

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

SECOND EDITION / ISSUE 10

12th December 2015

MIKEITZ

30th Kislev 5776

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.

Revi'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, verse 16 - Chapter 34, verse 17

- 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.
- 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

Shevi'i - Seventh Aliya: - Reading For ROSH CHODESH, Bamidbar Chapter 28, verses 9 - 15

Maftir - 6th 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.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA:

- ✚ The main focus of Chanukah is the נר (Candle light) has the numerical value of 250. If you multiply 250 by 8, corresponding to the number of days we celebrate Chanukah you come to 2000
- ✚ The first day of Chanukah falls on the 25th Kislev. If you take the 25 and add it to the 2000 you find it will equal to the exact number of words (2025) written in this week's Parsha of Mikkeitz on which Chanukah nearly falls upon each year.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

History is filled with object lessons, both positive and negative, and the story of Chanukah certainly contains its share of inspirational examples. Chanukah represents the first successful revolt on behalf of religious identity and the freedom to practise our Jewish faith in its entirety. The fight of the Maccabees led by Judah Maccabee was against a pressure of an outside value system that was influencing Jewish society and while it became a physical war, its essence was purely spiritual.

The battle revolved around the Greeks wishing to introduce a more Hellenist and ideological approach into the Jewish culture with a more philosophical emphasis on religion than a practical one. Opposing them, you had the Maccabees who had the courage not to assimilate into the Greek culture and bow down to the outside pressures. Although vastly outnumbered they stood up and fought over the true ideology and practises that should be dominant within the Jewish society.

When we read the story of the Maccabees it seems like the battles that took place only lasted a couple of weeks. Judah Maccabee and his army win and the Greek forces go home. But, in fact, it takes 25 years of fighting and a great many casualties on both sides until the Greeks finally reach a peace agreement with the Jews to live amicably with each other.

Three years into the war, Jerusalem is re-conquered and the Maccabees find the Beis Hamikdash of Hashem defiled and turned into a pagan sanctuary. When they re-enter the Temple, the first thing they do is try to light a make-shift menorah (as the real gold one had been melted down by the Greeks) but only one vial of pure lamp oil with the special seal is discovered. They use this vial to light the menorah and miraculously it stays lit for eight days, by which time fresh pure oil has been pressed and delivered to the Temple.

If we look at these two miracles, clearly the military victory was greater yet it is the miracle of the oil that is commemorated during the festival of Chanukah. The military victory may have been more impressive, but as we already mentioned, the real battle was spiritual and not physical. It is precisely this spiritual victory that is symbolized by the light of the menorah.

What the Maccabees stood and waged war for, was the need to maintain the uniqueness of our Jewish identity and meaning. **Keeping and upholding the Torah!** This primary goal is just as important for all of us today as it was during the time of Chanukah if not more so. It goes without saying that the current struggles in Israel against our Arab neighbours and the world's conflict with the idealism of ISIS and other similar factions is on the fore-front of our minds. May Hashem hear our prayers and bless us the same courage the Maccabees found to stand up and fight for what we believe in.

The light of Chanukah is symbolic of the inner spiritual strength of the Jewish society as a whole that despite all odds is never extinguished. It is precisely this inner spiritual strength that has enabled us, the Jewish people to outlast the greatest empires in history and have monumental impact on humanity.

