



TORAH WEEKLY

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Parshas Mikeitz

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A Taste of Torah

All Bad Things Must Come to an End

by Rabbi Yitzzy Melamed

The Medrash at the beginning of this week's parsha (Bereishis Rabba 89) explains that the verse (Mikeitz 41:1), "And it was at the end (*mikeitz*) of two years, Pharaoh was dreaming" can be connected to the verse "Hashem gave a set end time (*keitz*) for the darkness, He searches through all that is mortal, the [foundation] stone (*even* in Hebrew) of darkness and deep shadow" (Iyov 28:3). What is the meaning of this Medrash?

The Talmud (Kiddushin 30b) advises one who finds himself in the clutches of the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) to drag him (figuratively speaking) to the *bais hamedrash* (Torah study hall). The Talmud cites several verses that create analogies for Torah and the *Yetzer Hara*. The Talmud teaches that the *Yetzer Hara* is compared to an *even*, which the waters of the Torah can soften. The *Yetzer Hara* is also compared to iron, which can be shattered by the fire of Torah. We learn from this that *even* is seen as an allusion to the *Yetzer Hara*, which the aforementioned verse in Iyov cites as the cause of darkness and suffering.

However, Hashem has set an end time until which the *Yetzer Hara* will exist. There will come a time when He will remove it from our midst, at which point all suffering and darkness shall vanish. This will occur when the world is filled with the knowledge of Hashem and His Torah (see Isaiah 11:9), which, as discussed, is the ultimate antidote to the *Yetzer Hara*.

The Medrash offers an alternative understanding for the darkness referred to in the verse in Iyov, explaining that it refers to Yosef's time in Pharaoh's dungeon, which in due time would come to its end. According to this approach, the verse in our parsha

is to be understood as saying that it was specifically when that *keitz*, that endpoint, came that Pharaoh had his dream. The commentators explain that one would have thought that Pharaoh's dream was the cause for Yosef's release. This is not so, however. Rather, the fact that the set end time, or *keitz*, for Yosef's suffering had arrived was cause for Pharaoh's dream to occur.

The Izhbitzer Rebbe (Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner; 1801-1854) expresses a similar idea concerning the exile in Egypt. The verses discuss (Shemos 2:23-25) that Bnai Yisrael cried out, and their outcry rose up to Hashem. The final verse concludes that "Hashem saw the Bnai Yisrael, and Hashem knew." At face value, these verses seem to tell us that Klal Yisrael's distress was noticed by Hashem. The Izhbitzer Rebbe, however, uniquely interprets these verses to mean that Klal Yisrael cried out *because* Hashem knew and paid heed to their plight. Thus, the verses are telling us that since Hashem desired to save Klal Yisrael, He aroused in them an awareness of their situation and the need to cry out, which was the impetus for Hashem to take action and begin the process of redeeming His nation.

Rabbi Gedalia Schorr (1910 -1979) explains that this is also what occurred during the miracles of Chanukah. Our Sages refer to that era as a time of darkness, as the Jewish People were oppressed by the Assyrian-Greeks. However, Hashem had set a time for that darkness to cease. When the time came to redeem Klal Yisrael from that exile, Hashem sent forth the necessary opportunities that, if taken advantage of, would bring about the redemption. It was by utilizing this special spiritual

Stories for the Soul

Miraculous Victory

It was June 1967, and Yisrael, a cab driver, was part of the paratroop unit assigned with conquering the Straits of Tiran.

The Israeli soldiers didn't have to parachute out of the airplanes which took them to the Tiran Straits. They landed like spoiled tourists in the airport, because the Egyptian regiment which was on guard there fled before the Israeli planes were visible on the horizon.

After landing, Yisrael was sent with another reserve soldier, an electrician, to patrol the area. Suddenly, an Egyptian half-track appeared, filled with soldiers and mounted with machine guns on every side. The two men had only light weapons, nothing sufficient to combat the half-track. With nowhere to go and nothing to do, they stood, waiting for the first shot; for lack of a better idea, they aimed their guns at them.

The half-track stopped, and the two soldiers carefully approached it. Inside were eighteen armed soldiers, guns in hand, a petrified look on their faces. They looked at the two Jewish soldiers with great fear as though begging for mercy. Yisrael shouted, "Hands up!"

