



Snapshot Torah

GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

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VAYESHEV

23rd Kislev 5776

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 37, verses 1 - 11

- ✚ Yaacov and his family finally settled down and dwelt in the land of Canaan.
- ✚ Yisrael (Yaacov's new name) loved his son Yosef more than his other sons and presented him a coat of many different colours. When Yosef's brethren witnessed this, they started to despise him and would not speak amicably with him.
- ✚ Yosef has a dream and shares it with his brothers; which enhanced their anger towards him even more. He dreamt that eleven sheaves of wheat bowed down to Yosef's sheaf.
- ✚ Yosef dreamt a second dream. This time the sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down towards Yosef's star. Even though Yisrael scolds Yosef about these apparitions, deep down he knew there was truth in them.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 37, verses 12 - 22

- ✚ Yaacov sends Yosef out to check on the well-being of his brothers who are in the fields of Shechem shepherding their flocks and report back to him.
- ✚ After arriving at Shechem, Yosef manages to track his brothers down in Dothan. As he approaches, his brothers see him from afar and plot to kill him.
- ✚ Reuben was against this idea and persuaded the others to just cast Yosef into a pit instead in order that he could rescue him later and bring him back home.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 37, verses 23 - 36

- ✚ Yosef arrives and is set upon by his brothers who remove his coat and fling him into a pit.
- ✚ As the Brothers were sitting down to eat, in the distance they see a caravan of Ishmaelite's and decide to sell Yosef to them instead of killing him.
- ✚ Once sold, the brothers killed a goat and dipped Yosef's coat in its blood, to make it seem that Yosef was mauled to death by a wild animal and reported the news back to their father. Yaacov became grief stricken and could not be consoled or comforted over his loss.
- ✚ Yosef was eventually taken down to Mitzraim (Egypt) where he was sold as a slave to Potiphar.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 38, verses 1 - 30

- ✚ Yehuda marries and has three sons. The eldest son weds a girl called Tamar but before she conceives the son dies. Tamar marries the second son but he too is killed before she became pregnant.
- ✚ Comprehending that Yehuda would not allow her to marry the youngest son, Tamar disguises herself as a Prostitute and manages to swindle Yehuda to part with three of his possessions.
- ✚ On hearing the news that Tamar is now pregnant, Yehuda condemns her to death. Yet before the sentence is carried out Tamar hands back the possessions. Realising the deception played on him Yehuda releases Tamar and she went on to give birth to twins.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 39, verses 1 - 6

- ✚ Noticing how successful Yosef is in his work, Potiphar quickly promotes Yosef to become the manager of his estate.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 39, verses 7 - 23

- ✚ Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Yosef, but when Yosef refused her advances, she claimed Yosef attempted to attack her; leaving Potiphar no option but throw him into jail.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 40, verses 1 - 23

- ✚ Whilst in jail, Pharaoh's Butler and Baker who also happened to be imprisoned both dreamt troubling dreams. The Baker's luck was not good as Yosef predicted correctly the time of the baker's execution. However Yosef interpreted the Butler's dream favourably that in three days he would be released back into Pharaoh's service.
- ✚ Yosef requested the Butler to mention him to Pharaoh that he should not be in prison because he was innocent of his crimes. Yet upon the Butler's release, He forgot.

Haftorah – AMOS Chapter 2, verse 6 to Chapter 3 verse 8

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ The first half of this week's Haftorah, the prophet Amos rebukes Israel for a lengthy list of sins and warns that harsh punishment is on its way. Amos outlines the ways that the wealthy in Israel are oppressing the poor and how greed led to profaning Hashem's name,
- ✚ Amos then recalls all the good God has done for the Israelites, namely taking them out of the land of Egypt and destroying the Amorites, so that they could settle in their own land. but Israel refused to listen and because of their unjust behaviour and stubborn refusal to be educated will be punished severely,
- ✚ The second half of the Haftorah features a string of seven rhetorical questions that use different metaphors to convey one message: It can be possible to look at events and understand what caused them. The implication being is that when Hashem punishes Israel, they will be able to see that it was their own actions that brought about his wrath.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA

- ✚ The beginning of chapter 37 tells us that Yaacov lived in the dwelling place of his father. Where exactly was Yitzhaks' living?
- ✚ A clue can be found using Gematria. If you add up the phrase 'מגורי אביו migurey aviv' (dwelling place of his father) it will equal 278. Corresponding to same numerical value of 'זה חברון Ze Hevron' hinting to the fact that the place was in Hebron.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

One of the "diverse manners" by which Hashem spoke to our patriarchal fathers was through dreams and Yosef was no exception. His life revolved around, and in a sense, identified by three sets of two dreams each. Yosef lived what we might call today a "roller-coaster" life. He went from the high of being the favourite son of his father Yaacov to the low of being sold into a life of slavery by his jealous brothers. While in slavery, he then went from the high of being the chief steward in General Potiphar's house to being falsely accused and confined to Pharaoh's prison; where once again he was exalted to be the keeper over all the prisoners only to be forgotten by a prisoner who was released. Finally rising up once more, becoming the viceroy over all Egypt and the "number two" ruler in the whole land.

While the Sedra does not specify that there was a plot to poison Pharaoh, such a conspiracy is implied as the two chief suspects under Pharaoh's employ were arrested and jailed. Yosef had been also put into prison because of false allegations made against him by Potiphar's wife. As the prison master found Yosef's conduct so exemplary, he put him in charge of all the other prisoners and it was in this position that Yosef first met and gained the trust of Pharaoh's old butler and baker.

During the unspecified period of time they were confined, they both had dreams which troubled them deeply. Witnessing how distressed they both were Yosef offered his services and with Hashem's help interpreted the dreams for them. Three days later the interpretation of both dreams came to pass.

Uncharacteristically Yosef added a personal request, asking that the butler inform Pharaoh about him so he might be released from prison because he was unjustly accused. Although the butler was obviously elated to be freed and restored back into Pharaoh's employ, it took a further full two years to remember and carry out that promise. Yosef may well have been discouraged by this long delay and prolongation of his time in prison, but he never saw himself as the victim. Whilst living back at home with his father Yaacov and his brothers, Hashem had spoken to him through a dream informing him that he is going to rule someday. Although the dream has yet to be fulfilled. Yosef knew he should remain patient as a victor waiting for his liberty because Hashem would never renege upon his divine word and would one day make the dream a reality

I believe that Yosef knew deep down this was all Hashem's arranging and he had a job to first. In Pharaoh's prison most of the prisoners would have been political prisoners. Since Joseph was the overseer over all of them, he would have daily contact with them, which gave him an excellent opportunity to learn the inner workings of how Mitzraim's political system worked and how Pharaoh's court ran its daily affairs, thus furnishing him with the knowledge he would later need for his future work as Pharaoh's viceroy.

The path of life leads us into prison situations from time to time. We all face hardships and trials. Sometime we feel like we are shut up and forgotten in that prison. But the wheels of providence are slowly advancing. Hashem is slowly but surely lining up everything in our life just like Yosef to just the way it needs to be. It's true we all sometimes face many disappointments and discouragements which we find hard to handle or cope with but never lose faith in Hashem as his plans and purposes for us will eventually become crystal clear! May we all have the strength and courage to survive any ordeals we may face because though you might feel you've been forgotten, Hashem always remembers and will never forsake you.

