

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE MIKETZ

DECEMBER 11-12, 2015 30 KISLEV 5776

Rosh Hodesh Tebet will be celebrated on Shabbat & Sunday, Dec. 12 & 13.
DEDICATIONS: In memory of Rachel Bat Victoria – Aunt Rachel Sutton – 8th day of Hanukah

Minha & Arbit 4:09PM - Candle Lighting 4:09PM

Remember to Light the Menorah before the Shabbat Candles

Remember to use enough oil to last at least one hour

Friends – We need assistance and a commitment for Friday evenings

Shabbat NEW TIME FOR THE WINTER SEASON

Class with Rav Aharon 8:30AM – Latest Shema 8:39AM

Shahrit 9:00 AM, Torah not before 10:00 and Musaf not before 10:30AM

Derasha by Rabbi Yosef - Chazot is 11:48

Kiddush sponsored by the sisterhood for Hanukah

Please be generous and donate a Kiddush

As we pray Mincha after Kiddush during the winter, we need a sponsor every week

Mincha Follows Kiddush – Amida after 12:12 PM

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's program at Sephardic at 3:00PM – Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:00

Seudah Shelishi at Home

Shabbat Ends at 5:10 Return for Arbit at 5:30 PM

SUNDAY MORNING Shahrith at 8AM

DAILY MINYAN

Monday, Thursday 6:55, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 7:00AM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hanukah Continues through Monday the 14th

We are happy to announce the return of movie night! Thank you to Rabbi Colish for his help arranging the movies, to David Freiden and Robert and Avital Yadgarov for volunteering to be "counsellors" and to Patti Azizo and Lisa Gaon for volunteering to do the pizza runs!

The first movie night will be Motzei Shabbat December 19th at 6 pm. Please join us and bring your friends! Special Thank You to Jack and Patti Azizo for sponsoring the pizza.

To be on the volunteer list or to sponsor a movie night please email Hindy - HmizNY@Gmail.com

Please take the time to settle your outstanding pledges and obligations To make a payment or donate on line

Please visit <http://www.benaiasher.org/donate-online/>

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please reply to
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 Newsletter archives now at BenaiAsher.Org

**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue,
 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us!
 212-289-2100 – Mincha/Arbit –Give us 18
 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!**

Chen Inner Beauty

We spent the weekend in Miami visiting my mom. It's great to spend time with her, especially when we are with our two youngest, Moses and Mariyah. I love to see the interaction. We were at dinner and realized the date was December 7th, (Happy Birthday Lorraine), the anniversary of the surprise military strike by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. Hearing my mom tell us about FDR's speech and the thoughts that went through people's minds is priceless.

While we were in Miami, we had the opportunity to attend the world famous art exhibitions at Art Basel. Art Basel's stated goal has been to connect the world's premier galleries and their patrons. They also hope to be the meeting point for the international art world. In addition to the overflowing convention center, there were more than 25 different venues throughout the city with thousands of exhibitors showing everything from Picassos and Francis Bacon to lots and lots of things way beyond my understanding most of which appeared to be the Emperor's New Clothes to me. It's important for us to see trends in design, but I was totally puzzled by much.

We continue the story of Joseph this week and when reading it, I always wondered how Joseph became viceroy. When Pharaoh sent for Joseph to be brought from the prison and to interpret his dream, did his chief of staff quickly prepare a dossier on Joseph detailing his history, his rise to lead the house of Potiphar and the unjust accusation against him? Did it tell of the reason behind Joseph's incarceration, and his subsequent rise to assistant director of the prison managing all on behalf of the warden? What convinced Pharaoh to appoint the interpreter of dreams as the viceroy of all Egypt? The Midrash tells of a test of languages where Joseph climbed the seventy steps of Pharaoh's throne with each language he knew finally eclipsing Pharaoh who lacked knowledge of the Holy Tongue. But why appoint a linguist to lead a nation in need of an economic planner, a knowledgeable agricultural professional and food storage and distribution expert? Perhaps Pharaoh considered that if the

destiny of his nation was to rise and possibly fall based on some nature based fate, he needed someone connected to a place above fate, someone connected to a point above the stars, and someone who succeeded in everything he touched working for him? Perhaps Pharaoh saw that in a world seemingly governed by physical law, Joseph was that someone connected to the spiritual and the source.

