



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Mikeitz

HAMELECH

Two Extra Years

And it was at the end of two years' time and Pharaoh is dreaming..."

Let us ask a few questions: a) Two years starting when? b) Why does the pasuk write that Pharaoh is dreaming in the present tense? c) Why does the pasuk begin with the word "vayehi" which usually connotes distress? Isn't it a good thing to get out of jail?

Yosef was imprisoned for twelve years. After ten years, the Sar Hamashkim got out of jail and returned to his post. Yosef asked him to mention him to Pharaoh and ask for his release. The Sar Hamashkim did not remember Yosef. He forgot him.

Why did he forget him? Because Yosef asked him to remember! Yosef was really meant to leave prison soon after the Sar Hamashkim left. That was Hashem's original plan. But Yosef did something wrong, on his lofty level. For most people, it is normal *hishtadlut* to ask someone in the palace to help you get out of jail. But on Yosef's high level, it was expected of him to place full trust only in Hashem. As a punishment, he was sentenced to two more years of imprisonment. (Midrash)

The Torah uses the present tense when speaking of Pharaoh dreaming. This shows that Pharaoh's dream was at exactly the time that Hashem decided it should be. These dreams of Pharaoh were to trigger Yosef's release.

Since Yosef needed to be in the dungeons for two extra years, Pharaoh dreamt exactly at the conclusion of those years. (Alshich)

The Last Dose

Why does the *parsha* begin with *vayehi*? The Shach explains that ten forms of suffering were Yosef's lot and the method of his release was the last one: a) His brothers incited a dog to attack him. b) They kicked him with their shoes. c) They threw him into the pit. d) He suffered at the hands of Yishmaelim, e) Midyan, f) merchants, g) Potifar, h) Mrs. Potifar, i) and in the jail.

The tenth aspect of his suffering was how he got out. Pharaoh sent for Yosef. So it could have happened in a respectable fashion. But the messengers had been influenced by the Sar Hamashkim's description of Yosef. The Sar Hamashkim introduced him as an unintelligent, foreign slave. So the messengers came and dragged Yosef out of there. He had no idea where they were taking him next. (Many people only leave the dungeons on their way to the gallows!) This was a frightening experience.

On His Level

Now, this that Yosef asked the Chief Butler for a favor was only a sin on Yosef's level. For most people, it would be called normal *hishtadlut*. Rashba (Responsa 1:4:3) says that there is no problem asking people to help you, as long as you acknowledge Hashem as the Ultimate Source of all Goodness.

The Rashba goes on to say that there are some people who are just beyond, such as R' Chanina



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ben Dosa. He was on a very high level. He allowed a witch to practice her witchcraft on him, certain that it would have no negative effect.

But even R' Chanina ben Dosa has his limitations. His daughter was once upset that she had lit the Shabbat lights with vinegar instead of oil. R' Chanina consoled her saying that Hashem who makes oil burn shall, on this occasion, command vinegar to fuel the flame. And indeed it did. But... this was only *itso facto*, after the deed was done. To go ahead in the first place and purposefully replace oil with vinegar, even R' Chanina ben Dosa would not be allowed to say a Bracha Lehadlik Ner on such a lighting.

R' BeChaye (intro. to P' Mikeitz) says a few words about Bitachon. A person must know that Hashem is always in charge. If a man has wealth, it is a gift from Hashem, not a result of his efforts. A person ought not rely on his own brains and actions. He should rely upon Hashem.

Yosef always trusted in Hashem. When he was in prison, he asked the Chief Butler to put in a good word for him to Pharaoh. On his level, this was inappropriate *hishtadlut*. He had to stay in prison two extra years.

Beit HaLevi (P' Mikeitz) also says that the appropriate degree of *hishtadlut* varies from person to person. Someone who can have *bitachon* in Hashem after putting forth minimal *hishtadlut* ought not do more. The main thing is to be calm and confident that you did your part and Hashem can do the rest.

Punishment for doing too much *hishtadlut* is exactly that; that he will not achieve what he is seeking until after expending great effort.

Yosef was on such a high level that he was not to turn to the Chief Butler at all. For most people, that would have been the most normal and natural avenue of *hishtadlut*. From the very fact that Yosef was punished for this, we see how great he was and how much was expected of him.

For One and All?

Now, although we said that Yosef was on a high level, Menorat HaMeor learns from this a lesson for one and all. He writes not to place one's faith in people at all. Those who do so, not only do they not receive what they want, they even receive a curse, as it says in Yirmiya, "Cursed is the man who trusts in a human being etc."

One who places his trust in Hashem, not only is he granted his wish, he even receives a blessing, as it says, "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem."

Let us learn from Yosef. He trusted in a human and was punished with two extra years of imprisonment.

Sefer Chareidim counts it as a mitzvah to place our faith in Hashem, as do other great Mitzvah-Counters, such as Ramban, Smak, R' Yonah, R' Shlomo ibn Gabirol.

