

HAPPY CHANUKAH

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YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Mikeitz

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

A Conversation Starter As Opening To Seduction

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The Pagan Should Have Recognized the Source of Yosef's Outsize Abilities

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Preoccupation With Bounty Engenders Generosity

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The Canaanite Finally Acknowledged As Worthy

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Mikeitz: When Personal Initiative Belies Cosmic Intervention

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1. Yosef was imprisoned by Potiphar for 10 years.
2. In year 10, 2 ministers of the king were also incarcerated.
3. Yosef was appointed to attend to their needs.
4. One was the wine steward, the other, the baker.
5. They both dreamed the same perturbing dream one night. Yosef offered interpretation.
6. The wine steward would be reinstated in three days and the baker would be hanged.
7. Yosef requested the wine steward remember him, mention his innocence, & how he was sold into slavery.
8. Midrash: because of this request, Yosef spent two more years in prison for a lack of faith. Why?
9. When one sees that it is G-d catapulting him to the top, taking initiative is a lack of faith.
10. When Yosef was sold as a slave to Potiphar, his level of success was extraordinary.
11. When incarcerated, he rose to unofficial warden.
12. As it was clear beyond doubt that G-d was directing Yosef's life, his initiative was considered a lack of faith.

Mikeitz: Processing Life Through One's Own Prism

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1. Pharaoh dreamt two dreams that were not interpreted to his satisfaction.
2. The wine steward informs Pharaoh there is someone in prison with him who has the ability to interpret dreams.
3. When he describes Yosef to Pharaoh, he depicts him in the most denigrating context to indicate that he has no qualifications other than interpreting dreams.
4. Each depiction was intended to disqualify him from rising to power.
5. Midrash: we are able to draw from the wine steward's depiction that when evil people do a good deed they cannot do it appropriately.
6. Yosef asked the wine steward to mention him to Pharaoh when reinstated hoping to be released.
7. The wine steward failed Yosef thus causing him to remain in prison an additional two years.
8. The wine steward believed if Yosef rose to power, he would put him to death as an act of revenge.
9. He therefore depicted him as an unqualified person not fit for royalty or any position of leadership for self preservation.
10. Yosef, as a Tzadik, understood his extended incarceration was only due to his own failings.
11. A Tzadik doesn't look for scapegoats to blame because of his belief and faith.
12. An evil person who doesn't have belief, attributes everything to cause and effect to oneself & others.
13. The wine steward being evil processed Yosef's predicament within his own purview thus concluding what he would do under the same circumstances.



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YadAvNow.com Weekly Audio Series: Chanukah

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Debunking The Myth Of Chanukah

1. Chanukah: The 8 day holiday commemorates the victory over the Greek armies & burning of oil with the seal of the High Priest.
2. The vial was sufficient to burn 1 night & burned 8 nights.
3. The last of the revealed miracles of 2nd Temple Period done for the Jewish People was the miracle of the oil.
4. If oil burned another 7 days, the Holiday should be a 7 day commemoration.
5. Meiri: The 1st of the 8 days commemorates the victory & the others are for the miracle of the oil.
6. Al HaNissim is inserted in the Amida to thank G-d for the miracle of Chanukah.
7. There is no mention of the miracle of the lights of the Menorah in Al Hanissim.
8. Maharal: The primary miracle of Chanukah is the victory the Greeks as described in Al HaNissim.
9. The miracle of the oil was a revealed miracle not to be understood out of the context of miracle.
10. The victory of the Chashmonaim could be attributed to their physical prowess and strategy in battle.
11. The miracle of the oil was only present to reveal that just as the burning of the oil is the hand of G-d, so is the victory over the Greeks.

The Machiavellian Approach to Acculturation

1. Al HaNissim: "They attempted to cause the Torah to be forgotten & remove them from your statutes of will."
2. The Greeks forbade Torah study, circumcision, and sanctification of the new moon.
3. 1st paragraph of Shema: the mitzvah of loving G-d.
4. Juxtaposed to loving G-d the Torah states you must engage in Torah study wherever you may be.
5. Chazal: How does that bring one to love G-d?
6. A statute is a law that cannot be understood on a rational basis.
7. Laws, i.e stealing, damages, and injury, can be processed within a rational context but are statutes.
8. The Torah doesn't offer a rationale for its dictates.
9. Seforno: When one observes a statute it is a display of love for G-d.
10. One doesn't understand its value & adheres to it due to love of G-d.
11. The Greeks intended the Torah to be forgotten thus causing the Jews' love for G-d to wane.
12. Consequently they will be removed from the statutes.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Mikeitz



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The Occlusion of Yaakov's Divine Vision

Torah: "Yaakov settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan."

