

**Parshas Mikeitz in a Nutshell**

(Genesis 41:1–44:17)

Joseph's imprisonment finally ends when Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows that are swallowed up by seven lean cows, and of seven fat ears of grain swallowed by seven lean ears. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of hunger, and advises Pharaoh to store grain during the plentiful years. Pharaoh appoints Joseph governor of Egypt. Joseph marries Asenath, daughter of Potiphar, and they have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Famine spreads throughout the region, and food can be obtained only in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain; the youngest, Benjamin, stays home, for Jacob fears for his safety. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him; he accuses them of being spies, insists that they bring Benjamin to prove that they are who they say they are, and imprisons Simeon as a hostage. Later, they discover that the money they paid for their provisions has been mysteriously returned to them.

*(continued next column)*



Joseph became a viceroy because even in prison he had the mindset of a king. He possessed insight, self-control, a willingness to help others. Most importantly, he had faith in G-d and an awareness of His providence, realizing that whether we are riding the crest of a wave, treading water, or temporarily going under, it is He who is motivating that process of change.

**Anshei Lubavitch Congregation**

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

*Adult education:*

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

*Youth Outreach:*

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

**Shabbos Schedule**

**Erev Shabbos – Dec 3 / Kislev 29**

Candle Lighting.....4:11 pm

Mincha .....4:15 pm

**Shabbos Day – Dec 4 / Kislev 30**

Shacharis.....9:30 am\*

Torah Reading .....10:40 am

Kiddush .....12:15 pm

Mincha .....4:15 pm

Rabbi's Drasha.....4:40 pm

Shabbos Ends .....5:14 pm

*\*Latest morning Shema is now 9:23 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

**Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):**

**Minyan**

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) .....6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) .....9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) .....1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) .....9:15 pm

**Bulletin**

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Jacob agrees to send Benjamin only after Judah assumes personal and eternal responsibility for him. This time Joseph receives them kindly, releases Simeon, and invites them to an eventful dinner at his home. But then he plants his silver goblet, purportedly imbued with magic powers, in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers set out for home the next morning, they are pursued, searched, and arrested when the goblet is discovered. Joseph offers to set them free and retain only Benjamin as his slave. ❖

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**Halachic Zmanim**  
Shabbos, Dec 4, 2021  
Eastern Standard Time  
Earliest Tallis ..... 6:03 AM  
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:23 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) 12:11 PM  
Plag Hamincha..... 3:34 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema.... 5:00 PM

## Chassidic Masters

### The Prostration of the Shepherds

*Based on the teachings of  
the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

*Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

*Joseph was the ruler of the land; he was the supplier of food to all its people.*

*Joseph's brothers came and prostrated themselves to him . . . and Joseph remembered the dreams he had dreamed about them . . .*

*-- Genesis 42:6-9*

Twenty-two years earlier, Joseph had dreamed two dreams which foretold the events of that day. In the first dream, "we were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves stood round it and bowed down to my sheaf." In the second, Joseph saw "the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing down to me."

Joseph's brothers, who were already jealous of their father's special affection for him, "hated him even more for his dreams and his words." Jacob was well aware of this, yet "he kept the matter in mind and awaited and anticipated its fulfillment" (Genesis 37:8; Rashi, *ibid.*, verse 11).

For that to happen, Jacob had to mourn the loss of his beloved son for twenty-two years, and Joseph had to experience slavery and incarceration, and his brothers anguished remorse, for that same period.

Twenty-two painful years so that the sons of Jacob might prostrate themselves before the viceroy of Egypt, who unbeknownst to them was the very dreamer they had sold into slavery. Why was it so important that this submission take place? Why did Jacob await and anticipate the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams, despite his realization of the terrible animosity they provoked among his children?

