**Parshas Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanukah**

**The Impossible Dream**

What was it about Pharaoh’s dream that was so disturbing, as to cause a national emergency? Why sound the alarm because some fat cows disappeared? Why did Pharaoh immediately call for כל חרטומי מצרים וכל חכמיה? We grow up with an image of Pharaoh and other ancient rulers, as arrogant, vain and pompous buffoons. They act on impulse and indulge in their every whim. They are often superstitious and gullible. Yet, Pharaoh was the ruler of an empire. He commanded the mightiest and advanced military force of that time and oversaw the massive infrastructure of the Nile region. You have to have to be reasonably intelligent and sharp to do all that. (Not enough space here to wonder about some of our own modern-day leaders.)

Rav Shimon Schwab zt”l, suggested that Pharaoh put stock in the typical and predictable world order, which is predicated on the concept of the small and weak being subservient to the bigger and more powerful. Pharaoh considered himself a divine being. After all, the mighty Egyptian Empire ran on his say-so. The image of robust and healthy cows, being swallowed up by the worst-looking cattle he ever saw, threw him into a panic. What negligible power could possibly take down the might of Mitzrayim?

Herein lay the “Chap” of Yoseif HaTzadik’s interpretation. All the wisdom and divination of Pharaoh’s advisors and wizards, that helped shaped Pharaoh’s plans and policies, were based on normal expectations. More soldiers, better weapons and more advanced chariots usually carry the day. But that was not what the dream foretold. Yoseif spoke of an entirely different system – האלוקים יענה את שלום פרעה. If you want the “Sholom” of everything running smoothly, accept that the Ribono shel Olam has the power to manipulate and direct events, even in an unpredictable, atypical manner. בלעדי, this is beyond my wisdom or any power of human intelligence and ingenuity. Yoseif stunned Pharaoh, by introducing the “Chiddush” of Divine intervention. This interpretation clicked!

The Ribono shel Olam is not limited by bigger and better. מי שיאמר לשמן ידליק יאמר לחומץ ידליק. He who instructs oil to fuel a flame, can direct vinegar to do the same. He who makes it possible for a jar of oil to burn for a day, can make it continue burning for eight days. Yoseif learned this from his own experience. מקימי מעפר דל מאשפות ירים אביון...להושיבי עם נדיבים – in the lowest Matzav, we can hope and Daven to be raised to heights we didn’t dare to imagine. Yoseif the slave and convict, betrayed by his brothers, now has the world in the palm of his hands. A small and dedicated band of Ehrlich Yidden, untrained and ill-equipped, chased off the mighty Greek Empire with Torah and Tefilla, and reclaimed הר הקודש ירושלים.

A number of years ago, an Israeli soldier was accosted one dark night by five Arab terrorists, while waiting for a hitch on a lonely stretch of road. Tzachi was a poor shot. During basic training, he never once came close to hitting a target with his gun. Here, all alone with five Arabs rushing him with long knives, he drew his weapon and felled four of his assailants with perfectly aimed bullseyes. Tzachi didn’t wait to see what happened next. He ran down the road and flagged down a passing car.Still in shock, he didn’t mention a word about what happened. The fifth attacker was unharmed. Seeing that his comrades were dead, he quickly gathered up the knives and ran for it, before anyone got on the scene. A police investigation tracked down Tzachi. His claim of being attacked was found suspect. No knives were recovered at the scene. Poor Tzachi ended up with four life terms for murder! In prison, he bemoaned his fate to the prison Rabbi. “Why did Hashem save me, only to end up in prison for the rest of my life?” Although irreligious, Tzachi mentioned that he called out a heartfelt prayer to Hashem, when he saw his attackers coming towards him. Upon being told of Tzachi’s plight and his complaint, Rav Shteinman Shlit”a, responded, “if he saw that Hashem helped him because he davened, why doesn’t he daven again to be saved from imprisonment?” Someone asked, the davening may have helped before, when he had a gun. Here though, he was convicted to the maximum, four life terms and all the evidence was against him! Rav Shteinman burst out laughing. “The fellow didn’t even know how to shoot and he scored four perfect shots! Just like Hashem helped him then, when it wasn’t possible, with Tefilla he could be helped again.” In fact, Tzachi got out after four months. He explained that shortly after following Rav Shteinman’s advice to Daven with all his heart, the fifth assailant had been caught and arrested on an unrelated matter. In the course of that investigation, he revealed the details of the attack on Tzachi and produced the knives used in the attack. Tzachi was exonerated and immediately released. Nothing is impossible – even when all hope seems lost.

