

# *Shiur L'Yom Shen*<sup>1</sup>

[Monday's Study]

READINGS:	<b><i>Torah Miketz:</i></b>	<b>Genesis 41:1-36</b>
	<b><i>Haftarah:</i></b>	<b>I Kings 3:5-15</b>
	<b><i>B'rit Chadasha:</i></b>	<b>I Corinthians 1:1-2:1</b>

*The Holy One has shown Pharaoh What He is about to do ...*

[Genesis 41:25]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 75:1-3;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 7, *Kabat* [Ingathering]

*Vayehi miketz sh'natayim yamim* – And it came to pass at the end of two years of days ... *uPhar'oh cholem* - then Pharaoh dreamed ... *v'hineh omed al-ha-Ye'or* - and behold, he was standing at/upon the River. **Genesis 44:1.**

*Vayeshev* ended in a dark dungeon; in *Miketz*<sup>2</sup> the scenery changes dramatically. From the prison to the palace we go. The opening scene plays out in the private bedchamber of mighty Pharaoh, King of Egypt. The décor is stunningly beautiful. Guards stand at every entrance. The fragrance of sweetly scented incense fills the air with a delightful Middle Eastern aroma. All seems perfectly calm and serene at first glance. But first glances can be deceptive. All is not calm. All is not bright. The most powerful human being on the planet - politically, economically, and militarily, at least - is having a miserable night. He is tossing, turning, and trembling. In dreams, he sees his great kingdom, his legacy, and perhaps his bloodline coming undone.

But wait a minute! Torah is not about Pharaoh. For all his pomp, circumstance, and power, Pharaoh is merely a supporting actor. Torah is about a much, much greater drama. Moreover, the geographical center-of-gravity of Torah is not found in Egypt – or in city, nation, dynasty, culture, race, or civilization. Torah is about the sons and daughters of Avraham – and its focus is on the beachhead/portal of the Kingdom of Heaven's invasion of earth. That beachhead/portal is many, many miles from any city on the continent of Africa; it is in the heart of *Eretz Yisrael*. So, as we begin the final, end-game section of *Sefer B'reshit*, the real question of importance is not what is going on with Pharaoh, in Egypt, or in Africa; the important question, for our purposes, is *what is going on with the sons of Ya'akov?* And what is the state of things *in the land of Promise*.

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<sup>2</sup> As pointed out in the introductory *shiur* for this parsha *Miketz* is a Hebrew phrase meaning 'at the end'.

## *From A Lonely Wandering Aramean to a Thriving Community of Seventy Souls*

Back in the land of Promise, the original Covenant household has become a thriving Covenant Community. It now consists of seventy souls - though one, a shining star named Yosef, has mysteriously gone missing. The tents of the rapidly expanding Avrahamic seedbed stretch out all across the hills surrounding Hebron. Most of Ya'akov's sons have taken spouses and are raising children themselves now. One notable exception is Binyamin – the young protégé – the one whose birth coincided with his mother Rachel's death. It is upon this mother-less one that Ya'akov dotes. It is this sole remaining descendant of Rachel over whom he fusses.

In the tent at the center of the camp sits the last of the great trilogy of patriarchs - Ya'akov. His hair and beard are streaked with grey now. His eyes no longer glimmer with the sparkle of infinite possibility. The passionate mover and shaker selected by the Holy One to be the heir to the promises and callings of the Avrahamic Covenant now walks with a noticeable limp, and seems old beyond his years. He has suffered a series of devastating losses – losses that have shaken him to the core.

The first great loss Ya'akov endured was the loss of his most beloved wife *Rachel*. As you will recall, Rachel 'died on' Ya'akov on the road near Beit-Lechem. The trauma of giving birth to Binyamin on the road was too much for her. Following on the heels of the death of Rachel came two other losses rapidly in succession. Ya'akov's loss of his father *Yitzchak* was bad enough, but far worse was Ya'akov's loss of his 'favorite' son – *Yosef* - who mysteriously disappeared one day leaving behind nothing but a blood-smearred 'coat of many colors'. The cumulative effects of these losses have proven crippling.

At least the circumstances surrounding his loss of Rachel and Yitzchak allowed Ya'akov to *get some 'closure'* via burying their remains and eulogizing them. The circumstances regarding the loss of Yosef were different - there were no remains, nothing to bury, no one to eulogize. There was just the cruel testimony of that bloodstained coat ... and the *awful, foreboding silence* that the absence of *'that dreamer'* brought to the ancestral camp.

