

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

In one of the greatest transformations in all literature, Joseph moves in one bound from prisoner to prime minister. What was it about Joseph – a complete outsider to Egyptian culture, a “Hebrew,” a man who had for years been languishing in jail on a false charge of attempted rape – that marked him out as a leader of the greatest empire of the ancient world?

Joseph had three gifts that many have in isolation but few in combination. The first is that he dreamed dreams. Initially we do not know whether his two adolescent dreams – of his brothers’ sheaves bowing down to his, and of the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing down to him – are a genuine presentiment of future greatness, or merely the overactive imagination of a spoiled child with delusions of grandeur.

Only in this week’s parsha do we discover a vital piece of information that has been withheld from us until now. Joseph says to Pharaoh, who has also had two dreams: “The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by G-d, and G-d will do it soon” (Gen. 41: 32). Only in retrospect do we realise that Joseph’s double dream was a sign that this too was no mere imagining. Joseph really was destined to be a leader to whom his family would bow.

Second, like Sigmund Freud many centuries years later, Joseph could interpret the dreams of others. He did so for the butler and baker in prison and, in this week’s parsha, for Pharaoh. His interpretations were neither magical nor miraculous. In the case of the butler and baker he remembered that in three days time it would be Pharaoh’s birthday (Gen. 40: 20). It was the custom of rulers to make a feast on their birthday and decide the fate of certain individuals (in Britain, the Queen’s birthday honours continue this tradition). It was reasonable therefore to assume that the butler’s and baker’s dreams related to this event and their unconscious hopes and fears (ibn Ezra and Bekhor Shor both make this suggestion).

In the case of Pharaoh’s dreams Joseph may have known ancient Egyptian traditions about seven-year famines. Nahum Sarna quotes an Egyptian text from the reign of King Djoser (ca. twenty-eighth century BCE): I was in distress on the Great Throne, and those

who are in the palace were in heart’s affliction from a very great evil, since the Nile had not come in my time for a space of seven years. Grain was scant, fruits were dried up, and everything which they eat was short. (Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, New York, Schocken, 1966, 219.)

Joseph’s most impressive achievement, though, was his third gift, the ability to implement dreams, solving the problem of which they were an early warning. No sooner had he told of a seven-year famine then he continued, without pause, to provide a solution: “Now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.” (Gen. 41: 33-36)

We have seen Joseph the brilliant administrator before, both in Potiphar’s house and in the prison. It was this gift, demonstrated at precisely the right time, that led to his appointment as Viceroy of Egypt.

From Joseph, therefore, we learn three principles. The first is: dream dreams. Never be afraid to let your imagination soar. When people come to me for advice about leadership I tell them to give themselves the time and space and imagination to dream. In dreams we discover our passion, and following our passion is the best way to live a rewarding life. (One of the classic texts is Ken Robinson, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, Penguin, 2009.)

Dreaming is often thought to be impractical. Not so: it is one of the most practical things we can do. There are people who spend months planning a holiday but not even a day planning a life. They let themselves be carried by the winds of chance and circumstance. That is a mistake. The sages said, “Wherever [in the Torah] we find the word *vayehi*, ‘And it came to pass,’ it is always the prelude to tragedy.” (Megillah 10b) A *vayehi* life is one in which we passively let things happen. A *yehi* (“Let there be”) life is one in which we make things happen, and it is our dreams that give us direction.

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Theodor Herzl, to whom more than any other person we owe the existence of the state of Israel, used to say, "If you will it, it is no dream." I once heard a wonderful story from Eli Wiesel. There was a time when Sigmund Freud and Theodore Herzl lived in the same district of Vienna. "Fortunately," he said, "they never met. Can you imagine what would have happened had they met? Theodore Herzl would have said: I have a dream of a Jewish state. Freud would have replied: Tell me, Herr Herzl, how long have you been having this dream? Lie down on my couch, and I will psychoanalyze you. Herzl would have been cured of his dreams and today there would be no Jewish state." Fortunately, the Jewish people have never been cured of their dreams.

The second principle is that leaders interpret other people's dreams. They articulate the inchoate. They find a way of expressing the hopes and fears of a generation. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech was about taking the hopes of African Americans and giving them wings. It was not Joseph's dreams that made him a leader: it was Pharaoh's. Our own dreams give us direction; it is other people's dreams that give us opportunity.

