

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT MIKETZ

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**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
*TAL Founder & Director*

## WHOSE LIGHT IS AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

The world seems to be in trouble. We have immersed into deep darkness over the past few years; Brexit, Covid, Russia Ukraine, the Israel massacre and ongoing war. Will it ever end?

Our Parasha sheds light.

The Midrash Rabbah opens its commentary on the Parasha, with a verse from Iyov (Job 28:3) "Ketz Sam LaChoshech" - He brings an end to the darkness.

The Bet HaLevi makes an especially crucial point. We often get confused between cause and effect. A simple reading of the narrative at the beginning of Parshat Miketz gives us the impression that the "cause" was Pharaoh's dreams and the fact that his advisors could not interpret them to his satisfaction. The effect was that Yosef was brought out of jail to interpret the dreams and thereby rose to a position of authority in Egypt. The Bet HaLevi points out that the Midrash is teaching us that just the reverse is true. The CAUSE was that it was time for Yosef to be released from prison and accept a leadership position in Egypt. The EFFECT was that G-d made Pharaoh dream troubling dreams, which his advisors could not interpret.

The world has a Grand Plan. G-d makes things happen in the world so that the plan will be conducted.

We are taught to strengthen our faith as it is The Almighty that is in charge, not man, there is an end to the darkness.

Yosef Hatsadik was a man that had gone through a lot. After two extra years in prison, he had now perfected his Emunah and Bitachon in Hashem to an unprecedented level.

When finally called out of the prison to face

the King, the Torah relates that (41:14) Pharaoh's men rushed (Vayeritsuhu) him out of prison.

The Rebbe of Ostrova Zts'l explains the deeper meaning behind this rush.

The Torah relates that Yosef was thrown into the prison of the king. There were two types of prison, one with an official judicial system and another in which only the king would ever decide the fate. That is where Yosef was. He had been there for twelve years for a crime he did not commit, had potentially lost all hope of ever getting out of there, and was finally granted a meeting with the King. Yosef should have run at the opportunity to see the King, yet the Torah relates the opposite; Pharaoh's messengers rushed Yosef out of prison. Yosef did not rush on his own. Why?

The answer is that Yosef had reached a top level of Emunah trusting in Hashem and not man. Hashem will be the One to release him from jail, not Pharaoh. Therefore, there was no reason to rush out. When Yosef interpreted Pharaoh's dream, it is remarkable that he did not even add his plight or a plea to be freed from jail. He understood that speaking to Pharaoh and deciphering his dreams was enough of an effort on his part. The result was in Hashem's Hands.

Thus, the end of the darkness is found when we reveal the light of Emunah.

Rabbi Meshulem Feish Segal (1921 - 2015) was the Admor of Tosh and one of the last surviving Admorim of Hungary following the Holocaust. During the Holocaust Rabbi Meshulem was deported to a forced labour camp in Kashau where he risked his life keeping Shabbat and kashrut. Following World War II he rebuilt the Tosh Chassidut, eventually immigrating to Canada where he established flourishing Torah institutions. People flocked to him from around the world to seek his blessings and prayers.

One day in 1944 as Chanukah was approaching, he was filled with the desire to accomplish the Mitzvah. He knew that it would be impossible, nevertheless he



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gathered a minyan and together they prayed to G-d for the ability to perform the Mitzvah of Chanukah that year. People around thought they were mad. The Rabbi's job was to help facilitate burials of inmates and one late night a Nazi officer entered the barracks and demanded he come out to bury someone. On his way in the dark down the alleyways, he tripped and fell. As he lay, he saw that the cause of the fall was a little whole, inside there was buried some candles and oil. He could not take it on his way as the officer was shouting, but on the way back he managed to relocate the place and gather the candles. That year they sneaked in a Chanukah lighting. Their prayers had been answered.

In 1945 he went to visit Rabbi Yoel Satmar and they shared conversation. Rabbi Yoel told him that he too had been in that concentration camp and had arrived Pesach. He recalled that he was so worried about Chanukah (even though it was Pesach time) that he had smuggled in some candles and buried them. Rabbi Meshulam was flabbergasted and proceeded to tell Rabbi Yoel about the Hashgachah Pratit that had just occurred.

In life, we all face challenges and obstacles that can sometimes leave us feeling overwhelmed and discouraged. However, it is in these moments that the ability to see the light at the end of the tunnel becomes crucial.

This metaphorical light is the light of

faith that G-d is running the show, He is all good, He was, He is, and He will be! This light represents hope, optimism, and the belief that there is a brighter future awaiting us. It serves as a guiding force that empowers us to overcome adversity and navigate through tough times with resilience and determination.

A Jew is never in the dark – as King David said Gam ki Elech - "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me."

As the dawn follows the darkness so too will our redemption follow the long exile. When we come out let us come out like Yosef with the faith and heads held high exclaiming – "In You (G-d) we believed" (44:5).



