

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter X: Mikeitz (Gen. 41:1–44:17)

Essay 11. The realization of Joseph's first dream

Once Joseph had a dream which he told to his brothers; and they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf stood up and remained upright; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed low to my sheaf." His brothers answered, "Do you mean to reign over us? Do you mean to rule over us?" And they hated him even more for his talk about his dreams. He dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers, saying, "Look, I have had another dream: And this time, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." And when he told it to his father and brothers, his father berated him. "What," he said to him, "is this dream you have dreamed? Are we to come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow low to you to the ground?"

- Gen. 37:5–10

פסוק "וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת הַחֲלֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָלַם לָהֶם." קִשָּׁה מֵהַמְלֻמְדוֹת הַמִּקְרָא הַזֶּה, וְעוֹד מֵהוּ "לָהֶם," הִיָּה לוֹ לִזְמַר אֶת הַחֲלֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָלַם, שֶׁהָיָה לֹא חָלַם לָהֶם בְּלִבְדֹּ אֲלָא חָלַם אִפְּעַל בְּנֵימִין שְׁלֹא הִיָּה אִזְ עִמָּהֶם וְאִפְּעַל שְׁמֵשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ.

Regarding the verse: **“Recalling the dreams that he had dreamed about them,** Joseph said to them, ‘You are spies, you have come to see the land in its nakedness’ ” (Gen. 42:9). **It is difficult to see what this Scripture is teaching us, for it should have said, “Recalling the dreams that he had dreamed,”** omitting the words “about them,” **for he didn’t dream only about them. Rather he also dreamed about Benjamin, who wasn’t with them** during this conversation upon the brothers’ first visit to Egypt, and Joseph had dreamed, **also, about the sun and the stars.**

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ויש לומר שפוננת יוסף היתה כך, בנדאי שקשצני אתודע להם יבואו בכאן אף בנימין והשמש והירח ויתקיים החלום השני לגמרי. ואדרבא הוא לא היה מקפיד אלא על קיום החלום הראשון של "והנה אנהנו מאלמים אלמים", לפי ששונאתו לא היתה אלא עליהם דוקא, כמו שרומז "והנה אנהנו מאלמים אלמים", שלא היו בכלל חלום זה בנימין ויעקב. ולכן העליל עליהם כדי שהם לבדם יבואו להשתחוות לו, ונהו "אשר חלם להם", להם דוקא.

It can be said that Joseph's intention was thus: "Surely, when I inform them that I am demanding to see their younger brother, then even Benjamin and the sun and the moon will come here, and the second dream will be completely realized." To the contrary, he was only strict about the fulfillment of the first dream of, "There we were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf stood up and remained upright; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed low to my sheaf" (Gen. 37:7). According to this dream, his hatred was only about [the ten older brothers], as implied by the words "There we were binding sheaves," as that element did not include Benjamin and Jacob at all. Therefore, [Joseph] made a false charge against the ten older brothers, that they were spies, in order that they alone would come to bow down to him, and this is why the verse reads, "that he had dreamed about them," specifically them.

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