

Our *Parashah* begins by informing us that two years have passed since the end of last week's *Parashah*. Why is the timing important for us to know? asks R' Moshe Almosnino z"l (Turkey; 1510-1581). He answers:

We believe that *Hashem* is the epitome, the very essence, of goodness, and that only good can emanate from Him. Yet, we see that people experience bad things--such as the suffering Yaakov experienced being separated from his beloved Yosef for 22 years, and the suffering Yosef must have experienced being sold as a slave--not once, but multiple times (see *Rashi z"l* to *Bereishit* 37:28).

R' Almosnino continues: We read (*Tehilim* 145:9, which we recite three times daily), "*Hashem* is good to all; His mercies are on all His handiworks." Notably, the verse does not say: *Hashem* does good to all. In fact, *Hashem* sometimes does things that we do not perceive as good. Even then, however, He is good to all; everything He does is for a purpose and, even when He is punishing a person or causing a person suffering for some other reason, He does so in the most merciful way possible.

Moreover, writes R' Almosnino, *Hashem's* punishments are extremely precise. As soon as a punishment is completed, *Hashem* engineers a turnabout and the person who was being punished experiences goodness. To drive this point home, the Torah tells us that Yosef was in prison for a precisely calculated period--two years to the day. (*Olat Shabbat*)

## Shabbat

The *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 272:1) states: One should not make *Kiddush* on wine that was left uncovered overnight, even though nowadays we do not prohibit drinking liquids that were uncovered overnight. The *Mishnah Berurah* (272:3) explains: In the time of the *Talmud*, liquids that were left uncovered overnight were considered to be dangerous, because a snake might have drunk from such liquids and deposited its venom in them. Today, in our lands, there is no such risk, so we do drink such liquids. Nevertheless, one should not use such wine for *Kiddush* because one would not offer a human king a drink from it. (Nevertheless, leaving wine uncovered for a short time does not invalidate it for *Kiddush*.)

R' Avraham Chaim Schor z"l (Poland; 1550-1632) offers a different reason for not making *Kiddush* on wine that was left uncovered. He writes: *Shabbat* is *Mei'ain Olam Ha'ba* / a sampling of the World-to-Come. Therefore, a person must do things on, or when preparing for, *Shabbat* that allude to *Olam Ha'ba*. One of the things we are told about the World-to-Come is that the righteous will be served wine that has been guarded since the Six Days of Creation. (Perhaps this is a parable or metaphor for some reward the righteous will receive in the *Olam Ha'ba*.) Therefore, when we bring in *Shabbat*, which foreshadows that future time, we should not make *Kiddush* over wine that was left unguarded.

R' Shor continues: In the same light, we can understand as well the requirement that a person bathe himself in hot water before *Shabbat*. We read (*Kohelet* 7:20), "For there is no man so wholly righteous on earth that he [always] does good and never sins." Therefore, every person must undergo some cleansing in *Gehinnom* before continuing on to *Olam Ha'ba*. *Shabbat* is a taste of *Olam Ha'ba*, and the hot bath that one takes before *Shabbat* parallels the cleansing that precedes the World-to-Come.

(*Torat Chaim: Eruvin* 19a)

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**“Yosef saw his brothers and he recognized them, *Va'yitnaker* / but he acted like a stranger toward them and spoke with them harshly.” (42:7)**

*Targum Onkelos* (the Aramaic translation dating to the time of the *Mishnah*) renders “*Va'yitnaker*” as “He thought about what to say.” This requires explanation, writes R' Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam *z"l* (1813-1898; rabbi and *Chassidic Rebbe* of Sieniawa, Poland; known as the “*Shinever Rav*”), for that is not an accurate translation of “*Va'yitnaker*.”

He explains: Onkelos' intention is not to provide a literal translation of the Torah. Rather, he sometimes chooses to tell us what is happening in the verse without actually translating it.

Here, says the *Shinever Rav*, Onkelos is teaching us about Yosef's struggle when his brothers appeared before him. On the one hand, he wanted to help them correct the sin of selling him. On the other hand, he worried that his behavior would be motivated by personal animosity or by a desire for revenge. Therefore, “He thought about what to say,” in the words of Onkelos. After giving it thought, he was able to “act like a stranger toward them,” in the words of the verse. In other words, when the Torah says that Yosef acted like a stranger, it is not describing how he behaved toward his brothers. Rather, according to Onkelos, it is telling us how Yosef ensured that he would behave properly toward his brothers--*i.e.*, by acting like a stranger, as if he was meeting them for the first time and had never had negative interactions with them.

