

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. What lessons can be learned from the story of Yehudah and Tamar?
2. Who actually sold Yosef into slavery, the Midianites or Yosef's brothers? Who sold Yosef to Potiphar, the Midianites or the Ishmaelites?
3. Why is Yosef commonly referred to as Yosef HaTzaddik?
4. Why did the chief butler immediately forget about Yosef?
5. When was Yosef released from imprisonment?

This and much more will be addressed in the ninth lecture of this series: "FROM SLAVE TO VICEROY".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the lecture and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book were designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it as well as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

**This lecture is dedicated to the honor and merit
of the Schulman Family**

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series XIII Lecture #9

FROM SLAVE TO VICEROY

I. Yehudah and Tamar

A.

(1) וַיְהִי בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֶת אָחָיו וַיֵּט עַד אִישׁ עַדְלָמִי וּשְׁמוֹ חִירָה׃ וַיֵּרָא שָׁם יְהוּדָה בַּת אִישׁ כְּנַעֲנִי וּשְׁמוֹ שׁוּעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵלָיָה׃ וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ עֵר׃ וַתְּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שְׁלֵה וְהָיָה בְּכִזִּיב בְּלִדְתָּהּ אֹתוֹ׃ וַיִּקַּח יְהוּדָה אִשָּׁה לְעֵר בְּכוֹרוֹ וּשְׁמָהּ תָמָר׃ וַיְהִי עֵר בְּכוֹר יְהוּדָה רֵעַ בְּעֵינֵי ד' וַיִּמְתְּהוּ ד'׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְאוֹנָן בָּא אֶל אִשְׁתְּ אָחִיךָ וַיְבִיט אֵתְּהָ וְהָקֵם זֶרַע לְאָחִיךָ׃ וַיֵּדַע אוֹנָן כִּי לֹא לוֹ יְהִיָּה הַזֶּרַע וְהָיָה אִם בָּא אֶל אִשְׁתְּ אָחִיו וּשְׁחַת אֶרְצָה לְבַלְתִּי נָתַן זֶרַע לְאָחִיו׃ וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינֵי ד' אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיָּמַת גַּם אֹתוֹ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְתָמָר כְּלָתוֹ שְׁבִי אֵלַימָּנָה בֵּית אָבִיךָ עַד יִגְדַּל שְׁלֵה בְנֵי כִי אָמַר פֶּן יָמוּת גַּם הוּא כְּאָחִיו וַתֵּלֶד תָּמָר וַתֵּשֶׁב בֵּית אָבִיהָ׃ בְּרֵאשִׁית לַחֹ-א-יָא

And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brothers, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in to her. And she conceived, and bore a son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bore a son; and she called his name Onan. And she yet again conceived, and bore a son; and called his name Shelah; and he was at Kezib, when she bore him. And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the L-rd; and the L-rd slew him. And Judah said to Onan, Go in to your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to your brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the L-rd; therefore He slew him also. Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow at your father's house, till Shelah my son be grown;" for he said, "Lest perhaps he die also, as his brothers did." And Tamar went and lived in her father's house." **Genesis 38:1-11**

(2) וַיְהִי בַעַת הַהִיא. יְבוֹאֵר שְׁהַעַת גֵּרָם לַעֲנִיָּן הַבָּא לַפְּנִים. וּפְרִשׁ"י שְׁהוֹרִידוּהוּ מִגְדוּלְתוֹ. וּלְפ"ז לֹא שִׁיךְ סְמִיכוֹת הַפְּרִשָּׁה אֲלֵא לְמִשׁ"כ וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה. וְלֹא לְכָל הָעֲנִיָּן. אֲבָל בְּרַבָּה אֵיטָא בְּטָרָם תַּחֲלִיל יִלְדָּה. קוֹדֵם שְׁנוֹלֵד מִשְׁעַבְד הַרְאִשׁוֹן נוֹלֵד גּוֹאֵל הָאֲחֵרוֹן. הָעֵמֶק דְּבַר, שָׁם

And it came to pass at that time: It is clear from the text that "that time" was the cause of the events that followed. Now Rashi explained [that at that time] they reduced Yehudah from his position of leadership, [amongst the brothers for he should have been more responsible and stopped the sale of Yosef]. But according to that explanation, only the beginning of the narrative, "Judah went down from his brothers," has any connection [with the above] and not the whole narrative. In the Midrash Rabbah, however, it says, [quoting the following verse] (Isaiah 66:7), "'Before she labored, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a son,' before the birth of the first enslavement was born the final Redeemer." **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

(3) ויט עד איש עדלמי ושמו חירה. כל ענין חירה שבפ' לא נודע לאיזה ענין נזכר כי גם שליחות הגדי לתמר מה לנו לדעת מי הוא השליח אלא בא ללמדנו דכשם שבעת שהתנוצץ לידת משיח היה ע"י סרסרות אדם גדול ונכבד עד שיהודה התרועע עמו כך יהיה לאח"ז כי בבנין בית דוד המלך הזדקק חירם מלך צור. ובימי המשיח כתיב והיו מלכים אמניך: העמק דבר, שם

And turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah: It is not clear why the whole subject of Hirah is mentioned in this narrative. There was no reason to mention his name even in conjunction with his role as Yehudah's messenger in delivering the kid to Tamar. Rather, it came to teach us that just as the birth of Moshiach began its emergence through the involvement of a great and respected man, of such stature that Yehudah became his fast friend, so too will it be in the future, for the building of the Temple of the house of King David was through the involvement of Hiram, the king of Tzur. Regarding the days of Moshiach it is written (Isaiah 49:23), "And kings shall be your foster fathers . . ." **Haamek Davr, Ibid.**

(4) ויקח יהודה וגו'. הן לא היה ער אז כ"א בן שמונה שנים וכדאי' בסנהדרין פ' ב"ס ורק משום שיהודה נתאוה להרבות זרעו והוא לא היה יכול לקחת אשה אחרת משום שאשתו היתה בת שוע ואין זה כבודו שיקח אשה על בתו ועתה כאשר ראה שלא יוליד עוד ממנה השתדל למהר ליתן אשה גדולה לבנו הצעיר בשנים. ובאשר היא אשה גדולה בשנים תלד ממנו כדאי' בסנהדרין דק"ד ובאיכה רבתי שכך היו עושיין בירושלים להרבות בנים שהיו משיאין גדולה לקטן: ושמה תמר. היתה חשובה מאד עד שהיא כדאית להזכר בשמה. ושע"כ זכתה שיצא ממנה זרע מלוכה בישראל: העמק דבר, שם

And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar: Er, at the time, was only eight years old, as is stated in Sanhedrin, Chapter "Ben Sorer" (69b). It was only because Yehudah desired to increase his seed, and he wasn't himself able to take another wife, as his wife was the daughter of Shuah and it would be a dishonor for him to take another wife in addition to his daughter. And now that he saw that he couldn't have more children with her, he made the effort to hurry and give an older woman to his son who was still young. As she was older she was more likely to bear children from him [in this earlier period of history], as is stated in Sanhedrin 104a and the Midrash Eicha Rabathi (*"The city that was full of people."* Lamentations 1:1) Rabbah said in R. Yohanan's name: They used to marry off a young girl to an adult, and a minor to a full-grown woman, that they might bear many children.) **Whose name was Tamar:** She was very prestigious, as she was worthy of being mentioned by name. For that reason she merited that the seed of the kingdom of Israel should issue forth from her. **Haamek Davar ibid.**

B.

(1) וירבו הימים ותמת בת שוע אשת יהודה וינחם יהודה ויעל על גזוי צאנו הוא וחירה רעהו העדלמי תמנתה: ויגד לתמר לאמר הנה חמיו עלה תמנתה לגז צאנו: ותסר בגדי אלמנותה מעליה ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף ותשב בפתח עינים אשר על דרך תמנתה פי ראתה פי גדל שלה והוא לא נתנה לו לאשה: ויראה יהודה ויחשבה לזונה פי כסתה פניה: ויט אליה אל הדרך ויאמר הבה נא אבוא אליך פי לא ידע פי כלתו הוא ותאמר מה תתן לי פי תבוא אלי: ויאמר אנכי אשלח גדי עזים מן הצאן ותאמר אם תתן ערבון עד שלחך: ויאמר מה הערבון אשר אתן לך ותאמר חתמך ופיתלך ומטף אשר בידך ויתן לה ויבא אליה ותהר לו: ותקם ותלך ותסר צעיפה מעליה ותלבש בגדי אלמנותה: וישלח יהודה את גדי העזים ביד רעהו העדלמי לקחת הערבון מיד האשה ולא מצאה: וישאל את אנשי מקמה לאמר איך הקדשה הוא בעינים על הדרך ויאמרו לא היתה בזה קדשה: וישב אל יהודה ויאמר לא מצאתיה וגם אנשי המקום אמרו לא היתה בזה קדשה: ויאמר יהודה תקח לה פן נהיה לבוז הנה שלחתי הגדי הזה ואתה לא מצאתה: בראשית לחיב-כג

And in process of time the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheep shearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told to Tamar, saying, Behold your father-in-law goes up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she took off her widow's garments, and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place (*einayim*), which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him for his wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned to her by the way, and said, Come, I beg you, let me come in to you; for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What will you give me, that you may come in to me? And he said, I will send you a kid from the flock. And she said, Will you give me a pledge, till you send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give you? And she said, Your signet, and your bracelets (fringes), and your staff that is in your hand. And he gave them to her, and came in to her, and she conceived by him. And she arose, and went away, and took off her veil, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand; but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, who was at *einayim* (crossroads or guest house) by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place. And he returned to Judah, and said, I can not find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed; behold, I sent this kid, and you have not found her. **Genesis 38:12-23**

(2) בפתח עינים. במדינות הללו אין אכסניות על הדרך כ"א בית ריקם ואין איש דר שם ומי שנצרך ללון בלילה בדרך בא ולן שם והוא נקרא עינים והיה שם מטות ריקניות: העמק דבר, שם

And sat in an open place ("einayim"): In those countries, there were no inns by the roadside, only empty houses [which were situated at certain intervals], in which no one actually lived. Anyone who needed to stay overnight came and stayed there overnight. This was called "einayim". There were empty beds that were provided there. **Haamek Davar ibid.**

(3) כי כסתה פניה. דאלו היו פניה מגולים היה מכירה מרחוק כי היא תמר אבל באשר היו פניה מכוסים חשבה לזונה. ואחר שהוחלט אלו שהיא זונה שוב אח"כ כשדברה עמו לא הכירה בקולה שלא עלה ע"ד שתמר כלתו החשובה ביותר תעשה מעשה זונה ח"ו ע"כ לא היה קולה לאות כ"כ כמו שלא הכריע יצחק מקול יעקב שהוא הוא כמו שהכריע ממישוש הידים שהוא עשו: העמק דבר, שם

[He thought her to be a harlot;] because she had covered her face: If her face had been uncovered, he would have recognized from a distance that she was Tamar. But since her face was covered, he thought her to be a harlot. After he had made up his mind that she was a harlot, he was unable to recognize her from her voice, as it never entered his mind that Tamar, his daughter-in-law, who was so prestigious would be involved in harlotry, G-d forbid. That is why her voice was not a clear indication of who she really was, just as in the case of Yitzchak who didn't realize that it was Yaakov from his voice, since he had made up his mind, based upon the feel of his hands, that it was Esau. **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

(4) ופתילך: . . . ואולי היה הפתיל של תכלת כדי לזכור כסא הכבוד וכך נהגו בני יעקב. והנה שלשה דברים הללו היה לאות על שלש מעלות. חותם הוא למחוקק. פתיל הוא למתבודד ביראת ד'. מטה הוא לשבט מושל: העמק דבר, שם

Your signet, and your bracelets (fringes), and your staff that is in your hand: It is possible that the fringe [which was connected to his outer garment] was made of *techeiles* (wool that was specially dyed the color sky blue) so that he remember the Throne of Glory, that which was the custom of the children of Yaakov. Now these three things [which she took as a pledge] signified three special qualities. The signet ring is the sign of a law giver (*mehokek*). The fringe is indicative of one who meditates, absorbed with the fear of G-d. The staff is the symbol of a ruler. **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

C.

