

לעילוי נשמת
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בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



עַלֵּי דֵשֶׁה

AL EI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit" a of Gur

A Tale of Two Dreams

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וּפְרָעָה חָלַם

It happened at the end of two years;

Pharaoh was dreaming. (Bereishis 41:1)

Tzaddikim took various approaches to the lesson of Pharaoh's dreams. R. Meir of Premishlan contrasted Pharaoh's reaction to his dreams to Yaakov Avinu's reaction to his. When

Indeed, the yetzer hara can lull a person to such a sleep that he continues to sleep until his dying day.

Yaakov awoke from his dream, he immediately said (28:16-17), אֲכַן יֵשׁ ה'—ה' בַּמְקוֹם הַזֶּה וגו' מֵה נִרְאָה הַמְקוֹם הַזֶּה—*Truly, Hashem is present in this place... How awesome is this place!* What did Pharaoh do when he awoke? וַיִּקְוֹץ—*And Pharaoh awoke, and he fell asleep and dreamt*

a second time (41:4-5). When at last Pharaoh pulled himself out of bed, all that stuck with him were cows and stalks. While Yaakov awoke to a sensation of *kedushah*, Pharaoh was left with a memory of mundanity.

R. David of Tolna interpreted our *pasuk* as a series of wordplays: וַיְהִי שְׁנַתִּים—*What will be at the end?* מִקֵּץ—*if one sleeps¹ away his days,* חָלַם—*the yetzer hara* (represented by Pharaoh) *becomes strengthened.*² A person who wastes his days and does not stand up to his *yetzer hara*, will find his *yetzer hara* stronger than ever.

A person can sleep straight through his lifetime. The Gemara (Taanis 23a) relates that Choni Hame'agel was troubled by the *pasuk* (Tehillim 126:1), בְּשׁוֹב ה' אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הֵייוֹנוּ כְּחֹלְמִים—*When Hashem will return the captivity of Tzion, we will be like dreamers.* This is a reference to *galus Bavel*, which spanned seventy years.³ Choni wondered: Does anybody sleep for seventy years, so that there can be a seventy-year-long dream? Choni sat down to eat, and

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A Letter Added

וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרָעָה אֶל יוֹסֵף אֲנִי כְּרָעָה, וּבִלְעָדֶיךָ לֹא יָרִים אִישׁ אֶת יָדוֹ וְאֶת רַגְלוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

Pharaoh said to Yosef, "I am Pharaoh; and without you, no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Mitzrayim." (Bereishis 41:44)

The Gemara (Sotah 36b) tells that when Pharaoh appointed Yosef as ruler of Mitzrayim, his astrologers advised him that one could not be king without fluency in all seventy languages. The *malach* Gavriel came to teach Yosef all the languages, but Yosef could not retain them. Hashem therefore added a letter (hei) from His Name to Yosef's name—as the *pasuk* says (Tehillim 81:6), עָדוּת בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוּ בְצִאתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, *He appointed it as a testimony for Yehosef when he went out over the land of Mitzrayim*—and Yosef was thus able to retain all the languages.

It is impossible, by natural means, to learn seventy languages in one night, which is why a *malach* was necessary. If even that failed, why would an extra letter to Yosef's name help? Additionally, the Gemara (*ibid*) gives

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1 "שְׁנַתִּים" as an expression of שינה, sleeping.

2 חָלַם means strong in Gemara terminology; see *Chullin* 123b with Rashi חלים.

3 Rashi, *Taanis* *ibid*

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fell into a deep sleep. A wall of rock rose around him, obscuring him from sight, and he slept for seventy years.

The Maharsha explains what Choni's question was. A person's lifespan is seventy years, as the pasuk says (Tehillim 90:10), יְמֵי שְׁנוֹתֵינוּ בְּהֵם שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה—*The days of our years among them are seventy years*. Choni wondered: *Does anybody sleep straight through their seventy-year lifetime? Can a person pass his entire life as a foolish dream, with no substance at all?*

Why was Choni so troubled by this? One of the interpretations given⁴ for the title “Hame’agel” is “roofer.”⁵ In numerous places, Chazal hint that the concept of a “roof” alludes to elevating oneself in *ruchniyus*. “They would make a sukkah on their roof”⁶; “A *k’zayis* of *Korban Pesach* with the recital of *Hallel* breaks through the roof”⁷; at the time of the *Churban*, young *kohanim* ascended to the roof of the *Beis Hamikdash*⁸; the roof of a *beis haknesses* must be higher than the surrounding buildings.⁹

On the pasuk (Devarim 22:8), כִּי תִבְנֶה, *If you build a new house, you shall make a fence for your roof*, the *Kedushas Levi* comments that the *gematria* of גָּגֶךָ is 26, like the *Shem Hashem* of הויה. *Sefarim hakedoshim* teach that the mitzvah to “make a fence for your roof” means to create barriers for oneself. In order to reach the “roof”

of closeness to Hashem, one must fortify himself with boundaries.

