

JewishTimes

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Chanuka

**MEGILLAS
ANTIOCHOS**

**PHARAOH'S
WISDOM**

**THOUGHTS ON
CHANUKA**

**COURAGEOUS
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**THE DREAMS
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the **Importance** of the
Theme & Message of

Chanukah

RABBI BERNIE FOX



"During the Second Temple period when the Hellenist kings ruled, they made decrees against Israel and suppressed their religion. They did not permit them to study Torah and perform mitzvot. They seized their wealth and their daughters. They entered the Sanctuary, breached its walls, and defiled the objects of purity. Israel was greatly afflicted by them and terribly oppressed until the G-d of their fathers had mercy upon them and redeemed them from their hands and saved them. The Hashmoni family – the great Kohanim – arose and they killed them and saved Israel from their hand. They established a king from among the Kohanim and sovereignty returned to Israel for more than two hundred years until the destruction of the Second Temple." (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Laws of Chanukah 3:1)

Chanukah and Purim: Created by the Sages

With these comments, Maimonides introduces his discussion of the laws of Chanukah. He explains that during the Second Temple period, the Assyrian kings became rulers over the Land of Israel. The Assyrians were Hellenists and attempted to introduce their culture into the Land of Israel. Their strategy included brutal suppression of the Jewish religion and merciless oppression of all who opposed their policies. Ultimately, the Hashmonaim – a prominent family of Kohanim – lead the people in an armed rebellion against their Assyrian rulers. Despite discouraging odds against their success, the rebels succeeded in driving the Assyrians out of Israel and Jewish sovereignty was reestablished.

Maimonides continues in the following paragraphs to describe the miracle that occurred in the Temple with the rekindling of the Menorah – the candelabra of the Sanctuary. He then explains that in response

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to the miraculous victory and the miracle of the Menorah, the Sages established the festival of Chanukah.

Chanukah is the second of the two festivals created by the Sages. It was preceded by the establishment of Purim. Maimonides discusses these two celebrations in a single section of his code of Torah law – the Mishne Torah. He begins with a discussion of Purim and then continues with his discussion of Chanukah. His order contrasts with that of Rav Yosef Karo in his Shulchan Aruch. In Shulchan Aruch, the discussion of Chanukah precedes the discussion of Purim. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Zt”l explains that Shulchan Aruch’s order is dictated by the Jewish calendar. On our calendar, Chanukah precedes Purim. Accordingly, Chanukah precedes Purim in Shulchan Aruch. Rav Soloveitchik explains that Maimonides ignores this chronological consideration in order to focus upon a conceptual relationship between the two celebrations.

The controversy surrounding the innovation of Purim and Chanukah

The Talmud explains that the establishment by the Sages of a new celebration – one not included in the Torah – was a controversial innovation. The Sages were uncertain whether their authority included the power to create a new festival. Ultimately, after extensive discussion and debate, the Sages concluded that they were authorized to establish a new festival. This debate took place during the period of the first Diaspora in regards to Purim. After the return to the Land of Israel – during the Second Temple period – the events commemorated by Chanukah occurred. This time there was no debate regarding the authority of the Sages to create a festival celebrating the salvation of the people. This debate had already taken place and the issue had been resolved. The Sages of this latter generation relied upon the ruling of their predecessors and created the celebration of Chanukah.

In short, Purim served as that precedent and halachic basis for the creation of Chanukah. This relationship is expressed by Maimonides in the order in which he discusses the two celebrations. He begins with Purim which established the authority of the Sages to create a new celebration and then

continues with Chanukah which relies upon the Purim precedent.

“All of these mitzvot that they created we are obligated to accept and observe them as it says, “You shall not deviate from any of the word...” They are not an addition to the mitzvot of the Torah or a violation of the admonition to not add or subtract (from the Torah that specifies) that a prophet is not permitted to innovate and claim that the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded him in this mitzvah or to add onto the mitzvot of the Torah or to subtract any one of these six hundred thirteen mitzvot.

Instead, if an assembly of Sages with a prophet of that time added a mitzvah by way of enactment, teaching, or decree, this is not an addition. This is because they have not said that the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded to make an eruv or to read the Megilah in its proper time ...

Rather we say as follows: The prophets with the assembly of Sages enacted and commanded to read the Megilah in its proper time in order to proclaim the praise of Hashem and the salvation that He brought about for us and that He responded when we called out. (The mitzvah was created) in order that we should bless Him and praise Him and in order to make known to future generations that the promise made to us in the Torah – “For who is the great nation whose G-d is close to it like Hashem our G-d at any time that we call out to Him?” – is true...” (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Introduction)

The message of Chanukah and Purim and its unique role in the enactment of these celebrations

In his introduction to his Mishne Torah, Maimonides provides a short list of the 613 mitzvot. This list is composed exclusively of commandments whose source is to be found in the Torah. In other words, all of these 613 commandments originate from Sinai. Maimonides continues with a brief discussion of the authority of the Sages to create new commandments. He acknowledges that although the Torah admonishes us to not add or subtract to its commandments, the Sages have enacted various mitzvot. He then resolves this apparent paradox. He explains that the prohibition against adding to the Torah’s commandments is to be understood very literally. The Sages may not enact a new commandment and claim that it is ordained directly from Hashem. Any enactment of the Sages must be clearly acknowledged by them to be their own innovation and

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not a Divine decree. Therefore, the Sages acted within their authority when they created the mitzvah of reading the Megilah on Purim. They did not present their enactment as a Divinely ordained commandment. Instead, they established the commandment as an enactment of their own. No addition was made to the mitzvot revealed at Sinai.

Maimonides adds that the commandment of reading the Megilah was created in order to communicate an important concept. The events recounted in the Megilah demonstrate that Hashem responds to our petitions. He is the protector of the Jewish people and their redeemer. Presumably, the entire celebration of Purim is dedicated to communication of this message. This also seems to be the central message of Chanukah. It is notable that in this discussion Maimonides does not stress our obligation to offer thanks. Instead, he suggests that the objective of the Megilah's reading is to communicate Hashem's providential relationship with the Jewish nation. In other words, although the celebration of Purim, the reading of the Megilah, and the celebration of Chanukah certainly include a prominent element of thanksgiving, this element is not an ends unto itself. It is a means to the end of heightening our awareness of Hashem's relationship to our people.

In this sense, the celebrations of Purim and Chanukah are anomalies. Most decrees and commandments enacted by the Sages reinforce or relate to a specific commandment of the Torah. The Sages prohibited combinations of poultry and milk. This decree reinforces the Torah's prohibitions against cooking meat and milk together and consuming cooked combinations of meat and milk. Similar relationships can be identified between other enactments of the Sages and specific mitzvot in the Torah. In contrast, the celebrations of Chanukah and Purim do not reinforce specific Torah commandments. Instead, they are designed to focus our attention upon the Torah's perspective regarding Hashem's providential relationship with His people.

The twelfth foundation: (This is) the Messianic Era. It is that we should believe and affirm that he will come and not think that he will be late. If he is delayed one should await him and not assign for him a time and not speculate regarding passages of the Torah in order to derive the time for his coming... (Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishne, Tractate Sanhedrin 10:1)

The controversy regarding treating the Messianic era as a fundamental Torah doctrine

One of Maimonides most notable and controversial innovations was his enumeration of thirteen basic theological foundations of the Torah. His insistence upon the essential role of these doctrines and the specific doctrines that he selected for inclusion in his list have been criticized from virtually the time Maimonides recorded his position and up to modern times. One of Maimonides' most vigorous critics is Rabbaynu Yosef Albo. Albo dedicated an entire work to his polemic against Maimonides. One of his most revealing criticisms relates to Maimonides' twelfth foundation – belief in the eventual advent of a Messianic era. In his Mishne Torah, Maimonides describes the Torah's concept of the Messianic era. Essentially, it is an era in which the oppression of the Jewish people will come to a conclusive and permanent end. Torah observance will be embraced. Humanity will enter into an era of continual peace and prosperity.

Albo's criticism is not focused upon Maimonides' conception of the Messianic era. Neither does he challenge Maimonides' assertion that the Torah includes within its doctrines a declaration regarding the certainty of the future advent of the Messianic era. His criticism is that Maimonides insists that this doctrine is fundamental to the Torah. Albo argues that the doctrine is far from one of the Torah's most essential elements. Apparently, Albo's position is that this doctrine has no significance relevance to Torah observance and practice. Were a person to completely reject the doctrine, his observance of the Torah would not be significantly impacted. Yet, Maimonides regards one who rejects this doctrine as a heretic. In other words, although Albo accepts Maimonides' assertion that the Torah includes fundamental doctrines, he rejects the inclusion of this doctrine among them.

