sup>3</sup>

## What was the Issue with Yosef?

Yosef and his brothers started to drift apart when Yosef told them his dreams. They did not see the message of his dreams in a good light. They argued against Yosef: *אם משול תמשול, אם משול תמשול* – “Do you think you will become our king and rule over us?!”<sup>4</sup>

Yosef’s brothers suspected him of rebelling against the royal dynasty of David, from the tribe of Yehudah. *David Hamelech*, not Yosef or his descendants, is meant to be king over the Jewish people. Thus they judged him as a usurper of the royal throne, and sentenced him to the appropriate punishment, which is death.

Yosef’s brothers saw in his dreams an indication that Yosef intended to establish his own kingdom. And this is exactly what happened, later on. Yerovam ben Nevat, a descendant of Yosef, broke away from the dynasty of David, and established his own independent kingdom in northern Israel. This kingdom was characterized by idol worship and led inevitably to *galus*. This was exactly what Yosef’s brothers were worried about.

Yosef, however, had no intention to split off and to establish his own kingdom. His goal was to be part of the kingdom of Yehudah. Just as Binyamin, son of Rachel, joined with the kingdom of Yehudah, and *Beis Hamikdash* was built in his territory, so did Yosef intend to do. His plan was for Yosef to be an entity with its own identity, but one that is integrated into the kingdom of the Davidic dynasty, not separate from it and in opposition to it.

Yosef believed that the kingdom of Yehudah can be complete only if it includes within it the entity of Yosef. This is why Yosef is named “Yosef.” He got this name from his mother Rachel, who said *ה' לי בן יסף* – “May Hashem add for me another son.”<sup>5</sup> The name “Yosef” means “addition.” Yosef is meant to be an addition to, not a replacement of. Yosef wanted to add to the kingdom of Yehudah and bring it to perfection.

But Yosef’s brothers suspected him of seeking to

1 *Yechezkel* 37:16-17.

2 *Ibid* vs. 21-22.

3 *Ibid* v. i24.

4 *Bereishis* 37:8.

5 *Ibid* 30:24.

replace the kingdom of Yehudah, of trying to take the kingship away from Yehudah its rightful owner. Such an act would be high treason and liable for the death penalty. Their suspicions of Yosef lead to the whole controversy with Yosef, resulting in the Jewish people's eventual exile to Egypt.

## Two Approaches to Avodas Hashem

The issue between Yosef and his brothers boils down to differing approaches to life in general and *avodas Hashem* in particular.

Yehudah's approach was to see only *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* in the world. To focus on *Hashem*. Everything that exists and everything that happens is from Him. The name "Yehudah," יהודה, is composed of the four letters of *Hashem's* Name, with a *daled* in the middle. This *daled* represents Yehudah's self. [The letter *daled* represents the word *dal*, which means "weak and impoverished." Yehudah saw his self as insignificant; the main thing is *Hashem*, represented by the other letters of his name.]

The name "Yehudah" as a whole, and the reason why he was given this name – his mother Rachel said 'ה הפעם אודה את ה', "*Hashem*"<sup>6</sup> – expresses the idea that a person needs to thank *Hashem* for everything in the world and for everything that happens, because He created and did everything. This is the true feeling and full realization that a person doesn't do anything on his own, he is not the one to thank for what happens, because everything is from *Hashem*.

Thus it says:

וַיֵּשֶׁב שְׁלֹמֹה עַל כִּסֵּא ה' – Shlomo sat on *Hashem's* Throne.<sup>7</sup>

*Shlomo Hamelech* was a descendant of Yehudah. He did not have his own royal throne. He sat on "*Hashem's*" throne. Because the goal of his *avodas Hashem* and that of the kingdom of Yehudah was to bring out the awareness that everything is from *Hashem*, that *Hashem* rules over all, and there is

nothing other than Him.

The reason why *Klal Yisrael* was to be ruled by the kingdom of Yehudah was to impress upon them the understanding that the whole existence of the Jewish people is only from *Hashem*, and all the thanks and gratitude for everything is due to *Hashem*. In Yehudah's eyes, there is only *Hashem*.

