

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

The festival of Hannukah celebrates 2 miracles, the first highlighted by the al hanissim prayer and the second expressed by the kindling of the menorah; the military victory of the few and ill prepared Hasmoneans against the many and mightier Greek-Syrians, as well as the small cruse of oil which was sufficient for only one day but which lasted for eight. The question we have queried is, why the necessity for the second miracle of the cruse of oil? And even if that were indeed a necessary miracle, why do we celebrate it for eight days? After all, the miracle was only a seven—day miracle since there was initially enough oil for the first day!

In order to answer these questions I would like to analyze five similar phenomena which surround the festival of Hannukah, Torah readings during this period, and the astronomy of this time of year. First of all, the amount of daylight hours is beginning to increase and even slowly overcome the darkness which almost seemed to completely overtake the rays of the sun. Secondly, we recite the blessing of the new moon, which marks the renewed appearance of moonlight from the midst of a darkened sky. Thirdly, a small band of religious Macabees overcame a much larger army of Gentiles and Hellenist Jews. Fourthly, Joseph, the son of Jacob, emerged from a black, bleak dungeon to become the grand vizier of the pharaoh of Egypt—and saves his family and emerging nation from destruction. And finally, we read of the gifts of the princes of the tribes to the Sanctuary, a Temple whose ultimate task is to bring sanctity and light to a world inundated by darkness and impurity.

Some of these phenomena are cosmic-historic. Do we believe that Jewish History is determined in much the same way as the seasons of the year, the renewal of the moon each month, and the relative hours of sunlight and darkness each day? Is history as predetermined as nature, both being the result of the

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Rabbi Brian & Devorah Thau & family
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(17th Yahrzeit) of the passing of
Dr. Edwin C. Thau OBM.
Yhe Zichro Baruch.**

directing finger of the Divine suffusing every aspect of the world and life?

A careful investigation of Pharaohs' dreams and Joseph's reaction to them in this week's Torah portion will provide the answer. Pharaoh first dreams of seven fat cows and seven lean cows, the lean cows completely devouring the fat cows. Indeed even after the lean cows devour the fat cows they appear just as lean as they were. He then dreams of seven wind tossed and mildewed sheaves of wheat which devour seven bountiful sheaves of wheat, and once again we remain with the wind tossed mildewed sheaves. Joseph explains that the cows as well as the sheaves represent Egypt, the country which then led the world as the major power and the country for which Pharaoh was responsible as its chief executive officer. From this perspective, the cows symbolized the government which must nourish and sustain its citizens much as a cow must nourish and sustain her calves; in similar fashion, the sheaves symbolize the food and the economy. It is no wonder then that Pharaoh's dreams gave him no rest; these dreams clearly and absolutely announce the end of Egypt as any kind of economic force in the world. As the Bible itself testifies, "the famine shall completely consume the land (of Egypt)" (Genesis 41:30)

Nevertheless, Joseph continues to interpret Pharaohs' dreams with an added suggestion—or rather solution—which would alleviate the forthcoming disaster "and now let Pharaoh find an understanding and wise individual to be placed in charge of the land of Egypt...and let him store food in reserve within the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty....so that the land will not be destroyed because of the famine" (Genesis 41:33) Joseph is obviously setting the stage for himself to be appointed as that individual responsible for the salvation of Egypt. Pharaoh makes the right appointment and Joseph saves the day; he saves Egypt, he saves the Jewish people and he saves the world from a famine which had been set to destroy everything according to Pharaoh's dream.

History as well as nature may appear to be predetermined along lines inexorably set down by fixed laws of physics and sociology. However, it is no accident that the very first commandment given to Israel is, "this new moon is given to you..." (Exodus 12:1); to you to mark, to you to count and to you to control. You can and must control time, you can and must control history and you eventually will be able to master even

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nature. Pharaoh managed to avoid what appeared to be inevitable doom by making the right appointment;

