

material through and through, and rises above other substances. Chanukah, especially, is a time when one should increase his learning of the inner level—the “soul”—of the Torah.

During the Chanukah story, the Greeks tried to detach the Jews from Torah. It’s not that they were against the intellectual, and even moral, teachings of the Torah. They were all for more knowledge. But they could not accept that the Jews viewed the Torah as Divine wisdom that transcends creation.

Thus, the physical battle between the Greeks and the Jews represented a deeper, philosophical controversy—between the rational and the supra-rational. One can be a great Torah scholar, an expert in pilpulistic methodology, but if he is unaware of the soul of the Torah, if the “oil of Torah” has not penetrated into his being, then he can remain untouched by what he has learned. It is the "oil of Torah" that penetrates, permeates and illuminates one's whole being, empowering one to transform and illuminate the world.

Chanukah Facts

Did You Know?

Chanukah in Space

In December of 1993, Space Shuttle Endeavour was sent into space to service the Hubble Space Telescope. One of the astronauts to bravely perform a spacewalk to repair the telescope was a proud Jew, Jeffrey Hoffman. Knowing that he would be stuck in space over Chanukah, Hoffman made sure to bring along a *dreidel* and a traveling menorah so that he'd be able to celebrate (because of lack of gravity and safety concerns, there was no way to light candles).

Then, via live satellite communication, he showed his Chanukah supplies, gave his *dreidel* a twirl in the air, and wished Jews everywhere a Happy Chanukah.

Live & Laugh

Old Syd Finkel was very particular about air travel. He specifically asked the airline for a window seat. When the time came to check in, however, he was given an aisle seat. All his complaints met with, "Sorry sir, there's nothing we can do."

During the entire trip, he fidgeted, squirmed and

kvetched. When the plane landed Syd went straight to customer service. “I got hit by the drink cart. There was a man snoring across the aisle. A child spilled juice on me. It was miserable! Now I specifically asked for a window seat when I purchased the ticket and your airline told me I would get one. But see! Look at my boarding pass. Aisle seat.”

"I'm very sorry, sir. Did you by any chance try to trade seats with the person in the seat next to you?" "That was impossible!" "Why, sir?"

"Because there was no one in the seat next to me!"

Calendar

Shabbos Mevorchim Teves

Molad: Mon 18 Dec 13:41:01

- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ Social Shabbos
- ◆ Mincha: 6:20 pm
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 7:31 pm
- ◆ **Remember Tal U'matar**
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh:** Mon 18 & Tues 19 Dec

Chanukah

Through 20 December

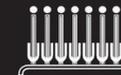
- ◆ Make sure to **light the Menorah at home** every evening after nightfall for 8 days.
- ◆ **Full Hallel** is recited daily. Recite **Al Hanissim** in the Amidah and Bentsching.
- ◆ Have a **Chanukah Party**. Tell the story, enjoy latkes or doughnuts and give your children **Chanukah Gelt**.

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell** & available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows**.
- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
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- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



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Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!



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Parshas Mekeitz

28 Kislev 5778

Famine in the Land

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Long before Dr Martin Luther King was having dreams we read of the dreams of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. When all the king's men and all the king's soothsayers fail in their attempts at dream analysis, the Chief Butler remembers Joseph and how the Hebrew prisoner who was his cell mate correctly interpreted his own dreams when they were together in jail. In a flash, young Joseph is hauled out of the dungeons and finds himself standing before the mighty monarch. Pharaoh repeats his two dreams – seven fat cows being devoured by seven lean cows and seven healthy ears of grain being swallowed by seven thin ears.

Immediately Joseph interprets the dreams to Pharaoh's satisfaction. Seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine. His explanation rings true for the king. But Joseph doesn't stop at the interpretation. He goes on to offer some seemingly unsolicited advice to the powerful ruler of the mightiest superpower of the time. “And now Pharaoh should select a person who is understanding and wise and appoint him over Egypt,” continues young Joseph. Let this man oversee the economic plan for the country, to store grain during the seven good years of plenty that are coming to sustain the people during the next seven lean years.

