

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

2ND EDITION / ISSUE 10

20th December 2014

MIKEITZ

28th Kislev 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 31, verses 1 - 14

- ✚ Two years after Yosef was sent to Prison, Pharaoh had two dreams which disturbed him very much.
- ✚ Not one of his advisors were able to give him a satisfactory answer to what the dreams were relating to.
- ✚ The Chief Butler suddenly remembers Yosef and recounts to Pharaoh how the baker and he both had dreams whilst in prison and Yosef was able to interpret them both accurately.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 31, verses 15 - 38

- ✚ Yosef is released from jail and is summoned to face Pharaoh.
- ✚ Pharaoh relates his dreams to Yosef. The first depicted seven fat cows coming out of the river Nile, closely followed by seven lean cows. The lean cows proceeded to consume the fat cows but remained thin.
- ✚ The Second dream saw seven healthy ears of corn being devoured by seven tatty looking ones but not looking any better afterwards.
- ✚ Yosef explained that both dreams have the same interpretation. The seven fat cows and seven healthy ears of corn represent seven years of abundant crops. Whereas the seven lean cows and seven tatty ears of corn mark seven years of famine which will be so severe it will wipe out the memory of the years of plenty.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 31, verses 39 - 52

- ✚ Impressed with Yosef's answer, Pharaoh removes his signet ring and puts it on Yosef's hand, promoting him to second-in-command of the whole of Mitzraim (Egypt)
- ✚ Yosef marries Asat and are blessed with two children: Menashe and Ephraim.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 31, verse 53 - Chapter 32, verse 18

- ✚ Just as predicted. After seven years of plenty, famine struck hard. People both from Mitzraim and its neighbouring countries flocked to see Yosef in order to buy grain.
- ✚ Yaacov's family also struggling, so he sent away all of his sons, except for Binyamin, to Mitzraim to purchase food.
- ✚ Upon arrival the brothers are sent straight to the viceroy. Yosef recognises them straight away but his brothers had no clue who he is.
- ✚ Yosef refuses the brothers' reasons of why they are in Mitzraim and accuses them of being spies and locks them up in prison for three days.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 32, verse 19 - Chapter 33, verse 15

- ✚ Yosef keeps Shimon as a hostage and tells his brothers they must prove to him that they were speaking the truth and they must return back to Mitzraim with Binyamin. In order to release him.
- ✚ Yosef then sent the brothers home laden with sacksful of grain along with all their money which they used to purchase it. Once home the brothers recount to Yaacov what had transpired, but Yaacov refuses to let them take Binyamin back in order to release Shimon from prison.
- ✚ Yaacov finally relents after they once again, run out of food. Yehudah swears to keep his youngest brother safe.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 33, verses 16 - 29

- ✚ The brothers, once again, upon entering Mitzraim are sent straight to the Viceroy. This time however Shimon is released and the brothers were then all invited into the viceroy's palace as his guests.
- ✚ Frightened, the brothers began recounting their story of how they came across their own money in their sacks of food and would like to repay it back. All the viceroy seemed to be interested in however was the welfare of Yaacov.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 33, verse 30 - Chapter 34, verse 17

- ✚ Yosef orders his steward to place his golden goblet into the sack of Binyamin filled with food and send them on their way. Later the steward chases after the brothers, and arrests Binyamin for the theft of the goblet which was found in his possession.
- ✚ Returning once more to the viceroy, the brothers offer themselves up as slaves in exchange for Binyamin's release.

Maftir — 4th day CHANUKAH, Bamidbar Chapter 7 verses 24 - 29

- The Maftir deals with the dedication of the Altar, listing the different gifts that the head of the twelve tribes bought to the Mishkan (tabernacle).

Haftorah —SHABBAT CHANUKAH, ZECHARIAH Chapter 2 verse 14 to Chapter 4 verse 7

OVERVIEW:

- Shortly before the building of the Second Temple. *Zechariah* prophesises a vivid depiction of the joy that will prevail when Hashem will return back to Jerusalem.
- Zechariah* describes a scene in the Heavenly Court; where Satan was seeking to incriminate the first Kohen Gadol to serve in the Second Temple, because of his sins. Hashem himself defends the High Priest and in turn rebukes Satan for his accusations.
- Hashem then proceeds to outline the rewards awaiting the Kohen Gadol if he and his descendants follow in Hashem's ways. Namely resuming full service in the Bais Hamikdash and the coming of the Moshiach.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- This *Haftorah* is read on Shabbat Chanukah as it contains a vision of the golden Temple Menorah.
- The prophecy also includes the menorah having a continuous supply of olive oil, in order to keep it lit, which is reminiscent one of the prime miracles of Chanukah.
- Both of Pharaoh's dreams in the sedra also has a nice link with Chanukah. Just as the seven bad looking cows and ears of grain swallowed up the seven fat and strong cows and ears of grain. In the days of Matisyahu, the Chashmonaim although a weaker nation, were able to overcome the much stronger nation of Greece, because of Hashem's intervention.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Every year, on Chanukah, I always ask myself the following Question: Are we celebrating the miracle of the oil or are we celebrating the miracle of the military victory? There are strong arguments for both sides, of course. On the one hand, a very small amount of oil was able to last much longer than it normally would have. On the other hand, a small untrained group of Maccabees were able to fight off a larger, stronger and better trained Greek army.

After a lot of research, I've come to the conclusion that both of these are only partly the reason why we celebrate Chanukah, I now believe the military victory and the oil, respectively, act as a prerequisite and a symbol of something much more important also.

The festival of Chanukah is designed to remind us how to appreciate the freedom we have today, enabling us to live our lives with a sense of purpose and security. With so many bad things going on today throughout the whole world, we begin to lose sight of what's really important and what Hashem wants from us as Jews. Life is not always about defeating an enemy or waiting for that one small miraculous event to inspire us into action. It's about putting our complete trust and faith in Hashem. Praying to him, reciting Tehilim, connecting with family and friends, contributing to society, and performing mitzvahs etc., which will help us to achieve our goals.

The miraculous war and the oil witnessed on Chanukah are the tangible events that we can focus and associate with a return to normality. May this Chanukah be the first stepping stone of making this world a better and peaceful place for one and all.

HAPPY CHANUKAH

שבת שלום
Shabbat Shalom!