THE WEISS EDITION

וישב

Vayeishev



Dreaming to Toil

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A Jew and His Dreams

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

וישב
Vayeishev

37:7 | לז:ז

וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְּמִים אֲלֻמִּים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה

And behold, we were binding
sheaves in the midst of the field.

Dreaming to Toil

Both Yosef's and Pharaoh's dreams involved grain, but a significant difference between them reflects the fundamental disparity between what they each represent.

Yosef's dream began with a scene of toil: he and his brothers were working the fields, binding sheaves of grain. Pharaoh's dream, on the other hand, involved no labor: ears of grain grew from the ground spontaneously.

The contrast between their dreams highlights the difference between those who draw sustenance from *kedushah*, holiness, and those who are sustained by *kelipah*, unholy sources.

Deriving nourishment from unholy sources involves little or no effort. As Bnei Yisrael told Moshe, "We remember the

fish that we ate in Egypt free of charge,"[1] which, Rashi explains, means not that the Egyptians provided them with food at no cost, but that their lives in Egypt were free from mitzvah obligations.[2] They referred to their food as "free of charge," because nourishment from Egypt, an allusion to all things unholy, comes easily, without effort or toil.

Conversely, when one's life is nurtured exclusively by *kedushah*, everything is earned through hard work. This is, in fact, G-d's means of granting us the greatest degree of delight, for ultimately, things that come without effort are not truly enjoyable. In the words of the Talmud Yerushalmi, "One who eats from the food of another is ashamed to look at his benefactor's face."[3] The blessings we enjoy most are those we've earned, not those that are handed to us for free.

It is therefore only natural that the dreams of Yosef—representing the good and holy—began with toil and labor, while the dreams of Pharaoh—representing the unholy—were of growth that did not involve labor.

One who follows the demanding path of Yosef, however, can rest assured that his successes will follow the pattern of Yosef's dreams: though his beginnings may be humble, he will ultimately reach great heights, like Yosef's dreams, which progressed from the plant kingdom on earth to the celestial beings on high.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 3, pp. 807–808, 820

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1. Bamidbar 11:5.
2. See Rashi ad loc.
3. Orlah 1:3.

39:12 | לט:יב

וַיַּעֲזֹב בִּגְדוֹ בְיָדָהּ וַיָּנָס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה

But he left his garment in her hand,
and fled and went outside.

A Picture Worth More than a Thousand Words

When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Yosef, "the image of his father's face appeared to him in the window," and stopped him from sinning, just moments before he would have succumbed to her advances.[4]

The Talmud's words imply that simply remembering the ethical standards with which he was raised would not have sufficed to stop Yosef from sinning; it was specifically the appearance of Yaakov's face that gave him the courage not to resist the immoral act. What did the appearance of Yaakov's face convey that so significantly influenced Yosef's decision?

Elsewhere, the Talmud tells us that "our forefather Yaakov's beautiful countenance was akin to that of Adam, the first man."[5] The Kabbalists attribute this physical resemblance to the spiritual bond that Adam and Yaakov shared. What was the spiritual bond? Through their spiritual endeavors, the forefathers, Yaakov in particular, undid the damage

4. Sotah 36b.
5. Bava Metzia 84a.

brought upon the world by Adam's sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge.[6]

Thus, seeing Yaakov's face reminded Yosef of his father's famous lookalike, Adam, an individual whose sin brought devastation upon the world. At the same time, he was reminded of Yaakov's efforts to bring healing (from the damage caused by Adam's sin) to the entire world. This caused Yosef to recognize that his decision whether or not to resist the advances of his master's wife would not be inconsequential or temporary. Like Yaakov and Adam, his actions would affect the entire world for all time!

To be sure, Yosef could have relied upon all sorts of rationalizations to justify sinning just this once, in order to avoid the inevitable life sentence for denying the wishes of his master's wife. But upon seeing his father's face, Yosef was reminded that the decisions of every individual at every moment have the ability to bring harm to the entire world, as did Adam's, or to repair the universe, as did Yaakov's. When he realized that his "personal" decision would affect the entire world for all eternity, Yosef raised himself above his rationalizations and fled.

—Toras Menachem, vol. 29, pp. 262–265

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6. See Keser Shem Tov, sec. 311; Zohar 3:111b.

לז:א-ב | 37:1-2

וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב... אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב

Yaakov dwelled... These are the descendants of Yaakov.

