

Yoseph successfully interprets Pharaoh's dreams and Pharaoh makes Yoseph the viceroy over Country of Egypt.

וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמִרְכָּבַת הַמִּשְׁנָה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָם וְנִתְּוֹן אֹתוֹ
עַל כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

“And he made him ride in the chariot of the second-in-command to him (Pharaoh), and they (the people) called before him “Avreich!” And he put him over the Country of Egypt.” (Genesis 41:43).

This verse can easily be read as this: “And He (HaShem) made Yoseph to ride in the chariot as the second-in-command to Him (HaShem). And they (the ministering Angels) called before Yoseph “Avreich!” And HaShem put Yoseph over the Country of Egypt.” This is how HaShem's ultimate plan for Yoseph came through. It was a hidden miracle in the sight of an entire people. A Hebrew slave rose up to be the second seat in the great power that was Mitzrayim.

What is the term ‘Avreich?’ It cannot be Yoseph's new title as Pharaoh calls him Tzafnas Paneach. (Ibid 41:45). What does it mean that Yoseph was made to ride in the viceroy's chariot? Surely, he would ride in the chariot of his new position, that is not giving us new information.

Gamara Bava Basra 4a explains: *What is the meaning of the word reikha? It denotes royalty, as it is written: “I am today soft [rakh] and anointed king” (II Samuel 3:39). And if you wish, say that the meaning of the word is learned from here, from the term describing Yoseph after he was appointed viceroy to the king: “And they cried before him, Avrekh”* Avreich is a denotation of royalty. Not only was Yoseph elevated to an advisor he was made royalty. He was made a nobleman. He was now part of the King's Court.

The Torah does not mention that anyone was replaced out of a job of viceroy. It appears that Yoseph was elevated to a new position, one that had no precedence. The verses go on about how Pharaoh made Yoseph a second to the king over the Land of Mitzrayim to indicate Yoseph was something new. He was now royalty, he was beyond an advisor or the employee position of viceroy of the king. He was now a royal. Thus, this chariot was a *mishne*, a secondary one, almost on the same level as the Pharaoh's. The chariot served the position.

Gemara Semachos 8:8 says, *When R' Shimon ben Gamaliel and R' Yishmael came [to be tried], it was decreed against them that they should be put to death. Whereupon R' Yishmael broke into tears; and R' Shimon said to him, 'Abreich' why do you weep? Two steps more you will be in the bosom of the righteous, and yet you weep!' He replied, 'Do I then weep because we are about to be executed? It is because we are about to be executed [in the same way] as murderers and desecrators of the Sabbath'. He said to him, 'Perhaps you were having a meal or you were sleeping when a woman came to ask [a ruling] concerning her ritual impurity or her cleanness, and your servant told her that you were asleep. And the Torah states, "You shall not afflict. To keeping an anxious woman waiting is a form of affliction, any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way—for if they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry."* (Exodus 22:21).

From here we see that Avreich was adapted as a vernacular term of endearment for a fellow scholar. It means, more, though, when it comes to Yoseph. It indicates something special about Yoseph's new powers and position.

Rashi explains the term Avreich. *Render this as the Targum does: "This is the father (counsellor) of the king". In Aramaic (some editions read in Roman i.e. Latin) אבא means king (rex). Thus in the Gemara of Bava Basra chapter השותפין (Bava Basra 4a) we have: "neither a noble (אבא) nor the son of a noble (אבא)".* See there.

Avreich can mean advisor to the king. Surely it does not mean the literal father of the king. It is a word in the Torah but it is a word that was used in ancient Egypt. Therefore, we can look toward a similar word in the ancient Arabic to interpret it. It can mean similar in ancient Egyptian. (This would be unlike the name Moshe which is the Hebrew derivation of 'from the water he was drawn' and is simply interpreting the actual name used in ancient Egyptian which the Torah does not record). The Etymology of words can be derived from other languages as languages draw on each other. An example is 'camel' coming from the ancient Hebrew word 'gamel.'

Rashbam explains how Yoseph was the 'father of the king.' "gnik eht fo rehtaf" אבא, *We have some proof for this from Baba Basra 4a אבא רב אלו אבא, "neither a king nor a king's son. Since we can discount the letter א at the end, this being an Aramaic ending, if אבא רב means son of a king, then אבא רבא means father of a king. This is proven further from Genesis 45:8 when Yoseph speaks of his position being ינמישיו באלוהים, "He (HaShem) has placed me in the*

position of being a father (provider) for Pharaoh.” In effect this made Yoseph “father” of the king. The word הערפ, after all, is simply a title, meaning “king,” not the personal name of an individual as we explained already on verse 10.

