

Miracles really do happen. We got snow in Corpus Christi TX! While I have had my fill of snow from living up north, I will say that this was just perfect. We got the snow in the middle of the night that stayed on the ground through the morning so children could play in it and adults could marvel at snow in South Texas. And then, with no shoveling required, it left as easily as it arrived to make way for another lovely day in the mid 60's Fahrenheit. This is how I like snow.

But this pre-Chanukah miracle has some deeper lessons to teach as well. Remembering all the many hard hours of shoveling snow and clearing it from house and car that used to be my winter reality until I moved to Texas, is a reminder that rarely are good things quite so easy and perfect as was our one day of snow. Usually such things take work and effort. There is a passage about love in the British Reform prayerbook that states: "Everyone has in their life a beautiful day when, like the first human beings in Eden, they find love without care and trouble. But when this day is past, you earn love, as you do bread, by the sweat of the brow." This is true of many things in life. Rarely are things so neatly packaged and perfectly timed as the snow on the Gulf Coast this year. Most of the good things in life must be worked for and effort expended to create and maintain them.

And, like this snow, many of the good things in life are also fleeting. They come and go and we miss them because we are preoccupied with other things that seem, at the time, more important. But looking back we realize how much we missed. It was wonderful to see the snow on the ground, to see my daughter playing in the snow with the neighbors and building a snow man (albeit a rather short-lived one!) This is an experience that will never come again. In Pirke Avot it asks "Who is rich?" and answers "The one who is happy with what they have." The word here "rich" is understood to mean rich in experiences and not just rich in material wealth. So often we are not happy with the experiences we have, too concerned about what comes next or what did not come before to appreciate what we have here and now. Our brief snow shows us how important it is to take advantage of the moment while it lasts and enjoy life as it occurs in all its glory and wonder.

As we look forward to a new secular year of 2018 may we all be blessed with many moments to appreciate and may we be able and willing to enjoy them to their fullest in the moment.

Happy (secular) New Year!
Rabbi Ilan Emanuel