



## הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד  
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,  
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד  
Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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### Parashat Miketz

## A Person's Whole Life is One Big Miracle

### Questions

1. The beginning of our *parasha* states that Yosef was released from prison at the conclusion of two years. R' Chaim Paltiel, a student and colleague of R' Meir of Rotenburg, asks what the Torah means when it states, "At the conclusion of two years?" He makes a calculation that Yosef was in prison for ten, not two more years after the *Sar Ha'mashkim's* release. The reasoning is as follows: Yosef was sold to *Potifar* when he was 17 years old. He was in *Potifar's* house for one year before he was slandered and put in jail. We know this since the Torah states, "And he was blessed in all that he had - in the house and in the field" - "the house" indicates winter and "the field" indicates summer. This is to tell us that *Potifar* was blessed one full cycle of seasons; in other words, a complete year. The *Sar Ha'mashkim* and the *Sar Ha'ofim* were imprisoned immediately following Yosef's imprisonment. We know this since Rashi writes that whenever the Torah says "*achar*" [afterwards], it indicates that this event occurred immediately after what was previously written. They were imprisoned for two years as is written, "And they were imprisoned for *yamim* [days]." When the *Sar Ha'mashkim* was released, Yosef was 20 years old. Since the Torah writes that Yosef was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, he must have remained in jail for 10 years following the *Sar Ha'Mashkim's* release. That being so, what does the Torah mean when it states, "At the conclusion of two years?"
2. The *Beit Ha'Levi* asks how the Torah can write, "At the conclusion of two years, Pharaoh dreamt a dream?" Yosef's imprisonment and Pharaoh's dream are two completely unrelated matters?

### Man's Perspective on Life

The average person looks at the world and sees that everything is running according to its nature. He is accustomed to seeing the sun go down, the moon and stars come out, an apple tree produce apples and a tomato seed produce tomatoes. He sees the same regularity occurring with his body. Without fail, his body functions like clockwork- he wakes up in the morning, walks on his feet, eats and drinks with his mouth, has his stomach digest his food in a proper manner, etc. Taking everything as it comes, he will certainly ascribe everything that happens to him as all being part of nature as well. However, our holy Torah teaches us that this is not the correct perspective and all of life is really a great miracle.

### The Fundamental Principle of the *Beit Ha'Levi* - The Outcome is the Cause

The *Beit Ha'Levi* answers his question by citing a *Medrash (Bereishit Raba 89:1)* which states, "'And at the conclusion of two years, Pharaoh dreamt a dream.' This is accordance with what is written (*Iyov 28*), 'I have placed a limit to the darkness.' There was a limit to the amount of time Yosef had to remain in prison; when that time came to an end - 'Pharaoh dreamt a dream.'" The *Targum Yonatan Ben Uziel* similarly writes, "And at the end of two years, Yosef was recalled in front of Hashem and Pharaoh dreamt a dream.'" The *Beit Ha'Levi* explains that everything has a cause and a result. For example, when someone buys merchandise and sells it for a tremendous profit, according to human understanding we would say that the initial purchase of the merchandise



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was the cause that produced the result - a large profit. However, this is incorrect, and the truth is the exact opposite; there was a decree that the person should make a large sum of money and this caused the person to buy this specific merchandise. Really the profit was the cause and the purchasing of the merchandise the result. This same is true for Pharaoh's dream and Yosef's release from prison: According to human understanding Pharaoh's dream was what caused Yosef to go free, but as the *Medrash* explains, the opposite was the case. The time for Yosef's imprisonment had come to its conclusion, and now Yosef needed to be released. Therefore, Pharaoh dreamt a dream to have a pretext to free Yosef.

Normally, when people would hear what happened to Yosef, they would say, "What good luck he has! Because Pharaoh had a dream that couldn't be interpreted, Yosef got to go free!" But the Torah tells us that this is not the correct outlook - rather, once Yosef's punishment for having faith in the *Sar Ha'mashkim* had reached its conclusion, Pharaoh dreamt a dream so Yosef should be released. This is what often occurs; people mix up the true cause and effect. This is the proper perspective that a person should have on everything that happens in life. Hashem's goal is that a person should think and ask himself, "What does Hashem want from me?" When a person sees a traffic accident, he shouldn't ask what mistake the driver made, but think about what Hashem did and why He did it. So too, when he hears that someone died, he shouldn't try to figure out what were the natural causes of death, ask what the illness was, and what the doctors did. Doing this will weaken his *emunah* and ascribe everything to nature and logic. The way of the Torah is to think and ask - why did Hashem, the Cause of All Causes, do this? This should lead us to repent, for ultimately, that is what Hashem wants from us.