(*Divrei Yechezkel*)



**“*Nachnu* / All of us are the sons of one man.” (42:11)**

The *Mesorah* / tradition regarding the spelling of words in *Tanach* records two additional instances of the word “*Nachnu*” (“נַחֲנוּ”):

- “*Nachnu* / We shall cross over, armed” (*Bemidbar* 32:32); and
- “*Nachnu* / We have transgressed and rebelled” (*Eichah* 3:42).

R' Yitzchak Klein *z"l Hy"d* (rabbi of Kosice, Slovakia; killed in the Holocaust) writes that it is possible to connect these three occurrences as follows: When we, the Jewish People, do not rely on our own merit, only on the merit of our forefathers, we are guaranteed to be saved soon. But, if we rely on our own strength and bravery, we thereby sin against *Hashem*. When we say, “All of us are the sons of one man” (Yaakov) and his merit will protect us, then “We shall cross over, armed,” and conquer our enemies. But if we say “We” are many and we are strong, then we will “have transgressed and rebelled.”

Alternatively, writes R' Klein: When we recognize that we are the smallest of all nations and we see our own weakness and say, “We are only the sons of one man, a small family, so what is our strength compared to that of our many enemies?” then *Hashem* will redeem us in our time of trouble. He will give us strength and we will “cross over, armed.” But if we say, “We”—*i.e.*, we are many—then we will have sinned and transgressed. (*Birkat Avraham*)

**“It happened at the end of two years to the day - Pharaoh was dreaming . . .” (41:1)**

R' Meshulam Feish Segal Lowy *z"l* (1921-2015; the *Tosher Rebbe* in post-War Hungary and, from 1951, in Montreal, Canada) writes: Just as Yosef experienced a person *Geulah* / salvation in our *Parashah*, so this is a propitious time of year for all people to experience a personal *Geulah*, whether their needs are material--for example, children, health, or sustenance--or spiritual--for example, desiring a closer relationship with *Hashem*. And, just as Yosef's *Geulah* came when he least expected it and in a most unlikely way, so *Hashem* is capable of bringing salvation to every person when it is least expected and from the most unlikely source.

(*Avodat Avodah: Pitgamei Kodesh*)



**“What *Elokim* is about to do, He has told to Pharaoh.” (41:25)**

R' Moshe Nata Langrut *z"l* (Tel Aviv, Israel) writes: *Hashem* reveals to each person what that person needs to know for some constructive purpose, and nothing more--just as animals instinctively know and sense what they need to know to survive. Even angels are informed of only that which they need to know to fulfill their missions. But, when something needs to be revealed in order to facilitate *Hashem's* plan for the world, it may be revealed even to a gentile, as we read here: “What *Elokim* is about to do, He has told to Pharaoh.” Why was *Hashem's* plan told to Pharaoh? So that (verse 34): “Pharaoh [may] proceed and let him appoint overseers on the land, and he shall prepare the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.”

[Ed. note: This answers the question that commentators ask: Yosef was brought before Pharaoh to interpret the latter's dream; who asked Yosef to give Pharaoh advice? The answer is: Yosef understood that the impending years of plenty and famine were revealed to Pharaoh for a purpose, and that the dream should be acted upon.]

R' Langrut continues: *Hashem* chose us from among the nations and revealed the Torah to us so that we will know how to repair the spiritual damage that our own and the world's failings have caused. But we read (*Devarim* 29:28), “The hidden things are for *Hashem*, our *Elokim*, and the revealed things are for us and our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah.” What a person needs to know to carry out the Torah is revealed. However, exactly how *Hashem* runs the world is not revealed to the average person, for that would serve no purpose. He would not know how to use G-d's secrets to impact the world in a positive way, so they are not revealed to him. However, to righteous people who know what to do with those secrets, they are revealed--to each *Tzaddik* on his own level.

(*Hegyonot Divrei Chachamim* p.1)