The third principle is: find a way to implement dreams. First see the problem, then find a way of solving it. The Kotzker Rebbe once drew attention to a difficulty in Rashi. Rashi (to Ex. 18: 1) says that Jethro was given the name Jether ("he added") because "he added a passage to the Torah beginning [with the words], 'Choose from among the people ...'" This was when Jethro saw Moses leading alone and told him that what he was doing was not good: he would wear himself and the people to exhaustion. Therefore he should choose good people and delegate much of the burden of leadership to them.

The Kotzker pointed out that the passage that Jethro added to the Torah did not begin, "Choose from among the people." It began several verses earlier when he said, "What you are doing is not good." The answer the Kotzker gave was simple. Saying "What you are doing is not good" is not an addition to the Torah: it is merely stating a problem. The addition consisted in the solution: delegate.

Good leaders either are, or surround themselves with, problem-solvers. It is easy to see what is going wrong. What makes a leader is the ability to find a way of putting it right. Joseph's genius lay not in

predicting seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, but in devising a system of storage that would ensure food supplies in the lean and hungry years.

Dream dreams; understand and articulate the dreams of others; and find ways of turning a dream into a reality – these three gifts are leadership the Joseph way. © 2013 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"The Lord shall broaden and beautify Japheth, and he [or perhaps He] shall dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9:27)

Why is there no clear religious prohibition against the study of Greek wisdom and intellectual involvement in philosophy, mathematics, the sciences, secular music, art, literature and theater? Why was no prohibition made against the study of all the expressions of Greek culture that we know as Hellenism?

Hanukah does not merely celebrate our military victory over an enemy who wished to remove political independence from Judea. Our main celebration is the lighting of the menorah, the stylized "tree of life." This ceremony makes the statement that "the candle is commandment, and Torah is our light" (Proverbs 6:23). In other words, it is G-d's will and His miracles - as in the small cruse of oil only sufficient to last for one day, but which lasted for eight - and not human reason that must direct human affairs and activities.

According to this view, the Haredim are right, at least as far as banning university is concerned. This is precisely the meaning of the Biblical verse as they read it, "The Lord may broaden and glorify Yafet [Greece and Greek wisdom], but only He [the Lord, without Greek wisdom] may dwell in the tent or Shem".

There is one Talmudic passage (B.T. Baba Kama 82b) that seemingly prohibits the study of Greek wisdom. It cites an internecine battle between two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, descendants of the Hasmonean dynasty (the instigators of the Judean victory over the Jewish Hellenists and the Greek-Syrians at Hanukah). An elderly man knowledgeable in Greek wisdom urged Aristobulus (whose army was outside of the walls of Jerusalem) to hoist a pig instead of a bullock over the ramparts, thus preventing and even desecrating the daily Temple sacrifice which continued to be offered by Hyrcanus from within Jerusalem.

The actions of this devotee of Greek wisdom who wished to destroy our Hebrew civilization led to a devastating earthquake in the land of Israel. From that day onwards, ruled the Sages, "Cursed be the individual who raises pigs and cursed be the father who teaches his child Greek wisdom." The prohibition seems to be

absolute. So our legal codes forbid us from raising pigs - or even benefitting in any way from pigs or pig skins.

However, as far as Greek wisdom is concerned, the story is strangely different. The Talmud praises the Greek language and deems "Greek wisdom" a skill necessary for international political discourse (ibid 83a). In fact, a parallel account at the end of Tractate Sota defines "Greek wisdom" in the context of the prohibition as a "special language of nuance and riddle" used for espionage. This is how Maimonides (Commentary on last Mishnah in Sota) understood the Talmudic decree, adding that "Greek wisdom" has since disappeared from use, and hence the prohibition no longer has practical application.

How can we understand this refusal to ban Greek wisdom? It is particularly strange since the Books of Maccabees demonstrate that the battles commemorated by Hanukah were waged by religious Hasmonians, who rebelled against the elite ruling priesthood, which had been captivated by the "modern" Hellenistic culture and its philosophy, esthetics and hedonism.

I believe it is because Judaism always valued wisdom - philosophy and science - and appreciated art and music. Witness the Books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes, which are even part of our sacred canon. The artist-architect of the Desert Sanctuary, Bezalel, has a name which means "in the shadow of G-d"; music abounded in the Holy Temple: King Solomon was highly praised for his worldly wisdom. The Talmud praises science, maintaining that those who are capable of studying it and do not do so "are making themselves blind to G-d's handiwork" (B.T. Shabbat 75a). Maimonides places philosophy and science under the rubric of gemara, insisting that these disciplines must be a necessary part of the curriculum in an Academy of Talmudic studies, as part of the commandment to strive to know G-d.