A Freilichen Chanukah and a Yeshuadikeh Chodesh, yk

**L’RavchaD’Milsa Weekly Almanac - Chanukah**

***Thursday, Shabbos Chanukah* - 4 Chanukah, 28 Kislev**

**Rav Eliahu Meir Bloch** (1894-1955). Born on Simchas Torah in the small Lithuanian city of Telshe to Rav Yosef Leib, Rav and Rosh Yeshivah of Telshe, having assumed the helm of the yeshivah from his father-in-law, Rav Eliezer Gordon, the founder of the Yeshivah. After his marriage, he spent 12 years as a Rosh Yeshiva at Telshe. When it became clear that the Yeshivah could not continue under the Soviets, the administration sent Reb Elya Meir and his brother-in-law, the late Rosh Yeshivah Reb Chaim Mordechai Katz on a mission to the United States, to raise funds to move the Yeshivah to either America or EretzYisrael. When they arrived, they learned of the Nazi invasion. They decided to restart the Yeshiva in Cleveland.

***Thursday Night, Shabbos Chanukah* - 5 Chanukah, 29 Kislev– “Der FiftehLichtel”**

The “Fifth Lichtel” is when it was customary by many Tzadikim to distribute “Chanukah Gelt”. Some say this is because the fifth day can never fall out on Shabbos.

**Erev Shabbos Chanukah – 5 Chanukah, Erev Rosh Chodesh Teves**

*earliestZman for lighting before Shabbos,PlagHaMincha, 3:30 in New York.*

***Skverer Chasidim*** *take one of their six haircuts for this Shabbos of “VayigalachVayichaleifSimlosav”.*

**Rav Yisrael of Husyatin and Rizhin** (1949). The son of Rav Mordechai Shraga and grandson of the RizhinerRebbe, he married NechamaGitel, a grand-daughter of his uncle, Rav Avraham Yaakov of Sadiger, when he was 14 years old. He was also the uncle of Reb Moshenu of Boyan. In 1937, he moved to Tel Aviv, along with his son-in-law, Rav Yaakov, who would succeed him 12 years later.

**Sunday, Parshas Vayigash- 1 Teves, ,Zayin Chanukah**

According to some, the Yartzeit of Avraham Avinu ben Amislaya bas Karnavo

**Esther HaMalka** was brought to the royal palace of Achashveirosh.

**Tuesday, Parshas Vayigash-3 Teves**

**Rav Chaim LeibShmulevitz**, Rosh Yeshivas Mir (1902-1979), born in Stutchin, Poland, where his father, Rav Alter Raphael, was Rosh Yeshiva. His mother, Ettel, was the daughter of Rav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, the Alter of Novardok. In 1920, both of his parents suddenly died, and Reb Chaim was left to care for his younger brother and two younger sisters. When Rav Chaim was 22, Rav Shimon Shkop, Rosh Yeshiva in Grodno invited him to join his yeshiva. Within three years, Chaim was appointed to a lecturing post in the yeshiva. Reb Chaim continued his studies in Mir where the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, chose him as a suitable match for his daughter. With the outbreak of World War II, he remained with the Mirrer Yeshiva in its exile in Shanghai for five years. After the war, he lived for a short while in America. With the establishment of the MirrerYeshivah in Yerushalayim, he immigrated to EretzYisrael and served as its Rosh Yeshivah. Rav Chaim authored SichosMussar.