



RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Rabbi Soloveitchik's Chanukah Lessons (P. 2)

Making a Miracle Great

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik suggested a dramatic comparison between the flames of the menorah and the flames of the burning bush that Moshe encountered in the wilderness. It is noteworthy, said the Rav, that Moshe did not describe the event of the burning bush as miraculous. He simply referred to the bush as *ha'mareh hagadol hazeh*, "this great sight." What does it mean by "this great sight"? Apparently the fact that it was miraculous was not interesting to Moshe.

The most important feature of this site is whether or not it will be impactful and life changing. It is "a great sight" in the fact that it produces change and it produces results. "Not always is it necessary for an event to be miraculous in order for it to be great, and not always is every miraculous event a great event." In other words, no matter how miraculous it is, it is very small if it is wasted. The greatness of a miracle is in "man's ability to turn a miracle into a great creative event." (The Rav Thinking Aloud pp.21-24)

Why did the Sages in the time of Chanukah not immediately establish the holiday of Chanukah (Shabbat 21b)? The Rav said that the answer is simple. The Sages waited to see the results of the wondrous events. If life had remained status quo after the miracle as before the miracle the festival of Chanukah would never have come into existence. It took a year to investigate and explore and only then did the Sages proclaim Chanukah as a festival.

The Rav commented that within the context of the modern miracles of the State of Israel the question that must be contemplated is if these miracles have been appropriately appreciated and have brought about a change. Only then can we determine the greatness of the miracle (Ibid, p. 24).

Yosef and Chanukah

There is symbolism in every detail of the Jewish calendar. The Rav taught that the timing of the Torah readings that fall out during Chanukah have significant meaning for the holiday itself.

Strikingly, the Joseph story is front and center this time of year. A common denominator between Yosef and Chanukah is the clash of cultures and the heroic Jewish spirit to courageously remain faithful in a threatening culture and environment "Joseph's mission was to demonstrate that enormous success, unlimited riches, admiration, prominence, and power are not

in conflict with a saintly covenantal life.” (Days of Deliverance, p. 163)

Yosef consistently showed great restraint and heroic determination in the face of a foreign culture and its seductive way of life. The Maccabees and the *Chashmonaim* similarly were tested and stood firm in the face of great pressure and provocation.

“Before the children of Abraham became involved in that adventure of exile and servitude, a basic truth had to be established; whether or not it is possible for the covenantal community to spend so many years in a land that is not theirs and not lose its identity. Jacob and Joseph both proved that.” (Ibid., p. 162)

Furthermore, the Rav turns our attention to a second theme that has profound relevance for Chanukah. He highlighted the fact that a major theme of the Yosef story was reconciliation between the brothers, and the *teshuva* that the brothers did. The Rav explained that it was insufficient just to remove the physical *tumah* [impurity] from the Temple, but the spiritual *tumah* had to be removed, and Israel had to do *teshuva*. The penitence by the *Chashmonaim* led to reconciliation with the Hellenists, with their return to Judaism. Thus Chanukah was the culmination of this *teshuva*, similar to the weekly portions recounting the story of Yosef and his brothers.

Shabbat and Chanukah Candles

In Jewish life there are two mitzvot that require the kindling of lights: Shabbat and Chanukah candles. The Rav compared the two and demonstrated that each represents a different notion and objective.

Shabbat candles are meant to be



FOR SALE

BAKA/GERMAN COLONY SEMI-DETACHED TOWNHOUSE

216 M ON FOUR LEVELS
PRIVATE GARDEN AND PARKING
6 BDRMS, 4 BATHS
FOR RENOVATION
QUIET OFF STREET
NEXT TO PARK HAMESILA
NIS 7,300,000

Dov Shapiro 052.5533739 | Ilana Nelson 054.5341403
integrityrealestate.co.il

***“TzviAir is a pleasure to
work with and did an
amazing job!”***

– Jamie Geller, Celebrity Chef



**AIR CONDITIONING
SALES & SERVICE**

02-628-8282 | tzviar.com

enjoyed. These candles serve the purpose of all lamps. Namely, to enable one to escape the darkness and benefit from its illumination. It is a useful light, meant to illuminate our homes on Shabbat.

However, the flames of Chanukah were declared unusable and enjoyable: *assur lehishtamesh le-ora* (Shabbat 21b). One must not use the lights of Chanukah for identification of objects, nor may one eat, read, or do work by its light.

These halachic guidelines hint to a profound symbolic meaning of the two lights. There is a light that is similar to the sun which illuminates and makes things visible. However there is another kind of light that can be compared to a remote star which neither illuminates nor shines, however it does guide.

“In other words, a candle is at times the symbol of a bright light; at other times, it is a symbol of remoteness, of unlimited stretches, of guidance from afar. The candles of Hanukkah is a light of the latter kind; it is lit not to illuminate, but to address itself to us from vast, dark spaces, to tell us to move along invisible paths.” (Days of Deliverance p. 177)

The Rav brilliantly directs our attention to the Menorah of the Temple. Here we find that its light is actually obscured and was not easily detected. How so? The Menorah was lit daily in the same area the vapors and fog of the incense filled

the same space. “Every morning, when he dresses the lamps, shall he make [the incense] burn...When Aaron lights the lamps at dusk shall he make [the incense] burn” (Shemot 30:7-8). When Aaron lights the Menorah he does not expect it to shine brilliantly. Rather this light represents the God that at times is hidden and yet we can sense that even His remoteness He guides everything and that Divine harmony and cosmic peace prevail throughout creation. (Ibid. p. 178)

Our lighting of the Menorah corresponds to what happened in the days of Chanukah. There was no obvious miracle or wondrous intervention from above. There was no prophet leading the way or charting a course for the nation.

“The Chanukah festival commemorates an era of *hester panim*. The people who committed apostasy and joined the Greeks were our own brethren...the heavens were closed. Not a single ray of light penetrated the mist of skepticism...No prophet promised a reward, no vision inspired them, no message gave them solace. It was an act of faith par excellence. This is the message to the generations: “Do not believe that our people is abandoned of God” (II Macc. 7:16). (Ibid., p.176)

Chanukah celebrates the unwavering faith of a Jew even when the heavenly signs are obscured and only a tiny flicker of illumination can be detected. ■



Having a Brit?
KISEI SHEL ELIAHU

Available to borrow
from the OU Israel Center
donated by Marion & Michael Silman
Ita Rochel 02-560-9125

GET FIT WHILE YOU SIT:

Exercise for ladies

Join us on Sundays 12:35-1:20pm
at the OU Israel Center
Sura Faecher 0504153239