Albo's criticism provides an important insight into his perspective on the definition of "fundamental" in the context of Torah doctrines. According to Albo, a fundamental doctrine should function as a foundation upon which the entire religion is dependant. Any ancillary doctrine cannot be regarded as fundamental. The doctrine of a Messianic era has little, if any, impact upon the observance and practices of the Torah. Hence, it cannot be regarded as foundational. What is Maimonides' position?

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The tenth foundation: Hashem is cognizant of the action of human beings and does not close His eye from them ... (Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishne, Tractate Sanhedrin 10:1)

The centrality of doctrines to the Torah

As noted above, Maimonides maintains that the celebrations of Purim and Chanukah were created in order to communicate a message regarding Divine providence. In this function, these commandments differ from other enactments of our Sages. In general, decrees and enactments were created by the Sages to reinforce specific commandments of the Torah. This suggests a question: Why did the Sages deem it necessary to enact celebrations that remind us of this specific idea?

It is notable that Maimonides includes the idea of Hashem's providence in his list of fundamental doctrines. His tenth foundation is that Hashem is cognizant of human affairs and is involved in our world. Maimonides' 10th and 12th foundations deal with two aspects of the Torah's understanding of providence. The 10th principle asserts that providence exists. The 12th focuses specifically upon the providential relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. The assertion of the certainty of a Messianic era communicates that although there

may be detours and setbacks in the journey of the Jewish people towards its destiny, there is a divine plan that shall be ultimately realized.

The message communicated by Purim and Chanukah is an elemental component of our concept of providence in general and specifically of the destiny of the Jewish people. Therefore, the Sages sought to reinforce our conviction in providence through these celebrations.

The different perspectives of Albo and Maimonides are evidenced in Maimonides' treatment of Purim and Chanukah. Albo regards as fundamental those doctrines that underlie our observance of the Torah and that find expression in our practices. Other doctrines he regards as ancillary and not deserving to be regarded as fundamental doctrines. For Albo, the Torah is not primarily a system of beliefs or convictions. It is a system of practice. The centrality of a doctrine is measured by its impact upon practice.

Maimonides rejects this perspective. For Maimonides, doctrines deserve to be judged intrinsically. The centrality of a doctrine is determined by the Torah's emphasis of the doctrine not by its impact upon practice. In his treatment of Chanukah and Purim, Maimonides asserts that the celebrations were created by the Sages in order to communicate and reinforce important doctrines. This suggests to Maimonides that doctrines are intrinsically significant and not only foundations for practice. ■

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eleven sheaves bowed to me
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lamine

PHARAOH

Joseph's DREAM INTERPRETATIONS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM



When studying Joseph's dreams and interpretations, the analogy of a genius painter comes to mind. This painter would arrange millions of paint specks on a single paintbrush. Then, using only one stroke, he would move his brush across a blank canvas. Suddenly, a beautiful scene would emerge; trees with colorful leaves, birds in flight, sun and clouds, mountains, and streams. A passerby witnessing the picture-perfect scene emerge with one stroke, would be in awe of how with one action, this painter anticipated how all the paint specks would fall into place and create a perfectly harmonious and picturesque scene. God's two dreams granted to the young Joseph paint such a picture.

When he was 17, Joseph dreamt of eleven sheaves bowing to him. And then in another dream, he saw eleven stars and the sun and moon bowing to him. Even after seeing his brothers' dismay at his retelling the first dream, Joseph nonetheless felt compelled for some reason, to repeat his second dream to his brothers and his father, in a second recounting. It was due to these dreams that the brothers conspired to kill Joseph...eventually selling him instead. It was his father who suggested and rejected an interpreta-

tion that they would all bow to Joseph: the eleven stars being his eleven brothers, and the sun and moon representing Joseph's parental figures. At this stage, it does not appear that Joseph offered his own interpretation. Yet, thirteen years later, Joseph accurately and astonishingly interprets not only the dreams of Pharaoh's stewards, but also Pharaoh's dreams. All three dreams came true exactly! But how did Joseph know their interpretations? This question is strengthened by Joseph's apparent lack of interpretative skills with regards to his own two dreams. And many of the Torah commentaries including Ramban and Klay Yakkar do not suggest Joseph was divinely inspired with the interpretations; he succeeded in unraveling each dream solely through his own wisdom.

Later on, when his brothers descended to Egypt to purchase food during the famine, the brothers do not recognize the now 39-year-old, bearded Joseph standing before them. It is suggested that a further denial of this Egyptian viceroy truly being Joseph, was generated from the brothers' rejection of any success Joseph would attain; having been humiliated by his brothers, they were sure Joseph would be psychologically crippled.

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*without
prophecy,
how did
Joseph
know the
dreams
were
Divine?*

When Joseph sees his brothers, he “recalls the dreams”. According to a wise Rabbi, this means that Joseph would use the Divine license provided by these dreams to subjugate his brothers into repentance. Creating a situation where the youngest Benjamin would be imprisoned on false charges, Joseph orchestrated a replica of his very own sale to force his brothers into a parallel dilemma. Would they abandon the accused Benjamin now who ostensibly stole Joseph’s goblet, as they had done 20 years earlier when they sold Joseph? Or, would they display complete repentance, and sacrifice themselves for their brother? Normally, one is not permitted to place anyone else under such a trial, but Joseph recognized his dreams as Divine in origin, and as a license to perfect his brothers. As this wise Rabbi taught, the first dream of the brothers’ sheaves bowing to his – physical dominance – was the precursor for Joseph’s dominance over them in the spiritual realm – symbolized by the eleven stars, sun and moon bowing to him. Then first dream was meant by God to teach Joseph that when the brothers would bow to him for food, Joseph thereby received permission to rule over them in regards to their perfection, symbolized by higher bodies: the luminaries.

Subsequent to his dreams, Joseph understood their meaning; and not necessarily 39 years later when he first saw his brothers...but perhaps much earlier. The Torah only tells us that he recalled the dreams upon seeing his brothers, to teach that this was when he would act upon those dreams. But their interpretation may have preceded this by many years.

We must now ask: when did Joseph become such a great interpreter? He was in prison most of the time in Egypt, and he didn’t seem to offer interpretation to his own dreams at 17 years of age. From where did Joseph obtain such knowledge of dreams, that he would eventually interpret the dreams of Pharaoh’s stewards and Pharaoh himself with such precision? We are aware of the Torah’s description of Joseph as “Ben Zekunim” or as Unkelos translates, “a wise son.” Jacob taught Joseph all his knowledge attained at the Yeshiva of Shem and Aver. Perhaps this included lessons Jacob learned from his own dream of the ladder, and maybe others. So at the very outset, Joseph was a wise individual. We also wonder why God gave these two dreams to Joseph, as they apparently contributed to, if not caused Joseph’s sale. But we cannot approach God’s true intent without His saying so. However, we can study, and perhaps suggest possibilities.

God’s Dreams: Altering History and Offering Perfection

God is perfectly just. He would not jeopardize Joseph’s life or well being, had Joseph nature not warranted this sale. We learn that Joseph beautified himself. He also reported his brothers’ wrong doings to his father. He had an egoistic tendency, which was rightfully corrected as God humbled him in prison for many years. He publicized his dreams attracting unnecessary jealousy towards himself, which culminated in his sale and ultimately, his imprisonment. Thus, with Joseph’s dreams, God clearly intended to perfect him. But that was not the only reason for the

dreams. As we mentioned, the genius painter performed one stroke of his brush, and created a perfect picture with tremendous detail. God’s dreams prophetically sent to Joseph also had many ramifications.

The wise Rabbi I mentioned taught that the dreams also provided perfection for the brothers, as Joseph was licensed through the dreams to place them into this trial regarding Benjamin. Simultaneously, this forced Jacob to part with Benjamin, perfecting Jacob as well, by helping him restrain his excessive love for Benjamin, displaced from his beloved, departed wife Rachel. And we see that Joseph’s plan is successful. As Rashi states, when Joseph embraced his father after all those years, we would think Jacob equally embraced his son Joseph. But he did not: he was preoccupied “reciting the Shima”. Of course the Shima (Torah phrases) did not yet exist, but this metaphor means Joseph’s plan to perfect his father worked: Jacob no longer directed his excessive love towards man, but now, towards God. He re-channeled his passions towards the Creator, as should be done.

So the dreams perfected Joseph by contributing to his sale and refinement of his ego; they enabled Joseph to perfect his brothers by forcing them to defend Benjamin, and they perfected his father as well, forcing him to break his bond to Rachel transferred to her son Benjamin. We might think these matters alone are amazing, that two dreams might offer so much good for so many. However, there is a great deal more to Joseph’s dreams. Something even more astonishing.

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Dream Instruction

We asked how Joseph transformed into such a brilliant dream interpreter. How did he know that the dreams of the stewards and Pharaoh were true and Divine? What did Joseph know about dreams? All he had were his two dreams years earlier! Soon thereafter he was cast into prison for over a decade. However, those dreams offered Joseph more than we think.