Joseph succeeded in avoiding inevitable doom by taking proper advantage of an opportunity and by using his G-d given wisdom and talents. The Macabees overcame the much stronger Hellenists by garnering the will and the ability to defeat a much stronger enemy. They certainly accomplished it only with G-d's help; but had they not attempted to take history into their own hands, mankind would never have benefited from the wisdom of our Torah and the ethics of our Ten Commandments after the Greek Period, and Jewish history would have ended two millennia ago. Similarly, the Macabees understood that their victory was not a physical-military victory alone; their battle had been fought first and foremost on behalf of the ethical monotheism which must emanate from the Menorah of the Sanctuary, the candle which is commandment and the light which is Torah. Hence, despite the knowledge that scientifically there was only enough oil for one day and that it would take eight days to process new oil, they nevertheless felt constrained to take science and nature into their own hands and begin lighting the menorah. The message of this second miracle rings out loud and clear; take history in hand and take nature in hand! If you do it for the sake of heaven, you will be helped from on High and you will overcome. © 2004 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

After Yosef had his goblet put in Binyamin's sack (Beraishis 44:2), and the brothers headed back home, he told his chief of staff to chase them down and confront them (44:4-5). The conversations that ensued between the brothers and the chief of staff (44:6-10) and then Yosef (44:15-17) contain several apparent difficulties.

1) The brothers responded by saying that whomever stole the goblet should be put to death, while the others will become slaves (44:9). But if only one of them stole it, why should the others be punished at all? And if they were all involved, then they should all get the same punishment. Why did they set up two different levels of consequences if it turned out that one of them had stolen the goblet?

2) The chief of staff countered (44:10) by saying "as your words [have indicated], so should it be," indicating that this two-tiered punishment was indeed appropriate. But he continued by stating that "the one with whom it is found shall be my servant, and [the rest of] you shall be innocent." If the original proposal was correct, why did he contradict it? Even if his counter-proposal was going beyond what the law required (so that the brothers' formula was right) how could Yosef later say "far be it for me to do such a thing" (44:17), as if such a thought shouldn't even be entertained. Yet his chief of staff (surely with Yosef's pre-approval) had said that such a punishment (or worse, as Yosef was referring to them all being slaves with no one put to death) really was appropriate. Which one was it—was it unthinkable to punish them all, or being overly gracious to only hold one of them responsible?

3) Why, if the chief of staff had already agreed that only the one found to have stolen the goblet would be kept as a slave, did Yehudah offer that they would all be slaves (44:16)? The starting point for any further negotiations should have been with one of them kept in Egypt, not all of them.

4) Linguistically, certain words seem to be superfluous. When the brothers first said that the one who stole the goblet shall be killed, they continued that "and we will **also** become slaves." If the culprit is going to be put to death, then he obviously will not become a slave. They should have just said "and we will become slaves;" the word "also" seems inappropriate. Similarly, when the chief of staff responds, he says, "now also should it be as your words [have indicated]. What is the "also" referring to, and why is there the implication that "now" it is appropriate, as opposed to earlier? When Yehudah offers that they should all become Yosef's slaves, he says, "we are slaves to my master; [not only] us, [but] also the one with whom the goblet was discovered." If anything, the "also" should refer to the other brothers, not the guilty one. Why did Yehudah imply that it was more of a "chiddush" (innovation) that Binyamin become a slave than the others, if just the opposite would seem to be true?

5) How could the brothers have opened the door to trouble by initially volunteering that if any of them were found to have stolen the goblet they should be put to death and the others should become slaves, if they knew that someone from Yosef's staff had previously put their money back in their sacks? Shouldn't they have realized that (at least) the possibility existed that a similar thing could have happened, and the

goblet placed in one of their sacks without their knowledge? Why risk trouble by suggesting a punishment that could be held against them when there is already a history of things being planted in their belongings?

These questions are posed by many of the commentators (although I haven't come across any raising the first linguistic issue), with numerous answers being given for each. While every approach answers some of them very well, they do not address all of them, and sometimes raise additional questions. However, if we glean different aspects from different commentators, and adjust one of them, we may be able to find an approach that answers all of them.

