

PRAAYER

Eternal God, help us to take some of the power of the *Chanukah* lights into our lives, and enable us to find ways to bring hope to others.

Teach us to use the strength of the flames of Chanukah as we would use the strength of our own hands to create and not destroy, to love and not to hate.

When we gaze at the *Chanukah* lights, may we recommit ourselves to fulfilling our role as God's partner in the act of creation, in the process of piercing the darkness with the light of our lives.

As we conclude this Festival of Lights, let us look into each other's faces and see God's light reflected in each other's eyes.

Debbie Perlman

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

It's much easier to point out the problem than it is to say just how it should be solved.

John Kenneth Galbraith



December 24, 2011

כט כסלו תשע"ב

CHANUKAH

Parashat Miketz - Genesis 41:1 – 44:17 (מקץ)
Hertz – p 155 Stone – p 222

Special Maftir – Numbers 7:30-7:35
Hertz – p 598 Stone – p 768

Haftarah – Zechariah 2:14-4:7 (זכריה)
Hertz – p 987 Stone – p 1210

Chanukah Kiddush sponsored by
Mel & Louise Saltzman

Special cake & hot chocolate provided
by Doug & Barbara Gaponoff Berson
in honor of Barbara's birthday and Chanukah

No *Talmud* Class this week

Minchah - 4:10 PM

Shabbat Ends – 5:26 PM

On This Week's Torah Portion - פקודי

That is beyond me. Gd will answer to Pharaoh's welfare (41:16)

Since Gd has informed you of all this, there can be no one as discerning and wise as you (41:39)

Ya'akov saw that there was food in Egypt. (42:1)

It means as if he saw in a holy mirror [i.e. prophetic perception] (Rashi ibid.)

When we are dealing with Torah, we are dealing with a profound level of knowledge – the knowledge of the inner workings of creation from its infinite source to all its varied surface manifestations. This knowledge had to be *revealed* to us by Gd, through the most exalted of the prophets – Moshe Rabbeinu. It is not something that is accessible to those who are not prepared to receive it, and it is not the kind of knowledge that is available strictly through intellectual striving. I'd like to consider why this should be the case.

Modern Western science is based on the process of measurement, be it simple measurements of distance and time, or extremely complex measurement of elementary particles made in huge particle accelerators. Now the process of measurement is the process of comparing some property of the object or phenomenon under consideration with a standard. When we measure length we use a standard length – a foot-ruler or a meter stick, and similarly for measuring weights or time intervals, etc.

The point is that by comparing an object with a standard, the process of measurement is *intrinsically limited to the finite*. There is no comparison of anything to the finite, as the Israelites sang after crossing the Sea: *mi kamocho ba'elim H"?! Who is like You H"?* And we sing the answer at the end of *Shacharit* on Shabbat and Festivals: *Ayn kelokeinu – There is none like our Gd!*

The other part of the scientific method is to link the measurements together to create a model of the system under study. These models are mathematical in nature; that is they are structures of human awareness that somehow map onto our perceptions (taking measurement as an extension of perception) of the external world. In any event, creating these maps is, in one sense, an intellectual pursuit.

Now the intellect is that faculty of our mind that makes distinctions. The Hebrew word for intellect is *binah* which comes from the root meaning *between*. The intellect decides between A and B, which means that there must be a difference between A and B, and as long as there are differences, we are dealing with the world of the finite. In order to grasp the infinite, it is necessary to transcend the limits of the intellect; perhaps this is why Zen Buddhism uses conundrums (*koans*) like "what is the sound of one hand clapping" to lead the student past the intellect and into the infinite. In our own tradition, perhaps we can gain a greater appreciation for "Talmudic hairsplitting" from this discussion. Talmudic debate often centers around reconciling two apparently opposite rulings by showing that they apply to two different situations. Sometimes there is little apparent difference between the two situations, but our Sages are showing us that by applying the intellect to discern ever subtler distinctions, we can eventually reach a point where, to quote Reb Tevye, "There is no other hand!" At that point the intellect is transcended and the infinite is directly experienced by the mind.