What was Joseph doing in prison this entire time? Of course he must have had chores, and he was promoted to oversee the other inmates. But he had his solitude as well...time to think.

Having received tremendous knowledge from his father, the teachings of Shem and Avraham, Joseph gained deep insight into how God rules the world, and interacts with mankind. He knew the concept of repentance, for he was soon to be the conductor of his family's repentance. He too must have reflected on his own state and sought repentance, "Why am I in prison? What is my sin?" He soon realized his dreams precipitated his descent into slavery, and that God gave him these dreams. He analyzed his dreams, and must have spent many hours, days, and weeks studying God's precise communications of the night. What did he discover?

Pharaoh and His Stewards

Ten years elapsed in prison. One day, Joseph saw the wine and bakery stewards were troubled by their dreams, and invited them to recount them before him. Joseph interpreted both dreams exactly in line with

what happened: the wine steward was returned to his post, and the baker was hung. Two more years go by, and Joseph finds himself before Pharaoh. Pharaoh heard of Joseph's interpretive skills, and he too told Joseph his dreams. Again Joseph interprets the dreams with exact precision, and they come true. But if God did not tell Joseph the future, how did he know it? We now arrive at the core of the issue...

2 Divine Signs: Dreamer & Duplication

God's dreams granted to Joseph contained content, but they were also "instructive". I believe God gave Joseph two dreams, for objectives in addition to perfecting his family and himself. What do I mean? Besides the 'content' of the dreams, prophetic dreams also have a 'style': the chosen dream recipient, and dream duplication.

Joseph received these dreams, and none other. He also received "two" dreams. Ramban states that two separate but similar dreams are unnatural: Pharaoh could have naturally seen both of the dreams' content concerning the cows and the ears in one single dream. (Ramban, Gen. 41:32) Pharaoh didn't wake up and dream similar content again...unless it was Divinely inspired. The same rule applies to the two stewards who dreamt similar dreams. And Joseph knew this. Joseph too had two separate dreams with similar content. (Gen. 37:9) In Numbers 12:6 Ibn Ezra teaches that duplication in dreams indicates their Divine origin: "[Divine] dreams are doubled, as is the manner of prophecies."

Joseph had many years to ponder his situation in prison, and much of what he may have pondered, was the last event leading him into prison: his dreams. He knew they were from God, as he tells his brothers years later: "God sent me before you to place for you a remnant in the land and to sustain you...(Gen. 45:7)."

What did Joseph determine were indicative of Divine dreams? He recognized dream duplication was unnatural. He also recognized that his dreams affected his perfection, so the "recipient" also indicates Divine intent. These two elements were contained in the stewards' dreams, and in Pharaoh's dreams. The stewards' dream duplications were a variation, but no less telling of their Divine nature, since they both occurred the very same night, to two individuals. Pharaoh also had two dreams, and of additional significance, it was "Pharaoh" – the man with the wherewithal to address the forecasted famine – who received the dreams.

Joseph understood from his own experience that dream duplication, and a strategic dream recipient point to the dream's Divine nature. So convinced was Joseph of their Divine origin, that duplication and the recipient is divine, Joseph says, "Pharaoh's dream is one [dream]; what God plans He has told to Pharaoh(Gen. 41:25)." Joseph meant to say, "Your dream duplication is truly "one" message, and your reception of this dream as opposed to another person indicates its Divine nature". Joseph repeats this in verse 28.

Had God not granted Joseph earlier his two Divine dreams,



*the clues:
duplication
and an
intended
dream
recipient*

(continued on next page)

Joseph would not have pondered dreams. He would not necessarily have studied their style, to the point that he was able to facilitate the good outcome God desired, by emancipating himself through the stewards' interpretations, and rising to viceroy by applying his wisdom to Pharaoh's dreams. It was this dream duplication and intended recipient, that moved Pharaoh to accept Joseph's interpretations over his astrologers. Both, Joseph and the astrologers offered dream interpretations. But only Joseph exposed their divine character, precisely why Pharaoh accepted Joseph's interpretations as prophetic.

Amazing!

God used dreams not only to perfect Jacob's household, but also to train Joseph in dream design and interpretation...the very matter essential for carving out Jewish history. The design of Joseph's dreams contained the blueprint for determining the Divine nature of the other dreams he would confront. In other words: his dreams were actually dream instructions, not just messages. This is akin to a coded message in an alien language, where the message content is one lesson, but the textual arrangement also contains hints to decipher this new language. Joseph's dreams' contained a message for directing his perfecting of his family. But the dream "design" (selected recipient and duplication) taught him how to unravel dreams in general.

God, with a single brush stroke of Joseph's dreams, 1) placed Joseph in prison to humble him; 2) He caused the brothers to repent, this time not abandoning

their youngest brother; 3) He caused Jacob to perfect his excessive love; and 4) He trained Joseph in the art of dream interpretation...the science essential for the aforementioned perfections of Jacob, his sons, and Joseph!

The very dreams that caused Joseph's imprisonment, also provided his escape, and helped sustain that generation.

We appreciate God's wisdom: with one action He effectuates the greatest good for so many. We also realize that without Joseph's appreciation that God teaches man with sublime wisdom, Joseph would not have engaged his own wisdom to discern God's will, nor would Joseph acquire the dream interpretation skills he discovered while in prison. But since Joseph had such deep knowledge of how God works, he turned all his efforts while in prison to analyzing his dreams, using wisdom to uncover God's message, and study dream style so as to determine which dreams are Divine, and how to interpret them.

A Fifth Message

Additionally, dreams are – by definition – a manifestation of "hidden" material. Understanding this, Joseph knew that if God communicates with His prophets in dreams (Numbers 12:6), it is for this reason. God wishes to indicate that just as dreams conceal deeper ideas, so too do God's dreams, and even more so. God's selected mode of communicating with His prophets via dreams is meant to underscore the principle that God's words too must undergo man's interpretation, if the intended message is to be discovered. With that appreciation, Joseph delved into

the study of dreams, both prophetic and mundane. He also determined that dreams of Divine origin contain a code, and once detected, can be understood. Joseph knew that wisdom is how God designed the world. Therefore, it is only with wisdom that man succeeds.

Relevance to Us

Does this lesson have any relevance in our lives? Without witnessing a miracle, we certainly cannot determine with any certainty that a given event is the hand of God. Maybe it is, maybe not. We do not know. We must review our successes and failures with the possibility that God's education of man can take one of two roads: 1) Divine intervention for the individual, as with Joseph's dreams; or 2) natural laws of general providence, such as "boredom" with new acquisitions. God designed man's psyche to be frustrated with overindulgence in the physical pleasures, so as to redirect our energies back to the world of Torah wisdom. This is not individual providence, but a law of nature that applies equally to all members of mankind. Our consideration of our travails must straddle both spheres of God's workings. And since the Talmud teaches that prophecy has ceased, our dreams are not prophetic. However, there is a primary lesson that does apply to us all.

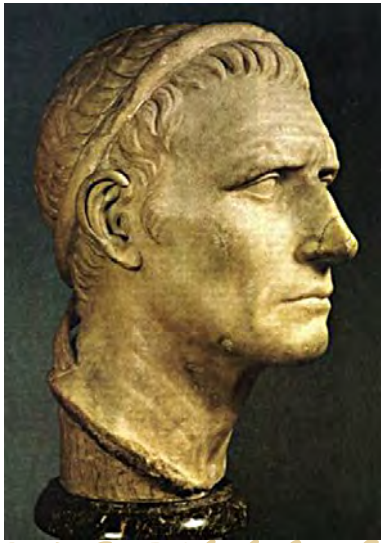
A Life of Wisdom

Joseph's approach to life was based on his knowledge that God created all. Thus, the world "naturally" functions according to God's wisdom. Despite the fact that God did not reveal Pharaoh's or his stewards' interpretations,

Joseph secured perfection and sustenance for his family and all of Egypt using wisdom alone. Since he guided his actions purely based on wisdom, he was not in conflict with God's world that functions according to that same, singular wisdom. Rather, he was perfectly in line with it, as his successes teach. We too can perceive God's wisdom if we earnestly seek it out from His Torah and His universe. Wisdom is the key to success and happiness in all areas. We do not need God telling us anything more, or sending signs, just like Joseph did not need God to interpret the dreams. In fact, God has already intervened by giving His Torah to us all.