Yosef is called "*Yosef Hatzaddik*" because his approach is based on *tzidkus*, on being a *tzaddik*. Yosef is all about a person's *madreigah*. If a person is a *tzaddik*, he will continue to exist, and if he falls from his *madreigah*, he will forfeit his very existence.

Yosef is known for successfully passing *nisyonos* and withstanding temptations. When Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Yosef, at that moment the image of Yaakov, Yosef's father, appeared to him, and said as follows, encouraging him to pass this trial:

Yosef! Your brothers are destined to have their names engraved on the precious stones of the *Eifod*, and your name is meant to be among them. Do you want your name to be deleted from among them?!"<sup>8</sup>

What was Yaakov's message? That for Yosef, falling to sin means his name will be deleted. Yosef's whole existence is predicated on his righteousness.

The first king over the Jewish people was Shaul, a descendant of Yosef, and for one misstep, he lost the throne. "Shaul did one thing wrong, and it made all the difference for him."<sup>9</sup>

When Yerovam ben Nevat was still on a properly high spiritual *madreigah*, *Hashem* said to him:

I and you and [David] son of Yishai will walk leisurely together in *Gan Eden*.<sup>10</sup>

When Yerovam was still a *tzaddik*, he took precedence even before *David Hamelech*. But when he fell from his *madreigah*, he was canceled. Yerovam's name was wiped out from the Jewish people.

6 *Ibid* 29:35.

7 I *Divrei Hayamim* 29:23.

8 *Sotah* 36b.

9 *Yoma* 22b.

10 *Sanhedrin* 102a.

This is how Yosef's kingdom worked, and how his *avodas Hashem* worked. His whole existence depended on the *tzidkus* that he achieved and maintained.

## Hashem is with Yehudah

Yehudah did things differently. In the story of Yehudah and Tamar, Yehudah recognized his mistake and admitted his guilt. And that was his strength. *Chazal* say that when he admitted to his deed with Tamar, a Heavenly voice came out and declared, "From you, *Mashiach* will come." Despite Yehudah's shortcomings, to which he admitted, *Hashem* was with him, and the *malchus* therefore will be his forever and ever.

The greatness of *David Hamelech*, although he was an exceedingly great *tzaddik*, was not because of his *tzidkus*. It was because he sang songs of praise to Hashem and was the "sweet singer of Yisrael," because he saw himself as insignificant and *Hashem* as everything. He said about himself, *ואנכי תולעת, ולא איש* – "I am a worm and not a man."<sup>11</sup> His success was not because of himself. It was because of *siyata d'Shmaya*.

David did certain things that were not appropriate to his *madreigah* but this did not undo him. "David did two things wrong, and it did not make all the difference for him."<sup>12</sup> It did not strip him of the kingship. David was promised the *malchus* forever and ever.

This was what saved King Menashe, son of Chizkiyahu.

Menashe, who was king of Yehudah, was exceptionally wicked. He sinned even more than Achaz and Yerovam, the wicked kings of Yosef's northern kingdom. Menashe was as wicked as could be. But in the end, he did *teshuvah*, and the dynasty of Yehudah continued on from him.

## Placing Value on the Future

Now let's get back to our subject, which is how

<sup>11</sup> *Tehillim* 22:7.

<sup>12</sup> *Yoma ibid.*

the rift between Yehudah and Yosef connects to *Galus Yavan*.

יַפֶּת אֱלֵקִים לְיֶפֶת וַיֵּשְׁבֵן בְּאֹהֲלֵי שֵׁם – G-d will grant beauty to Yefes, and He will dwell in the tents of Shem.<sup>13</sup>

This verse is telling us that Greece, which descends from Yefes, was granted excellence in beauty, in aesthetic matters. (For this reason, a *Sefer Torah* may be written in ancient Greek.<sup>14</sup>) Greek culture encouraged people to develop themselves in aesthetics and in wisdom. [The type of wisdom that the ancient Greeks pursued was relevant to the "beauty" of this world. They sought to understand this wonderful world.] This is what the ancient Greeks valued.

A person can perfect himself in beauty and wisdom. People feel a sense of completeness when they acquire knowledge and wisdom and beauty. Let's say you go to a distinguished medical specialist. You might feel inferior in a certain way. He's the big expert, bursting with knowledge, and you're just a regular guy.

