



BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON MIKETZ - CHANUAKA II - 5764

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: December 24, 2003 To: weekly1@torahweb.org Subject: Rabbi Benjamin Yudin - You Ask for it - You Get it! to subscribe, email weekly@torahweb.org to unsubscribe or for anything else, email: torahweb@torahweb.org the HTML version of this dvar Torah can be found at: <http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN
YOU ASK FOR IT - YOU GET IT!

The Talmud (Makkos 10a) teaches that man is assisted and enabled from on High to follow the path that he chooses. This phenomenon is a recurring theme in the story of Chanukah.

Unlike Purim, where the threat against us was a physical one, the primary threat at the time of Chanukah was against the spiritual component of our people. Those willing to accede and accept Greek values were unaffected. The Bach explains (Orach Chaim 670), that since the Jews were lax in relating to the Beis Hamikdash and the avodah (service) therein, they almost lost it. It was only when they repented and demonstrated a seriousness of purpose and dedication to the mikdash, showing the willingness to give their lives for it, did Hashem respond in kind and return the mikdash to them for another 200 years.

Moreover, adds the Pnei Yehoshua (Shabbos 21b), the miracle in the temple occurred through the menorah which our Rabbis teach (Shabbos 22b) is proof and testimony to the Jewish nation that the shechinah - Hashem's divine presence - dwells in their midst. In conjunction with the lighting of the menorah we are taught (ibid) that the kohain had to light but six of the seven lamps daily, because the ner ma'aravi, the middle light, miraculously burnt continuously. However, after the passing of Shimon Hatzadik this light often went out. It was just at the time of Chanukah that the miracle was restored to the menorah, demonstrating the return of His love for the Jewish people. Hashem responded favorably to the initiative of His people.

Similarly, in conjunction with the very miracle of the oil, we are familiar with the teaching that "tuma hutra b'tsibur"; if the majority of the Jewish

nation are in a state of tumah (impurity), they may use impure oil. The menorah could have been kindled without pure olive oil, and yet the chashmonaim exhibited a great desire and effort to only use the best quality oil. Once again, Hashem responded in kind and enabled them to perform the mitzvah in the best way possible.

It is fascinating to note what specifically the Greeks opposed and sought to uproot. We are taught in Megilas Antiochus that they targeted Shabbos, milah, and Rosh Chodesh. Shabbos and milah are understandable targets, as they are each an os - a sign of the covenant between Hashem and His people. But what is so special about Rosh Chodesh?

The medrash Shemos Rabbah explains that the reason Rosh Chodesh was the first mitzvah given to the Jewish Nation as a people is, "Yisroel Kedoshim M'kadshim", Israel the holy people has the capacity, and indeed the charge, to sanctify. The mitzvah of the Jewish calendar and Rosh Chodesh represents our ability to sanctify time. This ability is articulated in the phrase "mekadaish yisroel v'hazmanim", which the Talmud in Berachos understands as saying that Hashem sanctifies Israel, who in turn sanctifies time. Milah (circumcision) is our sanctifying the body, and Shabbos as well is our transcending time.

The Greeks were offering the world a new cultured world order and weltanschauung. They could accept the many understandable laws of Torah that could enhance society. However, they saw man and his gratification, pleasure, and enjoyment as the ultimate end. It is for this reason that they so strongly fought the opposing ideology of kedusha - the call of the Jew to sanctify. They could accept the quantitative difference between B'nai Noach with their seven mitzvos and B'nai Yisroel with its six hundred and thirteen. However, they could not accept the qualitative difference that our mitzvos are not merely rituals to be observed, but "asher kidshanu b'mitzvosov" - the commandments sanctify.

It is thus understandable why they did not destroy the temple, but as we recite in Ma'oz Tzur - "ufortzo chomos migdalai" - "they breached the walls of My citadel." This refers, as we are taught in the mishna (Middos 2:3) to a wooden partition known as the soreg which was ten tefachim (approximately thirty eight inches) high. The Greeks made thirteen breaches in the soreg. The Gra explains that this partition marked the location beyond which a non-Jew could not go. The Greeks could not accept this division and separation. To them, we are all the same, and there is to be no havdala (separation) "bain Yisroel l'amim" (between Israel and the rest of society).

Again, Hashem responded in kind. As we stood our ground in defense of kedushas Yisroel (the sanctity of Israel) we were rewarded with a mitzvah which enables us to create more kedusha. The lighting of ner Chanukah is in essence bringing more holiness into this world. A moment before the kindling you have a cup of oil or a candle. Now once lit as a designated Chanukah light, "hanairos ha-la-lu kodesh haim" - these lights are holy, and we are restricted in using them in any manner. We fought for kedusha and He rewarded us with a mitzvah that generates more kedusha annually. May we always be privileged to enable Him to reward us with more kedusha.

From: Rabbi Yissocher Frand [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: December 24, 2003 11:10 PM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Miketz

"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Miketz

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 397, Lighting Neiros in Shul; Other Chanukah Issues

Yosef Was Rushed From The Pit

When Pharaoh had his famous dream, he asked for interpretations from all his advisors. The Sar HaMashkim [chamberlain of the cup-bearers]

remembered Yosef and advised Pharaoh that Yosef had a good track record for interpreting dreams. The pasuk [verse] records that when Pharaoh sent for Yosef, "they rushed him from the pit" [Bereshis 41:14]. Nowadays, no one is taken out of prison quickly. There is a tremendous bureaucracy. There is always a lot of paperwork. In the case of Yosef, there apparently was a "paperwork reduction act". They rushed him through.

The Chofetz Chaim inquires as to what the Torah is teaching by telling us this detail, that they rushed. The Chofetz Chaim says that we are being taught an important lesson here. The lesson is that the salvation of G-d comes in the blink of an eye. Sometimes a person finds himself in a situation in which he cannot imagine how the situation is going to be rectified, but a moment later the light appears at the end of the tunnel.

Yosef was in prison. He had no friends or connections in the country. Two years earlier he had seen a potential way of getting out, but those hopes were dashed when nothing became of his request to the Sar HaMashkim to help him out. He must have been thinking to himself, "I am stuck in prison. Nothing is happening and nothing is going to happen."

