

א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

ג' טבת תשפ"ד-12/15/2023

מקץ

abisl Torah.wordpress.com

ה' Never Forget

By Ozzie Vidan

Throughout the entire פרשת מקץ, פרשת יוסף often speaks of "א-לקים" in his conversations. For example, at the beginning of the פרשה, when פרעה interprets פרעה's dreams, פרעה accredits his ability to interpret dreams to ה' ("א-לקים") rather than claiming all the fame and recognition for himself. As we see in the following פסוקים where he speaks: "בְּלִעְדִּי" וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-פַּרְעֹה חֲלוֹם פַּרְעֹה אֶחָד. "אֱלֹקִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת-שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶת-פַּרְעֹה הָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹקִים עָשָׂה הַגִּיד לְפַרְעֹה", Yosef said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh is one. What ה' is about to do, He has told to Pharaoh." "וְעַל הַשְּׁנוֹת הַחֲלוֹם אֶל-פַּרְעֹה פַּעַמַּיִם כִּי-נִכֹּן הַדְּבָר מֵעַם הָאֱלֹקִים וּמִמָּחֶר הָאֱלֹקִים לַעֲשֹׂתוֹ." And the dream was repeated twice because this matter stands ready before ה', and ה' is hastening to do it."

פרעה constantly mentions ה' by consistently acknowledging that every single aspect and detail of his life (e.g. the famine, his wisdom, his knowledge) shows us his devotion, dedication, love, trust, reliance, and faith in ה'. Not only that, but because of this he made פרעה, the king of a fully fledged gentile country, also believe and recognize how big of a part ה' plays in everything. As he says, אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלֹקִים אוֹתָךְ אֶת-כָּל-זֹאת אֵין-נִבֹן וְחָכֵם כָּמוֹךְ: Since ה' has informed you about all this, there is no one as wise and as intelligent as you.

We can all learn from this that the more you publicize ה's greatness, miracles, and benevolence, the more it influences the people around you to realize who the true Master of the Universe is. Following פרעה's interpretations, פרעה appoints פרעה (in the following פסוק) as the highest authority in all of מצרים besides for the king. Subsequently, the famine hit מצרים hard (just as פרעה had said) and as a result, פרעה tells the Egyptians in מא:נח to do whatever פרעה says to do. Another lesson we can learn from this is that being a servant of ה' and trusting Him no matter the circumstances will inevitably earn you honor and respect.

We see further into פרעה's connection to ה' when he named his two sons (מא:נח-נב). He names his first son מנשה, because ה' made him forget ("נשני") his troubles, and his father's house, and his second son is named אפרים, because ה' made him fruitful in the whole land. Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch comments that the word "נשני" (used in the explanation of מנשה's name) does not always mean "forget". According to Rav Hirsch, in this context "נשני" really means that up until this point the incident with פרעה and his brothers appeared to him as misfortune and mistreatment, but now, ה' has made it a source of his highest happiness, so that he will always be indebted to his family. A lesson that can be learned from this is that we should always try our best to never get worried, stressed, or angry at anything bad that happens to us. We always need to know and realize that ה' does not desire harm to befall on us. Even when situations appear distressing, it is all part of ה's bigger and better plan that always results in good. It is very important for all of us to trust that everything unfolds as part of ה's beneficial system. Additionally, מלבי"ם says that the reason he named his children for those reasons was so that he would always be reminded of his former tragedies and would never cease to be grateful to ה'. An insight we can learn from this commentary is that even during our highest times, we always need to humble ourselves before ה' and realize that if it weren't for Him, we wouldn't have anything.

What's In a Name?

By Eitan Orkaby

In this week's פרשה מקץ, פרשת מקץ, we learn about יוסף's name being changed to צפנת פענח, by פרעה (בראשית מא:מה). "צפנת פענח, יוסף calls פרעה, "and ויקרא פרעה שם יוסף צפנת פענח". Why would פרעה change יוסף's name, and what is the significance to that name?

On this question רש"י says that צפנת פענח means "it was hidden and can not be uncovered". However, he says that it was the way of the kings, and people of high power, to name their subjects, so that everything they did was really from the people of high power. Even with יוסף saving his entire kingdom, פרעה still does not want to give יוסף too much power.

The רשב"ם says that צפנת פענח is a translation from Hebrew, into egyptian, of יוסף's position. In the times of תנ"ך people had their names changed once they received a position of importance. For example, משה changed יהושע בן נון's name to יהושע once he was declared to be one of the מרגלים, a position of importance. Another example is when דניאל is called בלשצאר after he interprets נבוכדנצר's dream, and becomes an important figure. However in יוסף's case, פרעה was trying to control יוסף by giving him a name, and making himself more important.

The רמב"ן brings down that the עזרא אבן says because צפנת פענח is in Egyptian we do not know what it means, and even translated we do not know what it means. Other ראשונים answer this question by saying that inside the word צפנת פענח there is a hidden meaning. This hidden meaning is that צפנת פענח was a name to give respect to יוסף, and his position. Or it is that פרעה knows what language is spoken in ארץ כנען is similar to Egyptian, and he calls him צפנת פענח because צפונה means something hidden and פענח is uncovering that. This is exactly what יוסף did. He uncovered the hidden meaning behind פרעה's dream. Similarly פרעה's daughter calls משה רבינו his name, which is Hebrew, after she took משה רבינו out of the water. Both משה רבינו and יוסף got there names from what they did.

From this פרשה we see the importance of names, and how by changing it, you change how people view the person. Throughout בראשית we see everybody being named for a reason. The naming started with אדם הראשון when ה' named him, and then gave him the task of naming all of the animals; each one had its reason. Also, in פרשת ויצא, every single שבט is given a reason as to why they are named what they are. ה' put the explanations for each and every name, to show us how important and meaningful every name is. As שלמה says in קהלת ז:א "טוב שם משמן טוב" "a good name is better than good oil".

Editors in Chief: Binyamin Orkaby and Ephraim Fischer

Editors: Yochanan Cramer and Eitan Orkaby

Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Jaffe



Write a Dvar Torah for א ביסל תורה



Receive א ביסל תורה on WhatsApp