

# א ביסל תורה!

# The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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מקץ

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## Uniqueness in Life, Uniqueness in Existence

By Hayim Sims

This week our reading consists of פרשת מקץ, which, at a base level, discusses יוסף's rise to prominence among the court of פרעה due to his prophetic and administrative talents. This then ultimately leads to him reuniting with his brothers, which sparks the changes to follow further in the following chapters and books of תורה. The beginning of these events center on יוסף's rise, which - as we had seen in the previous פרשה - had, at this moment, consisted of him dwelling in the royal prison, albeit in higher prominence due to the ways in which he had been imparted on through his great ability and figure. יוסף experiences an atmospheric rise from being in jail to being פרעה's second in command, ruling Egypt and bringing it to the height of prominence. By the will of ה', the שר המשקים, the chief cupbearer of פרעה, addresses the ruler at a time in which he was not able to find a true interpretation of his troubling dreams. He said that he had recalled a certain figure in prison who had correctly offered interpretations to the dreams of both him and the שר האופים, the chief baker. This man had predicted that the שר האופים would soon be executed, just as he had predicted the שר המשקים's own rise back into the court of פרעה. It says in מ"א:י"ב that, "וַשֵּׁם אֶתְנֹנֹן עֶבְרִי עֹבֵד לְשֵׁר הַטִּבְחִים", "וַיֹּסֶפְרוּ לוֹ וַיִּפְתְּרוּ לוֹ אֶת־חֻלְמֹתָיו אִישׁ כַּחֲלֹמוֹתָיו". The שר המשקים says that the dreams had each been interpreted correctly by the Hebrew slave. A seemingly innocent statement, but one which intrigues Pharaoh as to the talents of this young prisoner that he is called to the court immediately. Why would such a thing occur? How could Joseph's interpretations be so incredibly impactful in such a sense?

Several opinions exist as to the reasoning behind why שר המשקים's interpretation of the dreams could be considered so important, especially to the Pharaoh of Egypt! רש"י states regarding the words of the chief cupbearer describing Joseph as a "נער עברי עבד", that "ארורין הרשעים שאין טובתן שלימה, מזכירו בלשון בזיון", that שר המשקים seems to direct towards יוסף were done so in a derogatory manner, to insult and belittle the youth who had sought to assist him years earlier. רש"י later on spells out how the cupbearer had called יוסף both youthful and foolish, not experienced in the ways and language of the Egyptians, and unable to achieve any sort of high acclaim or finery due to his status as a slave. In doing so, רש"י establishes the character of שר המשקים and how he seems to interpret the way in which his future had been foretold through the dream. Despite such an immense amount of accomplishment, שר המשקים does not seem to take the dream as any sort of unique or special circumstance, and he thinks it's as if it was done by someone who should not be focused on or discussed. יוסף's abilities and uniqueness are almost completely ignored. רש"י gives an additional insight into the words of שר המשקים in his descriptions, which creates a greater disparity between such and the previous comments. Regarding שר המשקים stating that יוסף had interpreted the dreams as "איש כחלמו", the way in which יוסף had interpreted the dreams correctly, רש"י gives the explanation of the words to mean "לפי החלום, וקרוב לעינינו". רש"י gives the explanation of the phrase to mean that the dreams had been interpreted in accordance with the dream and consistent with its contents. This רש"י shows how strong יוסף's ability as a dream interpreter was, as the words that he said would always come true.

רמב"ן provides a different explanation as to why יוסף's dreams were held in such high regard. He states, regarding the same words of "איש כחלמו", that "כאשר היה אמתת חלמו העתיד לבא לו, כי כאשר פתר כן היה לנו", that when יוסף would interpret dreams, he would interpret them as they were destined to happen to whoever dreamed them. רמב"ן compares said interpretation to a blessing יעקב gives his sons in a later פסוק, as it says in בראשית "איש אשר כברכתו בברך אותם". The blessing of יעקב towards his sons, just as the foretelling which had so

produced a later effect, computes with that of being each according to that which would befall them within future circumstances. However, רמב"ן still brings about his own interpretation of the viewing later in his commentaries. Placing his interpretation of the events under that of רש"י, רמב"ן states instead that this way of phrasing was done so that the פרעה would not consider that the interpretations were different from what had occurred in truth. רמב"ן further states that the שר המשקים used specific language in order to state that יוסף had not simply interpreted a shared dream that the שר המשקים and the שר האופים had experienced with a single interpretation, but rather he had given both their interpretations according to their dreams, as רמב"ן states at the end of his commentary, "אלא ברכה מיוחדת לכל אחד", "כאשר פירש ואמר לו". רמב"ן brings a further level of connection between the passage and that of the connection with מִטְכָּח, saying that the interpretation had been given in its uniqueness, each connecting its way through the completion. No single interpretation had been uttered for a single experience, instead, each received its own interpretation and came separately, just as the different blessings imparted upon the brothers begot their own rewards instead of simply coalescing into a great single circumstance. Uniqueness was the key.

Though seemingly simple in its phrasing at first glance, much can be extracted from a gaze at the passage which describes the שר המשקים interacting with פרעה regarding יוסף's interpretation of the dreams. The way in which he describes יוסף to his master seems according to the opinion of רש"י to show the height of sully the name of he who had assisted the man in his troubled circumstances, yet the שר המשקים goes on to describe the ways in which the events had been formulated. רמב"ן goes on to further draw upon said dichotomy of meanings, exhibiting the final range of outcomes as being associated with the drawing upon events directly to showcase their meaning; in his own interpretation. רמב"ן highlights the importance of the uniqueness in the description, how the שר המשקים describes to פרעה the ways in which events had been interpreted separately and given to produce multiple interpretations instead of that of a single outcome. We can all take in mind the idea of understanding the uniqueness of circumstances within our modern lifetimes. Nothing ever originates in a single sense, and even that which seems to hold true monotony inevitably seems to exhibit signs of difference and gradients as time passes. Events inevitably culminate in separate and diverse outcomes, and the ranges of display which people experience form from diverging circumstances. יוסף, starting his existence amidst that of his brothers, rises and falls through several circumstances and finds his niche amongst events. Just so, every single individual experiences their own changing circumstances and reaches different conclusions through their life experiences. Behind every sense of existence, there exists a uniqueness. Life is unique, and as we go through it, we should take note of the beauty of every changing circumstance in life.

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