Suddenly, Yosef was speedily rushed out of the pit. G-d had decreed that Yosef must remain in jail for two years, but once those two years were over, he had to be out in the blink of an eye. That is the way G-d works. Salvation comes in a flash.

All too often, people have terrible problems. They cannot imagine how these terrible problems will ever be resolved. They need to realize that the salvation of G-d comes in the blink of an eye.

There are so many times in life when salvation of G-d comes in the blink of an eye. We can bang our heads against the wall and wail "What's going to be! What's going to be!" But things suddenly turn around. That is why the Torah emphasizes "they RUSHED him out of the pit". Things can turn around on a dime.

What Gave The Brothers Cause To Celebrate?

Parsha Miketz contains the story of the full reunification of all the sons of Yaakov. Yosef sat the brothers according to their chronological age. The brothers were astonished. Yosef gave them all presents and gave Binyamin (his only full brother) a present that was five times as great as what he gave to the others. The narration concludes with the words "They drank and they became intoxicated with him" [Bereshis 43:33-34]. Rashi comments that from the day that the brothers sold Yosef, neither he nor they drank wine. This was the first time that any of the brothers allowed themselves to drink wine since that tragic day.

However, the question needs to be asked, what kind of holiday was this for the brothers? They did not know that they were reunited with Yosef. That did not happen until Parshas VaYigash. Perhaps, we can understand why Yosef would drink wine. He knew that it was the first time that the family was together in so many years. But why were the brothers drinking wine? From their perspective, it was still a situation of "Yosef is not here" [Bereshis 42:36].

The answer is that it was like a Yom Tov (holiday) for them because they saw that they had grown as human beings. They had just witnessed their brother Binyamin being given preferential treatment. He was given a present five fold as great as their own. This was exactly like the situation that triggered their resentment -- when Yaakov showed favoritism to Yosef. It could have been a situation of "here we go again."

Each family has its own set of dynamics. There are certain things that set off squabbles and harsh sibling interaction in every family. However, this occasion was different. Despite the history of the dynamics, the brothers were not resentful when Binyamin received five times as much. They were sincerely happy for him. That was cause for celebration.

The successful conquering of one's baser inclinations is cause for celebration. The discovery that "I can change for the better and not always react in the same inappropriate manner I have always reacted to

these circumstances" is a reason to party. The brothers were no longer jealous of one another. This was a Yom Tov for them. It was a justification to break out the champagne, despite the fact that they had not taken a drink of wine for decades!

Thanksgiving For The Troubles

We will conclude with an idea that finds a common thread in both the Chanukah story and in Parshas Miketz.

The Al HaNisim prayer recited on Chanukah states that these days were established for praise and thanksgiving. The Sefas Emes notes that Hallel [praise] was established in commemoration of the victory that Hashem provided for us. Hoda-ah [thanksgiving] was instituted for the gratitude we must have even for the experience of living through all the traumatic events that led up to the victory.

While this is a difficult level to achieve, a Jew should realize that when he does have troubles and does experience suffering -- these too might someday prove to be something to be thankful for. Eventually things will hopefully improve and he will emerge from those troubles. At that time he must give thanks to G-d not only for the cessation of the troubles, but even for the original troubles themselves. Such is the nature of suffering. Suffering itself is helpful for a person.

The experience was difficult. The Jews lived through catastrophic times. They were spiritually devastated; all the Temple oil was defiled. But this experience was also ultimately part of the story of deliverance and something for which we need to be grateful.

While a person is in the midst of the troubles, it may not be realistic to appreciate this. However, when the salvation from G-d eventually arrives, a person must look back and be able to say "Now I understand everything." As human beings, we are bound by time. We cannot always see and understand why things are happening. With the passage of time however, things become clearer.

Rabbi Zev Leff offers a beautiful insight. In Parshas Miketz, Yosef orders the brothers to bring Binyamin. Yaakov does not want to let him go. Eventually they are able to persuade Yaakov to allow Binyamin to accompany them. They bring him before Yosef. There are trumped up charges. Yehudah offers to have all the brothers become slaves to the Egyptian viceroy. Yosef insists, however, that only Binyamin will be his prisoner and the rest of the family may "return in peace to their father". This is the last thing that the brothers want to see happen.

That is how Parshas Miketz ends. What is the resolution? The resolution comes next week in Parshas VaYigash.

If we were dividing up the parshiyos, we would probably not end the parsha in the middle of a story. What is this -- a series? "To find out what happened to Binayamin..." Miketz leaves us sitting on the edge of our seats, waiting in anticipation to know the end of the story. Why doesn't the Torah tell us what happens?

The answer is that the Torah is teaching us a very important lesson: There are sometimes in life we need to 'wait until next week'. Sometimes we need to wait until next week and sometimes we need to wait until next year and sometimes we need to wait until the next life. Things do not always become abundantly clear, certainly not instantaneously. That is what this lesson is about. That is why the climax of the story of Yosef and his brothers does not end in Parshas Miketz as it logically should.

The Torah is sending us a message regarding how to deal with these types of troubles. The answer is that sometimes we have to wait to see how things will resolve themselves.

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From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ <jschwrtz@ymail.yu.edu>

Date: Fri Dec 20, 2002 Subject: Internet Chaburah -- Parshat VaYeichi [from last year]

NITTEL NACHT: SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES??

Torah study is our life. With it we study Yomam V'Laila. Once a year, there is a Minhag to be Mivatel Torah for non-Halachic reasons. That night is the night of Nacht. But what is the source for such a practice? And why is it not wide-spread?

The source for a limitation begins with the Gemara in Avoda Zara (8b) which comments on the Mishna's statements that during the three days surrounding the holiday one is not permitted to engage in business with a gentile. The Gemara then notes the Pagan holidays and includes Starana and Kolandarum which, the Gemara associates with the eight days after, and before Tekufat Tevet. The Rambam (Pirush hamishna0 associates these days with the early Christians who, it seems, might have stolen the concept of these holidays and their timing and created a holiday season surrounding Christianity so that the beginning of the secular new year would be associated with Jesus and his birth, adding importance to his existence (See beis yosef to Orach Chaim 117 in the name of Rav Dovid Avudraham). According to this position, the entire holiday season, from Christmas eve to New Years, should be a time not to engage in business with Christians.