Rashi citing Chazal: The word "settled" can mean that Yaakov wanted dwell in a state of tranquility. Until this point, Yaakov was confronted and endured many challenges and tragedies. He fled his father's home because his brother Esav vowed to kill him. Yaakov spent twenty years in the home of his father-in-law, Lavan, and was exposed to an environment that threatened his existence, both physicality and spirituality.

Yaakov was confronted by his brother Esav with 400 men who had come to kill him. Yaakov's most beloved wife Rachel passed away in childbirth. His daughter Dinah was defiled by Shechem, the prince of Canaan. Shimon and Levy, the sons of Yaakov, because of what had happened to their sister Dinah, destroyed the community of Shechem and thus put Yaakov and his family in a state of danger from the surrounding nations.

Rashi citing Chazal: "Because Yaakov desired to live in tranquility, G-d caused the strife of Yosef to come upon him. G-d said, 'Is it not enough for the devoutly righteous to receive their portion that is awaiting them in the world to come, that they should also want to have tranquility in this world?' Yaakov, is the Patriarch who embodies the Torah. As the Torah quantifies him, "He is the perfect man who dwells in the tents (of Torah)." Yaakov's desire for tranquility was purely for the sake of not being distracted to have greater clarity to advance his spirituality.

Torah: After Shimon and Levy, the sons of Yaakov, destroyed the community of Shechem, Yaakov was disturbed with his sons because of what they had done. He said to them, "Achartem osi – you have discomposed me (you have made me murky)..."

Rashi citing Chazal: "Yaakov had said to his sons, 'Prior to your action against Shechem, I had clarity of mind; however, after you put us in jeopardy I no longer have

that degree of clarity. It seems to be that the emphasis of the rebuke to his sons was the loss of clarity that they had caused him. *Yaakov* only desired to dwell in tranquility so that he could regain his clarity for the sake of his service to G-d. However, as a result of this aspiration, *Yaakov's* life became more tenuous due to the strife between *Yosef* and his brother.

Torah: *Yosef's* brothers sold him into slavery as a result of their hatred towards him. They had taken *Yosef's* tunic and dipped it into goat's blood and brought it to their father, *Yaakov*. *Yaakov*, believing that his son had been devoured by a beast rent his garments and began to mourn and grieve over the death of his beloved son *Yosef*. Despite all the attempts of his children to console him, *Yaakov* refused to be comforted and said, "For I will go down to the grave mourning for my son (*Yosef*)." *Yaakov* was in a state of mourning for 22 years.

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Basra*: The Divine Presence only rests upon the one who is in a state of joy and not grieving, mourning, or depressed. Because *Yaakov* believed that *Yosef* was no longer alive, he was denied unlimited levels of spiritual growth because of his emotional state. When *Yaakov* became aware that his son *Yosef* was alive the *Torah* states, "...the spirit of *Yaakov* became alive."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: G-d's Presence was restored to him. Due to *Yaakov* being in state of mourning for 22 years is something so grave that it is incalculable. *Chazal* tell us that the Ten Martyrs, who were the ten most special *Torah* sages (who had lived in the same generation since the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai), were mercilessly killed by the Romans (in the most cruel manner) to atone for the sin of the tribes for selling of *Yosef* into slavery.

One can explain that the atonement was not needed to correct the sin of selling *Yosef* but rather for causing and denying *Yaakov*, our Patriarch, the Divine Presence for 22 years. *Yosef's* ten brothers were the cause of denying their father's unlimited spiritual growth. Had he not been denied the Divine Presence, *Yaakov* would have been able to effect the Jewish people at a more advanced level until the end of time.

The killing of the ten martyrs was due within the context of measure for measure. Just as the ten brothers of *Yosef* denied their father spiritual growth,

clarity impinged, so too the ten most advanced *Torah* sages were taken from the midst of the Jewish people to deny them spiritual growth.

The *Torah* begins by describing the state of creation before it assumed its final form: "...when the earth was astoundingly empty, with darkness upon the surface of the deep (waters)..."

Midrash: The detailed description of existence at that moment in time is alluding to the four exiles that the Jewish people will experience in the future. "Darkness" refers to the Greek exile, "because they blackened the eyes of the Jewish people through their decrees." In what way did the Greeks "blacken the eyes" of the Jewish people? The Greeks decreed that the Jewish people were not permitted to study *Torah*, circumcise themselves, or sanctify the new moon.