## RABBI DAVID BAADANI

### Director - TAL Chazanut Program

#### PARSHAT MIKETZ

In this week's Parsha we read about the uprising of Yosef. Yosef is described in the Torah as a successful person. What's interesting is the Torah describing him as a successful person when he served as a slave in Egypt after he was sold by his own brothers rather than when Yosef becomes the second to the king of the

greatest empire of that era.

It comes to teach us that real success comes from understanding that wherever you are, in every situation, you should always try your best. Hashem might have put you in the situation, but you are in control of how you respond to that situation or circumstance. Real success is when things are not going the way you want them to go, when things are difficult, yet you persevere and try your hardest.

Yosef could do just enough in order not to be provoked by his master, but he did his best because he understood that Hashem put him in that situation for Yosef to find his purpose. Real success is to recognise that wherever you are, whether in your own personal slavery, imprisoned or even as second in command to the king; wherever Hashem puts you, you should always do your best.



## RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM

#### WHAT IS SHALOM BAYIT?

Pharaoh, the tyrannical ruler of Egypt, had just appointed Yosef, the Hebrew, who had interpreted his dreams, as second-in-command of Egypt. Pharaoh understood that in order for Yosef to succeed in his job, he must be married, as without a wife a man is not complete. Being married would enable him to be a successful leader and carry the burden and responsibility of feeding the nation during seven years of famine. It would help him to understand the needs of the people, attain popularity, and be faithful to the king and his people. Hence, Pharaoh gave him Osnat, Potifar's daughter, as a wife. Our sages teach us that without a wife a man lacks happiness, blessing, fulfilment, Torah, and a guardian against sin. Even shalom – true peace, can only be attained when one is married.

What is the definition of shalom? Why is it a necessity for us? And why is it emphasized so much within the relationship of husband and wife, such that G-d is agreeable even for His Holy Name to be erased to maintain peace in the home?

When two different forces or energies come together, explains Seferno, shalom is finding the right balance to be able to co-exist together in harmony. Shalom has no relevance when there are no contradictory factors present. In the human body, for example, there are requirements that pull in different directions. A person needs to have balanced sugar levels, standard blood pressure and a suitable equilibrium between exercise and rest. Thus, it can be said that a healthy person is at peace with himself. When a Jew greets his friend with the word "Shalom," this can be

taken to mean: "I wish you to be in a state of good, well-balanced health."

G-d created man and woman with different

potentials and qualities, tailor-made for their respective jobs. The man symbolises kindness, wanting to constantly give, which may sometimes be undefined, or even, not in place. The woman symbolises judgement, the ability to define guidelines, if, when and where. Additionally, the man resembles the sun, which consistently rises and sets every day without deviation, representing the stability of the intellect. The woman, on the other hand, resembles the moon, which regularly goes through a cycle of changes, thereby representing emotions. A man may be kind enough to bring a guest home with him, while a woman, with her strong intuition and sense of feeling, will determine whether the guest at the table is worth inviting again. The man will need a more intellectual approach to strengthen and internalise his faith in G-d, whereas the woman, with her better-developed emotions, will be able to feel and believe in G-d, at an even higher level, through sheer simplicity. The man may be



able to explain himself more easily on an intellectual level, whereas the woman feels it, without necessarily being able to express it.

The ability to live with each other and reconcile their differences is shalom – peace. It gives us the correct balance and is necessary in every scenario of our day-to-day lives. Shalom within the home is

what makes a man into a complete man, as the word shelemut – completeness, comes from the word shalom. The differences and opposites are our greatest blessings, when they serve as an impetus to forge a correct and healthy balance and live in peace with one another. Without them, life would be rather one-sided.

I once heard of a person who would set

aside \$1,000 every Rosh Hashanah, for the purpose of "keeping the peace" throughout the year. Whenever a situation of conflicting opinions concerning expenditure would arise, he would draw money from his "Shalom Buy-it fund" and defuse any tension in advance. Isn't it worth it, just to keep that peace!



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### USING ELECTRIC LIGHTS AS SHABBAT CANDLES

Halacha requires lighting candles in the home before the onset on Shabbat every Friday. The Sages enacted this obligation to ensure the presence of "Shalom Bayit" – a sense of serenity in the home – on Shabbat. Without light, people are generally tense and anxious; the presence of light brings a feeling of calm, contentment and tranquillity which characterizes the desired atmosphere we are to create in the home on Shabbat.

The Shabbat candles should be lit by the woman, who recites a Beracha either just before or just after lighting the candles. It should be noted, as an aside, that both practices are acceptable. The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) rules that one should light and then recite the Beracha, whereas from the Shulhan Aruch it appears that one should recite the Beracha before lighting. Hacham Ovadia Yosef follows the Shulhan Aruch's position, as did Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998), though Hacham Ben Sion added that a woman whose mother followed the Ben Ish Hai's position should continue that practice.

