

Parshas Mikeitz, records several dreams of Pharaoh. In the previous *parshah* the Torah describes the dreams of Yosef, the dreams of the *sar hamashkim* (the butler of Pharaoh) and the *sar ha'ofeh* (the baker of Pharaoh).

What are dreams all about? We have our intellect, which can see reality as it is, and we also have the power of imagination which sees fantasies. The Gemara says that "The night was not created except for sleep." When people go to sleep, the imagination dominates in their dreams. The *Gra* says that during a dream, a person's intellect is weakened, and his imagination dominates.

We know that there are dreams that contain meaning. Dreams can reveal things to us, and on a deeper, spiritual level, dreams were the vehicle by which Hashem would communicate with the prophets. There is intellect/thought, which is countered by imagination. Imagination has no substantial bearing on the reality of this world. However, when a person goes to sleep, although his intellect is weakened and his imagination is dominant, some of his intellect still remains. The imprint of the intellect that is still left can fuse with the imagination. All dreams contain meaningless things, but there are also truthful points contained in dreams. This is because the intellect fuses with the imagination, and therefore there will be some truthful points that a person can see, via his intellect.

The more a person has purified his spiritual level, his intellect becomes even clearer when he sleeps, and the more truthful his dreams will be. The stronger a person's ability of thought is, although his imagination will overtake his intellect when he sleeps, he will still be able to see truthful things in his dreams. His intellect will still play a very active role even as he sleeps, since it is strengthened during the day.

On a subtler level, when a person has a strongly developed intellect, his dreams will show him revelations from Heaven, through the imagination. Where the intellect ends and cannot perceive, that is where the imagination can jump past all the limitations of the intellect, and perceive higher things that the intellect cannot. This is only true when one has a strongly developed intellect, which purifies the imag-

ination and turns it holy. But when one hasn't purified his intellect yet, his imagination will not be so holy, and it will fantasize about things which aren't connected to reality.

The more one purifies the imagination, although his dreams will still contain meaningless things due to the lower parts of the imagination which will always be unfixed, the higher parts of his imagination which are pure will be able to break past the limitations of the intellect and receive Heavenly revelation and understanding. This can only happen through a strongly developed intellect, which can see reality as it is.

Chazal compare the Greek exile to "darkness," because they "darkened" the eyes of the Jewish people. Simply speaking, they "darkened" our power of intellect, our power of thought, by battling the holy power of intellect of the Jewish people. Even more so, the Greek "darkness" (which is simply understood as a war of secular wisdom versus the holy wisdom of the Torah) can also be understood as a war between the view of the imagination against the view of the holy Torah.

Simply speaking, a person has a time when he is asleep and a time when he is awake. The initial state of man was sleep. Adam was put to sleep, so that Chavah could be created from his body, and a great slumber descended upon him. The Torah does not say that Hashem awakened Adam from this slumber. The state of slumber remained with Adam. If he would have gone directly into Shabbos, he would have awoken from this state of slumber. But with the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas*, he remained with this state of slumber, which was the imagination. The *Eitz HaDaas*, according to the *Sforno* and the *Vilna Gaon*, is identified as a tree that produced *medameh*/imagination. As soon as Adam and Chavah ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, they remained with their imagination.

Within imagination itself, there is a state of being awake and a state of being asleep. Compare this to the difference between a person having a dream that he is having a dream, and a person having a dream that he is awake. They are both dreaming and within their imagination, but the person dreaming he is awake is "awake" within his imagination, while the person dreaming that he is sleeping is "sleeping" within his imagination. But they both exist within their imagination. That is the level we exist in.

Of the future, we will say, "Then, we were like dreamers." (*Tehillim 126:1*) In the imminent redemption, may it come speedily, we will see that our current era of 6,000 years is like one big dream. We will return to our root, through *teshuvah*, and then we will see that we were living in a dream all along.

The depth of exile, and especially the Greek exile which is compared to darkness, is that we are in exile within exile within exile. Exile means that our entire experience and perception is through a state of being "asleep," through a dreamlike state. We can see that babies

sleep a lot, and children also sleep more. As we get older, we need less sleep and we are able to be awake more. The depth of this is because our beginning state is mainly sleep. A baby sleeps for most hours of the day, because our very perspective which we view the world with, when we come into the world, is through sleep/imagination. Even when we get older and we mature, it is like being “awake” in a dream – it is still a dream, and it is not as dreamy as being “asleep” in a dream.