The Rashba (Rav Shlomo ben Adrat, Spain d.1310) wrote three responsa in which he banned the study of philosophy, but only for those under the age of 25 (Responsa 415,416,417), and Rav Moshe Isserles and the Vilna Gaon (Yoreh Deah 346,4; Biyur HaGra 18) both allow the study of science and philosophy. Although the Vilna Gaon is cited (Yoreh Deah 179) as saying that the "accursed philosophy turned Maimonides astray," one of the Vilna Gaon's best students, Rav Menashe from Illia, wrote that, "these words never emanated from the Gaon's pen nor from his sacred mouth".

Indeed the Vilna Gaon is quoted by Rabbi Barukh Shik of Shklov: "To the extent that a person lacks knowledge of wisdom, he will also lack one hundred measures of the wisdom of Torah, since Torah and wisdom are bound up together." As a result of the importance that our Tradition gave to the wisdom of philosophy and science, it would have been inconceivable for the Sages to ban Greek wisdom.

Hence, an alternate interpretation of the opening verse quoted above would serve as an introduction to this commentary, "The Lord shall broaden and beautify Yaphet (Greece), and he (Yaphet) shall dwell in the tents of Shem." "The beauty of Yaphet must adorn the tents of Shem" (Gen 9:27, Gen Rabbah ad loc.). Torah must be wed to university study. ©2013 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

All of the people involved in the human drama described for us in this week's Torah reading are haunted by their past actions, behavior and attitudes. Pharaoh is disturbed by his dreams of an empire where the strong overwhelm the weak and suddenly this past dream turns into a nightmare of the weak devouring the strong. Pharaoh's butler thought that he had placed his past indiscretions behind him and could safely forget everything and everyone associated with his time in prison.

He is now forced to recall the young Jewish Yosef and once again bring back the entire sordid story to the attention of Pharaoh. Yosef rises to power and position and attempts to build a new life for himself far away from his homeland and his family.

And, lo and behold, there now appear before him his ten brothers with whom he disagreed vehemently years ago and were the agents in his being sold as a slave to Egyptian aristocracy. Suddenly his heavenly inspired dreams of long ago and the bitterness of his relationship with his ten brothers descend upon him once more. The brothers do not realize that they are standing before their brother Yosef. But they remember remorsefully the feud with him and their less than charitable behavior towards him and see their current danger in Egypt as somehow being Divine retribution for their callousness and lack of compassion towards a brother.

And back in the Land of Israel, the old father Yaakov is inconsolable over the disappearance of Yosef for he remains convinced that the old dreams of Yosef were true prophecy and thus somehow must yet remain valid and will be fulfilled.

The past never disappears, not in personal life nor in national and international affairs. All attempts to "move on" so to speak are always hampered by the baggage of the past that we are always forced to carry with us. Our generation of Jews is still haunted by the Holocaust.

The nations of Europe are still possessed of their ancient and almost inbred disdain and hatred of Jews and Judaism. They cannot expunge that demon from their very being. The Left is still haunted by the false vision and unattainable economic and social theories of nineteenth century Marxism with all of its malevolent byproducts. The past compresses upon our

world and gives us little room for serenity and comfort. But there is a positive past that also exists in the Jewish world - the past of Sinai and Jerusalem, of Torah and chosiness, of thousands of years of traditional Jewish life and unwavering moral values.

That past is also slowly returning to many Jews who had forgotten about it or who never really knew much about it. The past is therefore a mighty weapon in shaping our present and certainly our future. It is the past that saves Yosef and his brothers and restores Yaakov to be the father of the nation of Israel. The past is not always pleasant to recall. But it is always necessary and instructive. As we dream on of a glorious future we must remember that our past always accompanies us on life's journey. © 2013 Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

In this week's portion, Yaakov (Jacob) hesitates to allow Binyamin (Benjamin) his youngest child, to return with his brothers to Egypt. Reuven, the eldest of the brothers, guarantees he'd bring Binyamin back home-proclaiming, "Let two of my sons be killed if I fail to bring him back to you." (Genesis 42:37) Yaakov rejects Reuven's offer. In the end, Yehuda (Judah) steps forward and declares, "If I do not bring him (Binyamin) back to you...I will have sinned to you forever." (Genesis 43:9) These words are accepted by Yaakov.

