

INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.

ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים

"It happened at the end of two years to the day..." (41:1)

The verse could be telling us that *Pharaoh* had this same dream for two years. However, each morning he woke up and forgot the dream. It is only now, when the time came for *Yosef HaTzaddik* to be freed from jail, that he remembered the dream in the morning. The dream is the first step leading to *Yosef's* release from prison. (Ohr HaChaim)

ופרעה חלם והנה עמד על היאר

"And Pharaoh had a dream and beheld – he was standing near the river..." (41:1)

Pharaoh's advisers believed that the world only operates within the laws of nature. Accordingly, the weak cannot overpower the mighty; skinny cows cannot consume fat cows. Therefore, they could not properly interpret the dreams. The answer was obvious to all, but the advisers could not reconcile this interpretation within the confines of nature. *Yosef*, however, understood that the laws of nature are governed by Hashem, who can alter them according to His will. (Chochmah Im Nachala)

ועתה ירא פרעה איש נבון וחכם וישיתוהו על ארץ מצרים

"Accordingly, let Pharaoh find a man of discernment and wisdom and set him over the land of Egypt." (41:33)

Even from the dictator *Pharaoh*, we can learn a lesson in *middot*: recognize truth and act on it, however unpleasant. How it must have pained *Pharaoh* to promote an "abominable" Hebrew slave over all his experienced officers! Yet he faced the facts squarely and acted accordingly.

But how was *Pharaoh* so sure of *Yosef's* superiority? What quality placed him above all others?

People tend to ignore problems until they become acute. For instance, unions start negotiating only days, or even hours, before a major strike! Likewise, the world arms to the teeth, and only then – under the threat of mass destruction – disarmament talks begin. While *Pharaoh* knew his officers could organize the country and stockpile grain, when would they start? Only after enjoying a few years of abundance. In contrast, *Yosef* said, "And now let Pharaoh seek an

understanding, wise man...”, revealing himself as a man of action and a true “chacham,” who “sees what lied ahead” (Tamid 32a) and uses every precious moment wisely. This initiative is what earned him Pharaoh’s trust. (Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, Rosh Yeshiva, Ner Yisrael)

ויקרא פרעה שם יוסף צפנת פענח

“And Pharaoh named Yosef Zaphenat Paneach.” (41:45)

The *Chasam Sofer* comments on the hand of Divine Providence as evidenced by these events. Had it not occurred to *Pharaoh* to rename *Yosef* as *Zaphenat Paneach*, the brothers would have quickly discovered his true identity upon their arrival in Egypt. Once he was known as *Zaphenat Paneach*, however, it never occurred to them to suspect him as being their long-lost brother. (Torah Anthology)

ויוסף בן שלשים שנה

“Now Yosef was thirty years old...” (41:46)

The story of *Yosef* teaches us that if a person had a dream that showed something good happening to him, he can hold out hope that it will come true, even as long as 22 years later.

Yosef was seventeen year old when he dreamed that he his family would bow down to him. Our verse tells us that he was appointed viceroy over Egypt 13 years later, at the age of 30. His family came down and bowed down to him 9 years later – after the 7 years of plenty and 2 years of hunger. We see that it was a total of 22 years from the time he had his dreams until they came true. (Teachings of the Talmud; Brachot 55b)

וטבח טבח והכ

“Have meat slaughtered and prepare it...” (43:16)

The verb *הכ* is the one used to designate the preparations made on the eve of the *Shabbat* for that holy day. From this we conclude that the brothers came to *Yosef’s* house the second time on Friday, and hence the great occasion when he made himself known (which took place the following day) occurred on *Shabbat* day, the day *par excellence* of calm and appeasement.

(Tanchuma)

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