



# Bountiful Belief

To believe in the seemingly impossible, not to lose faith, is a principal hallmark of every Jew. Our *parashah* presents two individuals who demonstrated this belief and held it close to their hearts. In doing so, they not only set the stage for us to believe in our own dreams, but also in our national dream and anticipation for our future redemption.

Yosef Hatzadik relays to his brothers and his father the details of his dreams which include his becoming a king. The brothers react with jealousy, while the Torah tells us that Yaakov Avinu “*shamar et hadvar – [he] kept the matter in mind or waited to see the result.*” Rav Yekutiel Weiss, in *Ziv Hachomah*, offers an explanation based on the teachings of the Saba of Kelm. Yaakov Avinu indeed felt that Yosef Hatzadik was a worthy candidate for leadership. One of the key qualities that a king must display is to be “*noseh b’ol im chavero – to carry another’s*

burden.” A king must be sensitive to the physical and spiritual needs of his people. Yaakov Avinu understood that the reports that Yosef Hatzadik brought back about his brothers were motivated by his concern for their spiritual welfare. Later we find that Yosef Hatzadik once again takes an interest in the welfare of others when he notices the downcast faces of the royal butler and baker in the Egyptian prison. One who is attuned to the needs of others is capable of ruling fairly and efficiently. Yaakov Avinu saw this in Yosef and therefore took it seriously and waited to see what would happen.

Rav Yechezkel Levenstein z”l sees a powerful reference to this idea at the end of the first brachah in the Shemoneh Esrei. We say that Hashem is “*Melech ozer, u’moshe’a, u’magen.*” He proposes that we can deepen the meaning by thinking of the word “*Mel-ech*” as preceding each of the words that follow. Hashem is the King who is “*ozzer*”, one who helps, Hashem is the King who is “*moshe’a*,” a savior, and Hashem is the King who is “*magen*,” a protector. A king’s role is to help, defend, and protect his people.

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These are the qualities that will define a true leader.

The Midrash in *Bereisheet Rabbah* [88;7] discusses several cases that one would never have believed that something would happen, and it nevertheless happened. Who would have expected Avraham Avinu and Sara Imeinu to have a child at their age? Yet they did! The Midrash continues, who would have believed that Yosef Hatzadik who experienced so many travails, would become a king? Rav Svei z"l, in *Ruach Eliyahu*, offers a fascinating insight into this Midrash. He suggests that even though Yosef went through so much trouble and pain, even though there were times that it seemed impossible, he always held on to the belief that he would one day be king. Yosef's interpretation of Paroh's dreams as carrying both good tidings for himself and for the Jewish people (according to the Midrash) implied that he was ever hopeful for his personal and national redemption. Yosef Hatzadik kept his dreams at the forefront of his mind and this informed his choices and actions.

From where did Yosef Hatzadik get the stamina to hold on to his dreams regardless of his many challenges? Clearly it was inspired by his father, who was "*shamar et hadavar*," who himself held the belief that Yosef would ascend to kingship. As Yosef Hatzadik always held the vision of his father strong in his thoughts, everything his father represented inspired him to prevail in difficult times. The lesson here is a compelling one. Not only do our beliefs about ourselves hold great power to inspire us, but our belief in our children encourages them to believe in themselves. ■

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