One wonders, why? Why does Yaakov embrace Yehuda's argument and not Reuven's?

Ramban notes that Reuven impetuously makes his comment while there is still food left from their trip to Egypt. Yehuda leaves Yaakov alone waiting until all the food is gone to make his plea. Ramban concludes that only after the food was gone would Yaakov be ready. This teaches the importance of timing. What we say and what we do may be rejected at one moment, but embraced at the next.

Another suggestion is in order: It can be posited that the greatest consequence of doing wrong is to be constantly wracked by the sin itself. And so, Yaakov rejects Reuven's argument as he offered a punishment if he fails. Yehuda on the other hand, is saying that his punishment will be his ever-present guilt in having sinned to Yaakov. In the words of Benamozegh (19th century, Italy) "sin itself is its own punishment."

A final thought comes to mind. Reuven's answer displays the assurance of one absolutely certain of success-so certain he offers the precious lives of two of his sons for punishment. Yehuda, on the other hand, recognizes the precariousness of the mission. He understands that he may not succeed. Hence, he

argues, "if I fail, I will forever have sinned to you." Yaakov accepts Yehuda's argument and not Reuven's, for, often, greatest success goes to one who understands the danger of the situation and realizes the very real possibility of not succeeding.

Additionally, Yaakov assents to Yehuda precisely because he (Yehuda) was prepared to act even when unsure of success. The real test of commitment is to become involved even when the outcome is unknown. This impresses Yaakov. This idea relates to the Chanukah holiday. Unlike in the Bible, where G-d assures Moshe (Moses) of success in Egypt, the Hasmoneans received no such assurance. Still, against great odds, uncertain of victory, they fought and prevailed. Maybe that is why we use the dreidel on Chanukah. The dreidel spins without knowing where it will land.

The Biblical Yehuda and Yehuda HaMaccabee of the Chanukah story interface. Both were aware of the uncertainties of their mission. Notwithstanding, they went forward.

May we all be so courageous, to do, even when unclear about the outcome. And like Yaakov, may we trust-with the help of G-d-that all will work out. © 2011 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

RABBI YITZCHOK ADLERSTEIN

Be'eros

Their hearts went out. Trembling, each one said to his brother, "What has G-d done to us?"

The gemara (Taanis 9a) relates how R. Yochanan found Reish Lakish's child declaiming, "A persons' foolishness corrupts his way, but his heart rages against Hashem." (Mishlei 19:3) R. Yochanan was bewildered. Can there be a thought developed in Kesuvim that is not at least hinted at in the Torah? The child responded. The thought certainly is hinted at -- in our pasuk! "Trembling, each one said to his brother, 'What has G-d done to us?'"

What does the gemara mean? How does our pasuk relate to the thought that the child cited from Mishlei? We could explain that the gemara conveys a point about the punishment Hashem inflicts upon a sinner. It is well-established that Hashem's punishments are midah keneged midah, measure for measure. We can see the justice of His actions in the way He punishes, and determine which of our shortcomings brought about a particular punishment. The gemara clues us in on another feature of His punishment: it is the sin itself that sets in motion the events that ultimately lead to the pain and grief we experience! We can see ourselves not only as deserving the punishment, but as the agent of our own misery.

At the climax of the story, Yaakov's sons will realize in an instant that had they not sold their brother

Yosef, none of the unpleasantness they endured for many months would ever have occurred. The connection between all the unhappy events became clear. Had the mysterious and harsh viceroy of Egypt not been the Yosef they sold, they would not have been accused of being spies. They would not have been challenged by the ruler to return home and bring their youngest brother back with them. The episode of the purloined cup would not have taken place. Neither would the trouble over the money planted in their knapsacks.

That later clarity contrasts with their reaction now, which seems to ironic to us, who know what Yosef is really up to. At this point, however, the brothers are overwhelmed. When first accused of being spies, they could at least make sense of the allegation. They had acted somewhat strangely. Many a neutral observer would have become suspicious upon learning that members of one family all entered the city by taking a different route. Concluding that they were spying out the city was not absurd. But finding money in each of their knapsacks -- what other explanation could there be, other than that they were marked men, being framed for a crime they did not commit. At this point, all they can do is feel crushed by the hand of G-d that has acted against them. It is Him they blame, so to speak. The moment of clarity had still not arrived when they would understand the interrelationship of all the events they had experienced. When that happened, when Yosef revealed himself to them, they no longer had to look to Hashem for the cause of their suffering. They realized how they had directly brought it all upon themselves.

