

VAYEISHEV 5773

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TWO DREAMS REQUIRED

Dreams are important Chazal tell us, “KOL HALON SHIVA YAMIM BELEE CHALOM , NIKRA RA” “One who passes seven days without a dream is considered-evil” [Berachot 14a]. Rav Soloveitchik added that a Jew must constantly have two dreams, one is not sufficient.

This concept comes from our parasha. Yosef had two dreams. He dreamt of “alumot” sheaves, which rose and stood up high while the sheaves of his brothers came and bowed down to his. When he told that dream to his brothers, they were not happy, but, neither were they envious of that dream. True their hatred was deepened but their envy was not aroused. Then he dreamt another dream. He dreamt of the sun and the moon and the stars bowing down to him. When he told this dream to his father, “Vayekanu bo echav” his brothers envied him [Bereishit 37:11] – not only did they hate him but they were envious of him as well. Why were they envious from the second dream and not the first?

Rav Soloveitchik suggested that the dream of sheaves symbolized material economic power, of prosperity, and that dream came entirely true. The second dream revolved around spiritual greatness. Yosef wanted to attain wealth, prosperity and power, to be feared by people because of his might, but he also strived for greatness in spirituality, to be loved by people, to be revered by people because of the greatness of his compassion and kindness.

Can one person combine both qualities? Can one person fulfill both dreams, that of sheaves- of economic power- and also that of spiritual greatness, and moral heights? Yosef apparently thought that he could combine both.

We Jews throughout history and up to present times have imitated Yosef, we also have two dreams. The Jews dreamt of being successful in their profession, and skillful in their trade. We constantly dreamt of sheaves, for otherwise we could not have survived. At the same time the Jew- the poor merchant, the grocer, the peddler- would come home for Shabbat and transform his total character and being. The same Jew, sometimes in rags, always had another dream-not of alumot, not of dollars, not of shekalim, nor of rubles and kopeks, but of something else, of a “sun, a moon, and eleven stars” [37:9], of spiritual greatness. His Shabbat robe made him look like a king, his table resembled a royal banquet, and for 24 hours he was transformed into a spiritual personality. These two dreams represent Jewish survival and eternity. Shabbat Shalom, and Chag HaChanuka Samei’ach.