

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

There has been massive debate in Anglo Jewry in the past few weeks as to whether we should take a unified stance in our support of the state of Israel or whether we should openly air our differences. It's been a noisy debate, a shrill debate, but it's the wrong debate, and it is deflecting us from the real issue, which is hardly discussed at all.

And if we seek it we will find it in this week's parsha. Listen to these words. They are among the most fateful and reverberating in all of Jewish history: "Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him."

The Torah is a deep book. We make a great mistake if we think it can be understood on one superficial level.

On the surface, the story is simple. Envious of him, Joseph's brothers initially planned to kill him. Eventually they sell into slavery. He is taken to Egypt. There, through a series of vicissitudes, he rises to become Prime Minister, second only, in rank and power, to Pharaoh.

It is now many years later. His brothers have come to Egypt to buy food. They come before Joseph, but he no longer looks like the man they knew many years before. Then, he was a seventeen year old called Joseph. Now he is thirty-nine, an Egyptian ruler called Tzofenat Paneach, dressed in official robes with a gold chain around his neck, who speaks Egyptian and uses an interpreter to communicate with these visitors from the land of Canaan. No wonder they did not recognise him, though he recognised them.

But that is only the surface meaning. Deep down the book of Bereishit is exploring the most profound source of conflict in history. Freud thought the great symbol of conflict was Laius and Oedipus, the tension between fathers and sons. Bereishit thinks otherwise. The root of human conflict is sibling rivalry: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau,

and now Joseph and his brothers.

Joseph has the misfortune of being the youngest. He symbolises the Jewish condition. His brothers are older and stronger than he is. They resent his presence. They see him as a trouble maker. The fact that their father loves him only makes them angrier and more resentful. They want to kill him. In the end they get rid of him in a way that allows them to feel a little less guilty. They concoct a story that they tell their father, and they settle down to life again. They can relax. There is no Joseph to disturb their peace any more.

And now they are facing a stranger in a strange land and it simply does not occur to them that this man may be Joseph. As far as they are concerned, there is no Joseph. They don't recognise him now. They never did. They never recognised him as one of them, as their father's child, as their brother with an identity of his own and a right to be himself.

Joseph is the Jewish people throughout history.

"Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him."

Judaism was the world's first monotheism but not the last. Two others emerged claiming descent, literal or metaphorical, from Abraham, Christianity and Islam. It would be fair to call the relationship between the three Abrahamic monotheisms, one of sibling rivalry. Far from being of mere antiquarian interest, the theme of Bereishit has been the leitmotiv of the better part of the last two thousand years, with the Jewish people cast in the role of Joseph.

There were times-early medieval Spain was one-when Joseph and his brothers lived together in relative harmony, convivencia as they called it. But there were also times-the blood libels, the accusations of poisoning wells or spreading the plague-when they sought to kill him. And others- the expulsions that took place throughout Europe between the English in 1290 and the Spanish in 1492 -- when they simply wanted to get rid of him. Let him go and be a slave somewhere else, far from here.

Then came the Holocaust. Then came the State of Israel, the destination of the Jewish journey since the days of Abraham, the homeland of the Jewish people since the days of Joshua. No nation on earth, with the possible exception of the Chinese, has had such a long association with a land.

The day the State was born, 14 May 1948, David Ben Gurion, its prime minister, sought peace with

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by Saba & Savta Weiss

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its neighbours, and Israel has not ceased seeking peace from then until now. But this is no ordinary conflict. Israel's opponents-

Hamas in Gaza, Hizbollah in Lebanon, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, are not engaged in a border dispute, these boundaries or those. They deny, as a matter of non negotiable religious-not just political-principle, Israel's right to exist within any boundaries whatsoever. There are today 56 Islamic states. But for Israel's neighbours a single Jewish state the size of Wales, is one too many.

Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

There is no State among the 192 member nations of the United Nations whose very existence is called into question this way. And while we as Jews argue among ourselves as to this policy or that, as if this were remotely relevant to the issue of peace, we fail to focus on the real issue, which is, so long as Joseph's brothers do not recognise his right to be, there can be no peace, merely a series of staging posts on the way to a war that will not end until there is no Jewish state at all.