(1) וַיְהִי | כְּמִשְׁלַשׁ חֳדָשִׁים וַיִּגַּד לַיהוּדָה לֵאמֹר זָנְתָה תָמָר כְּלִתְךָ וְגַם הֵנָּה הָרָה לְזַנוּנִים וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה הוֹצִיאֶנָּה וְתִשְׂרָף: הוּא מוֹצֵאת וְהִיא שְׁלִיחָה אֶל חַמְיָה לֵאמֹר לְאִישׁ אֱלֹה לֹא אָנֹכִי הָרָה וְתֹאמַר הִכָּר נָא לְמִי הַחֲתָמֹת וְהַפְתִּילִים וְהַמָּטָה הָאֵלֶּה: וַיִּכַּר יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מִמֶּנִּי כִּי עַל כֵּן לֹא נִתְתִּיחָ לְשִׁלָּה בְּנֵי וְלֹא יִסֵּף עוֹד לְדַעְתָּהּ: וַיְהִי בַעֲת לְדָתָהּ וְהֵנָּה תֹאמְרִים בְּבִטְנָהּ: וַיְהִי בְלִדְתָהּ וַיִּתֵּן יָד וַתִּקַּח הַמִּילֶדֶת וַתִּקְשֹׁר עַל יָדוֹ שְׁנֵי יָצָא רֵאשֶׁנָּה: וַיְהִי | כְּמִשְׁיָב יָדוֹ וְהֵנָּה יָצָא אָחִיו וַתֹּאמֶר מַה פָּרִצְתָּ עָלַיךָ פָּרֵץ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פָּרֵץ: וְאַחַר יָצָא אָחִיו אֲשֶׁר עַל יָדוֹ הַשְּׁנֵי וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ זָרָח: בְּרֵאשִׁית לַח-כַּד-ל

And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by harlotry. And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burned. When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child; and she said, Discern, I beg you, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She has been more righteous than I; because I did not give her to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more. And it came to pass in the time of her labor, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she labored, that one put out his hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out; and she said, What a breach you have made for yourself. Therefore his name was called Perez. And afterward came out his brother, who had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah. **Genesis 38:24-30**

(2) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה הוֹצִיאֶנָּה וְתִשְׂרָף אִמֵּר אֶפְרַיִם מִקְשָׁאָה תַלְמִידוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי מֵאִיר מְשׁוּם רַבִּי מֵאִיר, תָּמָר בַּת שֵׁם הִיטָה שֶׁהוּא כֹהֵן לְפִיכָךְ דְּנוּהָ בְּשִׂרְיָפָה (ב"ר פה י) זֶה כָּתַב רַש"י, וְלֹא פִירְשׁוּ: וְאֵנִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי הַדִּין הַזֶּה, שֶׁבַת כֹּהֵן אֵינָה חַיִּיבַת שְׂרִיפָה אֲלֵא בְּזִנוּת עִם זִיקַת הַבַּעַל, אֲרוּסָה אוֹ נְשׂוּאָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְפֹרָשׁ בְּגִמְרָא בְּסִנְהֶדְרִין (נא:), אֲבָל בַּת כֹּהֵן שׁוֹמֵרַת יָבָם שׁוֹזִינָתָה אֵינָה בְּמִיתָה כְּלָל, וּבֵין בַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵין בַּת כֹּהֵן אֵינָה אֲלֵא בְּלֹא גְרִידָא וְאֵם תֹּאמַר שֶׁהִיא הַיְבוּם נוֹהֵג בְּבִנֵי נַח, וְהִיא לֵהֶם בְּכָלֵל אֵשֶׁת אִישׁ, וְאִזְהָרָה שֶׁלֵּהֶם זֶה הִיא מִיתָתָם (שם נח:), וְהֵלֵא הֵם אוֹמְרִים (ב"ר פה ה) שֶׁיְהוּדָה הַתַּחֲחִיל בְּמִצְוֹת יְבוּם תַּחֲלָה, וְכֵן בְּגִמְרָא סִנְהֶדְרִין (נז:), מוֹכִיחַ שֶׁאֵין יְבָמָה בְּבִנֵי נַח חַיִּיבַת כְּלָל: וְנִרְאָה לִי שֶׁהִיא יְהוּדָה קִצְיָן שׁוֹטֵר וּמוֹשֵׁל בְּאַרְץ, וְהַכֹּלָה אֲשֶׁר תִּזְנֶה עָלָיו אֵינָה נְדוּנָת כְּמִשְׁפַּט שְׂאֵר הָאֲנָשִׁים, אֲךָ כְּמַבְזָה אֶת הַמְּלָכוֹת, וְעַל כֵּן כָּתוּב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה הוֹצִיאֶנָּה וְתִשְׂרָף, כִּי בָּאוּ לְפָנָיו לַעֲשׂוֹת בַּה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה, וְהוּא חַיִּיב אוֹתָהּ מִיתָה לְמַעַלַת הַמְּלָכוֹת, וְשִׁפְט אוֹתָהּ כְּמַחֲלַלַת אֶת אֲבִיהָ לְכַבּוֹד כְּהוֹנָתוֹ, לֹא שִׁיחָה דִין הַדְּיוֹטוֹת כֵּן: . . . רַמְב"ן לְבְּרֵאשִׁית לַח-כַּד

And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burned: “Ephraim Maksha'ah, the disciple of R. Meir, said on the authority of R. Meir: Tamar was the daughter (or granddaughter) of Shem, who was a Kohen (Melchizedek, king of Shalem, who was the priest of the most high God, (Gen. 14:18), is identified by our Sages, of blessed memory, with Shem, the son of Noah.) Therefore they condemned her to burning. (Midrash Beraishis Rabbah 85:10).” The above is a quote from

Rashi's commentary. He didn't, however, explain it. I am personally not aware of such a law. That which the daughter of a Kohen (priest) is condemned to death by burning is only if she has an extramarital affair, after either betrothal (*eirusin*) or marriage (*nisuin*), as it is clearly stated in Sanhedrin (51b). A daughter of a Kohen who is waiting for her deceased husband's brother to perform the duty of a husband's brother (*yibum*), is not at all punished with death, whether she is the daughter of an Israelite or a Kohen. She is only in violation of a negative commandment. And don't say that the laws of *yibum* are in effect for *b'nai Noah* (lit. the descendants of Noah, i.e. humanity in general), and, in accordance with their legal system, she is considered to be akin to a married woman, and the penalty for any violation of any law in that system is death (Sanhedrin 58b), because the [Sages] say (Midrash Bereishis Rabbah 85:5) that Yehudah was the very first to have performed the *mitzva* of *yibum*. Similarly, it is evident from the gemora Sanhedrin (57b) that there is no penalty at all in the system of *b'nai Noah* if a *yivama* (widow, waiting for *yibum*) has an affair. It seems to me that Yehudah was an officer, judge, and ruler in the land. [In such a situation,] a daughter-in-law who would act immorally would not be judged like any other individual but would be considered as if she had disgraced the government. That is why it is written (Gen. 38:24), "And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burned," as they came before him with the intention of carrying out anything that he would command them. He condemned her to death for the sake of the honor of the government, and specifically condemned her [to die by burning] akin to someone who dishonored their father, in honor of the office of his priesthood. But this judgement would not have applied to an ordinary person. . . . **Ramban, ibid.**

3 א"ר יוחנן אמר הקב"ה ליהודה אתה אמרת הכר נא חיך שתמר אומרת לך הכר נא. מדרש
בראשית רבה פד:ט

Rabbi Yohanon said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Yehudah, "You said (Gen. 37:32), "know now - please recognize (*haker na*)," by your life [I swear,] that Tamar will tell you (Gen. 38:25), "please recognize (*haker na*)." **Midrash Bereishis Rabbah 84:19**

4 ויכר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני - היינו דאמר רב חנין בר ביזנא א"ר שמעון חסידא: . . .
יהודה שקדש ש"ש בפרהסיא זכה ונקרא כולו על שמו של הקב"ה. כיון שהודה ואמר צדקה ממני,
יצתה בת קול ואמרה: אתה הצלת תמר ושני בניה מן האור, חיך שאני מציל בזכותך ג' מבניך מן
האור מאן נינהו? חנניה מישאל ועזריה. צדקה ממני - מנא ידע? יצתה בת קול ואמרה: ממני יצאו
כבושים. (בראשית לח) ולא יסף עוד לדעתה - אמר שמואל סבא חמוה דרב שמואל בר אמי משמיה
דרב שמואל בר אמי: כיון שידעה שוב לא פסק ממנה, כתיב הכא: ולא יסף עוד לדעתה, וכתוב התם:
(דברים ה) קול גדול ולא יסף. סוטה י:

"And Judah acknowledged them, and said: She is more righteous than I." (Genesis 38:26) That is what R. Hanin b. Bizna said in the name of R. Shimon the Pious: . . . Judah . . . who sanctified the heavenly Name in public merited that the whole of his name should be called after the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, [as the name Yehudah contains all four letters of the Tetragrammaton]. When he confessed and said: She is more righteous than I, a Bath Kol issued forth and proclaimed, "Thou didst rescue Tamar and her two sons from the fire. By thy life, I will rescue through thy merit three of thy descendants from the fire". Who are they? Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. "She is more righteous than I." How did he know this? A Bath Kol issued forth and proclaimed, "From Me came forth secrets." "And he knew her again no more (or alternately: without cessation)." (ibid.) Shmuel the elder, father-in-law of R. Shmuel b. Ammi said in the name of R. Shmuel b. Ammi: Having once known her, he did not separate from her again. It is written here, "And he knew her again no more (without cessation) [*Yasaf*], and elsewhere it is written: With a great voice increasing [*Yasaf*]. (Deut. 5:19)" **Sota 10b**

