

Our *Parashah* opens with Pharaoh dreaming, followed by Yosef interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and thus gaining his freedom and rising to prominence. But which was the cause and which was the effect? The answer is found in *Midrash Rabbah*, which relates the opening verse of our *Parashah* ("It happened *Mikeitz* / at the end of two years") to the verse (*Iyov* 28:3), "He sets a *Keitz* / limit to the darkness." Since the time came for Yosef to get out of prison, Pharaoh dreamt, explains the *Midrash*.

R' Nosson Yehuda Leib Mintzberg z"l (1943-2018; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) elaborates: There is a common thread, a lesson for us, that runs through all of the events in Yosef's life, and that is (*Mishlei* 19:21), "Many designs are in man's heart, but the counsel of *Hashem*, only it will prevail." At every step, nothing in Yosef's life went as planned or as we would have expected. In fact, every thought of man led to the opposite result compared to what he planned.

For example, Yaakov sought to elevate Yosef above his brothers, and Yosef himself tried to rule over them. Those very actions caused the jealousy that led to Yosef being sold as a slave, not to his being accepted by his brothers as their leader. In turn, Yosef's brothers sold him to ensure that he would never rule over them, but that is what led to their bowing down to him. And so on. The obvious lesson is that *Hashem* is in control of all of these events. (*Ben Melech*)

## Shabbat

R' Yitzchak Isaac Halevi Herzog z"l (1888-1959; Chief Rabbi of Ireland and, later, *Ashkenazic* Chief Rabbi of Israel) said in an address: We read (*Vayikra* 19:30), "My Sabbaths you shall observe and My Sanctuary you shall revere--I am *Hashem*." The Torah does not merely tell us to observe *Shabbat* as a day of physical rest devoid of holiness. The Torah is not telling us to close our stores and businesses so we can take trips, play ball, or otherwise have fun. Rather, these days of rest must be "My Sabbaths"--*Hashem's Shabbat*, a day of holiness, as we read in the *Aseret Ha'dibrot* (*Shmot* 20:8), "Remember the *Shabbat* day to sanctify it." The purpose of *Shabbat* is to attest that there was a Creation, which further implies that there is a Creator who oversees our world.

R' Herzog notes further: The quoted verse suggests some equivalence between *Shabbat* and the *Bet Hamikdash*. Nevertheless, *Shabbat* is the holier of the two. The *Bet Hamikdash* was a specific place. Notwithstanding that many people could fit comfortably inside it (see *Avot* 5:7), it never contained all of the Jewish People. Not so *Shabbat*, which is capable of enveloping all of the Jewish People at once. *Shabbat* surrounds us on all sides and fills the air; thus, even people who are distant from Jewish observance cannot help but be touched when they experience *Shabbat* in a Jewish home, so long as they have any emotions within them. And *Shabbat* continues to accompany a person when he leaves the home.

(*Le'ma'an Ha'Shabbat* p.3)

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

R' Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam z"l (1813-1898; rabbi and *Chassidic Rebbe* of Sieniawa, Poland; known as the “*Shinever Rav*”) writes: When Yosef's brothers came before him, he wanted to help them obtain atonement for what they had done to him. However, he was concerned that he might also be motivated by a desire for revenge. Therefore, says our verse, he forced himself to “act like a stranger toward them”--as if he had never met them and they had never wronged him. This, adds the *Shinever Rav*, is what *Targum Onkelos* means when it says, “He thought about what to say to them.”

Rebuke that is motivated even slightly by self-interest is not good, concludes the *Shinever Rav*.  
(*Divrei Yechezkel*)

R' Yehoshua Buksbaum z"l Hy"d (1877-1944; rabbi in Galanta, Slovakia) describes how the *Shinever Rav* himself practiced the trait he describes above. R' Buksbaum relates:

A *Chassid* once approached the *Shinever Rav* for a letter of recommendation regarding a potential *Shidduch* / match for a marriage. The *Rav* asked the *Chassid* to return the next day. When he returned, the *Rav* told the *Chassid* that he did not think the match was a good one.

“What changed?” the *Chassid* asked. “Yesterday you were willing to write the letter!”