Because they were not permitted to observe the *Torah* the Jewish people began to lose their clarity. Thus, it is the equivalent of blackening one's eyes thus denying him the ability to see. Clarity is essential to spiritual growth, whereas lack of focus through distraction leads to the antithesis. *Yaakov* wanted to have tranquility so that he should regain his clarity. However, as a result of the selling of *Yosef*, he was denied that state of being for 22 years.

Seeing Beyond

Torah: "*Yehudah* was told, 'Your daughter-in-law (*Tamar*) has committed an act of promiscuity ...she has conceived through promiscuity. *Yehudah* said, 'Take her out and let her be burned!'" When *Tamar* had heard that *Yehudah* had pronounced that she was to be taken out to be burned, she could have revealed that he was the one who fathered the unborn fetuses, but she chose not to do so. She communicated to him through allusion that he was the one by saying, "Recognize, if you please, whose are this seal, this wrap, and this staff." Why did *Tamar* not openly identify *Yehudah* as the father of her unborn children in order to spare her life?

Gemara in Tractate *Kesubos*: "From here we learn that it is better for one to be cast himself into a fiery kiln rather than embarrass another individual."

Rashi: When *Tamar* pleaded with *Yehudah* to recognize the three items that she had been given by the one who had fathered the children, she had said, "Recognize, if you please..." *Tamar* was beseeching to *Yehudah*, "Recognize and acknowledge your Creator and do not allow the lives of three living beings to perish." If *Yehudah* would recognize his Creator he would be compelled to openly admit that he was the father and he would thus spare *Tamar* and her unborn children from death.

Shach: "How is it possible that the Davidic line and the kingdom of Israel should emanate from such a tarnished beginning – such the setting in which *Yehudah* had engaged with *Tamar*?" *Peretz*, one of the twins born from *Tamar*, was the ancestor of the Davidic line from whom *Moshiach* will descend. We also find a similar setting that is unbecoming to the individuals involved in the story of *Boaz* and *Ruth*, who is the grandmother of King David. *Boaz* was in the field at the threshing location and *Ruth* had appeared in the middle of the night to present herself as being available to be his wife.

Gemara: The level of control that *Boaz* needed to restrain himself from cohabiting with her was at a superhuman level. Why do these two events, the stories of *Tamar* and *Ruth*, need to have taken place in such an inappropriate context?

Shach: *Satan* has the ability to prevent certain events from coming about, if he chooses to intervene. The conception of the ancestor of the Davidic line, *Peretz*, under normal circumstances within a context of purity would not have been allowed to come about by *Satan* because of what will ultimately occur at the end of time.

When *Moshiach* comes, *Satan* will be destroyed by G-d. Thus, *Satan* will do everything within his power to prevent that eventuality from coming about. However, if the setting is set in a tainted context that has a semblance of sin, *Satan* is thus blinded and allows it to take place. This is the reason the conception of *Tamar*'s children and the setting for *Boaz* to chose *Ruth* did not evolve in a more appropriate setting.

It is interesting to note that had the *Akeidah* not taken place the Jewish people would not have been able to withstand the prosecution of *Satan* on *Rosh Hashanah*, The day of Judgement. The merit of the *Akeidah* with the sounding of the ram's

horn (*shofar*) silences prosecution. It is because of this that *Satan* attempted vehemently to interfere with the *Akeidah* at every possible moment not to allow it to happen. Had *Yehudah* not acknowledged *Tamar*'s communication to him through her allusion, she would have perished together with her unborn children in the kiln. If that were to have happened, *Peretz*, the ancestor of *Moshiach* would have not been born. If *Moshiach* would not have been able to come about as a result of *Tamar*'s death, G-d's Glory at the end of time would not be able to be actualized through the coming of *Moshiach*.

Regardless of the gravity of the consequence of her dying with her children, *Tamar* would not openly reveal that *Yehudah* was the father of her unborn children because the *Torah* dictates that "it is better to be cast into a fiery kiln than to embarrass another individual." This is why *Tamar* pleaded with *Yehudah* saying "please" recognize the consequences of your decision. Similarly, G-d pleaded with *Avraham* when He had commanded him to take his son *Yitzchak* to the *Akeidah*. As the verse states, "And it happened after these things G-d tested *Avraham* and said to him...'Please take your son, your only one, whom you love – *Yitzchak*...'"