Before the brothers "volunteered" that the one with whom the goblet is found shall be put to death and the rest shall become slaves, they reminded the chief of staff that when their money had been mistakenly put back into their sacks they had brought it back down on their next trip. If they would return money that was already in their possession months later, surely they would never steal anything! Some commentators explain their having "volunteered" to suffer severe consequences had they stolen the goblet as a further argument to "prove" their innocence. Being that bravado is no where near as good a proof as real evidence, and their bags would surely be (shortly) searched, why employ such a method when momentarily their (they assumed) empty bags would really prove their innocence? Besides, knowing that things might have been planted there kind of counteracts any effect of offering to be severely punished if found guilty. It is possible that while this statement by the brothers was in fact a means of bolstering their claim of innocence, perhaps it was not via offering to be severely punished, but by describing what they knew would happen if they were guilty.

Numerous commentators point out that the punishment for violating a Noachide law is death, and that since theft is one of the 7 Noachide laws, the brothers were indicating that the one who actually stole the goblet should be put to death. (Interestingly, if the "dibah," or bad report, that Yosef brought back to Ya'akov about his brothers was in fact that they ate "eiver min hachai," limbs of an animal still alive, and the source of their disagreement was whether the brothers had to follow the details that apply to non-Jews or not, this might have been an admission that they had been mistaken earlier when they claimed that they were already considered full Jews. Put in the light of Yosef having orchestrated this whole charade to allow his brothers to repent for their earlier sins, this possibility adds another dimension to their "teshuvah.")

While offering to be given such a punishment has some (above mentioned) difficulties, if it is put in the context of arguing that they are innocent, it takes on a different meaning. Conceivably, they were continuing their "proof" that they would never stoop as low as

stealing; First of all, they had even returned the money mistakenly put in their sacks, and secondly, since the consequences of being caught stealing are so severe, they would never do it. Their own (internal) justice system demands the death penalty for theft, and the Egyptians, who had already suspected them of being spies, would probably make them all slaves. (See 43:18, where the brothers were concerned that they would be kept as slaves for having taken the money during their first trip.) They weren't volunteering to be punished severely, but stating that because they knew that they would be severely punished, they would never have stolen anything in the first place.

This would explain why they added the word "also;" they were saying that each brother knew how severely the other brothers would treat one who stole, and "also" what the Egyptians would do if they were caught by them.

When the chief of staff starts his response with "now also," he can be referring to both of these arguments; We can presume your innocence based on your previously having returned the money, and "now also" based on the current argument that because the consequences are so severe, we can assume that stealing is not your (plural) modus operandi. Therefore, we will not hold all of you responsible if the goblet is found in the possession of one of you. Nevertheless, Binyamin wasn't around when you tried to return the original money, nor was Shimon—who was in prison at the time. Additionally, while as a group you do not conspire to steal, perhaps another brother only returned the money because everyone else did. If one of you has the goblet, though, he probably did it on his own, and therefore only he will become a slave. The chief of staff wasn't contradicting his first statement that "you are right," since that first statement wasn't about the punishment, but about whether the brothers should be presumed innocent. And Yosef was agreeing with his chief of staff's assessment that only the guilty should remain a slave.

Aside from not wanting to leave Binyamin by himself in Egypt, Yehudah heard the Viceroy say "what have you (plural) done" (44:15), and assumed that Yosef was blaming all of them, unlike his chief of staff. He also figured that their becoming slaves was G-d's punishment for having sold Yosef into slavery ("G-d has found your servant's sin"), a sin which Binyamin was not a part of. And if they had said that their own system of justice demanded that a thief be put to death, Yehudah was afraid that Binyamin would suffer a worse fate than "just" slavery. Therefore, Yehudah insisted that not only should the brothers become slaves, but Binyamin—who did not deserve slavery via heavenly decree, and might get killed for being suspected of theft—should "also" become a slave.

When Yosef responded that the brothers misunderstood, and were not being blamed for the theft and could return home, Yehudah realized that this was

not a divinely sent punishment for having sold Yosef. It was at this point that he changed from having accepted becoming a slave to confronting the Viceroy in next week's Parsha. © 2004 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

It is well known that on the first day of Chanukah one candle is lit. On each successive night, one more is kindled. This in fact is the view of Beit Hillel as recorded in the Talmud. (Shabbat 21b)

Beit Shammai dissents. His position is that on the first night eight candles are lit. On each successive night, one less light is kindled.

The Talmud explains the reasoning behind each view. Beit Hillel bases his view on Ma'alim Bakodesh, holiness moves in ascending order. Since lighting the Chanukah candles is a holy act, each night requires an additional candle to be lit.

