

The Enigma: What Prompted Yosef to Prepare a Chanukah and Purim Seudah for His Brothers in Egypt

This coming Shabbas, parshas Mikeitz, is also Shabbas Chanukah. It is only fitting, therefore, that we investigate the relationship between the weekly parsha and issues related to Chanukah. We shall begin with the following insight presented by our holy sources. In the following passuk from our parsha, Yosef hatzaddik alludes to the festival of Chanukah (Bereishis 43, 16): **“וירא יוסף אתם את בנימין ויאמר לאשר על ביתו, הבא את האנשים הביתה וטבחו טבח והכן”**—Yosef saw Binyamin with them, and he said to the one in charge of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and have meat slaughtered and prepared, for with me will these men dine this afternoon.”

Now, take note of the two words **“טבח והכן”**. If we take the last letter of the first word—the letter “ches”—rearrange the letters of the second word, and combine them, we obtain **חנכה**. In short, we can interpret this passuk as Yosef issuing a command to prepare a festive meal in honor of Chanukah. The source for this allusion is found in the Shiltei Giborim; it is also introduced by the Eliyahu Rabbah (O.C. 670, 10) and the Mateh Moshe (Chanukah, 993):

“ברוב השנים חנכה חל בפרשת מקץ, וסימנך (בראשית מא-א) מקץ שנתים, נוטריקון ש'מאל נר ת'דליק ימין מ'זוזה... ואני יום טוב הכותב קבלתי סימן אחר בפרשת ויהי מקץ (שם מג טז) וטבח טבח והכן, הח' מטבח, והתיבה מן והכ"ן, הן אותיות חנכה, וסמך לסעודות שעושים בחנכה, ואותיות וטבח טבח בגימטריא מ"ד כמו הנרות.”

Here he brings two additional allusions. After the word “mikeitz” at the beginning of the parsha, appears the word **שנתים**. He interprets this word as an acronym for: **ש'מאל נר ת'דליק ימין מ'זוזה**—you shall light the candles on the left; the mezuzah is on the right. He also points out that the numerical value of the two words **וטבח טבח** equals forty-four—the number of candles we light during the eight days of Chanukah including the shamashim.

The Maharam of Rotenberg holds that the Chanukah meals are optional. While it is true that our blessed sages did not establish the days of Chanukah to be like Purim—days of festivities and merriment; nevertheless, it is a mitzvah to be merry on Chanukah for it is referred

to as a “yom tov.” The Gemara states (Shabbas 21b): **“לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאום ימים טובים בהלל והודאה”**—the following year they were established as days of “yom tov,” celebrated by the recitation of Hallel and giving thanks. The Mateh Moshe proposes a compromise: **“ואנו נוהגין לזמר זמירות ושבחות בסעודות שמרבים בהם, והוי סעודת מצוה לדעת כולם”**—it is our custom to sing songs of praise during the numerous meals scheduled on Chanukah; we all treat these meals like “seudos mitzvah.”

This is the source for the author of the Shulchan Aruch's statement (O.C. 670, 2): **“ריבוי הסעודות שמרבים בהם הם סעודות הרשות, שלא ריבוי הסעודות שמרבים בהם הם סעודות חובה”**—Chanukah was not established as a time of festive meals and merriment; hence, the many meals scheduled on these days are strictly voluntary. Concerning this matter, the Rama writes: **“הגה. ויש אומרים שיש קצת מצוה בריבוי הסעודות, משום דבאותם הימים היה חנוכה המזבח (מהר"א מפרא"ג), ונוהגין לומר זמירות ושבחות בסעודות”**—nonetheless, it is considered a mitzvah to some small degree to increase meals on Chanukah, since the “mizbeiach” was consecrated during these days.

In any event, we learn from here a fascinating “chiddush.” When Yosef hatzaddik was the second in command to the King of Egypt, and when his brothers returned to Egypt for the second time—this time with Binyamin—he prepared for them a festive Chanukah meal. For this reason, he instructed the person in charge of his household: **“וטבחו טבח והכן”**—have meat slaughtered and prepare—prepare meat for them in honor of Chanukah. We can postulate that he waited for all twelve of Yaakov's sons to be present before arranging this meal. For they were the forbearers of the entire community of Yisrael, the twelve heavenly tribes, and with their presence, he wished to make preparations for the Chanukah miracle for all of Yisrael.