Yet, the Rashbam (cited in Talmidei Rabbeinu Yonah A.Z. 2a) notes that the custom was only to limit business on Christmas and Christmas Eve as these were the only days that had any significance on the calendar. Yet, this speaks to engaging in business. Where did the prohibited Torah Study come from, and why?

The earliest source for a prohibited night of Torah study appears in the name of Rav Zalman Zvi Ophauzen (Otzar HaVikuchim, p. 174) who was chastised by a Christian priest during a debate about the "well known" Jewish practice of not studying Torah on Chistmas eve. It would seem that if the practice was well-known, it must have started at least 100 years earlier. Indeed, the Chavos Yair (Mekor Chaim, Orach Chaim, 155) notes a practice not to study Torah on the night of "Holada". Professor Daniel Sperber (Minhagei Yisroel IV: p. 329) cites Christian sources of the times that also seem to suggest that the Christian authorities incited the people to believe that the Jews did not learn on Christmas eve, choosing to blaspheme their G-d on that night. From the legends of the Maharsha, it seems that he too, participated in Nittel Nacht and was almost "caught" by the authorities when his bookcase collapsed and he "accidentally" picked up a Sefer as the authorities burst in. when they saw that he was "learning" they left him alone. Clearly, the practice of not learning was prominent in Europe in the last 300 years.

But why the practice?

In Minhagei Yeshurun (cited in Taamei Haminhagim p. 500) it is suggested that the Jewish Battei Medrash were out in the fields. If Jews were to be going to learn on those nights, they would be subjugated to potential attack by the gentiles coming home from midnight mass. To prevent the chaos, Jews were told to stay home. Otzar Minhagei Chassidim (119) puts the same idea in a different light, suggesting that it was the Christians who shut the lights in the homes and Shuls of the Jews not allowing them to study.

The Chasam Sofer (Shut Chasam Sofer, VII:31) quoted his Rebbe, Rav Nosson Adler who felt that it was forbidden to rejoice during the holiday. Therefore, Torah study, which gladdens the heart, cannot be studied. Paradoxically, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Y.D. III:85) applies the same logic in explaining why schools must remain open during this season. The Chasam sofer himself argues with his Rebbe and

suggests that the stopping of learning prevents allowing Satan to have power. This idea is advanced in the works of Chassidic masters (Bnei Yisosschar's Regel Yeshara Erech Yeschu HaNotzree) where the idea of Torah study on this night is associated with Sakanna.

Today, the Nittel Nacht custom seems to be limited to the Chassidic world. Sefardim, who came from Islamic countries do not have the Nittel Nacht custom (Shut Yabia Omer VII:22). Similarly, the Chazon Ish reportedly did not hold of the custom (Orchos Rabbeinu, p. 193) and as such, most of the Lithuanian Yeshivot still study on Christmas Eve.

[Note from crshulman@aol.com. See also, tape of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion: Tape # 33, Nitel Nacht, Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. (410) 358-0416 tapes@yadyechiel.org www.yadyechiel.org/

See also, <http://members.aol.com/TorahShiurim/leiman.htm> Dr. S. Leiman's Tape 3518 Nittel Night - The 9th day of Tevet - The Jewish Pope 02/13/90]



From: RAV KOOK List [RavKookList@hotmail.com] Dec 24, 2003

Subject: Rav Kook Dvar Torah List -

Miketz: Joseph and Judah (II)

As explained previously, the source of the strife among Jacob's sons was their conflicting viewpoints regarding the sanctity of the Jewish people. Judah felt that we must act according to the current reality. Given the present situation, the Jewish people need to maintain a separate existence to safeguard their unique heritage. Joseph, on the other hand, believed that we should concentrate on the final goal. We need to take into account the hidden potential of the future era, when "nations will walk to your light". Even now, we are responsible for the spiritual elevation of all peoples.

So, which was right - Judah's nationalism or Joseph's universalism?

The dispute of Judah and Joseph, the rift between the present reality and the future potential, is rooted in the very foundations of the universe. On the second day of creation, G-d formed the "rakia", separating the water below from the water above. [Gen. 1:7; see Chagiga 15a] This separation signifies a rupture between the present and the future. The inability to reveal the hidden potential in the present is a fundamental defect of our world. Unlike the other days of creation, the Torah does not describe the second day, when this breach occurred, as being good. According to the Midrash [Sota 36b], the angel Gabriel taught Joseph seventy languages, and added to his name the letter "hey" from G-d's name, as it is written, "a testimony for Yehosef". [Psalms 81:6] What is the significance of this name change?

The Sages wrote that G-d created this world with the letter "hey", and the World to Come with the letter "yud". [Breishit Rabba 12:9] For Joseph, each nation is measured according to its future spiritual potential, in the manner in which it will fit in the final plan of "kiddush Hashem", sanctification of G-d and revelation of His rule in the world. The particular role of each nation relates to its unique language. Yet, without the letter "hey", Joseph could not properly grasp the language of each nation, i.e., their portion in the future world. The letter "hey", used

to form this world, allowed Joseph to understand the world as it exists now, and thus comprehend the languages of all peoples.

Joseph saw the sanctification of G-d in the world according to its hidden potential, with the help of a single letter. He used the "hey", a letter open from the bottom, to connect to the present world. Judah, on the other hand, viewed the sanctification of G-d in the world as it is revealed now. "Joseph who sanctified G-d's name in private, merited one letter of G-d's name; Judah who sanctified G-d's name in public, merited that his entire name was called after G-d's name." [Sota 36b]

According to the Zohar, Benjamin complemented his brother Joseph: "Rachel gave birth to two tzaddikim, Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was a 'tzaddik for above', and Benjamin his brother was a 'tzaddik for below'." [Vayetze 153b] What are these two types of righteousness? The "tzaddik for above" continues the divine influence ("shefa") from above, while the "tzaddik for below" passes it on below. The role of Benjamin was to imbue our lowly world with holiness. His whole life, Benjamin was concerned that the Temple should be built in his inheritance. Why was that so vital to Benjamin? The Temple is "a house of prayer for all peoples", allowing all to share in its holiness. "Had the nations known how important the Temple was for them, they would have surrounded it with forts in order to guard over it." [Tanhuma Bamidbar 3]

When the brothers appeared before Joseph in Egypt without Benjamin, Joseph accused them of being spies. They had come without Benjamin, without the desire to influence and elevate the nations through the holy Temple. They were separated from the rest of the world, like the spies who did not want the holiness of the Land of Israel to spread to the rest of the world.