Responding to our misfortunes with safe-sounding beliefs that "it's all for the good", man deceives himself, and will repeat his errors. It is only through analyzing our ways and determining if they match Torah ideals, that we will terminate our need to falsely pacify ourselves with "it's all for the good". Using reason in all areas, and admitting our errors with a responsible analysis and internal change, we can engage wisdom to steer us to the truly good path, one that God wills for all mankind, and is readily available without further intervention.

he Torah has all we need. No quick fixes, amulets, or blessings will address what God says requires wisdom and personal perfection. "For only with this may one glorify himself: understand and know Me; for I am Hashem who does kindness, justice and righteousness in land, for in these I desire, so says Hashem." (Jeremiah, 9:23) ■



MEGILLAS

ANTIOCHOS

Facing religious persecution, the five sons of Mattisyahu displayed much courage, although greatly outnumbered. They were inspired to battle against those who wished to strip the Jewish nation of its laws and identity. The Greeks were intent on preventing Torah observance and coercing idolatrous practice. However, Mattisyahu's sons displayed unwavering devotion to what their minds knew as true. We read in verse 39, "we remember that which God commanded us on Mount Sinai." They were convinced of the truth of God's revelation, His existence, and His commanding us in His Torah at Sinai. No enemy could erase history, or the truths contained in our Torah. Without Torah observance, one's life is meaningless in God's eyes. Mattisyahu's sons took it upon themselves to fight to preserve Torah, at all costs.



We must take this lesson to heart, as this is the sole reason for our celebration of Chanuka: to proclaim God's performance of miracles and intervention when we adhere to His word. Devotion to a Jewish life – God's words – earned the Jews of Chanuka miraculous salvation. Many leaders have not learned from history, and keep Israel under the sword. As long as God's word is absent from national interests, God may not assist us. This is the dichotomy: most Jews today celebrate Chanuka recalling God's intervention when Torah was defended, while other aspects of Jewish life are abandoned. Lighting the menorah with our families, we testify to God's providence; saving those Jews who followed Him, risking their lives to preserve Judaism for all. Therefore, God stepped in. Until the Jews demonstrated their devotion, there was no divine intervention. Once these five, brave souls declared the essentiality of Torah adherence through action, God protected them, and gave "the many into the hands of the few, the wicked, into the hands of the righteous."

Today we perish by the hands of those like Antiochos. Children of Israel, IDF, and leaders of our people are wise to heed Chanuka's lesson. Is this not why we celebrate? God enabled five brothers to defeat the armies of our enemies. God is not sleeping. God is not weak. He sees our travail at this time too. God's word and history attest to the fact that He saves those who follow him. Until we follow His Torah, until we see with

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clear conviction that, not based on political and military strategies alone will we be saved, but also with Torah as our guide...we may continue to suffer. We must include the Torah's direction when determining our course of action in all national matters.

Let us recall Abraham defeating tremendous forces with just a few men. Jacob's salvation from his twin Esav. Recall the Ten Plagues, the Manna in the desert, and the splitting of the Red Sea, where every Egyptian soldier perished. And recall this: our claim to Israel is from no other source than God's Torah – His promise to Abraham. These Torah accounts are "lessons". But many Jews resist.

We do not rely on miracles; this is against Judaism. Living by Torah ideals is the best life of itself, and we do not uphold Torah to avoid pain. But as the Torah is absolute truth, we must be concerned by God's promise to abandon us if we abandon Him. He says this in the Shema Yisrael. But God also promises His great providence when we live according to His word. In line with this promise, we may seek His assistance. God's word is absolute truth, which enables our existence. When living in line with God's word, He has many vehicles to protect us. This is the message of so many Torah stories. But as the Shema says, He certainly will not shield us when we abandon His word. Of course it is preferred that we attach ourselves to the truth of Torah when prompted by its perfect and pleasing laws, not only for salvation's sake. But many times God removes His protection to instruct us to return to Him. Maimonides teaches that national catastrophe must not be viewed as natural, but as God's instruction that we return to Jewish life. And if we dismiss such catastrophes as mere chance, we will make matters worse. For God did not create man so as to ignore His gift of intelligence, and ignore God. This earns us none of His providence.

Remember the Chanuka Story. It celebrates God, who protects those who follow Him. Proclaim its message not just with your menorah, but with your daily actions all year. We all wish happiness, health and success for our people. As Mattisyahu's sons lived by, and were saved through Jewish values, with God's help, we too can triumph over our enemies. If however, we solely engage political and military considerations, denying these Torah truths, Jewish history, and God's abilities...we ignore Chanuka's primary message.

Following His laws, even the few will be victorious over the many. Happy Chanuka to all!

MEGILLAS ANTIOCHOS

Megillas Antiochos was found in an old edition of a siddur printed in Solonika, Greece. Otzar HaTfilos refers to it as a "precious letter." Arbitrary paragraph breaks have been added every 10 verses for ease of reading. These breaks do not exist in the original.

1. **A**nd it was in the days of Antiochos, king of Greece, a great, mighty king was he, and he was strong in his reign and all kings listened to him. 2. And he conquered many cities and mighty kings, and he destroyed their palaces and their temples he burned with fire, and their men he imprisoned in jails. 3. From the days of Alexander the king, there arose no king like him on all sides of the river. 4. And he built a great city on the sea shore to be his house of kingdom, and Antiochos called the city by his name. 5. And also his second in command Bagris built another city next to it and Bagris called it by his name, and so is its name until this day. 6. In the twenty third year of his reign, it was the two hundred and thirteenth year of the building of the Temple, he gave face to ascend to Jerusalem. 7. And he answered and he said to his officers, "Do you not know that there is the Jewish people in Jerusalem amongst us? 8. To our god they do not sacrifice, and our religion they do not practice and the king's decrees they forsake, to do their religion. 9. And they also hope for the day of the dethroning of the kings and rulers and they say, "When will our King rule the seas and dry land, and the entire world will be given to our hand?" 10. It is not honorable to the kingdom to leave them be on the face of the earth.

11. And now let us come and we will ascend on them and nullify their treaty that was cut with them concerning Sabbath, the new Month and circumcision. And the matter was good in the eyes of his officers and in the eyes of his entire army. 12. At that time, Antiochos the king arose and he sent Nikanor his second with a great army and many people and they came to the city of Judah, to Jerusalem. 13. And they slaughtered a great slaughter and built an altar in the Temple in the place where the God of Israel said to His servants, His prophets "Where I will cause to dwell My manifested presence eternally", in that place, they slaughtered the pig and they brought its blood to the sanctified courtyard. 14. And as this occurred, when Yochanan son of Mattisyahu the High Priest heard these doings occurred, he was filled with anger and rage, and the countenance of his face changed, and he counseled in his heart what should be done on this. 15. And then Yochanan son of Mattisyahu made himself a sword two spans long, one span wide, covered under his clothing. 16. And he came to Jerusalem and stood in the

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gate of the king, and he called to the gatekeepers and he told them "I am Yochanan son of Mattisyahu, I have come to come before Nikanor." 17. And then the gatekeepers and watchers came and told him the High priest of the Jews stands in the opening, and Nikanor answered and said to them, "Let him surely enter." 18. And then Yochanan was brought in before Nikanor and Nikanor answered and said to Yochanan, "Are you one of the rebels that rebels against the king and desires not the peace of his kingdom?" 19. And Yochanan answered before Nikanor and said, "I am he, now I come before you, that which you wish I will do." 20. And Nikanor answered and said to Yochanan, "If as my will you will do, take a pig and slaughter it on the altar and robe in the king's clothing and ride of the king's horses, and as one of the kings beloved you will be."

21. And as Yochanan listened, he responded a thing, "My master, I fear from the children of Israel, perhaps they will hear I have done so and they will stone me with rocks. 22. Now let all men leave from before you, perhaps they will make the matter known." Then, Nikanor caused all men to leave from before him. 23. At that moment, Yochanan son of Mattisyahu lifted his eyes to the heavens and assembled his prayer before his God and he said, "My God and the God of my fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, please do not give me into the hand of this uncircumcised, because if he will kill me, he will go and praise in the house of Dagon his god, and say "My god has given him to my hand." 24. At that moment, he stepped towards him three steps and plunged the sword into his heart, and he threw that corpse into the sanctified courtyard. 25. Before the God of heaven, Yochanan answered and he said, "My God, do not place on me sin that I have killed in the sanctified (area), now, so also give all the people that come with him to pain Judah and Jerusalem." 26. Then went out Yochanan son of Mattisyahu on that day and warred with the people and slaughtered in them a great slaughter. 27. The number of the slain that he slayed on that day was seventy two thousand seven hundred that were killed these to these. 28. On his return they built a pillar on his name and called it "Maccabee Killed the Mighty". 29. And it was that king Antiochos heard that his second in command Nikanor was killed, it grieved him much, and he sent to bring Bagris the wicked that mislead his people. 30. And Antiochos answered and said to Bagris, "Do you not know, have you not heard what the children of Israel have done? They killed my army and looted my camp and my officers?"