5) אבל עדיין לא נתבאר במה רשום בלידת פרץ התנוצצות משיח יותר מיהודה בעצמו שממנו יצא לדור אחרון מלך המשיח. ומתחלה יש לומר דבמה שפרץ נולד בפריצות דרך הטבע ניכר היה שזרעו יצא זרע מלוכה שפורץ לעשות לו דרך. . . . וכשראו ישראל אשר תאמי צביה פרץ וזרח היו אנשי מעלה שאין למעלה מהם מזה הבינו שמהם יצא מלך המשיח שיפרוץ דרך ברוחנית כדכתיב וְהָרִיחוּ בְיָרְאֵת ד' ועוד הרבה עד שאמר בלעם עליו וקרקר כל בני שת. וביארנו במקומו שיבער אמונת בני שת והיינו והאלילים כליל יחלוף. העמק דבר, בראשית לה:א

It is still not clear how the birth of Perez is more indicative of the blossoming of Moshiach than the birth of Yehuda himself, who was the progenitor of the line that would produce the anointed king (Moshiach) in the final generation of mankind. The first answer is that Perez's birth, one which breached through the normative natural way [of child birth], is a clear indication that his progeny will be royalty who will possess the power to break through barriers in order to create a new path [for themselves]. . . . [But the ultimate answer is that] when the people of Israel saw that the beloved twins, Perez and Zerah, were people of the highest spiritual level, they understood that from them would be produced the anointed king (Moshiach) who would break through barriers in order to create a new path of spirituality, as it is written [in Isaiah 11:3], "And his delight shall be in the fear of the L-rd," and in many other places. [His power will be such that] Balaam said of him (Numbers 24:17), "and [he will] destroy [the falsehoods of] all the sons of Seth (mankind)." We explained this verse, in our commentary there, to mean that Moshiach will destroy the beliefs of the sons of Seth, i.e. that the idols and idolatry will be utterly destroyed. **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

6) ויהי בלדתה: כבר בארו שער ואונן באו בסוד היבום בפרץ וזרח, וע"כ נחשבו תמיד בין בני יהודה כמ"ש בפ" ד"ה וער בא תפרץ ואונן בזרח, וזרח רצה לצאת ראשונה, כי אונן לא היה רע כער, ויתן יד, כי מזרח יצאו נביאים ובעלי רה"ק איתן האזרחי והימן וכלכל ודרדע שהיה עליהם יד ד', פרץ עליו פרץ, כי ער הוא הבכור ויצא ממנו מלכות ב"ד כמ"ש אף אני בכור אתנהו, והמלך קודם לנביא, וע"כ ואחר יצא אחיו. מלבי"ם שם

And it came to pass, when she labored: The [Kabbalists] have already explained that Er and Onan came back to this world through the mystery of *yibum* (levirate marriage) as Perez and Zerah. That is why they are always enumerated amongst the sons of Yehudah, as I explained in my commentary to Chronicles. Er reincarnated into Perez and Onan into Zerah. Now Zerah wanted to go out first, as Onan wasn't as bad as Er. **One put out his hand:** For from Zerah there descended prophets and men of the Holy Spirit: Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Kalcol, and Darda (Kings I 5:11 see also Psalms 88 and 89), men on whom the hand of G-d (the holy Spirit) was felt. **What a breach you have made for yourself:** For Er was the first born, and from him issued forth the dynasty of the kings of the house of David, as it is stated (Psalms 89:28), "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth," and a king takes precedence over a prophet. Therefore he went out first. **Malbim, ibid.**

7) ויאמרו כל העם אשר בשער והזקנים עדים יתן ד' את האשה הבאה אל ביתך כרחל | וכלאה אשר בנו שתיהם את בית ישראל ועשה חיל באפרתה וקרא שם בבית לחם: ויהי ביתך כבית פרץ אשר ילדה תמר ליהודה מן הזרע אשר יתן ד' לך מן-הנערה הזאת: רות די-א-יב

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The L-rd make the woman that has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, who both built the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-Lehem; And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which the L-rd shall give you of this young woman. **Ruth 4:11-12**

II. A Slave in the House of Potiphar

A.

(1) וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לֶאֱכֹל לֶחֶם וַיִּשְׂאוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וַיִּרְאוּ וַהֲנִה אֲרֻחַת יִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים בָּאָה מִגְּלָעַד וּגְמָלֵיהֶם נִשְׂאִים נֹכַחַת וְצָרִי וְלֹט הוֹלְכִים לְהוֹרִיד מִצְרַיִמָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל אָחִיו מָה בָּצַע כִּי נִהְרַג אֶת אָחִינוּ וְכִסִּינוּ אֶת דָּמוֹ: לָכוּ וְנִמְכְּרֵנוּ לְיִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים וַיִּדְנוּ אֶל תְּהִי בּוֹ כִּי אָחִינוּ בְּשָׂרְנוּ הוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אָחִיו: וַיַּעֲבְרוּ אַנְשֵׁים מִדִּינִים סַחְרִים וַיִּמְשְׁכוּ וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת יוֹסֵף מִן הַבּוֹר וַיִּמְכְּרוּ אֶת יוֹסֵף לְיִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים בְּעֶשְׂרִים כֶּסֶף וַיְבִיאוּ אֶת יוֹסֵף מִצְרַיִמָּה: בְּרֵאשִׁית לז:כה-כח

And they sat down to eat bread; and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of **Ishmaelites** came from Gilead with their camels bearing gum, balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said to his brothers, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the **Ishmaelites**, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brothers were content. Then there passed by **Midianites** merchants; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out from the pit, and [they] sold Joseph to the **Ishmaelites** for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph to Egypt. **Genesis 37:25-28**

(2) וְהַמְּדָנִים מָכְרוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל מִצְרַיִם לְפוֹטִיפָר סָרִיס פְּרֹעֶה שֶׁר הַטְּבָחִים: בְּרֵאשִׁית לז:לו

And the **Midianites** (*Madonim*) sold him to (in) Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard. **Genesis 37:36**

(3) וַיּוֹסֵף הוֹרֵד מִצְרַיִמָּה וַיִּקְנֶהוּ פוֹטִיפָר סָרִיס פְּרֹעֶה שֶׁר הַטְּבָחִים אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵלִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹרְדוּהוּ שָׁמָּה: וַיְהִי ד' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרַיִ: וַיִּרְא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי ד' אֹתוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר הוּא עוֹשֶׂה ד' מְצַלִּיחַ בְּיָדוֹ: וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּשְׁרַת אֹתוֹ וַיִּפְקְדֵהוּ עַל בֵּיתוֹ וְכֹל יֵשׁ-לוֹ נָתַן בְּיָדוֹ: וַיְהִי מֵאֲזַז הַפְּקִיד אֹתוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ וַיְבָרֶךְ ד' אֶת בֵּית הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּגִלְלַת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי בְרַפְתּוֹ ד' בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ בְּבֵית וּבְשָׂדֵהוּ: וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בְּיַד יוֹסֵף וְלֹא יָדַע אֹתוֹ מֵאוֹמָה כִּי אִם הִלָּחֵם אֲשֶׁר הוּא אוֹכֵל וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יָפֵה תָאֵר וַיִּפֶּה מְרֹאֶה: בְּרֵאשִׁית לט:א-ו

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard (chamberlain of the butchers), an Egyptian, bought him from the hands of the **Ishmaelites**, who had brought him down there. And the L-rd was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the L-rd was with him, and that the L-rd made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the L-rd blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the L-rd was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not what he had, save for the bread which he ate. And Joseph was handsome and good looking. **Genesis 39:1-6**

(4) אַנְשֵׁים מִדִּינִים סַחְרִים. שֶׁהֲלָכוּ בַמַּדְבָּר עִם אוֹתָהּ אוֹרְחַת יִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים וְהַגְּמָלִים שֶׁהָרִי א"א לִילֶךְ בַּמַּדְבָּר בְּלִי אוֹרְחָה גְדוּלָה וְהָמָה הֲלָכוּ רַגְלֵי וּמִשָּׁה לֹא רָאוּ מִרְחוֹק אֱלֹהֵי הַגְּמָלִים הַגְּבוּהִים. וְהָמָה הַמִּדְיָנִים שֶׁהֲלָכוּ רַגְלֵי נָטוּ מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ לְקוֹל יוֹסֵף אוֹ שֶׁלִּבְבָם דָּפַק לָהֶם לְהִסְתַּכֵּל בּוֹזֵה הַבּוֹר: וַיִּמְשְׁכוּ. הַמִּדְיָנִים. וְהָאֲחִים שֶׁרָאוּ שֶׁמַּחֲזוּ בּוֹזֵה כִּי נַעֲשׂוּ רְצוֹנָם בְּלִי אֲמִצְעוֹת עֲצָמָם וְאֵלּוּ לֹא דָבַר יְהוּדָה כִּךָ לֹא הָיוּ מִנִּיחֵי לְמִשׁוֹךְ וּלְמִכּוֹר אֵלּא הַנִּיחוּהוּ בְּבוֹר עַד שֶׁמַּת אֲבָל מִשֶּׁהוּחַלֵּט אֲצִלָּם לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן הָיָה לָהֶם לְנַחַת כִּשְׁנַעֲשֶׂה ע"י הַמִּדְיָנִים. וְהָיִינוּ דְאִי' כְּב"ר פ' פ"ד שֶׁנִּגְנַב יוֹסֵף שְׁתֵּי פַעֲמִים. הָיִינוּ הָאֲחִים גְּבוּהוּ

מאביהם. והמדנינים מן האחים. ומכ"מ אמר יוסף כשנתודע לאחיו כי מכרתם אותי הנה. משום שהמה גרמו לדבר וידעו מעשה המדינים ולא מיחו עליהם. ה"ז כמו שעשו המה. וכן פי' הרשב"ם: ויביאו. הישמעאלים: העמק דבר לבראשית לז:כח

Then there passed by Midianites (*Midianim*) merchants: They were traveling with the caravan of Ishmaelites and camels, as it is impossible to travel through the desert without being together with a large caravan. They traveled, [however,] by foot. For that reason the brothers only saw from a distance the camels, which were tall, [but not them]. Those Midianites, who were traveling by foot, turned off the road, because they heard the voice of Yosef, or perhaps out of curiosity to see what was in that pit. **And they drew and lifted up Joseph out from the pit:** This is referring to the Midianites. The brothers who saw this, rejoiced from all of this, as their wishes were fulfilled without their being directly involved. Had Yehudah not spoken up, they wouldn't have let them pull him out of the pit, but they would have left him in the pit to die. But when they decided to [sell him] they were satisfied that it was done through the Midianites. Now it is stated in the Midrash Bereishis Rabbah, in Chapter 84, that Yosef was stolen twice. This means that the brothers stole him from their father, and the Midianites [stole him] from the brothers. Nevertheless, Yosef said to the brothers, when he revealed himself, "you sold me here," because they caused the thing and were aware of what the Midianites were doing and they didn't protest. Such a thing is the equivalent of having done it themselves. Rashbam also explains this in the same way. **And they brought Joseph to Egypt:** This refers to the Ishmaelites [who bought him from the Midianites]. **Haamek Davar, Genesis 37:28**