That silence left a hollow feeling in Ya'akov that was apparently almost more than he could bear. Lavan, Esav, and Divine wrestlers he had fought valiantly and each time prevailed. The recent deaths of Rachel, Yitzchak, and Yosef in quick succession, however, seem to have done to Ya'akov what no human being or angel could. He looked worn down, defeated, broken. His countenance has fallen. His situation looks bleak. Binyamin is the sole bright spot in his life. But I'll just bet

the Holy One *has a plan* for Ya'akov's redemption. He always has such a plan, for all His Covenant Partners.

### ***Od Yosef Chai?***<sup>3</sup>

Unbeknownst to Ya'akov, you see, *od Yosef chai* – i.e. Yosef is *still alive*. But his countenance is not much brighter than Ya'akov's. Far, far away in the land of Egypt Yosef sits in a dungeon at the lowest point of his life. Not only has he been despised, rejected, and sold for money by his brothers, he has become the lowliest of slaves, rotting in a foreign prison. He has been labeled as a sex offender. Shame is his lot, despair his constant companion. His vast storehouse of prophetic potential appears to be destined to die with him in that Egyptian prison.

Looking at the matter in terms of objective reality it would appear that the brothers did not do Yosef any favors when they decided to spare his life. Surely on many long nights Yosef's flesh cried out to him that death would have been far better than what he had suffered - and appeared to be destined to continue to suffer – as a result of his brother's strange 'gift' of life. But things *are not as bad as they appear*. What a difference *two years of days* will make!

### ***Two “Years of Days”***

Please remember our last *shiur* of parsha *Vayashev* when Pharaoh's personal cupbearer and baker got thrown in prison with Yosef and both had a dream. Yosef, a dreamer of prophetic dreams himself, was given the interpretation of the dreams of both of these men.

The fulfillment of the things that Yosef prophesied to these men occurred precisely on Pharaoh's birthday. In the course of Pharaoh's birthday celebration Pharaoh issued a decree restoring the cupbearer to his place in the palace and directing that the baker be beheaded. It happened exactly as Yosef had prophesied. And all that occurred exactly *sh'natayim yamim* [two years of days] ago.

The time period Torah denotes poetically as *sh'natayim yamim* [two years of days] ago did not I suspect pass quickly. I suspect the *sh'natayim yamim* [two years of days] were the opposite of the 7 years Ya'akov worked for the hand of Rachel, which Torah says *seemed to him as just a few days*.

These were not after all just two *years*. They were instead two very long '*years of days*' – a dark season throughout which *not one single thing that the Holy One felt it appropriate to record in Torah* has taken place. There were no God-encounters

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<sup>3</sup> The English translation of this phrase would be '*Does Joseph still live?*' It is this precise question Ya'akov would ask incredulously years later, when Yosef's brothers finally broke down and told him the whole sordid tale.

in that season. There were no life-changing God-ordained dreams. There were no angelic visitations. There were no great exploits of faith. There were no signs in the Heavens. There was no shaking of the earth. There was nothing new under the sun. Every day was like the prior one. And the greatest act of faith the world experienced was simply the perseverance of the Holy One's saints. There was air to breathe. There was food to eat. There were tents – or in some cases prisons - to live in.

I suspect that for Yosef and for Ya'akov each day of the *sh'natayim yamim* [two years of days] *seemed like an eternity*. The time period consisted of two *years of days* that came and went with *no deliverance for Yosef*. The *sh'natayim yamim* consisted of two *years of days* that came and went with *no confession or repentance by his brothers*. The time period consisted of two *years of days* with *no relief whatever for Ya'akov from the unbearable grief*. These were two years of days of *complete famine of the Word of the Beautiful Voice of the Creator of Heaven and Earth*. Day, after day, after day, for 2 long years of days, *nothing happened*. Have you experienced periods of time like that, Dear Reader? Don't look now, but that time may be coming to an end. If you hear the buzz on the street, you will understand that something exciting *is finally happening*.

***It is Almost Time for the Annual Birthday Celebration  
The People of Egypt Stage for Their Blatantly False Pharaoh-God***

Egypt is a sentimental, sensual, hyper-emotional place. It's people love a party. So among other things, they love to observe, celebrate, and wax eloquent about the birthdays – and the anniversaries of the deaths - of their gods. Think about how crazy celebrating the birth or death of a supposed spiritual being is, and you will see the blatant absurdity of this kind of thing. But there is no time to think about that: can you believe it – the birthday of the culture's current 'Pharaoh-God' is just around the corner. There is going to be a party – because, after all, Pharaoh is the 'reason for the season'.