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "G-d requested of *Avraham* to bring his son as an offering in a beseeching manner. G-d had said, 'You must succeed in this more difficult test so that they should not say that the earlier tests were meaningless.'" However based on our understanding, G-d was beseeching *Avraham* to succeed with the *Akeidah* because without its merit, the Jewish people would not be able to withstand the prosecution of *satan* on the day of judgment. Similarly, *Tamar* pleaded with *Yehudah* to recognize that she and her children needed to be spared so that *Moshiach* would bring G-d's Glory into existence.

G-d's Kindness to Yosef

Torah: "And to *Yosef* were born two sons...*Yosef* called the name of the firstborn *Manasheh* for, 'G-d has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's household.'" *Yosef* was thanking G-d for causing him to forget the hardships and anguish that he endured through his brothers. Why was *Yosef* so thankful to G-d for causing him to forget? Was it merely because

he felt relieved that he no longer experienced the trauma and pain of the past? If this would have been the cause of his rejoicing, the name that he chose to call his first-born should have connoted his thankfulness, such as the name *Yehudah*. When *Leah* had given birth to a fourth child she gave thanks to G-d and called him *Yehudah*.

Yosef's brothers had initially hated and despised him. Ultimately, they considered killing him. However, because there was a caravan of Ishmaelites that was passing, *Yehudah* suggested that they not should not leave him in the pit to die, but rather sell him into slavery. After being sold as a slave, *Yosef* experienced various levels of suffering. His greatest pain came from the fact that he was denied a relationship with his father *Yaakov*. *Yaakov's* love for *Yosef* was unlimited because he saw him as his spiritual heir, regarding guarantee the ability the spirituality of his family and the Jewish people in exile.

The teachings and spiritual growth that *Yosef* was denied because of his separation from his father was tragic. *Yosef* was groomed by his father to address all of the spiritual issues of the Jewish people in exile. He understood that his mission as the son of *Yaakov*, was to prepare for the Jewish people for the exile they would enter into and to create an insular environment to guarantee the spiritual and material survival in Egypt.

Had it not been for *Yosef's* selfless dedication and sacrifice for his family, the Jewish people would have assimilated and not left Egypt. This would have not allowed the evolvement of the people who would stand at Sinai and declare, "*Naaseh v'nishma* (we will do and we will listen)." It was only *Yosef* who was uniquely qualified to contend with all of the issues of exile, as his father had in the home of *Lavan*. All of the *Torah* that *Yaakov* had studied in the *Yeshiva* of *Shem* and *Eiver*, which was the *Torah* that was specific to the spiritual challenges that existed outside of the Land of Israel, was transmitted to *Yosef*.

Despite the depravity of Egypt and its pagan culture, *Yosef* remained unaffected as "*Yosef ha'tzaddik* (*Yosef* the devoutly righteous)." In order for *Yosef* to assume his role, as the sustainer and provider for his family, he could not have any sense of negativity towards them. The hardships and suffering that he had endured due to his brothers' initiative would

have hindered him for acting effectively. The degree of dedication that was necessary for *Yosef* to succeed was overwhelming.

Since *Yosef's* positive mindset was an imperative for the future of the Jewish people to meet the objective of existence, G-d caused him to forget all that he had suffered at the hands of his brothers, it would have not allowed his mission to succeed. *Yosef* acknowledged and declared his thankfulness to G-d for bringing about something that under normal circumstances would have been impossible. Forgetting the trauma and pain that his brothers had brought upon him was the equivalent of a miracle. By naming his firstborn *Manasheh*, it is his testament to thank G-d for the ability to fulfill his mission.

Yosef Determining the Roles of Ephraim and Menasheh

Torah: "Now to *Yosef* were born two sons...*Yosef* called the name of the firstborn *Menasheh* for, 'G-d made me forget all my hardships and all my father's household.' And the name of the second son he called *Ephraim* for, 'G-d has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.'" *Yosef* had been appointed to be the viceroy of Egypt, which was the most advanced civilization in the world. He was entrusted by Pharaoh to oversee and address all the material needs of the country.

During the years of famine, *Yosef* oversaw the sale of all grain to the Egyptian people and all the countries in that region. *Yosef's* level of power and influence over the material was profound. When *Yosef* named his son *Menasheh* he said that he had become fruitful.. was he referring to his political and material success as the Viceroy of Egypt or something other than that?