The dialectic between Judah and Joseph finds expression in two institutions, the monarchy and the Temple. The monarchy, protecting the national sanctity of the Jewish people, was established in Judah's inheritance, in Hebron and Jerusalem. The Temple, elevating all mankind, was built on Benjamin's land. Yet, the Temple was partially located on a strip of land that extends from Judah's portion to Benjamin's portion. This strip represents the synthesis of Judah and Joseph, the integration of the national and universal outlooks.

"Miketz", the name of the Torah reading, means "at the end". The Midrash Tanhuma explains that G-d established an end for all things. Just as Joseph's imprisonment finished, so too this conflict will be resolved after a constructive period of development and change. The fundamental dissonance in the world will be corrected, and the rift between the present and the potential, between the lower and higher waters of creation, will be healed.

[Shemu'ot Hari'iyah 10, Miketz 5690 (1929)]

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From: DR. WILLIAM KOLBRENER [kolbrew@ashur.cc.biu.ac.il]

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by Dr. William Kolbrener

THE TRAGEDY OF TRANSLATION:

TORAH IN THE GREEK LIBRARY

Max Weber, the German sociologist, in 1918, famously described "scholarship" as a "vocation"—that is, literally (he was consciously appropriating the theological term) a "calling." What, we might ask (somewhat skirting the larger question of the possibility of Torah u'Maddah, especially in our generation) is what is the difference between the "vocation" of the scholar and that of a talmud chacham? Which is to say, when we interrogate the differences between the yeshiva and the university, we are not only asking a question about the nature of

the curriculum, but by necessity, we would be asking about the nature of the different forms of engagement—intellectual, psychological, and spiritual—which they demand. In a sense, then, the question becomes (and it one of no little import, for ourselves, not to mention for our children): what is the difference between thinking like a Greek and thinking like a Jew? The English critic, Matthew, Arnold certainly got it right when he made his famous distinction between "Hebraism and Hellenism"—identifying the antithetical powers which inform the culture of the West; though of course he failed utterly to provide anything like an accurate definition of the former. In our own tradition, l'havdil, there has been no one who has provided more profound meditations upon the nature of the relation between Yavan and Yisroel than R. Yitzchak Hutner zt'l. The following discussion relies upon, and in some cases freely adapts, the seventh of the Hanuka meimarim in Pachad Yitzhak—to explore the difference not only between the Torah and chachmas ha'olam, but primarily between the Greek and the Jew. [I am indebted to R. Chaim Yitzchak Kaplan for my understanding of the meimar; however, any failure to adequately represent the intentions of Rav Hutner are mine alone.]

As the Bach notes (OC 670), during all of the exiles except the Greek, the oppressing powers of empire sought to destroy the very lives of the Jews (Purim, for the Bach, is the primary example and point of contrast to Hanuka, where Haman sought actually to kill all of the Jews). This, however, was not the case during the time of the conquest and domination of the Greeks. Indeed, the other exiles entailed the complete destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the physical exile of the Jews from Eretz Yisrael. During the period of galus Yavan, the Jews were, in fact, living in Jerusalem. Interestingly, Yavan was content to simply defile the Temple: although the inside was converted into a gymnasium (a means for celebrating the Greek enlightenment ideal of the triumph of the human), the walls of the Temple themselves stood and the Jewish presence in Jerusalem remained.

So what then were the powers of the Greeks? Why were they, unlike Edom, for example, able to accommodate the continued presence of the Temple and the Jews themselves? Maharal explains, in his perush of Daniel, that the special attribute of the Greek nation is its wisdom, and it is precisely on these terms that it comes to try to undermine—really destroy internally—Am Yisrael (Ner Mitzvah 1). Indeed, because of the special Greek claim to wisdom (who can deny the philosophical profundities of Plato? the epic majesty of Homer? the tragic insights of Sophocles?), the Greeks sought to undermine the privileged status of Torah. Which is to say, the Greeks were happy to tolerate the Jews in so far that they would abandon their particular practices, and acknowledge that the Torah itself had no special status, that it could be assimilated to the Greek ideal of knowledge as universal. As long as the Jews would turn their holiday into one which celebrated bland and universal notions of religious freedom and enlightenment; as long as they wouldn't insist upon their particularity; then, under the dispensation of the Greeks, they would be tolerated. The universalist and "tolerant" ethic of the Greeks lead them not to pour out the oil from the Temple, but to simply defile it.

As Maharal explains the practice, the Greeks did not pour out the oil, but rendered it unusable, because their primary desire was not to destroy Am Yisrael, but rather, they intended to blur the distinction between Greek and Jewish cultures—to tolerate a watered-down version of Judaism in the ancient Greek version of multi-culturalism. Indeed, this minor detail of the defiling of the oil emerges as symptomatic of the more general Greek strategies against Jewish practice and learning. For when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they not only defiled all the oils, but they blemished the thoughts and feelings (the internal worlds) of the majority of Am Yisrael. As Rav Hutner emphasizes, it is only in galus Yavan where we have a concept of misyavnim: that is Hellenists (there was no corresponding phenomenon, for example of misbavlim, that is

“Bavelists”). The galus of Yavan is the internal exile of assimilation—the primary end of which was the breaking down of the claims to Jewish difference.

As Pachad Yitzchak elaborates, the Greeks attempted to achieve this end through two primary means: 1. through the attack upon Torah in its essence, and 2. through the attack upon the practice of mitzvos. The blessings which we say upon being called to the Torah end in two distinctive manners: *asher bochar banu*, emphasizing the G-d “who chose us,” and *asher nasan lanu*, emphasizing the G-d “who gave us” the Torah. Greek wisdom—and the primary insistence upon the universalism of knowledge—entailed an attack upon both of these very particular Jewish claims. The Jews as a people, the Greeks asserted, were no different than any other people: this entailed an attack upon the distinguishing features of Jewish practice—the attack upon mitzvos, and upon *asher bocher banu*. Further, the Torah, they asserted, was no different than the wisdom of the nations—thus the attack upon Jewish study and *asher nasan lanu*. Torah study was abolished, accompanied by the banning of those particular mitzvos, each of which, in its own way, would come to emphasize the distinctive Jewish approach to life—and the sanctification of this world which it entailed. Thus the Greeks abolished Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, and Bris Mila, because all of these mitzvos emphasized the particular Jewish relation to the World—the sanctification of the Creation, of Time, and of the body respectively. This was the way that Yavan attached “*asher bachur banu*”—the Jewish distinctiveness derived from performing G-d’s will. They attempted, however, to undermine the distinction implied in “*asher nasson lanu*” as well.