Brilliant. But who asked him for any advice? And where does this young man, who a moment ago was languishing in prison, get the temerity to offer *ei tzlos* – unsolicited advice to none other than the king himself? I know

Jews are renowned for their *chutzpah*, but still! You gave your interpretation, fine and well, but did anybody ask you for your opinions or solutions?

The Rebbe explains that the advice was actually part and parcel of the interpretation. Why were there two dreams with essentially the same message? Why were the thin cows standing next to the fat cows before they swallowed them? Moreover, why did Pharaoh wake up after the first dream, go back to sleep, and only then experience the second dream? According to Joseph all of this was highly pertinent. The dream was repeated because it will happen soon and therefore no time is to be wasted in preparing for the famine. The two sets of cows stood side by side to indicate that there is an important connection between them and the good years can sustain the people in the lean years. And Pharaoh woke up in between the two dreams because G-d was saying to him “Wake up before it is too late to save your people!” Thus, the solution was implicit in the dreams and therefore had he chosen not to share that with Pharaoh, Joseph would have been derelict in his duty by omitting crucial sections of their meaning. Offering the advice was not *chutzpah* at all. Withholding it would have been a job half done.

The Pharaoh is so impressed with this explanation that he immediately appoints Joseph as Viceroy of Egypt and the rest, of course, is history.

Long ago the Prophet Amos said,

Behold, days are coming, says the L-rd, when I will send a famine in the land; not a famine for bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the L-rd. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east,

they shall run to and fro to seek the word of G-d and they shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint from thirst.

Is this not a prophecy of our own day and age? Are we not witnessing a hunger for truth and authenticity in a corrupt and false world? Do our own young people from America and even Israel not go wandering across the far corners of the earth desperately seeking spirituality and some deeper meaning to their lives? And what is our response when many of our youngest and brightest get lost in the East? Do we appreciate the tragedy when they despair of finding fulfillment in the faith of their fathers? Do we mimic the Pharaoh and turn over on the other side going back to sleep even when we seem to be getting heavenly signals and messages that something momentous is about? Or do we seek out the guidance of a 'wise and understanding man' who can guide our young people towards the path of what, for them, must be the only truth, the Torah?

In the end, Pharaoh took Joseph's advice, acted responsibly, and spared his nation the famine that engulfed the world. Will we today feed those spiritually starved souls and give them the nourishment they crave? Many among us are trying to do just that. I pray we will all join in.

Parsha Pointers

*Mikeitz: Artscroll Chumash pg 222;
Living Torah pg 200*

Joseph's imprisonment finally ends when Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows that are swallowed up by seven lean cows, and of seven fat ears of grain swallowed by seven lean ears. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of hunger, and advises Pharaoh to store grain during the plentiful years. Pharaoh appoints Joseph governor of Egypt. Joseph marries Asenath, daughter of Potiphar, and they have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Famine spreads throughout the region, and food can be obtained only in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain; the youngest, Benjamin, stays

home, for Jacob fears for his safety. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him; he accuses them of being spies, insists that they bring Benjamin to prove that they are who they say they are, and imprisons Simeon as a hostage. Later, they discover that the money they paid for their provisions has been mysteriously returned to them.

Jacob agrees to send Benjamin only after Judah assumes personal and eternal responsibility for him. This time Joseph receives them kindly, releases Simeon, and invites them to an eventful dinner at his home. But then he plants his silver goblet, purportedly imbued with magic powers, in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers set out for home the next morning they are pursued, searched, and arrested when the goblet is discovered. Joseph offers to set them free and retain only Benjamin as his slave.