A famous midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 93:10) reacts to the shame of the shevatim as Yosef reveals himself to them. "The brothers could not respond to him, because they were shamed." Abba, the kohein of Bardela, put it pithily, "Woe unto us for the day of judgment! Woe unto us for the day of rebuke." Bilam had difficulty hearing the rebuke of his she-donkey; the shevatim melted before the rebuke of their younger brother. Imagine the shame, he continues, when each person is admonished by Hashem Himself at his moment of judgment, each person "according to what he is."

That last phrase, "according to what he is," troubled many of the commentators. We could explain it according to the approach we have taken. Not only will Hashem point to our many faults and sins, but He will show how they were the direct cause of the difficulties that confronted us in life, in the same way that Yosef made his brothers recognize that all the pain they had endured flowed directly from their sin in selling him. Similarly, Bilam had been furious at his animal for veering off the path. When the angel revealed himself, Bilam understood that it was his own sin that brought the angel to block his progress, and cause the donkey to turn from the middle of the road. He then realized that he was the cause of his distress, not the donkey. Each

person's suffering and tribulations are "according to what he is" -- according to the chains of events his own actions unleashed.

This is what Abba, koheun of Bardela had in mind in speaking of the day of judgment and the day of rebuke. Judgment refers to the pain and suffering a person endures because of his misdeeds. They become even more unbearable when a person realizes that he, and he alone, brought that pain and suffering upon himself as direct consequences of those misdeeds. This realization is the "rebuke" to which Abba refers.

Demonstrating to a person that he is responsible for all that went wrong in his life, and that caused him untold grief, is an enormously powerful form of reprimand. (Based on Be'er Yosef, Miketz 42:28).
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RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

Weekly Dvar

In this week's Parsha, Miketz, we find Paroh having two dreams that none of his advisors can interpret satisfactorily. Yosef is then introduced, and he tells of the 7 years of plenty that will be followed with the 7 years of hunger. As part of the interpretation of the dreams, Yosef tells Paroh to appoint a man that is 'smart and wise' to overlook the storage of food for the hunger years. Paroh promptly appoints Yosef as that person, reasoning that Yosef has the 'spirit of G-d', and therefore is smart and wise. Paroh then gives Yosef more power than anyone in the entire country. Many of these actions need explanation.... Why would Paroh need a wise man to be in charge of storing food? Wouldn't it be enough to have an efficient person? And if it was important to have a 'smart and wise' person in charge, why did Paroh then choose Yosef because he had a 'spirit of G-d', when it wasn't even the requirement he was looking for? Furthermore, once he did appoint Yosef, why was he so eager to give him so much power?

To answer these questions, we first need to know Rav E. Lopian's insight into the 'smart and wise' requirement. He explains that although any bright person could have arranged for food to be stored, it takes a wise person to plan and implement for the future. It's that extra bit of foresight a wise person has that gives him the added push to do what he knows must be done, although the results are not immediate, or immediately apparent. With this we can now explain what Paroh saw in Yosef... Not only was Yosef wise, but he also had the 'spirit of G-d' -- meaning -- Not only was he wise enough to think of the future, but he had G-d's help in knowing how to do it, which is an even higher level. That's why Paroh was so eager to give him all that power. Paroh himself knew that he didn't have the potential Yosef had, and it was all because Yosef had G-d's guidance. When we follow the guidelines of the

Torah, we too show that we're wise enough to not only think of what the Torah wants, but use those actions to save up for our future (in the next world), which takes the spirit of G-d, and even more of a commitment. It's ironic that Paroh is the one that reminds us of how lucky we are to even have the Torah as our guide. We should all be wise enough to 'store' all the Torah study and good deeds we can, and enjoy their reward when it counts -- in the future world. © 2013 Rabbi S. Ressler & LeLamed, Inc.

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

“When the Greeks entered the [Temple] sanctuary they ritually contaminated all of the oil in the sanctuary, and when the House of the Chashmona'im became stronger and defeated them, they searched and only found one jar of oil that was left with the seal of the Kohain Gadol, and there was only enough [oil] in it to light for one day; a miracle occurred with it and they lit from it for eight days." Almost as well known as the miracle described in the Talmud (Shabbos 21b) is the question asked by the Bais Yosef (Orach Chayim 670): Since there was enough oil for one day, the miracle only occurred for seven days, not eight; why do we celebrate Chanukah for eight days if the miracle only lasted seven days?