Well, this particular Pharaoh-God Birthday celebration is going to be pretty special. Unseen by anyone, in the shadowy realms of night, *the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth is approaching* as well. This time the approach of the Holy One surreptitious - through the hidden form of *releasing prophetic dreams where and as and to whom and in what manner* He wills. Thirteen years ago, the Holy One gave Yosef a series of prophetic dreams – hazy, nebulous visions of a future harvest and a great reset of the center-of-gravity of the Universe. Two years ago, He gave prophetic dreams to the king's cupbearer and baker - dreams that seemed meaningful only to the two men who dreamed them. But we are about to discover that there was more to the dreams of the cupbearer and baker than anyone thought.

The dreams of the baker and cupbearer, it turns out, were given to lay the foundation for the prophetic dreams of Pharaoh about which we are going to read today.

### ***Nothing Is As It Appears!***

This week's entire parsha – and indeed the whole story that is about to unfold over the last three parshot of *Sefer B'reshit* – is absolutely *surreal*. It is chock full of mystery and symbolism. That is partially because of the time of year in which this section of Torah is read – i.e. the winter season in the Northern Hemisphere. Nothing in it is exactly as it appears in this season. All the oaks and sycamores appear to have succumbed to a plague, but are really very healthy and alive. Flowers seem to have disappeared from the earth, but what is really happening is that the trees, shrubs, and bulbs that produce those flowers are aggressively storing up energy for another, even more glorious, display. Perhaps another reason the narrative of Torah is about to tip toward the mysterious and surreal is that a lot of the action takes place in Egypt – in a hyper-emotional 'fake news' cultural milieu, where up is down, where in is out, where right is called wrong, where profanity is considered clever, where nonsense is considered wisdom, where lies are revered as 'truth', and where what is said is almost always the exact opposite of what is meant. Yosef has fallen through the looking glass; Potifar has played the White Rabbit; his wife the Cheshire Cat, and Pharaoh the Mad-Hatter. Logic and human reason have flown out the window. Tables turn, then turn again. Just when one thinks one just about has it figured out, the rug comes out from under his feet.

There is much, much more to this section of Torah, you see, than meets the eye. The first clue is the parsha's name, *Miketz*, found in the opening phrase. *Miketz* means 'at the end'. The substance of what we will be reading about relates not merely to Egypt three thousand or so years ago – but to the 'end of times'. What we are reading this week is not just 'history' – it is *end-times prophecy* as well. The revelation begins, appropriately enough, with a 'dream sequence'<sup>4</sup>.

#### ***V'hineh omed al ha-Ye'or***

*And behold he [Pharaoh] stood near the River,*

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<sup>4</sup> According to one tradition the dream of Pharaoh occurred on Yom Teruah, the "New Year" of mankind/earth, in the year 1532 BCE. *Rosh HaShanah 10b, ff.* This would make the Egyptian monarch in question Amenhotep I. This Pharaoh ruled 20 years - from 1545-1525 BCE. For historical information on Amenhotep I and the era in which he reigned you may wish to visit:

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/timeline.html>

<http://www.touregypt.net/18dyn02.htm>

and/or <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/amenhotep1.htm>.

The only other likely candidate would be Ahmose [Amenhotep I's father], the first king of the 18th Dynasty, who drove the Hyksos out of Egypt and reigned from 1570 to 1545 BCE.

**V'hineh min ha-Ye'or olot sheva parot y'fot mar'eh**  
*And behold –from the river ascended seven handsome, healthy-looking cows*

**uvri'ot basar v'tir'eynah b'achu**  
*and grazed in the bulrushes [marsh grass].*

**V'hineh sheva parot acherot olot achareihen min ha-Ye'or**  
*And then behold, seven cows after this emerged from the Nile,*

**ra'ot mar'eh v'dakot basar vata'amodnah etzel ha-parot**  
*ugly, lean cows, and these stood next to the cows*

**al-sfat ha-Ye'or**  
*[those] already on the riverbank.*

**V'tochalnah ha-parot ra'ot ha-mar'eh**  
*And then the ugly, lean cows*

**V'dakot ha-basar et sheva ha-parot yefot ha-mar'eh**  
*ate up the seven handsome, fat cows.*

**V'ha-bri'ot v'yikatz Par'oh**  
*Pharaoh then woke up.*

The symbol with which a prophetic dream begins is often a critical key to the dream's deepest level of spiritual interpretation. Yosef's first adolescent dream started with a harvest scene. At its deepest levels the dream constituted a prophecy that he – and ultimately One sharing his characteristics and his sorrows<sup>5</sup> - would become 'Lord of the Harvest'. Yosef's second adolescent dream started with signs in the Heavens. The dream constituted a prophetic picture of how not only Yosef but the One like him

The cupbearer's dream started with a producing vine – *i.e.* a symbol of life. The baker's dream started with baskets and bread – *i.e.* things that had been alive but now were cut off from their life source. The dream sequences the Holy One released into Pharaoh's subconscious mind at the beginning of parsha *Miketz* started with *the River*.