**“They drank and they imbibed with him”
—an Allusion to the Purim Seudah**

Come and enjoy an amazing truth that we are obliged to publicize. At that very same meal that Yosef prepared in honor of Chanukah, he also prepared a Purim seudah. For, regarding this

meal, the Torah states (Bereishis 43, 34): **“וַיֵּשֶׂא מִשְׂאֵת מֵאֵת פָּנָיו אֵלֵיהֶם, וְתָרַב מִשְׂאֵת בְּנֵימִין מִמִּשְׂאוֹת כּוֹלָם חֲמֵשׁ יוֹדוֹת, וַיִּשְׁתּוּ וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ עִמּוֹ”**—he passed portions from before him to them, and Binyamin’s portion was greater than the portions of all of them fivefold. They drank and they imbibed with him.

At first glance, we can only wonder what possessed Yosef hatzaddik, the moral standard of the world, to drink wine with his brothers to the point of drunkenness—and to do so while their elderly father Yaakov was at home alone in Eretz Canaan worried and concerned over the safety of Binyamin. Therefore, we are compelled to explain this event based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Megillah 7b): **“מִיֵּחֵיב אִינֶשׁ לִבְסוּמֵי בְּפוּרִיאַ עַד דְּלֵא יֵדַע בֵּין אַרְוֵר הַמֶּן לְבָרוּךְ מֵרַדְכַּי”**—one is obligated to drink wine on Purim until he cannot differentiate between “cursed is Haman” and “blessed is Mordechai.” To fulfill this mitzvah, Yosef gave instructions that wine be brought to this meal: **“וַיִּשְׁתּוּ וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ עִמּוֹ”**—They drank and they imbibed with him.

I found this incredible idea in the immaculate teachings of the Sefas Emes (Mikeitz 5639): **“וְאִמְנִינָא לְפִי רַמְזוּ הַמְּפָרְשִׁים טַבַּח וְהַכֵּן הוּא”** חנוכה, אף אנו נאמר וישכרו הוא מרומז על פורים, כי חנוכה ופורים הם נסים האחרונים, סמוכים לסוף תיקון הכולל שיהיה נגמר במהרה בימינו בעת **“וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ”** alludes to Chanukah, and **“וְהַכֵּן”** alludes to Purim; for Chanukah and Purim are the last miracles; they are predecessors to the final tikun which will be realized with the coming of the redeemer—swiftly in our days.

At this point, let us add a tasty little tidbit of our own concerning Yosef’s command: **“וְטַבַּח טַבַּח וְהַכֵּן”**—have meat slaughtered and prepare. This was certainly not the first time Yosef ate meat in Mitzrayim; and he surely observed the laws of “shechitah” he had learned from his father Yaakov—just as he had learned the entire Torah. So why did he specify here in particular: **“וְטַבַּח טַבַּח וְהַכֵּן”**?

Yet, with the understanding that Yosef hatzaddik intended to prepare a festive meal in honor of both Chanukah and Purim, we can provide an explanation. We learn from the Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev Teves 4, 116) that the two festivals of Chanukah and Purim represent the trachea and the esophagus. Chanukah was instituted as a day on which we express thanks and praise with our voices and speech—which rely on the trachea. Purim, on the other hand, was established as a day of festive meals and merriment—relying on the esophagus which is the conduit for our food and drink. Let us present a segment of his sacred words:

“ב’ הַזְּמִנִּים הַלְלוּ חֲנוּכָה וְפוּרִים הֵם בְּבַחֲנֵית קִנְיָה וְשֵׁט, חֲנוּכָה נִיתְקַן לְהוֹדוֹת וְלֵהֲלֵל הוּא עֲבוּדָה בְּקִנְיָה, וְפוּרִים בְּמִשְׁתָּה וְשִׂמְחָה הוּא בּוֹשֵׁט, רַמְזוּ”