#### The New Jew

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were shepherds, as were the sons of Jacob. They chose this vocation because they found the life of the shepherd—a life of seclusion, communion with nature, and distance from the tumult and vanities of society—most conducive to their spiritual pursuits. Tending their sheep in the valleys and on the hills of Canaan, they could turn their backs on the mundane affairs of man, contemplate the majesty of the Creator, and serve Him with a clear mind and tranquil heart.

Joseph was different. He was a man of the world, a "fortuitous achiever" in commerce and politics. Sold into slavery, he was soon chief manager of his master's affairs. Thrown into jail, he was soon a high-ranking member of the prison administration. He went on to become viceroy of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh in the most powerful nation on earth, and sole supplier of food for the entire region.

Yet none of this touched him. He remained the righteous Joseph who had studied Torah at the feet of his father.

Slave, prisoner, ruler of millions, controller of an empire's wealth—it made no difference: the same Joseph who had meditated in the hills and valleys of Canaan walked the streets of depraved Egypt. His spiritual and moral self derived utterly from within, and was totally unaffected by his society, environment, or the occupation that claimed his involvement twenty-four hours a day.

The conflict between Joseph and his brothers ran deeper than a multicolored coat or a favorite son's share of his father's affections. It was a conflict between a spiritual tradition and a new worldliness, between a community of shepherds and a politician. The brothers could not accept that a person can lead a worldly existence without becoming worldly, that a person can remain one with G-d while inhabiting the palaces and government halls of pagan Egypt.

For the first two hundred years of Jewish history, the shepherd's credo held sway. But Jacob knew that if his descendants were to survive the Egyptian galut (exile)—and the millennia of Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Eastern, Western, economic, religious and cultural galuyot that history held in store for them—this must be subordinated to the credo of Joseph. If the children of Israel are to pass through every social convulsion of the next four thousand years and persevere as G-d's people, they must become subjects of Joseph. ❖

# Lighten Out

Tzvi Freeman

Joseph had spent an entire year in prison when one morning he noticed that two Egyptian prisoners seemed more unhappy than usual.

So he asked them what was wrong. And out of that question, years later, emerged not only his own release from prison, but the rescue of all Egypt, indeed all the known world, from a famine of seven years.

Everything Joseph did defied human nature.

These were, after all, former officials of the royal court. It was just such an Egyptian official who had thrown him in the dungeon to begin with. It's only human to harbor prejudice against the ilk of those who have caused you harm.

And why shouldn't they be miserable? They're in a dungeon, where hope dims every day as the ugly claws of despair suffocate the human spirit.

Indeed, by human nature, Joseph more than anyone else should have long ago succumbed to bitter apathy, as a helpless victim of a cruel and unjust world.

He was imprisoned despite his excellent service only because he stuck to his principles in the face of overwhelming temptation. And before that, he had been sold by his own brothers as a slave as a direct result of faithfully carrying out his father's request.

Yet when Joseph saw two of G-d's creations were unhappy with how G-d had made them and where He had put them, he felt it was his responsibility to do something. G-d's world was his world, and if any creature's sadness reached out to him, it was a mission handed to him from Above.

When your world looks dim, when you feel you are stuck in a prison and all is unjust, do yourself a favor. Look up and see what's going on with the people around you. Do something, however small it may be, for a fellow human or two.

You will liberate yourself, perhaps even your entire world. ❖

*Remember to say "V'ahl Hanissim" in the  
Shemonh Essray/Amidah and in the  
Benching/Birchas HaMazone (Grace After Meals).*

## From Our Sages

### **It came to pass . . . (Genesis 41:1)**

*The three Torah sections (Vayeishev, Mikeitz and Vayigash) that relate the story of Joseph and his brothers . . . are always read before, during or immediately after the festival of Chanukah.*

*Since “to everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose” (Ecclesiastes 3:1), certainly the arrangement of the festivals of the year, which are the “appointed times of G-d” (Leviticus 23:4), as well as the festivals and fasts instituted by the sages, all have a special connection to the Torah readings in whose weeks they fall, since everything is masterminded by G-d. Thus the story of Joseph was destined to be repeated with the royal Chashmonai family in the Greek era . . .*

