

ParShaT **MiKeTz**— One Pager Series

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Introduction: We study 5 Rashis dealing with Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's 2 dreams. In presenting the two dreams we must realize there are 6 accounts: The first set of two dreams that Pharaoh dreamed, one about cows, and one about ears of grain; the second set of two dreams when Pharaoh recounts these two dreams to Joseph (so the recount is slightly different than the originals); and finally, Joseph's interpretation of the 2 dreams. We cite the biblical text with sequential letters to indicate commonalities and contrasts. This facilitates reading Rashi. All Rashi does is give the correspondence between the dreams and their interpretation. Therefore we shall suffice with citing the Biblical texts and showing the main points. In explaining this Rashi, we have benefited greatly from the writing of

Rav

Samson

Raphael

Hirsch.

Rashi

#1-#5:

Biblical

Text

Gn41-02a,04a,26s,

30a,

Pharaoh's Dream #I:

Pharaoh dreamed: (I-A) Behold, I stood on the river; (I-B) behold, there came up from the river seven cows (I-B1) good looking and (I-B2) healthy-fleshed; and they (I-B3) grazed in the reed grass; (I-C) behold, seven other cows came up after them from the river, (I-C1) bad looking and (I-C2) emaciated; (I-D) they stood by the other cows upon the brink of the river; (I-E) the (I-E1a) bad-looking and (I-E1b) thin cows (I-E-3) ate the seven (I-E2a) good looking and (I-E2b) healthy cows.

Pharaoh's Dream #II:

And he dreamed a second time; and, (II-B) behold, seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk, (II-B2) plump and (II-B1) good; (II-C) behold, seven (II-C-2) ear, thin ears, (II-C-1) and wind-blasted, sprung up after them; (II-E) the seven (II-E1b) thin ears (II-E-3) swallowed the seven (II-E-2) plump and (II-E-1) full ears.

Pharaoh's Account of Dream #I:

(III-A) I stood upon the bank of the river; (III-B) behold, there came up from the river seven cows, (III-B-2) healthy and (III-B-1a) of good form (III-B-3) and they grazed in the reed grass (III-C); behold, seven other cows came up after them, (III-C-2a) poor and (III-C-1) and bad looking (III-C-3) I have never seen in all the land of Egypt such badness; (III-E-2) the thin and (III-E-1) poor looking cows (III-E-3) ate the first 7 (III-E2) healthy cows (III-F-1); when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still (III-F-2) poor looking, as at the beginning.

Pharaoh's Account of Dream #II

And I saw in my dream, and, (IV) behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, (IV-B-3) full and (IV-B-1) good; (IV-C) behold, seven ears, (IV-C-3) weathered, (IV-C-2) thin, and (IV-C-1) wind-blasted sprung up after them; (IV-E-1) the thin ears (IV-E-3) swallowed the seven (III-E-4) good ears;

Joseph's Interpretation (Introduction):

Symbols come in three flavors. A stop sign is not a symbol; it is simply a **sign**, something designated to remind you of something else. The components of the stop sign – the 8 sides, the redness – have nothing to do with stopping; it is a mere designation. Contrastively, the American flag is a **symbol** precisely because its components have meaning related to the overall meaning. The 13 stripes correspond to the original 13 colonies; the stars correspond to the states; the proof of this is that when a state is added to the country a star gets added to the flag. The American flag is static, a symbol in one point of time. An **allegory** is a *sequence* of symbols tied by a common thematic symbol. In interpreting dreams, Joseph uses **allegory**. All other dream details are ignored; he states one thematic sentence: **7 cows/ears = 7 yr.**

Joseph's interpretation:

Joseph said to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's dream is one.... (V-B) The seven good cows are seven years; and (VI-B) the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one. And the (V-C) seven (V-C2) thin and (V-C1) bad-looking cows that came up after them are seven years; and the (VI-C) seven ears (VI-C-3) empty and (VI-C-1) wind-blasted will be seven years of

famine.

The Dream:

Nothing else has to be done!! Once you translate **7 = 7 years**, all other interpretation flows naturally. From the constant change of words: *good looking – healthy – good – form – full* vs. *thin – wind-blasted – weathered – empty* It is a mistake to look for significance in the change of words and sequence for the continual change tells us that all terms are equal (Rashi Nu27-01b) To use English idioms once we have the fundamental equation of **7=7years** we can “see” that B) there will be 7 *healthy* years followed by C) 7 *emaciated, weather-blasted* years; so bad that the (memory of the) 7 healthy years will be swallowed by the 7 years of emaciation and whether blasting. Pure and simple! The equation **7 = 7 years** makes the interpretation spontaneous, *Peshat*.