(5) והמדנינים. המה סרסרים שהיה בזה העסק של עבדים שנדרש לאנשי ריב ומדון: אל מצרים. במצרים מיבעי אלא כדאי' ברבה לדימוסיא של מדינה שכך היה הנהוג דמי שבא למכור עבד וקשה עליו להמתין עד שיזדמן קונה לזה הי עסק המדינה שקנוהו עד שיעמידו לשוק המקח כ"פ עד שיהי' נמכר. ופויטפר היה ממונה על זה העסק. ועיין להלן ל"ט א': העמק דבר בראשית לז:לו

(Genesis 37:36) And the Midianites (*haMidanim*) sold him to (in) Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard]: These were brokers (*Midanim*), [and not Midianites,] who were involved with dealing with slaves, [a field] which demanded that they have a stubborn and argumentative (*madon*) personality. **To Egypt (*el Mitzraim*):** It should have been written "in Egypt". The explanation is as is stated in the Midrash Bereishis Rabbah (84:22), "To the official office of the country." The following was the common custom [at that time]: When one came to sell a slave and it was hard for him to wait around until he would come across a customer for a particular slave, there was a governmental body that bought the slave and would take care of him until the slave would be taken to the slave market and sold there. [They would keep him there, even for an extended period, until a suitable customer would be found for him]. Potiphar was the one appointed over this governmental body. **Haamek Davar Gen. 37:36**

(6) ויוסף הורד מצרימה. פרש"י חוזר לענין הראשון. וא"כ אינו אלא כפלות דברים. וגם מיותר מש"כ איש מצרי וגם מיד הישמעאלים אשר הורידוהו שמה כ"ז אין בו טעם וענין. אבל כבר ביארנו שכך היה המנהג בבוא איש למכור עבד. והיה קשה עליו לשבת ולפרנס ולשמור את העבד עד שיזדמן קונה אזי היה נמכר לדימוסיא של מדינה אשר פויטפר היה הממונה ע"ז והמדנינים היו הסרסרים בזה. והיה הנימוס אשר אין הממונה רשאי ליקח לעצמו מן הדימוסיא כמו שהדין גם אצלנו אשר גבאי צדקה אסורים לקנות מן הצדקה לעצמן מפני החשד. אבל אם המוכר מביא בעצמו על השוק למכור הלא הכל שוין. ומספר המקרא אופן ההשגחה הפרטית אשר זרחה ליוסף כי קנהו פויטפר לעצמו והיה בזה תועלת נפלא באשר היה שר הטבחים של מלוכה ע"כ נפגש לבסוף עם שרי

המלוכה שר המשקים ושר האופים ומזה החל להתנוצץ גדולתו. ומספר המקרא ויוסף הורד מצרימה היינו על שוק המקח שהיה בעיר לא כאשר ישב עד כה בדימוסיא של מדינה שהיה חצר חוץ לעיר אלא הורד מצרימה: ויקנהו פוטיפר. אע"ג שלא בקל היה יכול לעשות כן אחרי אשר נמכר לדימוסיא מ"מ השתדל בהמצאה אשר לא יורידוהו המדנים סרסרי הדימוסיא אלא הישמעאלים שמכרו המה הורידוהו שמה על השוק ואל נודע לאיש כי נמכר לדימוסיא תחלה. והיה גם בזה טובה ליוסף לשעה זו. כי המדנים המה אנשים רעים אשר חברתם הרגילה עם עבדים קשה על איש יקר רוח כיוסף אבל הישמעאלים היו סוחרים בשארי דברים ואין להם עסק עם עבדים רק במקרה בא להם עסק יוסף. ומספר הכתוב שהיה פוטיפר איש מצרי שלא נחשוב שהסיבה שהשתדל פוטיפר כ"כ בזה משום שהיה ממדינת כנען כמו שמצוי שעובדים במלוכה אנשים ממדינה אחרת. ובאשר מצא עבד מכנען היודע טבע בני כנען ערבה עליו עבודתו. ואה"כ כי לא כן הדבר אלא הי' איש מצרי ומ"מ השתדל הרבה בזה ע"פ השגחה פרטית: העמק דבר, בראשית לט:א

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt: Rashi explained that the Torah [repeated it in order to] return to the first subject. If so, this is only redundant. In addition it was unnecessary to write, "an Egyptian," [in describing Potiphar]. Furthermore, there is no reason or rationale for [the statement,] "[he] bought him from the hands of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down there." We have already explained, however, the custom was when one came to sell a slave and found it difficult to remain and feed and guard his slave until a customer would be found, that he would sell it to the governmental body over which Potiphar had been appointed. The *Madanim* were the brokers for the sale. The law was that the appointee over this [governmental slave center] did not have the right to purchase a slave for himself, which is similar to our law that a trustee (*gabai*) over a charitable trust (*tzedakah*) is forbidden to take from the trust for himself, [even for the purpose of exchanging coins]. This is in order for him to remain above suspicion. If, however, the seller, himself, would bring the slave to the market to sell, then everyone has equal access, [including an official]. Scripture is describing the special Providence which shone upon Yosef, the fact that Potiphar acquired him for himself, which had an amazing benefit. Since [Potiphar] was the captain of the guards, [Yosef] was eventually able to meet governmental officials, the chief butler and the chief baker, who were responsible for his rise to power. Scripture relates that Yosef was brought down to Egypt, to the slave market in the city, and not, where he had previously been, in the governmental slave center that was in a courtyard outside the city. Rather he was brought down into Egypt [proper] and was purchased by Potiphar. Even though it would have been easier for him to acquire Yosef after he had [initially] been sold to the slave center, nevertheless, [Potiphar] arranged that the *Madanim*, brokers of the slave center, should not bring him to the slave market, but rather the Ishmaelites who [originally] sold him should take him [back and go] down to the market, without revealing the fact to anyone that he had already been sold to the slave center first. [Not only did his removal from the slave center enable Potiphar to buy him,] but it also directly benefited Yosef, as the *Madanim* (slave brokers) were evil people and their normal relationship with slaves would be offensive for a highly spiritual person like Yosef. The Ishmaelites, however, were merchants of other goods whose only dealing with slaves was in this particular instance. Scripture tells us that Potiphar was an Egyptian, so we shouldn't think that Potiphar worked so hard [to purchase] Yosef because he was [originally] from the country of Canaan, as is common that a government would employ people [whose origin was] from a different country. In such a case, had he found a slave from Canaan, who would be familiar with the culture of Canaanites, [he would prefer him] as his service would be quite pleasant. Scripture specifically tells us, however, that it was not the case, but rather he was an Egyptian. Nevertheless he tried very hard to purchase him. This is a sign of a special Providence. **Hamek Davar, Bereishis 39:1**

B.

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּשָּׂא אֶשֶׁת אֲדֹנָיו אֶת עֵינֶיהָ אֶל יוֹסֵף וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂכַבָה עִמִּי: וַיִּמָּאֵן | וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל אֶשֶׁת אֲדֹנָיו הֵן אֲדֹנִי לֹא יָדַע אֶתִּי מִה בְּבֵית וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ נִתֵּן בְּיָדִי: אֵינְנוּ גְדוֹל בְּבֵית הַזֶּה מִמֶּנִּי וְלֹא חֶשֶׁךְ מִמֶּנִּי מֵאוֹמָה כִּי אִם אוֹתָךְ בְּאֲשֶׁר אַתָּה-אֶשְׁתּוֹ וְאִיךָ אֶעֱשֶׂה הַרְעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחִטָּאתִי לֹא-לֵהִימ: וַיְהִי כַּדְּבָרָה אֶל יוֹסֵף יוֹם | יוֹם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלֶיהָ לְשֹׁכַב אֶצְלָהּ לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּה: וַיְהִי כַּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֵא הַבַּיִתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלֹאכְתּוֹ וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת שֶׁם בְּבֵית: וַתִּתְפָּשֶׂהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׂכַבָה עִמִּי וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיֵּנֶס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה: וַתִּקְרָא לְאֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לֵאמֹר רְאוּ הֵבִיא לָנוּ אִישׁ עֲבָרִי לְצַחֵק בְּנוֹ בָּא אֵלַי לְשֹׁכַב עִמִּי וְאֶקְרָא בְּקוֹל גְּדוֹל: וַיְהִי כְשִׁמְעוּ כִּי הָרִימְתִי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיֵּנֶס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה: וַתִּנָּח בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלָהּ עַד בּוֹא אֲדֹנָיו אֶל בֵּיתוֹ: וַתִּדְבַר אֵלָיו כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר בָּא אֵלַי הַעֲבָד הַעֲבָרִי אֲשֶׁר הֵבֵאתָ לָנוּ לְצַחֵק בִּי: וַיְהִי כַּהֲרִימִי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיֵּנֶס הַחוּצָה: וַיְהִי כְשִׁמְעַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֶשֶׁתוֹ אֲשֶׁר דְּבָרָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה לִי עֲבָדְךָ וַיַּחֲרֵ אִפּוֹ: וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנִי יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ וַיִּתְּנָהוּ אֶל בֵּית הַסֹּהַר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֲסִירֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲסוּרִים וַיְהִי שֶׁם בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר: וַיְהִי ד' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיֵּט אֵלָיו חֶסֶד וַיִּתֵּן חֲנוּן בְּעֵינָי שׁוֹר בֵּית-הַסֹּהַר: וַיִּתֵּן שׁוֹר בֵּית הַסֹּהַר בְּיַד יוֹסֵף אֶת כָּל הָאֲסוּרִים אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שֶׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה: אִין | שׁוֹר בֵּית הַסֹּהַר רָאָה אֶת-כָּל מֵאוֹמָה בְּיָדוֹ בְּאֲשֶׁר ד' אֹתוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה ד' מְצַלִּיחָה: בְּרֵאשִׁית לַט:ז-כג

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said to his master's wife, Behold, my master knows not what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; nor has he kept back any thing from me but you, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against G-d? And it came to pass, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he listened not to her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there inside. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me; and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out, That she called to the men of her house, and spoke to them, saying, See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to mock us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice; And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. And she spoke to him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought to us, came in to me to mock me; And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, After this manner did your servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him in the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the prison. But the L-rd was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the L-rd was with him, and that which he did, the L-rd made it to prosper. **Genesis 39:7-23**

(2) אמר רב חנא בר ביזנא א"ר שמעון חסידא: יוסף שקידש שם שמים בסתר הוסיפו עליו אות אחת משמו של הקב"ה, . . . יוסף מאי היא? דכתיב: (בראשית לט) ויהי כהיום הזה ויבא הביתה לעשות מלאכתו, א"ר יוחנן: מלמד, ששניהם לדבר עבירה נתכוונו. ויבא הביתה לעשות מלאכתו רב ושמואל, חד אמר: לעשות מלאכתו ממש, וחד אמר: לעשות צרכיו נכנס. ואין איש מאנשי הבית