An interesting question arises concerning the status of electric lights with respect to this obligation. Since the purpose of this Mitzvah is to provide light in the home, can one fulfil the obligation by turning on the

electric lights in his home? Moreover, if one's home is already illuminated, how can he recite the Beracha over the lighting of the candles, which contributes a negligible amount of light to the home?

Hacham Ben Sion, in his work Or Le'sion (vol. 3, p. 189, and vol. 2, 18:13), writes that one does not fulfil the obligation of Shabbat candles with electric lights because the "fuel" is not present at the time of lighting. When a person lights a candle, all the wax or oil needed to sustain the flame is already present. An electric lamp, however, is sustained by the electric current that is constantly being fed into the lamp. Since that current is not present at the time of lighting, one cannot use such a light for this obligation. Hacham Ben Sion contends that this would be analogous to an oil lamp that has just several drops of oil, and into which one slowly pours oil drop by drop. Clearly, one cannot recite the Beracha over lighting in such a fashion, since the fuel needed to sustain the flame for the required period is not already present. Likewise, according to Hacham Ben Sion, one cannot fulfil the obligation of Shabbat candles with an electric light.

By the same token, one may recite a Beracha when lighting candles in a room that already has illumination from electric lights. Since those lights are not suitable for the obligation of Shabbat candles, the candles are needed for the fulfilment of the Mitzvah, thus warranting a Beracha.

Of course, if we follow this rationale, we would allow using a battery-operated light for this Mitzvah. As Hacham Ben Sion

notes, in the case of a battery-operated light all the power is already contained in the mechanism, and it would therefore suffice for the obligation of Shabbat candle lighting. By extension, then, if one has battery-operated lighting in his home, he should extinguish those lights before kindling the Shabbat lights.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, in his work Yabia Omer (vol. 9), disagrees, and rules that in principle, one can, in fact, fulfil the obligation with electric lights. Since when all is said and done electric lights have the effect of providing illumination, they suffice for this Mitzvah regardless of the fact that the source of power is not currently present. This ruling has numerous ramifications. For example, if a person spends Shabbat in a hotel or hospital, where he is not permitted to kindle a flame, he may turn on an electric light before Shabbat in fulfilment of the obligation to light Shabbat candles. (Rav Aharon Kotler is likewise reported to have taken this position.) Similarly, if a person spends Shabbat in somebody else's home, and is given a room to which he has exclusive access, he may turn on a closet or bathroom light to fulfil the obligation of Shabbat candles.

**Summary:** Different views exist as to the status of electric lights regarding the obligation of Shabbat candles. Whereas Hacham Ovadia Yosef maintained that one may, in fact, fulfil his obligation with electric lights, Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul held that one may not fulfil the obligation with electric lights, unless they are battery-operated.



## WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Parshat Miketz

It is two years later. Pharaoh has a dream. He is unsatisfied with all attempts to interpret it. Pharaoh's wine chamberlain remembers that 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, Tsafnat Panayach, and selects Osnat, 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 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 accedes. Yehuda guarantees Binyamin's safety, and the brothers go to Egypt. Yosef welcomes the brothers lavishly as honoured 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 to be his slave as punishment. Yehuda interposes and offers himself instead, but Yosef refuses.

Rabbi Sinclair, Seasonsofthemoon.com



**1** What did the fat cows being eaten symbolize?

41:4 - That all the joy of the plentiful years would be forgotten. (Not that the good years would provide food for the bad years.)

**2** How did Pharaoh's recollection of his dream differ from Nevuchadnetzar's recollection of his dream?

41:8 - Pharaoh remembered the contents of his dream but didn't know its meaning. Nevuchadnetzar forgot even the contents of his dream.

**3** What does "Tsafnat Panayach" mean?

41:45 - He who explains things that are hidden and obscure.

**4** What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain?

41:55 - Become circumcised.

**5** What prophetic significance lay in Yaakov's choice of the word "redu" — "descend" (and not "lechu" — "go")?

42:2 - It hinted to the 210 years that the Jewish people would be in Egypt. The word "redu" has the numerical value of 210.

**6** When did Yosef know that his dreams were being fulfilled?

42:9 - When his brothers bowed to him.

**7** Under what pretext did Yosef accuse his brothers of being spies?

42:12 - They entered the city through 10 gates rather than through one gate.

**8** Who was the interpreter between Yosef and his brothers?

42:23 - His son Menashe.



"... Pharaoh was dreaming ... out of the river there emerged seven cows of beautiful appearance .. seven other cows emerged after them ... of ugly appearance ..." (Bereishis 41:1-4)  
"Yosef said to Pharaoh, 'What G-d is about to do, He has told Pharaoh.'" (Bereishis 41:25)

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