Ultimately the answer is likely based on the Jews celebrating an eight-day holiday after liberating the Temple even before they knew how long the "miracle of the oil" would last (see <http://tinyurl.com/pjxqv4b>); the miracle allowed the oil to burn for eight days, matching the length of their celebration, indicating divine approval of their "new" holiday. Nevertheless, more than a hundred other answers have been suggested throughout the centuries. However, even as a kid I never really understood the question. After all, the oil burned for eight days, which indicated that on each day only one eighth of the normal amount of oil was consumed; the same miracle occurred on day one as on day eight! Why invent possible scenarios whereby all of the oil was left after the first day just to be able to ask the question of why we celebrate for eight days? I know this is one of the answers given (although this is not the first answer of the Bais Yosef, who suggests that they only put one eighth of the normal amount into each cup of the menorah on each day), but I never thought of it as an "answer," it is the reason why there is no question. If there was enough oil for one day and it burned for eight days, the starting point should be that on each day only one eighth of the oil was consumed, meaning that there was a miracle on all eight days! Why is there even a question?

There are several reasons why this "simple" scenario may be problematic. First of all, the wording of the Talmud is that "they lit from it for eight days," not that it burned for eight days, indicating that something

additional was done each of the eight days, not that it just lasted for eight days. [This is likely why the Bais Yosef suggested that only some of the oil was put into the menorah each day rather than that all of it was put in right away. The Bais Yosef's second answer is that the jar remained full even after the menorah was filled up, making the "it" that the menorah was lit from for eight days the jar. Even though this explains how there was a miracle on the first day too, there would now be no miracle necessary on the eighth day; the menorah was filled from the miracle that occurred on the seventh day. His third answer, that the cups of the menorah were still full in the morning, shares this issue.] Another issue that needs to be addressed is that the menorah must have the full amount of oil to last through the night (a half a "lug," see Rambam, Hilchos T'midin u'Musafin 3:11), and after the first night only seven eighths (seven sixteenths of a "lug") were left, with another eighth of the oil (which is another sixteenth of a "lug") less after each subsequent night. Even though they had no more uncontaminated oil to fill up the menorah with, since ritually contaminated oil can be used if need be (see Rambam, *ibid*, 3:10), how could they have let the menorah burn without enough oil to last the night? [This issue applies to the Bais Yosef's first answer as well.] According to some (see Meiri on Shabbos 22b), any flame still burning when it was time to light the candles again is extinguished, and the old wick, any remaining oil, and the ashes are cleaned out. If so, the oil must not have been left to burn continuously for eight days.

There are other peculiarities regarding how the miracle is described. Rambam (Hilchos Chanukah 3:2), rather than saying that with the ritually pure oil in the jug "they lit the menorah for eight days," says "they lit from it the 'neiros ha'Ma'aracha' for eight days." Why did the Rambam use the term "neiros ha'Ma'aracha" rather than the more straightforward "menorah"? (G'vuras Yitzchok, Chanukah #26 and #27, discusses this issue at length.) Sh'iltos (Vayishlach 26; page 173 in Netziv's edition) first says that there was enough oil to light for one day, then later (page 178) says there wasn't even enough for one day. Although the latter reference is used to explain why it was a miracle even on the first day (since it lasted longer than it should have), why did Rav Achai Ga'on describe how much oil there was in the jug two different ways? Additionally, when telling us that there was enough to light for one day, he says that there was a "lug" of oil, which is only enough for two of the seven lamps in the menorah! Since each lamp needed a half a "lug," three and a half "lugin" were needed to light the menorah, not just one. (Although the term "lug" might be a borrowed term, referring to the jug the oil was found in not the amount of oil in the jug, since the term "lug" likely came to mean "jar" because of how much liquid it held, it would be very misleading for Rav Achai to use the term "lug" instead of another term for "jar" if he didn't mean to indicate how much oil was in it.)