It's Chanukah. We hear about the Jews and the Greeks. The Torah states, "May God beautify Yefet". Yefet, the son of Noah, is the ancestor of Greece and he was blessed with Yofi, an external beauty; a beauty limited to the surface or the cover. But beauty must extend beyond the surface. Too often we judge by the cover. Too often we like what we think we should like. Too often we are influenced by society. I understand they have a word for this behavior today, FOMO or Fear of Missing Out!

At Art Basel, as I passed by what looked to be a six foot square coffee table painted with chalk board paint and adorned with some chalk circles and a few rocks set on it, I joked to Moses that we needed to have one of those. A mother with her two kids was next to us and they all started laughing. The boy had a kippah on his head. The mom told me she couldn't believe what passed for art these days. It made me think of Hanukkah and the Greeks and where they placed art within their society.

Where Greece is known for Yoffi, Israel is known for Chen. We translate Chen as grace, but chen represents an inner beauty. Sometimes you look at a person and believe you see the spirit shine through. You can feel their presence, their soul, their grace.

In the decrees against the Jewish people, the Hellenists did not seek to destroy the body. To them Yoffi or external beauty was all that was needed. They sought to destroy the fire within. They sought to extinguish the light. They forbid circumcision stating the body is perfect as it is. They forbid the celebration of Rosh Hodesh which places man over time. They forbid the celebration of the Sabbath which adds a spiritual dimension to our physical world. They sought to eradicate the chen.

Walking through Art Basel I realized that beauty is often in the eyes of the beholder, but grace, chen, appeals to us all. The beauty of the spirit is what Pharaoh may have seen within Joseph and the beauty of the spirit is what separates Greece from us.

We have to remember to reject that feeling of FOMO, to reject the emperor's new clothes, and to withstand

society's pressures. Yes, the external is important but only when accompanied by the internal.

Going back to the verse, I realize maybe the lesson is there. "May God beautify Yefet and he will dwell in the tents of Shem." Perhaps Yefet represents beauty but the only way for beauty to shine is when it is accompanied by the inner beauty of Jacob's tent.

We are a special people; a people with chen. Let's remember that always.

Shabbat Shalom, David Bibi

Story of How A US Soldier Saved 200 Jews Finally Told - Roddie Edmonds honored for his remarkable move in POW camp By Arden Dier,

(Newser) – Roddie Edmonds is the first US soldier to receive Israel's Righteous Among the Nations honor, 70 years after he risked his life to save 200 Jews. The native of Knoxville, Tenn., was captured in the Battle of the Bulge in late 1944 and held at German POW camp Staleg IXA, according to Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum. When the Nazis ordered all Jewish-American POWs to step forward on Jan. 27, 1945, Edmonds—the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer at the camp—ordered 1,000 US soldiers to do so, regardless of their religion, per the AP. "They cannot all be Jews!" a German commander said, per Yad Vashem. "We are all Jews here," Edmonds replied, adding soldiers didn't need to divulge their religion under the Geneva Conventions. The commander then put a gun to Edmonds' head.

He said, "I'll give you one more chance. Have the Jewish men step forward or I will shoot you on the spot," Edmonds' son, the Rev. Chris Edmonds, tells NPR. "They said my dad paused, and said, 'If you shoot, you'll have to shoot us all.'" The commander yielded. Chris Edmonds believes his dad's move saved 200 lives. Edmonds died in 1985 and his untold story nearly died with him. How it surfaced is fascinating: Some time after his father's death, Chris Edmonds read an article about Richard Nixon's purchase of a tony Manhattan townhouse from a man named Lester Tanner—who mentioned that Edmonds saved his life. The son then embarked on a quest to find Tanner. Edmonds was honored on Wednesday as only the fifth American to receive the Israeli honor, the country's highest for non-Jews who undertook heroic acts in WWII. He is now being considered for a Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Weekly Torah Reading - Yosef becomes viceroy. The brothers come down to Mitsrayim