The primary means for attacking this latter distinction was through an action considered so catastrophic that it itself merited a day of fasting and mourning: the translation of the Chumash, the Five Books of Moses, into Greek. The Megilla Ta’anis relates that “on the eighth day of Teves, the Torah was rendered into Greek, during the days of King Ptolemy, and darkness descended upon the world for three days.” Indeed, Chazal explain that the darkness—the “*choshech*”—in the second verse of Bereishis refers, in fact, to Yavan. Here is where our own universalist outlooks (our sensibilities have almost certainly been influenced by that of the Greeks!) may come into play. For we may ask, perhaps even with incredulity, what could be so terribly problematic about a Greek translation? Why should we worry—indeed mourn—the translation of the Torah?! Did the chachamim have something against libraries such that they would institute such a fast?! What was so terribly cataclysmic about such a translation that it actually merited the institution of communal mourning?

As Pachad Yitzchak explains, it was precisely through this translation (in fact forced by the hands of the Ptolemy), undertaken by the seventy-member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (thus the name, Septuagint), that the Greeks endeavored to weaken the claims of the special status of the Am Yisroel, by attempting to weaken the special status of the Torah. In fact the translation of the Bible would allow the nations of the world, as the Talmud tells us, to claim, “Anu Yisroel!”: “We are Israel!” That is once, the Torah was no longer the exclusive province of the Jews, the nations of the world could claim to occupy their special place and status: “We are Israel!” We note, in passing, that there are two kinds of “Anu Yisroel.” There is the “Anu Yisroel” of Edom (and the Roman Catholic Church) which accepted the Jewish claims about transcendence and spirituality, but rejected—indeed attempted to replace—the Jews. In this way, Christianity would claim to occupy the sacred space which Am Yisroel inhabited (it is no wonder, then, that Edom—the Church—required the actual exile of the Jews, for they came to replace them, and thus they could not bear any physical manifestation of the continued Jewish presence in Jerusalem).

More importantly, for our purposes, however, there is the “Anu Yisroel” of the Greeks, which does not come to supercede Israel, but rather blur

the very difference between Israel and the nations. The “We are Israel!” of Yavan is based upon the blurring of all distinctions between cultures into a universalism in which Jews are Greeks and Greeks are Jews. The contemporary manifestations of the sensibility of Yavan are indeed ubiquitous: all of the nations of the world are, the refrain goes, different but equal, all of us G-d’s chosen people. This is the universalistic claim, often made in the name of toleration, which comes to undermine the very distinction between Jews and the nations (it is these days, regrettably, a claim heard most loudly from within some quarters of Am Yisroel itself!). Indeed, the Septuagint became the central means by which such a claim could be forwarded. For Torah in translation becomes merely a “book,” an external form of knowledge like any other, not part of a lived tradition (guaranteed through the face-to-face teaching throughout the generations), but just another call-number in the library (though in the religion section undoubtedly). It is a book, which, now can be gazed upon (studied) from the outside. Thus the nations of the world can behave as if they too have the Torah, and as if the Torah is no different from any book, from any other form of knowledge. This was the aim of the conquest by Yavan—to place Torah on the same footing as the wisdom of the nations. Calling Am Yisroel the “People of the Book” is actually part of the strategy of Yavan. For Am Yisroel is the people of the Torah, not the book. The Torah, unlike the rest of the books in the library, is vital, alive, transformative. The knowledge it entails is one that has an internal soul—which lives, and is embodied in this world by means of its continued transmission and study. The book, on the other hand, and the library in which it resides, is founded upon *chetzonios*, the external: the Torah, as mere book, becomes the realization of the Greek ideal, not the Jewish one!

Just as the Greeks attempted to take the Jewish essence out of the Temple (defiling it internally, and leaving the empty shell), so they wanted to take the Jew out of the Jew. True, they were content to leave the Jew with his exterior form, maybe even some of his customs, and even him some of his books, provided that they didn’t lead him to claim a special status. That is, the Jews could continue to have the Septuagint so long as they studied it in the university, with all of the other knowledges of the nations. But they were not to learn it in their *batie midrashim* and *yeshivos*, and they were certainly not to learn the Oral Law, the internal soul of the Torah. The Greeks, as tolerant as they may have been, would not tolerate the p’nimios of Torah; so they defiled the interior worlds of Israel—the Temple, the oil, and the people themselves—and left the external shells in tact.

Torah, however, is thus not merely an external knowledge to be considered from the distant and disinterested realm of theoretical knowledge. Philosophical models from the Western tradition encourage disengagement—standing apart (or perhaps above) in the so-called disinterested realm of the Ivory Tower. The Torah, by contrast, commands that we listen, internalize, and then practice. Indeed, the Torah is a lived activity, requiring the constant acknowledgement and internalization of Revelation. “*Asher nasson lanu*” reflects our commitment to receiving the Torah; “*asher bachur banu*” is our commitment to mitzvos, to manifesting our acceptance of the Torah in practice. The power of the Torah is transformative, different from *chachmos Yavan*, in demanding not the theoretical abstraction which always remains external, but rather internalization—and the sanctification of *olam ha’zeh*.

In the time of the Hasmoneans, this was manifested most centrally in the miracle of the oil. For the miracle of the oil embodies the bending of rules of nature and the ostensibly immutable strictures implicit in natural processes so vaunted by the Greeks. The oil that burnt for eight days, instead of just one, testifies that the seemingly immutable external laws of the world are themselves always subject to change. The natural world is not as the Greeks say it is: nor is the Torah a mere external form, a mere book in the library, nor is a Jew a Greek. “*Ner Mitvah*, Torah

Ohr"—"The Candle of the Mitzvah is the Light of Torah"—so writes Shlomo Hamelech in Proverbs. The light of the Hanuka flames testifies to a force that transcends nature, and that force is the power implicit in the lights of the menorah: the internal light of Torah. This is the symbol of the Hanuka menorah: the internal powers of both the Torah and the Jew. From Hanuka emerges a conception of the world in which the laws of nature are subject to change, a world based upon the internal, and not the external. Such a world is one where a man can be more than what the external laws of nature dictates—where a man can be a Jew.