Tzofnas Paneyach (a commentary on the Rambam, but since some have requested that I somehow connect Chanukah with the Parasha, I will point out that it is also the name Paro gave Yosef, see B'reishis 41:45), within his attempt to explain why the Rambam uses the term "neiros ha'Ma'aracha," suggests that it was only the "ner ma'aravi," the "western lamp," that was lit by the Chasmona'im, not the other six. However, since the word "neiros" is plural, I find it difficult to accept that Rambam (or anyone else) would suggest that only one of the seven lamps of the menorah was lit. (Rambam himself says that when the menorah is inaugurated all seven lamps must be lit, see Hilchos T'midin u'Musafin 3:11.) Nevertheless, as G'vuras Yitzchok (#27) points out, since the Rambam was of the opinion that the menorah was lit twice everyday (once in the morning and once in the evening), and a half a "lug" was needed for each lamp for each lighting, if we are discussing just one lamp then one "lug" would be enough for one day, while for the menorah one "lug" wouldn't be enough for even one day. I would therefore suggest (and you can decide for yourself whether this qualifies more as Chanukah Torah or Purim Torah) that the ritually pure oil they found was used only for the "ner ma'aravi," which was the only lamp that could not be lit (or relit) from the other lamps, but had to be lit from the fire of the outer altar (see Hilchos T'midin u'Musafin 3:13). As previously mentioned, if ritually pure oil was not available, ritually impure oil could be used, and it was -- for the other six lamps. Because of the difficulty involved in keeping the uncontaminated oil ritually pure, rather than pouring it into the "ner ma'aravi" twice, they poured the whole "lug" into it once, lighting it from the fire of the outer altar after that was re-inaugurated. If this is true, all of our issues have been resolved.

The Sh'iltos calls it a "lug" because that's how much oil there was, which was enough for one day for one lamp, but not enough for even one day for the whole menorah. Rambam refers to them as "neiros ha'Ma'aracha" in order to distinguish them from the "ner ma'aravi." The "miracle oil" was in the "ner ma'aravi," and burned for eight days even though there was only enough for one. The "neiros ha'Ma'aracha were lit from the "ner ma'aravi" (which is how they were normally lit), and since the "ner ma'aravi" had the oil from the jar that was found, it could accurately be said that "they (the "neiros ha'Ma'aracha) were lit from it (the oil that was found, which was in the "ner ma'aravi") for eight days." (Even those of the opinion that the lamps must be extinguished for the next lighting agree that this does not apply to the "ner ma'aravi.") Since only half a "lug" was needed per lighting, when they saw that there was still seven eighths of a "lug" left in the "ner ma'aravi" after the first day, there was no need to add any more oil to it. The same is true when they saw three quarters of a "lug" left after two days, five eighths of a "lug" after three days, and a half a "lug" after four days. Once four

days had passed and only one eighth of a "lug" was being consumed each day, there was a "chazakah" (precedent that could be relied upon) that this oil only needed one eighth of a "lug" per day, so they didn't need to add more oil to it on the fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth days either. And since this same miracle of only one eighth of a "lug" being consumed per day occurred on all eight days, there is no reason to question why Chanukah is eight days long instead of seven. © 2013 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

Haftorah

This week's haftorah, read in conjunction with Shabbos Chanukah, teaches us a hidden dimension of Hashem's compassionate ways. The prophet Zechariah opens by announcing prophecies of the arrival of Hashem's presence in the near future. He declares in Hashem's name, "Rejoice and be happy daughter of Zion for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," These words refer to the sudden erection of the second Temple after seventy dark years of exile. In truth, early construction began earlier but our Jewish brethren slandered to the Persian government and brought the development to an immediate halt. This led the Jewish people to total despair and to forfeit all hope of experiencing Hashem's return. Suddenly and totally unexpected, the prophet Zechariah announced Hashem's immediate plan to rebuild the Temple.

Zechariah the prophet continues and reveals a private discussion between Hashem and the assigned prosecuting angel. The discussion centered around Yehoshua ben Yehozadak who was designated to serve in the new Temple. Hashem defended Yehoshua and said, "Is he not an ember spared from fire? The prophet Zechariah continues, "And Yehoshua was wearing soiled garments and standing before the angel. And the angel responded, 'Remove the soiled garments from upon Yehoshua...and they placed the turban upon his head.'" (Zechariah 3:4-5) This dialogue reflects that the ordained high priest was seriously faulted for an offense to the priesthood. The Sages explain that Yehoshua was judged for failing to involve himself in his children's choice of marriage. Unfortunately, the Babylonian exile took its toll upon the Jewish nation and corrupted their moral fiber. Their constant exposure to the Babylonians broke down basic barriers and numerous intermarriages occurred. Yehoshua's offsprings were party to this mind set and married women forbidden to them according to priesthood standards. (Targum and Rashi ad loc)

Their esteemed father, Yehoshua was unsuccessful in influencing them to choose appropriate wives and was now seriously faulted for this. The prosecuting angel protested Yehoshua's priestly status because of his inability to properly preserve it. Hashem defended Yehoshua and argued that he deserved special consideration because he was an ember spared

from the fire. Yehoshua received a second chance and immediately resolved to rectify his fault and terminate these inappropriate relationships. Hashem responded to this sincere commitment and restored Yehoshua to his prestigious position.