31. Now, on their money you are trusted or their houses are yours. Come, and ascend upon them and nullify the treaty which was cut with them (by) their God, Sabbath, the New Month and circumcision. 32. Then Bagris the wicked and all his camp came to Jerusalem and slaughtered in them a great slaughter and decreed a complete decree on Sabbath, the New Month and circumcision. 33. When this occurred that the matter of the king was urgent, there was found a man who circumcised his son and they brought the man and his wife and they hung him in front of the child. 34. And also the woman who bore the son, after her husband died and circumcised him at eight days, she went up to the walls of Jerusalem and her circumcised son in her hands. 35. And she answered and said, "To you, Bagris the wicked, you intend to nullify from us the treaty that was cut with us, the treaty of our fathers will not be nullified from us, Sabbath, the New Moon and circumcision from our children's children, it will not be removed." 36. And she dropped her son to the ground, and she fell after him and they both died together. And many of the children of Israel that did similarly in those days, and they did not veer from the treaty of their fathers. 37. At that time, the children of Israel said, "These to these, let us go and rest in the cave, lest we desecrate the Sabbath day, and they slandered them before Bagris. 38. Then Bagris the wicked sent men girded for battle and they came to the opening of the cave and said to them, "Come out to us, eat of our bread and drink of our wine and our actions you shall do." 39. And the children of Israel answered, "These to these, "we remember that which God commanded us on Mount Sinai, 'Six days you shall work, and do all your labor, and on the seventh day rest'. Now it is better for us that we die in this cave than desecrating the Sabbath day." 40. When this happened that the Jews did not come out to them, they brought wood and burnt it at the opening of the cave and there died like a thousand men and women.

41. Afterwards, there came out five sons of Mattisyahu, Yochanan and his four brothers and they warred with the people and slaughtered a great slaughter and drove them to the isles of the sea because they trusted in the God of heaven. 42. Then Bagris entered one ship and fled to king Antiochos and with him were men, escapees of the sword. 43. And Bagris answered and said to king Antiochos, "You the king, placed a command to nullify from the Jews Sabbath, the New Month and circumcision, a great deceit and rebellion in its midst. 44. That when there went all the people and nations and languages, they could not defeat the five sons of Mattisyahu. From lions they are stronger, and from eagles they are more swift, and from bears they are more quick. 45. Now king, I offer you good counsel, and do not war with few men, for if you war, you will be embarrassed in the eyes of all kings. 46. Therefore, write and send books in all cities of your kingdom, that there come officers of war and not leave one of them, and also elephants wearing armour with them." 47. And the matter was good with king Antiochos, and he sent books to all cities of his reign, and there came officers of all the people and kingdoms, and also elephants

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wearing armour came with them. 48. A second time Bagris the wicked arose and came to Jerusalem, he broke the wall, and he cut off the water supply, and he broke in the Temple thirteen breaches and also from the stones he broke until they were like dust and he thought in his heart and said, "This time I will not be overtaken because of the numbers of my army and might of my hand". But the God of heaven did not think so. 49. And when the five sons of Mattisyahu heard, there arose and came to Mitzpeh Gilead, that were there the remnant of the house of Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet. 50. They decreed a fast, and sat on ashes to seek out mercy from before God of heaven.

51. Then there fell good counsel in their hearts, Judah the firstborn, Simon the second, the third Yochanan, the fourth Yonasan, the fifth Elazar. 52. And their father blessed them and so he said, "Judah my son, I liken you to Judah son of Jacob who was equated to a lion. 53. Simon my son, I liken you to Simon son of Jacob who killed the inhabitants of Shechem. 54. Yochanan my son, I liken you to Avner son of Ner, officer of the army of Israel. Yonasan my son, I liken you to Yonasan son of Saul, who killed the Philistine people. 55. Elazar my son, I liken you to Pinchas son of Elazar who was jealous for his God and saved the children of Israel. 56. On this, there went out the five sons of Mattisyahu on that day, and warred with the people, and slaughtered in them a great slaughter, and there was killed from them Judah. 57. At that moment when the sons of Mattisyahu saw that Judah was killed, they returned and they came to their father. 58. And he said to them, "Why have you returned?" And they answered and they said, "On account that our brother was killed who was equated to all of us." 59. And Mattisyahu their father answered and said to them, "I will go out with you and I will fight with the people, lest the house of Israel perish, and you are frightened on your brother." 60. And Mattisyahu went out on that day with his sons and fought with the people.

61. And God of heaven gave all the mighty of the nations into their hands. And they slaughtered a great slaughter, all who seized the sword, and all who drew the bow, officers of war and the seconds in command, there was not left one remnant, and there fled the rest of the people to the cities of the sea. 62. And Elazar was involved in killing the elephants and he was submerged by the chariots of the elephants, and when they returned, they looked for him among the living and among the dead, and they could not find him. And afterwards they found him that he was submerged by the chariots of the elephants. 63. And the children of Israel were gladdened that there was given to their hands their enemies. From them they burned with fire and from them they pierced with the sword, and from them they hung on trees. 64. And Bagris the wicked that misled his people, the children of Israel burned him with fire. 65. And then, Antiochos the king heard that Bagris the wicked was killed and all officers of war with him, he entered into a ship and fled to the cities of the sea, and it was that each place he came to there, they mocked him and called him "the runaway". 66. Afterwards, the children of the Hasmoneans came to the temple, and they built the broken gates and they closed the breaches, and purified the courtyard from the casualties and from the impurities. 67. And they searched for pure olive oil to light the candelabrum, and they did not find but one canister that had the seal of the ring of the High Priest and they knew that it was pure, and it contained a measurement to light for one day. 68. And God of heaven Who causes to dwell His name there, gave a blessing and they lit from it eight days. 69. Therefore there established the children of the Hasmoneans a fulfillment, and they forged a law, and the children of Israel with them as one, to make these eight days days of drinking and happiness as the appointed days written in the Torah, and to light on them lights to make known what was done to them (by) the eternal God of heaven. 70. And on them, one may not eulogize, nor to decree fast days, or have a fast, except if it was accepted on it prior to this and pray before their God.

71. But the Hasmoneans and their children and their brothers they did not decree on them to nullify service of work. And from that time, there was no name to the kingdom of Greece. 72. And there received the kingdom, the children of the Hasmoneans and their grandchildren from that time until the destruction of the Temple two hundred and six years. 73. Therefore, the children of Israel from that day in all their exiles guard these days and call them days of drinking and gladness from the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, eight days. 74. From that time and eternally, there should not be removed from them, that were in their Temple, priests, Levites and their wise men who established upon them and upon their grandchildren eternally.

Other prayer books add these verses:

And these days, they arose and accepted on themselves and on their children and on their grandchildren eternally, the priests, Levites and wise men that were in the temple, and they were not removed forever. The God that did with them a miracle and a wonder, He should do with us miracles and wonders and sustain with us the verse that was written as the days of your Exodus from the land of Egypt, I display wonders, Amen. ■



When studying the sources dealing with Chanukah, there are many questions which surface. I will first outline those questions, and then offer possible answers.

1) The Al HaNissim prayer of thanks included in our daily prayers and Birchat HaMazone primarily discuss the war. At the end it makes mention of our kindling the lights, but does not mention the miracle of the oil. Does this mean that war is the essence of the day? What was the essential element in Chanukah the Rabbis deemed worthy to be instituted as a holiday? Was it the miracle that a few Jews overtook the myriads of Greeks in battle, the duration of the oil, both, or some other factor?

2) What was the purpose in the miracle of oil lasting 8 days? The principle of “ohness rachmana patreh” – one forced by situation is exempt – rendered the priests innocent for not being able to light the menorah. Since they were exempt from the obligation to light the menorah until they pressed new oil and were cleansed from the casualties, why did God create this miracle of the oil’s duration?

Can we suggest that the miracle of the oil is to reflect upon the war, that it was won via miracles? If so, why then does Rambam state that we won due to God’s salvation, even before discussing the oil? It would seem that Rambam held that the Rabbis understood our military victory to be caused by God. In such a case, the oil would be superfluous for teaching this, unless we suggest that the military victory – although executed by God – was not an overt miracle, and itself would be no cause for a holiday. It would be no different than wars won by Joshua for example, when conquering Jericho, a day around which, the Rabbis did not create holiday. What then was so different about the battle of the Macabees or that entire event in general, that God decided to underline that event by the miracle of the oil, highlighting such significance?

Additionally, in his Mishneh Torah, Rambam indicates that until the miracle of the oil, the Rabbis would not have instituted the holiday based on military success alone. According to Rambam, what is it about the oil – or the war upon which it reflects – which demanded that Chanukah be established as a holiday?

