

מקץ

א ויהי מסוף תרתיני שניו ופרעה חלם והא קאם על נהרא: ב והא מו נהרא סלקו שבע תורו שפירו למחזי ופטימן בשר ורעון באחיה: ג והא שבע תורו אחרניו סלקו בתריהון מו נהרא בישו למחזי וחסירו בשר וקמו למבליהון דתורו על פיר נהרא: ד ואכלו תורתא בישו למחזי וחסירו בשר ית שבע תורתא שפירו למחזי ופטימתא ואתער פרעה: ה ודמוד וחלם תנינות והא שבע שבליא סלקו בקניא חד

מא א ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים ופרעה חלם והנה עמד על-היאר: ב והנה מן-היאר עלת שבע פרות יפות מראה ובריאת בשר ותרעינה באחו: ג והנה שבע פרות אחרות עלות אחריהן מן-היאר רעות מראה ודקות בשר ותעמדה אצל הפרות על-שפת היאר: ד ותאכלנה הפרות רעות המראה ודקת הבשר את שבע הפרות יפת המראה והבריאת וייקץ פרעה: ה ויישן ויחלם שנית והנה | שבע שבליים עלות בקנה

(6) ויהי מקץ. כתרגומו מסוף, וכל לשון קץ סוף הוא: לימי השובע, שהנריות נראות יפות זו לזו, שאין עין על היאור. כל שאר נהרות אינם קרוין יאורים חוץ מנילוס, כריה זרה צמרתה: באחו. באגס מריש"ק זלע"ז כמו מפני שכל הארץ עשויים יאורים יאורים צדי אדם ונילוס עולה בתוכס ומשקה אותם, לפי שאין גשמים יורדין במזרים מדיד (כשאר ארצות): (3) יפות מראה. סימן הוא נשכחת צימי הרעב: (5) בקנה אחד. טואיד"ל זלע"ז: נשכחת צימי הרעב: (5) בקנה אחד. טואיד"ל זלע"ז: נשכחת צימי הרעב: (5) בקנה אחד. טואיד"ל זלע"ז:

— It came to pass at the end of two full years. קץ usually denotes the end of a process. Wherever there is a historical development to be consummated, the term קץ is used.

Biblically, the term קץ always means *the end*, as in קץ כל בשר *[is come before Me]* (6:13) and מקץ, *At the end of seven years you will make a release* (Deut. 15:1). In the Talmud and Midrash, קץ refers to the messianic redemption; it is the end of the *galus* and suffering. God promises that at some point in history the Jewish people will be redeemed. The time of redemption is the end of a long process. The maturation of this process is called קץ.

Joseph's experiences in Egypt comprised a process which offered him the opportunity to develop his specific talents. This evolution required him to spend many years in bondage and in prison. Every event had significance. Each day, week, and month contributed toward the emergence of the great biblical figure. The day and hour which marked the end of this process, the קץ, was precise. When the time arrived, Joseph was ready to occupy the position of vizier of Egypt. (*Vision*, p. 20)

— that Pharaoh was dreaming. The word חלם is constructed in the present tense. The Torah should have written חלם, *Pharaoh dreamt*. Ibn Ezra explains that the form חלם is identical with the form ופרעה היה חלם—a past imperfect participle. The unique construction of the verb tells us about Pharaoh as an individual: a hard-boiled realist began to dream.

This change in Pharaoh occurred precisely when Joseph was to be elevated to power. Pharaoh would have been disconcerted over his dreams even if this metamorphosis had not taken place. However, to accept Joseph's interpretation, Pharaoh himself had to be a dreamer, a visionary. Otherwise, he would not have chosen Joseph to manage the economy of Egypt. He preferred Joseph's interpretation to that of others, not on objective grounds, but on purely subjective ones: dreamer met dreamer. (*Vision*, pg. 21)

— and behold, he was standing by the Nile. The preposition על has the connotation of nearness, proximity. There is another meaning, however. על עמד is a biblical idiom, as in: והנה עלי, *And behold, the Lord was standing over him* (28:13), that is, paying special attention to him

MIKEITZ

41 ¹ It came to pass at the end of two full years, * that Pharaoh was dreaming, * and behold, he was standing by the Nile.* ² And behold, from the Nile were coming up seven cows, of attractive appearance and robust flesh,* and they pastured in the marshland. ³ And behold, seven other cows were coming up after them from the Nile, of ugly appearance and lean of flesh, and they stood beside the cows [which were] on the Nile bank. ⁴ And the cows of ugly appearance and lean of flesh devoured* the seven cows that were of attractive appearance and healthy; then Pharaoh awoke. ⁵ And he fell asleep and dreamed again, and behold, seven ears of grain were growing on one stalk,

(Rashi). The word על describes a relationship. Jacob dreamt of God's concern for him.

The Nile is not merely a river. The economy of Egypt in antiquity depended on the Nile, as it does today. The Torah speaks of how this unique geographical feature was responsible for either abundance or famine. *For the land to which you are coming to possess is not like the land of Egypt... where you sowed your seed and which you watered by foot, like a vegetable garden (Deut. 11:10).* Local rain did not play a role in the agricultural economy. Life instead depended upon the Nile. Rashi says, *No other river is called "the River" except the Nile, because the whole country consists of artificially constructed canals and the Nile flows into them and fills them with water since rain does not fall regularly in Egypt as in other lands.* The river became the very symbol of Egyptian civilization. Pharaoh thus saw himself עמד על הַיָּאָר, concerned with the destiny of Egypt as a land and as a people.

In his later description of his dream to Joseph, Pharaoh used the term עמד על שפת הַיָּאָר, [Pharaoh] was standing on the bank of the river (verse 17). Unlike the earlier phrase here, עמד על הַיָּאָר, the phrase על שפת הַיָּאָר has no connotation other than the physical description of the scene in his dream. Joseph's interpretation, however, fully accounted for Pharaoh's understanding of the dream's broad implications. (*Vision*, p. 23)

שִׁבְעַת פְּרוֹת יְפוֹת מְרֹאָה וּבְרִיאוֹת בֶּשֶׂר - seven cows, of attractive appearance and robust flesh. The description of the cows as attractive seems anomalous. A butcher is not interested in the attractiveness of his cows; he only wants them to be healthy and fat. Egyptian civilization, however, was concerned with both material prosperity and esthetics. (*Vision*, p. 24)

וּתְאֹכְלָנָהּ הַפְּרוֹת רְעוֹת הַמְרֹאָה וְדִקְתָּ הַבֶּשֶׂר - And the cows of ugly appearance and lean of flesh devoured. Pharaoh saw the attractive cows being devoured. Civilization produces prosperity, esthetics and security; it also contains destructive, satanic elements. The curse imposed upon Adam by the Almighty that the environment will display hostility towards man is a reality. The land will yield its produce to man while at the same time conspiring to destroy him. The environment often appears to be cooperative, yet it clandestinely attempts to defeat man as well.

Each discovery for man's advantage paradoxically makes his life more precarious. Medicine has advanced, yet sickness is in a race with it. Such phenomena as pollution of the environment increase the occurrence of degenerative diseases. The possibility of destroying life on our globe is represented by the fact that the seven lean cows emerged from the same river which produced the seven attractive cows. Nature is forced by man to bow to its will; but occasionally, when man is inattentive, the captive environment avenges itself on man.

From the river—the source of civilization, abundance and prosperity—emerge beautiful cows as well as ugly cows, the satanic forces whose task it is to consume. The blessings of the human civilizing experience compete with demonic forces. (*Vision*, pp. 24-26)