

Torah Talk—מאמרי תורה



The Parasha Post of the Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital

Parashat Miketz
December 31, 2016

פרשת מקץ
ב' בטבת תשע"ז

Torah Reading: *Bereshit* [Genesis] 41:1-44:17
Maftir for Chanukah: Bemidbar (Numbers) 7:48-53

In this *parasha*, Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dreams and is appointed to implement Egypt's anti-famine plan. This brings him into contact with his brothers again, as they come to Egypt to buy food.

Yosef's epithet is "*HaTzaddik* – the Righteous One." This is an interesting appellation for a person who lorded his dreams over his brothers, concealed from his father the fact that he was alive for twenty two years, and did not reveal his true identity to his brothers until he had sufficiently taunted them. Ah, but you say, he resisted the charms of the wife of Potiphar. But is this one action enough to label him "*tzaddik*?"

A careful look at the following section may reveal the reason for his name (41:15-16; 25-32; 37-39):

טו וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יוֹסֵף, חֲלוֹם חֲלַמְתִּי, וּפְתַר אֵין אֵתוֹ; וְאֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר, תִּשְׁמַע חֲלוֹם לְפָתַר אֵתוֹ. **טז** וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת-פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר, בְּלַעֲדֵי: אֶ-לֵהִים, יַעֲנֶה אֶת-שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה.... **כה** וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-פַּרְעֹה, חֲלוֹם פַּרְעֹה אֶחָד הוּא: אֵת אֲשֶׁר הָאֵ-לֵהִים עֲשָׂה, הִגִּיד לְפַרְעֹה. **כו** שִׁבַּע פָּרֹת הַטֹּבֹת, שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים הֵנָּה, וְשִׁבַּע הַשָּׁבָלִים הַטֹּבֹת, שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים הֵנָּה: חֲלוֹם אֶחָד הוּא. **כז** וְשִׁבַּע הַפָּרוֹת הַרְקוֹת וְהַרְעוֹת הֵעֲלֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶן, שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים הֵנָּה, וְשִׁבַּע הַשָּׁבָלִים הַרְקוֹת, שְׁדָפוֹת הַקָּדִים--יִהְיוּ, שִׁבַּע שָׁנֵי רָעַב. **כח** הוּא הַדָּבָר, אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל-פַּרְעֹה: אֲשֶׁר הָאֵ-לֵהִים עֲשָׂה, הִרְאָה אֶת-פַּרְעֹה. **כט** הֵנָּה שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים בָּאוֹת--שִׁבַּע גְּדוֹל בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם. **ל** וְקָמוּ שִׁבַּע שָׁנֵי רָעַב אַחֲרֵיהֶן, וְנִשְׁפַּח כָּל-הַשָּׁבַע בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם; וְכֻלָּה הָרָעַב אֶת-הָאֶרֶץ. **לא** וְלֹא-יִנָּדַע הַשָּׁבַע בְּאֶרֶץ, מִפְּנֵי הָרָעַב הַהוּא אַחֲרֵי-כֵן: כִּי-כָבֵד הוּא מְאֹד. **לב** וְעַל הַשָּׁנוֹת הַחֲלוֹם אֶל-פַּרְעֹה פָּעַמִּים--כִּי-נִכְוֵן הַדָּבָר

מַעַם הָאֵל-לֵהִים, וּמִמֶּהָר הָאֵל-לֵהִים לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ.... לֹא וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינַי פְּרַעֲהַ, וּבְעֵינַי כָּל-עֲבָדָיו. לַח וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרַעֲהַ, אֶל-עֲבָדָיו : הֲנִמְצָא כָזֶה--אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ. לֹט וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרַעֲהַ אֶל-יוֹסֵף, אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֶל-לֵהִים אֹתְךָ אֶת-כָּל-זֹאת, אִין-נָבוֹן וְחָכָם כָּמוֹךָ.

15 And Pharaoh said to Yosef: 'I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard of you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.' **16** And Yosef answered Pharaoh, saying: 'It is not in me; Hashem will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.'.... **25** And Yosef said to Pharaoh: 'The dream of Pharaoh is one; what Hashem is about to do He has declared to Pharaoh. **26** The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. **27** And the seven lean and bad cows that came up after them are seven years, and also the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind; they shall be seven years of famine. **28** That is the thing which I said to Pharaoh: what Hashem is about to do He has shown to Pharaoh. **29** Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. **30** And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; **31** and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine which follows; for it shall be very harsh. **32** And as for the dream being sent to Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by Hashem, and Hashem will shortly bring it to pass.... **37** And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. **38** And Pharaoh said to his servants: 'Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of Hashem is?' **39** And Pharaoh said to Yosef: 'Seeing as how Hashem has shown you all this, there is none so full of understanding and wise as you.'

Right from the beginning of his dialogue with Pharaoh, Yosef attributes his skill to Hashem. He alludes to the powers of Hashem five times during a short discussion with Pharaoh, and makes clear that whatever interpretive spirit resides within him comes from Hashem. We can see from the last two verses that Pharaoh is convinced of Hashem's powers. This is quite a feat for a man who himself was regarded as a god, and whose culture revered many different deities.

Yosef temporarily turned around Egyptian culture to accept the Divinity of Hashem. This is why the verse in *Shemot* 1:8 is necessary: “וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ, עַל-מִצְרָיִם, אֲשֶׁר .לא-יָדַע, אֶת-יוֹסֵף.” It explains how a Pharaoh could enslave the people of the God whom he had already acknowledged as being powerful by implying that the new king knew neither Yosef nor his God.

Yosef the Righteous One had created a *Kiddush Hashem*, a sanctification of God's name, by showing God's power to the king of Egypt and very clearly attributing events directly to that power. Perhaps the appellation “*HaTzaddik* – the Righteous One” comes to tell us that nothing is more important than sanctifying God's name through our deeds and words.

Shabbat Shalom and *Chag Urim Sameach* – Happy Chanukah!

For Discussion:

- How can you create a *Kiddush Hashem* in your own life?
- The name for Hashem appears seven times in this section. Seven, according to the mystics, denotes completion. What has been completed here?
- What do you think of the fact that after more than 10 years of living in Egypt without a connection to the Israelites, God is still at the front of Yosef's mind? To what do you attribute this phenomenon?