



Parshat Miketz

For the week ending 2 Tevet 5760
10 & 11 December 1999

Overview

It is two years later. Pharaoh has a dream. He is unsatisfied with all attempts to interpret it. Yosef accurately interpreted his dream while in prison. Yosef is released from prison and brought before Pharaoh. He interprets that soon will begin seven years of abundance followed by seven years of severe famine. He tells Pharaoh to 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,

granary of the world. Yosef has two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Yaakov sends his sons to Egypt to buy food. 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 Yaakov and retell everything. Yaakov refuses to let Binyamin go to Egypt, but when the famine grows unbearable, he

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

is discovered, Yosef demands Binyamin become his slave as punishment. Yehuda interposes and offers himself instead, but Yosef refuses.

Insights

SPARKS IN THE DARK

first seven healthy cows. They came inside them, but it was not apparent that they had come inside them, for their appearance remained as inferior -21)

window. There may be a Chanukah bush at the other end of the living room, there maybe little spark of Judaism left, a Chanukah menorah still shines there in the window.

When the Ancient Greeks defiled the Holy Temple, they overlooked one little flask of oil. It was that little flask, untouched and untainted, which allowed the Menorah to blaze into light when Judah Maccabee and the Hasmonians defeated the might of Greece and the Jewish People returned to the Holy Temple.

Inside every Jew there is a little spark of holiness, a flask of pure oil, a light that never goes out.

have tried to sully that oil, to put out that little light, but it can never be extinguished. How many millions of our people have given up their lives for that little spark? Evil may trumpet its vainglory to the skies, but it can never put out that light.

If you think about it, probably the biggest miracle of all is that evil itself can exist. The definition

world is no more than an expression of G- can evil exist?

This is a secret which the mind of man may contemplate but never fathom. Maybe one approach is that evil can only exist by virtue of some spark of holiness wrapped inside it that gives it its life force, its

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ability to exist at all.

And the emaciated and inferior cows ate up the first seven healthy cows. They came inside them, but it was not apparent that they had come inside them, for their appearance remained as inferior as at first. (41:20-21)

In the above verse, the emaciated and inferior cows symbolize the forces of evil. The healthy cows represent the forces of holiness. The emaciated cows eat up the healthy cows and yet, from the outside, the spark of holiness is totally undetectable:

Nevertheless, it is the spark of holiness which gives them their life force.

The Jewish People are in their darkest exile. G- see that His concealment is concealed. We live in a double-blind world where evil seems to thrive; where tragedy abounds; where selfishness and materialism have eaten to the very core. Yet, in the heart of all this evil there is a holy center. Without that component of sanctity, evil would cease to exist in a second. For by itself, evil can have no toehold in existence.

But that holy spark burns on in the heart of the Jewish people. The menorah represents the heart of the Jewish People, and in that heart burns a little flame that cannot go out. Any day now, that spark will burst into a fire that will consume all the crass materialism like so much straw, and then we will no longer light our menorahs in the windows of New York, London and Buenos Aires. Any day, the *kohen gadol* will once again enter the Holy of Holies and re-light the lights that have burned in holy Jewish Hearts through millennia, sealed inside that flask that can never be sullied or spoiled.

ELIMINATION OR ILLUMINATION?

And the name of the second son, he called -51)

Fire consists of two powers: The power to burn, and the power to illuminate.

In the days of Chanukah, the Hasmoneans used both of these powers. Fire to sear and eradicate the impurity of the ancient Greeks, and the fire of the Torah to light up the *Beit Hamikdash* once it had been resanctified.

A fire to burn out Evil, and a fire to illuminate Good.

There is a dispute between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel regarding how to light the Chanukah candles: Beit Shammai says that you start with eight candles on the first night and work down to one on the last, while Beit Hillel says you start with one and work up to eight.

The power to burn always starts with much and reduces it to nothing starting with eight candles and reducing them to nothing. Beit Shammai held that the essential aspect of Chanukah to be communicated to future

part of evil in the world. It must be burned until it is totally eradicated, for then Good, perforce, must blaze out and shine.

The power of light, however, is always something which grows stronger and stronger: Beit Hillel considered that the lighting of the menorah should stress the triumph of the light for where there is light, necessarily the darkness must flee. So Beit Hillel holds we should light one candle on the first night, and that light grows and grows until it fills the world and there is no place left for the darkness.

these two powers, fire and light, rooted in all Israel.

destroy evil, with the result that the light will shine. the power to illuminate, so that darkness can have no place to rule.

Just as ultimately the Jewish People will be called by the name Ephraim, the power of illumination, similarly, the *halacha* follows Beit Hillel to start with one candle and add more light every night until the darkness disappears.

Sources:

So This Is Chanukah - Sfat Emet

Illumination Or Elimination? - Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin in

Haftarah: Melachim I 17:40 - 50

USER-FRIENDLY TORAH

The highlight of Jewish history was the building of the First Temple by King Solomon. The Temple bridged the gap between Heaven and earth, allowing us to feel and almost see G-

remains from those glorious days of Temple, prophecy and revelation is one wall of the Temple Courtyard. What is there to guide us through this spiritual eclipse?

The Haftarah describes the construction of the

orders. King Solomon also ordered the construction of ten Menorahs, and had five of them placed on either side of the original Menorah made by Moshe. The five

the five Temple dedications that took place throughout history. It appears that these five Chanukahs all take root in the Torah given to Moshe (represented by the central Menorah).

The Torah was given in the desert, far away

from the site of the Temple. The Torah is not dependent on the Temple. On the contrary the rebuilding of the Temple depends on us upholding and

not changed, but the presentation has. The first major change was the writing down of the Oral Law, the Mishna and Talmud. Then the commentaries of the early authorities, and the codes of Jewish law Maimonides, Shulchan Aruch, etc. Most recently quality Torah literature in English, even via the

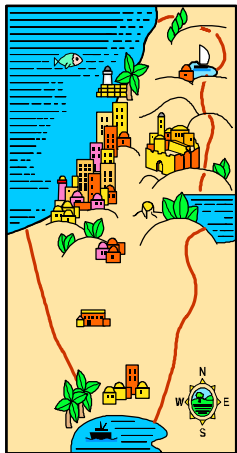
much of its depth and essence. However, G-guidebook for life can and must be understood by

Sinaitic Torah will illuminate the spiritual darkness of exile.

Sources: *Maharal, Exodus 23, Talmud Chagiga, Leviticus 26, Rabbi S.R. Hirsch*

LOVE OF THE LAND

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



NOV

When the Philistines destroyed Shiloh, the Mishkan Sanctuary was re-established in Nov where it remained during the more than a decade that the Prophet Shmuel led the Jewish People. Its destruction at the end of about through tragic circumstances described in the Book of Shmuel I (21-22). When David fled for his life from King Saul, who saw him as a threat to his sovereignty, David came to Nov where the kohanim provided him with food and the sword of Goliath. Although the kohanim were not aware of

they were put to death. This marked the end of the Sanctuary on this site, and it was transferred to Givon.

T who lost their livelihood as woodchoppers and water carriers for those kohanim, and suffered three years of

the Jewish People.

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