Until the sibling rivalry is over, until the Jewish people wins the right to be, until people-including we ourselves-realise that the threat Israel faces is ultimate and total, until Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah agree that Jews have a right to their land within any boundaries whatsoever, all other debate is mere distraction. © 2010 Chief Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and torah.org

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The Talmud teaches us that the meanings of dreams are all contingent upon the interpreter and interpretation of the dream. Yosef had told the butler and baker of Pharaoh's court that "Dream interpretations are up to the Lord." Yet he went ahead and interpreted those two dreams accurately and presciently.

Apparently what he meant by "up to the Lord" was that the one who interprets dreams has to possess some sort of holy intuition, an inner sense of the person whose dream he is interpreting in order to be able to interpret the dream. This inner voice is a gift from the Lord.

This is true in medical matters where some physicians are master diagnosticians and their inner voice leads them to the correct conclusion regarding the nature of a person's illness. It is also true for psychologists and mental health therapists. An inner voice must guide them as to how to help the troubled person that they see before them.

It is even true for the great decisors of halacha, who many times arrive at their decision after rigorous scholarship but also with unerring intuition as to what the correct solution is to the matter laid before them. Yosef has this intuition within him and therefore he is confident that his interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh will be accurate and correct.

It is this apparent self-confidence and certainty of spirit that so impresses Pharaoh and thus is the catalyst for Yosef's meteoric rise to power in Egypt. Pharaoh recognizes this by stating that Yosef possesses G-d's spirit within him. Without that spirit, Pharaoh is well aware that his dreams will never be interpreted in a proper light.

We read in Psalms that when the Lord returns the captivity of Zion "we will be as dreamers." The dream will require interpretation and that interpretation can only come from the returnees to Zion themselves. And in order for that dream to be interpreted correctly, the spirit of G-dly holiness and purpose must reside within the interpreters - in this case the dreamers themselves.

G-d provides the dream but the interpretation is up to us and our ability to fathom G-d's wishes is the matter. Every dream - even the dream of Zion restored and rebuilt - is subject to varying interpretations. We who live in current day Israel are well aware that there are not only varying but even conflicting interpretations of what the dream of Zion and Jerusalem truly means.

Holy spirit is required to make sense of the dream and to implement its promise. The Lord presents us with opportunities. What we do with those opportunities is the ultimate measure of our interpretation of the dream. Yosef not only interprets Pharaoh's dream but he lays out a course of action in order to actualize its promise and opportunity. The healthy intuition born of Jewish experience and tradition can help us arrive at the correct and most meaningful realization of our age old dream of Zion and Jerusalem, peace and holiness. © 2010 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 SHLOMO RESSLER

Weekly Dvar

Parshat Miketz tells of the sons of Yaakov traveling to Egypt to buy food and bring it back to their father. Yosef tries to foil their plans by accusing his

brothers of being spies because their father wouldn't have to send all 10 sons to get food, and the brothers respond that "we are all sons of one man" (42:11). How does that explain why they were all sent? The suspicion Yosef raises still exists!?

In Majesty of Man, Rabbi Leibowitz explains that when Hillel and Rabbi Akiva emphasized loving our fellow man as ourselves, they were describing fundamental principles of the Torah. As the Ramban explains, although the trip to Egypt was long and dangerous, Yaakov felt that developing the brothers' feeling of unity and brotherhood was worth the risk. This Ahavat Yisrael (love for a fellow Jew) is so critically important that Hillel and Rabbi Akiva stressed it, and Yaakov risked his own sons' safety for it. If we neglect each other's needs in the outside world, in the workplace and at home, we're placing ourselves in danger of losing the comm"unity" we strive to be a part of! © 2010 Rabbi S. Ressler & LeLamed, Inc.

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Mordechai Greenberg
Rosh Yeshiva, Kerem B'Yavne

“**A**nd it happened, at the end of two years” [Bereishit 41:1]. “For every suffering, there will be a benefit” [Mishlei 14:23]. Every unhappy event will in the end give rise to something good. That is how Yosef's salvation came about, from within the Egyptian prison. (See: Bereishit Rabba 89:2.)

“Happy is the man who puts his trust in G-d” [Tehillim 40:5] -- this refers to Yosef.” [Bereishit Rabba 89:3]. Yosef represents the firm belief that relief will develop from within the trouble itself, and that the level of salvation corresponds to the depth of the troubles.

Pious and learned people are sure that even the passages of rebuke in the Torah will eventually be seen as a blessing. “The stranger in your midst will rise higher and higher, and you will fall down lower and lower” [Devarim 28:43]. This is also a source of consolation for Yisrael—just like a point on the edge of a wheel. After it reaches the lowest point of the circle, the existing trend is reversed and the point begins to rise.