- 1- Paroh has 2 dreams. Yosef is called up from jail to interpret the dreams.
- 2- Yosef interprets the dreams.
- 3- Paroh appoints Yosef as the viceroy. The good years begin and Yosef amasses grain. Yosef gets married and has Efrayim and Menashe.
- 4- The hunger begins. The brothers go down to mitsrayim to get food. Yosef accuses them of being spies.
- 5- Yosef keeps Shimon and sends the brothers to bring back Binyamin
- 6- The brothers return to Yosef with Binyamin
- 7- Yosef finds the cup in Binyamin's sack

What should we be thinking and feeling during the days of Hanukah? The gemara in Shabbat, Daf 21b, notes that because of the miracle of the candles the days of Hanukah were established as days of hallel and hoda'ah (days of praise and thanks). Similarly, we say in the bimey matitya which we insert in the amida on Hanukah "kab'oooh shemonat yemey Hanuka eluh be'hallel oo'be'hoda'ah (these days were established as a time of hallel and hoda'ah). So we see Hanukah is a time to give praise and thanks to Hashem. It is a time to look around and give thanks for all Hashem has blessed us with. As we light the candles we can be thankful for the home we are in and the family that surrounds us as we light. We can focus on the miracle of the candles which shows us that even in a time darkness like Yavan Hashem is there with us. So much so that he performed a miracle that changed nature to remind us of his presence (to encourage us and show us he is there). And so even in times of darkness like today, when we often can't see Hashem clearly, we need to know Hashem is here. He cares about us. He is protecting us. He is watching over us daily! And maybe we can say that this is the hallel and hoda'ah of Hanukah! We are celebrating Hashem's love for us and that he is taking care of us. As we light the candles let us take a moment and reflect on all we were blessed with! Happy Hanukah!

**THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN
"Hanukah candles are lit in the synagogue before Habdalah." (Shulhan Aruch, Orach Chaim 681:2)**

The Shulhan Aruch rules that the Menorah lighting precedes the making of Habdalah on Saturday night in shul, even though there is a rule that when confronted with two misvot at the same time, the one that occurs more often gets the green light to go first (tadir kodem). In our case, we do Hanukah lights first in order to delay the exit of

Shabbat as long as possible (Mishnah Berurah ibid. #2.) Rabbi David Yosef explains (Torat Hamoadim chapter 8 paragraph 9) that even though the one who lights the Menorah removes from himself the sanctity of Shabbat by lighting the Menorah, nevertheless since the rest of the congregation is not fulfilling its obligation of Hanukah lights in shul, they still retain the holiness of Shabbat a few more moments until Habdalah is said. Therefore, when each individual lights the Menorah at home, since he will remove the sanctity of Shabbat when he lights, the other rule of more common occurrence (tadir kodem) kicks in and therefore our custom is to say Habdalah at home before Hanukah lights.

Rav Pam would often extract from this discussion an important practical lesson on how one should treasure every moment of Shabbat and not rush to see it depart. This is illustrated by the fact that we disregard the principle of tadir by making Habdalah after the Menorah just to delay the departure of Shabbat for a few more moments. How unfortunate is it that many people rush Shabbat out by saying Arbit at the earliest permissible time!

Shabbat is the time of tranquility. Rashi says (Bereshheet 2:2), "When Shabbat arrives tranquility arrives." The Tur (295) writes that even the wicked who experience terrible punishment in purgatory, enjoy tranquility on Shabbat. Nonetheless, at the conclusion of Shabbat the wicked return to their punishment and, a Rama (295:1) notes, this is the reason why Jews recite the perek of "Vehi noam" (Shuva) on Saturday night in Arbit, to extend the reprieve of the wicked from purgatory for a few more minutes.

There are various opinions as to when Shabbat is over. Is it 40, 60, 72 or 90 minutes after sunset? What is the official time in Gehinam to bring the wicked for the resumption of their punishments? Yesod Veshoresh Haavodah (8:1) quotes Kabbalistic sources which say that the wicked return to Gehinam at the time when they held the conclusion of Shabbat during their lifetimes. If they were from those who impatiently waited for the earliest time to end Shabbat, their punishments will resume at the earliest time as well. If they tried to extend the Shabbat as long as possible, they will receive the same courtesy from Heaven as well. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"If I don't bring Binyamin back, I will be a sinner forever."(Bereshheet 43:9)

Yehudah wanted to convince Ya'akob to allow Binyamin to go down to Egypt with them. Otherwise, the viceroy would not allow their other brother out of prison. Yehudah therefore told Ya'akob, "If I don't bring back Binyamin I will be considered a sinner my whole life, including Olam Haba, the Next World." The Gemara says that

because of these words, Yehudah was not allowed into Olam Haba for many hundreds of years, until Moshe Rabenu prayed fervently, and got Yehudah into Olam Haba.