### ***The Prophetic Image of the River Nile***

There is only one river – indeed only one water source - in the whole country of Egypt, and that is *the Nile*. So to Pharaoh 'the river' he saw in his dream had to be the Nile. For all practical purposes the river WAS – and STILL IS – the *lifeblood of Egypt*. As the River flowed through Egypt Pharaoh saw himself *standing by* this river. To 'stand' [Hebrew *amad*] means to *appear before* and *stand prayerfully in an*

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<sup>5</sup> Yosef's name means 'he will add [another]'. Rachel had long been barren, and as her firstborn, Yosef, was being named, her dream and prayer was that another would come after him. This was only partially fulfilled in the birth of Binyamin. The ultimate fulfillment is in the 'seed of woman' promised by the Holy One in Genesis 3:15 – *i.e.* the Messiah Himself.

*attitude of service, awaiting instructions from that deity.*

The Nile was a god to the Egyptians. Pharaoh saw himself, a lesser deity to the Egyptian way of thinking, appearing before and prayerfully awaiting instructions from what he considered a greater deity. Pharaoh thought of that greater deity as being the Nile; when the time came for interpretation, however, Yosef would see a far higher Deity cast in the role of ‘the River’. Yosef saw Pharaoh being instructed by none other than the Creator of Heaven and Earth<sup>6</sup>.

Pharaoh’s prophetic envisioning of himself ‘standing’ by the River was, however, just the beginning. Then came the *real action*. Beasts began to come forth out of the waters. Out of the midst of the waters of this great river the Holy One caused Pharaoh to see seven amazingly healthy and beautiful prize cows arise one-by-one. The Holy One then caused Pharaoh to watch these seven prize cows swim ashore one-by-one and start grazing on the reeds and bulrushes that grew along the river’s edge.

Surreal, huh? What in Heaven’s name meaneth all these beasts? Oh, did I mention that in the Hebrew tongue in which this story was originally written and preserved for us the word we translate as *Pharaoh* is *peh, resh, ayin, hey*, pronounced *paro*, and the word we translate as cow is *peh, resh, hey*, pronounced *paro*?

In Hebrew the word *paro* means ‘His cow’. So in Hebrew we read that *Paro* [Pharaoh] – *i.e.* ‘His cow’ - sees seven prophetic *parot* [cows] arising in sequence. In English we totally miss the not-so-subtle play on words; in the Hebrew tongue it is unmistakable.

There is a lot of *double entendre* going on. The dream will have its initial literal fulfillment in *Yosef’s time* – but it will have its ultimate fulfillment at *the end of time*<sup>7</sup>.

Oh, but the Holy One is by no means through messing with Pharaoh’s mind – or ours. As the seven prize *parot* [cows] graze contentedly by the Nile, Pharaoh sees seven more *parot* [cows] arise from the great river. These seven however are *malnourished* and *ugly*. They join the other cows in the marsh bulrushes alongside the Nile. Then to Pharaoh’s horror this latter group of *parot* turn cannibalistic and devour their better-nourished counterparts.

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<sup>6</sup> See Genesis 41:25, 28. Yosef tells Pharaoh “*Elohim has shown Pharaoh what He [is] about to do.*”

<sup>7</sup> For the ultimate interpretation of this dream is that a total of fourteen beasts – each one a world ruler like unto one of the Pharaohs of Egypt – will hereafter be given authority to rule the earth. Seven will be seen as ‘good’; seven will be seen as ‘bad’. The seven ‘bad’ beasts will make the world forget all the goodness of the seven ‘good’ beasts that preceded.

Pharaoh awoke with a shudder. But then the Holy One put him right back to sleep and commenced a second, similarly mystical download from Heaven. Upon re-entering an altered-conscious state, Pharaoh's in-dream *alter ego* begins immediately to see things happening in sequences of sevens once again. He is still by the river. His focus this time is not on the cows, but upon the reeds that sprang up when they disappeared. This time what he saw was the cane [in Hebrew, *qanah*] of one of those reeds. On that cane were seven well-formed seed-clusters [in Hebrew, *shibolim*]. To Pharaoh's horror these seven fat, good seed-clusters got swallowed up by seven small, powder-like, East wind-scorched seed clusters.