There is an avreich, now living in Jerusalem, who, many years back, attended one of the most prestigious universities in America, and was one of the most outstanding students in one of its premier academic programs. Recalling his daily commute to the university, he remembers how he would carry with him (depending upon the weekly assignment) either Plato or Aeschylus, Shakespeare or Homer. Across from him on the train, however, there was a young man (with whom he never actually spoke), who always had, in addition to whatever else he was carrying, a chumash. As my friend recalls, there was something about the way this young Jew studied his chumash, that indicated that he related to it as more than a mere book—different from the classics which he himself carried with him. Indeed, carrying the chumash was, in actuality, a simon—an external manifestation—that the young man was not merely carrying the Torah under his arm, but he was actually attempting to carry it within himself. The message of Hanuka, then, is not only about the difference between Torah and the wisdom of the Greeks, but the difference between thinking like a Greek, and thinking like a Jew. When the scholar studies in the university library, he aspires to inhabit the ostensibly disinterested perspective whereby he can objectively survey the different wisdoms of the world. The talmud chacham, however, engages in scholarship as an emesdicke vocation (to coin a term)—that is, as a means of personal transformation. When we show our willingness to be addressed by the divine, we ourselves, like the young fellow on the train, like the avreich in Jerusalem, and like the oil from the Temple at the time of the Hasmoneans, become potential vessels of kedusha. You can't do that at Harvard or Yale.

<http://www.ezrastorah.org/>
SHABBOS PARSHAS MIKEITZ
EIGHTH DAY CHANUKAH

1 TEVES, FRI. AFTERNOON, DEC. 26

Friday afternoon we light the Chanukah Menorah at home before lighting the Shabbos candles, at the proper time, at least 20 minutes before sunset. (One should recite Mincha before lighting the Chanukah lights. However, one must be careful not to delay the welcoming of Shabbos because of this.) One may not light neither Chanukah nor Shabbos lights, earlier than Plag HaMincha ó one and one-quarter proportionate hours before sunset, (a proportionate hour is one-twelfth of the daylight period. One must be careful to use enough oil (or light a large enough candle) that will remain lit until thirty minutes after the appearance of three stars.

WELCOMING THE SHABBOS

2 TEVES, FRIDAY NIGHT, DEC. 26

MAARIV

Al Hanisim, etc.

2 TEVES, SHABBOS MORNING, DEC. 27

SHACHRIS

Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei for Shabbos; Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Kaddish Tiskabel. We take out two Sifrei Torah; in the first we have seven Aliyahs in the weekly Sidrah (Mikeitz); we place the second Torah next to the first, and Half-Kaddish is said; the first Sefer Torah is lifted and closed; the Maftir reads in the second Sefer Torah

from Parshas Naso (7:54-8:4) from Bayom Hashmini until Kein Asah Es Hamenorah. The Haftorah is read in Kings I 7:40-50; (no Kel Malei or Av Harachmim) Ashrei, Yehalelu.

MUSSAF

Half-Kaddish; in Shemonah Esrei of Mussaf for Shabbos we say Al Hanisim; Chazzan's Repetition; Kaddish Tiskabel; Ein Keilakeinu; Aleinu; Anim Zmiros; Shir Shel Yom (Psalm of the Day); Mizmor Shir Chanukas; Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam.

MINCHA

Three Aliyahs in Parshas Vayigash; Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei for Shabbos. No Tzidkascha Tzedek; Aleinu.

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com]

Sent: December 25, 2003 2:21 PM To: Peninim Parsha

PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM - Parshas Mikeitz

PARSHAS MIKEITZ The cows of ugly appearance and gaunt flesh ate the seven cows that were of beautiful appearance and robust. (41:4) There must be some purpose in having the ugly cows swallow up the healthy cows. It seems to be more than a minor detail. Yosef interpreted it to mean that the seven years of famine would be so severe and drastic that they would overshadow the years of plenty to the point that they would be completely forgotten. Yet, the seven meager cows swallowing up the seven robust cows does not seem to express this idea. While the seven years of famine might be ruinous, they did not interfere with the comfort level enjoyed during the seven years of abundance. Why was it necessary for the gaunt cows to swallow up the healthy cows?

Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zl, explains that there is a significant lesson about human nature to be derived from this dream. A person may be blessed with incredible bounty, but, if he knows that the time he has left for enjoying this gift is very short, his enjoyment will be limited, at best. One who is about to be executed hardly enjoys his last meal, regardless of how tasty it may be. The Egyptians were aware that the wonderful years of abundance were to last for a limited amount of time, to be followed by years of famine and disaster. How could they enjoy the gift, knowing fully well what was soon to strike them? Every time they ate a delicious, bountiful meal, they thought of the impending doom that would result in the upcoming famine. The dream was quite accurate in describing the years of famine. The seven years of famine would actually erode any remembrance of the years of bounty. In anticipation of the pain, the enjoyment could hardly be felt.

Then Pharaoh said to Yosef... "There can be no one so discerning and wise as you... You shall be in charge of my palace and by your command shall all my people be sustained. (41:39,40)

Yosef certainly came across as wise, astute and knowledgeable. He was wiser than anyone Pharaoh had previously employed as an advisor. Yet, how does a king of Pharaoh's stature take a "criminal" out of jail and almost immediately make him Viceroy over the land of Egypt? Yosef was given the "keys" to the country! Is that the way a wise king acts? Could he have not simply appointed Yosef as Secretary of Finance and Agriculture? Why make him Viceroy?

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, explains that the answer lies in one word - biladoi, "this is beyond me" (41:16). Yosef could just as well have said, b'ezras Hashem, with Hashem's help, I will interpret the dream. No! he did not attribute any power to himself whatsoever. Everything came from Hashem. He attributed all of his success to Hashem. A person such as this was a unique find. Pharaoh had never met such an individual who took absolutely no credit for himself. Such a person could be trusted to direct his country.