We see from here how careful we have to be when using words, even about ourselves. Although Yehudah said these words for a noble purpose of reuniting the family, nevertheless, his words affected his future in a very drastic way. We should never utter words which can have a dangerous effect on ourselves or on anybody, even when just joking or playing. Saying things like, "I could die from embarrassment," or, "I'm going to kill you for that," or, "You're dead," and the like, should be avoided at all costs. Although we don't mean these things literally, words uttered have a powerful force. We should train ourselves to say words of berachah (blessing) even when upset or angry. Many people from the old generation used to say, "You should be blessed," or the like, when they got upset with that person. This way, not only did they not say anything negative during an argument, but by saying nice things they made the arguments shorter. This is something to think about and train ourselves to do. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

ON YOUR GUEST BEHAVIOR

It's a daily battle. No matter how hard you try, you can't seem to get the children to stop bickering at the dinner table. Manners? Forget about it; there is no hope! Get the kids to clean their rooms? Don't fantasize, please!

Let's face it – not only children, but adults as well act quite differently in a familiar, comfortable environment where they can be totally relaxed. Even the way people dress breaks all rules when they are safely ensconced in the confines of their own homes.

Things really change, however, when a family has houseguests. Adults have the good sense to "clean up their act," and even more miraculous is the transformation of their rambunctious offspring into sparkling, neat, well-behaved kids. Having new "eyes" on the premises prompts better behavior.

David Hamelech didn't wait for guests. His approach was to imagine that Hashem was opposite him at all times. The Shulhan Aruch opens with the instruction to always imagine that Hashem is present wherever you may be, and is watching all that you do. Yet most of us still have a tough time envisioning Hashem watching us at close range. It is even more difficult to imagine His immediate presence when we are at home doing our menial chores.

A good training technique is to imagine that you have guests as you work through your daily routine. Walk, talk, sit, and dress to impress your VIPs. Be on your "guest behavior." It may be only play-acting, but you will avoid slipping into a "sloppy"

mode of behavior that is really beneath your dignity.
(One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

**Visit DailyHalacha.com, DailyGemara.com,
MishnaBerura.com, LearnTorah.com
Inconspicuous Consumption**

We read in Parashat Miketz of the devastating drought that ravaged Eretz Yisrael and the surrounding countries during the time of Yaakov Abinu. As the famine tightened its grip, Egypt was the only country that still had large stockpiles of grain. Yosef had predicted the seven years of drought that would follow seven years of surplus, and urged Pharaoh to prepare for the famine by storing the surplus grain. People from the surrounding countries flocked to Egypt to purchase food provisions, which were scarce, or unavailable altogether, in their homelands.

The Torah relates that Yaakov Abinu, too, sent his sons to Egypt to purchase grain. When he proposed the idea to his sons, he asked them, “Lama Titra’u?” (42:1), which literally means, “Why do you make yourselves conspicuous?” The commentaries explain that Yaakov and his family still had food provisions at this point; they had not reached the point where they needed to purchase grain from Egypt. However, Yaakov was concerned about what the surrounding peoples would think upon seeing him and his family enjoying financial stability while they were without food. Everybody else was forced to travel to Egypt to buy food. If they saw Yaakov and his family enjoying relative stability while everybody else in Canaan had nothing and had to buy grain from Egypt, they would naturally feel envious and resentful. Yaakov, wisely, knew he had to avoid these hostile feelings. He therefore said to his sons, “Why should we make a spectacle? Why should we appear wealthy while everyone else is struggling? Why draw this kind of attention to ourselves? Why evoke the resentment of the surrounding nations?” And he sent his sons to buy grain in Egypt – not because they needed grain, but in order not to look wealthier than the surrounding tribes.