Beit Shammai sees it as corresponding to the sacrifices offered on the Sukkot festival. As they were offered on successive days in descending order, so too, the Chanukah lights. For Beit Shammai the descending order also reflects the amount of oil remaining as the miracle unfolded. On the first night there was enough oil for eight days, on the second night there was left enough for seven days until the eighth night when only the amount for that night remained.

Yet there is another way to look at this disagreement. Chanukah is a two dimensional miracle. On the one hand, we were victorious over the Syrian Greeks who were prepared to annihilate our religion. This miracle is spelled out in the Al Hanisim prayer. In it we say that on Chanukah God "gave the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few."

There is also the miracle of the lights. There was enough oil for one day and it miraculously lasted for eight. This miracle is alluded to in the Haneirot Halalu which is recited after the candle lighting.

In one word the Al Hanisim celebrates the physical miracle of overcoming the Syrian Greeks. The Haneirot Halalu, the spiritual miracle of retaining our belief system even in the face of powerful assimilationist forces.

Could it be that Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree concerning which miracle is paramount. For Beit Shammai it was the physical military victory. Hence, the candles are lit in descending order. Such is the way of military victory. At first, it looms large, all eight candles are lit. But, while physical victory is important, if it does not lead to a meaningful message, it quickly fades and diminishes in power.

Beit Hillel is of the opposite opinion. For Beit Hillel, the miracle is spiritual. The way of spirituality is to begin modestly almost unnoticed. In time, the spiritual power expands and becomes larger and larger. Hence Beit Hillel insists the candles be lit in increasing

numbers - each day the power of the spirit becomes stronger and stronger.

This is an appropriate message on this Chanukah when in Israel soldiers display important physical power and do so with a sense of deep ethics. This is known in the Israeli Defense Forces as *tihur haneshek*, purity of arms. In this sense, our soldiers reflect the words of Zechariah read this week: "Not by might nor by power but by My spirit says the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6) This does not mean that might and power are not important. Indeed, some commentators understand this sentence to mean "Not only by might nor only by power, but also by my spirit says the Lord of hosts." Power and might are crucial when infused with a spirit of God.

And so it is with our holy soldiers. On this Chanukah may they all be blessed. © 2004 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA

RABBI LABEL LAM

Dvar Torah

“What's Chanukah?” asks the Talmud and it proceeds to tell of the historical events of Chanukah. This comes curiously after many of the practical laws of observance have already been explained in great detail. The more organized approach would be to first introduce the subject and later tell of its laws. It has been pointed out that this is in keeping with Jewish practice. For some mystical reason, Jews keep this "Rabbinic" holiday with a tenacious loyalty. The 1991 JNF Jewish Population Survey found that of 5.5 million Jews in America more than 3.5 million have no synagogue affiliation. Yet, more than 74% celebrate Chanukah. Only later they may ask, "What's Chanukah?"

One reason for this phenomenon may be that the Mitzvah of Chanukah is for "each person and his household". There are no grand social contrivances or central authority, no dues, fees, or bureaucracies to surmount. One only needs to have lived in a Jewish home and there is likely a happy Chanukah memory planted there.

For a "Chanukah present", right before the first marking period, I received a beautiful Sierra Club calendar, from a student. It featured some awe inspiring scenes of nature atop each month. Even after the year had passed, for some reason, not even known to me, I had trouble parting with a few of the photos, so I decoratively affixed them to the wall of what I would call my study/closet.

Years later I was there in that room talking privately with a couple of young men we had over for Shabbos. I noticed that they were surveying my odd collection of stuff on the walls and so I decided to play a spontaneous little game. I covered this one particular picture and asked them to take a two second quick peak and tell me what they thought it was. I covered it

again and waited for them to register their responses. "It looks like a snowy mountain range or a cloud cluster taken from a plane high above." "Take a closer and longer look." I invited them. "Wow! What's this black dot?" Then it hit them. "This is a bird—a swan...All the other white bumps are presumably swans too!" It took some time but they got it. On the back of the picture was a description of what was depicted in the photo. A flock of swans on a frozen lake in Japan became covered in a thin dusting of snow.