שְׁצָרִיכִין לְשַׁעֲבַד שְׁנֵיהֶם לְעִבּוּדַת הַשֵּׁי”ת. וְהֵנָּה בִּימֵי אַחְשׁוּרוֹשׁ פָּגְמוּ בּוֹשֵׁט (מִגִּילָה יב.) שְׁנֵהֵנוּ מִסְּעוּדָתוֹ שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ הַרְשַׁע, וְהוֹשֵׁט הוּא כַּח גּוֹפְנֵי שַׁעַל יָדוֹ נִיזוֹן הַגּוֹף, עַל כֵּן הִיתָה הַגְּזִירָה עַל הַגּוֹפּוֹת.

וְכֹאשֶׁר עֲזַר הַשֵּׁי”ת לַעֲמוֹ קִבְּעוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ ז”ל יוֹם טוֹב בְּרוּחַ הַקּוֹדֵשׁ סְעוּדַת מִצְוָה בּוֹשֵׁט, וּבִימֵי הַיּוּוֹנִים פָּגְמוּ בַלְשׁוֹן הָרַע וּבִיטוּל תּוֹרָה שֶׁהִפְגַּם הוּא בְּקִנְיָה, הִיתָה הַגְּזִירָה עַל יָדֵי זֶה לְבַטְלֵם לַגְּמִירֵי מִן הַתּוֹרָה וְתַפְלָה שֶׁהֵם בְּקִנְיָה... וְכֹאשֶׁר עֲזַר הַשֵּׁי”ת לַעֲמוֹ קִבְּעוּ יוֹם טוֹב בְּמִצְוָה לְהוֹדוֹת וְלֵהֲלֵל בְּקִנְיָה.”

It is essential to sanctify both aspects—the trachea and the esophagus—in the service of Hashem. During the time of Achashveirosh, the Jews defiled the esophagus by partaking in his festivities. Since the esophagus is the physical organ which nourishes the body, the decree at that time was directed against the physical bodies. After being saved by Hashem, our blessed sages instituted celebration involving the esophagus—“seudas mitzvah.”

In contrast, during the Greek reign, the Jews defiled the trachea—speaking “lashon hara” and desisting from Torah study. Consequently, the Greek decrees were aimed at abolishing Torah study and tefilah—which rely on the trachea. Hence, when Hashem saved them, a festival was instituted whose mitzvot involve the trachea—thanks and praise.

For this reason, Yosef hatzaddik wisely instructed the person in charge of his household: **“וְטַבַּח טַבַּח וְהַכֵּן”**—have meat slaughtered and prepare. He meant that the shechitah should be performed according to halachic guidelines—incorporating both landmarks, the trachea and the esophagus. Thus he hinted at the fact that he intended to prepare a festive meal in honor of both Chanukah and Purim—corresponding to the trachea and the esophagus. Now, however, we are obligated to decipher this enigma. What prompted Yosef to prepare a festive meal celebrating Chanukah and Purim in Mitzrayim? What is the deeper association between the exile in Mitzrayim and the festivals of Chanukah and Purim?

Yaakov Revealed Chanukah and Purim to Yosef but Not to the Other Brothers

I was struck by a wonderful idea concerning this subject. Let me first present an introduction from the impeccable teachings of the Chasam Sofer found in Derushim V’Aggadot Chasam Sofer (page 138, column 2). He addresses the passuk in parshas Vayeishev (Bereishis 37, 3): **“וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֱהָב אֶת יוֹסֵף מִכָּל בְּנָיו כִּי בֶן זָקוּנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ”**—and Yisrael loved Yosef more than all of his sons, because he was a child of his old age; and he made him a striped tunic. Rashi comments: **“וְאוֹנוֹקְלוֹס תְּרַגְּם בְּרַחֲמֵי הוּא לֵיה, כָּל מָה שֶׁלָּמַד”** **“כִּי בֶן זָקוּנִים הוּא”**—Onkelos translates the phrase **“מִשֶּׁם וְעָבַר מִסֵּר לוֹ”**

לו as indicating that Yosef was his wise son; therefore, everything he learned from Shem and Ever, he conveyed to Yosef.