Yaakov’s remark to his children conveys a critically important message specifically for our day and age, when, by and large, we enjoy prosperity and material comforts. Contemporary society teaches, “If you have it, flaunt it.” Yaakov Abinu, however, teaches us to do just the opposite. He instructed his sons to appear poorer than they were, as opposed to today’s culture which encourages us to exhibit our wealth to the greatest extent possible. Yaakov understood what far too few people today understand – that

showing off material success, especially in periods of financial instability, invites hostility, not admiration. When a person flaunts his wealth, people around him become resentful – not his adoring admirers.

This is an especially important message for Orthodox Jewry in America. We, like Yaakov and his sons, must be wary of how the nations around us see us. And they will not take to us too warmly if they see us flaunting our wealth. They will become envious, hostile and resentful, and will accuse us of taking what they feel is rightfully theirs. When two women are sitting together at the hairdresser reporting to each other their latest purchases and luxury vacation plans, they must realize that the non-Jewish hairdressers and other customers are listening and paying attention. And when a Jewish businessman is always keeping up-to-date with the latest clothing fashions and luxury cars, his non-Jewish associates are watching, observing, and becoming jealous.

We have to be very careful not to be too conspicuous in our consumption. There is certainly nothing wrong with enjoying the material benefits with which one has been blessed by God. But this must be done privately, with discretion. We must avoid giving an outward appearance of wealth and luxury when the gentiles around us are struggling. This will only invite hostility. Let us learn from our great patriarch, Yaakov, and exercise extreme caution in the way we use our material blessings, and do whatever we can not to arouse the jealousy and resentment of our non-Jewish neighbors through whose ongoing grace we are blessed to live peacefully and comfortably on these shores.

VICTOR BIBI - SOD HAPARASHA
Danger On The Road

The Talmud in Berakhot (29-30) rules that one who sets out "laderekh - on the road", is required to say Tefilat Haderekh. The prayer beseeches that one be rescued from the hand of the enemy who may be lurking on the derekh. The blessing appears to assume that spiritual and possibly physical enemies are always to be found on the Derekh - road.

The idea that the "Derekh - the road" was fraught with danger was first noted by Yaakov in his prayer at Bet-El. "If Hashem will be with me...If he will protect me on the Derekh." In our Parasha, Yaakov rejects Reuven's offer to take responsibility for Binyamin and to return him safely back to his father. His response to the offer begins " His brother is dead...Something will happen to him on the Derekh - the road." Yaakov only appears concerned with a mishap that might occur "on the Derekh- road". He thereby preempted

his rejection of the offer with "His brother is dead". Namely, I sent Yosef on the Derekh- the road, but he did not return. Furthermore, his mother Rahel died and was buried on the road to Efrat. In recounting this to his children Yaakov notes " Rahel had died on the Derekh - road".

In next weeks Parasha we see Yosef advising his brothers in the combatting of any evil that might befall them on the Derekh - road back to Canaan. As they were leaving Egypt he warns "Do not become angry or agitated on the Derekh- road." As anger and agitation amongst travelers can surely arouse the negative forces that lurk there.

The Yerushalmi (Shabbat 2:6) asks, On the Derekh - road? Yes! At home? No. From here it is derived that Satan attacks only at a time of danger." The Talmud apparently equates one's time on the Derekh - road with a time of danger. In fact, R. Yohanan is sighted in another Midrash and asserts that indeed "The Derekh- road is a place of danger."

Having no choice, Yaakov acquiesces to Yehuda's offer to take responsibility for Binyamin. We would have assumed that now the Torah would proceed to describe how Yaakov would attempt to arouse Divine forces to counter any adversarial forces by performing the misva to escort (Melave) them on the road. This would surely arouse protection for Binyamin prior to his travels. Hadn't Yaakov learned this from his grandfather Abraham who had escorted the Angels after their visit to him. ?

This time, however, it appears that Yaakov had opted for an alternative way of protection for them. The verse reads "Their father said to them...Take some of the land's famous produce in your baggage. A little balsam...and almonds." R. Yosef Hayyim (Od Yosef Hai - Mikets 4) sights Rabbenu HaAri (Sha'ar Kavanot) that the words and letters in this verse stated by Yaakov contain three holy names which offer protection from certain mishap. Evidently, Yaakov only felt confident to use this form of protection as opposed to (only) using the misva of escorting them.