At this Pharaoh awoke again. The download was now complete. Quite against his will a Pharaoh who went to bed happy and content awoke a very, very troubled man. And when Pharaoh is troubled reverberations are felt around the world. Hence Torah tells us:

***Vayehi v'boker v'tipa'em rucho***

*It happened in the morning that his spirit was troubled,*

***Vayishlach vayikra et-kol-chartumei Mitzrayim v'et-kol-chachameiha***

*and he sent and called for all the leaned men<sup>8</sup> of Mitzrayim, and all the wise men of it*

***v'yesaper Par'oh lahem et-chalomo***

*And Pharaoh told them his dream,*

***v'eyn poter otam l'Par'oh***

*but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.*

Were the wise men of Pharaoh's court really so *stupid* that they did not know what these dreams meant? Or were they just *playing 'coy'* with Pharaoh? I mean, let's be real - would you be excited about interpreting a dream that had troubled the spirit of the Pharaoh of Egypt? Remember, these were the days when the phrase 'kill the messenger' meant just that.

### ***The Cupbearer Suddenly Remembers***

Suddenly the cupbearer remembers the strange young man he met two years ago when he and the chief baker of the kingdom were in prison – the young man who had so completely interpreted his and the baker's dreams for them. This might just be his chance to be a hero. And so he begs audience with Pharaoh.

***V'yedaber sar ha-mash'kim et-Par'oh l'emor***

*And the chief cupbearer spoke to Par'oh, saying,*

***et-chata'ai ani maz'kir ha-yom***

*I remember my faults today."*

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<sup>8</sup> The word in Hebrew is *Chartumim*, literally meaning writers [in this case, hieroglyphists].

***Par'oh katzaf al-avadav***

*Pharaoh was angry with his servants,*

***V'yiten oti b'mish'mar beit sar ha-tabachim***

*and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard,*

***oti v'et sar ha-ofim***

*me and the chief baker.*

***V'nachalmah chalom b'laylah echad ani v'hu***

*We dreamed a dream in one night, I and he.*

***ish kefitron chalomo chalamnu***

*We dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.*

***V'sham itanu na'ar Ivri***

*There was with us there a young man, a Hebrew,*

***eved l'sar ha-tabachim***

*servant to the captain of the guard,*

***v'nesaper-lo v'yiftor-lanu et-chalomoteinu***

*and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams.*

***ish kachalomo patar***

*To each man according to his dream he interpreted.*

***Vayehi ka'asher patar-lanu ken hayah***

*It happened, as he interpreted to us, so it was:*

***oti heshiv al-kani v'oto talah***

*he restored me to my office, and he hanged him."*

**[Genesis 41:9-13]**

Here is where more of the surrealism sets in. Pharaoh could be expected to *laugh* at the report of the cupbearer. A *prison trusty* who interprets dreams? A *Hebrew*, no less? But Pharaoh does not laugh. He is – inexplicably, I am certain, to those who looked on – much more than a little intrigued. And when he speaks his words are not words of derision. He instructs his servants to *go immediately and fetch the Hebrew slave who interprets dreams*.

### ***Yosef, Come Forth!***

Yosef has not known freedom for 13 years – since his brothers threw him in the pit near *Dotan*. He has been confined in a dungeon for over a decade. He has no realistic prospect of either pardon or parole. He appears destined to die in Pharaoh's prison as a broken, shamed, hated man.

Unbeknownst to Rachel's firstborn son however the Holy One is arranging for stunning changes to occur. He does not know it yet, but his years of incarceration, his long season of cruel bondage, and his decades of unimaginable shame are

almost over. He is about to be set free – and much, much more! Here is how Torah puts it:

***Vayishlach Par'oh vayikra et-Yosef***

*Then Pharaoh sent and called Yosef,*

***v'yeritzuhu min ha-bor***

*and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon.*

***v'yegalach v'yechalef simlotav v'yavo el-Par'oh***

*He shaved himself, changed his clothing, and came into Pharaoh.*

***V'yomer Par'oh el-Yosef***

*Pharaoh said to Yosef,*

***chalom chalamti ufoter eyn oto***

*"I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it.*

***v'ani shamati aleicha l'emor tish'ma chalom liftor oto***

*I have heard it said of you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."*