As they marched the Egyptian prisoners away, Yisrael asked the Egyptian sergeant, "Tell me, why didn't you shoot at us?" He answered, "I don't know. My arms froze - they became paralyzed. My whole body was paralyzed, and I don't know why."

Chanukah does not celebrate military might or the personal prowess of mighty warriors. It celebrates the Hand of G-d that allowed a ragtag group of Jewish men to defeat the might Assyrian-Greek army. In our day, as well, we must recognize that success is not due to our efforts, but to Divine Intervention on our behalf.

continued on back

Kollel Happenings

DEATH THREAT: SHABBOS OBSERVANCE & LAW ENFORCEMENT AT THURSDAY'S T4T ON ZOOM

Join Howie Shapiro, Intelligence Analyst for the FBI, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they negotiate the ins and outs of conflict resolution on Thursday, December 9 at 7:30 pm via Zoom. Visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org for details and Zoom info.

TALMUDO BIYADO GEMARA CLUB FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Learn, review, and acquire a masechta! Boys in grades 6-8 are invited to join Rabbi Chaim Gross at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochor weeknights Mon.-Thu. from 8-8:30 pm for a Gemara shiur followed by review. Contact Rabbi Nesanel Kipper at rnk@denverkollel.org for further details.

LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING ON DEC. 24 AND 31

The Kollel's Legal Holiday Learning program continues on Fridays Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Stay tuned for further details. For sponsorship opportunities and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

Halacha Riddles

Last week's question: How would there be a difference between one who drank water versus some other beverage regarding the laws of *mezuman*?

Answer: One who participated in a meal but did not eat bread can combine with two others who did eat bread for *mezuman* so long as he ate a *kezayis* (olive's volume) of food or drank a *revi'is*

(3-5.3 fl. oz.) of any beverage - except water. However, only one who ate bread may lead the *mezuman*. (See Shulchan Aruch 197:2) It should be noted that the Magen Avraham (197:6) disagrees and says water suffices for inclusion.

This week's question: How would a *mezuman* be affected by six instead of seven?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part XXVIII

About a week after the Knessia Gedola, Rosh Hashana of the Jewish year 5684 (September 11, 1923) arrived. Rabbi Shapiro's *daf yomi* was to start on that very night, the first day of the new year. Following *maariv* in the main *bais medrash*

of the Gerrer chassidim, where many many chassidim had gathered to be with the Gerrer Rebbe for Rosh Hashana, the Gerrer Rebbe turned to his attendant and asked for a Tracate Brachos - the very first volume of the Talmud.

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

power provided by Hashem that the Chashmona'im were victorious, despite the odds against them.

The verses in the Book of Daniel talk about the ultimate *keitz*, the end of the darkness with the advent of the era of Mashiach. Through various cryptic allusions, a specific time when the redemption will take place is mentioned. Many great Torah personalities throughout the ages have suggested different possibilities of when that time will occur. The problem is that the Talmud (Sanhedrin 97b) quotes Rav as saying that all the *kitzin* (endtimes) alluded to in Daniel have already come to pass. In light of the fact that these later Torah scholars were all writing their commentary after the Talmud was redacted, why would they continue to try and offer their opinion as to when the final *keitz* will occur?

The answer is apparent from the Talmud itself, which concludes that the matter of the *keitz* is solely dependent on *teshuva* (repentance) and good deeds. Rabbi Schorr explains that all the times referred

to by the later commentators had the potential to develop into the Final Redemption. However, the opportunity was not properly seized upon, and the moment passed and was missed.

Coming full circle to the Medrash at the start of this discussion, the *keitz* of the verse in this week's parsha and that of the Book of Iyov are indeed connected; they both speak of a point when Hashem provides an opportunity for the darkness to end. In Yosef's case, it meant his utilizing Pharaoh's dreams properly to end his time in prison. For the verse in Iyov, the *keitz* of the *Yetzer Hara* and its reign of evil will come about through the spread of knowledge of Hashem and His Torah, for it is Torah that destroys the *Yetzer Hara*. When the time arrives and Hashem provides us with the opportunity to destroy the *Yetzer Hara*, we must be prepared to seize the moment and finally make it happen. It is therefore imperative that we keep our eyes and hearts open for opportunities of Torah study and spiritual growth, as these may well be the very impetus for that Final Redemption to finally arrive.

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