The *Rav* answered, “In fact, I recognized immediately when you asked for the letter that the match was not a good one for the other family. However, I was afraid that my conclusion was motivated by laziness, since I do not enjoy writing.

“Therefore,” said the *Shinever Rav*, pointing to the letter sitting on the table, “I first wrote out the letter. Now that I have removed my self-interest, I am confident in telling you that I cannot recommend you to the other family for such-and-such reason.”  
(*Nachalei Yehoshua*)

The *Gemara* (*Yevamot* 65b) teaches, “Just as one should offer rebuke that will be listened to, so he should not offer rebuke that will not be listened to.” The *Gemara* does not mean, writes R' Eliezer Chaim Bloom z"l (1939-2018; rabbi and *Chassidic Rebbe* of Kosice in Bedford Hills, NY), that one should give rebuke only if it will result in immediate change. Rather, even if the person being rebuked will commit the same sin again, maybe he will enjoy it less following the rebuke. Also, maybe the rebuke will make him less likely to entice others to sin with him. Finally, writes R' Bloom, there are those who simply do not know what *Halachah* prohibits, so they assume that something is permitted because “everyone does it.” Rebuke that is given publicly (in an appropriate way) may prevent others from sinning out of ignorance.

(*Si'ach Chaim* p.236)

**“So Pharaoh sent and summoned Yosef, and they hurried him from the Bor / dungeon.” (41:14)**

R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (1882-1951; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Mercaz Harav) notes that Yosef and the Torah use two different words for the place where Yosef was imprisoned. In our verse, the Torah calls it a “*Bor*” (literally, “pit”). Similarly, in last week's *Parashah* (40:15), Yosef says, “I have done nothing for them to have put me in the pit.” On the other hand, in the verse before that, Yosef said, “Do me a kindness, if you please, and mention me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this *Bayit* (literally, ‘house’).”

R' Charlap suggests: Within the prison, there was a “*Bor*” in which the worst criminals were imprisoned. That is where Yosef was sentenced to be (“They put me in the pit”). But the warden took a liking to him (see 39:21) and let him remain in the “*Bayit*,” outside of the *Bor*, except from time-to-time when the prison was visited by other officials. Thus, in our verse, when Pharaoh's agents came to take Yosef from the prison, they found him where he was supposed to be--in the *Bor*.

When the Cupbearer first tells Pharaoh about Yosef, he says (41:12), “And there, with us, was a Hebrew youth, a slave of the Chamberlain of the Butchers.” *Rashi* z"l comments: “Cursed are the wicked, for the favors they do are not sincere. [At the same time that the Cupbearer praises Yosef's ability to interpret dreams,] he mentions him in disparaging language: ‘A youth’--unwise and unfit for a high position; ‘A Hebrew’--he does not even know our language; and ‘A slave’--whereas it is written in the laws of Egypt that a slave may neither become a ruler nor dress in princely robes.” [Until here from *Rashi*] R' Charlap adds: The Cupbearer also gave away the secret that Yosef was not imprisoned where he was supposed to be, for he said that Yosef was “with us”--*i.e.*, in the *Bayit* and not in the *Bor*.  
(*Mei Marom: Nimukei Mikra'ot*)

**“Yaakov saw that there were provisions in Egypt, so Yaakov said to his sons, ‘Why should you make yourselves conspicuous?’” (42:1)**

*Rashi* explains: “Why do you appear before the children of Yishmael and the children of Esav to have plenty to eat [when others do not]?” For at that time they still had some grain. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R' Dov Meir Rubman z"l (1895-1967; *Rosh Yeshiva* in Vilkomir, Lithuania and Haifa, Israel) writes: Yaakov refers to the children of Yishmael and Esav because they are the one that he had to contend with. In reality, however, this principle applies even towards one's Jewish neighbor. If one acts as if he lacks nothing and his neighbor dislikes him, the neighbor may conspire to steal from him. On the other hand, if his neighbor is his friend, the neighbor may wonder why the person who is living comfortably does not share with him.

At the same time, R' Rubman notes, we are taught to be happy with our lots. Walking the fine line between being satisfied with what one has and not appearing “showy” requires great delicacy. We must pray that *Hashem* grant us the necessary wisdom, R' Rubman concludes.  
(*Zichron Meir*)