וגו' אפשר, בית גדול כביתו של אותו רשע לא היה בו איש? תנא דבי ר' ישמעאל: אותו היום יום חגם היה, והלכו כולן לבית עבודת כוכבים שלהם, והיא אמרה להן חולה היא, אמרה: אין לי יום שניזקק לי יוסף כיום הזה. (בראשית לט) ותתפשהו בכגרו לאמר וגו' באותה שעה באתה דיוקנו של אביו ונראתה לו בחלון, אמר לו: יוסף, עתידין אחיך שיכתבו על אבני אפוד ואתה ביניהם, רצונך שימחה שמך מביניהם ותקרא רועה זונות? דכתיב: (משלי כט) ורועה זונות יאבד הון. מיד: (בראשית מט) ותשב באיתן קשתו, א"ר יוחנן משום ר' מאיר: ששבה קשתו לאיתנו. סוטה לו:

R. Hana b. Bizna said in the name of R. Shmon the Pious: Because Joseph sanctified the heavenly Name in private one letter ("hei") was added to him from the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, [as it is stated (Psalms 81:6), "This he ordained in Joseph (Yehosef) which is for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt." There his name is spelled with an additional "hei"] How was it with Joseph [that he sanctified the Name]? As it is written: And it came to pass about this time, that he went into the house to do his work. R. Johanan said: This teaches that both [Joseph and Potiphar's wife] had the intention of acting immorally. "He went into the house to do his work." (Gen. 39:11) Rav and Samuel [differ in their interpretation]. One said that it really means to [actually] do his work; but the other said that he went to fulfill his desire. "And there was none of the men of the house etc." (ibid.) Is it possible that there was no man in a huge house like that of this wicked [Potiphar]! It was taught in the School of R. Ishmael: That day was their feast-day, and they had all gone to their idolatrous temple; but she had pretended to be ill because she thought, "I shall not have an opportunity like to-day for Joseph to associate with me." "And she caught him by his garment, saying etc." (Gen. 39:12) At that moment his father's image came and appeared to him through the window and said: "Joseph, thy brothers will have their names inscribed upon the stones of the ephod and thine amongst theirs; is it thy wish to have thy name expunged from amongst theirs and be called an associate of harlots?" As it is written: He that keepeth company with harlots wasteth his substance. (Proverbs 29:3) Immediately, "his bow abode in strength." (Gen. 49:24) R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Meir: [This means] that his passion subsided. "And the arms of his hands were made active." (ibid.) He stuck his hands in the ground so that his lust came out from between his finger-nails. **Sota 36b**

III. The Interpreter of Dreams

A.

(1) וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה חָטְאוּ מִשְׁקָה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וְהָאֶפֶה לְאֹדְנֵיהֶם לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּקְצֹף פְּרַעֲהַ עַל שְׁנֵי סְרִיסָיו עַל שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים וְעַל שֵׁר הָאוֹפִים: וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם בְּמִשְׁמַר בַּיִת שֵׁר הַטְּבָחִים אֶל בַּיִת הַסֵּהַר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יוֹסֵף אָסוּר שָׁם: וַיִּפְקֹד שֵׁר הַטְּבָחִים אֶת יוֹסֵף אֹתָם וַיִּשְׁרֹת אֹתָם וַיְהִיו יָמִים בְּמִשְׁמַר: **בראשית מ:א-ד**

And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard (chamberlain of the butchers), in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season (a year) in custody. **Genesis 40:1-4**

(2) חטאו משקה מלך מצרים והאופה. עבדי שר המשקי' ועבדי שר האופי': ויקצוף פרעה על שני סריסיו. שלא השגיחו על עבדיהם: המשקה והאופה: פירוש הספורנו לבראשית מ:א

The butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord [and] the king of Egypt: This is referring to slaves of the chief of the butler and the chief of the bakers. **And Pharaoh was angry against two of his officers:** Because they had not supervised their slaves, the butler and the baker. **Commentary of R. Ovadiah Seforno to Gen. 40:1-2**

(3) במשמר. לא היה העונש לישוב בבית הסוהר אלא במשמר עד שיחקרו בדינם מש"ה ישבו בית שר הטבחים ולא בבור כדרך יושבי בית האסורים אשר גם יוסף היה שם כמש"כ להלן ויריצהו מן הבור: העמק דבר, שם

And he put them in custody: Their punishment was not to sit in prison but rather to be in custody until their case would be thoroughly investigated. For that reason they sat in the house of the captain of the guards and not in the pit (dungeon), where prisoners normal sit, such as Yosef, as it says (Gen. 41:14), "And they brought him hastily out of the dungeon." **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

B.

(1) ויחלמו חלום שניהם איש חלמו בלילה אחד איש כפתרון חלמו המשקה והאפה אשר למלך מצרים אשר אסורים בבית הסהר: ויבא אליהם יוסף בבקר וירא אתם והנם זעפים: וישאל את סריסי פרעה אשר אתו במשמר בית אדניו לאמר מדוע פניכם רעים היום: ויאמרו אליו חלום חלמנו ופתר אין אתו ויאמר אליהם יוסף הלוא לא-להים פתרנים ספרו נא לי: ויספר שר המשקים את חלמו ליוסף ויאמר לו בחלומי והנה גפן לפני: ובגפן שלשה שריגם והוא כפרחת עלתה נצה הבשילו אשכלתיה ענבים: וכוס פרעה בידי ואקח את הענבים ואשחט אתם אל כוס פרעה ואתן את הכוס על כף פרעה: ויאמר לו יוסף זה פתרנו שלשת השרגים שלשת ימים הם: בעוד | שלשת ימים ישא פרעה את ראשו והשיבך על כנף ונתת כוס פרעה בידו כמשפט הראשון אשר היית משקהו: כי אם-זכרתני אתך כאשר ייטב לך ועשית נא עמדי חסד והזכרתני אל פרעה והוצאתני מן הבית הזה: כי-גנב גנבתי מארץ העברים וגם פה לא עשיתי מאומה כי שמו אתי בבור: וירא שר האפים כי טוב פתר ויאמר אל יוסף אף אני בחלומי והנה שלשה סלי חרי על-ראשי: ובסל העליון מכל מאכל פרעה מעשה אפה והעוף אכל אתם מן הסל מעל ראשי: ויען יוסף ויאמר זה פתרנו שלשת הסלים שלשת ימים הם: בעוד | שלשת ימים ישא פרעה את ראשו מעליך ותלה אותך על עץ ואכל העוף את בשרך מעליך: בראשית מ:ה-יט

And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison. And Joseph came to them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, Why do you look so sad today? And they said to him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said to them, Do interpretations not belong to G-d? Tell them to me, I beg you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded, and its blossoms shot forth; and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes; And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said to him, This is the interpretation of it; The three branches are three days; And within three days shall Pharaoh lift up your head, and restore you to your place; and you shall deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when you were his butler. But think of me when it shall be well with you, and show kindness, I beg you, to me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they

should put me in the dungeon. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head; And in the uppermost basket there were all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh; and the birds ate them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation; The three baskets are three days; And within three days shall Pharaoh lift up your head off you, and shall hang you on a tree; and the birds shall eat your flesh off you. **Genesis 40:5-19**

(2) המשקה והאפה וגו'. . . . ויתכן שאין מאמר זה בא להודיע מי הם החולמים רק יודיע דרך כלל שראו בחלומותיהם נפילת מדרגתם, שאינם במעלת שרים רק במדרגת משרתיהם, זה נושא על ראשו סל במעשי אופה וזה סוחט ענבים על הכוס, וזה אינו ענין לשר האופים ולשר המשקים רק מעשי המשרתים תחתיהם, וזה גרם להם להיות זועפים, כי מזה שפטו בדעתם שלא ידונו בעונש קל על חסרון השגחתם על משרתיהם אבל יצא עליהם משפט עונש חמור כאילו הם בעצמם התעסקו במעשי אפיה והמשקה ופשעו במלאכתם:

The butler and the baker . . . : It is quite reasonable to assume that this statement is not coming to inform us of the identity of the dreamers. Rather, it is telling us that they saw in their dreams a lowering of their status, as they were not [portrayed in the dreams] as being administrators but rather as being simple servants. This one carried a basket of baked goods and the other squeezed out grapes in to the cup. These dreams didn't relate to the [role of a] chief baker or chief butler but rather to [the role of] the servants who were below them. This is what caused them to be so distressed. Originally they thought that they would only receive a light punishment for their lack of supervision over their servants. But because of this, however, they now assumed that they would receive a severe punishment, as if they themselves had been the ones who had been negligent in their work as bakers and butlers. **Sefer Ksav V'Kabbalah, ibid.**

(3) (בראשית מ') ובגפן שלשה שריגים, אמר רב חייא בר אבא אמר רב: אלו ג' שרי גאים היוצאים מישראל בכל דור ודור, פעמים ששנים כאן ואחד בארץ ישראל, פעמים ששנים בארץ ישראל ואחד כאן יהיבו רבנן עינייהו ברבנא עוקבא ורבנא נחמיה בני ברתיה דרב. רבא אמר: אלו שלשה שרי גוים שמלמדים זכות על ישראל בכל דור ודור. תניא, רבי אליעזר אומר: גפן זה העולם, שלשה שריגים זה אברהם יצחק ויעקב, והיא כפורחת עלתה נצה אלו האמהות, הבשילו אשכולותיה ענבים אלו השבטים. אמר לו רבי יהושע: וכי מראין לו לאדם מה שהיה? והלא אין מראין לו לאדם אלא מה שעתיד להיות אלא: גפן זה תורה, שלשה שריגים אלו משה ואהרן ומרים, והיא כפורחת עלתה נצה אלו סנהדרין, הבשילו אשכולותיה ענבים אלו הצדיקים שבכל דור ודור. אמר ר"ג: עדיין צריכין אנו למודעי, דמוקים ליה כוליה בחד מקום רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר: גפן זה ירושלים, שלשה שריגים זה מקדש, מלך, וכהן גדול, והיא כפורחת עלתה נצה אלו פרחי כהונה, הבשילו אשכולותיה ענבים אלו נסכים. רבי יהושע בן לוי מוקים לה במתנות, דאמר ר' יהושע בן לוי: גפן זו תורה, שלשה שריגים זה באר, עמוד ענן, ומן, והיא כפורחת עלתה נצה אלו הבכורים, הבשילו אשכולותיה ענבים אלו נסכים. רבי ירמיה בר אבא אמר: גפן אלו ישראל, וכן הוא אומר: (תהלים פ') גפן ממצרים תסיע, שלשה שריגים אלו שלשה רגלים שישראל עולין בהן בכל שנה ושנה, והיא כפורחת עלתה נצה הגיע זמן של ישראל לפרות ולרבות, וכן הוא אומר: (שמות א') ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו, עלתה נצה - הגיע זמן של ישראל ליגאל, וכן הוא אומר: (ישעיהו ס"ג) ויז נצחם על בגדי וכל מלבושי אגאלתי, הבשילו אשכולותיה ענבים הגיע זמנה של מצרים לשתות כוס התרעלה. והיינו דאמר רבא: שלשה כוסות האמורות במצרים למה? אחד ששתה בימי משה, ואחד ששתה בימי פרעה נכה, ואחד שעתידה לשתות עם כל העובדי כוכבים. אמר ליה רבי אבא לרבי ירמיה בר אבא: כי דריש להו רב להני קראי באגדתא כוותך דריש להו. אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: אומה זו כגפן

נמשלה, זמורות שבה - אלו בעלי בתים, אשכולות שבה - אלו תלמידי חכמים, עלין שבה - אלו עמי הארץ, קנוקנות שבה - אלו ריקנים שבישראל והיינו דשלחו מתם: ליבעי רחמים איתכליא על עליא, דאילמלא עליא לא מתקיימן איתכליא. חולין צב.