In the ensuing years of bounty that Egypt would experience, there was great opportunity for an enterprising individual to put a little away for

himself. Later on, during the years of famine, this person could make a healthy profit from his foresight. Yes, this is what the average person might do. A person who was prepared to give everything up and not take any credit for himself, however, was above taking personal gain - albeit legal - from the country's bounty. Such a person was unique. He was worthy of immediately being put into place to govern the land.

As Jews, we should always realize that biladoi - everything comes directly from Hashem. Whatever success we achieve has one source: Hashem. This awareness should fortify our faith and trust in the Almighty as it gives us the fortitude to confront life's challenges stoically, with determination and courage.

Sponsored by Mrs. Helen Pollack Mr. and Mrs. Yaacov Pollack and Family Mr. and Mrs. Marty Pollack and Family Mr. and Mrs. Steven Glassman and Family in loving memory of Rav Yisrael Tzvi ben Mordechai Pollack a"h Niftar 1 Teves 5748 T.N.T.V.H.

From: RABBI RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM LIST [parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: December 24, 2003

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Miketz - Hanukkah - by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin (Genesis 41:1-44:17)

Efrat, Israel - It has justly been said that the Hebrew word 'mazel', which literally means the astrological zodiac sign or the luck which comes from the stars, is in actuality a mnemonic for three Hebrew words: makom, z'man and limud - being at the right place at the right time and knowing how to take proper advantage of an opportune confluence of circumstances. This is precisely what Joseph does when he is taken out from his dungeon prison and brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams; not only does he provide the interpretation itself, but he goes on to suggest to Pharaoh that he appoint "an intelligent and wise man" to sequester grain during the years of plenty and dispense it during the years of famine - in effect, to appoint him Grand Vizier (Genesis 41:33-46). Individual initiative must always augment the G-d-given opportunities which come our way.

This is likewise the crucial message which emanates from Hanukkah, a Rabbinically enacted festival which generally falls out during the week of this Torah reading. Hanukkah is called the Festival of Lights, 'Hag Urim' by the great second commonwealth historian Josephus. One of the most fundamental reasons for this appellation is a Talmudic passage about Adam, the very first human being:

"When Adam the first saw that the day was becoming smaller and smaller, he said, 'Woe unto me, lest, because I sinned, the world is darkening because of me and is returning to emptiness and void (tohu andbohu) ;... But then when he saw that the day began to grow longer, he realized that the comparative length of night and day was part of the immutable order of the world. He then went and established eight days of Festival. The next year two types of Festivals for eight days were held at that time, with one group giving praise to G-d and the other group giving praise to idols..." (B.T. Avodah Zarah 8a).

This passage is apparently making reference to an ancient Festival of lights which celebrated the beginning of the yearly lengthening of the days, when the frightening night began to lessen in time and give way to the optimistic daylight which began to grow longer. The lights of the menorah which were kindled in the Holy Temple and which are kindled in our homes at the same time of year represents the importance of the human addition to the Divine gift of light, the human kindling of the light of Torah which will eventually lead the world to peace and redemption.

This theme of the importance of human intervention, augmentation and even initiation is fundamental to the festival of Hanukkah from many different perspectives. According to the Sixteenth Century Code of Jewish Law (Shulhan Arukh), the laws of Hanukkah are discussed

before the laws of Purim, a logical progression from the one to the other, because Hanukkah falls out before Purim in the Hebrew calendrical year. Maimonides, however, in his 13th Century Mishneh Torah compendium of Jewish Law, discusses the laws of Purim before the laws of Hanukkah. Why? Historically, chronologically Purim (536-516 B.C.E.) comes before Hanukkah (165 B.C.E.). But my teacher and mentor, Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, provided a brilliant additional insight. If it were not for Purim, the first Rabbinically added Festival based upon Queen Esther's Megillah which she requested be included within the twenty-four Books of the Bible, we would never know that we in post-Biblical times have the right to initiate a Festival like Hanukkah! It is only after the precedent of Megillat Esther has been established that we recognize the rights of later generations to initiate a Festival like Hanukkah (and Yom Haatzmaut). And from this perspective, both Purim and Hanukkah teach us the importance of rabbinic additives of decrees, enactments and customs to the Torah of the Almighty, how we human students of Torah must enhance the treasure trove of Torah in each generation. The Divine Torah is G-d's gift to us; Rabbinic additions - be they added holidays, decrees or customs - are our gift to G-d and to future generations...

Finally, I would like to strengthen the decision of Rav Joseph Karo, compiler of the Shulhan Arukh, for his having codified the laws of Hanukkah before the laws of Purim in accordance with the calendrical year and despite the historical chronology the other way. From my perspective, Hanukkah deserves to come first - because Hanukkah is a Festival of Israel whereas Purim is a Festival of the galut (exile) of Persia.

According to most chronologies of the midrash, Purim occurred after Cyrus, King of Persia gave permission to the Jews exiled to Babylon - Persia to return to Judea. The majority opted to remain in Persia - for economic and security considerations. Tragically, they suffered the twin dangers of exilic Jewry: assimilation (the "entire" Jewish community went to Ahasueros' open Palace feast, despite the lack of Kashrut certification) and anti-Semitism (Haman). At the end of the day all they can do is defend their own lives and hope for survival; our Sages do not even ordain the recitation of Hallel (Psalms of Praise) on Purim because "we are still slaves of Ahasueros" in Persia.

Hanukkah, on the other hand, occurs in Judea, where we not only defend our lives but we dare to re-dedicate the Holy Temple of world peace. On Hanukkah we recite Hallel for eight days - because in Israel we are not enslaved, in Israel we can re-establish Jewish sovereignty, as we did then for more than two hundred years. Despite the fact that the Hasamoneans ultimately failed in their mission, fell prey to internecine struggle and assimilation, nevertheless Hanukkah is a complete holiday - because in Israel we reach out not only for survival but even for redemption. And since redemption can only take place when the Jews return to the land of Israel and the Torah of Israel, since redemption requires human initiative and human action in accordance with G-d's will, the paradigm for redemption is Hanukkah: human augmentation of G-d's hand in history! Shabbat Shalom and Hanukkah Sameah.

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at: <http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm>
Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean To subscribe, E-mail to: Shabbat_Shalom-on@ohrtorahstone.org.il

From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: December 23, 2003 1:30 AM To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Mikeitz
TORAH WEEKLY - For the week ending 27 December 2003 / 2 Tevet 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu Visit Ohr Somayach's online

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*The Hidden Light

Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

"When behold! Out of the river emerged seven cows..." (41:2)

One of the most difficult things in life is to take the wisdom of happiness into the despair of depression.