In our Parashah, the Torah appears to be telling us that there is another way of gaining knowledge, namely, revelation directly from Gd. So when Pharaoh summons Yosef to explain his dream, he assumes that, like his wise men, Yosef will use his individual intellect to figure out the symbolism of the dream. Yosef quickly disabuses him of this notion – rather the interpretation will come directly from Gd. That is, although Yosef's individuality would be involved, he would not be "figuring out" what Pharaoh's dream would mean. Rather it would be a case where Yosef would know intuitively exactly what the interpretation was and how to speak it out. To paraphrase Chevy Chase: "Hear the dream, be the dream."

In English the word "intuition" is significant – it signifies that the knowledge comes from *within* the knower, not from any external modality. Great artists and great scientists have all testified that the most important driver of their work is their intuition.

In our tradition, this kind of inner knowledge is called *ruach hakodesh*, the Holy Spirit. If well enough developed, it is called prophecy. I believe we can understand how such knowledge is possible when we understand that there is a profound parallelism between the structure of human consciousness and the structure of "external" reality. It is this parallelism that allows us to construct predictive, mathematical models of physical phenomena; these models are constructions of our consciousness, yet they map to the structure of objective reality with astounding accuracy.

Naturally, intuitive, *ruach hakodesh* knowledge comes in degrees. The more finely attuned one's mind is to the subtle workings of the universe, the greater the degree of intuition. This can be in a limited field, but it can also be a broader experience, where one's entire personality gets refined to the point that knowledge of all aspects of the cosmos is open to him. In our tradition the zenith of this refinement occurred in Moshe Rabbeinu; he is described as speaking with Gd "face to face, as one would speak with a friend." That is, his individuality had become so identified with the infinite that he was able to convey all levels of knowledge to *k'lal Yisrael* for all generations. Our Tradition gives us time-tested procedures for attuning our individual minds with Gd's Mind. Although we know we will never reach the level of Moshe Rabbeinu or the other great Sages and prophets of our tradition, still we can continue to strive in that direction and we will surely come closer to our goal.

Shabbat shalom, Rafi Rabinoff

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 25 through January 4 Office closed for vacation.

Friday, Jan. 6 **Deadline for paid reservations for Anna's Soup Kitchen** on January 15 (see below)

Motzei Shabbat, Jan 7 **Family Game Night, 7:30 PM.** Bring your family, your friends, your board games; play games, schmooze & nosh, plus annual ping-pong tournament. \$5/person, *advance payment required by Thurs Jan. 5.*

Sunday, January 8 **Stitch & Schmooze, 10:00 AM**

Sunday, January 15 **2nd Annual Anna's Soup Kitchen, 5:30-7:00 PM.** Soups 'n sides, \$12/person, \$48 family max (kids under 5 eat free). Carry-out available, \$3 additional /person. *Advance reservations required by Fri. Jan 6.*

Chanukah is here... When you link to Amazon.com **from our website (www.tradcong.org)**, Traditional earns a commission on your purchase. Go to the Traditional home page, click on **Our Shopping Partners** in the left margin, scroll down to the Amazon.com banner and click on it. Make your purchase as usual, and Traditional receives a percentage—all at no extra cost to you!

And speaking of gift-giving...Dierbergs sells gift cards for a wide variety of other stores and you can use the Dierbergs scrip you purchase from Traditional to buy those cards as gifts for family and friends. (Of course, you can buy scrip and give scrip cards as gifts as well.) There are so many ways to help Traditional earn 5% on your purchases at Dierbergs (and Kohn's, too)!

Do you have...A box at the Fox? A condo in the Ozarks? Tix to the Cardinals, Blues or Rams? A service you can provide? We need your donation of items or services for our **Silent Auction** which will be held in conjunction with our fabulous **Casino Night on February 11th**. Get creative! Call Jennifer Tobias at 636-532-6621 and let her know what you can contribute to our Auction.

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday & Monday mornings – 9:00 AM

Tuesday-Friday mornings – 7:00 AM

Monday-Thursday evenings – 6:30 PM

Friday evening – 5:45 PM