Two of the swans stretched forth their parallel half-heart necks while all the others huddled beneath the layering of snow. The whole picture is white on white and it makes it hard to tell what's going on. If it wouldn't be for the two black dots of each eye and the splash of orange from the two beaks it would be difficult to discern.

It occurred to me, and I shared with my two young guests, that this accurately depicts state of the Jewish People. Sometimes you see this group or that like the Rocky Mountains tough and unapproachable. Others seem so high and hard to reach like lofty clouds. Because a few have lifted heads it reveals that all those white bumps are soft swans protecting themselves from the cold. The covering is only a slight disguise though. Underneath is a beautiful bird. Eventually the spring thaw will arrive and they will be seen in their full majesty.

King Solomon, the wisest of all men, writes in "Song of Songs" about the Jewish People, "I am asleep but my heart is awake." This describes our existence during exile. We fall into a deep slumber but we are never entirely unconscious. At some unrehearsed moment, and simultaneously, a growing vital sign is miraculously manifest across the globe. A wink, like a light in the window, opens and shuts, nightly, whispering, "Majesty resides within!" © 2004 Rabbi L. Lam & www.torah.org

THE SALANT FOUNDATION

Around the Shabbos Table

by Rabbi Zvi Miller

When Pharaoh needed an interpretation for his dreams, Yoseph was rushed out of prison to come to Pharaoh's aid, as the Torah (Bereishis 41:14) records: "And they rushed him from the dungeon."

The Seforno teaches that all deliverance of HaShem is instantaneous. Hence, when Klal Yisrael were freed after the 210 years of bondage "the Egyptians drove them out of Egypt". They left so quickly they didn't have time for the dough to rise.

Conversely, the deliverance that comes from the hand of man is unlike Divine intervention. Even after one promises to save another person, his plan must be

actualized. For instance, even if the king issues a royal decree to free a prisoner, the captive will not be released until all the official protocol is completed.

Whereas, the deliverance of HaShem is not an incremental process, rather it is contingent on the completion of an exact period of time. HaShem decreed that Yoseph should be incarcerated for 12 years. Once, that period was up-then that very second-Yoseph was released from jail.

Likewise, the final redemption will come as soon as the period of our exile is finished. The two thousand years of darkness will end at once, and not linger a second longer. For this reason, we refer to the redemption as the keitz-which means, the end of a period of time.

The Prophet (Malachie 3:1) alludes to the suddenness of our future redemption: "And HaShem, Whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple." The primary difference between exile and redemption is the revelation of the Shechinah. All the expulsions and troubles that we endured was an aspect of hester panim, the concealment of the Shechinah.

The second when the time arrives for HaShem to reveal the illumination of His countenance-we will be redeemed. Once the night ends, the day is before us!

Implement: Envision how at the second of our redemption the light of HaShem will instantaneously transform the quality of existence. [Based on Da'as Torah of Rabenu Yerucham HaLevi]

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

Joseph's first dream comes to realization in this week's parsha. His brothers come down to Egypt and prostrate themselves before him. The dream of the sheaves of the brothers bowing to Joseph's sheaf is at last fulfilled. But strangely, Joseph does not feel himself satisfied. It is human nature that the expectation of the realization of events is always greater and more exciting than the fulfillment of the realization itself. No vacation or event that we plan for ourselves can live up to our imagination and expectation regarding it. And Joseph is further burdened by the enormity of what has transpired. He has the brothers, who sold him as a slave and were deaf to his shouts and tears and pleas for mercy, in his hands. But what is he to do with them now? And what of his beloved father, the old man, broken in grief, whom he has not seen or communicated with for twenty-two years? Are the brothers telling him the truth about his father's condition? And what about Benjamin, his younger brother? Is he like the other brothers in attitude and belief or is he different? Does he mourn for his lost brother Joseph or is he sanguine about his fate, as his ten older brothers seem to be? All of these questions plague Joseph at the moment of his seemingly great triumph when his brothers are in his power and abjectly

bow before him. His triumph therefore seems somewhat hollow to him at that moment.

