

Guarding the Dream

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

In December of 1941 Rabbi Unsdorfer, who was later to perish in Auschwitz, wrote the following about Joseph and his dreams, translated by scholar Nehemia Polen:

This Torah section, from start to finish, is all about dreams. When a person lives in peace and tranquility he has no need for dreams. Who wants to interrupt a quiet, contented life with dreams? Who loves dreams? Who needs dreams? Someone who is suffering, God spare us, someone who is persecuted, just as Joseph was persecuted by his brothers, just as the royal cupbearer in prison. So it is with us today: we are as in a dream, because we are saturated in suffering. They have forbidden us to speak, no one dares utter a sound for fear of the enemy. But they could not prohibit us from dreaming, and with our dreams we see the future: our sheaf has risen and stands firm. This is our consolation: just like the dreams of Joseph, they will certainly come to pass.

We live today in the dream of Rabbi Unsdorfer: a free Jewish community, a state of Israel. Yet dreams never come without a cost: It is our task as his heirs, to guard the dream he did not live to see.