According to the Rashbam, Yoseph was actually even higher than Pharaoh. Since he was the one that would be in charge of providing the Land of Mitzrayim with food during the years of famine, he became the ultimate provider. Who is the provider of a family or nation other than the King or a father? Since Yoseph would also provide food for Pharaoh, it was Yoseph who became—in a way—the father or king over Pharaoh himself.

The Midrash says, *Rabbi Yehuda explained: אברך is appellation for Yoseph who was אב “a father” in wisdom and רך “tender” in years. Whereupon Rabbi Yose the son of a woman of Damascus said to him: “How much longer will you pervert for us the meaning of Scripture? The word אברך can only be connected with the word ברכים knees (i.e. “Bend the knee”), for all came in and went forth only by his permission, just as it states “and he set him [over all the land of Egypt]” (Sifré Devarim 1:1).*

Rabbi Yose clearly takes exception from culling from other languages to interpret this word. Rabbi Yose believes that the word in the Torah is, in fact, ancient Hebrew. Thus, it is a Hebrew derivative from bending knees. The officials would yell to the people before Yoseph—as he approached—“Avreich”— (or the Egyptian equivalent) because the officials wanted to let everyone know to bow down to Yoseph. He was royalty. Several rishohim agree. I would suggest that “av” and “rakh” are also ancient Hebrew words and we can derive their meaning as provider or advisor to the king.

Ibin Ezra explains it like Rabbi Yose as well. *Every man called before him, I will bend the knee (avrekh) and I will bow down. The word avrekh is a hifil. However, the word va-yivrakh in and kneeled down (va-yivrakh) upon his knees (II Chronicles 6:13) is a kal. Both words come from the same root, birkayim (knees). Rabbi Yonah, the Spanish grammarian, said that avrekh is an infinitive, with an alef taking the place of the heh, as we find in the word ashkem in sending them betimes (ashkem) and often (Jeremiah 25:4). However, I believe that the alef of ashkem is a first person future prefix.*

Sforno says similarly that it refers to the bending of the knees. *Our verse says “he placed him” meaning, he put Yoseph’s authority before the people.*

If Avreich simply means ‘bend your knees’ then when it is used later in the Gemara Semochos colloquially by Rabbis toward each other as a term of endearment it simply is from the fact that Yoseph was associated with the word and it became in the vernacular a term of endearment or one worthy of being honored. The Gemara Bava Basra explains it more a function of Yoseph’s position.

Radak says, *The letter ם in this word appears here in lieu of the letter ן and is part of the infinitive as in ארתו ונתון, in other words: it is appropriate to bend one’s knee before this person and to raise him to be ruler over the land of Egypt. Alternatively, the meaning could be that the letter ם refers to the respective person (anyone) announcing at the approach of Yoseph’s coach that those who were still a distance away before he passed them should get down on their knees to pay their respects anticipating his passing.*

Oh Chaim explains the verse to mean, *“Avreich” means “On your knees!” and “he has been appointed in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” These two separate announcements were proclaimed in advance of the parade in which Joseph rode in a state coach. He was granted royalty-like status.*

The Midrash also has another explanation of the word. The word is a composite of the two words אב and ורך, “a father-figure though young in years.” There are other examples of the word רך meaning young in years, such as (Samuel II 3:39) ומשוח מלך היום, “and although young in years I have today been anointed king.” (Bereshis Rabbah 90:3).

This does not seem to fit well with our verse as Yoseph was not young; he was already “thirty years old.” (Genesis 41:46). Dovid, in the verse in Shmuel, is also 30 years old. It is more fitting in that verse to say he was ‘weak’ or ‘soft’ which is another meaning of ורך as in “and Leah had weak/soft eyes.” (Genesis 29:17). That verse is not interested as ‘young eyes.’

A better meaning of the Midrash is that Yoseph was a father figure even though weak. Dovid took kingship from a weaker position than Shaul. Yoseph was a slave and a foreigner. He was in a very weak position. Yet, “Avreich” he became a father figure (royalty) from a weak position. It was a miracle.

Ibin Ezra explains the meaning of ‘secondary chariot.’ *Mishneh (the second) comes from the same root as shenayim (two). The king is like the numeral one, next comes the mishneh which means second to him, and afterward the shalish (adjutant) which means the same as shilishi (third).* This is very similar to what Gemara Yerushalmi Klayim 38a says.

Radak says it means the chariot reserved for the second highest position.

Rashi explains the chariot as secondary. “That which drove next to Pharaoh’s own chariot.”