The Yerushalmi explains that when Yaakov sent Yosef to inquire about the welfare of his brothers he had in fact offered his son protection and escorted him. Yaakov told Yosef that in the future the descendants will fail and not escort their guests to the outskirts of the city. This will expose the guests to the spiritual dangers of the Derekh - road and the guest will be killed. This would then require the Judges of the town to take a calf of cattle (Egla Arufa) and declare "Our hands have not spilled this blood and

our eyes did not see". In essence they were to say that the murdered one did not come within our presence and we did not send him off without food. Nor did we see him leave to go on his way without escort.

This is why Yaakov taught Yosef this law of Egla Arufa and escorted him on his way to search out the welfare of the brothers. However, according to the Sages, Yaakov was later troubled as he knew that the traveler and the escort are to be protected through this misva. They had left each other as proscribed by the Torah!

Why would tragedy have befallen Yosef on the Derekh if Yaakov had done the misva? Yaakov likely pondered that he might not have done the misva properly! Thereby exposing his son to the danger on the Derekh! Hence, the spirit of Yaakov had departed.

In next weeks Parasha we are taught that Yaakov saw the Agolot - Wagons which Yosef had dispatched. The Midrash explains that Yaakov had understood this to be a veiled reference by Yosef concerning the learning of the subject of Egla Arufa they had previously when Yosef had set off on the Derekh road to Shekhem.

It appears to me that Yosef was telling his father, that your misva of escorting me indeed had protected me! I was not injured! I had been sent to preserve Israel through these events. Do not be dismayed. The teaching of Abraham that one who escorts another will offer him protection on the Derekh - road is valid. The performance thereby of the Egla Arufa would not be necessary! Yosef is alive! Hence, Yaakov realized that the teaching of his Grandfather to escort one who sets out on the Derekh road was indeed effective. Upon realizing this the verse continues " The spirit of Yaakov was revived".

Rabbi Wein

The Maccabees of old lived in a very fortuitous time. Had they lived today they would be accused of extrajudicial executions of the poor Syrian Greeks who, after all, were only trying to kill them and improve their civilization. At least that is certainly how the Foreign Minister of Sweden would have seen the matter. But since Sweden at that time was inhabited by pagan tribes and there was no Internet or media to speak of, we really do not know what the Swedish attitude towards the Maccabees would have been.

We can certainly surmise though that it would not have been a positive one.

And if the current president of the United States were alive then he would certainly have been critical of the use of arms just to purify the Temple and regain the territory and sovereignty that was rightfully Jewish. He would have advocated conferences, shuttle diplomacy and above all, the willingness to compromise with an enemy that openly professed the desire to destroy you no matter what concessions are granted to it.

And the Maccabees were also fortunate that the European Union did not exist then. If it had, then the olive oil that the Maccabees searched for and eventually found to light the great candelabra in the Temple would have had to be labeled as being produced in areas of the Land of Israel that were previously occupied by the Greeks and now subject to the "occupation" policies of those stubborn Jews.

Needless to say, had the United Nations existed then the Maccabees would have been the subject of many resolutions condemning their policies, actions and behavior. But as mentioned above, the Maccabees lived at a time when none of this nonsense existed and, perhaps, that alone is one of the great miracles of our holiday of Chanuka.

We are not as fortunate as the Maccabees. For us, all of the above is not a parody but rather the reality of the world in which we live. So, the holiday of Chanuka must come to give us hope and determination and a renewed belief in our cause and our rights.

The Maccabees faced not only powerful external enemies but an insidious internal foe as well. The Hellenists amongst the Jews were so influenced and enamored by Greek culture that they actively proposed steps that would have completely snuffed out the Jewish state and Judaism itself. The defeat of the Hellenists within the Jewish world was as vital to the triumph of Chanuka as was the military victory over the Syrian Greek oppressors.

The Hellenists distorted Judaism to make it fit their own Hellenist-Greek template of what they considered politically correct and their view of an advanced civilization. The Torah and Jewish tradition in their eyes was antiquated and deserved to be ignored and/or rewritten to fit the then seemingly modern Greek view of the world.

Well, the current day Hellenists are alive and well amongst us. They are the leading Israel bashers and

tradition haters in the Jewish world. They are driven by a false vision of Jewish values and a complete misunderstanding of the role of Israel in Jewish and world affairs. They not only give comfort to our enemies but in many respects they are our enemies themselves.