*-- (Shaloh)*

### **Behold, he stood over the River (Genesis 41:1)**

*The wicked see themselves as standing over their gods, as it says, “Pharaoh dreamed, and behold, he stood over the River” (the Nile being the arch-deity of Egypt). But as for the righteous, their G-d stands over them, as it says (regarding Jacob’s dream), “Behold, G-d stood over him” (Genesis 28:13).*

*-- (Midrash Rabbah)*

### **He sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all her wise men . . . but there was none that could interpret them to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:8)**

*There were indeed interpreters of the dreams, but “none that could interpret them to Pharaoh”—their interpretations were unacceptable to him. They said: the seven good cows mean that you will beget seven daughters; the seven bad-looking cows, that you will bury seven daughters; the seven full ears of grain, that you will conquer seven provinces; the seven thin ears, that seven provinces will revolt against you.*

*-- (Midrash Rabbah)*

### **Then spoke the chief butler to Pharaoh . . . “There was there with us a lad, a Hebrew, a slave . . . and he interpreted to us our dreams” (Genesis 41:9–12)**

*Accursed are the wicked, for they never do a kindness thoroughly. In mentioning Joseph, the chief butler speaks of him in disparaging language: “a lad”—unwise, and unfitted for a high position; “a Hebrew,” who does not even know our language; “a slave,” and it is written in the bylaws of Egypt that a slave may neither become a ruler nor dress in princely robes.*

*-- (Rashi)*

### **Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons: “Why should you display yourselves?” (42:1)**

*I.e., why should you give the impression to the children of Ishmael and the children of Esau that you are sated? For at that time they still had food.*

*-- (Rashi)*

*Our rabbis have taught: If one journeys from a place where they are not fasting to a place where they are fasting, he should fast with them. . . . If he forgot and ate and drank, he should not make it public, nor may he indulge in delicacies, as it is written: “Jacob said to his sons: ‘Why should you display yourselves?’”*

*-- (Talmud, Taanit 10b) ❖*

## Haftorah for Mikeitz in a nutshell

*I Kings 3:15-4:1*

This week's haftorah opens with the words "And Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream," echoing this week's Torah portion which opens with Pharaoh's dreams.

Though not included in the haftorah, in this dream G-d granted King Solomon his legendary wisdom. The haftorah relates a famous episode that made all of Israel aware of their new monarch's keen intellect.

Two harlots approach King Solomon to adjudicate their dispute. They lived together in the same house, and each had given birth to an infant three days apart. One night, one of the infants was accidentally crushed to death by her mother, and one woman accused the other of switching infants in order to have a live baby. Each woman claimed that the live child is theirs and the deceased child was the other's. King Solomon asks that a sword be brought and orders that the child be cut in half with each woman receiving one half. At this point, the mother of the living child exhorts the king to give the child to the other woman so that he may live, while the other woman says, "Let it be neither mine nor yours, divide!" The king ruled: "Give her the living child, and by no means slay him: she is his mother!" ❖

## Water Oil Fire

Tzvi Freeman

Water and oil both represent wisdom.

Water represents the wisdom of life in this world, a wisdom that flows from the tallest mountain to the lowest valley, from the highest cloud to the deepest ocean floor. In all things, that wisdom breathes, telling us how to live, how to bring harmony into this world.

Oil represents a wisdom that is beyond this world. It is called the hidden wisdom because it is hidden by its very nature, so that it must be squeezed out of its source with great effort.

But if it is a wisdom that is beyond this world, why make the effort to reveal it? If we can live without it, why search for it?

We search for it to know why we should live in this world. To discover it is not just a world, that it has purpose and meaning. That in every cell, it contains G-d.

That is the wisdom that shines from the oil of Chanukah. In its light, we see the divine even in the darkness.

From that wisdom emerges the flame we need to live true lives. ❖

שבת שלום גוט שבת!



**Good Shabbos and Happy Chanukah to all!**