“Once she has fallen she will not continue to rise, the virgin of Yisrael” [Amos 5:2] -- In Eretz Yisrael this is read in the following way: She will begin to fall and stop falling. The virgin of Yisrael will rise.” [Berachot 4b].

One of the thirteen Traits of Mercy seems at first glance to be out of place. “He will not clean them away” [Shemot 34:7] implies that G-d will not relent on punishing the sins. But the ARI is quoted as commenting on this trait, “Do not look at the vessel but at what lies inside it” [Avot 4:26]. This comment needs to be elucidated further.

In his book “Gelilei Zahav” Rabbi Moskowitz of Transylvania explains the ARI's comment based on the following verse: “For I will cleanse and make an end of

all the other nations where I dispersed you but not of you... and I will not cleanse you” [Yirmiyahu 30:11]. Rashi explains that this refers to death and destruction. That is, G-d promises never to eliminate the nation of Yisrael from the world. This explains how this trait is indeed related to mercy—not that the sins will not be forgotten but rather that Yisrael will never be eradicated from the world.

The Hebrew text of this expression, “Venakeh... Yenakei” contains the four letters of the name of G-d (yud-heh-vav-heh) and “kuf-nun.” That is what the ARI means in his commentary—“Do not look at the vessel (hakankan) but at what lies inside it.” Look for the holy name that is hidden within the verse. Even at a time of trouble and exile, G-d remains with the people, as is written, “I will descend with you and I will also lift you up” [Bereishit 46:4].

And this is the inner meaning of the line quoted above from the Chanukah song, Maoz Tzur, “From what remained in the containers, a miracle was performed for the 'roses.’” The miracle of Chanukah was performed for Yisrael, who are nicknamed “roses,” by G-d, whose name remains after the “kankan” is stripped away from the phrase “He will not cleanse them.”

The TAZ repeats the well known question of the Beit Yosef as to why the holiday is celebrated for eight days when the actual miracle was only for seven days (since there was enough oil to burn for the first day). His response is that a miracle will not happen to something that is completely empty, as is seen from the miracle of the pitchers of oil performed by Elisha. Therefore the miracle already began on the first day of Chanukah. And the question is asked: That may be true for a miracle performed by a prophet, but can't the Almighty create something new even when nothing existed beforehand? The answer is that when a miracle is performed based on the explicit name of G-d (yud-heh-vav-heh) it can indeed consist of absolute creation. Therefore, when the Jews poured the oil into the Menorah on the first day the vial was refilled immediately, and the miracle indeed lasted for all eight days. Thus, the line of the song, referring to the remainder of the “Kankan,” emphasizes that G-d's explicit name was involved, and therefore, “Wise men decreed songs and praise for eight days”—and not for seven days.

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

Haftarah

This week's haftarah, 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. © 2010 Rabbi D. Siegel and Project Genesis, Inc.

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

It is commonly known that the reason that we call ourselves by the name Yehudim (Jews) is because most of us come literally from the Kingdom of Judah, or more specifically the tribe of Judah. Yet, there is a deeper reason why we have continued to use this term specifically when there are countless other names that our people and religion could go by.

This week's Torah portion points to this reason. In the narrative, Yosef (Joseph) takes Shimon (Simon) hostage and demands that the brothers bring Binyamin (Benjamin) to Egypt, as a precondition for both Shimon's release and his (Yosef's) providing of more food for Yaakov's (Jacob's) family.

Yaakov is understandably hesitant. Having already lost Yosef, his favorite, he fears losing Binyamin his only remaining son from his beloved wife Rachel. It is here that Yehudah (Judah) bravely rises to declare that he would act as an "orev," a surety for Binyamin. "If I don't return him," he says to his father Yaakov, "I will bear the sin forever." (Genesis 43:9)

Yehudah's pledge is unusual. Normally when a debtor guarantees collateral, the collateral comes from a party other than the debtor. Here, Yehudah takes his obligation to a higher level. Yehudah himself is both the one who makes the commitment as well as the guarantor. This indicates how seriously Yehudah takes the pledge or the "arevut" he is offering.