Joseph comes to the great realization that his ultimate triumph over his brothers lies not in punishing them - though he will certainly cause them great anguish on their road of repentance - but rather to eventually conciliate them. Vengeance is momentarily more satisfying than is conciliation. But in the long run, vengeance lies not in human hands. And it will only continue to widen the rift within Jacob's family. Joseph's greatness and heroism lies in the fact that he chose the road of healing and conciliation rather than that of punishment and vengeance. Joseph, out of all of the avot and the brothers is called tzadik - righteous and holy. This is certainly due to his behavior in escaping from the clutches of Potiphar's wife. But Joseph's righteousness and piety is exhibited not only in that incident. It is apparent in his treatment of his brothers after his dream of their bowing down to him has been realized. He will protect his brothers from the Pharaoh and the ravages of Egyptian society. He will support them physically, financially and spiritually for the rest of his life. He still weeps at the gulf of suspicion that yet exists between him and the brothers. Conciliation is a long and difficult road to traverse. But Joseph realizes that it is the only hope for his family's continuity and purpose.

In the rough and tumble of Jewish and Israeli politics, organizational life and competitive societal forces, the temptation for excluding others and even punishing them is very strong. But the lesson of Joseph should remain instructional to all of us today as well. A Jewish society that can cast away old hatreds and feuds and truly attempt to be conciliatory one to another will certainly be stronger and holier in purpose and action. In this respect, we should all profit from and attempt to emulate Joseph's wisdom and course of behavior. © 2004 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/jewishhistory.

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

After Yosef accuses his brothers, "You are spies, you have come to see the nakedness of the land" [Bereishit 42:9], and he hears from them about the existence of another brother, he proposes a test of their truthfulness: "Send one of you to get your brother and you will remain here in prison, and we will test whether what you say is true or not. I swear by Pharaoh that you are spies!" [42:16]. At this point, Yosef puts his brothers "in prison for three days" [42:17]. Surprisingly, at the end of the three days Yosef suggests a more lenient approach, presented in a milder tone. "If you speak the truth, let one of your brothers be kept in prison, and the

rest of you can bring the food to satisfy the hunger in your homes. Then bring your young brother to me, and your words will be verified. And you will not die." [42:19-20]. What caused Yosef to modify his initial proposal?

Throughout the entire ordeal, it seemed as if Yosef was trying to determine if his brothers acknowledged the sin of having sold him into slavery. Evidently this was the reason that he kept them imprisoned for three days. It is quite common in the Torah that a period of three days signifies a time of special introspection. Examples are the three days of separation before the momentous events of Sinai (Shemot 19:15), three days that Rechavam requested before responding to the request of the people (I Melachim 12:5), three days that Yonah spent inside the fish (Yonah 2:3), or the three day fast that Esther declared (Esther 4:16). But in this case, to his disappointment, nothing happened. The brothers did not react at all, and their only response was silence.

Yosef therefore understood that if he wanted to bring his brothers to recognize their sin he would have to create a situation that would give them a stronger hint about the link between what was happening to them and the fact that he had been sold. If he had kept all the brothers in Egypt and sent only one of them back to Yaacov with food, it might have been viewed as punishing Yaacov rather than the brothers. After all, Yaacov would be left without enough food for a long time, while the brothers would be supplied with food in prison and could take comfort from the fact that they were all suffering together. Yosef's second approach, on the other hand, leads to a situation that is very similar to what happened when Yosef was sold. Once again most of the brothers would be forced to return to their father with one brother missing. Since they would have food with them, Yaacov would be able to pay attention to this new but familiar problem. The brothers should be able to sense in advance what Yaacov would in fact say to them: "You have brought me into mourning. Yosef is gone, and Shimon is gone; if you take Binyamin, I will have all the tragedy." [Bereishit 42:36].

And this time Yosef succeeded in accomplishing his goal. After three days in prison with no reaction, when the brothers heard Yosef's new proposal, they suddenly realized the significance of the events. "And the brothers said to each other: Indeed we are guilty, because of our brother, as we saw his suffering when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this trouble has come upon us." [42:21].

Thus, the first stage in the process of repentance was a success: "And he turned away from them and wept" [42:24].

