YOSEF, and his success. # 4. HOW TO SEE THE FUTURE?

No. 4. HOW TO SEE THE FUTURE?

During the last days, I wrote about Yosef and the secrets of his success. We mentioned his patience, his self-esteem and his proactivity. Today I'm going to write about his vision of the future. Later on, we will explore two more elements: Yosef's integrity and ultimately Yosef's Emuna. These six personality traits made of Yosef a role model for us all, his descendants.

What does a Jewish "vision of the future" mean?

I think this is one of the least appreciated elements in the story of Yosef. Let's see…

Pharaoh dreamed of seven fat cows being devoured by seven skinny cows. But the skinny cows remained skinny, even after having devoured the fat cows. And so happened with seven ears of wheat as well. Pharaoh sought someone to interpret his dream, and the Torah says □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ "And there was no one who interpreted Pharaoh's dreams." Does this mean that no one was able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams? This is what most people think.

But there is another possibility. Actually, the interpretation of the dream of the Egyptian monarch was more than obvious. Egypt's cattle industry, cows, and Egypt's agriculture, ears of wheat, will collapse. But, if the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was so obvious, why none of the court's wizards approached Pharaoh and interpreted his dream?

Perhaps what happened was not that no one was *able* to interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, but no one *wanted* to bring Pharaoh the bad news: that after seven years of wealth, Egypt will end in bankruptcy. Who would dare giving these horrible news to Pharaoh?

First, because Pharaoh could react very badly and "shoot the messenger".

But there's more. Something much deeper. The court's soothsayers understood that Pharaoh's prophetic dreams conveyed an inevitable fate awaiting Egypt. The soothsayers were futuristic-fatalists, and thought that the future cannot

be altered.
Here comes the genius of Yosef and his “Jewish wisdom”. For Yosef the future is not written in stone. The future is not static, it is dynamic. It can be changed. When the prophets of Israel spoke to the people about the future, and for example, prophesied that the Bet haMiqdash was going to be destroyed, they were not transmitting an unchangeable prophetic vision, they were warning about the future consequences of the misdeeds of the people of Israel. And thus, they called the people to do Teshuba, repentance, because they knew that “the future” is in men’s hands. The realization of that bad prophecy could be avoided.
The same happened with King Hizquia, who despite the prophecy of Yesha’ayahu Hanabi, saying that the King would die, prayed to HaShem and was cured.
Unlike Jewish society, where it is understood that the future can be changed by God or by men, in pagan society omens, prophetic dreams and oracles convey an “unalterable” vision of the future. For the diviners of Pharaoh, the seven years of famine would be hopelessly seven years of famine that will destroy Egypt. So, it is better to say nothing ….
But where others saw a big problem, Yosef, with his Jewish vision, saw a great opportunity. If during the seven years of wealth Egypt stores grain abundantly, Egypt not only will survive the famine, Egypt (and Pharaoh) could end up becoming the richest country in the region, since everyone else will come to Egypt to buy grain.
The difference between Yosef and Pharaoh’s soothsayers had to do with a fatalistic vs. a creative vision of the future.
I think Yosef’s approach to the future characterized (and characterizes) deeply the Jewish view of the future, even in the professional or a commercial field. We Jews do not have a static or fatalistic vision of the future. As my grandfather, z”l, who came from Syria to Buenos Aires without a penny in his pocket, said. “If today I work mopping floors, it does not mean that I will have to do this for the rest of my life”. He saw the possibilities of the future as wide open.
This is also the message conveyed by Tefila, prayer: If the future is already determined, why would I pray to Hashem and ask Him to cure a loved one who is dying? We pray because we do not believe in fate or destiny. We pray because we know

that the future is God’s hand. It depends on His Will.
The future is not limited by a destiny. And Yosef understood this very well.