



Miketz

First, Establish The Facts...

How did King Pharaoh of Egypt know Yosef was giving him the correct interpretations of his dreams?

At the beginning of Parshat Miketz, the Torah tells us all the details of the two dreams of the king. Then we're told how Yosef was suddenly elevated to stand in the presence of the king. The Torah could have easily just said Pharaoh then told Yosef all about the content of the dreams. But no, we find that Pharaoh goes into all the details, and we hear about the dreams a second time.

Intriguingly, however, there are some small differences in terms of how Pharaoh explained his dreams as opposed to what really happened in the dreams. For example, in the original dreams, we're told Pharaoh was standing 'Al-hayye'or (on the river), and then Pharaoh says to Joseph, "I was standing *Al-sefat hayye'or*" (on the banks of the river).

Now, the Midrash Tanchuma tells us that on every occasion on which Pharaoh deviated slightly from what he had originally seen, Yosef corrected him and said, "No, it's not on the river; it's on the banks of the river." At one point, says the Midrash, Pharaoh cried out to Joseph, "Were you eavesdropping on my dreams?"

It was this that convinced Pharaoh that Yosef was not only somebody who knew the interpretation, but someone who knew the dreams. And this extraordinary fact convinced him that what Yosef was saying was the word of Hashem.

Now, I believe that there is such an important message for us all, which goes well beyond Pharaoh, Yosef, and Egypt at the time, and anything to do with dreams. It's all about interpreting a situation and problem-solving.

If you want to know how to understand a situation in order to provide a solution for it, if some of your facts are wrong, then your capacity to provide a solution will be impeded.

For example, right now, we continue tragically to witness an ongoing war in the Middle East. It's now more than 14 months, and we're finding continuously that there are people right around the world who have all the solutions.

They are pronouncing, "This is what must be done in order to guarantee ongoing peace and security." Sadly, however, a lot of the information they have is simply not correct. And sometimes, they are basing their own interpretations on the feelings that they have as a result of the images they have seen.

From Joseph, we learn that if you want to provide a solution, the facts need to be correct.

No wonder, therefore, that our tradition tells us: Knowing the question properly is half the answer.

Shabbat Shalom and Chanukah Sameach!