

Parashah Miketz

The one where Joseph leaves prison to become Pharaoh's second-in-command. He plans for the famine and meets up with his brothers.

The parashah begins with the pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, having two troubling dreams. In the dreams, he sees seven healthy cows being devoured by seven starving cows, and he also sees seven plump ears of grain being consumed by seven withered ears. Disturbed by these dreams, Pharaoh seeks an interpretation.

Pharaoh's cupbearer remembers that Joseph, who had interpreted his dream while in prison, can interpret dreams accurately. Joseph is summoned from prison and interprets the Pharaoh's dreams as predicting seven years of plenty in Egypt followed by seven years of famine. Impressed by Joseph's wisdom, Pharaoh appoints him as the second-in-command over all of Egypt.

As Joseph predicts, Egypt experiences seven years of healthy harvests and prosperity. Joseph manages the storage of grain during this period so that Egypt is well-prepared for the coming famine.

After the years of having plenty, the severe famine strikes, affecting not only Egypt, but also the surrounding regions, including Canaan, where Jacob and his sons reside. Jacob, who is also called Israel, sends his ten sons to Egypt to purchase grain.

When Jacob's sons come to Egypt to buy grain, they encounter Joseph, whom they secretly sold into slavery years before. Joseph recognizes them, but the brothers do not recognize him. Joseph tests his brothers by accusing them of being spies and demands that they bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, to prove their honesty.

Joseph imprisons his brother Simeon as collateral until the other brothers return with Benjamin. He also secretly gives back their money paid for the grain in their sacks.

Jacob is initially reluctant to send his son Benjamin to Egypt, fearing for his safety, but he eventually agrees to do so. The brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin and additional gifts for Joseph, as well as the money that had been returned to them.

Parashah Miketz highlights forgiveness and reconciliation. It showcases Joseph's remarkable journey from slavery and imprisonment to becoming a powerful leader in Egypt. Additionally, it sets the stage for the eventual reunion and reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, as the family comes together to weather the famine and begins a new chapter in their lives.

Teen Takeaways from Parashah Miketz

- 1. Leadership and responsibility:** When Joseph is put in charge of managing Egypt's resources during the years of plenty, he demonstrates effective leadership and responsibility. This can serve as a lesson to teens about the importance of taking on responsibilities, even at a young age, and the positive impact that can have on their lives and the lives of others. People often say that old age brings wisdom, but there are plenty of examples of young people excelling in many ways. Can you think of someone who is relatively young who has accomplished much?
- 2. Planning for the Future:** Joseph's foresight and planning during the years of plenty enable Egypt to survive the ensuing famine. This underscores the importance of preparing for the future, setting goals, and making wise decisions that can help navigate challenges and uncertainties. The idea of immediate gratification brings instant rewards but sometimes leaves nothing down the road. How can sacrifice now be a smart way to guarantee that you will be rewarded later?
- 3. Forgiveness and reconciliation:** The eventual reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, who had once betrayed and sold him into slavery, highlights the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation. People can learn about the power of forgiveness, letting go of grudges, and the potential for healing broken relationships. Joseph grows from a self-centered, vain, arrogant youth to a mature, thoughtful, caring brother. Is change possible in people?
- 4. Family values:** The story of Joseph and his brothers emphasizes the significance of family bonds. Despite their past conflicts, the brothers come together to support one another during the famine. People can learn about the importance of family unity, communication, and loyalty.
- 5. Patience and perseverance:** Joseph's journey from slavery to leadership is marked by patience and perseverance. He faces numerous trials and setbacks but remains steadfast in his faith and determination. Teens can learn the importance of resilience and not giving up in the face of adversity. Do you ever imagine that you are being tested when some difficult things are going on in your life?
- 6. Honesty and trust:** The story highlights the importance of honesty and trust in relationships. Joseph's brothers learn to be truthful with him, and he eventually places his trust in them. Teens can reflect on the significance of trustworthiness in their own interactions with peers and family.
- 7. Jews in positions of power:** Joseph achieved great prominence in the government of Egypt. Can you think of other Jews in history or today who have risen to important positions and how they used their position to help other Jews and others in general?

Summary

Parashah Miketz offers valuable lessons on **personal growth, responsibility, forgiveness, family values, and character development.**