This incident reveals a unique dimension of Hashem's judgement and compassion. In truth, Yehoshua was at fault for his children's behavior and conceivably should have forfeited his esteemed position. However, Hashem focused on Yehoshua's outstanding merit as an ember spared from the fire. The Sages (Sanhedrin 93a) explain that the wicked Nebuchadnezar tested Yehoshua's faith and merit and casted him into a fiery furnace. Yehoshua was miraculously spared thereby displaying his supreme level of devotion to Hashem. Hashem argued that every fiber of Yehoshua's being was devoted to Hashem and deserved careful consideration. Although Yehoshua was faulted for his children's behavior he received a second chance and regained his status of the High Priest.

We learn from this Hashem's appreciation and response to devotion. Yehoshua totally dedicated himself to Hashem's service and thereby earned his privileged status. Yehoshua's devotion brought him into Hashem's inner circle and earned him special appreciation. Hashem views His close ones through the perspective of devotion and affords them special privileges. After proving their total loyalty to Hashem their subsequent service becomes invaluable. Such pious people bring credit to Hashem by their mere existence and will undoubtedly increase this credit a thousand-fold through their continuous service to Hashem. Although they may be imperfect their quality of devotion surpasses all and renders them the most worthy candidates for his service.

This lesson repeated itself in Yehoshua's offsprings during the days of Chanukah. In the early years of the second Temple the Jewish people were represented by illustrious high priests such as Ezra Hasofer and Shimon Hatzadik. During that period the Menorah's western lamp burned throughout the day. This constant miracle showed the entire world Hashem's constant presence amongst His people. However, after Shimon's passing this coveted priestly position was periodically neglected. It assumed political status and was obtained, at times, through handsome sums of money. Numerous unworthy individuals served as high priests for brief periods of time. Every year Hashem would display their unworthiness and punish them for entering the Holy of Holies without proper preparation. (Mesichta Yoma 9a) After years of mistreating their Temple privileges Hashem responded to this disgrace and permitted the Greek's to control the Bais Hamikdash. This new development exiled the Jews in their very

own land and restricting them for sacrificial service. The Chashmonaim, high priests by rite, took charge of

the situation and sacrificed their lives to restore this service. They displayed unprecedented levels of devotion and Hashem responded and returned the Temple to them.

The Chashmonaim overstepped their bounds and declared themselves rulers over the entire Jewish nation a position belonging exclusively to the household of Dovid Hamelech. Although this was a serious fault Hashem focused on their display of devotion and granted them the privilege of the priesthood. (Ramban Breishis 49:10) According to some opinions Yanai (Yochanan) Hamelech served as the high priest for eighty years. (Mesichta Brachos 29a) The Chashmonaim family proved their devotion and deserved to remain in Hashem's inner circle. Their total dedication to Hashem created a relationship of fondness and endearment and establish them the most qualified candidates for his service. (see Malbim, Zechariah 3:7)

The Bach sees this dimension of service as the heart of the Chanuka experience. He explains that the Jewish people became lax in their service in the Temple Bais Hamikdash. This sacred and precious opportunity became a matter of routine and was performed without inner feeling and devotion. Hashem responded and removed their privileges to awaken them to their shortcomings. The Chashmonaim, descendants of Yehoshua and Shimon Hatzadik understood the message and resolved to restore Hashem's glory to His nation. Following the footsteps of their predecessors they totally dedicated themselves to this service and sacrificed their lives on its behalf. Hashem responded to their devotion and led them to a miraculous victory. We kindle our menorah as an expression of our devotion to Hashem's service and resolve to internalize Chanuka's lesson. After sincerely examining our level of service we dedicate heart, mind and soul to Him and apply our Chanuka experience to our service throughout the year. (comment of Bach O.H. 670)

May Hashem accept our total commitment to His service and grant us the privilege of serving him in His holy abode in the nearest future. © 2013 Rabbi D. Siegel and torah.org