"Arevut," writes Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik. "means more than just another concern for one's fellow Jew. It means that I am a surety-each and every Jew is a surety for every other Jew. Just as a surety in money is held responsible as if he had been the debtor, so,

also, every Jew is a surety for all the spiritual obligations of every other Jew."

Of course this does not mean that Jews are not concerned for all of humankind. We are. Every human being is created in the image of G-d. In the words of our Rabbis, chaviv adam shenivrah be-tzelem Elokim. As such, we have very deep obligations to all people. But our obligation to our fellow Jew is unique. As we are more connected to our inner family with whom we share a common tradition, history and destiny, so too concerning our larger family - the people of Israel.

Hence, we are called Yehudim, as we are named after the person who so intensely exemplified ahavat Yisrael - Yehudah. We must realize the centrality of the principle of Jewish unity. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, the medieval poet and philosopher notes that all of Israel can be compared to a human body. When one limb hurts, the entire being is affected. So it is with Am Yisrael. All Jews are one body. He taught that when one Jew is in pain, Jews everywhere feel that pain.

Yet, he also taught us that when a Jew dances and experiences joy, we all dance and feel the joy. Let us hope that we can experience the unity of joy, an important element in our obligations as Yehudim, more and more in the days, months and years to come. © 2010 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 DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

“**A**nd after that, Your sons came to the sanctum of Your house, and emptied out Your sanctuary, and cleansed Your Temple. And they lit lamps in Your holy courtyards.” These words, part of the "Al HaNisim" prayer said on Chanukah, have founded the commentaries throughout the generations. After all, the menorah, the seven-lamp vessel at the center of the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days, belongs in the sanctuary itself, not outside in the "courtyards." Why do we use the expression "in Your holy courtyards" if that's not where the menorah belonged?

The "Baruch She'amar" (a commentary on davening written by the author of the Torah Temima) suggests that the menorah is not the subject of these words, "since those lamps (of the menorah) were inside the sanctuary and not in the courtyards. Rather, it is referring to lighting private lamps (i.e. not part of the Temple service) similar to the lamps that were lit in the courtyards at the time of the Simchas Bais Hasho'eivah, as is explained in the 5th chapter of Succah." (It is interesting that the son of the Aruch Hashulchan connects Chanukah to Succos, just as his father did; see <http://RabbiDMK.posterous.com/Chanukah-5770>). However, if the "lamps" referred to in Al HaNisim are

not those of the menorah, then not even a hint of the oil miracle is included in this prayer. (It is appropriate for the focus of this prayer of thanks to be the military victory which enabled traditional Jewish life to resume/continue, especially since the miracle of the oil was basically a divine "stamp of approval." For this miracle to be totally ignored, though, is a bit surprising.) Most commentators understand the lamps lit "in Your courtyards" to be the lamps of the menorah, leaving us wondering why it was "in Your courtyards" rather than inside the sanctuary.

Rav Moshe Shternbuch, shlita (Moadim U'Zemanim 6:80; thanks to @jcabshul on Twitter for bringing this to my attention) has an interesting, but off-the-beaten-path approach (as he admits) to answer this and other issues. He suggests that the Chashmonaim weren't able to fulfill the mitzvah of lighting the menorah anyway (for various reasons) but wanted to accomplish one of the side-effects of the menorah: having its light shine on the entire city Yerushalayim (see Tanchuma, Tetzaveh 3). They therefore lit the menorah where they could, in the courtyard, hoping it would show the rest of the nation (via the miraculous light) how much G-d still loves them. This fits well with the connection the Avudraham makes with the expression "My holy courtyards" used in a prophecy to Yishayahu (62:9), which refers to Yerushalayim (see Radak). Nevertheless, as far as our issue is concerned, we wouldn't need to say that the menorah wasn't lit inside the sanctuary. If, as the Tanchuma indicates, the menorah lit in the sanctuary provided light for all of Yerushalayim, the wording in Al HaNisim could be referring to just that; after cleaning out the sanctuary, they lit the menorah there, and it provided light for "Your holy courtyards," i.e. for all of Yerushalayim.

The Chasam Sofer has at least three approaches to this issue (my thanks to chavairim in shul and on Twitter for helping me locate them). One is far from peshat (equating the light of the menorah with the light of the Torah, and the "holy courtyards" with the protective decrees the Chashmonaim made to uphold the Torah), another is halachically controversial, and the third is only suggested reluctantly.