What the Chanukah Lights Tell Us

By Rabbi Nechemia Schusterman

We've all heard the story a hundred times about the victory of the Maccabees over the Assyrian Greeks and the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days instead of one. The holiday is celebrated by reciting special prayers, with public menorah lightings, by sharing the light and the message of the holiday, and, of course, with the lighting of the menorah in our homes, adding a candle each of the eight nights.

This is all fine and nice, but there's more!

Typically, light is used for what *you* are doing. You flip a switch in your bedroom because *you* need light. You put a floodlight in your backyard so *you* can play basketball after dark. You turn on your flashlight to brighten a dark space so that *you* can tighten that elusive screw.

But imagine a world where the reason you created light was for everyone else?

Remember the old JFK line: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

I propose that a deeper message of Chanukah is: "Ask not what your lights will do for you, but what your lights will do for others."

There is a curious feature about the menorah that

was lit in the Temple and the light it produced. In the days of old, before double-pane glass windows, windows worked a bit differently. Houses had thick walls with narrow openings exposed to the outside, and a wider opening facing the inside of the house (like an inverted funnel or bull horn).

In this way, you limited exposure to intruders but maximized on the amount of light you took into your home. The windows of the Holy Temple were the opposite. The narrow opening was on the inside, and the wider opening was on the outside.

Our sages teach us that this was because the Temple was lighting up the world, not vice versa. The light, spirituality and holiness of the Temple brightened up the dark world outside.

This Chanukah, perhaps, in addition to doing our personal menorah lightings and mandatory *latke*-eating at home, and publicizing the miracle by attending public menorah lightings, let's attempt to emulate the lights of the Temple, whose lights we are celebrating, and try not just to not light up our own lives, but also to brighten the lights in others' lives.

There is a curious law regarding the menorah: "It is forbidden to use the lights of the menorah, only to gaze upon them." Meaning, we cannot use the lights for their most obvious purposes, heat or light. Rather, we are encouraged to simply gaze at them.

Now, if I can't use them, then what good does gazing upon them do? If I could read a book by their radiance, fine. But to simply look at them? What is that worth?

This can be understood, however, in the context of the lights of the Temple, which radiated spiritual light out into the world. Like the Temple lights, the lights of the menorah are uplifting, even to those who just look at them. There is something magical about flames that draws us to stare at them. Gazing at them elevates and inspires us. It's not their utility that lifts us up. It's just candles being candles, flames being flames. It is their essence that uplifts. Using them for our mundane purposes can potentially diminish that magic. If I am using the candlelight for reading, my shadow may block you. However, simply gazing upon them allows that magic to enter us. Let's not keep that aura all to ourselves; let's share that with the world. Let's allow others to experience the mystique of the can-

dles as well.

We simply need to #sharethelights.

Why Eat Latkes and Doughnuts on Chanukah?

By Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin

Jews eat greasy food on Chanukah. While some prefer latkes and others doughnuts (or "sufganiyot," as they're known in Hebrew), the underlying custom is the same: to eat foods fried in oil.

The earliest mention of this custom seems to have been made by Rabbi Maimon ben Joseph (born c.1110), father of Maimonides, who wrote:

"[People] shouldn't be lenient regarding any custom, even the lightest of customs. And one is obligated to make every effort to prepare festivities and foods to publicize the miracle that G-d did for us on those days [i.e., Chanukah]. It has become customary to make "*sufganin*," known in Arabic as "*alsingh*" . . . This is an ancient custom, because they are fried in oil, in remembrance of His blessing."

In other words, there is an old custom to eat foods on Chanukah that are fried in oil, as a remembrance of the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days.

This custom has remained firmly entrenched in Jewish practice.

Centuries later and on the other side of the globe, "on one of the evenings of Chanukah, the saintly *Tzemach Tzedek*, would customarily hold a kind of *farbrengen* with the members of his family, including his daughters-in-law. This gathering was known as a "*latke* evening."

The Oil of Torah

In addition to commemorating the miracle, the mystics point out that oil represents the esoteric level of the Torah, for oil both penetrates a

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