Here is Yosef's chance. All eyes are on him. He finally has a captive audience to tell his sad tale. He can now expose Potifar's wife as the shameless liar she is. He can finally let everyone know how misunderstood and abused he has been all his life. But that is not who Yosef is. He therefore does no such thing. He does not even once mention his troubles. He does not vent his anger. He does not 'out' his former master's wife. He is content to let Pharaoh and the members of his court think whatever they want to think about whether he deserves the sentence he has received from Potifar and the lot he has been assigned in life by Heaven. He knows this moment is not about him. He knows this moment is not about Pharaoh. He knows that the Holy One – the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov – is using this situation to speak to His Creation and taking the occasion to intervene in and change the course of human history. Yosef is intent on the Holy One getting every ounce of the glory for whatever He may be about to do. Hence we are told:

***Vaya'an Yosef et-Par'oh l'emor bil'adai***

*Yosef answered Pharaoh, saying, "It isn't in me.*

***Elohim ya'aneh et-sh'lom Par'oh***

*God will give Pharaoh an answer of shalom."*

And with those words Yosef, great-grandson of Avraham the Hebrew, is at long last, in the place for which he was created to stand - strategically positioned to declare the wisdom of the Holy One to the most powerful man and the most prosperous and influential nation on earth. After a lifetime of never quite fitting in and 13 years of suffering at the hands of others he has finally come to *the threshold of his appointment with destiny.*

NOTE: Appointments with destiny do not come *easy* or *cheap*.

## ***Yosef's Stunning Interpretation of Pharaoh's Dreams***

When Pharaoh tells Yosef his dreams Yosef does not hesitate in the slightest. Employing the same gifts and principles of dream interpretation as he utilized in connection with the dreams of the cupbearer and baker the young Hebrew tells Pharaoh exactly what his dreams mean.

***Vayomer Yosef el-Par'oh chalom Par'oh echad hu et asher***

*Yosef said to Pharaoh, 'Pharaoh's dream has a single meaning.*

***Ha-Elohim oseh higid l'Far'oh***

*Elohim has told Pharaoh what He is about to do.*

Yosef then explained what each item in the dreams meant. First, he explained the *seven good cows* and *seven good seedpod clusters*, saying:

***Sheva parot ha-tovot sheva shanim henah***

*The seven good cows are seven years.*

***V'sheva ha-shibolim ha-tovot sheva shanim henah***

*The seven good seedpods are [the same] seven years*

***chalom echad hu***

*It is one dream.*

Yosef then went on to explain the meaning of the *seven emaciated cows* and the *seven wind-scorched seedpods* as follows:

***V'sheva ha-parot ha-rakot v'ha-ra'ot ha-olot***

*The seven emaciated, bad cows who came up*

***achareyhen sheva shanim henah***

*after [the first ones] are also seven years.*

***v'sheva ha-shibolim ha-rekot***

*The seven empty, wind-scorched seedpods*

***sh'dufot ha-kadim yihyu sheva shnei ra'av***

*will [likewise] be seven years of famine.*

Yosef then gave Pharaoh much more than a mere dream interpretation. He went beyond his reason for being called and presumed to *advise the king on matters of governmental policy*.

***V'yikbeitzu et-kol-ochel ha-shanim ha-tovot ha-ba'ot ha-eleh***

*Let [the officials] collect all the food during these coming good years,*

***V'yitzbeiru-var tachat yad-Par'oh***

*and let them store the grain under Pharaoh's control.*

***ochel b'arim v'shamaru***

*And let the food be kept in the cities under guard.*

*V'hayah ha-ochel l'fikadon l'aretz*  
*The food can then be held in reserve for the land*

*l'sheva shnei ha-ra'av asher tihyenah b'erezt Mitzrayim*  
*when the seven famine years come to Egypt.*

*V'lo-tikaret ha-aretz b'ra'av*  
*The land will then not be depopulated by the famine.'*

One might have expected Pharaoh to laugh. A foreign slave, fresh out of prison, lecturing the most powerful king on earth on matters of state? But Pharaoh did not laugh. He was totally mesmerized by Yosef's words. And he suddenly was convinced that every single thing Yosef advised him to do absolutely had to be done. How much more surreal can you get?

### ***Questions For Today's Study***

1. Describe Pharaoh's first dream. [Answer in outline form]
2. Describe Pharaoh's second dream. [Answer in outline form]
3. How did Pharaoh find out about Yosef?
4. Read verse 16 of the aliyah for today carefully:

*Yosef answered Pharaoh, saying, It isn't in me.*  
*God will give Pharaoh an answer of shalom.*

[A] What does Yosef's answer reveal about him?

[B] Our English Bibles make it appear that Yosef tells Pharaoh – who is well-known to be a believer in, and priest of, many gods, and who claims to be a god himself – that “God” – who we understand to be the **One** God of Avraham – will interpret his dream. If this is what Yosef said, this would be a bold “in your face” insult likely to get Yosef killed. But let's not jump to conclusions based upon English translations. What *Hebrew* word do our English Bibles translate as “God” in this verse? Write the Hebrew word/name in Hebrew letters with vowel markings, and then search out the word picture that word/name, and its verb root, presents to us.