In his Derashos (Volume I, pg. 67) the Chasam Sofer suggests (similar to Rav Shternbuch, l'havdil bein chayim l'chayim) that the sanctuary was still unfit for lighting the menorah, but lighting it outside the sanctuary is allowed. Even though it is preferable to light the menorah inside, since that wasn't possible, they lit it in the courtyard instead, which (as it turned out) enabled the miracle of the oil to be seen by all, not just by the Kohanim who entered the sanctuary. That the menorah can be lit outside the sanctuary, even by a non-Kohain, is codified by the Rambam (Hilchos Biyas Hamikdash 9:7). That it can remain there rather than having to be brought into the sanctuary after being lit is not so simple, and many say that it must be brought inside to fulfill the mitzvah. The Aleh Yonah (quoted in

Otzros Meforshai HaTefila) suggests that the sanctuary was already cleaned out, but they lit it outside, in the courtyard in order to publicize it. However, if the menorah was brought in after it was lit, the miracle of the oil burning for eight days would not have been seen by anyone who couldn't (or didn't) enter the sanctuary (nor would they have known it would occur when they first lit the menorah); one has to wonder why they wanted to light it publicly in the first place. Additionally, the wording in Al HaNisim is "courtyards" (plural); if the one menorah was lit outside (whether it was brought in or not), it would have been in only one courtyard.

In the fourth edition of Toras Moshe, the first part of another approach is quoted; the second part (which addresses our issue) is included in the 5-volume Toras Moshe that has all of the editions of Toras Moshe (and separates the pieces written by his grandson, Rabbi Shimon Sofer). This second part starts with the words "and if I wasn't afraid to say it, I would say [the following]." Here, the Chasam Sofer suggests that they lit the menorah in the (cleansed) sanctuary, but when the Chashmonaim saw that the oil miraculously burned longer than it should have, they stuck a wood-covered iron rod into the ground in the courtyard and lit a lamp on top of it, to publicize the miracle that was going on inside the sanctuary. Each day, as the miracle continued, they stuck another rod in the ground and lit it. (These wood covered steel rods are mentioned in Pesikta Rabasi 2:1 and in Megilas Taanis, with the former saying there were eight rods and the latter saying there were seven.) It is these rods, which were set up in the courtyard, that are referred to in Al HaNisim. (The issue of "courtyards" rather than "courtyard" applies to this approach as well.)

One of the things the Greek government did to undermine our religious life was to "enter the sanctuary and break through [its structure]" (Rambam, Hilchos Chanukah 3:1). This may have been a symbolic way of destroying Jewish life, but if it is mentioned as one of the things done by the Greeks, and specified as being the sanctuary that was "punctured" rather than the Temple building (in general), it would seem that there was more than just symbolism to this act. The Mishnah in Midos (2:3) mentions that they broke through the "Serug," the fence on the Temple Mount that marked where non-Jews couldn't go. The Vilna Gaon explains that the Greeks broke through this fence specifically to show that these boundaries were no longer valid, and Rav Yitzchok Sorotzkin, shlita (Gevuras Yitzchok, Chanukah 21) suggests that the Greeks also had a reason to specifically break through the sanctuary's structure.

The Talmud (Zevachim 40a) says that if part of the ceiling of the sanctuary was missing, blood usually sprinkled in the sanctuary can't be, as without a complete ceiling it is no longer a "tent," and no longer qualifies as the Ohel Moed (Tent of Meeting). Most of the Temple service can still be performed, as a

"building" isn't needed if done on the spot where the Temple belongs. This sprinkling, however, which the Torah (e.g. Vayikra 4:7) specifies as having to be done "in the Ohel Moed," can't be done if it's not a structure.

Rav Sorotzkin points out that when the Torah discusses the lighting of the menorah (Shemos 27:21 and Vayikra 24:3), it specifies that it is "in the Ohel Moed," and wonders whether this means that, like the sprinkling of the blood, the sanctuary has to be a "tent" (i.e. without holes in the ceiling) in order to fulfill the mitzvah of lighting the menorah. If it does (he continues), this would explain why the Greeks made holes in the ceiling of the sanctuary. Just as they purposely contaminated all of the oil (which might be why the Kohain Gadol sealed some jars, to verify that it had not been tampered with) in order to prevent the Jews from lighting the menorah (see Bach towards the end of O"C 670), they tried to make the sanctuary unfit for the menorah as well. This, Rav Sorotzkin explains, could be why the expression "in Your holy courtyards" is used, as due to the holes in the ceiling (which they didn't have a chance to repair yet), the sanctuary didn't really qualify as the "sanctuary," but was halachically considered a courtyard.

