

# Mikeitz

Perceptions • Teves 4, 5784 • December 16, 2023 • Issue #2025

*The Secret* came out in 2006. This is what Wikipedia wrote:

“*The Secret* is a 2006 self-help book...based on the earlier film of the same name. It is based on the belief of the pseudoscientific law of attraction, which claims that thoughts can change a person’s life directly. The book alleges energy as assurance of its effectiveness... Scientific claims made in the book have been rejected by a range of critics, pointing out that the book has no scientific foundation.”

I was asked back then to watch the movie by students of mine, and I saw enough to get the gist of what they were saying. As is often the case with things like this, some parts resonated with me and some did not. But the parts that did inspired me to write a Torah version of the idea, in a book I ended up calling: *Be Positive is More Than Just a Blood Type*.

You see, the difference is that they were pointing out things about the universe and man in it, based upon observation and experience without really understanding what the system is or how it works. This leads to inaccuracies and sometimes even misleading misrepresentation of some important ideas.

Thanks to *Kabbalah*, we not only know what the system is, but how it works as well. *Be Positive* discusses this in some detail, and then shows how Yosef was a master of this system. It helps to explain why dreams are so prominent in the narrative of the development of *Mosbiach*. Now, thanks to Quantum Physics, we can “see” how reality around us may reflect this as well.

The question is this: How much does what we think and desire impact the outcome of our reality? According to Physics, the final outcome of a moment depends upon the person observing or measuring it. Until that critical moment, “reality” is more a

function of probability, or *potential*, allowing personal perception to play a role in the reality in which they play an active part.

Similarly, the *Gemora* says that a dream goes after the interpretation. We have always assumed that the interpretation of the dream was just telling us what the reality of the dream was. According to the *Gemora*, it's actually telling us the reality the dream *became* once it was interpreted.

This could explain why the Torah tells us at the beginning of *Parashas Vayaishev* that the brothers first hated Yosef, and then became jealous of him. Hatred is just because a hater doesn't like someone, regardless of what the person they hate has or doesn't have. At first, the brothers just hated Yosef because of his aspirations to be their leader, assuming that he was only delusional.

Jealousy however acknowledges that the other person *does* possess something we want, but do not have. When their father, who heard the second dream, interpreted it in terms of Yosef becoming the leader of the family, it finally struck them that he might not have been as delusional as they had first thought. Ya'akov's interpretation of Yosef's dream had concretized the reality of his becoming king one day, and that made them jealous. Therefore, Yosef had to go.

### **Shabbos Day**

THE GEMORA MAKES its point by telling the story of a particular dream interpreter, Bar Hedyā, to whom Rava and Abaya had turned in order to understand identical dreams they had (*Brochos* 56a). Abaya paid the interpreter for his services, but Rava did not. Consequently, Bar Hedyā interpreted everything positively for Abaya, but negatively for Rava, and everything happened as he said.

Eventually Rava caught on and gave Bar Hedyā a piece of his mind, and shortly afterwards Bar Hedyā was executed by the Romans in a *very* unpleasant way. But the *Gemora* made its point, that a dream, which is only potential, becomes reality according to the way it is interpreted.

It is not clear if Yosef and his brothers knew this, but it could explain why they went from only hatred of their brother to jealousy. Of course, Yosef was going to interpret his own dreams favorably and make himself a king in the future, and they hated him for it. But when their father did the same, it was as if he was sanctioning Yosef's future rise to power—not a surprise—even though he criticized Yosef for telling his brothers about it. That became reason to be jealous.

Apparently, prophecies worked similarly. With the exception of Moshe *Rabbeinu*,

God spoke to prophets in a riddle. It was up to the individual prophet to interpret the prophecy as it made sense to him, and then deliver it to the people. It was his perception of what he believed God was telling him that established the reality of the prophecy.

Of course being outside of time, God knew that the prophet would interpret the prophecy the way he did, even though the prophet did not, which is why God chose him for that particular prophecy. But the same thing is true about the dream interpreters and the people observing and measuring reality. Reality may be in flux until we actualize it, but God knows this even before the person does. God makes sure, for the sake of the master plan, that the “right” person is in the right spot at the right time to do so.

Then what’s the point? If reality does not become fixed solely on our observations because they are manipulated by God to achieve specific outcomes, why involve man in the process at all? It’s Moshe *Rabbeinu* all over again is it not, faking construction of the *Mishkan* while God actually builds it, so that he can get the credit for doing so?