3) The Megilla is read on Purim as our halachik observance. The reasoning is that this specific element was the catalyst for the Jew’s salvation, as the Talmud in Megilla 12b states, “Had it not been for the first letter, not one remnant or escapee of Jews would have survived.” Meaning, since the Persians disqualified King Achashverosh’s credibility based on a previous letter, which was foolish in their eyes, they showed little respect for the Kings subsequent decree to destroy the Jews. Following this template for establishing a holiday, if the Rabbis established Chanukah based



on the success of the war, why is there no mention of the Chanukah battle as part of our halachik performance? Lighting oil or candles is divorced from the battle. Why are these lights selected by the Rabbis as the performance of the halacha, and not something germane to the war, like carrying a sword or the like? Purim’s laws were organized around elements, which caused our salvation. Why are Chanukah laws centered on a miracle subsequent to our salvation?

4) What is the concept of having “mehadrin” – multiple levels of fulfilling the obligation of Chanukah flames, each more preferred than the previous? We do not see this concept in connection with the Megilla. Additionally, why focus on the 8-day element, to the point that 8 days became an essential aspect of our halachik performance? Additionally, why does a single Chanukah menorah satisfy an entire household’s halachik obligations, whereas this does not work in the case of Lulav? Here, each member must have his own four species?

Although possible to enact a miracle in the war itself, God chose to enact a miracle in the lights to emphasize our adherence to the Torah commands as the essence of that event, not mere bodily rescue. Life alone is not the goal for man. It must be a life of understanding and adherence to God’s Torah. Without Torah, our lives are meaningless. Perhaps for this reason the Rabbis understood the oil miracle in this light, and sought to build the laws of Chanukah around this reuniting of the Jews to their laws, illustrating that the initial act of Torah adherence – lighting the menorah – was the goal of the victory.

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This follows well with Purim, as we state therein, “kimu v’kiblu mah shekiblu kvar”, “they (the Jews) rose up and accepted that which they previously accepted”, i.e., the Torah. Purim was an event where the Jews saw that a life permeated with wisdom proved to be the source of their salvation, as Mordechai’s and Esther’s cunning saved the Jews. The statement of “kimu v’kiblu mah shekiblu kvar” displays again that mere victory is not the goal, but rather, the objective of that military success was the re-acceptance of Torah. Chanukah is therefore celebrated via lights (the goal of the victory) which was the reestablishment of the Temple.

Talmud Shabbos asks, “What was Chanukah established upon?” Meaning according to Rashi, “upon which miracle?” This Talmudic question addresses our question: that without a miracle, military success would not qualify as a holiday. Only through the event of the miracle of the oil did the Rabbis deem Chanukah worthy of institution as a holiday, and did so via lights, as this was the ‘goal’ of the victory. The essential miracle was the war, as it was the catalyst for our Torah adherence. So when offering thanks, we thank God for the success of the war, but not the lights. The lights are not that for which we are thankful. The lights are the reestablishment of our Torah. It was the war, which demands thanks. The lights are used to recall the goal of the day through observance generation after generation. We make recourse to lights to pronounce the goal. However, it is the war alone for which we are thankful.

What was present in Chanukah, which surpassed the battle at Jericho for example? Or when God stopped the Sun and Moon in Gibeon and Amek Ayalon respectively? All had miracles! Why

then was Chanukah established as a holiday, but not Jericho or other events, which included miracles? The answer could be the following: The miracle of the oil was subsequent to the war when we were already victors. All other wars, which contained miracles, had miracles for the sake of winning the war. The Rabbis may have perceived the fact that God enacted a miracle unnecessary for salvation as a Divine indication that Chanukah was different, and worthy of institution as a holiday. (A Rabbi once discussed another difference, that during Chanukah, the Greeks sought to strip us of our Judaism, not so in other wars, where the enemy simply was fighting for conquest.)

The element of a subsequent miracle (not necessary for salvation) compounded with our salvation from religious oppression (not mere military victory) were recognized by the Rabbis as grounds for instituting Chanukah as a holiday. That special quality of God’s salvation from oppression, enabling us to follow the Torah also existed during Purim. Therefore we have only two holidays subsequent to the giving of the Torah; Purim recalls our bodily salvation, whereas Chanukah recalls our religious salvation.

While discussing this further with Rabbi Mann, we came to the observation that “holiday” means that which is instituted for generations to observe. This needs explanation, as it would have sufficed to celebrate Chanukah just that one year. The concept of a perpetual celebration must be adding another point. That is, that the future celebrants have what to celebrate, somewhat on par with those who actually experienced the salvation so long ago. What do we, future celebrants have in common with the Jews alive at that event? It is that our existence and ability to practice our laws is a direct result from the miracles of Chanukah. As we are direct beneficiaries, we must also show thanks to God for these acts of kindness. This also explains why Passover has two models: “Passover of Egypt”, and “Passover for Generations”. We see this idea is consistently part of our laws.

The concept of mehadrin – beautification – teaches us that there are levels of fulfilling the obligation of Chanukah. The reason mehadrin exists for few commands is as follows. When a Torah obligation deals with qualitative act, such as donning tefillin, one either dons them or does not. There is nothing more to be added after one has put on tefillin; you cannot wear tefillin more, once they are on. A quantitative increase is impossible, you either wear them or you don’t. The same applies to kosher, either one eats kosher or he doesn’t. But an act, which is of a quantitative measure, is different. Such acts as discussing the Exodus, Chanukah lights, and purchasing a finer Esrog, all lend themselves to quantitative increase. One may discuss the Exodus until morning, or buy a better Esrog, or light multiple candles. But there still must be sound reasoning behind such increase.

There is one goal with the lighting of the candles: to publicize the miracle to others. There are two ways in which we can increase this publicity: 1) more individuals spreading the story through multiple menorahs, and 2) increasing the content of the story publicized, which is achieved by increasing the number of lights each night. This teaches a passerby that there were a number of days, which the miracle lasted, thus, teaching a new element. By lighting only one candle each night, all one knows when he sees a menorah, is that there was a miracle of Chanukah. But if he sees five candles on the fifth night, he now learns something new: there were many days to the miracle. This increases the content of the story taught through the lights. ■

