



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

Awake To Act

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

"And now, let Pharaoh look for an insightful and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt." (41:33)

After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and predicting seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine, Yosef advises Pharaoh to appoint an administrator to carry out a strategic plan. The plan would involve imposing a twenty percent tax during the years of abundance to be kept as provision during the years of famine. Many commentaries are bothered by Yosef's apparent presumptuousness in laying out a plan for Pharaoh. Yosef had been called upon only to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, not to chart out a new course for the country.

Rav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (Haksav V'hakabalah) suggests that Yosef was not overstepping his role by presenting this plan because this was actually part of his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. When the Torah records Pharaoh's dreams, as well as when Pharaoh repeats them to Yosef, the Torah specifically mentions that Pharaoh "awoke." (41:4,7,21) From this, Yosef deduced that Pharaoh's awakening also contained a message: Pharaoh needed to be awakened to action. He needed to be directed to take heed of the message contained in his dreams and begin to implement a plan immediately to accomplish what was necessary.

On Chanukah, we celebrate how our ancestors rose up to defend the Torah's way of life and overthrow the Greek oppressors. While certainly many Jews recognized that their situation was dire, it was a small group, led by Mattisyahu Hakohen, who were awakened to action. Their efforts, with G-d's help, met with success – forever changing the course of history.

As we celebrate this beautiful holiday, we must remember that it is not only about donuts and latkes. There are many valuable messages to discover if we take the time to learn more about Chanukah. But perhaps most important is what we do with those lessons. They should not just lie dormant, remaining as ideas and dreams tucked away in the back of our minds. These lessons must awaken us to action, spurring us to greater heights in our service of G-d.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos and a Happy Chanukah!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

They (Yosef's brothers) said to one another, "Indeed we are guilty concerning our brother inasmuch as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we paid no heed; that is why this anguish has come upon us (42:21).

Their (Yosef's brothers) hearts sank and they turned trembling to one another, saying "What is this that Hashem has done to us?" (42:28)

If the brothers knew why they were facing hardships, as indicated by the first verse, why were they perplexed as to why Hashem was punishing them?

Parsha Riddle

How do we learn from Chanukah that one should thank Hashem for the natural running of the world?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which two people acted inappropriately because of prophetic visions about their future which they misinterpreted?

Answer: Potiphar's wife wanted to marry Yosef, because she prophetically saw that she was destined to have descendants from Yosef. Korach believed he was correct to argue with Moshe because he saw that Shmuel Hanavi would descend from him (Korach).

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Mikeitz*, the Torah relates that when the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers mentioned Yosef and his talent of dream-interpretation to Pharaoh, he described Yosef as "a Hebrew youth, a slave of the Chamberlain of the Butchers." (41:12) Rashi explains that the Chamberlain's language contained a number of pointed objections to Yosef's eligibility for high office:

"A youth" – a fool, and unsuited for greatness; "Hebrew" – he is not even familiar with our language; "a slave" – and it is written in the laws of Egypt that a slave may not rule or wear the clothes of aristocrats.

A midrash (cited by Riva, end of *Vayigash*) relates another objection that was raised against Yosef's elevation to viceroy:

How can we appoint as king over us one who committed adultery with his master's wife?

Yosef had not, of course, actually committed adultery, but the basic principle that one who has committed a grave sin is ineligible to be appointed to a position of public authority is found in *halachah* as well. The *Terumas ha-Deshen* (2:214) rules that one who was exposed as having sworn falsely in a civil proceeding in court may not be appointed to a local governing council. Despite the fact that his fellow citizens have forgiven his offense against *them*, G-d has not forgiven the offense against *Him*, and so until the sinner demonstrates the proper repentance required by *halachah*, he is ineligible to hold public office. While the Talmud only asserts the disqualification of a sinner from acting as a judge, and makes no mention of his disqualification from other positions of public authority, the *Terumas ha-Deshen* declares that officials invested with authority over public affairs "stand in the place of the court," and thus must satisfy the same eligibility requirements as judges.

On the other hand, various authorities maintain that the legitimacy of a sovereign does not depend on his righteousness. The Zohar (*Vayeishev* 192b) makes the remarkable assumption that King Achav actually had the legal right, as a monarch, to seize the vineyard of Navos, his (Achav's) wickedness and idolatry notwithstanding. Based on this, R. Ovadia Yosef rejects the position of *Shut. Pe'as Sadecha* (165) that the *halachah* does not recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli government due to the fact that many of its members do not observe the Torah, since even sinners can possess sovereign authority (*Shut. Yechave Da'at* 5:63).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We equal Reuven and Shimon (-1).
2. Our uncles are Shevatim.
3. We are a blessing.
4. We were born in Egypt.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I had seven.
2. I stayed lit for eight.
3. I was made from fire.
4. I was made of gold.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Yosef (I had dreams, I explained dreams, My downfall was dreams, I ruled on account of dreams.)

#2 Tamar (I married brothers, I married their father, I pretended not to be married, Moshiach comes from me.)

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GWCK wishes everyone a Happy Chanukah!

**Thank you to all who
joined us at the
GWCK Chanukah
Celebration!**