[C] Is the Hebrew word/name that is translated “God” in verse 16 *singular* or *plural* [or *dual*, since there is this third possibility in Hebrew]?

[D] If you found that the word/name used by Yosef to describe who would provide the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was anything other than singular, what does that mean to you?

5. Here is the description Pharaoh gave to Yosef of the troubling dreams he had dreamed:

*In my dream, behold, I stood on **the brink of the river**:*

*and, behold, there came up out of the river seven cattle,  
fat-fleshed and well favored.  
They fed in the reed-grass,  
and, behold, seven other cattle came up after them,  
poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed,  
such as I never saw in all the land of Mitzrayim for ugliness.  
The lean and ill-favored cattle ate up the first seven fat cattle,  
and when they had eaten them up, it couldn't be known that they had eaten them,  
but they were still ill favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke.*

*I saw in my dream, and, behold,  
seven seed clusters came up on one stalk, full and good:  
and, behold, seven seed clusters that were withered, thin,  
and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them.  
The thin seed clusters swallowed up the seven seed clusters.  
I told it to the magicians; but there was no one who could explain it to me.*

[Genesis 41:17-24]

[A] List the ways in which Pharaoh's description was different from the dream as stated in verses 1-7.

[B] Why do you think there was a difference?

[C] Why do you think the Holy One sent Pharaoh 2 dreams?

[D] What did the "river" of Pharaoh's dream represent/symbolize?

[E] What did the *7 rich, fat cattle*, and the *7 thick, full ears of grain*, of Pharaoh's dream represent/symbolize?

[F] What did the *7 lean, gaunt cattle*, and the *7 withered, thin, wind-blistered ears of grain*, of Pharaoh's dream represent/symbolize?

[G] What did it mean that the *7 lean, gaunt cattle* ate up the *7 rich, fat cattle*?

[H] What did it mean that after the *7 lean, gaunt cattle* ate up the *7 rich, fat cattle*, they were still lean and gaunt?

6. Haftarah *Miketz* is taken from I Kings 3 – the beginning of the reign of Shlomo [KJV 'Solomon'], the son of David and Bat-sheva. Shlomo, still a very young man, has just become Israel's king. At this auspicious time, he also has a dream from the Holy One. It is the first "God encounter" of Shlomo's life. May such an encounter characterize all our lives, Dear Reader.

*In Giv'on the Holy One appeared to Shlomo in a dream by night;  
and God said, "Ask what I shall give you."*

*Shlomo said, You have shown to your servant David my father  
great lovingkindness, according as he walked before you in truth,  
and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with you;  
and you have kept for him this great lovingkindness,  
that you have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.*

*Now, O Holy One my God,  
you have made your servant king instead of David my father:*

*and I am but a little child; I don't know how to go out or come in.  
Your servant is in the midst of your people that you have chosen,  
a great people, that can't be numbered nor counted for multitude.  
Give your servant therefore an understanding heart  
to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil;  
for who is able to judge this your great people?*

*The speech pleased the Holy One, that Shlomo had asked this thing.  
The Holy One said to him, “Because you have asked this thing,  
and have not asked for yourself long life, neither have asked riches for yourself,  
nor have asked the life of your enemies,  
but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice;  
behold, I have done according to your word:  
behold, I have given you a wise and an understanding heart;  
so that there has been none like you before you,  
neither after you shall any arise like you.*

*I have also given you that which you have not asked, both riches and honor,  
so that there shall not be any among the kings like you, all your days.*

*If [as, when and to the extent] you will walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my mitzvot,  
as your father David did walk, then I will lengthen your days.”*

*Shlomo awoke; and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Y'rushalayim,  
and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Holy One,  
and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace-offerings,  
and made a feast to all his servants.*

[A] Describe Sh'lomo's dream in outline form.

[B] Imagine you had a dream and the Holy One appeared to you and said, “Ask what you want from Me”. Think it through, then write out what you would ask the Holy One for - and why that is what you would ask for.