Aside from the issue of the word "courtyards" (plural), whichever way you look at it, the expression in Al HaNisim is problematic. If the menorah needed to be lit inside the Ohel Moed, the damaged ceiling prevented the mitzvah from being fulfilled. And if it didn't need to be inside the Ohel Moed, why mention that the sanctuary had the status of a courtyard? Even if we can't call it the "heichal" (a term used shortly before the word "courtyards" is used), why mention where it was lit at all? Saying that they lit the menorah would avoid the issue, and there would be no reason to assume that it was lit anywhere but where it was always lit. Another issue this raises is why there is no halachic record regarding whether or not the menorah needs to be in a "tent" just as the sprinkling does.

Perhaps the Chashmonaim themselves were unsure whether or not the sanctuary has to be a "tent" in order to fulfill the mitzvah of lighting the menorah, and were therefore faced with a dilemma. If it doesn't need to be a "tent," they should light the menorah in the sanctuary despite the gaping holes in the ceiling. On the other hand, if it needs to be a tent, lighting it in the damaged sanctuary would set an improper precedent. In order to avoid this, they lit several menorahs (bear in mind that there were 11 menorahs in the first Temple, see Melachim I 7:48), both inside the damaged sanctuary and in the Temple courtyards (there were several courtyards, see Yechezkel 8:16 and Nechemya 13:7). This way, no precedent would be set, as the menorah in the "sanctuary" was only one of several, with those lit in the courtyards indicating that this was not the normal lighting process. (Obviously, the uncontaminated oil was used in the sanctuary, as that lighting might fulfill the mitzvah.) It is also conceivable

that once there were lamps lit in the courtyards, reminiscent of the fires lit on Succos during the Simchas Bais HaSho'eiva, spontaneous Succos-style celebrations broke out. G-d may have even purposely left this issue unresolved (and/or undecided) so that lamps would be lit in the courtyards, thereby publicizing what was going on inside the sanctuary and bringing about the Succos-like celebrations which they were unable to have while the Greeks controlled the Temple. Therefore, when the Al HaNisim prayer was established, wording that reflected the full breadth of the lighting (inside the sanctuary and outside in the courtyards) was used. © 2010 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI SHLOMO KATZ

Hama'ayan

“Yosef saw his brothers and he recognized them, but he acted like a stranger toward them.” (42:7)

Rashi z"l writes that the brothers did not recognize Yosef because he had left home without a beard, and now he had a beard. However, writes R' Yitzchak Isaac Sher z"l (1875-1952; rosh yeshiva of the Slobodka Yeshiva in Lithuania and Bnei Brak, Israel), this is difficult to understand; after all, many people recognize individuals whom they last saw without a beard and now see with a beard! Moreover, our Sages say that Yosef resembled Yaakov, who presumably did have a beard. Why, then, did the brothers not recognize that the Egyptian official standing before them looked like their father? On top of this, there were many other signs that they missed. For example, the midrash relates that the Egyptian official (Yosef) demonstrated such superhuman strength that his brother Shimon even commented that he shared this trait with the family of Yaakov. Also, the Egyptian correctly "divined" the birth order of the brothers who stood before him and the fact that they had different mothers. Even so, they did not suspect that the Egyptian was their brother! How can this be?

R' Sher answers that this teaches us how far a person's own thoughts can lead him to erroneous conclusions. The midrash relates that Yosef's brothers did not immediately go to purchase food when they arrived in Egypt. First, they visited the "red-light districts" searching for their brother Yosef. They reasoned that because he was so handsome, that was surely where he was to be found. Having formed this picture of a lowly, immoral Yosef, it was thereafter impossible for the brothers to imagine a regal, noble Yosef.

This, concludes R' Sher, should be a warning to us of the power of a heretical or immoral thought to be absorbed into our subconscious from our surroundings and to corrupt our system of beliefs. (Lekket Sichot Mussar Vol.I p.127)

R' Don Yitzchak Abarbanel z"l (1437-1508; author of a significant commentary on Tanach and of

numerous other works; advisor to the monarchs of Portugal, Spain and several Italian states) writes that Yosef was very much afraid of being recognized. This is why Yosef accused his brothers of spying as soon as they appeared before him. His intention was to distract them and worry them so that they would not have the presence of mind to observe him closely. (Beur Al Ha'Torah) © 2010 Rabbi S. Katz & Project Genesis, Inc.