Regarding this tunic, we have learned in the Gemara (Megillah 16b): **“בשביל משקל שני סלעים מילת [בד] שהוסיף יעקב ליוסף משאר”**—as a result of this extra gift Yaakov gave to Yosef and not to the other brothers, the matter evolved such that our forefathers descended to Mitzrayim. Let us endeavor to understand the matter of the “kesonet passim”—the striped tunic. Additionally, why did this garment weigh specifically “two selas”? The Chasam Sofer explains that the “two selas” of fine wool that Yosef received in excess of his brothers correspond to the festivals of Chanukah and Purim. The other brothers did not comprehend the significance of these two festivals; only Yosef did. Let us present the amazing words of the Chasam Sofer:

“והנה כל השבטים השיגו בשכלם הזך והקדוש כל התורה עד שלא ניתנה, חוץ ממצוות פורים וחנוכה הנ”ל שהם חוץ לתורה לא השיגו, מה שאין כן יוסף שהיה למעלה מהשגת כל השבטים, כמבואר בשל”ה ז”ל יעקב יוסף אפי רברבא ואפי זוטא, וזיו איקונין שלו ממש דומה לו כי בן זקונים הוא לו, מסר לו כל תורתו שלמד, וכל הפירושים האמתיים אפילו פורים וחנוכה נמי, כי השיגוהו ידו להשיג הנ”ל.”

אדרבא המבין יבין כי יניקת יוסף הצדיק הידוע, היא מפורים וחנוכה הידוע והיא חלקו ממש. וזהו שהוסיף יעקב ליוסף יותר מאחיו שני סלעים מילת, היינו ב' מצוות מתורה שבעל פה הנרמז בסלעים, ורמז בכתנות חלוקא דרבנן, ועל זה ויקנאו בו אחיו קנאת סופרים בודאי סופרים ממש מצוות דרבנן”.

The other shevatim comprehended the entire Torah, even before it was given, with the exception of the mitzvot of Purim and Chanukah—which are not included in the Torah. Yosef’s comprehension, however, exceeded that of his brothers—as explained by the Shela. Yosef bore a strong resemblance to Yaakov; hence Yaakov passed on to him all of his Torah—even the matters of Purim and Chanukah.

In fact, these festivals were truly his portion; he drew from them spiritually. As such, Yaakov gave Yosef two selas of fine woolen cloth above and beyond what he gave the other brothers. For they symbolized two mitzvot from the Torah she’b’al peh; the garment alluded to the tunic worn by the Rabbis. This provoked the brothers’ jealousy.

Thus, we have learned a tremendous chiddush. When the Torah states: “and Yisrael loved Yosef more than all of his sons, because he was a child of his old age; and he made him a striped tunic”—it is referring to Chanukah and Purim which are revealed to us by our Torah scholars in Torah she’b’al peh. They are referred to as “kesonet passim,” because the novel interpretations presented by the scholars of the Torah she’b’al peh are termed by the Zohar hakadosh **“חלוקא”**

“רבנן”—rabbinical garments. The garment consisted specifically of two selas of cloth corresponding to Chanukah and Purim.

Yaakov Avinu Prayed for Chanukah and Purim

I believe that we can connect this noble idea of the Chasam Sofer’s with what he writes in Toras Moshe (Vayishlach). There he writes that Yaakov Avinu, with his “ruach hakodesh,” prayed and paved the way for the miracles of Chanukah and Purim:

“ויש לומר על פי מה שאמרו חז”ל על (בראשית לב-כה) ויותר יעקב לבדו - לכדו, שנשאר על פכים קטנים. [כן כתב רבנו בחיי (שם): “ויותר יעקב לבדו, דרשו רז”ל לכדו קרי ביה, מלמד שחזר על פכין קטנים.” ונראה שהמקור לכך הוא מ”דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות” (שם): “ויותר יעקב לבדו, פירש רש”י מלמד שנשאר על פכים קטנים, וסמך לדבר מדכתיב לבדו, אל תיקרי לבדו אלא לכדו”].

