

Parent-Child Learning
Parashat Miketz, 5774
First Night of Chanuka

1. Explain why Yosef named his first son the way that he did:¹

בראשית פרק מא

(נ) וְיִוֹסֵף יָלֵד שְׁנֵי בָנִים בְּטָרָם תְּבוֹא שְׁנֵת הָרָעַב אֲשֶׁר יִלְדֶה-לוֹ אֲסֵנַת בֵּת-פּוֹטִי פָּרַע כֹּהֵן אוֹן:

(נא) וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי-נָשַׁנִּי אֱלֹקִים אֶת-כָּל-עֲמָלִי וְאֶת-כָּל-בֵּית אָבִי:

(נב) וְאֶת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי-הִפְרִינִי אֱלֹקִים בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי:

And unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath the daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On bore unto him. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: 'for God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.' And the name of the second called he Ephraim: 'for God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction'.

How many of the troubles that Yosef experienced both in Canaan and in Egypt can you remember?

Do you think that he ever expected to see his family again?

Do you think that he was happy that all of the troubles that he experienced when he was with his family were over?

Do you think that he ever missed his family once he was Pharaoh's second-in-command in Egypt?

2. Explain what you think Yosef was thinking/remembering when the Tora describes the following unexpected meeting:²

¹ Yaakov's wives, Rachel and Leah named their children based upon the things that were happening to them. Which of the names of the 12 tribes resemble the names of Yosef's children and which are different? See Beraishit 29 and 30.

² Can you figure out how many years had gone by between Yosef naming his first son and his first meeting with his brothers from the following verses?

(1) בראשית פרק מא

(כט) הִנֵּה שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים בָּאוֹת שִׁבְעַת גְּדוֹל בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

(2) שֵׁם (נ) וְיִוֹסֵף יָלֵד שְׁנֵי בָנִים בְּטָרָם תְּבוֹא שְׁנֵת הָרָעַב אֲשֶׁר יִלְדֶה-לוֹ אֲסֵנַת בֵּת-פּוֹטִי פָּרַע כֹּהֵן אוֹן:

(3) שֵׁם (נו) וְהָרָעַב הָיָה עַל כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ וַיִּפְתַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם וַיִּשְׁבֶּר לְמִצְרַיִם וַיִּחַזַּק הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

(נז) וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁבֵּר אֶל-יוֹסֵף כִּי-חַזַּק הָרָעַב בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ:

(4) שֵׁם מב (א) וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יִשְׁ-שָׁבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לֵמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ:

(ב) וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְתִּי כִּי יִשְׁ-שָׁבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם רַדוּ-שָׁמָּה וְשִׁבְרוּ-לָנוּ מִשָּׁם וְנִחְיֶה וְלֹא נָמוֹת:

1) 41:29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt.

2) Ibid. 50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath the daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On bore unto him.

3) Ibid. 56-7 And the famine was over all the face of the earth; and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine was sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn; because the famine was sore in all the earth.

בראשית פרק מב

(ו) וַיֹּסֶף הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט עַל־הָאָרֶץ הוּא הַמְּשָׁבִיר לְכָל־עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיָּבֵאוּ אֹחֵי יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ־לוֹ אַפַּיִם אֶרֶץ:

(ז) וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת־אֲחָיו וַיִּכְרַם וַיִּתְנַכַּר אֲלֵיהֶם וַיְדַבֵּר אֲתָם קִשׁוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מֵאִין בָּאתֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ: מֵאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְשִׁבְר־אֶקֶל:

(ח) וַיִּכַּר יוֹסֵף אֶת־אֲחָיו וְהֵם לֹא הִכְרָהוּ:

(ט) וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת הַחֲלֻמוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָלַם לָהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מְרַגְלִים אַתֶּם לָרְאוֹת אֶת־עֲרוֹת הָאָרֶץ בָּאתֶם:

And Joseph was the governor over the land; he it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down to him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spoke roughly with them; and he said unto them: 'Whence come ye?' And they said: 'From the land of Canaan to buy food.' And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew him not. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them: 'Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.'

3. The dreams that Yosef remembered that had been about himself and his brothers:

בראשית פרק לז

(ז) וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאֻלְמִים אֻלְמִים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֶלְמָתִי וְגַם־נִצְבָּה וְהִנֵּה תִסְבְּינָה אֶלְמָתִיכֶם וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאֶלְמָתִי:

(ט) וַיַּחְלֵם עוֹד חֲלוֹם אַחֵר וַיִּסְפֹּר אֹתוֹ לְאֲחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלֻמֹתַי חֲלוֹם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשֶׂר כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לִי:

For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and bowed down to my sheaf.' And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said: 'Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream: and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me.'

4. Yosef seemed to understand the solution to the dreams of the Minister of Bakers and the Minister of Butlers as well as those of Pharaoh himself, immediately and was able to explain them as soon as he heard about them. However the dreams that he dreamt about his family he didn't understand until he remembered them as a result of his brothers bowing down to him. Why didn't HaShem Allow Yosef to understand his own dreams right away the way that Yosef seemed to understand the dreams of others?

4) 42:1-2 Now Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, and Jacob said unto his sons: 'Why do ye look one upon another?' And he said: 'Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt. Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.'

Do you think that he regretted naming his first son Menashe once he meets the brothers again?