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“**T**he Lord shall broaden and beautify Japheth, and he [or perhaps 'He'] shall dwell in the tents of Shem.” (Genesis 9:27)

The Hanukka struggle was between Judaism and Hellenism, Jerusalem vs. Athens, a band of Maccabee traditionalists who waged war to prevent Jerusalem from becoming a Greek city-state (polis), hosting idolatrous Olympic games and Dionysian orgies.

But the products of Hellenism were much more profound than idols and orgies. Javan (Ion, Greece), son of Japheth and grandson of Noah, gave the world the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the literature of Sophocles and Euripides, the mathematics of Euclid and Pythagoras, the sculpture of Praxiteles, and the epic poetry of Homer. If indeed Western civilization is the result of Greco-Rome and Judeo-Christianity, and if our Bible is the fount of ethical wisdom and humane morality, then it was Greece which pioneered philosophic discourse, mathematics as the language of science, and the aesthetics of art, music and drama.

To be sure, there is a fundamental tension between the worldviews of Judaism and Hellenism. Whereas for us the G-d of love, compassion and truth stands at the center of the universe, with the human being created in the Divine image striving for morality and sanctity, in Athens the human being, was embodiment of perfection; "the measure of all things" (Protagoras). The gods were created in his image.

On Hanukka, these two ideologies clashed and we emerged triumphant, but is there room for a synthesis? Can the soul of Jerusalem be garbed in the cloak of Athens much like Mother Rebekah covered the voice of Jacob in the trappings of Esau? It depends on how we read the verse cited in the introduction to this article. One approach is, "The Lord shall broaden and beautify Japheth, and he [Japheth, the glories of Greek culture] shall dwell in the tents of Shem," in sacred synthesis. Another approach dictates that we must guard against the anthropocentric and hedonistic Japheth, who will try to shatter the fundamentally frail boundaries and ramparts of Shem: "The Lord shall broaden and beautify Japheth, but He, G-d, can only dwell in the tents of Shem" (Rashi, ad loc Gen. 9:27)!

I believe the answer is found in a fascinating incident recorded in the Talmud (Bava Kama 82b). Two

brothers, descendants of the Hasmonean dynasty, were fighting one another not long after the Maccabean victory. One brother and his troops were based within Jerusalem, while the other brother supported by the Roman legions was camped outside the city walls. Despite their conflict, every day, one brother sent coins in a basket over the wall and the other brother purchased animals which he purchased and hoisted over the wall by the other, so that the daily sacrifices of the Temple would not be interrupted. Using what the Talmud calls the language of "Greek wisdom," an elderly man suggested that as long as the sacrificial rite continued, the brother on the outside would never conquer Jerusalem. The next day, when the coins for the purchase of sacrifices arrived, instead of sending back bullocks for the sacrifices, they sent a pig, and when the pig's hoofs touched the city's ramparts, Jerusalem was convulsed by an earthquake. The story concludes: "The sages then decreed, 'Cursed be the individual who raises pigs, and cursed be the father who teaches his son Greek wisdom.'"

After the Hanukka experience and its aftershocks, one would have thought that Greek wisdom - Greek philosophy, Greek literature and Greek art - would have been banned. But this was not the case. The Talmud (Bava Kama 83a) goes on to praise the Greek language, and deems "Greek wisdom" a skill necessary for international political discourse. In fact, a parallel account at the end of Tractate Sota defines "Greek wisdom" as a special language of nuance and riddle used by politicians for the purpose of espionage - which is how Maimonides understood the Talmudic decree. He added that there was no contemporary application of the ban since that particular language had disappeared. Even later responsa (see for example Rivash, Rav Yitzhak bar Sheshet, Responsum 45) agree with Maimonides' interpretation of "Greek wisdom" in the context of the ban. To be sure, he argues that philosophical tracts committed to the extirpation of Jewish theological principles are to be avoided, and even suggests that Maimonides and Gersonides were led astray by Greek philosophy; nevertheless, normative Judaism never codified a prohibition of studying Greek wisdom.

Apparently despite the dangers, the Jewish ideal remains the incorporation of the "beauty of Japheth within the tents of Shem." © 2010 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