Between Pebbles and Pearls

The Torah relates the events of Yaakov's life in detail, pauses briefly to mention Eisav's family and where they settled, and then resumes the story of Yaakov. Rashi explains:

> The Torah describes Eisav's settlements and his descendants only briefly... It describes Yaakov's settlements, the growth of his family, and all the events that brought these about in detail, since their importance before G-d warrants dwelling upon them at length... This can be compared to a pearl that falls into the sand: A person searches in the sand and sifts it with a sieve until he finds the pearl. Upon finding it, he casts the pebbles from his hand and keeps the pearl.[7]

Rashi's analogy refers not only to the Torah's detailed account of Yaakov's life in contrast to its abbreviated history of Eisav; it also alludes to the Jewish people's primary mission throughout history—to sift through "the settlements of Eisav." The search for the pearl symbolizes our mission to find the holiness—the G-dly meaning and potential—hidden in the mundane world.

In view of that, we can understand why it was necessary for Rashi to note that upon finding the pearl one "*casts away* the pebbles." Is it not obvious that once he has the pearl in his

7. Bereishis 37:1.

hands, he loses all interest in the pebbles and sand through which he was merely sifting to find?

By including this detail, however, Rashi teaches us that "casting away the pebbles" is indeed a crucial component of our mission. In order to extract and elevate—and indeed be elevated by—the sparks of G-dliness found in the mundane world, we must be certain that "the pebbles," the material setting in which those sparks lay hidden, are not what actually appeals to us. Otherwise we can easily be dragged down by materialism, instead of drawing out the positive elements that the material world contains. Only by casting away any personal interest in "the settlements of Eisav" can we successfully extract "the pearls"—the great spiritual wealth that is hidden therein.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 15, pp. 305–307

37:5 | לז:ה

וַיַּחֲלֹם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם

Yosef dreamed a dream.

A Jew and His Dreams

In Parshas Vayeishev we read about Yosef's dreams, both of which foretold that his family would one day bow to him. In the first dream, Yosef and his brothers were represented by sheaves of wheat. Eleven sheaves—the brothers—bowed to Yosef's single sheaf. In the second dream, his family—represented by the sun, moon and stars—again bowed to him.

In Parshas Mikeitz we read that, like Yosef, Pharaoh had two dreams, and his dreams also shared a theme, both foretelling seven years of plenty that would visit Egypt, followed by seven years of famine. And, like Yosef's, in Pharaoh's dreams the imagery changed from one dream to the next. In the first, the years of plenty and famine were represented by seven heavy, well-fed cows and seven sickly, emaciated cows. In the second, they were represented by seven healthy, plump ears of grain and seven limp, underdeveloped ears of grain.[8]

Interestingly, Yosef's dreams featured celestial beings—the sun, moon and stars—whereas Pharaoh's did not. Moreover, Pharaoh's dreams "deteriorated," as it were. His first dream involved animal life, but his second dream featured vegetation—a much lower lifeform. In contrast, Yosef's dreams progressed from the earthly to the heavenly.

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8. Bereishis 41:1–32.

The contrast between these two sets of dreams highlights the differences between the dreamers. Pharaoh's dreams were devoid of anything heavenly, symbolizing a person whose mind is wholly engrossed in earthly pursuits. It comes as no surprise that such a person gradually becomes increasingly entrenched in his material obsessions, as is represented by the "degenerative" sequence of Pharaoh's dreams.

Yosef's dreams, however, were different. A Jew, even as he goes about the physical world, is always thinking about the heavenly aspects of his life—his spiritual development and G-dly purpose. Yosef therefore dreamed of the earthly as well as the heavenly, and in an order of "progression," because his life as a whole was in a constant state of growth.

—Likkutei Sichos, vol. 3, pp. 805–806




לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת **ישראל**

ב"ר **שמואל הכהן** ע"ה

לאפיין

נלב"ע ביום כ"ו כסלו נר ב' דחנוכה ה'תשע"ז

תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו




לעילוי נשמת

האשה היקרה ובעלת מרץ

מרת **מרים** ע"ה

בת הוו"ח אי"א ר' **דובער** ומרת **רישא** ז"ל

פלטיאל גרדאן

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שימשה כשלוחה במשך עשיריות בשנים

בעלת אמונה בטחון ואהבת ה'

נפטרה יום ב' דחנוכה

כ"ו כסלו ה'תשפ"ו

תנצב"ה

THE LIGHTPOINTS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT *of*
Rabbi Moshe Aaron Tzvi and Mrs. Ruty Weiss