Ramban says according to Rashi’s interpretation, *the word hamishneh refers to the noun, [“chariot,” meaning that this was the chariot of second rank]. The same applies in the verses: the priests ‘hamishneh’ (of the second order); (II Kings 23:4). ‘eth mishnei’ (a copy) of this Torah. (Deuteronomy 17:18.). However, the correct interpretation is that the word mishneh is adjectival, meaning that this was the chariot of the mishneh, of he who was second in rank. just as: And I shall be to you ‘l’mishneh’ (as a second one); (I Samuel 23:17). For Mordecai the Jew was ‘mishneh’ (the second) unto king Ahaseurus. (Esther 10:3). Similarly, the expression, keseph mishneh, (ibid 43:12). (the money of the mishneh) is adjectival and is to be understood as “the money of the ‘second’ purchase.” Now the grammarians (R’dak) who mentions this point in his Sefer Hashorashim (Book of Roots), under the root shana have already brought a proof to this thesis.*

Ramban’s interpretation further supports that Pharaoh created this position and the chariot that Yoseph rode in became the chariot to the Royal Viceroy.

Bartanura also says *it must mean that the chariot belonged to the viceroy, it was the chariot to the Viceroy, and not the “Viceroy chariot.” It says ‘to him.’ This indicates the position made the chariot, not the other way around.*

Radak also says, “and he placed him” means *and everyone agreed that this person deserved to be given control of the whole land of Egypt.*

Thus, Pharaoh elevated Yoseph to become a royal in the great and powerful Land of Mitzrayim. He was not a mere viceroy that can be demoted from his position. This was a lifetime position, a new one created just for Yoseph. It was, then, fitting that he marries a governor’s daughter. (Genesis 41:45). He was so important because he was the new provider of the people. Years of famine were coming and it was Yoseph’s duties to provide for the people so they not starve. He was also in charge of making Egypt fat with wealth. In this way he provided Pharaoh. He was advisor and provider to Pharaoh. He was also a royal so all had to bend the knee before him.

Yoseph’s elevation served two things. First, it was a foreshadowing to Mordechai’s elevation in Shushan. (Esther 8:2). It gave precedence for a king to elevate a Hebrew so that he

can save his Hebrew brethren. Second, it fulfilled Yoseph's dreams. Yoseph had two dreams. First that stalks of grain in the field bowed to Yoseph. Then, the stars bowed to him.(Genesis 37:7,9). The stalks symbolized those seeking to gain food from him when the years of famine hit. Yoseph was an 'av' a provider of food. The stars symbolized his brothers who were compared to stars. (Genesis 15:5). When his brothers came they did not bend the knee as a courtesy. It was to an actual royal.

Bonus Shtikel

Mitzrayim means “the plural of Mitzra.” ‘Misra’ is a term for Egypt in the Ancient tongues. There were two Misras. A lower one and a higher one. This we cull from Egyptian history. The Lower Egypt was north as its elevation was more to sea level as it approached the Mediterranean Sea. The upper or higher Egypt was south, more inland of the continent of Africa.

“Mitzrayim” was a city in Egypt. When the Torah simply says “Mitzrayim” it means the capital city of Egypt. The City of Mitzrayim is similar in name to City of New York in the State of New York. When referring to the country the Torah uses the term “Land of Mitzrayim.” Consequently, the ‘King of Egypt’ is not the same person as “Pharaoh.” Pharaoh was the emperor of the entire Land of Egypt, the entire country. King of Egypt was a mayor or governor, of the city-state called Mitzvrayim. He was a king of a city state. Pharaoh was the ruler and emperor of the entire country.

We see this in our verses. The baker and the wine pourer served under the King of Egypt. (Genesis 40:1). They did something to offend the King of Egypt. Thus, Pharaoh was angry at their officers, the Chamberlain of Wine Pourers and the Chamberlain of Bakers. (Ibid 40:2). In his dream, the Chamberlain of Wine Pourers—not the wine pourer that sinned, but the officer—saw in his dream that he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. (Ibid 40:11). Yoseph said he would return to put the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. (Ibid 40:13). Pharaoh’s hand, not King of Egypt because he served in Pharaoh’s court not in the city of Egypt.

Further, the entire time Yoseph talked to Pharaoh about his dreams it never mentions “King of Egypt.” The King of Egypt is not the one who had the dreams; Pharaoh did. Only Pharaoh can elevate Yoseph to royalty. Similarly the entire episode keeps referring to the territory that would be effected by the plenty and famine as “Land of Mitzrayim.” It was the entire country that was about to be hit by plenty and then famine. As we read the verses this distinction between the city and country, the Pharaoh and king become clear.

Now the verse does say, “Yoseph was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh [and] King of Egypt.” (Ibid 41:46). But the verse continues “Yoseph went out from before Pharaoh’s presence and he passed the entire Land of Mitzrayim.” (Ibid). The verse means he stood before Pharaoh who was King over of Egypt—so Pharaoh was able to raise him from the dungeon under the auspices of the King of Egypt. Yoseph, however, went out and was elevated and worked directly under, Pharaoh and over the entire Land of Mitzrayim.