



# Parshas Miketz

For the week ending 28 Kislev 5758  
26 & 27 December 1997

## Overview

It is two years later. Pharaoh has a dream. He is not satisfied with any of the interpretations offered to explain it. Pharaoh's wine chamberlain remembers that Yosef accurately interpreted his dream while in prison and Yosef is released. Yosef interprets that within a short time there will be seven years of abundance, followed by seven years of severe famine. Yosef suggests to Pharaoh that he appoint a wise person to store grain in preparation for the famine. Pharaoh appoints him as viceroy to oversee the project. Pharaoh gives Yosef an Egyptian name, Tsofnas Panayach, and selects Osnas, Yosef's ex-master's daughter, as Yosef's wife. Egypt becomes the granary of the world. Yosef has two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Yaakov, hearing that there is food in Egypt, sends his sons to buy provisions. The brothers come before Yosef and bow to him. Yosef recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. Mindful of his dreams, Yosef plays the part of an Egyptian overlord and acts harshly, accusing them of being spies. Yosef sells them food, but keeps Shimon hostage until they bring their brother Binyamin to him as proof of their honesty. Yosef commands his servants to replace the purchase-money in their sacks. On the return journey, they discover the money and their hearts sink. They return to their father Yaakov and retell everything. Yaakov refuses to let Binyamin go to Egypt, but when the famine grows unbearably harsh, he accedes. Yehuda guarantees Binyamin's safety, and the brothers go to Egypt. Yosef welcomes the brothers lavishly as honored guests. When he sees Binyamin he rushes from the room and weeps. Yosef instructs his servants to replace the money in the sacks, and to put his goblet inside Binyamin's sack. When the goblet is discovered, Yosef demands Binyamin become his slave as punishment. Yehuda interposes and offers himself instead, but Yosef refuses.

## Insights

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DREAM

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

A sweltering summer. The Baal Shem Tov was traveling with his disciples. They had run out of water. The parched dry steppes stretched out as far as the eye could see. Nothing seemed to move in this bleak landscape, save the lonely tumbleweed rolling across the horizon.

"Master," said one of the Baal Shem's students, "what are we going to do? We must have water." Said the Baal Shem Tov: "If you have *bitachon* (trust in Hashem), we will have water."

Day turned to night, and night to day. "Master, we *must* have water," said the student. "If you have *bitachon*, we will have water" said the Baal Shem Tov.

On the third day, they saw in the distance a shepherd. The shepherd approached the Baal Shem Tov and asked if he knew where his flock was. The Baal Shem Tov closed his eyes. After some seconds he opened them and said to the shepherd "Your sheep are over there." He pointed to the south. "I will take you to them." After about twenty minutes they came upon the flock lazily watering themselves by a stream.

The shepherd said to the Baal Shem Tov, "I've been looking for these sheep for three days! Thank you!"

The Baal Shem Tov nodded gently. Reb Pinchas MiKuritz, one of the Baal Shem Tov's students, approached the master. "Master," he said, "it is obvious that Hashem sent us this shepherd to lead us to the water. But there is one thing I don't understand: *Why did the shepherd have to wander for three days? Why couldn't he have just lost his sheep today?*"

"That shepherd has been wandering around in circles for the last three days waiting for you to have *bitachon*. He could have come yesterday. He could have come the day before. At any point in the last three days Hashem would have sent us the shepherd. But it was not until now that you had *bitachon*."

The Midrash says that Pharaoh dreamed the same dream every night for two years but forgot it before he awoke. It was only after two years of dreaming that one morning he remembered it. If the whole purpose of Pharaoh dreaming the dream was so that he would summon Yosef from prison to interpret it, why did he have to dream it every night for two years? Why wasn't it sufficient for Pharaoh to have the dream just once when it was time for Yosef to be released from prison?

Every day of the two years that he was in prison, Yosef could have been released. Every night Pharaoh had the same dream — the dream that was Yosef's passport to freedom. Another day, another dream. But every day Yosef still had a little bit of trust in Pharaoh's wine steward to put in a good word for him and secure his release. It was only when Yosef had *bitachon only* in Hashem that Pharaoh finally remembered his dream.

The final redemption can come any and every day. The agents of Hashem's salvation are wandering around the world in circles waiting for His people to recognize that it is only He, and He alone, who can save us.

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel  
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Parshas Miketz — 28 Kislev 5758, 26 & 27 December 1997

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

ENOUGH SE

## “And may Almighty G-d (Kel Sha-dai) grant you mercy...” (43:14)

This world hangs in a precise balance. A balance between two opposing views. You can look at the world and see the Hand of G-d in all that happens around you; you can see each and every event as a piece in a Divinely ordained jigsaw. You can see life as a celestial work of art. Or you can see the world as illegible scratchings on nothingness.

The choice is yours. The world is designed so that at each and every turn, you can see order — or chaos. Hashem creates this exquisite balance in order that man may have freedom of choice. If Hashem’s Hand is too clearly visible, man ceases to be able to choose. He becomes like a courtier in the throne room, frozen in awe.