And in the vine were three branches. (Genesis 40:10) R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of Rav: These are the three men of excellence that come forth in Israel in every generation; sometimes two are here [in Babylon] and one is in the land of Israel, and sometimes two are in the land of Israel and one is here. And the Rabbis set their eyes upon Rabbana Ukba and Rabbana Nehemiah, the sons of Rav's daughter. Rava said: These are the three princes (angels) of the nations who plead in Israel's favor in every generation. It was taught: R. Eliezer says: The "vine" is the world, the "three branches" are [the patriarchs] Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; "and as it was budding its blossoms shot forth" these are the matriarchs; "and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes" these are the tribes. Thereupon R. Joshua said to him: Is a man shown [in a dream] what has happened? Surely he is only shown what is to happen! Therefore, I say: The "vine" is the Torah, the "three branches" are Moses, Aaron and Miriam; "and as it was budding its blossoms shot forth" these are [the members of] the Sanhedrin; "and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes", are the righteous people of every generation. R. Gamaliel said: We still stand in need of the Modiite, for he explains the verse as referring to one place. For R. Eleazar the Modiite says: The "vine" is Jerusalem, the "three branches" are the Temple, the King and the High priest; "and as it was budding its blossoms shot forth", these are the young priests; "and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes", these are the drink-offerings. R. Yehoshua b. Levi interprets it in regard to the gifts [bestowed by G-d upon Israel]. For R. Yehoshua b. Levi said: The "vine" is the Torah, the "three branches" are the well, the pillar of smoke, and the manna; "and as it was budding its blossoms shot forth" these are the first fruits; "and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes" these are the drink-offerings. R. Jeremiah b. Abba said: The "vine" is Israel, for so it is written (Psalms 80:9): Thou didst pluck up a vine out of Egypt. The "three branches" are the three Festivals on which Israel go up [to the Temple] every year. "And as it was budding" the time is come for Israel to be fruitful and to multiply, for so it is written (Exodus 1:7): And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly. "Its blossoms (lifeblood) shot forth" the time is come for Israel to be redeemed. for so it is written (Isaiah 58:3): And their lifeblood is dashed against My garments, and I have stained all My raiment. "And the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes" the time is come for Egypt to drink the cup of staggering. And this is in accordance with what Rava had said: Why are three cups mentioned in connection with Egypt? (see Gen. 40:11) One [refers to the cup] which she drank in the days of Moses; the other to that which she drank in the days of Pharaoh-Necho; (see Jeremiah 46:2, 13) and the third to that which she is destined to drink together with all the nations. R. Abba said to R. Jeremiah b. Abba: When Rav expounded [this verse] in an Aggadic lecture he expounded it as you have done. R. Shimon b. Lakish said: This people [Israel] is like unto a vine: its branches are the aristocracy, its clusters the scholars, its leaves the common people, its twigs those in Israel that are void of learning. This is what was meant when word was sent from there [Palestine]. "Let the clusters pray for the leaves, for were it not for the leaves the clusters could not exist." **Chullin 92a**

(4) הלוא לא-להים פתרונים. הודיע להם שאין חכמה זו כשארי חכמות שתלוי רק בשכל ולמוד לא כן פתרון חלומות שהוא תלוי בסגולת הנפש ולא הכל יש להם סגולה זו. ומאחר שכן הוא חכמה זו שייך לא-להי' המופיע על הנפש המסוגל לזה ידיעה אמת' וברורה. א"כ יודע אני בי שיש לי סגולת הנפש נפלאה לזה אע"ג שלא למדתי הרבה בבתי חכמה: העמק דבר, שם

Do interpretations not belong to God?: He informed them that the branch of knowledge [of dream interpretation] is unlike other areas of wisdom which are dependent upon intelligence and study. Dream interpretation, on the other hand, is dependent on an innate psychic ability, and not everyone has this ability. . . . I know that I have this innate supernatural psychic ability, even though I never studied much of this [branch of knowledge] in schools. **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

C.

(1) וַיְהִי | בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יוֹם הַלֵּלֶת אֶת-פְּרַעֲהוּ וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתֶּה לְכָל עֲבָדָיו וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ | שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים וְאֶת רֹאשׁ שֵׁר הָאֲפִים בְּתוֹךְ עֲבָדָיו: וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶת שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים עַל מִשְׁקָהוּ וַיִּתֵּן הַכּוֹס עַל כַּף פְּרַעֲהוּ: וְאֶת שֵׁר הָאֲפִים תָּלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּתַר לָהֶם יוֹסֵף: וְלֹא-זָכַר שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכַּח: בְּרֵאשִׁית מִ:כ-כג

And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler to his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; But he hanged the chief baker; as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. **Genesis 40:20-23**

(2) וְלֹא זָכַר וּגו'. כּפֶרֶשׁ"י בֵּאוּתוֹ יוֹם וְהִיא אִפְשָׁר לַחֲשׁוֹב שֶׁלֹּא רָאָה שַׁעַת הַכוֹשֶׁר לַכֶּךְ. מִשׁ"ה פִּירֵשׁ הַכְּתוּב וַיִּשְׁכַּח. וְלֹא שֵׁם לֵב לְזוֹה כִּלְל. כִּי רִצּוֹן ד' הִיא כֶּךְ בְּהַשְׁגָּחָה פֶּרֶטִית בַּעֲוֹנָשׁ עַל שִׁבְטָה עַל שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים וּבְכֹר ר"פ מִקָּץ. אִמְרוּ ע"ז אֲשֶׁרִי הַגִּבֵּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא פָנָה אֶל רֵהֲבִים זֶה יוֹסֵף בְּשִׁבִיל שֶׁאִמְרָ כִּי אִם זָכַרְתִּי אֶתְךָ. נִיתוּסָף לוֹ שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים. הֵינְנוּ דְמִזָּה הַעֲוֹנָשׁ שֶׁמַּעֲנֵנוּ דְיוֹסֵף הַצַּדִּיק מֵעוֹלָם לֹא פָנָה לְרֵהֲבִי בְּנֵי אָדָם מִשׁ"ה נַעֲנֵשׁ כֶּהֱיוֹם וּכְמִשׁ"כ לַעֲלִיל ל"ב כ"ו. וּמִזָּה שֶׁמַּעֲנֵנוּ עִישׁוּרוֹ דָּאָם לֹא הִיא מִקְבַּל שָׂכָר עַל מִנְהַגָיו הַטּוֹבִים לֹא הִי' נַעֲנֵשׁ כְּשַׁעֲבַר עֲלָיו הַיּוֹם:

Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him: Rashi explains that he didn't remember him on the day [of his release]. It would have been possible to think that this was because [the chief butler] couldn't find an opportune time [to broach the subject with Pharaoh]. For that reason, Scripture clarifies this by saying: but forgot him, for he didn't pay any attention to the matter at all. This occurred [not through happenstance but rather] because it was [decreed through] G-d's will, through special Divine Providence. It was a punishment [to Yosef] for having put his trust in the chief butler. The Midrash Bereishis Rabbah states the following: "Happy is the man who makes the Lord his trust, and does not turn to the proud, nor to those who go astray after lies." (Psalms 40:5) This verse refers to Yosef. Because he said (Gen. 40:14), "But think on me [when it shall be well with you, and show kindness, I beg you, to me, and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house]," an additional two years was added [to his imprisonment]. - The explanation is that by the very fact that he was punished, we can infer that Yosef HaTzaddik (the righteous) had never previously turned (placed his trust) to the proud of mankind. For this was the reason he was [now] punished, as he was that day. This is a principle which I stated above (Gen. 32:26). From here we see his greatness, for if he wouldn't be receiving reward for his superior conduct [of always trusting in G-d], he wouldn't have been punished [with additional imprisonment] after the day passed. **Haamek Davar, ibid.**

IV. Yosef is Released from the Dungeon

A.

(1) וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וּפְרַעַה חָלַם וַהֲנֵה עֶמֶד עַל הַיָּאֵר: וַהֲנֵה מִן-הַיָּאֵר עֹלֹת שְׁבַע פְּרוֹת יְפוֹת מְרֹאָה וּבְרִיאַת בֶּשֶׂר וַתִּרְעִינָה בְּאָחוּ: וַהֲנֵה שְׁבַע פְּרוֹת אַחֲרוֹת עֹלֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶן מִן הַיָּאֵר רְעוֹת מְרֹאָה וְדִקּוֹת בֶּשֶׂר וַתַּעֲמִדנָה אֶצֶל הַפְּרוֹת עַל שִׁפְתַּי הַיָּאֵר: וַתֹּאכְלֶנָה הַפְּרוֹת רְעוֹת הַמְרֹאָה וְדִקּוֹת הַבֶּשֶׂר אֶת שְׁבַע הַפְּרוֹת יְפוֹת הַמְרֹאָה וַהֲבִרְיאַת וַיִּיקֶץ פְּרַעַה: וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּחְלֹם שְׁנִית וַהֲנֵה | שְׁבַע שְׁבָלִים עֹלֹת בְּקִנְיָה אֶחָד בְּרִיאוֹת וְטֹבוֹת: וַהֲנֵה שְׁבַע שְׁבָלִים דִּקּוֹת וּשְׁדוּפֹת קָדִים צְמַחוֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶן: וַתִּבְלַעְנָה הַשְּׁבָלִים הַדִּקּוֹת אֶת שְׁבַע הַשְּׁבָלִים הַבְּרִיאוֹת וַהֲמַלְאוֹת וַיִּיקֶץ פְּרַעַה וַהֲנֵה חֲלוֹם: וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַתִּפְעֹם רוּחוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת כָּל חֲרָטְמֵי מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת כָּל חֲכַמֵּיהֶם וַיְסַפֵּר פְּרַעַה לָהֶם אֶת חֲלֹמוֹ וְאִין פּוֹתֵר אוֹתָם לְפְרַעַה: וַיְדַבֵּר שׁוֹר הַמִּשְׁקִים אֶת פְּרַעַה לֵאמֹר אֶת חֲטָאֵי אֲנִי מִזְכִּיר הַיּוֹם: פְּרַעַה קִצֵּץ עַל עֲבֹדָיו וַיִּתֵּן אֹתִי בְּמִשְׁמֵר בֵּית שׁוֹר הַטְּבָחִים אֹתִי וְאֶת שׁוֹר הָאֲפִים: וַנְּחַלְמָה חֲלוֹם בְּלִילָה אֶחָד אֲנִי וְהוּא אִישׁ כְּפַתְרוֹן חֲלֹמוֹ חֲלָמְנוּ: וְשֵׁם אֲתָנּוּ נֶעַר עֲבָרֵי עֶבֶד לְשׁוֹר הַטְּבָחִים וַנְּסַפֵּר לוֹ וַיִּפְתֹּר לָנוּ אֶת חֲלֹמֵינוּ אִישׁ כְּחֹלְמוֹ פְתָר: וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּתַר לָנוּ כֵּן הָיָה אֹתִי הַשִּׁיב עַל כִּנְיָ וְאֵתוֹ תְּלֵה: וַיִּשְׁלַח פְּרַעַה וַיִּקְרָא אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיְרִיצֵהוּ מִן הַבּוֹר וַיַּגְלַח וַיַּחְלֵף שְׂמֹלֹתָיו וַיָּבֵא אֶל פְּרַעַה: בְּרֵאשִׁית מֵאֵ-אֵ-יָד