The modern world continues this Greek tradition of valuing the pursuit of aesthetic matters and of gaining knowledge. This leads to the exaggerated respect that modern society has for young people. Why is the younger generation so admired? Because it represents the future. They are the ones who will develop and further the world. What the world has today is never enough. Modern society always wants more and more, it wants to realize its aspirations for the future. It is oriented toward what will be tomorrow. Tomorrow I will be stronger, richer, more successful. Tomorrow, everything will be better.

## Yosef's Future

Yosef's brothers suspected him of espousing an approach similar to that of the Greeks. Yosef's dreams about the future worried them. Here is a seventeen-year-old kid planning out the kingdom that he is destined to lead. They thought that Yosef is overemphasizing the future and underemphasizing

<sup>13</sup> *Bereishis* 9:27.

<sup>14</sup> *Megilah* 9b.

the present and the past.

A person can take a “Greek” approach even to spiritual matters. A person could dream about how tomorrow he will be a *masmid* and in the future he will know *Shas* and so forth. In principle, this is a positive thing. These are good aspirations and they are built on the recognition that a person can develop himself and achieve success in the future.

However, Yosef’s brother followed the path of Yehudah. They thanked *Hashem* for everything and they saw all ability and all success as coming from *siyata d’Shmaya*, not from grandiose dreams and personal ambition. This is why they weren’t pleased with Yosef’s dreams and aspirations. They smelled Greece. Especially as Yosef curled his hair and concerned himself with his aesthetic appearance, they saw him as treading down the Greek path.

Yosef has dreams, Yosef has a beautiful appearance, Yosef is a *tzaddik*. [The significance of this last point will come out later.] All this testifies to a person who has the ability to realize his aspirations. This is a person who builds his own future, who makes his own success. They felt it was all wrong.

Yosef’s brothers were concerned that Yosef intends to build a kingdom based on the innate abilities of the individual Jew and of the Jewish people as a whole to achieve *tzidkus* and spiritual greatness. And when the kingdom is built solely on the greatness of the human being himself, this is Greek.

Yosef’s brothers thus saw him as rebelling against the kingship of Yehudah, and they held him liable for the death penalty. Because the kingdom of Yehudah, the kingdom appropriate to the Jewish people, is the way of *Ein ohd milvado*. Everything that exists is from *Hashem* and everything that happens is from *Hashem* and all success comes only from *Hashem*, Who grants a person abilities and brings him success through *siyata d’Shmaya*.

Let’s talk about what Yosef did subsequently. After he ended up in Egypt, he rose to greatness and sustained the whole world. Here was an individual who, with great wisdom and exceptional talents, managed to store up grain and then supply it to all of humanity during the years of famine.

When Yosef’s brothers came down to Egypt to buy grain, Yosef secretly returned their money to them in their sacks, and then the second time they came, he even hid his goblet in their sacks. Why did he do that? The first time, he ostensibly wanted to scare them. But why did he do it the second time?

Yosef wanted to get to the place where he would be the sole supporter of whole world, and support everyone for free. The populace in Egypt already handed over to Yosef their fields and their work animals, and when they ran out of buying power, he continued to support them for free.

There was one family left, Yaakov and his sons, that was ruining Yosef’s plans to complete his kingship. They were buying grain with their own money. That was not consistent with Yosef’s plans. He did not want to be a big businessman and bring in lots of money. He aspired to rule over everyone and support them for free, and that is why he returned his brothers’ money to them, thus demonstrating that he supports everyone for free.

Yosef’s goal in all this was a spiritual one. He wanted to achieve the reality of *tzaddik yesod olam*, that the whole world stands on the *tzaddik*. The idea was for *Yosef Hatzaddik* to support the whole world and bestow goodness on it.

Yosef’s brothers disagreed with this approach. They held that making the world’s existence dependent on a person, no matter how great a *tzaddik* he may be, goes against the whole idea that *Hashem* is our King. Everything stands on *Hashem*, not on the *tzaddik*. *Yiddishkeit* is not based on a human being’s capabilities. Everything is from Heaven. ●