Going further with this, if there is anything we cannot perceive, because it is on a higher level than our understanding, we are “asleep” towards it. We can “imagine” it – but we cannot actually grasp it and understand it. This is the imagination – when one cannot understand something, the imagination will get to work and imagine it through an example of something in this world. This is the concept of *moshol* (parable) and *nimshal* (lesson). The *moshol* is within my understanding, while the *nimshal* is above my understanding. When one cannot understand the *nimshal*, he uses a *moshol* to understand it, which is a use of the imagination. His understanding of the *nimshal* will be through the imagination. That is the depth of exile.

Shlomo *HaMelech*, the wisest of all people, wrote *Mishlei*, which reveals the wisdom of the Torah, by means of *moshol*, parables. The Greek exile counters the wisdom of the Torah, and as is well-known, the Greek exile is called “wisdom of the body” (*chochmas haguf*). What is the depth of this? How do people connect to the spiritual, when they have never seen it and they cannot sense it physically? By means of a *moshol* (parable), which speaks to the body. That is a use of Greek wisdom. It is a wisdom which uses the means of *moshol*, parables, which is a use of the imagination.

The Torah also speaks to the language of people, and the Torah also uses parables. If there would be no exile, a person would hear the *moshol* and immediately understand the *nimshal*. But in exile, we keep hearing the *moshol*, and we do not absorb the *nimshal*. Even worse, there are many people who love to hear a *moshol* but without understanding the *nimshal* – they would rather remain with the *moshol*. That is the “Greek exile”! The redemption will be that people will understand the *nimshal* of every *moshol*. In our present exile, we have a perspective in which we see only the *moshol* in things. If we remain only with the *moshol*, that is an even more total state exile. Many times people remember the *moshol* and they don’t remember the *nimshal*. When people live only in the *moshol*, this is “exile,” An even subtler form of

exile is when a person absorbs the *nimshal*, but he only perceives it on a level of *moshol*. That is the “exile” that comes from the imagination. When we begin to understand something, we need a *moshol*, in order to understand. But when we try to live by the *moshol*, we need to understand reality from seeing reality as it is and not through *moshol*. That is how we can leave behind the “exile of the imagination.” This is an *avodah* for all of one’s life. One must first understand things through *moshol*, absorbing the *nimshal* through the *moshol*, and then purify himself further, so that he can see reality as it is. He doesn’t need *moshol* to understand things. He can live by the *nimshal* even without using the *moshol*.

The Greek exile, which was the “wisdom of the body,” is essentially a state of being exiled by the “body.” It is when one can only understand inner and spiritual matters by way of *moshol*, which speaks to the body. The Greek exile is when a person cannot identify directly with spirituality, and he needs parables from this world in order to identify with the spiritual. The ideal way to mature is to use parables as a transitory stage in his spiritual development. The depths of exile is if a person remains at that level of parable.

The Ramban says that whatever the Greeks could not comprehend, they denied. This meant that their imagination could not comprehend spiritual or Heavenly matters. Whatever they understood, they understood, and whatever they didn’t understand, they could not relate to, so they denied it. This is the depth of all of the exiles in general, and the Greek exile especially.

The way to come out of the perspective of “Greek exile,” then, is that **we need to see *ruchniyus*, the spiritual world, as no less real and tangible than the physical world in front of us.** Even if a person learns Torah and does *mitzvos* and makes sure to do the will of Hashem, he may still be in one big state of “slumber,” because he doesn’t know what the “real” world is. Surely, Hashem will reward every person for all of his actions, but the person will still remain in a perspective of exile, until he changes his perception. The *Geulah* will essentially be a change of perspective- the realization that there is a reality which we never knew existed.

Most people recognize the spiritual world and recognize the Creator only through their imagination. How does a person recognize the Creator? With one person, it is because his father and grandfathers told him. Another person has recognition of the Creator because he is an intellectual, and knows that it’s logical that there has to be a Creator because the Creation itself testifies to a Creator. One can simply sense reality when he realizes that just as he can sense the physical reality, so can he sense the reality of the Creator.

