

Parshat Mikeitz

Friday, December 15, 2023

ג טבת תשפ"ד

From the Lower School

1. Which brother approached Yosef to save Binyamin?
2. What question did Yosef ask his brothers after revealing himself?
3. What did Yosef send his father so he knows he is still alive?
4. How many people from Yaakov's family came down to Mitzrayim?
5. How many years was it into the famine when Yaakov came down to Mitzrayim?

— *Rabbi David Schlusselberg, HS, Judaic Faculty*

Answers can be found on the last page.

From the High School

The Light Overcoming Darkness

The eight day festival of Chanukah often takes place between the weeks in which we read the Parshiot of Vayeishev and Mikeitz. A connection between these two Parshiyot and Chanukah can be as follows:

The Al Hanissim prayer states that the miracle of Chanukah was that the many were delivered into the hand of few and the strong into the hand of the weak. This thought is emphasized in the parshiyot of Vayeishev and Mikeitz. In Parshat Vayeishev we read about Yosef's dreams, and in Parshat Mikeitz we read about Pharaoh's dreams. In Pharaoh's dreams the weak conquered the strong. Yosef dreamt that

From the High School

continued from page 1

the majority can be subordinate to the minority.

Also in the Al Hanissim prayer, the word “yad” — “hand” — is mentioned five times: “You delivered the mighty into the hand of the weak, the many into the hand of the few, the impure into the hand of the pure, the wicked into the hand of the righteous, and sinners into the hand of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah.” A hint for this can be found in the pasuk, “Binyamin’s portion was five hands (times) as much as theirs” (43:34).

May we see in our times how light overcomes the darkness!

- Mrs. Nechama Hendel — MS, Judaic Faculty

The parallel of this week's *parsha* to the story of Chanukah can be summarized

From the High School

Having Faith in Hashem,

as it is always darkest, just before dawn. This week's *parsha* is *Mikeitz*, the story of Yosef. The story of Yosef shows us that when things are at their bleakest, if you have faith in God, He can save you in the blink of an eye.

There were several times when things seemed to be at their worst for Yosef, and when he had faith in God, he was saved; however, when he tried to have faith in others, things got worse. For example, when Yosef was put into a pit by his brothers, he prayed to Hashem, and he was immediately saved when the Midyanim passed by and took him out of the pit. Then he was sold down to Egypt, and again things were bleak, and again he looked to Hashem; he was saved by being sold to one of the highest officers in the land, Potiphar, and he lived what seemed like a charmed life. But again, once he got a little too comfortable, that is when he was accused of seducing Potiphar's wife and thrown in jail. Again, things got dark. He was in prison for ten years, and just as it was getting close for him to be saved, he interpreted the dreams of Par'oh's servants: One would survive, and one would be hanged. At this point, he put his faith in a person; he asked the butler to mention him to Par'oh in hopes that he would save him, and of course, he was forgotten. He remained in jail for another two years. When things were bleak again, all of a sudden, he was

From the High School

continued from page 2

taken out of the prison and brought right to Par'oh. When he had faith in Hashem and said, only because of Hashem can I explain your dreams, he immediately was raised again to be the second-in-command to all of the world. He became the ruler under Par'oh and then had the ability to save his entire family and all of the Jewish people, as we know, due to his position.

So, the story of Chanukah is also a story that teaches that there is still hope when it is darkest, when things are bad, when the Jews are at the point of no return, when it seems like there is no oil left, when the Beit Hamikdash is destroyed. Even when it seems there will be no way to serve God. We see that the few people who prayed to God and had belief in God found that tiny bit of oil and through that, the entire miracle of Chanukah happened.

This should be a lesson to our lives now, even though we're at a time when things seem dark, and terrible tragedies are happening, and unknown horrors have been done to the people of Israel. Hopefully, we pray to God; He will save us, and a true miracle will happen. Something good will come out of the bad. That is the lesson: Have faith in Hashem, not in ourselves, and when we do, hopefully, God will save us.

— Atara Friedman is a Freshman at RKYHS

Never Forgetting Who We Are

Imagine you and your family are the only observant Jewish people in a foreign country. Everyone around you worships the ideals you despise, but they look to you for approval for how things should work in that country. You not only have to live in a society you think is gross but have to *lead* in such a place while doing your best to cling to your faith and simultaneously raise a family in contrast to where you live. Sounds easy? When looking at Yosef in Parshat Miketz, we have the prime example of what it means to have unapologetic faith in Hashem and serious guts.

After being in jail for two years, the *sar hamashkim* mentions an *eved ivri* he met who was able to resolve his dream. When Par'oh called for Yosef to come and resolve his own dream, Yosef's response is pretty

From the High School

continued from page 3

daring: "I will not resolve your dream; only Hashem will" (*Bereishit 41:16*). Par'oh believed himself to be a god and Yosef has the audacity to say that a different god has the answer that Par'oh does not possess? And yet, he continues: After the dreams are described to Yosef, Yosef says, "Par'oh has been told what God is about to do" (25). Yosef tells Par'oh that the woes that will come upon his nation are from Elokim. Mind you, Par'oh is a "kill the messenger" kind of man, and yet Yosef has no problem mentioning Hashem and what His plans are in front of a man who considers himself to be the most powerful god in the world.

This clearly doesn't faze Yosef, but what does that have to do with raising a Jewish family? More importantly, what does this have to do with me or my life now? It's a story of bravery and faith but... relevance, please? After living in Mitzrayim for 22 years, a country seeped in adultery and idol worship, Chazal refer to Yosef as "Yosef Hatzadik." Every Friday night, parents give their sons the blessing, "Yesimcha Elokim k'Efraim u'k'Menashe," "Hashem should make you like Efraim and Menashe" (48:20), Yosef's children. The blessing for daughters is that they should be like the *imahot*, our great matriarchs, so then why not give the sons a blessing to be like the *avot*, our patriarchs? The uniqueness of Yosef's children is that, like us, they grow up in *galut*, in exile, and they still develop into righteous *tzadikim*, and, ultimately, the tribes of Israel. Yosef's children manage to be amazing, like him, in the most hopeless of places.

We are currently living in a time that is quite discouraging for the Jewish people in *galut*. We need to look no further than Yosef and the family he managed to raise in the most decadent society of the ancient world to find a source of hope. The most amazing thing is that we have it in us to be a Yosef, a Menashe, or an Efraim. It doesn't matter where we are as long as we remember who we are. May we never forget who we are as Jewish people and live an unapologetic Jewish life wherever we may be.

- Ms. Nava Eisenberg — HS, Judaic Faculty

Answers to questions on page 1

- (1) Yehuda
- (2) Is my father still alive
- (3) Wagons
- (4) 70
- (5) 2 years