Choni exclaimed: *Can a person really sleep away his life? A person must create barriers to lift himself up, to reach the roof!* Choni fell asleep and slept for seventy years, surrounded by rock. “Rock” is an allusion to the *yetzer hara*.¹⁰ Choni thus received his answer: indeed, the *yetzer hara* can lull a person to such a sleep that he continues to sleep until his dying day.

There lived in Yerushalayim a *talmid chacham*, a disciple of the Brisker Rav. One year, as Sukkos approached, he went to extraordinary lengths to obtain a beautiful esrog. As he slept one night, the Brisker Rav appeared to him in a dream and said, “Your esrog is not kosher.” Stunned, he jumped out of bed and reexamined his esrog from top to bottom. He could not find anything wrong with it; it was kosher *l’mehadrin*. *But what about the dream?* he wondered. Then he consoled himself: the Gemara (Berachos 55a) states, אִי אֶפְשֶׁר לַחֲלוּם בְּלֹא בִטְלִים דְּבָרִים—*Every dream contains fictitious elements*. Apparently, the word “not,” from the statement, “Your esrog is not kosher,” was a fictitious element of this dream.

This seems far-fetched. The Gemara explains that although part of a dream can materialize, not all of it will. In the Brisker Rav’s dreamt statement, the

word “not” was crucial to the message he was conveying—that the esrog wasn’t kosher. If the word “not” was fictitious, then the entirety of the dream did not come true, as that was the essence of the dream.

The real answer to this person’s dilemma is that the Gemara is addressing a specific class of dreams—dreams that have truth to them. These dreams are like a miniature *nevuah*. Still—teaches the Gemara—they will not materialize in their entirety. All other dreams have no truth to them at all.

This contains a lesson for us. A person can either experience the “dream” of life as one that is primarily true, but contains fiction; or one may live a dream of total untruth. If a person tries to fill his days properly, he might slip up and engage in some *devarim beteilim*, but still, it is a dream well-lived. But one who lives his days with no inspiration or purpose, without achieving anything of substance—he has lived a dream of utter falsehood.

This is the lesson of Pharaoh’s dreams: We must rouse ourselves from our slumber, and remember that man was created not in vain, but to fulfill his purpose on this world.

(מקץ-שבת חנוכה תשפ"ג – ס"ג מאמר ב)

4 See *Melech Shlomo*, Taanis 3:8

5 See Mo’ed Kattan 11a; Rashi, Makkos 7a s.v. *Haya m’eagel*

6 See Rashi, Shabbos 154b s.v. *Shtayim*; Avodah Zarah 3a

7 Pesachim 85b

8 Taanis 29b

9 Shabbos 11a. See also Rashi, Shmuel I 9:25.

10 See Sukkah 52a

A Letter Added

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a different reason Yosef's name was added onto: because he was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* privately. How could both be true?

The Maharsha addresses this second point. He explains that because Yosef overcame his *yetzer hara* and sanctified Hashem's Name, he became fit to gain a letter of Hashem's Name. It didn't happen immediately, but was

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reserved for when it would be needed—so that Yosef could learn the seventy languages and ascend to rulership. Had Yosef not prevailed over his *yetzer hara*, he would not have merited this.

What is the connection between being *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* and learning all seventy languages? Also,

why was it that he could not retain them even being taught by a *malach*?

*Shem M'Shmuel*¹¹ quotes the Chiddushei HaRim as saying that a language contains the essence of its nation, so that it influences its speakers with the nation's character. For example, the French language has a negative draw on a person, since the French are an indecent people.¹²

This, then, is why Yosef had difficulty absorbing the seventy languages. His *kedushah* didn't allow the languages, with their attached foreign cultures, to take hold in him.¹³ But why would an added letter to his name help?