Our own existence is entirely a power of imagination which can recognize the Creator. That is why man is called *adam*, from the word *medameh* (imagination). The existence of the Creator is the only absolute reality that exists. There is no reality other than Him. Our own existence is only a form of imagination, and our entire existence serves to recognize the reality of the Creator. But if we view ourselves as our own reality and we try to recognize the Creator within our own reality, this is an imagined perception, and it will not be a true recognition of the Creator. We are not speaking here of those who are in

the category of “*tinok shenishbah*” (Jews who are born and raised irreligious). Rather, even most believing Jews, who know about the Creator because that’s how they were raised, do not have a kind of *emunah* (faith) that is **alive** and **palpable**. Their *emunah* in Hashem is just intellectual knowledge, in the same way that a person knows (*l’havdil*) that there’s a country called France.

Only through palpable *emunah* does a person have true “recognition” of the Creator. We are not speaking here of people who don’t believe in Hashem and people who are skeptical about the reality of *ruchniyus*. It is an issue even for those who are exerting themselves to attain recognition of the Creator. Even the few people in the world who have devoted their lives to recognizing the reality of the Creator struggle with this.

How can even these few reach it? **Recognition of the Creator can be reached through receiving our *mesorah* (tradition), and through *hisbonenus* (reflection), and from all other ways which our Sages revealed to us.** But most people have reached it on an “intellectual” level alone. They see that if there is a functioning world, there must be Creator behind it. Yet, this is actually a perception of imagination.

Why? Because the person looks at this world, the lower dimension, and deduces that there must be a higher world. This is imagination, because imagination seeks to understand the higher world through the means of this lower world. If one uses this only as a stage in his spiritual growth, that is wonderful, but if he remains at this level, he is still in “exile”.

In the redemption, it will be revealed that one’s recognition of the Creator is not through intellectual perception or through imagination, but by recognizing the reality of the Creator because He is the only reality! The Creator *is* reality! This is what the *Chovos HaLevovos* describes. True, complete recognition of the Creator *is* the state of the *Geulah*.

What is the exile (*Galus*) and what is

the redemption (*Geulah*)? The main aspect of exile is **not** that most Jews are not living in *Eretz Yisrael* today. The Greek exile took place in *Eretz Yisrael* so there is something deeper about exile that isn’t dependent on being in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The main aspect of exile is also not our subservience to the nations of the world and the tremendous suffering that our people have gone through. It is not even defined by the troubles which pursue us daily, or from the anti-semitism from the nations of the world. And it is not even from the *Erev Rav* who make decrees us on in *Eretz Yisrael* in the final days. Rather, the main aspect of our exile is the absence of true, clear, and absolute recognition of the Creator. The exile obscures us from clearly sensing the reality of the Creator, and the redemption will reveal His Presence clearly to us.

In the *Geulah*, when we will clearly recognize Hashem’s Presence, that recognition itself will bring all *shefa* (Heavenly sustenance and blessing) to the world and all of the suffering and troubles will then vanish. Awaiting the *Geulah* is therefore not about awaiting anything else that will come to the world other than the absolute recognition of the Creator which will be revealed to the world. That is what we are waiting for!

As long as we are in exile, whether in the collective exile or our own personal exile, we have a perspective of imagination, which can only understand the spiritual in terms of *moshol*, parables. Even more so, it means that we are only having a sense of recognition of the Creator by way of *moshol*—the imagination. But the more a person elevates his level and strengthens his intellect, his imagination becomes purified, and his sense of recognition becomes purified as well. The *Ramchal* and others have said that one can leave his own “personal exile” even during his lifetime.

We have no comprehension in the Creator, of course. All we can do is recognize His existence, which is to recognize the reality as it is: Hashem exists! To recognize that *He* exists is essentially the level of complete *emunah*. Thus, the

main part of exile is the absence of *emunah*.

When this becomes a person’s main perception, his entire life changes, and this is the personal redemption of one’s soul. When one can only get a sense for the spiritual and the Creator through hearing *meshalim*/parables, he is trying to understand a higher realm by the means of this lower realm. This is the use of the imagination, which seeks to understand the higher realms through the lower realms.

With this level of perception, one will sometimes forget about His reality, and sometimes remember it. But when one has recognition of the Creator because he is aware that this is reality as it is, he never forgets it. This is the meaning of שיית ה' לנגדי תמיד “*I place Hashem opposite me, always.*”

True recognition of the Creator does not come through merely “reminding” yourself of the Creator, or any other means which may or may not be helpful. It is simply to recognize reality as it is. Then all of the “darkness” of the Greek exile will not feel “dark” at all, and at that level, the Greeks cannot have any effect at all.