It is interesting to note that each of *Yosef's* sons evolved and developed into different roles based on their innate abilities. *Menasheh* became his father's confidant and a statesman along side his father. *Ephraim* on the other hand, was fully occupied in spiritual pursuits and thus dedicated himself only to the study of *Torah*. When *Yaakov*, came to Egypt, *Ephraim* studied with him for the remainder of *Yaakov's* life. *Yehoshua Bin Nun* who was the spiritual heir and successor of *Moshe* was from the tribe of *Ephraim* and not *Menasheh*, who was the more special of the sons of *Yosef*.

Yosef understood through his prophetic dreams and the teachings of his father that he had learned in the *Yeshiva* of *Shem* and *Aiver*, that he was the one to assume the responsibility to create a spiritual refuge for the Jewish people during their time in exile. Despite all of the impurity and depravity of Egypt the Jewish people were sufficiently insulated to be able to endure the exile because of what Yosef had created for them.

Yosef had suffered greatly at the hands of his brothers. They hated and despised him. Although they initially wanted to kill him, they decided to sell him into slavery. Because of the natural feelings pain and anguish that Yosef had as a result of their abuse, how was he able to establish such an insular environment for his family? G-d had performed a miracle and allowed him to forget the pain and travails of the past regarding his brothers. Had it not been for G-d's intervention to allow these negative feelings to dissipate, Yosef could have not been effective in his role as the provider and sustainer of the Jewish people.

After Yosef had realized that the negativity of the past had dissipated and no longer existed, he understood that he would be able to fulfill his potential as the one who is responsible for the eternity of the Jewish people. Yosef thus called his firstborn son *Menasheh* in order to acknowledge the miracle that G-d had provided for him.

After Yosef had risen to a position of power and was able to actualize his influence, he expressed his thankfulness to G-d for allowing him to succeed in his mission. He thus named his second son *Ephraim* to reveal his gratitude to G-d. Yosef experienced two levels of thankfulness. The first level of thankfulness addressed the removal of the impediment regarding his role as provider and caretaker. This was revealed through naming his firstborn *Menasheh*.

When his second son was born, his expression of thankfulness was at a more advanced level because he was declaring that he had actualized his potential and succeed to be the provider. The second stage of gratitude, was his acknowledgement of G-d's beneficence to him, allowing Yosef to merit a son such as *Ephraim*, who was the more spiritual of his two sons.

We find something similar regarding *Leah's* naming of her sons. In terms of the dimension of greatness

of the tribes, *Yehudah* the fourth son of *Leah*, merited kingship because he possessed the qualities of leadership that were needed to succeed in his role as king. When *Leah* had initially named her sons, each name connoted her own self-interest in securing her relationship with *Yaakov* as his wife. For example, The *Torah* states, "*Leah* conceived and bore a son, and declared his name *Reuvain*, as she had declared, Because *Hashem* has discerned my affliction..."

Torah: *Leah* conceived and bore another son, "Because *Hashem* has heard that I am unloved." She called her second son *Shimon*. After *Shimon*, *Leah* again conceived and declared, "This time my husband will become attached to me for I have borne him three sons; therefore He called his name *Levy*."

It was not until *Leah* conceived and gave birth to a fourth son, did she give thanks to G-d for giving her a fourth child. As it states, "This time let me gratefully praise *Hashem*; therefore she called his name *Yehudah*..." It was only after having the fourth son did *Leah* through the naming of the child acknowledge she went beyond her own self-interest thus naming him *Yehudah*. Thus, she merited to have a son who was not inwardly focused, but rather qualified and capable to assume the role of the king of the Jewish people because of his selfless dedication.

The Eternal Message that is Communicated through the Kindling of the Menorah

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: There is an argument between the house of *Hillel* and the house of *Shamai* regarding how one kindles the menorah. *Hillel* is of the opinion that on the first night of *Chanukah* one should kindle one light and add another for each subsequent night until the eighth night of the holiday. Ultimately one will have on the eighth night, eight lights burning. This manner of lighting is to commemorate the miracle that occurred during the rededication of the Second Temple.

After the Greeks had been vanquished and driven out of the Land of Israel, the Priests of the Temple were only able to locate one vial of olive oil with the seal of the High Priest. Thus indicated that it was not contaminated by the Greeks. It was sufficient to burn

for only one night. In order to produce new olive oil, it would have taken minimally another seven days. However, G-d performed a miracle and the oil that was only sufficient for one night burned for eight nights.

The house of *Shamai* argues and is of the opinion that on the first night one commences the kindling with eight lights and diminishes one light for each subsequent night until the eighth night when only one light will remain. What is the basis for the argument between the house of *Shamai* and the house of *Hillel*?