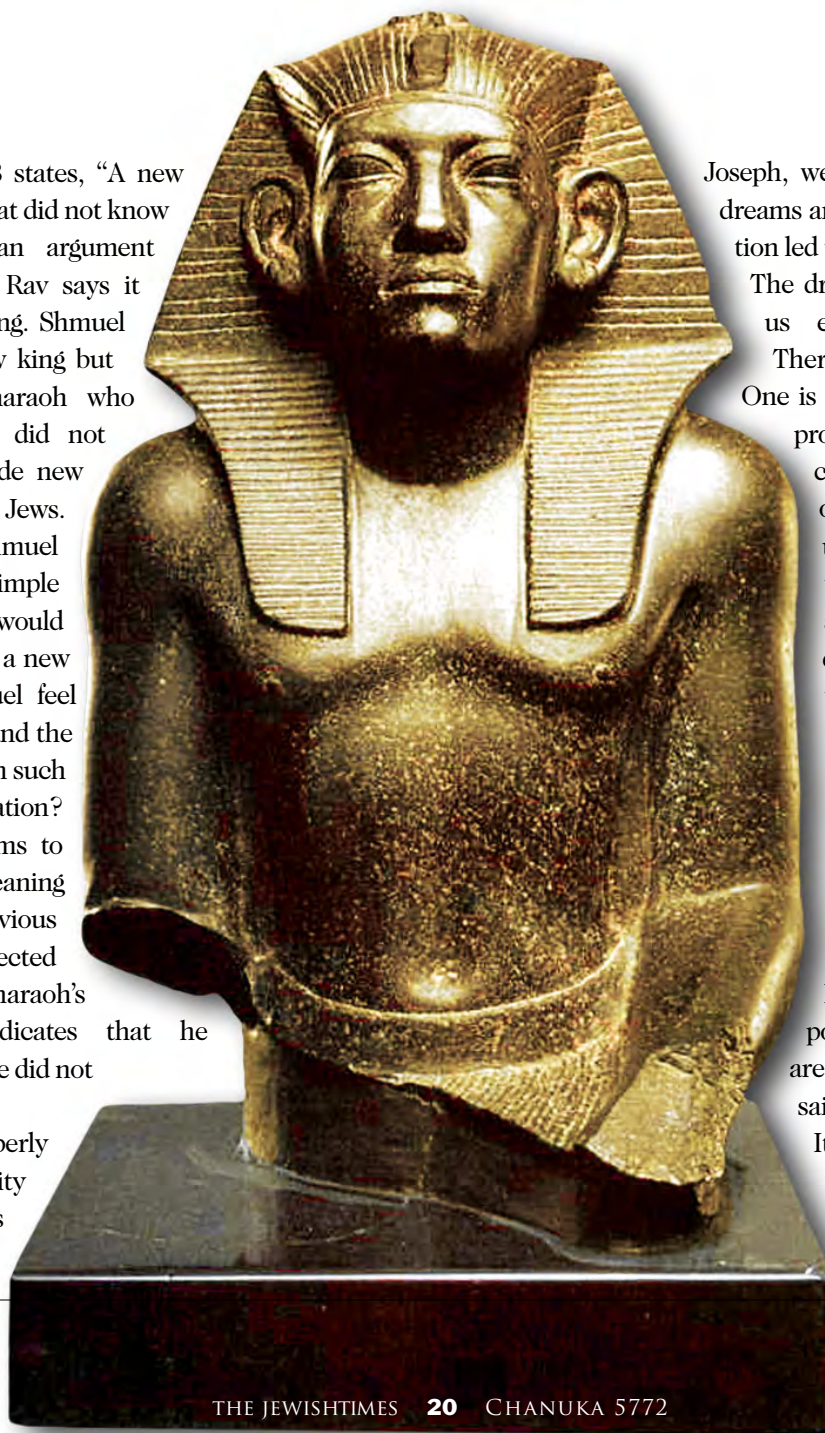
THE DREAMS OF PHARAOH

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Transcribed by a student

Exodus 1:8 states, “A new king arose on Egypt that did not know Joseph.” There is an argument amongst the Rabbis. Rav says it was literally a new king. Shmuel says it was not a new king but rather the same Pharaoh who acted as though he did not know Joseph; he made new decrees against the Jews. The position of Shmuel seems difficult. A simple reading of the text would indicate it was plainly a new king. Why did Shmuel feel compelled to understand the meaning of the verse in such a strained interpretation? This explanation seems to stretch the simple meaning of the verse. It is obvious that Shmuel detected something in Pharaoh’s personality that indicates that he pretended as though he did not know Joseph.

In order to properly analyze the personality of Pharaoh and his relationship with



Joseph, we must examine Pharaoh’s dreams and how Joseph’s interpretation led to his ascendancy to power.

The dreams of Pharaoh can help us examine his personality.

There are two causes of dreams.

One is a dream of divine origin, a prophetic vision. Another cause is the person’s wishes or the thoughts of his unconscious. Pharaoh had two dreams. By analyzing and contrasting both dreams we should be able to determine the portion of the dream, which is prophetic, and the part, which is an expression of his personality. The aspects of his dreams, which are duplicative, are obviously of divine origin.

However, if we examine the portions of one dream, which are not common to the other, said portion is not prophetic.

It would understandably be an expression of Pharaoh’s unconscious.

By analyzing the

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dreams we note one striking difference with respect to the cows. Pharaoh sees himself as part of that dream. Genesis 41:1 states, "...and behold I was standing above the river." Another unique aspect of this dream is that it states the origin of the cows. The cows were coming up "out of the river." However, the dream of the bundles of wheat does not state their origin. We must understand; why does Pharaoh include himself in the first dream, and why does he envision the cows appearing from out of the river?

Another clue to Pharaoh's personality would be an analysis of his actions. Upon Joseph's interpretation of the dreams, Pharaoh's response seems overwhelming. He immediately appoints a despicable "Jewish lad, a slave" as his viceroy, the second most powerful position in Egypt. He dresses Joseph in ornate clothing and extends him a regal coronation. Furthermore, when his subjects come to ask his advice when they were starving, he replies "Go to Joseph and whatever he tells you to do, abide by it". It would seem rather unlikely that Pharaoh was willing to relinquish all control and credit, and suddenly bestow it upon Joseph. His response, besides being overwhelming, seems incongruous to Shmuel's interpretation of his later actions. At this juncture he seems to be a righteous individual capable of appreciating and recognizing the good of Joseph. However, later, after Joseph's death, there is a complete transformation of his personality and he denies Joseph's existence and in fact, acts ruthless to his people, the Jews.

An understanding of the extraneous portion of his dreams can give us an insight into his personality and can demonstrate why seemingly incompatible actions are actually consistent with his character.

In his first dream the cows arose from the river. The Hebrew term for river that the Torah uses is "ye-or". Rashi explains that this term is used because it is referring to the Nile. The Nile was the source of sustenance for the land of Egypt. Egypt is a dry climate and the Nile overflows and irrigates Egypt. The Nile thereby represents the source for the fulfillment of the Egyptians' basic needs. However, in Pharaoh's dream he was standing "al ha ye-or", above the Nile. This signifies that Pharaoh felt that he was 'above' the Nile. In his own mind he was more powerful than the powers of nature. Pharaoh considered himself a god. In fact, the Medrash tells us, that he even emptied his bowels without anyone knowing, so as the feign divinity in front of

his people, never needing to relieve himself. He professed to be above the laws of nature. Thus, the most threatening occurrence to Pharaoh would be if he were not in total control. It would shatter his self image as a god. Thus, the occurrence of a drought was a fearful event to Pharaoh. The Torah tells us "vatepaem rucho", his spirit was troubled. Unconsciously, he feared losing control. That is why in the dream he envisioned the cows coming out of the river. He feared a natural event that would be beyond his control. He thus sensed that Joseph's interpretation was accurate. He therefore had to come to grips with the possibility of losing control. However, Joseph presented him with the ability to maintain control. He realized that through Joseph he would be able to retain control and keep intact his image as a god. However, in order for him to view his reliance on Joseph as a situation akin to being in control, he was coerced into viewing Joseph as an extension of himself. Psychologically there was total identification with Joseph. Therefore, his response to Joseph was overwhelming. The deification of Joseph was not an abnormal response, but on the contrary; it was necessitated by his identification with Joseph. It was an expression of his vision of Joseph as his alter ego. This relationship reinstated his threatened view that he was not the most powerful force in the world: with Joseph, he now resumed his self-image as a god. Therefore, when people asked him what to do, he quite naturally responded, "whatever Joseph says, abide by it". It bolstered his image of being in control. To Pharaoh, Joseph's actions were merely expressions of his own power. Pharaoh and Joseph together, in his mind, were one entity.

We can now understand Shmuel's explanation. After Joseph's death, Pharaoh, because of his psychological make-up, faced a terrible problem. Narcissism, the love of oneself, was a key characteristic of Pharaoh's personality. A narcissistic individual's psychic energies are directed towards the love of the self. However, when a person like Pharaoh strongly identifies with another individual and views him as his alter-ego, that other person becomes a source of his narcissistic, psychic energy. Therefore, upon Joseph's death, the excess psychic energy could no longer be channeled towards his alter ego. He began to confront the same emotions that he previously experienced. He felt threatened by the fact that he was really not in control. However, he could not use the defense mechanism of identification but instead resorted to denial. He was unable

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to confront the fact that Joseph really allowed him to retain control. Therefore, psychologically, in order to function without feeling threatened, he had to act as though he did not know Joseph. Any remembrance of Joseph or acknowledging Joseph's value was painful to his self-image of being all-powerful. Accordingly, not only did he have to act as though he did not know Joseph, but that denial coerced him to act in the opposite fashion. His remembrance of Joseph was so painful; it served as the source for his oppression towards Joseph's people, the children of Israel.

Therefore Shmuel stated that "a new king" is only viewed as new, in terms of his actions. However an analysis of Pharaoh's personality indicates that on the contrary, it was the same Pharaoh. That is why the Torah specifically articulates that the new king did not know Joseph. If he were truly a new king, the statement would be redundant. The Torah is really offering us an insight into his nature.

An example of this type of psychological mechanism is evident in Christianity. The Christian hates the Jew for ostensibly killing his G-d. However, this is indicative of a psychological defense mechanism. The Christian cannot admit that we gave them their G-d, since Jesus was Jewish.

Jacob, upon meeting Pharaoh, was keenly aware of Pharaoh's true nature. His response to Pharaoh's inquiry with respect to his age seems rather lengthy and irrelevant. "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my sojourning are 130, few and bad were the years of my life

and I have not reached the days of the years of the lives of my fathers, in the days of their sojourns (Genesis 49:9)." Nachmanides questions this rather lengthy response. However, based upon our insight into Pharaoh's personality, it is understandable. A person, who perceives himself as all-powerful and god-like, feels threatened by someone who possesses something that is desirable, which he does not have. Jacob realized that Pharaoh had such a personality. He sensed that Pharaoh, when questioning his age, noted he was an elder and was asking more out of a sense of envy rather than curiosity. He sensed that he possessed something that Pharaoh desired: old age. Accordingly, Jacob who was old, at a time when people were not living so long, responded based upon this perception. He stated that he was not so old, and that he did not have a good life nor did he live as long as his fathers. He attempted to dispel any envy that Pharaoh may have had. He did not want to entice Pharaoh's anger by giving him any cause for jealousy. Therefore, his lengthy response was appropriate and warranted, considering the circumstances.