If, however, Hashem hides His Hand too much, then man turns away and claims that his ordeal was too great; that it was impossible to see the Hand of G-d. The Divine Name which expresses this balance is *Sha-dai*, which means “He who spoke and said to the world ‘Enough!’” When Hashem created the world, He set in motion a process which, if left unchecked, would have expanded ad infinitum. However, Hashem wanted there to be a perfect balance in Creation. Not too much and not too little. So when the Creation reached its point

With this idea, we can now understand a very puzzling *Midrash* in *Parshas Beshalach*. When Hashem split the sea, the angels said to Hashem, “Is not Your Name *Sha-dai*?” What were they trying to imply? What does Hashem’s name have to do with splitting the sea?

The angels were saying to Hashem “Didn’t You create the world so that it is just so and no more; that the possibility always exists for freedom of choice? By splitting the sea and making the exercise of

## Haftorah for

The festival that we call Chanukah is really the Chanukah. The word Chanukah means dedication. The first of the three previous *Mishkan* — the Tent of Meeting.

The second was the dedication of the First *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple). The third Chanukah is the subject of our Haftorah. It refers to the times of the Second *Beis Hamikdash* and the inauguration of the Menorah at the time of Yehoshua the *Kohen Gadol*, and the nation’s leader, *Zerubavel*, who is referred to in “*Maoz Tsur*,” the traditional Chanukah song.

### MOTHER NATURE’S FATHER

After a small band of Jews had beaten the might of Greece, one small flask of oil for the Menorah was discovered in the Holy Temple. One small flask, not defiled by the Greeks.

That flask contained enough oil to last just one day. But it burned and burned for eight days. To commemorate that miracle we kindle the lights of Chanukah for eight days.

But if you think about it, really we should only light the lights for seven days, because that first day the lights burned completely naturally. After all, there was enough oil for one day! So why do we

Free Will well-nigh impossible, haven’t You gone against the exquisite balance that Your name ‘*Sha-dai*’ implies?”

Similarly, in this week’s *Parsha*, when Yaakov Avinu was forced to send Binyamin to Egypt in order to procure grain, he gave the brothers a blessing: “*And may Kel Sha-dai grant you mercy.*” In other words: “*May He who said to the world ‘Enough!’ also say ‘Enough!’ to my suffering.*”

Yaakov was saying that he was being pushed past the point of freedom of choice, that he had endured too much heartache in his life. He was praying that Hashem should reveal the principle of ultimate balance expressed in His Name, *Sha-dai*.

### THE HUNGRY HEART

## “When the famine spread over all the face of the earth, Yosef opened up all the store-houses...” (41:56)

Why did Yosef open up all the store-houses in one go, rather than bit by

Yosef’s intention was to prevent hunger riots. Just as there are physical hunger riots, there are spiritual hunger riots.

cannot take the wisdom of happiness into the despair of depression; times when we lose hope that we can ever serve Hashem.

are suddenly thrown open for us, and we bask in the radiance of enlightenment and optimism. We become like a new person with a

This opening of the gates of Heaven is only to banish despair from our hearts, so that we should know that we have not lost our faith,

Hashem with renewed strength and vigor.

## Zechariah 2:14-4:7

light candles for eight nights since one of those nights was no miracle at all!

One answer is that the eighth candle is to remind us of a miracle that is constantly with us. The problem is that a lot of the time we don’t see it as a miracle at all. We don’t call it a miracle. We call it *nature*.

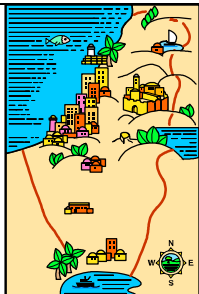
In this week’s Haftorah, Zechariah is shown a vision of a Menorah made entirely of gold, complete with a reservoir, tubes to bring it oil, and two olive trees, to bear olives. A complete self-supporting system.

The symbolism is that Hashem provides a system which supports us continuously. However, we have to open our eyes to see where that support is coming from. And that’s the reason we light the eighth candle. To remind ourselves that “Mother Nature” has a “Father.”

Sources:  
*Another Day, Another Dream* - Rabbi Pinchas Mikuritz as heard from Rabbi Moshe Zauderer  
*Enough is Enough* - Ohr Gadalyahu, Rabbi Shalom Fishbane  
*The Hungry Heart* - Shem m’Shmuel  
*Mother Nature’s Father* - Based on the *Beis Yosef* and the *Artscroll/Stone Chumash*

# LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



## STONES OF SUBSTANCE

When Rabbi Chanina Hagadol went from Babylon to *Eretz Yisrael* there were no signposts or border guards to indicate that he had reached his destination. But he had his own litmus test. He would pick up stones and feel their weight. As long as the stones were still too light he would cast them aside with a sense of disappointment that he had yet not reached his goal. When he finally picked up some stones of real substance he declared that these were “*Eretz Yisrael* stones,” and he kissed them in fulfillment of King David’s words (*Tehillim* 102:15) “Your servants hold dear her stones.”

*Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Shlach* (quoted by Tosefos in *Kesuvos* 112a)

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