The despair of depression and the wisdom of happiness are two different worlds, two different realities. They have no point of contact. It's like visiting- time at the State Pen when the telephone has broken down. A one-inch wall of glass separates them like a prisoner from his wife. They gesture to each other, but their mutual isolation is total. They are like two people on different islands waving flags at each other, but neither understands the other's signal. They are like two people who don't know a word of each other's language, trying to hold a conversation using a dictionary in which every word is completely mistranslated.

Seven cows emerge from the river. They are beautiful to behold, strong and healthy. Then, seven other cows emerge from the river. These cows are as dissimilar from the first cows as is possible. They are gaunt, skinny, malnourished. And then, these evil looking creatures devour the fat cows. Nothing is left. The fat cows are gone and the thin cows are as thin and as miserable-looking as before.

In life, a person must use his days of optimism, the good days, the days that are full of holiness and closeness to G-d to fix in his heart the light of that holiness so that when lean, gaunt days come upon him he is prepared. Then he will understand that the light has not vanished, it is only hidden. The light seems to have been swallowed up completely by evil but in fact it is merely in exile.

At the beginning of time, there shone a unique light called the Ohr Haganuz, the Hidden Light. This light was not like any light that you or I have ever seen. With this light you could see from one end of the Creation to the other. In other words, you could see how one end of the Creation was connected to the other. It was a spiritual light that revealed the existence of the unseen world of spirituality. G-d hid

away the Ohr Haganuz after the first thirty-six hours of Creation so that evil would not be able to exploit its power. However, there are times when you can still catch glimpses of its hidden glow.

On the first night of Chanuka, we light one candle, on the second night two. Thus after two nights, we have lit three candles. If you do your sums right, you'll find that the total number of candles that we light on Chanuka is thirty-six (excluding the shamash). The thirty-six lights of Chanuka correspond to the thirty-six hours during which the Ohr Haganuz shone.

The power of depression is that it tries to usurp the light. It tries to usurp the true reality of things. It tries to tell us that the good days have been devoured by the bad. The light has gone forever and the bad days are now firmly in command.

That's the message of this week's parsha - and it's also the message of Chanuka. The thin cows want us to believe that the healthy cows are gone forever. That they rule in their stead. The nations of the world want us to believe that we no longer have any portion in the G-d of Israel - that He has hidden the light forever.

However, those thin cows will only be in business for just as long as G-d allows them to keep the good years in exile. They have no independent power. One day, very soon, that Hidden Light will blaze once more in this world of darkness, and the rule of the gaunt and evil cows will be revealed as no more than a dream.

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From: RabbiWein@jewishdestiny.com Sent: December 25, 2003-12-25

Subject: RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY COLUMNS

Parsha Archive December 26, 2003 MIKETZ

The uniqueness of the holiday of Chanuka is apparent in the fact that it is so widely celebrated amongst the Jews the world over and no matter what their level of Jewish observance is. It is not only that Chanuka has the "good fortune" of always falling in the month of December that accounts for this level of interest in it. This is definitely a factor, but I do not believe it to be the deciding factor. I think rather that Chanuka represents the last refuge of Jews who want to be Jewish but are unable to verbalize or express in their actions that inner desire. So, Jews allow Chanuka to speak for us. For Chanuka declares clearly that there is a G-d in the world, that there are basic principles of faith and godly behavior that are worth great sacrifices, that a little light can overcome a sea of darkness and that G-d demands a certain greatness from the Jewish people and He will perform miracles to guarantee human realization of His presence in world events. Jews really believe in these ideas but somehow they are not publicly expressed in our lives. It may be that in our modern world that has cast away so much of the positive of the past, it is embarrassing to mouth these eternal truths. Certainly in this century when Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler and other representatives of the new, modern, progressive world, were ascendant, the lights of Chanuka were certainly dim and the ideas they represented were only capable of being whispered but not proclaimed. So the Jewish person retreated into Chanuka and let the holiday itself speak for them and their inner being and hopes.

One of the qualities of Chanuka, which the Talmud emphasizes, is the concept of *pirsuma nissa* - the requirement to publicize and make known the miracle of Chanuka. Thus the lights of Chanuka are lit in a window that opens to the outside street. In Israel we light the lights of Chanuka in the passageway of our outside doors so that they shine on the street and the passerbys. The lights of Chanuka, the symbol of the miracle and the lessons of this holiday, thereby become a public statement of Jewish faith and of our deepest instincts and godly intuition. What we cannot say in words, either out of ignorance, shame, or weakness, we say therefore with the lights of Chanuka themselves.

The problems in Jewish life that Chanuka records for us are still present today in the Jewish world. The Hellenistic Jews no longer go by that name but their program of advocating unchecked Jewish assimilation, no matter what the cost, still lives on. There are other Jews in our time that advocate putting all of our trust in our own might and power, even though all of the history of the events of this bloody century seem to deny the validity of such a strategy. There are still other Jews that are blind to the realities of being subjugated and are unappreciative of the benefits, spiritual and physical, of being an independent nation. All of these groups existed within the Jewish world of the Hasmoneans almost twenty-two centuries ago. The victory and miracles of Chanuka stand as a stark reminder to all of us that we have been through this trial once before. A wise people learn from its past history. Chanuka and its lights are a powerful memory aid for all of us.

The Torah records for us in this week's reading the story of the fulfillment of Yosef's dreams. The Torah reading of Miketz almost invariably coincides with the Sabbath of Chanuka. The message here is also clear. Chanuka and Jewish dreams are inseparable. In order to have a meaningful, spiritual, Jewish life, one must be a dreamer. One must have a maximum vision of one's self and one's importance and contributions to Jewish life and destiny. Without that vision, it is difficult to appreciate the lights of Chanuka. For Chanuka not only commemorates our past, it is meant to illustrate our future. It gives hope for our dreams' fulfillment and a sense of confidence - Jewish confidence - that somehow all will yet be right for us and for all of humankind.

Shabat Shalom. Happy Chanuka.

Rabbi Berel Wein info@jewishdestiny.com or subscribe online at www.RabbiWein.com.