ואפשר לומר לפי מה דאיתא ברוקח בהלכות פורים (סימן רלה), שיעקב היה רואה עכשיו כל העתידות שיבואו על בניו, ורמז על זה (שם שם-יב) ה’צילנו נ’א מ’יד ראשי תיבות המן, ותיקן עכשיו הכל להצלחת בניו... וגזירת המן נכלל בגלות מדי, ואחר כך בין מדי לאדום היה יון, ושם זכו ישראל לנס חנוכה, וזה מרומז בויותר יעקב לבדו, שהתבונן מה יש לו עוד לתקן בגזירת יון, וזהו לכדו שיעשה נס לבניו וידליקו נרות חנוכה”.

We learn from the Chasam Sofer that Yaakov Avinu foresaw all the troubles that would befall his descendants in the future—including Haman’s decree and the Greeks’ decrees. Therefore, he prayed to Hashem to provide them with salvation via the miracles of Purim and Chanukah. With this insight, we can better appreciate the words of the Chasam Sofer above. Yaakov foresaw the future events of Purim and Chanukah—events revealed in Torah she’b’al peh; however, he did not reveal this knowledge to his sons except for Yosef hatzaddik. This is the message inherent in the passuk: **“וישראל אהב את יוסף מכל”**—and Yisrael loved Yosef more than all of his sons, because he was a child of his old age; and he made him a striped tunic.

The Miracles of Chanukah and Purim Occurred within the Realm of Nature

Nevertheless, it is still incumbent upon us to clarify the following three issues: (a) why did Yaakov Avinu choose to reveal the two festivals of Chanukah and Purim to Yosef, specifically, rather than to any of his other sons? (b) With this knowledge, what prompted Yosef to prepare a festive Chanukah and Purim meal in Mitzrayim? (c) Why did HKB”H arrange for the two festivals of Chanukah and Purim to be revealed specifically in Torah she’b’al peh rather than Torah she’b’chsav?

Let us begin to shed some light on these issues by introducing an important principle learned from the teachings of the Kedushat Levi. He addresses the question of why our blessed sages instituted that the berachah of “שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה” be recited only on Chanukah and Purim. Why isn't it recited regarding the miracles and wonders associated with Pesach?

He points out that the miracles associated with the exodus from Mitzrayim differ significantly from the miracles of Chanukah and Purim. Those miracles were supernatural; the laws of nature established during creation were altered and defied. During the ten plagues water turned into blood, the houses became filled with frogs and lice, the light turned into darkness and all of the firstborn died in a single night. This supernatural aspect was ever so apparent when the sea was transformed into dry land during the phenomenal miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea.

In contrast, the miracles of Purim and Chanukah were obscured within the realm of nature. On Purim, Haman's decree was annulled as a result of Achashveirosh's love for Esther HaMalkah. On Chanukah, the Chashmonaim defeated the Greeks with military weapons. Despite the veil of nature, it was obvious to all—both on Purim and on Chanukah—that HKB”H performed these miracles to save Yisrael.

Therefore, our blessed sages instituted the recitation on Chanukah and Purim of the berachah: “שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה”—Who performed miracles on behalf of our forefathers, in those days, at this season. In other words, the miracles performed by HKB”H on Yisrael's behalf were concealed “בזמן הזה”—within the realm of nature and the constraints of time; whereas the miracles associated with the exodus were beyond the realm of nature and beyond the constraints of time.

Miracles Conducted within the Realm of Nature Are Facilitated by Torah She'b'al Peh

Let us take the high road and explore another incredible source from one of the great luminaries, the Maharal of Prague. In his sefer Be'er HaGolah (Be'er Rishon), he explains why HKB”H gave us the Torah in two distinct forms—Torah she'b'chsav and Torah she'b'al peh. These two aspects of the Torah correspond to the two methods by which HKB”H manages His universe—by means of miracles and by means of nature. When conducting the world by means of miracles, HKB”H does not utilize intermediaries. His presence is not obscured by constellations or heavenly stars that seemingly control nature. When conducting the world according to the laws of nature, on the other hand, the world is still operating under HKB”H's miraculous supervision; however, he utilizes the forces of nature as intermediaries to accomplish His will.