The Gemara (Menachos 44a) states that even for fulfilling a "light" mitzvah, one earns immense reward in this world. The Gemara gives the example of *tzitzis*: A certain person, who was careful with this mitzvah, was saved by it from stumbling in a serious *aveirah*. The person was subsequently given what he desired in a permitted fashion.

My father asked: Could this be the reward of withstanding a *nisayon*—attainments of *gashmiyus*? Surely, even the reward Hashem gives in this world is spiritual. My father explained that the person's reward was the opportunity

his attainment of *gashmiyus* would provide—he could now withstand the *nisayon* of *divrei reshus* (permitted matters), by sanctifying the *gashmiyus* and fulfilling his needs with it *l'shem Shamayim*. He gained access to this great *madreigah* because he overcame the *nisayon* he was handed.¹⁴

When Yosef overcame his *nisayon* and was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* privately, he earned the ability to involve himself in permitted matters and remain uninfluenced by them. When he gained a letter of Hashem's Name as reward, this ability was actualized. He could now learn the seventy languages, since he would not be affected by the cultures of their respective nations.

This can be true of any of us. When a person privately sanctifies Hashem's Name by triumphing his *yetzer hara*, he becomes capable of elevating myriads of *divrei reshus*. In this way, even when one needs to tend to these matters, he will not be negatively affected by them.

(בנאות דשא – מקץ תשפ"א)

11 Devarim 5679

12 This is why Rashi often explains *pesukim* in French; in order to purify the language to some extent, for the benefit of those who spoke it.

13 Indeed, it is told that many *tzaddikim* couldn't even sign their names in a secular language, much as they tried.

14 My father would often explain the words of Chazal in this way; instead of reading and understanding them plainly, he showed how the Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* would read them. Whenever I reach the above Gemara, I feel ashamed: how could I have understood it so crudely before? The way my father explained it *must* be the truth! (We might go so far as to say that if one would recite *Birchas HaTorah* on learning this Gemara plainly, the *berachah* would be *l'vatalah!*) This is a common phenomenon throughout all my father's writings—he shines a new light on the words of Chazal, explaining their true, pure meaning.

Of Guarantors and Thieves

אֲנִי אֶעֱרָבְנוּ מִיָּדֵי תְּבִקְשָׁנוּ

I will personally guarantee him; of my own hand you can demand him. (Bereishis 43:9)

The Gemara (Bava Basra 173b) derives from our *pasuk* that a guarantor (*arev*) is held liable. As Yehudah said, תְּנֵה אֹתוֹ עַל יְדֵי וְאֲנִי אֶשְׂיָבְנוּ אֵלָיךְ—*Put him in my care and I will return him to you* (42:37). The Rashbam explains that this includes a guarantor whose commitment was only verbal, as was Yehudah's.

The Rashba¹⁵ writes that if a person instructs someone else to steal, saying that he will remunerate the victim, he is exempt from paying, since אין שליח לדבר עבירה, *one cannot be made an agent for an aveirah*. *Avnei Nezer*¹⁶ questions this: granted, he is not responsible to pay as a *meshale'ach* (appointer of a shaliach), but why is he not considered a guarantor? As we have seen, a guarantor becomes responsible even by verbal commitment. *Avnei Nezer* concludes that the Rashba's position is consistent with his own statement elsewhere,¹⁷ that the effectiveness of *arvus* is because of *shlichus*. Thus, where *shlichus* does not apply, such as in a case of an *aveirah*, *arvus* does not apply either.

We may suggest another reason *arvus* would not apply here. Suppose a person instructs somebody to damage another's property and says he will compensate the victim. Is he liable through *arvus*? This would seem comparable to a case discussed by the *Rishonim*, where a person says, "Throw a coin into the sea and I will pay you for it." The Rashba¹⁸ maintains that he is not held responsible as a guarantor. The same would seem to apply in the case of an instruction of damage: if the damage is carried out, the instructor would not need to pay as an *arev*.

However, Rav Mendel Shafran pointed out a difference between these two cases. When one throws a coin into the sea, this effects neither a responsibility nor a gain upon anybody. Thus, *arvus* is inapplicable. But where damage is done, the damager becomes responsible for it, and so this responsibility could be passed onto his instructor as a guarantor. In fact, if the instruction would be, "Throw *Reuven's* coin into the sea and I will pay for it," the instructor

could be considered an *arev*, since following his instruction incurs a monetary obligation.