Chanukah and Succot

by Rabbi Aviad Tabory, Bnei Akiva Shaliach, London

The well known question by the Beit Yosef, asking why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days and

not seven, is based on the assumption that the miracle of the vial of oil provides justification for seven days of celebration and not eight. A similar question was asked in Megilat Taanit. "Why was Chanukah established as eight days when Moshe's dedication of the Tabernacle in the desert lasted only seven days?... The same is true for the dedication ceremony of Shlomo at the Temple, which only lasted seven days." The basic assumption in this question, as opposed to that of the Beit Yosef, is that Chanukah is modeled on the dedication of the Temple.

As noted in Sefer Hamakabim II, the number of days in Chanukah is the same as that of the holiday of Succot, which also consists of eight days. The explanation is that the first time Chanukah was celebrated it was to make up for Succot, which was skipped that year. On 25 Kislev of that year, the Jews even celebrated with a lulav and an etrog.

There are in fact several interesting parallel elements between Succot and Chanukah. For example, the full Hallel is recited on both holidays, and they are both characterized by "hidur," a special effort to observe the mitzvot of the holiday in a stringent way. Another remarkable similarity is the importance of the Temple in both holidays, and the attempt to bring the Temple and the revelation of the holy Shechina into the home of each and every Jew. This can be seen from the Succah, which can be compared to the Temple, and from the Chanukah menorah, which can be compared to the Menorah in the Temple.

It is interesting to note that on both holidays a Jew is required to leave his home (sometimes into harsh cold!) in order to observe the special commandments. This teaches us an important lesson. It may be true that the Temple approaches the entrance of the home, but a person must show that he is ready—a least with a minimum effort—to leave his warm and pleasant home in order to welcome the Temple into the house.

RABBI YEHUDA PRERO

Project Genesis

Have you ever tried to find a detailed discussion of Chanukah in Talmud? You shouldn't try too hard: it's not there. Yes, a few highlights of the history and some brief discussion of the Menorah-lighting are mentioned on a few pages. However, there is no "in-depth" discussion, let alone a tractate, devoted to Chanukah and the laws applicable on the holiday.

The Talmud (Yoma 29a) discusses another "omission" concerning Chanukah. "It is written (Tehilim 22), 'For the Conductor, on the Ayeles HaShachar (brightening of dawn, according to one interpretation).' Rav Assi said:

Why was Esther compared to the dawn? To tell you that just as the dawn is the end of the whole night, so too is the story of Esther the end of all the miracles.

What about Chanukah? we refer only to those included in Scripture."

The story of the miracle of Chanukah, as this passage in the Talmud notes, is not included in Scriptures, while the story of Purim is, in Megillas Esther. Chanukah is omitted from discussion in the Talmud, while the discussion of Purim is contained in an entire tractate. Clearly, there must be a reason for this stark difference between Chanukah and Purim. Rav Yehonasan Eybshitz comments that this difference highlights an underlying historical difference between these two holidays.

In the Talmud (Shabbos 88a), we learn that "Raba said... they re-accepted it (the Torah) in the days of Achashverosh, for it is written (in Megillas Esther), [the Jews] confirmed, and took upon them [etc.] -- they confirmed (at the time of Purim) what they had accepted long before (by Mt. Sinai). The spiritual problem that existed in the days of Mordechai and Esther was a fundamental one: the Jewish people were lacking in their faith. People openly flaunted their disdain for the precepts contained in the Torah and dabbled in idolatry. Upon the threat of physical annihilation, Mordechai rallied the nation to repent. The people saw the errors of their ways, repented, and a miraculous turn-around of fortune occurred. The nation of Israel was saved from the murderous hands of Haman and his willing minions. The nation, as the Talmud states, then reaccepted the Torah upon themselves, reaffirming the acceptance of the Torah that occurred at Mount Sinai.

However, not all was well and good with the spiritual status of the nation of Israel after the events of Purim. Granted, no one desired any longer to worship idols. However, a new form of heresy emerged. Groups formed that denied fundamental Jewish beliefs. Rav Eybshitz explains that at the time of Chanukah, there were three distinct segments of the populace: the Perushim, those who faithfully upheld the Torah. The Chashmonaim were part of this minority group. They had to battle the Greeks and their non-believing brethren. As we know, in the end, they were victorious. The Chashmonaim were able to uphold the honor of the Oral Law. In fact, the very miracle of the Menorah's oil is an illustration of one of the precepts of Oral Law: nowhere in the Written Law do we find any prohibition on lighting the menorah with impure oil. That law is learned in the Oral Law, and because of the strict adherence to this precept, the nation of Israel merited the miracle of one flask of oil lasting for eight days, a miracle we celebrate to this day.

