THE Zera Emes זרע אמת PROJECT

והגדת לבנך Keeping Their Torah Alive.

MIKEITZ-CHANUKAH • DECEMBER 19, 2025 • 29 KISLEV 5786

This issue is dedicated: לעילוי נשמת הבחור החשוב שלמה אבא בן יבלחטו"א דוד שליט"א

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.
For sponsorship opportunities or to sign up to the weekly newsletter, email weekly@zeraemes.com or visit www.zeraemes.com

Dream On

Pharoah had a couple of dreams that were agitating him. He brought in all of the, "wise men," as well as his dream-interpreters (41:8). They offered suggestions on how to interpret the dreams, but none of the interpretations calmed him (8). Then he was informed that Yosef, who was still sitting in a jail cell, had the power to correctly interpret dreams. The servants heard the order and immediately removed Yosef from the jail, cleaned him up and brought him before the king (14). The king explained to Yosef, "I had a dream, but no one was able to interpret it." (15)

Yosef explained that both dreams were really one concept, foretelling the future years that were going to occur in Egypt. Seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Then he advised the king to, "seek out a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt." (33) The wise man would oversee the gathering of food during the good years to safeguard it, and preserve it and prepare the entire nation for the bad years that were coming (34 - 36)

Yosef's interpretation sat well, the king believed that there were going to be bad years that would follow some great ones. He also assumed that "since God had informed you of all of this, there can be no one so discerning and wise as you." (39) And that is how Yosef rose to power from sitting in a jail cell to become the second in command in Egypt within an extremely short amount of time.

The Torah stresses that not only did Yosef suggest to the king to seek out a "wise" man, but these words were taken so seriously that the king stressed that there was no one as "wise" as the Yosef and that is why he was going to put him in charge.

WHO IS WISE?

The Mishna (*Avos* 4:1) teaches us that a wise man is one who can see the future.

Rav Yisrael Yaakov Lubchansky wonders why a "wise," man was needed at all when the interpretation of a wise man is defined as one who can see the future. It might be understandable why when the dream was still unclear in its meaning that Pharoah would seek out "wise" man. After all the dream was assumed to be predicting the future and maybe a wise man can help interpret the dream that is showing the future. However, once the interpretation of the dream was accepted in that it was going to be seven good years followed by seven bad years there was no longer any need for one who can see into the future for they already had that part of the equation solved. Why would a wise man be important now? Maybe what they really needed was a proper manager.

THE FUTURE STARTS SLOW

Rav Yisrael Yaakov learns what a real wise man is on how the Torah stressed this description here. He explains that there is a higher level than knowing that there is a tomorrow. A poor person naturally thinks about

tomorrow. He saves his crumbs, because he knows that he will need them the next day. However, the wealthy person finds it difficult –even silly – to save. This applies on a national level too. A wealthy country throws away thousands of tons of food because they do not consider it valuable, even though they ought to fear that future years might bring shortage.

Egypt was about to face that situation. Yosef foresaw that during the seven years of plenty—when year after year the land would overflow with every good thing and food would be considered insignificant—then ***even though*** they knew that it would be followed by years of a great famine, nevertheless, as long as the famine was not seen and felt, people might neglect working the land and might also be wasteful with the grain.

Therefore, a wise and discerning man was needed who could awaken the nation to understand that they must not only be aware of the future but to presently feel it. With that type of wise man leading the nation they had a chance to properly prepare for the future.

"Vicheemaish" (וחמש) is explained by the Targum as "they will be urged on"—that he would spur the people to sow to the best of their ability, to leave no plot of land unsown, and to store the grain they would gather in a proper manner.

"Who is wise? One who sees what is being born." This means, not just seeing the future, not even seeing the future in the now, but feeling it now too, as something real and tangible. This is the only way to properly prepare for the inevitable future.

Yosef recommended finding one who was capable during the years of plenty to see and presently feel the danger of the future famine. Pharoah recognized that Yosef was just such a person. He would motivate and convince others that the future is now,

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Rav Yisrael Yaakov adds that the Torah's lesson was not limited to Egypt at that time, nor is it limited to physicality. This approach is certainly true regarding spiritual matters. Each person knows that his days on earth are numbered. He probably understands that whatever he has not prepared for himself—he will lack. He knows that the Chazal said: "This world is like the Erev Shabbos, and the World to Come is like Shabbos. One who did not prepare—what will he eat on Shabbos?" This world is like dry land, and the World to Come is like the sea; one who did not prepare on land—what will he eat at sea? (*Avodah Zarah* 3a).

But as learned from this week's *parasha*: it is not about knowing what lay ahead but about making it a reality that is felt now. This is the only way to properly prepare for the inevitable future –the world to come.

Rav Yisrael Yaakov notes that this process is a positive idea. He notes that we also all know that here in this world, Torah and mitzvos are given to a person for free—they roll beneath a person's feet with every single step. The Vilna Gaon reminded everyone before his passing how precious this world is, for with only a few pennies one can fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzis, through which one merits to greet the Shechinah.

The wise and discerning man knows this; he of course feels it too. He does not waste his days and hours. He prepares provisions for the journey—for the eternity that awaits.

Fortunate is one who, in the present, possesses a sense of tomorrow.

ר' ישראל יעקב לובצ'אנסקי הי"ד

Rav Yisrael Yaakov Lubchansky was born in a suburb of Baronovitch where his father Rav Chaim Leib was Rav. Rav Yisrael Yaakov learned in Novordik where he became a star student of the Altar, who then chose him as a son-in-law. In 1906 he became the Rav of Baronovitch after the passing of his father. He would wake up early every morning and draw the water as well as ensure that there was wood in the fireplace for those who came to daven. After a very short time he gave the job to his sister's husband, Rav Dovid Veisel, and returned to help lead the Novordik Yeshiva.

In 1920, he took the position of Mashgiach in Baronovitch's Yeshiva which was led by Rav Elchanan Wasserman H"yd. Rav Elchanan held him in such high esteem that he would discuss all serious matters of the yeshiva with him.

Rav Elchanan would attend the shmussen of Rav Yisrael Yaakov and openly weep from the love that was shown to the students. During each, Elul, when Rav Elchanan would travel to Radin to spend the Yomim Norayim with his rebbi, the Chofetz Chaim, Rav Yisrael Yaakov would be fully in charge of the Baronovitch Yeshiva.

He was known to be extremely careful regarding all his personal matters but a complete pacifist regarding his honor and other people's comfort. His style of giving mussar was soft. He tried to impress upon the students the value of each second of life.

When World War Two began, there were over 300 students in the yeshiva and most of them returned home. Some of the older ones stayed and traveled in exile together and their final stop was Kovna. In the summer of 1941, the Germans came into the city and sent everyone to Slobodka. The conditions there were very harsh and he took upon himself to try to infuse *emunah* into the students as well as the mitzvah of sanctifying Hashem's name.

He and his wife, Rebbetzin Faiga Malka were murdered together along with many others who were part of the yeshivah H"yd.