

## It happened at the end of two years to the day: Pharaoh was dreaming that behold! He was standing over the river. (41:1)

*Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah 69:3)* distinguish between: the wicked who stand over their gods, such as Pharaoh, who dreamt that he was standing over the Nile River, which is the Egyptian godhead; and *tzaddikim*, the righteous, such as Yaakov *Avinu*, over whom we see that Hashem stood protectively. *Horav Simchah Wasserman, zl*, explains that idol worshippers seek a god that will fit into their comfort zone, who will serve them without making any undue demands on them. The Egyptians viewed the Nile River as their god, because it provided for their needs. Pharaoh stood over the river, because this is their idea of worship – the idol is their servant.

Yaakov *Avinu*, however, understood that Hashem is above him at all times. Thus, his service was Heaven-focused. He had one G-d, because he followed His precepts. This is in contrast to the pagan/wicked, who require a multitude of gods to fulfill their varied desires.

*Tefillah*, prayer, is a *mitzvah*, because through it, we pay homage to Hashem. When we petition Hashem for our needs, it is our way of intimating to Hashem that, without Him, we are nothing. *Tefillah* is the consequences of humility, whereby we recognize our insignificance and weakness. When we ask for Hashem's favor, we acknowledge that our very existence is a gift from Him. When we *bentch*, say grace following a meal, we do not ask for food, but rather, we thank Hashem for the meal. When a person acknowledges that everything he has in life, indeed life itself, is a gift from Hashem, he will be mindful of the fact that he is here for a purpose. Living a vacuous, self-serving life focused on satisfying one's physical desires is certainly not a reason for Hashem to have created him. Only an arrogant, or perhaps obtuse, fool would think that Hashem had created him for no other purpose than to satisfy his narcissistic, self-absorbed needs. Yet, the majority of the world believes this, or, at least, they act in such abandon that they demonstrate it. As Jews, we realize that Hashem stands over us. We look up to our Father in Heaven – not down, like those who live life as if it has no purpose.

Many assert that we are here for *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. No one is denying that *tikkun olam* is important, but one must first repair himself before he can repair others.