And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed; and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up from the river seven cows sleek and fat; and they fed in the reed grass. And, behold, seven other cows came up after them from the river, gaunt and thin; and stood by the other cows upon the brink of the river. And the gaunt and thin cows ate the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time; and, behold, seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk, plump and good. And, behold, seven thin ears, blasted by the east wind, sprung up after them. . And the seven thin ears devoured the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh. Then spoke the chief butler to Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day; Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker; And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored to my office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his garment, and came in to Pharaoh. **Genesis 41:1-14**

(2) נֶעַר עֲבָרֵי עֶבֶד. מוֹסִיף פֶּלֶא בְּכָל פֶּרֶט שֶׁהוּא נֶעַר וְלֹא לִמַּד חֲכָמוֹת. וְעֲבָרֵי א"כ לֹא בֹא בִּכְח הַכִּישׁוּף. וְעֶבֶד ג"כ לֹא נִיתֵן לְבַתִּי חֲכָמָה. וְא"כ הוּא עֲנִין א-לֵהי כְּמוֹ שִׁדּוּעַ הַי' לָהֶם שִׁמְשֻׁפְחַת הַעֲבָרִים הַמָּה לְמַעְלָה מִטְּבַע שֶׁאֵר ב"א. . . . הַעֲמֵק דְּבַר, שֵׁם

And there was there with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant [to the captain of the guard]: Every detail [that he mentioned] only increased the marvel [of this feat]. He was a young man and had not studied the sciences. He was a Hebrew and therefore his powers were not a result of sorcery. He was a servant, which also meant that he didn't have access to the schools [that taught this branch of wisdom]. That being the case, his ability must be a Divine gift, as it was known to them that the family of Hebrews were above the natural limitations of other humans. **Hamek Davar, ibid.**

B.

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם חֲלַמְתִּי וּפְתַר אֵין אֶתוֹ וְאֲנִי שֹׁמֵעַתִּי עָלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר תִּשְׁמַע חֲלוֹם לְפַתֵּר אֹתוֹ:
וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר בִּלְעָדֵי אֲ—לֵהִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת שְׁלוֹ' פַּרְעֹה: בְּרֵאשִׁית מֵאֵ—טו—טז

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none who can interpret it; and I have heard say of you, that you can understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me; G-d shall give Pharaoh a favorable answer. **Genesis 41:15-16**

C.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל פַּרְעֹה חֲלוֹם פַּרְעֹה אֶחָד הוּא אֶת אֲשֶׁר הָאֲ—לֵהִים עֲשֵׂה הַגִּיד לְפַרְעֹה: שְׁבַע פְּרֹת הַטֹּבֹת
שְׁבַע שָׁנִים הֵנָּה וְשְׁבַע הַשְּׁבָלִים הַטֹּבֹת שְׁבַע שָׁנִים הֵנָּה חֲלוֹם אֶחָד הוּא: וְשְׁבַע הַפְּרוֹת הַרְקוֹת וְהָרַעַת
הָעֵלֶת אַחֲרֵיהֶן שְׁבַע שָׁנִים הֵנָּה וְשְׁבַע הַשְּׁבָלִים הַרְקוֹת שְׁדוּפוֹת הַקְּדִים יִהְיוּ שְׁבַע שָׁנִים רָעָב: הוּא
הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הָאֲ—לֵהִים עֲשֵׂה הָרְאָה אֶת פַּרְעֹה: הֵנָּה שְׁבַע שָׁנִים בָּאוֹת שְׁבַע
גְּדוֹל בְּכָל—אַרְץ מִצְרָיִם: וְקָמוּ שְׁבַע שָׁנִים רָעָב אַחֲרֵיהֶן וְנִשְׁכַּח כָּל הַשְּׁבַע בְּאַרְץ מִצְרָיִם וְכֻלָּה הָרָעָב
אֶת—הָאַרְץ: וְלֹא יוֹדַע הַשְּׁבַע בְּאַרְץ מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָב הַהוּא אַחֲרֵי כֵן כִּי כָבֵד הוּא מְאֹד: וְעַל הַשָּׁנֹת
הַחֲלוֹם אֶל פַּרְעֹה פְּעָמִים כִּי נִכּוֹן הַדְּבָר מֵעַם הָאֲ—לֵהִים וּמִמֶּהָר הָאֲ—לֵהִים לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ: וְעַתָּה יֵרָא פַּרְעֹה
אִישׁ נְבוֹן וְחָכָם וַיִּשִׁיתָהוּ עַל—אַרְץ מִצְרָיִם: יַעֲשֵׂה פַּרְעֹה וַיִּפְקֹד פְּקָדִים עַל הָאַרְץ וַחֲמֵשׁ אֶת אַרְץ
מִצְרָיִם בְּשְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הַשְּׁבַע: וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת—כָּל—אֲכָל הַשָּׁנִים הַטֹּבוֹת הַבָּאֹת הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּצְבְּרוּ כֵר תַּחַת יָד
פַּרְעֹה אֲכָל בְּעָרִים וְשָׁמְרוּ: וְהָיָה הָאֲכָל לְפִקְדוֹן לְאַרְץ לְשְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הָרָעָב אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶינָה בְּאַרְץ מִצְרָיִם
וְלֹא—תִכָּרֵת הָאַרְץ בְּרָעָב: וַיִּיטֹב הַדְּבָר בְּעֵינֵי פַּרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי כָל עַבְדָּיו: וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל—עַבְדָּיו
הַנִּמְצָא כְּזֶה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֲ—לֵהִים בּוֹ: בְּרֵאשִׁית כֹּה—לֵח

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river; And, behold, there came up from the river seven cows, fat and sleek; and they fed in the reed grass; And, behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very gaunt and thin, such as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt for badness; And the thin and the gaunt cows ate the first seven fat cows; And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good; And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted by the east wind, sprung up after them; And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears; and I told this to the magicians; but there was none who could declare it to me. And Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one; G-d has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. And the seven thin and gaunt cows that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted by the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the matter which I have spoken to Pharaoh; What G-d is about to do he shows to Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt; And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And plenty shall not be known in the land because of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled to Pharaoh twice; it is because the matter is established by G-d, and G-d will shortly bring it to pass. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven years of plenty. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of G-d is? **Genesis 41:17-38**

V. Yosef's Rise to Power

A.

(1) וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֶל-לֵהִים אוֹתָךְ אֵת כָּל זֹאת אֲיִן נְבוֹן וְחָכָם כְּמוֹךָ: אֵתָה תִהְיֶה עַל בֵּיתִי וְעַל פִּיךָ יִשָּׁק כָּל עַמִּי רַק הַכֹּסֵא אֲגַדֵּל מִמֶּךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף רְאֵה נָתַתִּי אֹתָךְ עַל כָּל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: וַיֹּסֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶת-טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ עַל יַד יוֹסֵף וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֹתוֹ בְּגָדֵי שֵׁשׁ וַיִּשֶׂם רֶבֶד הַזָּהָב עַל צַוְאָרָיו: וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמַרְכָּבַת הַמְּשֻׁנָּה אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיִּקְרָאוּ לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָם וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף אֲנִי פַרְעֹה וּבַלְעָדֶיךָ לֹא יָרִים אִישׁ אֵת יָדוֹ וְאֵת רִגְלוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה שֵׁם יוֹסֵף צְפֹנָת פַּעֲנָח וַיִּתֵּן לוֹ אֵת אֲסֵנַת בַּת פּוֹטִי פַרְעֹה כַּהֵן אֵן לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: וַיֹּסֶף בֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּעָמְדוֹ לְפָנָי פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף מִלְּפָנָי פַּרְעֹה וַיַּעֲבֹר בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: בְּרֵאשִׁית מֵאֵל-ט-מו

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, For as much as G-d has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are; You shall be over my house, and according to your word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than you. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in cloaks of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in his second chariot; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without you shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. **Genesis 41:39-46**

(2) אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֶל-לֵהִים אוֹתָךְ. מִזֶּה יֵשׁ לְהַבִּין שֶׁעַל יַדְךָ יֵהָא מֵתְנַהֵג הָעֵנִין הַנִּשְׁגָב בְּשִׁלְמוֹת וּמִשׁ"ה הוֹדִיעַ אֶל-לֵהִים אוֹתָךְ כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוֹדִיעַ בְּשִׁבִיל זֶה אֵת פַּרְעֹה מִשׁוֹם שֶׁבִידוֹ הַדְּבָר תְּלוּי. הָעֵמֶק דְּבַר, שֵׁם

For as much as G-d has shown you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are: It is self evident from [the fact that you understood the meaning and ramifications of the dream] that through you this awesome program will be conducted to perfection. For this reason did G-d inform you of it, just as he informed Pharaoh, for it was in his power to fulfill it. **Haamek Davar, ibid. verse 39**

(3) אֵתָה תִהְיֶה עַל בֵּיתִי. הוּא עֲנִינֵי מְדִינָה כְּמוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים בֵּין אָדָם לְחֻבְרֵי וּכְדוּמָה: וְעַל פִּיךָ יִשָּׁק כָּל עַמִּי. לְשׁוֹן נִשְׁק וְכֹלֵי זֵיַן. וְעַמִּי הֵמָּה אֲנָשֵׁי מִלְחָמָה שׁוֹמְרֵי הַמְּלוּכָה וְכֹמָה פְּעָמִים מִשְׁמַעוֹת עִם בִּיחּוּד אֲנָשֵׁי מִלְחָמָה כְּמִ"שׁ בְּס' שְׁמוֹת א' ט' וּבְס' דְּבָרִים כ"ז ט' וּבְכ"מ וּבְאִשֶׁר הִי' הַדְּבָר קִשָּׁה לְקַבֵּץ כָּל תְּבוּאוֹת שְׁבַשְׁנֵי הַשָּׁבַע לְאוֹצְרוֹת הַמְּלוּכָה. וְזֶה לֹא הִי' אֲפֹשֶׁר אֲלֵא ע"י עֲזֵר אֲנָשֵׁי חֵיל. ע"כ מִסֵּר כַּח וְאוֹן כָּל הַחֵיל לִיד יוֹסֵף. הָעֵמֶק דְּבַר, שֵׁם

