

The fate of a country is at stake and Pharaoh calls upon Yoseph to interpret his dream.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-פַּרְעֹה חֲלוֹם פְּרִעָה אֶחָד הוּא אֵת אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹקִים עָשָׂה הַגִּיד לְפַרְעֹה:

“And Yoseph said to Pharaoh, a Pharaoh dream is one, that which the Lord is to do was told to Pharaoh.” (Bereishis 41:25).

Knowing that it was one dream seems to impress Pharaoh. Why did Yoseph keep emphasizing that it was one dream? (See *ibid* 41:26). If they were indeed one dream, why did Yoseph later say they were two dreams and why did Pharaoh say his men could not interpret *them*? (*Ibid* 41:32). What was Hashem to do and what was told to Pharaoh?

The implication from the end of the pasuk is that what Hashem was about to do was already told to Pharaoh. Pharaoh knew of the plenty and the famine. He knew that it affected his country, not him personally. He just did not know when, how, why, and what to do about it. Pharaoh knew it was one dream. “I have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpretation for it.” (*Ibid* 41:15). Pharaoh refers to it as *a dream* and an *it*, both singular. Further, he calls his necromancers and his wise men to help him. (*Ibid* 41:8). That is an odd combination. Either he needs advice or he needs a priest / magician to intervene with the gods. Pharaoh knew he needed both. From the dreams he wanted to know when it would happen and how bad the situation would be and if the country would survive it. From his wise men he wanted advice how to deal with such news.

That it was one dream but needing two experts is shown from the wording: וַיֹּסֶפֶר וַיְסַפֵּר “And Pharaoh told them of his dream, but they could not interpret them for Pharaoh.” (*Ibid*). Pharaoh told them his *one* dream. They could not interpret *them* – *how to intervene with the gods and how to react to the news for Pharaoh – the monarch*. This is what Yoseph does differently, as this pasuk introduces.

The Torah does seem to imply it was two dreams. “And he slept and dreamed a second time.” (*Ibid* 41:5). But when he wakes it says “behold, it was a dream.” (*Ibid* 41:7). Yoseph clarifies this, when he says, “Concerning the repetition of the dream two times.” (*Ibid* 41:32). Pharaoh dreamed both dreams twice. As Pharaoh says, “I awoke. Then I dreamed in my dream.” (*Ibid* 41:22). It was one dream, dreamt twice. He remembered the first part before he awoke and then he remembered the second part before he awoke again.

“And Yoseph told to Pharaoh.” This seems to suggest that Yoseph is telling something new to Pharaoh. It is also important that it was Yoseph saying it.

“A Pharaoh dream is one.” It is not *Pharaoh's dream*. He refers to it generally, a dream that a Pharaoh will dream is one. It is one message. The message is one that combines both a message from the gods and one needing the Pharaoh's sage wisdom to unlock and benefit from. Yoseph is telling Pharaoh that he does need both

priests/necromancers and wise advisers for this dream. This dream came from the Lord so that Pharaoh can know what is to come and deal wisely with it for his people. The reason why Pharaoh's servants could not help is because each only knew half the key – their own area of expertise. Yoseph was a wise man and was also tapped into knowing the Lord through his upbringing by Yaakov through Yitzchok, Avraham, Melchizedek, Shem, and Noach. Pharaoh says of Yoseph, רַחוּם אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ: "Can we find another like this man that has the spirit of the Lord in him?" (Ibid 41:38). Pharaoh was referring to a person with both wisdom but also knowing the ways of the gods.

"That which the Lord will do has been told to Pharaoh." Yoseph was hinting that not only was the meaning of the dream told to Pharaoh, but also the solution. There would be no purpose is Hashem telling Pharaoh what is about to happen if there would be no solution. The dream was meant as a forewarning with a purpose. The purpose could not be just to scare everyone that after seven years of plenty the country will collapse in starvation. It was meant to forewarn so that Pharaoh can grow from it, help his people, and change destiny. Either the country would fall or it would rise.

The destiny that was changed here was that Mitzrayim changed the way it was governed. Yoseph gathers the grain during the years of plenty, perhaps for purchase, perhaps by government decree. There is plenty so the excess is gathered without detriment. When the famine hits וְכָל-הָאֲרֶץ בָּאוּ מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁבֵר אֶל-יוֹסֵף כִּי-חֲזַק הָרָעָב בְּכָל-הָאֲרֶץ: "The entire country came to Mitzrayim to beg for rations to Yoseph, because the famine was strong in the entire country." (Ibid 41:57). This is referring only to the Land of Mitzrayim. It already said there was a famine in all lands while there was bread in the Land of Mitzrayim. (Ibid 41:54). Then Mitzrayim gets hit with the famine, too. (Ibid 41:55). Later it says that Yaakov sends his sons down because Canaan also has a famine. (Ibid 42:5). It would not need to tell us Canaan had a famine if it already said "all the lands" came to Mitzrayim. It means, the entire country of Mitzrayim came. Yaakov sends because Canaan, incidentally, is also hit hard by the famine.

Yoseph now combined the country under one ruler. Mitzrayim means the two Mitzras. There was Lower and Upper Mitzrayim. They had different governments. This helped combine them under one monarch: Pharaoh. Until now, Pharaoh was only ruler of the Lower Mitzrayim. Later we see the Torah refer to a "King of Mitzrayim." That will be the nomarch – the local leader – of the district or city of Mitzrayim. Pharaoh was the ruler of the entire country, his capitol located further south. This is why the dream was so special. It was not simply about a famine. It was about a country either falling into destruction or rising into a great power.

Conversely, Yoseph had two dreams. While similar they were not the same. וַיִּחְלֵם "He dreamed another dream." (Ibid 37:9). The first elicited "will you be ruler over us?" (Ibid 37:8). The second, "Will we bow down to you?" (Ibid 37:10). The first was him as ruler in Canaan. He was a stalk as they were, but he was king. (Ibid 37:7). This was twelve tribes filling the Land, with one of them king. However, their jealousy and hatred prevented this. Instead, the sun, moon, and stars (destiny, powerful lords, their father, and they; or many strange peoples) would bow to Yoseph himself. (Ibid 37:9). He would rule alone, not with his brothers. His dreams also affected a nation; Yisroel.