

## Higher Power

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף רְאֵה נָתַתִּי אֹתְךָ עַל כָּל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

**"Pharaoh said to Yosef, 'Behold I have put you over all the land of Egypt.'" (41:41)**

Harav Sholom Schwadron writes that he has always been puzzled by these words. What was it, he asks, that Pharaoh was revealing to Yosef when he uttered this phrase? Surely, this was obvious to everybody by this point? Furthermore, in Possuk 44, Pharaoh tells Yosef, "I am Pharaoh," yet surely this was something Yosef knew?! Reb Sholom acknowledges that this latter difficulty is dealt with by Rashi, who explains that Pharaoh was telling Yosef that it was his status as Pharaoh that allowed him to decree that no-one else in the land would be higher than Yosef. Yet, writes Reb Sholom, this idea was already made clear to Yosef in an earlier Possuk when Pharaoh told Yosef that only his, i.e. Pharaoh's chair would be higher than Yosef's, implying that no-one in the land would outrank Yosef except Pharaoh who held the power to do as he wished.

To answer these questions, Reb Sholom begins by explaining a separate point in relation to the birth of Shimshon. When an angel appeared to Shimshon's parents to inform them of his conception, they were doubtful as to whether the person speaking was a man or an angel. The Possuk records that it was only when the angel did not appear to them again, that they became sure that it was indeed an angel who had spoken to them. However, asks Reb Sholom, why should this be? Why was the lack of further appearances seen as a proof that they had seen an angel as opposed to a man? Reb Sholom answers that the nature of man would not have allowed a human being to stay away for ever. When a person does a good deed for a friend, such as the revelation to Manoach, Shimshon's father, that he would have a son, he is unable to prevent himself showing up again. Even if, Reb Sholom stresses, the person who did the good deed is not looking for Kovod; he does not desire, as Reb Sholom puts it, to be given the honour of Sandek, none-the-less he cannot stay away for ever. The reason for this is that a person's heart pushes him to see what the outcome of his joyous revelation was, and specifically, to make sure that the Baal Simchah sees him. That is not because, Reb Sholom reiterates, the person is necessarily arrogant, but rather it is human nature to desire to be recognised as the cause of a person's happiness. Were the angel to have been a human, when he met Manoach in the street, he would forever more have wished him good Shabbos with a broad smile, and that broad smile would mean, "Do you remember what I did for you?" It was this lack of reappearance that Manoach was puzzled by. The only explanation that he could attribute to the angel's lack of appearance to receive the goodwill and appreciation, was that the angel was indeed an angel!

This, concludes Reb Sholom, was what Pharaoh was telling Yosef. Pharaoh informed him that whilst he did not want anything from Yosef, no outward signs of appreciation or gratitude, none-the-less, he wanted Yosef to recognise where his good fortune had come from. All he wanted was that Yosef should, 'See that I am Pharaoh,' meaning always recognise and appreciate that it was me who brought you up to this level of honour and good fortune. This was also what Pharaoh was telling Yosef when he said simply, "I am Pharaoh," remember who I am, because I gave you all this.

## Fast Food

וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם

**"Yaakov saw that there was produce in Egypt." (42:1)**

The Midrash Tanchuma relates that the Halochoh regarding the permissibility of a mourner working during Shivoh were taught in conjunction with this Possuk. The Halochoh is that a pauper, if he is unable to provide food for his family, may begin working after three days. The Midrash then appends the above Possuk to this opinion, and notes that whilst Yaakov's sons did not know that there was food in Egypt, Yaakov saw and knew. The Maharil Diskin explains the relationship between these two seemingly irrelevant points.

The Midrash explains that Yaakov saw the food in Egypt using Ruach Hakodesh. However, the Midrash had a difficulty with this explanation, since why should Yaakov have suddenly seen now? The Midrash therefore concluded, explains the Maharil Diskin, that Yaakov had, until that point, been in a state of mourning for Yosef, and since happiness is a pre-requisite for Nevua, Yaakov was unable to access his prophetic abilities. However, when the famine in his home became excessively difficult to withstand, Yaakov became exempt from mourning as noted in the Halochoh first cited. As such, he was forced to put aside his sadness and access his Nevua, so as to find out where food could be bought to support his family.

## I Spy...

מְרַגְּלִים אַתֶּם

**"You are spies!" (42:9)**

The Ksav VHakabolloh explains why Yosef accused his brothers of espionage, as opposed to some other false charge. He writes that Yosef was deliberately setting up a situation whereby the brothers would be unable to question their accuser. Had they begun to question his right to interrogate them, it would have appeared as though they were trying to find out more information about the country, something that would have simply strengthened the charges made against them.