### The Creation of the World and Man's Purpose

Furthermore, we should reflect that every day we make a blessing before *Kriyat Shema*, where we say, "And in Your goodness, you renew every day the creation of the world." This is difficult to understand - the world is already created and according to nature, should continue to function smoothly - the sun coming up in the morning and darkness falling in the night. Moreover, we don't use the past tense, but say "renews"; how can this be true? Isn't everything created already? The answer is that our Sages are teaching us that although the world has already been created, it has no continuity of its own and "nature" doesn't assure and guarantee that the world will be here tomorrow; only Hashem's Will keeps the world going from minute to minute. If Hashem would desire, there would no longer be any day or night, and nothing would continue as is. This is why we thank Hashem every day for the great kindness He does, that every day He really renews the word and all of Creations as if right now it is being created for the first time. A person has to live his life with this feeling because it is the absolute truth and not just a tidbit of inspiration; otherwise, everyday a person is making a useless blessing. Similarly, a person takes his body for granted and assumes that his eyes will open and he will see, his arms and legs will move as he wishes, without any impediment, his mind will function properly, his digestive system will properly process his food, and everything will continue in the natural manner - anything else is unthinkable. He takes his good health as a given, as there is no reason to believe he will become ill. However, someone who has complete faith knows that every second that all is working as it should is a miracle. He knows that there is no such thing as "nature" that assures us that things will be the same from one minute to the next. A look around us confirms this - without warning, people find out that they are afflicted with a terrible disease and doctors predict the worst. This should teach us not to take life for granted, but to realize that we are living by Hashem's miracles all the time.



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### The Lesson of Chanukah: Nature is Really a Miracle

With this idea, we can better understand the miracle of Chanukah. *Maran Beit Yosef* asks why we are commanded to light candles for eight days to commemorate that one day's worth of oil was enough to light the menorah for 8 days. If there was enough oil for one day, then the first day's lighting was not miraculous; if the miracle only occurred for seven days, why don't we light candles only for seven days as well?

### Our Sage's Perspective on Nature

I saw a nice idea in the name of R' Aharon Siman Tov. He explained (according to what Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz wrote in his *Sichot Mussar*) that our Sages wanted to teach us the *Ramban's* principle - that the miracles we saw in Egypt were done so that we would be able to recognize that just as Hashem performs open miracles, so too does he perform hidden miracles for us every second, which we often fail to notice due to their constancy. Our Sages enacted that we should light candles for eight days and not seven to teach us this idea. A person would think that since there was enough oil for one day according to the rules of nature, he would think that there were only seven days of miracles. But our Sages wanted to instill within us that the first day's lighting was also extraordinary and also really a miracle. The truth is that there is no reason that oil is flammable and not water or any other liquid; the fact that one can light oil is a miracle. However, since this is a regular occurrence and what we have seen happen all the time, we think that this is "natural" and has to be this way.

This is the lesson that R' Chanina Ben Dosa told his daughter one Friday afternoon. Our Sages relate that one Friday afternoon, R' Chanina Ben Dosa saw that his daughter looked down. He asked her why she was sad, and she replied that she had accidentally switched a container of oil and a container of vinegar, and she lit the vinegar instead of the oil for the Shabbat candles. Her father told her, "My daughter, what does it matter? The one who told the oil to light, can tell the vinegar to light." And so it was, that the vinegar provided light throughout Shabbat. R' Chanina lived with this understanding, that there is no real "natural" difference between oil or any other liquid, and the only reason that oil lights and not vinegar is because it is the Will of Hashem. This is the perspective that our Sages are trying to impress in all of our hearts by instructing us to commemorate the miracle of Chanukah. It is to fight against the perspective of the Greeks, who wanted to uproot our faith in Hashem and make us write that we have no portion in the G-d of Yisrael. Whoever walks in the way of the Torah and lives with the perspective of our Sages must reach the realization that all that happens in this world comes from Hashem. There is no such thing as "nature" without Hashem, all occurs with His Divine Intervention, and nothing is left to nature or happenstance. This is how a person has to view everything in his life. He must know that there is a Master of the World who runs the world and leaves nothing to happen on its own. This is what we say in our prayers, "On the miracles that you do for us every day, and the wonders and favors that you do for us every moment - every evening, morning, and afternoon." Unfortunately people don't realize these miracles until they Heaven forbid become ill, such as when they develop respiratory problems and have difficulty breathing. Only then to they recognize the miracles that Hashem does for them and the gratitude and praise they should express to Hashem for every breathe they take.



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Words of Mussar

We have learned that a person has to think about what happens in his life and recognize the miracles that Hashem does for him. He should be aware, especially in these days of Chanukah, of the tremendous miracles that accompany a person throughout his life in all areas of life and to know that all that comes to a person is from Hashem. He should not believe, as is common, that there are natural causes that are the true sources of what occurs in the world. This is a terrible mistake in life perspective and essentially heresy. This is the heresy that the Greeks tried to introduce into the Jewish People, to strive to find natural explanations for all events and not contemplate Hashem's involvement in world affairs. Our job is to strengthen our faith and to implant deep into our hearts the belief that there is no such thing as an independent "nature" and all that happens here in this world is really one big miracle. In this way, a person can fortify himself in his *avodat Hashem* and do the Will of Hashem. For everything depends on Hashem, all comes from Him, and if we do His will, He will do our will. We should all merit to have miracles and wonders performed for us as were performed during these days, and our Redemption should come quickly through His kindness and mercy. Amen.

*Shabbat Shalom and Chanukah Sameach.*

Rav Mordechai Malka