To me, the opposite seems true—*arvus* is less applicable to an instruction to damage another's property than to an instruction to throw a coin into the sea. This is because *arvus* means accepting responsibility for a loss or expenditure a person will undergo. (A simple example of this is a loan.) Accordingly, if a person would follow another's instruction and throw a coin into the sea, the other person might be considered an *arev*. But one who damages property on someone else's instruction has not expended any funds; his liability is only to restore the victim's loss of property. Thus, *arvus* would not apply.¹⁹

We may now understand the Rashba's ruling that one who instructs somebody to steal is not responsible to compensate the victim. Why doesn't *arvus* apply? The answer is that the thief did not incur any loss by following the instruction; his responsibility to pay is only to compensate the victim. As we have seen, *arvus* does not apply to such a case.



וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם עִתָּהּ כְּדַרְיִיכֶם כֵּן הוּא, אֲשֶׁר יִמְצָא אֹתוֹ יִהְיֶה לִי
עֶבֶד וְאֶתֶם תִּהְיוּ נְקִיִּים

He replied, "What you say now is also correct. The one with whom it is found shall be my slave, but the rest of you shall be exonerated." (Bereishis 44:10)

The brothers suggested that if one of them would be found holding Yosef's cup, that person would die and the rest of them would be Yosef's slaves. Yosef responded that what you say is correct; I will keep only the thief as a slave. The Midrash²⁰ explains what Yosef meant: Truthfully, your suggestion is proper, since if a stolen item is found in the hand of one of a group of people, they are all culpable. Nonetheless, I will only punish the actual thief.

The Tosefta²¹ states that if a group of thieves stole by means of a tunnel (*machteres*), and they subsequently all did *teshuvah*, they must each return their portion of the stolen goods. If only one of them did *teshuvah*, he needs to return only his portion.

In his commentary to the Tosefta, the Magen Avraham questions this based on our Midrash. The Midrash says that one of a group of thieves is held accountable for all of them, so the one thief who did *teshuvah* should need to pay back the entire theft.

The Baruch Taam answers²² that there is an important distinction between these cases. A member of a regular group of thieves may, in fact, be held responsible for his entire group, since at the time of the theft, the thieves, as a group, became responsible to repay. But thieves who steal through a *machteres* are different. The halachah is that a homeowner who catches a thief in a tunnel may kill him, because it is assumed the thief would kill the homeowner if caught. Thus, he is technically exempt from paying for the theft, in accordance with קָם לִיה בְּדִרְבָּה מִיְנִיה (which absolves one of paying for an action which also makes him liable to die). If so, why must such a thief repay his theft? It is only because after the theft—and his liability to die—are over, he maintains possession of the stolen item.

Concludes the Baruch Taam: This is why the Tosefta says that each member of the group is responsible only for his portion of the stolen goods. Since each person's responsibility begins after the thievery's conclusion, as he maintains possession of what he took for himself, he is responsible to return only his portion.

In truth, the Magen Avraham's question is difficult to comprehend. He cites the Midrash as saying that one of a group of thieves is responsible for all the group's members. But this is not the way the Midrash reads. The Midrash says, rather, that if only one member of a group of people stole, the whole group is liable. This is certainly not Torah law; Yosef must have been referring to Egyptian law. Perhaps such a whole group would be detained for investigation, or possibly, indeed, they would all be punished. Regardless, this is not halachah. Accordingly, it may not be derived from here that according to halachah, one member of a group of thieves is accountable for all of them. If so, no question arises on the Tosefta.

(בְּנְאוֹת דֵּשׁ – מִקַּץ תַּשַּׁח"א)

15 *She'elos U'Teshuvos*, vol. 4 no. 1, cited in *Beis Yosef*, C.M. 177:5

16 *E.H.* 349:13

17 *Kiddushin* 7a

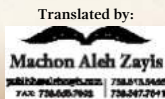
18 Cited by Ran (*Kiddushin* 4b of dapei haRif)

19 See *Sefer Hamakneh*, *Kiddushin* 9; *Terumas Hakri*, 380; *Nesivos Hamishpat*, 344:1

20 *Bereishis Rabbah* 92:8, cited by Rashi

21 *Bava Kamma* 10:16

22 *Ateres Chachamim*, Sanhedrin, beginning of the *sugyah* of *ba b'machteres*



Translated by:

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