7. The apostolic reading I have chosen for parsha *Miketz* is from the beginning of Shaul's letter to the followers of Messiah in the Greek city of Corinth. Today's aliyah is a rather long introduction, provided in order that the verses we will study Tuesday through Friday will be kept in context. Here is the first chapter:

*Sha'ul, called to be an apostle of Yeshua the Messiah  
through the will of the Holy One, and our brother Sosthenes,  
to the assembly of God which is at Corinth;  
those who are sanctified in Messiah Yeshua, called to be holy ones,  
with all who call on the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah  
in every place, both theirs and ours: Grace to you and shalom  
from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.*

*I always thank my God concerning you,  
for the grace of the Holy One which was given you in Messiah Yeshua;  
that in everything you were enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge;  
even as the testimony of Messiah was confirmed in you:*

so that you come behind in no gift;  
waiting for the revelation of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah;  
who will also confirm you until the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

The Holy One is faithful, through whom you were called  
into the fellowship of his Son, Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord.  
Now I beg you, brothers, through the name of our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah,  
that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you,  
but that you be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers,  
by those who are from Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

Now I mean this, that each one of you says,  
"I follow **Sha'ul**," "I follow **Apollo**,"  
"I follow **Kefa**," and, "I follow **Messiah**."

Is Messiah divided? Was Sha'ul crucified for you?  
Or were you immersed into the name of Sha'ul?

I thank God that I immersed none of you, except Crispus and Gaius,  
so that no one should say that I had immersed you into my own name.

(I also immersed the household of Stefanus;  
besides them, I don't know whether I immersed any other.)

For Messiah sent me not to immerse, but to preach the Good News –  
not in wisdom of words, so that the cross of Messiah wouldn't be made void.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying,  
but to us who are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, "**I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
I will bring the discernment of the discerning to nothing.**"

Where is the wise? Where is the Sofer? Where is the lawyer of this world?  
Hasn't the Holy One made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For seeing that in the wisdom of the Holy One  
the world through its wisdom didn't know the Holy One,  
it was the Holy One's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching  
to save those who believe.

For Y'hudim ask for signs, Yevanim seek after wisdom; but we preach Messiah crucified;  
a stumbling block to Y'hudim, and foolishness to Yevanim,  
but to those who are called, both Y'hudim and Yevanim,  
Messiah is the power of the Holy One and the wisdom of God.

Because the foolishness of the Holy One is wiser than men,  
and the weakness of the Holy One is stronger than men.

For you see your calling, brothers, that not many are wise according to the flesh,  
not many mighty, and not many noble; but the Holy One chose the foolish things of the world  
that he might put to shame those who are wise.

The Holy One chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame  
the things that are strong; and the Holy One chose the lowly things of the world,  
and the things that are despised, and the things that are not,  
that he might bring to nothing the things that are:  
that no flesh should boast before the Holy One.

*But of him, you are in Messiah Yeshua, who was made to us wisdom from God,  
and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption:  
that, according as it is written, "He who boasts, let him boast in the Holy One."*

*When I came to you, brothers, I didn't come with excellence of speech or of wisdom,  
proclaiming to you the testimony of the Holy One.*

[A] Write a one-page essay on Corinth, specifying [i] where it was located, [ii] what it was like in Shaul's time, and [iii] what experiences our Bibles (in the Book of Acts, chapters 18 and 19) tell us Shaul had there.

[B] Who co-wrote the letter (or was at least with Shaul when he wrote the letter)? What does this man's name mean, and what do we know about him?

[C] Shaul had received a "*dibbah ra*" [bad report] about the Messianic believers in Corinth. Who brought Shaul this *dibbah ra*?

[D] What was the *substance* of the *dibbah ra* which Shaul had heard about the Messianic believers in Corinth?

[E] If the *dibbah ra* was true, what do you think brought about the situation (what was the root of the problem)?

[F] In I Corinthians 1:19 ff, Shaul speaks of "the *wisdom of the wise*" being made "*foolishness*". What was he referring to as the "*wisdom of the wise*"?

[G] In I Corinthians 1:21-25, Shaul refers to something that our English Bibles translate as "the *foolishness of preaching*". This is not talking about Sunday morning sermons in Church, or the so-called "*four spiritual laws*" of street evangelism. What was Shaul referring to as "*preaching*"?

[H] What does Shaul mean "*that no flesh should glory in his Presence*" [verse 29]?

[I] To a Hebrew, familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, what does it mean to "*glory/boast in the Lord*"?

*May the Light of the world be manifest in your home and in all your spheres of influence  
throughout this prophetic season of Dedication!*

### ***The Rabbi's Son***

### ***Meditation for Today's Study***

Psalm 75:1-3

*We give thanks to you, O Holy One, We give thanks, for your Name is near.  
Men tell about your wondrous works.*

*When I choose the appointed time, I will judge blamelessly.  
The eretz and all its inhabitants quake.  
I firmly hold its pillars.  
Selah.*