Tailor-made

Ben Azai taught (Yoma 38a): You will be called by your name; you will be placed in your assigned seat; from that which is yours, you will be granted. No man can touch that which is meant for another. No ruling authority will infringe upon another even a hairsbreadth.



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Expounds Rashi: No one should worry that he is earning less money because of his competitors. Each person will receive what is meant for him from Heaven. Also on a national level, when it is time for authority to change hands, this will happen at the exact moment ordained in Heaven.

Says Chovot Halevavot (Bitachon 3:5): No one can help you or harm you but Hashem. Elsewhere (Chapter Four), he states: One who trusts in Hashem does not serve others. He does not hope for favors from man, he does not flatter them, attempting to squeeze anything out of them. He does not agree to their wayward deeds. He is not scared to outrightly disagree with them. He releases himself from being obligated to humans and returning them favors.

When the situation calls for it, he does not hesitate to offer them reproach. He shares no signs of approval to their falsehood.

The Amazing Segulah

Reb Chaim of Volozhin discloses an amazing segulah to be spared from all harm. Just firmly establish in your heart that Hashem is constantly in charge of everything and nothing exists without Him willing it to exist. Nothing can harm a person without Hashem giving the go-ahead. There is no power in the world besides Hashem.

Turned Tables

The Chafetz Chaim liked to tell over the following story. There was a wealthy Jew who lived in a village close to the Russian-German border. He owned several estates plus a water-operated mill

plus a tavern where travelers would come to drink. He also lent money on interest.

One time, the tsaddik R' Elya Lieder was travelling in that area and came to rest a bit in the inn. He struck up a conversation with the wealthy owner and was astounded to hear words of heresy escaping his lips. R' Elya tried to get him to acknowledge Hashem as the source of all his goodness. But the man thought otherwise. He attributed it all to his own business prowess. In a moment of conceit, the man declared, "I'm so rich that I'm assured to never lose my riches."

R' Elya said, "Say that Hashem gave it to you and can do whatever He wants with it."

The man refused to hear of it.

Well, you guessed it! A few years later, R' Elya came to a place which was an open home for the needy. He recognized the former rich man, but was not recognized in return, so he quietly engaged him in conversation and offered assistance.

The man's wellsprings of tears opened and poured forth. He felt compelled to share his story, how he was once so wealthy until one day a Russian brigade came to town. As their leader crossed the bridge on his horse, two planks gave way and horse and rider soon found themselves underwater, never to rise again.

For some reason, the soldiers hurled an accusation at the owner of the nearby mill, claiming that he had intentionally loosened the planks in an attempt to harm the Russian army. The man got word of the accusation, and understood that he had to flee for his life. On the way out, he snatched a satchel which he believed



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to hold a great fortune of money. Upon arriving at a nearby town, he opened the satchel and understood that he had made a mistake and took the wrong briefcase.

But there was no going back, if he cared about his life. And his life was just about the only thing he had left.

R' Elya reminded him about their previous conversation. The man now regretted his earlier words and acknowledged that Hashem is in control.

Look What the Wind Blew In

Here is a nice story about Rav Mordechai Sharabi zt"l.

Oy! The famine, starvation. There was nothing to eat! There was no money to buy even challah for Shabbat. The Rabanit cried to her husband, "What will be?"

The Rav saw her plight and took it to heart. He closed his sefer and decided that he must do something to help his wife. He thrust his burden upon Hashem as he paced towards the door. He began thinking about what his next step should be when Hashem sent rain down from Heaven. He still did not know where to turn, but he saw the water forming a stream outside his home. He could not help but notice a little piece of paper floating downstream. It stopped right in front of his house, held up by a little rock.

Rav Mordechai bent down to pick up the paper and it was a folded up money bill. A bit wet, but still usable. He picked it up and handed it to his wife so that she could go and purchase what was needed for Shabbat. Rav Mordechai returned to his sefer.

You Hit Upon a Goldmine!

Here's another good one. It took place around 500 years ago, in the days of the Alshich. There lived a man who transported building cement for his parnasah. One day, he heard that the Alshich was speaking on the topic of *bitachon*. He went to listen and was greatly inspired. Then and there, he decided to sell his wagon and sit and learn. Hashem will take care of the rest.

So he sold his wagon and donkey to a heathen who went to dig a hole. The heathen discovered a gold mine and began loading sack after sack upon the wagon. He went back to look for more gold and a heavy boulder crashed down upon his skull. He had finished his mission.

The donkey waited around a bit for his new owner to return. But, alas, it was not meant to be. So he pranced back to the home of his previous owner. The family was delighted to discover the gold and the man understood that his *bitachon* paid off.

The Alshich's students asked why they were not recipients of such grants. The Alshich responded that this man's level of *bitachon* was very high, with no doubts.

So let us learn from our parashah to have *bitachon* in Hashem. Let us realize Who is running the show, and how everything in our lives is His Doing. Let us dedicate ourselves to fulfilling His Will.

Let us strive for ever higher levels of *bitachon*. The higher we go, the more blessing we will see in our lives.

**Shabbat Shalom,
Mordechai Malka**