It also explains the blessing that Jacob bestowed upon Pharaoh. Rashi tells us that he blessed him that the Nile should rise to greet him whenever he approaches it. Jacob was aware of Pharaoh's personality. This blessing Pharaoh truly cherished. It represented that even the most powerful phenomenon of nature would be subordinate to his control. ■

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Pharaoh's Wisdom

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM



In Genesis 41:45, we find that after Pharaoh sees the undeniable brilliance of Joseph, Pharaoh selects Joseph to be his second in command over Egypt. The passage states three ideas, 1) Pharaoh changes Joseph's name to Zaphnas Paneach, 2) he gave Asnas, the daughter of Poti-Phera (now subtly referred to as "Priest" of Ohn) to Joseph as his wife, and 3) Joseph goes out on Egypt (to rule).

We have a mesora, a tradition, that when one pasuk (passage) contains many points, they must all be related, as God intentionally placed them in a single verse.

We have the following questions:

- 1) What is the connection between all the points in this passage?
- 2) Why did Pharaoh give Joseph the daughter of Poti-Phera? His wife accused Joseph of attempted rape! Wasn't there a better choice of a mate, if he must have a wife?
- 3) Why is Poti-Phera suddenly referred to as a "priest"?
- 4) What does Joseph "going out on Egypt" have to do with anything?
- 5) Why does Pharaoh change Joseph's name to Zaphnas Paneach?

With a little consideration, the answers leap from this passage.

Pharaoh was in his position, and not without intelligence. Upon summoning Joseph from prison to interpret his dreams, Pharaoh was cognizant of the future political problems faced with elevating an imprisoned Jew to viceroy status. More to the point, Pharaoh was appointing someone accused of rape. This would not wash well with his subjects, or his country. How would Pharaoh deal with this?

I believe with the following answer, we unveil insight into Pharaoh's wisdom.

Pharaoh attempted to dispel any rumors of Joseph's ill repute by giving him this specific woman for a wife. Who in their right minds would believe that Joseph attempted to rape a

woman, the wife of Poti-Phera, and then marries her very daughter? Pharaoh caused Egypt to believe that the rape accusation was false. Furthermore, Poti-Phera's wife would no longer accuse Joseph, as any accusation would bring shame to her daughter, and to herself. In addition to silencing the wife of Poti-Phera, Pharaoh sought to silence Poti-Phera himself about Joseph's alleged rape attempt. What do people desire more than anything else...more than money? Power. Pharaoh again displayed his cunning by granting a status of priest to Poti-Phera, in exchange for his silence. At first, Poti-Phera was not referred to in the verses as a "priest". This is changed afterwards to silence him. Finally, Pharaoh's changing of Joseph's name was an attempt to transform his Hebrew slave reputation, into an Egyptian icon. One's name creates a perceived status.

We now see how these ideas are all connected, and why God desired them to be in one passage. All of the elements in this passage reflect Pharaoh's single goal of denying Joseph's alleged wrongdoings and cleansing his reputation to server Pharaoh's urgent needs.

But what about "Joseph going out on Egypt"? What is the Torah's lesson by placing it here? I believe it is to show that regardless of Pharaoh's success in rendering Joseph into a leader acceptable by the Egyptians, Joseph never shed his identity as "Joseph the Righteous". It was still "Joseph" who went out upon Egypt, and not the fabricated, Egyptian veneer "Zaphnas Paneach" created by Pharaoh.

We must appreciate the precision of the Torah; how it is written so sparingly. Just enough information is revealed to suggest the problem, and just enough for the answer. It is brilliant that those very statements, which cause the problem, are in fact, clues to the answer. We are further impressed by God's composition of the verses; a manner that intends to lead the Torah reader towards the answers. ■



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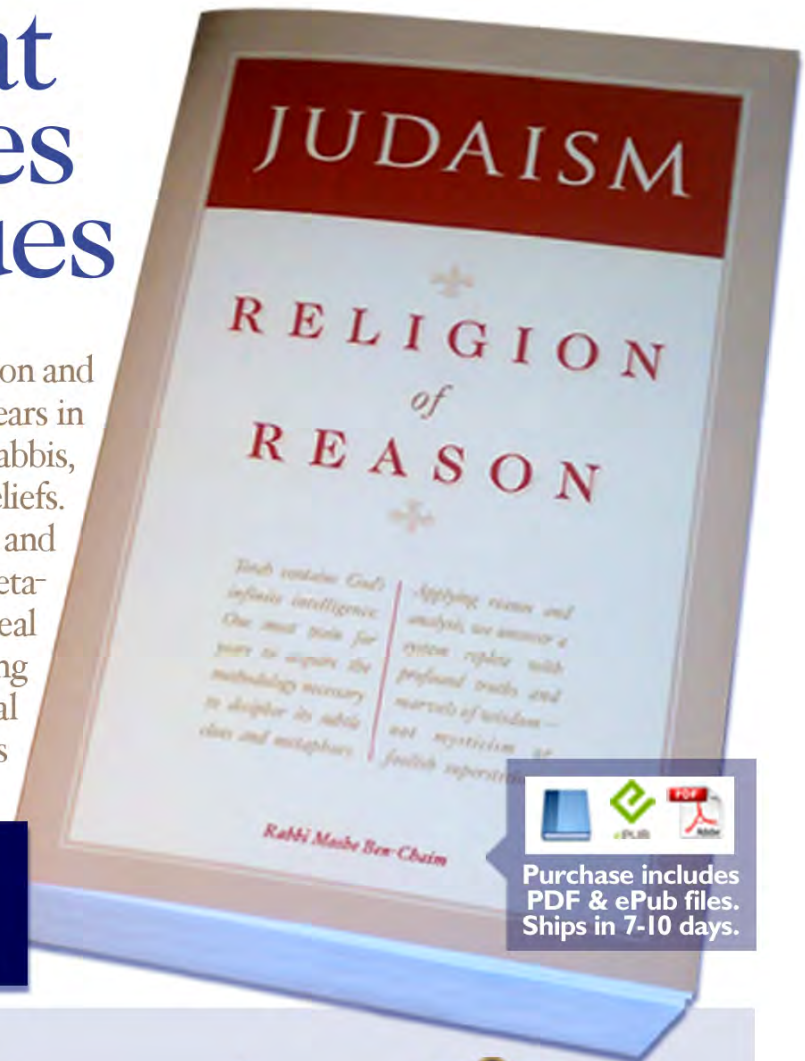
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COURAGEOUS PRIESTS

The story of Chanuka centers around the five courageous sons of Mattisyahu; members of the Jewish priest class – the Kohanim. When faced with the obliteration of the Jewish religion, these few priests took on myriads of their enemies and were victorious. From the subsequent miracle of the one-day's measure of oil that eventually burned for eight days, the Sages realized that God's hand was with the priests in the war as well; not just in the oil miracle. But what was unique about this battle that deserved Divine Providence?

It is the role of the priests to educate the Jewish nation on our rich heritage, received at Mount Sinai 3324 years ago. They are our teachers and leaders. They are engaged daily in Temple service and the study and dissemination of Judaism. It is then understandable why it was the priests – those most intimately aware of Jewish fundamentals – who leaped forward first to save the nation, and our religion.

During the Grecian oppression, Jews were forbidden to celebrate the Sabbath and the New Moon. We must understand the significance of these two days.

Sabbath recalls God's Creation, and rest. The New Moon celebrates the continued cycle of natural law. Observing the Sabbath and the New Moon, Judaism focuses on two fundamentals respectively:

1) Sabbath: there is but One Creator; no other forces exist, which are responsible for this entire universe. The Creator 'alone' created all that exists, which is why He alone is the "Creator" and why nothing else exists that might alter our fate. Thereby, we reject notions of powers or forces other than God, despite

the many Jews and gentiles who accept such notions. And as He created and rested, we mimic this rest each week to proclaim His Creation to the world.

2) New Moon: this single Creator sustains His creations. The repeating cycle of the moon is merely one example in millions of how the Creator does not abandon man. For without God's continued will, all natural laws vanish. Just as nothing came into being on its own, nothing continues "naturally" on its own.

The Greeks were intent on spreading their religion alone, and sought to vanquish monotheism from all Jews...explaining why they selected these two days for erasure.

Five brave priests waging battle against 72,700 enemies was an act of faith in a Creator who does not abandon man...when man follows God's Bible: the book of truth. Therefore, God endorsed this truth exemplified by the priests' courage: He too did not abandon them in war, as they did not abandon a belief in His providence. God enabled five men to beat unprecedented numbers.

And the priests were successful, as we today witness the world's unanimous acceptance of the Five Books of Moses. The priests were concerned that not only Jews, but that the entire world should possess the Book that records God's Creation and His will for mankind exemplified in the lives of the Patriarchs, Matriarchs and the Prophets.

Perhaps for this reason alone, that these two fundamentals should survive to imbue every man and woman with a realization of the Creator and His continued providence, God stepped in to assist the priests' battle to ensure the Bible would endure. ■

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