

Miketz-Chanuka 5776

BS"D Parashat Miketz-Chanuka 5776

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Leadership Appointment

There are concepts and things which possess the potential to create contradictory results. A "toxic substance" when used in proper dosage can restore one's good health, but when abused can cause death.

Compulsion or desire (yeitzer) when directed in the service of HaShem uplifts a person's soul and brings him to Gan Eden. But when the yeitzer is used to satisfy one's egotistic desires, his soul feels downtrodden, debased and degraded, paving the way to Gehennom.

Even Torah possesses this duality. The Gemara (Yuma 72:b) states that for one who abides by the Torah "lishma" (for the proper reason of keeping HaShem's laws) the Torah is an elixir of life; but for one who practices the Torah "lo lishma" (for the wrong reasons) the Torah is an elixir of death.

Chutzpa is another example of this idea. When performed properly, chutzpa becomes a virtuous act of courage and valor, but when used improperly it is no more than brazen audacity, disrespect, impertinence and shameless presumptuousness.

In our parsha, Yosef, the Jewish slave-convict is removed from the bor (pit), shaved, dressed appropriately and immediately whisked to the royal court. He is set before the powerful despot Paro and his entourage of priests and royal advisers to perform an act in a very hostile environment, for which there

is no room for mistakes – the interpretation of Paro's dreams.

He is informed of the previous interpretations of Paro's expert advisors – that seven sons will be born to Paro and will die, and the other suggestion that seven daughters will be born to him and they will die. Paro is dissatisfied with these divinations, and looks to the young Hebrew just released from incarceration to satisfy his intuition.

Yosef, in direct conflict with the established advisors, tells Paro and all those present that there will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of great famine.

This was the epitome of chutzpa-courage: for Yosef predicted that the great and ever-faithful god of the Nile would disappoint the nation! For seven years the Nile's flow would not bring the flow of fertile soil and silt from the rich African hinterland of Lake Victoria. The waters would not overflow their banks to drench the land with life giving liquid. People would die. And there were also religious and political implications; the god of the Nile is unhappy with the monarchy and priesthood, with the obvious conclusion that they must be replaced.

For Yosef to imply all this is chutzpa-courage at its height. But Yosef's courage goes even further. His mandate was to interpret dreams, not to give advice. But knowing that running through Paro's mind was that this interpretation could endanger the monarchy, Yosef immediately followed with a plan whereby the god of the Nile would forsake the nation, but Paro would come to its rescue. Save food from the plentiful years to be sold to the people in the famine years. Paro accepts Yosef's interpretation and advice, and the rest is history.

Chutzpa-heroism of the Maccabees is also unique in history: When a single family of Kohanim from the town of Modi'in declared war upon the Greek superpower which had conquered the land, and together with other faithful Jews drove the hated

enemy from the land.

In our time, the same can be said of the two underground armies in pre-state Eretz Yisrael; the Etzel (Irgun Tzva'i Le'umi) and Le'chi (Lochamei Cheirut Yisrael), which succeeded in driving out the brutish British from the land.

This is the beautiful side of the coin called chutzpa; it is courage and faith in HaShem.

But the ugly side of chutzpa is ever present. The Mishna at the end of tractate Sota predicts:

Prior to the coming of the Mashiach, chutzpa (brazen audacity, disrespect, impertinence and shameless presumptuousness) will be the norm in the world.

When Islam decapitates people as nonchalantly as one plucks an apple from a tree; and declares its intention to Islamize the whole world by the sword and the AK-47...

And the Russians annex Crimea and are poised to do so with Eastern Ukraine...

When sexual perversion becomes respectable and legal...

When the Europeans and their cohorts single out Israel for condemnation for defending itself...

When rabid capitalism tramples on the needy, and the truth of the Islamism of the US President comes to the fore...

The time is ripe for Am Yisrael to demonstrate our hallowed chutzpa.

We must stand tall in the halls of the world's leaders to

state that the Creator has given the Holy Land exclusively to us. Let us unabashedly point an accusing finger at the Arabs, and in the words of Eliyahu to King Achav after murdering Navot in order to take his vineyard, "You have murdered (as if Navot was an enemy) and then possessed (his property as if you were a rightful heir!) For over a hundred years you have been murdering Jews in Eretz Yisraal and have stolen our lands.

Perhaps the Mishna's intention when connecting chutzpa and the Mashiach is to allude, that if we cringe in fear of the goy, then we will have to "go it alone". However, if we stand proud and state our holy case, then the Mashiach will join with us in victory.

Numbers Dictate the National Agenda

Many of our holy brothers, sisters and spiritual leaders cling to the "Utopian" galut while arrogantly stating that Medinat Yisrael is not a Torah State.

Indeed, we are not yet a Torah state, but we are a democracy where numbers dictate the national agenda. The chasm between Medinat Yisrael being an Halachic society or one based on British Common Law is no more than an additional 3-4 hundred thousand religious voters.

Now, since the mass of Jews will not leave their galut "Utopia" willingly, we here have to do it the hard way. Through the slow process of education and personal example of how a Torah observant Jew lives his life. We are succeeding admirably!

Our parasha relates how Yosef, the Hebrew "felon", was taken from prison and on that very day was appointed to be the most powerful man in Egypt, second only to Paro himself. It is a

parasha of leadership appointment.

In the last 10 days, two leading appointments were made: the position of Superintendent of our national police; and the Head of the feared and respected Israeli Mosad. Both men in their early 50s are products of our Religious-Zionist educational system. Men who learned many years in yeshivot and have taken the wisdom and truth of the Torah into the most responsible and sensitive areas of our lives.

They join with the Head of the secretive Shin-Bet (General Security Services) who has a similar background, to create a troika of observant men who steer the helms of most of the nation's security organizations. This is in addition to the tens of thousands of religious officers and soldiers in Tzahal, whose love of the land grew out of the Tanach and yeshiva study.

The Jews in galut are missing the boat. And while doing so are oblivious to the dangers they will be facing very soon. My heart goes out to them, but there is nothing we can do to move them as long as they follow the false messages of their leaders.

Shabbat Shalom and a meaningful Chanuka

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