

## **Pharaoh called Yosef's name Tzafnas-Paneach and he gave him Osnas bas Potiphera, chief of On, as a wife. Thus, Yosef emerged in charge of the land of Egypt. (41:45)**

Pharaoh was confronted with a major policy decision. A brilliant young man stood before him, who had the ability not only to save the country, but also to fill Pharaoh's coffers with enormous wealth. The problem was that not only was he a slave – he was also a Hebrew. This would not sit well with his pagan populace. While they thought little of their slave population – they reviled Jews! What was Pharaoh to do? How was he to concoct an extreme makeover of Yosef and transform him into an “acceptable” Egyptian?

The Torah gives us the answer when it juxtaposes Pharaoh's “naming” Yosef Tzafnas-Paneach upon his marriage to Osnas. (Pharaoh gave her to him.) For all intents and purposes, Yosef was now Tzafnas. His wife was the daughter of the distinguished pagan priest of On. Yosef was no longer a Jew. He was now a member of Egyptian aristocracy! Pharaoh could not take a chance that the people might balk at his choice for viceroy. True, he was good for the country. They needed him. However, *sinaah mekalkeles es ha'shurah*, “hatred distorts a straight line.” Animosity blinds, perverts, and causes one to lose the clarity of his perspective. The Egyptians could never tolerate a Jew as ruler over them. It was necessary to change his identity.

Two and a half centuries ago, our secular brethren decided that they, too, must compromise their Jewish identities. They changed their names from Hebrew to German. They discarded their traditional garb together with their *tznius*, chaste dress code. Once they looked and talked like *goyim*, it was easier to act like *goyim*, to adopt their lifestyle and culture. Thus, they could completely reject their traditional upbringing and centuries of commitment to the Torah. *Baruch Hashem*, their dream of acceptance by the gentiles was never realized. The *goyim's* hatred of the Jew was stronger than the Jew's external alteration of self. To the *goy* we were, and will always be, Jews.