And doesn’t this also mean that the universe is not so responsive to our requests and positive thinking? There will be times when it will work out like that, but only because God wants it to for the sake of the bigger picture. But there will also be times when it will not work out like that, again, for the sake of some bigger picture. There have been people who did it all correctly and still didn’t get the results they were hoping for. The universe doesn’t work for us. It works for God.

### **Seudas Shlishis**

I CAN’T SAY for sure, but this is what I think. It’s a known principle, but with a deeper application of it.

The *Gemora* teaches that God gives merit to the merit worthy, and demerit to those who deserve that (*Bava Basra* 119b). For example, *Bnos Tzelofchad* had the merit to teach a law about inheritance and be mentioned in the Torah, because of their love of *Eretz Yisroel*. Korach, because he was overly proud, led people to rebel who were swallowed up by the earth.

Until now, the assumption has been that every reality was destined and on its way since Creation. All that remains to be decided at the time it actually occurs is, who would be honored with the good part, or dishonored with the bad one? History is a Divine “screenplay” with a specific plot and characters, but it is the Producer (God) Who chooses the actual players once the “casting” begins.

When He does that, a person is chosen for their part based upon their ability to play it well. All are people who have made themselves into good people or bad people through their free will choices, after which God just has to plug each one into His “play” as He sees fit.

All of this is true. But what we said above adds to this. It says that a merit worthy person not only gets the opportunity to carry out the good deed necessary for the sake of history at that time. They also get to establish what the opportunity needs to be through their perception of the situation. This not only makes them a hero, but a partner with God in the making of reality itself.

This may be the deeper explanation of the verse:

*“Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen saw it, arose from the congregation, and took a spear in his hand.” (Bamidbar 25:3)*

We can assume that if Pinchas responded to the crisis, it was because he *saw* what was happening in the camp. Why does the verse need to emphasize that he first *saw* what was happening before acting?

Perhaps it was Pinchas’s “seeing” of the event that established the reality of it, at least for him. This is perhaps why no one else saw him as the hero he was until God confirmed that Pinchas had acted correctly, and everyone else had been wrong. It’s what God wanted, and therefore Pinchas got the Divine tap on the shoulder, and merited to be the one to complete the Divine will.

This adds a caveat to the idea of getting what you want through the way you think. If you want your wish to be fulfilled, your wish should be in consonance with the will of God. As the *mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos* says,

*“Make His will like your will, so that He will make your will like His will. Nullify your will before His will, so that He will nullify the will of others before your will.” (Pirkei Avos 2:4)*

That’s when a *tzaddik*, like Yosef *HaTzaddik*, decrees and God fulfills (*Moed Katan* 16b) . . . and the “universe” does their bidding.

### ***Ain Od Mihado, Part 77***

BASED ON WHAT we have just said, a person should not be so quick to evaluate a situation, even when a quick evaluation is necessary. Jumping to conclusions can be a dangerous thing because it can cause the dangerous situation to actually occur. When the rabbis advised us to “be deliberate in judgment” (*Pirkei Avos* 1:1), it was more than just good advice. It was instructions about how to have more control of

our lives.

Furthermore, “I told you so . . .” may be less about “I told you so” than making the fear come true by concretizing the reality through decisions and words. There may be more than one possible outcome to a situation, and by going with the more probable one, we are the ones who discount the others.

On the other hand, by believing in a better possibility, we may be the ones making it happen and, responsible for our redemption. After all, look how quickly Yosef went from the depths of Egyptian society to the heights of it. Did anyone see that coming, including Yosef?

Perhaps that is what underlies *bitachon*—trust in God. God builds several possible outcomes into a crisis, from disaster and failure to miraculous redemption. Then He leaves it up to the person to decide how much they believe that a happy ending can result from their currently unnerving crisis. What we end up believing may itself be the reason for our success or failure.

The *Satan* knows this. Therefore, he does whatever he can to make us believe in only negative outcomes to circumstances, so that we will make them happen. He uses everything in his arsenal to distract us away from thinking positively in a negative situation and, so often succeeds.

This would help to explain the miraculous victory of the tiny and poorly armed *Chashmonaim* army over the mighty Greeks. It wasn't just that they had to lose the war, and badly. That was just the most *obvious* possibility, given our perception of reality. But they chose to believe in the less obvious outcome, victory, and that is what made it happen.

Because, as the *Lesbem* points out, at the core of everything physical and concrete is the *Ohr Ain Sof*, God's infinite light. This light can become anything the moment God wills it, so built into everything finite is an infinite number of possibilities. It's as if God has given a choice of different versions of His will He has regarding situations, and allows us to choose the one *we* want, based upon what we think and believe. Therefore, as the Torah says, we must choose *wisely*.

Good *Shabbos*,  
Pinchas Winston