Redemption from the Greek exile is to recognize reality as it is, a reality which is always revealed, all the time. When we leave the collective exile and merit the collective redemption, and when we merit specifically to leave our personal exile and merit personal redemption, to leave the “darkness” of the Greek exile during these days [of Chanukah], it is an actual recognition of the reality of the Creator, beyond the perception that comes from our imagination.

The more one that penetrates into this place of the soul and sees reality as it is, he receives this level of recognition on a permanent level, as a gift from Hashem, where he can recognize the true recognition that there is a Creator who made this world, and even more so, to recognize His very reality, with nothing else besides Him.

[translated from שיחת השבוע 047 מקץ]

FINAL DAYS' REVELATIONS

QUESTION We keep hearing different statements in the name of *tzaddikim* (many times with an untraceable source) that Mashiach will soon be here, and many times it doesn't come true and it makes us disappointed that the *Geulah* didn't come. How can we keep awaiting Mashiach in spite of these disappointments, especially because Mashiach didn't come after corona finished reached its climax [which many people had hoped that it would end with Mashiach]?

ANSWER As long as something is not based on any reliable source, it is not worthwhile to involve yourself with it. It is better to learn the words of *Chazal* where they speak explicitly about these matters, and *Chazal* definitely spoke in certain terms about it. *Emunah peshutah* (simple, unquestioning faith in Hashem!) is more precious than anything. Therefore there is no difference with what is happening in the world now. *Emunah peshutah* should always be the main aspect which builds one's growth. Current events are merely a tool to get aroused to improve and prepare oneself [for the *Geulah*]. And for any *bar daas* (sensible person), current events are able to be seen as an explanation of a process that was already foretold and which is certainly going to happen. But in any case, **simple and unquestioning *emunah peshutah* must always remain as the most important aspect of one's *avodas Hashem*.**

QUESTION [Asked before the first corona lockdown in 5780]: Is right now like when the "plague of darkness" in

Egypt was about to happen?

ANSWER It is not "about" to happen. Everyone is already found in darkness.

QUESTION [Asked recently, at the end of 5781]: Now that we are past the "darkness" of corona, are we right now in "smiting of the firstborn" (*makas bechoros*)? And if yes, then how can we see it?

ANSWER In Egypt there was a plague of darkness that ended and was then followed by the smiting of the firstborn, which was a night that shone like the day for the Jewish people [the night of Pesach]. However, the current plague is a continuous plague of darkness, like "light and darkness serving together in a mixture," where the darkness has entered together with the smiting of firstborns. The "plague of the firstborn" right now is essentially the striking down of all "heads" [anything that enjoys prestige and being at the lead]. In Egypt, both the firstborn people and firstborn animals were smitten. Now, all of the "beginnings" of the world of falsity are being smitten, and presiding over all of them is the "beginning" of all the nations- Amalek, whose end will be destruction. Hashem is striking down and uprooting every "head" [ruler] of the world. Every evil beginning point, in all dimensions – every "place" that "rules", every "time" that "rules," and any person who rules, and all the inanimate and animate creations, animals, and people, anything that "rules" will get struck down. The topic is long and deep.

QUESTION How do we see a "striking

of the firstborn" today?

ANSWER Every *rosh* (every "head" - every point that is at the lead) will fall, just like in Egypt when the oldest child in every house fell at the final plague. That will reveal Who the true *Rosh-Head* is, Hashem, as it is written: "*I am the First.*"

QUESTION Also, which strike is this being directed against and what is the purpose of it?

ANSWER That is the goal of this striking down – to remove all evil "heads" [all those who think they are in charge and anything which is deemed prestigious in world], and to reveal Who the true "Head" is.

QUESTION What is the next stage after this "striking of the firstborn"?

ANSWER After the plagues came the splitting of the sea [another plague upon Egypt], and when the people came to the sea and they wanted to *daven*, Hashem said to them, "Now is not the time to *daven*. Now, it is *b'Atika talya milsa*, now it depends on *Atik* (just trust Hashem)." This will be the stage when the level known as "*Atik*" will be completely revealed.

QUESTION And where do we see the previous nine "plagues" that came to the world before this?

ANSWER The first 9 plagues corresponded to the first 9 of the 10 "*Sefiros*," which span the *Sefiros* of *Malchus* through *Chochmah*. Each of the previous plagues that came to the world corresponded to one of these particular *Sefiros*.