The Maccabees, if they were alive today, would certainly recognize them as the heirs and followers of the Hellenists of old. We should also think of them in those terms and react accordingly to their baseless charges and pernicious programs.

The recent spate of Islamic radical violence the world over has yet to change the mindset of the Western world regarding Israel. The Palestinian narrative regarding Israel is so fixed in the minds of Western academia, media and political leadership that almost no facts, no matter how obvious they may be, can somehow expose that narrative for its basic falseness.

The world has long known that the Jews are the canary in the mine. Nevertheless, the world not only tolerated but in many respects even encouraged Islamic violence against the Jewish state and its citizens. After all, only Jews are being killed and Israel is the catalyst for all the violence that wracks the Middle East.

But as Pastor Neimoller commented regarding the Nazis, they first came for the Jews and no one rose to object or protect them. Eventually they came for everyone and there was no one left who could object or protect the innocent. Well, they have now come for everyone, everywhere in the Western world. The Maccabees would certainly recognize our current world and they would instill within us the courage to resist annihilation and to rekindle the lamp of hope that Chanuka symbolically represents

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks To Wait Without Despair

Something extraordinary happens between last week's parsha and this week's. It is almost as if the pause of a week between them were itself part of the story.

Recall last week's parsha about the childhood of Joseph, focusing not on what happened but on who made it happen. Throughout the entire roller-coaster ride of Joseph's early life he is described as passive, not active; the done-to, not the doer; the object, not

the subject, of verbs.

It was his father who loved him and gave him the richly embroidered cloak. It was his brothers who envied and hated him. He had dreams, but we do not dream because we want to but because, in some mysterious way still not yet fully understood, they come unbidden into our sleeping mind.

His brothers, tending their flocks far from home, plotted to kill him. They threw him into a pit. He was sold as a slave. In Potiphar's house he rose to a position of seniority, but the text goes out of its way to say that this was not because of Joseph himself, but because of God: "God was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that God was with him, and that God caused all that he did to prosper in his hands."

Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, and failed, but here too, Joseph was passive, not active. He did not seek her, she sought him. Eventually, "She caught hold of his garment, saying, 'Lie with me!' But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside." Using the garment as evidence, she had him imprisoned on a totally false charge. There was nothing Joseph could do to establish his innocence.

In prison, again he became a leader, a manager, but again the Torah goes out of its way to attribute this not to Joseph but to Divine intervention: "God was with Joseph and showed him kindness. He gave him favour in the sight of the chief jailer ... Whatever was done there, He was the one who did it. The chief jailer paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because God was with him; and whatever he did, God made it prosper."

There he met Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. They had dreams, and Joseph interpreted them, but insisted that it is not he but God who was doing so: "Joseph said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.'"

There is nothing like this anywhere else in Tanakh. Whatever happened to Joseph was the result of someone else's deed: those of his father, his brothers, his master's wife, the chief jailer, or God Himself. Joseph was the ball thrown by hands other than his own.

Then, for essentially the first time in the whole story, Joseph decided to take fate into his own hands. Knowing that the chief butler was about to be restored to his position, he asked him to bring his case to the attention of Pharaoh: "Remember me

when it is well with you; please do me the kindness to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this place. For indeed I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should have put me into prison."

A double injustice had been done, and Joseph saw this as his one chance of regaining his freedom. But the end of the parsha delivers a devastating blow: "The chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, and forgot him." The anticlimax is intense, emphasized by the double verb, "did not remember" and "forgot." We sense Joseph waiting day after day for news. None comes. His last, best hope has gone. He will never go free. Or so it seems.

To understand the power of this anticlimax, we must remember that only since the invention of printing and the availability of books have we been able to tell what happens next merely by turning a page. For many centuries, there were no printed books. People knew the biblical story primarily by listening to it week by week. Those who were hearing the story for the first time had to wait a week to discover what Joseph's fate would be.

The parsha break is thus a kind of real-life equivalent to the delay Joseph experienced in jail, which, as this week's parsha begins by telling us, took "Two whole years". It was then that Pharaoh had two dreams that no one in the court could interpret, prompting the chief butler to remember the man he had met in prison. Joseph was brought to Pharaoh, and within hours was transformed from zero to hero: from prisoner-without-hope to Viceroy of the greatest empire of the ancient world.