Gemara: The house of *Hillel* is of the opinion that one must kindle the lights based on the days that are to come. The house of *Shamai* is of the opinion that one kindles the lights based on the days that have passed. According to the house of *Shamai* one commences the holiday with a full appreciation of the miracle that had occurred on *Chanukah*, thus one begins the kindling of all eight lights. In contrast, the house of *Hillel* is of the opinion that one should kindle the lights as the miracle had presented itself. Just as the Jewish people did not know the full extent of the miracle of the oil until the eighth night, so too do we increase the number of lights each night until the eighth night.

Gemara: There is another interpretation of the positions of the house of *Hillel* and house of *Shamai*. The house of *Shamai* explains that during the festival of *Sukkos* there were seventy oxen that were brought throughout the festival. Each of the seventy oxen correspond one of the seventy root nations of the world. The seventy oxen were brought over the seven-day period of the holiday. There was a gradual diminishment of the number of oxen brought each day until it concluded on the seventh day with the last oxen.

Gemara: Sacrificing the oxen in diminishing order is an indication that all the nations of the world will be destroyed at the end of time and the one ox that is brought on the festival of *Shemini Atzeres*, which symbolizes the Jewish people will remain in tact. The house of *Hillel* argues, stating, "Regarding all issues of sanctity (*kedushah*), we always advance *kedushah* and we do not diminish it." Meaning, although he is in full agreement with *Shamai* regarding the oxen that were brought on *Sukkos*, which represents the demise and diminishment of the nations of the world, regarding the kindling of

the lights, the overriding principle that *kedushah* must be advanced and not diminished. Therefore, on *Chanukah*, one kindles one light and adds candles in increasing order each night.

On *Sukkos*, G-d determines the amount of water that will provide for the world. Thus, each nation is represented through the sacrifice of the oxen in order to be worthy of existence. However, ultimately they will be diminished and the Jewish people will prevail. In contrast, the kindling of the menorah on *Chanukah* is a commemoration of the miracle of the oil that was found during the re-dedication of the Temple. Despite the fact that the Greeks attempted to destroy the spirituality of the Jewish people, they were defeated and vanquished. What relevance do the oxen that were sacrificed at the *Sukkos* festival have with *Chanukah*?

The miracle of *Chanukah* took place during the Second Temple period. At this time, the Jewish people did not have the same degree of relationship with G-d as they had during the First Temple. After the destruction of the First Temple, G-d said that He would go into concealment "*hester panim* – concealed face". Meaning, one would only experience G-d through His concealment in nature.

During this period, there was no longer revealed miracles and no longer prophecy, which is a direct communication between G-d and man. During the occupation of the Greeks the Jewish people were becoming acculturated with the Greeks (Hellenized) culture. As a result of the initiative of the *Chashmonaim* to expunge this impurity from their midst, the Greek armies were driven from the Land. Although the number of *Chashmonaim* and Jews who battled the Greeks was small and on a natural level were not able to beat the mighty Greek army, G-d performed a miracle and brought victory to the *Chashmonaim*. Subsequently, the Temple was purified and rededicated.

During the Second Temple period, there was no revealed miracles. The only revealed miracle that had taken place after the destruction of the First Temple was the miracle of the vial of oil. The *menorah* burning in the Temple was an indication that G-d dwelt among the midst of the Jewish people. Despite the fact that the Jewish people of the Second Temple period were

not on the same spiritual level of the First Temple, G-d wanted to reveal to them that He was still in their midst.

The message that was communicated through the miracle of the oil of the menorah was that although the Jewish people from a spiritual standpoint may not be as advanced as previous generations; nevertheless, because G-d is in their midst they will live on for eternity.

However, this is not so regarding the nations of the world. This was communicated through the diminished amount of oxen that were brought as sacrifices on the festival of *Sukkos*. The house of *Shamai* is of the opinion that the miracle of *Chanukah* was to demonstrate to the Jewish people that they are eternal, unlike the other nations of the world who are only temporary.

Therefore, in order to communicate this understanding in a clear manner we begin with the kindling of eight lights and diminish one for each subsequent night. In fact, the house of *Hillel* is in full agreement with the house of *Shamai* regarding the philosophical message; however, because the lighting of the menorah is a *mitzvah*, it is a representation of sanctity there is an overriding factor that supersedes the message. One must advance sanctity and not diminish it. Therefore, one must add a light for every night until all eight lights are kindled.

Regarding one's level of spirituality, one is never permitted to regress or plateau. One must continue to advance in his spirituality and go from strength to strength.



Yad Avraham Institute