The Oral Law is just that, Oral Law. It was not to be Chanukah, as we know, commemorates a victory of the weak over the mighty, the few over the many, the pure over the impure, the righteous over the wicked, and the diligent students of the Torah over the wanton. However, the holiday also celebrates purity—not just of the requisite olive oil that was needed, but of tradition.

The integrity of the Oral Law was upheld by the Chashmonaim in the face of those who did all they could to diminish it. Tradition was upheld in the face of philosophical arguments advocating modernity and change. Chanukah commemorates the strength the Chashmonaim had, not only on the physical battlefield, but on the spiritual battlefield as well. It is now up to us to live up to the ideals for which the Chashmonaim fought, and to safeguard those ideals for generations to come. © 2004 Rabbi Y. Prero & www.torah.org

DR. AVIGDOR BONCHEK

What's Bothering Rashi?

Our parsha continues the drama of Joseph and his brothers. There is famine in the land of Canaan and Jacob realizes that the only way he and his family can continue to sustain themselves is by purchasing food in Egypt, where there is no famine. He tells his sons that they must go to Egypt to purchase food from the viceroy there. This was, of course, none other than their brother, Joseph, whom they had sold into slavery some twenty years previously. Below we read of Jacob's command to his children.

"And he said 'Behold, I have heard that there are provisions in Egypt. Go down there and purchase for us there, that we may live and not die.'" (Genesis 42:2)

"Go down there"—RASHI: "He did not say 'go' (but rather 'Go down'). This is a hint to the two hundred and ten years that they (the Nation Israel) were to be enslaved in Egypt. For the Hebrew word 'R'du' ('Go down') is numerically 210."

Look at Rashi on verse Genesis 45:9.

A Question: Rashi assumes that the word "go" ('I'chu' in Hebrew) is more appropriate than 'r'du'. But this is not so. Rashi himself tells us further on (Genesis 45:9) that Eretz Yisrael is higher than all other lands, thus when speaking of going to Eretz Yisrael the Torah uses the word 'alu' ('go up') and conversely when one leaves Eretz Yisrael the Torah uses the word 'to go down.' So Jacob's word here—'go down there (to Egypt)' are appropriate. How can Rashi imply that he should have said 'go' and not 'go down'?

A difficult question. Can you think of an answer?

Hint: Look carefully at verse 45:9. Granted that verse speaks of "going up" and our verse speaks of "going down" but in fact the idea is the same. Can you see any other difference between our verse and that one?

An Answer: Rashi's point is well taken. Because while the Torah uses the words "going up" and "going down" when coming to or leaving Eretz Yisrael respectively, an individual does not. (Today of course we do speak of "Aliya" but in the Torah Jacob would not ordinarily have used this word.) Jacob's use of this word is therefore inappropriate. His word "going down" has a

negative connotation and implied going down into slavery—for 210 years.

Can you find support for Rashi, that Jacob would not have used this word, had it not been for the implied hint that it conveys? Hint: Look further on in the story.

An Answer: Later on, after Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, Jacob prepares to go to see him (Genesis 45:28): "And Israel said: It is great that my son Joseph is still alive. I will go (Hebrew 'ailcha') and see him before I die."

So we see that when Jacob speaks of going to Egypt himself, he uses the word "to go," and not "to go down." Thus Rashi's focusing on Jacob's use of the word "go down" in our verse is correct. Jacob himself would not have used this term (though the Torah itself does), had the word 'r'du' not had other connotations in this context.

The Torah's words as a narrative may be quite different from a quote in the Torah of an individual. There are other instances in the Torah where this is the case. The lesson is to closely examine Rashi's comments, especially when it seems that he contradicts himself. He was quite careful in his choice of words and in his comments. © 2004 aish.org & Dr. A. Bonchek

Happy Chanukah!



... "Anybody got a match?"

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