Why this extraordinary chain of events? It is telling us something important, but what? Surely this: God answers our prayers, but often not when we thought or how we thought. Joseph sought to get out of prison, and he did get out of prison. But not immediately, and not because the butler kept his promise.

The story is telling us something fundamental about the relationship between our dreams and our achievements. Joseph was the great dreamer of the Torah, and his dreams for the most part came true. But not in a way he or anyone else could have anticipated. At the end of last week's parsha – with Joseph still in prison – it seemed as if those dreams had ended in ignominious failure. We had to wait for a week, as he had to wait for two years, before discovering that it was not so.

There is no achievement without effort. That is the first principle. God saved Noah from the flood, but first Noah had to build the ark. God promised

Abraham the land, but first he had to buy the cave of Machpelah in which to bury Sarah. God promised the Israelites the land, but they had to fight the battles. Joseph became a leader, as he dreamed he would. But first he had to hone his practical and administrative skills, first in Potiphar's house, then in prison. Even when God assures us that something will happen, it will not happen without our effort. A Divine promise is not a substitute for human responsibility. To the contrary, it is a call to responsibility.

But effort alone is not enough. We need *seyata di-Shemaya*, "the help of Heaven". We need the humility to acknowledge that we are dependent on forces not under our control. No one in Genesis invoked God more often than Joseph. As Rashi (to Gen. 39:3) says, "God's name was constantly in his mouth". He credited God for each of his successes. He recognised that without God he could not have done what he did. Out of that humility came patience.

Those who have achieved great things have often had this unusual combination of characteristics. On the one hand they work hard. They labour, they practice, they strive. On the other, they know that it will not be their hand alone that writes the script. It is not our efforts alone that decide the outcome. So we pray, and God answers our prayers – but not always when or how we expected. (And of course, sometimes the answer is No).

The Talmud (Niddah 70b) says it simply. It asks, What should you do to become rich? It answers: work hard and behave honestly. But, says the Talmud, many have tried this and did not become rich. Back comes the answer: You must pray to God from whom all wealth comes. In which case, asks the Talmud, why work hard? Because, answers the Talmud: The one without the other is insufficient. We need both: human effort and Divine favour. We have to be, in a certain sense, patient and impatient: impatient with ourselves but patient in waiting for God to bless our endeavours.

The week-long delay between Joseph's failed attempt to get out of jail and his eventual success is there to teach us this delicate balance. If we work hard enough, God grants us success – but not when we want but, rather, when the time is right.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL
"The cornerstone which was despised by the builders, became the top (exalted) of the edifice"
(Tehillim 118:22).

This week we say the complete 'Hallel' for the full eight days of Chanukah. David Hamelech included

this principle in the wealth of thoughts of praise, gratitude and excitement found in Hallel.

Yosef Hatzadeek was at the most desperate point in his career. He was sold into slavery, taken to a foreign land, unjustly accused and thrown into jail for 12 years. "The cornerstone which was despised by the builders." referring to Yosef who was also rejected by his brothers.

Now Pharaoh does something unprecedented, irresponsible and unexpected. He could have just given Yosef a great reward for interpreting the dreams. Pharaoh takes the King's ring off of his finger and puts it on Yosef!! This evokes feelings of wild excitement in us. Yosef is King of Egypt!!

Just like the elation experienced by our Nation at Chanukah when the single flask of oil miraculously stayed lit for 8 days. And also when we saw that suddenly Haman was hanging on the tree and the King's ring was placed on Mordecai's finger. All of these revelations by Hashem are indications that: "Hashem is with His Jewish People."

The next verse of the Hallel reveals the true purpose, that of gaining *Emunah*.

"This (unexpected surprise) is from Hashem, it is (meant to be) a wonder in our eyes." (ibid.188:23) Hashem operates the world utilizing 'surprises' throughout history in order to reveal that it is He who manages the affairs of the world with His Providence.

Some examples are, Yishmael was older but Yitzchak was chosen. Esav was the first born but Yaacob was the chosen one. Yosef was younger and despised by the Brothers yet through it all Yosef was chosen. David was the youngest and his lineage was suspected however he became King David. The Jewish nation is the most despised and very small in numbers yet we are the Chosen of Hashem and will become "the top of the edifice" at the end.