

The Power of Dreams

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Every time I reach the Parshiot that speak about Yosef's story I find myself asking many questions. After getting to know Yosef, it is clear that God gave him much success in everything he ever did, we also learn that Yosef was the ultimate Tzadik.

But the first impression of Yosef does not seem to align with this figure. He approaches his siblings and tells them about his dreams, and the manner in which he does so makes a bad impression. If so how do these actions fit his character?

Another thing that confuses me about Yosef's story comes from the previous Parasha. God tells him that he will succeed in everything that he does, but yet, being sold to slavery, and later becoming a prisoner, doesn't seem very successful. Furthermore, after telling us that God will give him success in all he does, Yosef finds himself sitting in prison for two additional years. Indeed eventually he rises to greatness, which too is surprising, given his lack of experience in leadership and business. How does he do so?

One answer might be sufficient to explain these contradictions: Yosef views the world in a Godly manner, he tries to understand God's plan. He sees the bigger picture, rather than the 'here and now'.

First we see this with his dreams. The moment he dreams his dreams, he understands that God is speaking to him. He therefore tells his brothers, since as far as he's concerned he is just speaking Godly truth and facts rather than an imaginary dream or wishful thinking. We are taught in Masechet Brachot that a dream that is solved is destined to become reality, and a dream that is forgotten will never come true. Yosef's brothers and even father didn't see these dreams for what they were – prophecy.

With this approach it is clear how Yosef managed to succeed in all of his 'tests'. He didn't even see them as tests, since he knew what the Godly truth was behind them, and that's what he stuck to. It is therefore not contradicting that God told him he will succeed in everything he does, just to keep him in prison for two additional years. That was the thing that was right for Yosef at the time, and it was just part of a much bigger picture which was only revealed to us in this Parasha.

Even Pharaoh recognized this in Yosef. While making the decision if to trust his dream-solving abilities, Pharaoh claims that Yosef has a 'Ruach Elokim' – God is guiding him. When you do things in God's spirit, others will recognize this and believe in you. And indeed Yosef had much success.

I think there are many things we can learn from Yosef. First and foremost, to dream. To dream and try to find solutions for our dreams. To never forget our dreams. Unfortunately, we live in a generation that lacks prophecy. But God speaks to us every single day, and it is our duty to listen and understand what he is telling us. We have a role in this world, and we must try and understand what it is, and how to fulfill the best we can. If we will live a life of seeing the world 'through God's eye' we will understand what he wants from us, we will then be able to

overcome obstacles along the way, and we will live a life lead by ideology, rather than what 'reality' dictates for us.

For 2000 years we dreamt of returning to Israel, those were years of darkness. But only thanks to that dream we managed to see that dream become a reality, and Israel is now a State. We must appreciate that, but also not settle for less than the dream of orur complete Geula (redemption), and for the rebuilding of Beit HaMikdash.

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