The Midrash (B.R. 1, 1) teaches us that HKB”H utilized the Torah as a blueprint with which to create the world. It is apparent, therefore, that the Torah is the source for both methods of conducting the world—the supernatural and the natural. So, the Maharal explains that Torah she'b'chsav—which was given by HKB”H Himself directly without Torah scholars as intermediaries—is the source for the management of the world by means of miracles—which also functions without natural intermediaries. Torah she'b'al peh, on the other hand, includes all the aspects of the Torah that were revealed as a result of HKB”H bestowing His wisdom upon Torah scholars so that they could clarify and refine Torah knowledge in each and every generation. It is the source for the management of the world according to the laws of nature—whereby HKB”H utilizes the forces of nature as intermediaries to run the universe. This is the gist of the Maharal's explanation.

Thus we can appreciate why HKB”H arranged that the two festivals of Chanukah and Purim be revealed specifically by the scholars of Torah she'b'al peh. Seeing as the miracles associated with these festivals manifested themselves within the guise of nature, it was imperative that they be revealed specifically via Torah she'b'al peh—the source of HKB”H's management of Yisrael within the guise of nature.

The Purpose of the Visible Miracles Is Recognition of the Concealed Miracles

Continuing along this path, let us proceed to explain why Yaakov revealed these two festivals—Chanukah and Purim—specifically to Yosef. Additionally, we will explain why Yosef hatzaddik prepared a meal for his brothers in Mitzrayim celebrating Chanukah and Purim. We will base our explanation on a fundamental idea which the Ramban teaches us toward the end of parshas Bo (Shemos 13, 16). The purpose of all the supernatural miracles which HKB”H performed on our behalf during the exodus from Egypt is to allow us to recognize the tremendous miracles performed on our behalf on a daily basis within the realm of nature.

The concealed miracles are the foundation of the entire Torah. Whether the miracle is performed for the general public or for an individual, everything is determined from above; our daily events and miracles are not determined by natural law. A Jew who does not believe in this principle does not have a part in the Torah.

It is well known that it is prohibited to pray for a miracle. This is expressed by the Sefer Chassidim as follows (794): “ואסור להתפלל שיעשה לו הקב”ה נס בשינוי העולם”. He brings proof for this notion from the Gemara (Taanis 24a). The Gemara states that it is prohibited

to pray for a tree to bear its fruit before the natural time. The reason being that HKB”H created the world to operate according to the laws of nature. Nevertheless, a person must still believe wholeheartedly that HKB”H controls the natural order of things.

Therefore, it is prohibited to pray for a miracle, because HKB”H does not wish to alter the natural order of things. During the exodus from Egypt, however, when Bnei Yisrael had descended to the forty-ninth level of tumah, HKB”H performed miracles on their behalf outside the constraints of nature in order to inculcate in them “emunas Hashem”—faith in Hashem. Yet, the ultimate goal is that expressed by the Ramban. By means of the visible, supernatural miracles, we must come to recognize and believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that HKB”H’s hand controls nature. This is the foundation of the entire Torah!

Yosef’s Connection to Torah She’b’al Peh

At last, let us rejoice and connect all of the loose ends. Yaakov Avinu realized by means of his ruach hakodesh that Yosef was sold to the Egyptians so as to pave the way for all of Yisrael to sanctify themselves in Mitzrayim. As a result, they would merit the supernatural phenomena and miracles that HKB”H would perform during the exodus. Nevertheless, the purpose of such miracles is to instill in a person the belief that even nature is controlled by HKB”H. Yisrael’s belief that the natural order of things is determined by HKB”H was revealed by means of Chanukah and Purim.