You shall be over my house: This refers to [internal] matters of state, such as issuing judicial decisions regarding disputes between people. **And according to your word shall all my people be ruled (yishak):** The word *yishak* is an expression of *neshek* and weaponry. "My people" (*ammi*) refer to soldiers, who guard the kingdom. Many times the meaning of the word "*amm*" (people) is to be specifically understood to mean soldiers, as I have written in Exodus 1:9 and Deuteronomy 27:9, and in other places. As it was difficult to gather together all of the grain during the years of plenty and place them in the governmental storehouses, it was only accomplished through the assistance of the military. He therefore transferred the power of the entire military in the hands of Yosef. **Haamek Davar, ibid. verse 40**

4) אתה: דרך המלכים שבעת ירצו להגדיל אחד מעבדיהם הקטנים אל משרה גדולה לא יעלהו פתאום מבירא עמיקתא לאגרא רמא רק יעלהו בהדרגה, יעשהו שר מאה ואח"כ שר אלף, וכן ממדרגה למדרגה, וכן נהג פרעה, שתחלה שמהו לשר על בית פרעה, ועז"א אתה תהיה על ביתי . . . כי בבית המלך תהיה כמוני לבד מאשר אני יהיה לי היתרון לשבת על כסא המלכות. ויאמר פרעה: ואח"כ אמר אליו שמעלהו למדרגה יותר גדולה, ראה נתתי אלך על כל ארץ מצרים שיהיה מושל על כל הארץ. מלבי"ם בראשית מא:מ-מא

You [shall be over my house]: It is customary amongst kings that when they want to elevate one of their minor servants to a position of power, the person is not lifted up from the depths [of inferiority] to the heights [of a superior position] in an abrupt manner, but rather gradually. He is [first] made an officer over a hundred, then afterwards an officer over a thousand, ever rising higher in the ranks. Pharaoh acted in a similar fashion. Originally he placed [Yosef] in a leadership position over the house of Pharaoh. Regarding this is it stated, "You shall be over my house." . . . for in the house of the king you shall be like me, with the exception of the throne of the kingdom upon which I sit. **And Pharaoh said:** Afterwards he said to him that he is elevating him to an even higher position. **See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt:** that you should be the ruler over all of Egypt. **Commentary of Malbim to Genesis 41:40-41**

5) תקעו בחדש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו: פי חק לישראל הוא משפט לא-להי יעקב: עדות | ביהוסף שמו בצאתו על ארץ מצרים שפת לא ידעתי אשמע: הסירותי מסבל שכמו כפיו מדוד תעברנה: תהלים פא:ד-ז

Blow a shofar at the new moon, at the covering (appointed) day of our festival. For this is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the G-d of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt. I heard the language of one whom I had not known, Saying, I removed his shoulder from the burden; his hands are freed from the basket. **Psalms 81:4-7**

6) בראש השנה יצא יוסף מבית האסורין, מנלן? דכתיב (תהלים פא) תקעו בחדש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו כי חק לישראל הוא וגו', עדות ביהוסף שמו בצאתו וגו'. ראש השנה יא.

On New Year, Joseph went forth from the prison. Whence do we know this? – Because it is written (Psalms 81:4-7), "Blow the horn (shofar) on the new moon, on the covering day for our festival . He appointed it for Joseph for a testimony when he went forth etc." **Rosh Hashana 11a**

B.

ותעש הארץ בשבע שני השבע לקמצים: ויקבץ את כל אכל | שבע שנים אשר היו בארץ מצרים ויתן אכל בערים אכל שדה העיר אשר סביבתיה נתן בתוכה: ויצבר יוסף בר כחול הים הרבה מאד עד כי חדל לספר כי אין מספר. בראשית מא:מז-מט

And in the seven years of plenty the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which was in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; the food of the field, which was around every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left counting; for it was without number. **Genesis 41:47-49**

C.

וַיִּוֹסֵף יָלֵד שְׁנֵי בָנִים בְּטָרַם תְּבוֹא שְׁנַת הָרָעָב אֲשֶׁר יִלְדָה לוֹ אֲסֵנַת בַּת פּוֹטִי פְרַע כַּהֵן אוֹן: וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי נִשְׁנִי אֲ-לֵהִים אֶת כָּל עֲמָלִי וְאֵת כָּל בֵּית אָבִי: וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי הִפְרִנִי אֲ-לֵהִים בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי: בְּרֵאשִׁית מֵאֵ-נֹנֵב

And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bore to him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh; For G-d, said he, has made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim; For G-d has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.
Genesis 41:50-52

VI. The Famine Begins

A.

וַתִּכְלִינָה שְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הַשְּׁבַע אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַתַּחֲלִינָה שְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הָרָעָב לְבוֹא כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּכָל-הָאֲרָצוֹת וּבְכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הָיָה לָחֶם: וַתִּרְעַב כָּל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּצְעַק הָעָם אֶל פְּרַעָה לֵאמֹר וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרַעָה לְכֹל מִצְרַיִם לָכוּ אֵל יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר לָכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ: וְהָרָעָב הָיָה עַל כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאֲרֶץ וַיִּפְתַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם וַיִּשְׁבֵּר לְמִצְרַיִם וַיַּחֲזֹק הָרָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וְכָל הָאֲרֶץ בָּאוּ מִצְרַיִמָּה לְשִׁבֵּר אֵל יוֹסֵף כִּי חָזַק הָרָעָב בְּכָל הָאֲרֶץ: בְּרֵאשִׁית מֵאֵ-נֹנֵב

And the seven years of plenty, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of famine began to come, according as Joseph had said; and the famine was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph; what he said to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth; And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine grew severe in the land of Egypt. And all countries came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain; because the famine was so severe in all lands.
Genesis 41:53-57

B.

וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֵשׁ שָׁבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנֵה שְׁמַעְתִּי כִּי יֵשׁ שָׁבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם רְדוּ שָׁמָּה וְשִׁבְרוּ לָנוּ מִשֶּׁם וּנְחִיָּה וְלֹא נָמוֹת: וַיֵּרְדוּ אַחֵי יוֹסֵף עִשְׂרֵה לְשִׁבֵּר בְּרַם מִצְרַיִם: וְאֵת בְּנֵימִן אַחֵי יוֹסֵף לֹא שָׁלַח יַעֲקֹב אֶת אַחִיו כִּי אָמַר פֶּן יִקְרָאנוּ אֶסוּן: וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשִׁבֵּר בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּאִים כִּי הָיָה הָרָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: בְּרֵאשִׁית מֵבֵ-אֵה

Now when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, Why do you look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; get down there, and buy for us from there; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brothers; for he said, Lest perhaps harm befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who came; for the famine was in the land of Canaan. **Genesis 42:1-5**

VII. From Slave to Master

A.

וַיִּקְרָא רָעָב עַל-הָאֲרֶץ כָּל-מִטָּה-לָחֶם שָׁבֵר: שָׁלַח לְפָנֵיהֶם אִישׁ לְעַבְדֵי נַמְכָר יוֹסֵף: עָנוּ בְּכַבֵּל רִגְלוֹ בְּרִזָּל בָּאָה נַפְשׁוֹ: עַד עַתָּה בֹא דַבְּרוּ אִמְרַת ד' צָרְפְתָהּ: שָׁלַח מֶלֶךְ וַיִּתִּירָהּוּ מִשְׁלַ עַמִּים וַיִּפְתַּחְהוּ: שָׁמוּ אֲדוֹן לְבֵיתוֹ וּמִשְׁלַ בְּכָל קִנְיָנוּ: לְאִסּוֹר שְׂרִיו בְּנַפְשׁוֹ וּזְקָנוֹ יַחֲכֶם: וַיָּבֹאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲקֹב גָּר בְּאֶרֶץ חָם. תַּהֲלִים קָה: טז-כג

Moreover he called for a famine upon the land; he broke every staff of bread. He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave; Whose foot they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron; Until the time that his word came to pass; the word of the L-rd had tested him. The king sent and released him; the ruler of the people let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions; To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his elders wisdom. And Israel came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. **Psalms 105:16-23**

B.

אריב"ל מתוך צרה רוחה מתוך אפילה אורה מתוך נבולך של צדיקים רוממותן וכן הוא אומר (משלי ל') אם נבלת בהתנשא אם זמות יד לפה . . . ויוסף ענו בכבל רגלו ברזל באה נפשו (תהלים קה) ונתרומם שנאמר ויוסף הוא השליט על הארץ אמר ליה פרעה חלום חלמתי אמר יוסף בלעדי א-להים יענה וגו' תלה הגדולה בבעליה אמר הקב"ה אתה לא רצית להתגדל בעצמך חייך שעל ידי כך תעלה לגדולה ולמלוכה. מדרש תנחומה פרשת מקץ ג'

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: From adversity comes relief, from darkness comes light, from the degradation of the righteous (*tzaddikim*) comes their elevation. Similarly it is stated (Proverbs 30:32), "If you have become degraded in lifting up yourself, or if you have thought evil, lay your hand on your mouth." . . . "They hurt Yosef's foot with fetters; he was laid in iron," (Psalms 105:18) but he was elevated, as it says (Genesis 42:6), "And Joseph was the governor over the land." Pharaoh said to him, "I dreamt a dream." Yosef replied (Genesis 41:16), "It is not in me; G-d shall give Pharaoh a favorable answer." He attributed greatness to He who is in control. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Since you don't want to elevate yourself, by your life, through me you will rise to magnificence and royal power. **Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Miketz Chapter 3**

C.

טוב לגבר [כי ישא עול בנעוריו] אשרי מי שמקבל יסורין מנעוריו למה שסופו נח. . . . יוסף כמה נצטער שנאוהו אחיו נתנוהו בבור מכרו אותו נחשב בבית האסורין ראה מה כתיב בו ענו בכבל רגלו ברזל באה נפשו עד עת בא דברו אמרת ד' צרפתהו (תהלים קה יח ויט) ויוסף שתק פושטין כליו ויוסף שתק שנאמר ישב בדד וגו' (איכה ג כח) ובסוף נח כי לא יזנח וגו' כי אם הוגה (שם שם לא לב) מה כתיב בסוף מהרו ועלו אל אבי וגו' (בראשית מה ט). מדרש אגדת בראשית סא

(Lamentations 3:27) "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Fortunate is he who, from his youth, accepts the pains which he suffers. Why? Because at the end he will be free from [pain]. . . . Yosef suffered very much. His brothers hated him, they put him in a pit, they sold him, he was confined to a prison. See what is written regarding him (Psalms 105:18-19), "Whose foot they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron; Until the time that his word came to pass; the word of the L-rd had tested him." [Yosef] remained silent. They removed his garments and Yosef was quiet, as it says, (Lamentations 3:28), "Let him sit alone and in silence, because he has taken it upon him." At the end, Yosef will be free [of his pains]. as it says (Lamentations 3:28), For the L-rd will not cast off for ever." "But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the abundance of His grace." (Lamentations 3:31-32) What is written at the end (Genesis 45:9), "Hurry back to my father, and say to him, Thus said your son Joseph, G-d has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, delay not." **Midrash Agadah Beraishis Chapter 61**