Therefore, Yaakov Avinu wisely revealed the mystery of these two festivals—Chanukah and Purim—specifically to Yosef hatzaddik. Comprehending his father’s true intent, he acted accordingly. He paved the way for all of Yisrael in Mitzrayim with his sanctity. He became the second in command to the ruler of Mitzrayim. Then he commanded his brothers, the tribes of Yisrael, to bring Binyamin along with them so that all twelve heavenly tribes would be present at his gala event. Once all the pieces were in place, he prepared for them in Mitzrayim a festive meal in honor of Chanukah and Purim. This event prepared the way for the events to follow. The supernatural miracles witnessed in Mitzrayim inculcated in Yisrael the unwavering belief that even mundane daily events are miracles wrought by Hashem within the guise of nature.

How nicely this ties in with a wonderful association we find between Yosef and Torah she’b’al peh. When Yosef was appointed

as second in command in Mitzrayim, the Torah states (Bereishis 41, 42): **“וַיֹּסֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶת טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתֵּן אוֹתָהּ עַל יַד יוֹסֵף וַיֹּלְבֹשׁ”**—and Pharaoh removed his ring from upon his hand and put it on Yosef’s hand; he then had him dressed in garments of linen . . . and he had him ride in his second chariot.

The great Rabbi of Apta, zy”a, finds the following allusions in this passuk (ibid.):

“וַיֹּלְבֹשׁ אוֹתוֹ בְּגָדֵי שֵׁשׁ, רִצּוֹנוֹ לומר שְׁרוּמוֹ בְּזֶה שֶׁהַקַּב”ה הִלְבִּישׁ אֶת יוֹסֵף בּוֹא”וֹ מִדּוֹת הַקְּדוּשׁוֹת, דְּהוּא אֶתְקַשְׁרוֹתָא דְכוּלָּא כְּנ”ל, וַיִּרְכַּב אוֹתוֹ בְּמַרְכַּבַּת הַמַּשְׁנָה, רִצּוֹנוֹ לומר בְּשִׂית סֹדְרֵי מַשְׁנָה סוּד כְּלָלוֹת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁבַעֲל פֶּה וְהַבֵּן”.

“Bigdei sheish” (“sheish” means linen but also means six) alludes to the six midot of kedushah with which HKB”H adorned Yosef; the word “mishneh” alludes to the six orders of the Mishnah—the cornerstone of Torah she’b’al peh.

It seems that this is also alluded to in the passuk (ibid. 41, 45): **“וַיִּקְרָא פַּרְעֹה שֵׁם יוֹסֵף צַפְנַת פַּעֲנָח”**—Pharaoh named Yosef Tzaphnas Pahneiach. Rashi provides the following clarification: **“צַפְנַת פַּעֲנָח, מַפְרֵשׁ הַצִּפְנוֹת, וְאֵין לַפַּעֲנָח דְּמִיּוֹן בְּמַקְרָא”**—decipherer of the cryptic; there is no word resembling פַּעֲנָח in Scriptures. As the chariot for Torah she’b’al peh, his function is to decipher that which is cryptic. For, the Torah she’b’al peh deciphers and reveals all of the mysteries of Torah she’b’chsav. We might suggest that this is also alluded to by Rashi’s comment that there is no word resembling פַּעֲנָח in Scriptures. Rashi is alluding to the fact that Torah she’b’al peh explains all of the things for which we cannot find an explanation or similarity elsewhere in Torah she’b’chsav.

As we have learned, Yosef paved the way for Yisrael to merit the miracles that were performed beyond the realm of nature. Yet, the true goal is to believe and recognize that HKB”H performs miracles on our behalf constantly within the realm of nature. Consequently, Yosef merited becoming the chariot and representative of Torah she’b’al peh. We have also learned that all of the miracles performed within the realm of nature emanate from Torah she’b’al peh. Hence, in this merit, he was able to pave the way for all of Yisrael to believe in these miracles performed on our behalf within the realm of nature. It was for this reason that he arranged for all twelve heavenly tribes to join him in a Chanukah and Purim seudah.

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For the Refua shelema of Refael Gavriel Simcha Chaim Ben shulamit

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