

# LAMPLIGHTER

20 Kislev  
Vayeishev

1013

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

At first glance, this week's Torah portion, Vayeishev, chronicles the circumstances leading to Joseph's appointment as second in command over Egypt, subordinate only to Pharaoh. Yet, upon examination, we find that Joseph's story is synonymous with the history of the Jews.

Joseph, the pride of his father, at the age of 17 is suddenly plucked from his secure environment, family, and his country. Sold into slavery and finding himself in a foreign land, he must now cope with the most adverse and cruel of circumstances. Worst of all, Joseph is not to blame, for all this has come about through no action of his own.

A lesser individual would have surely succumbed to bitterness and depression. Another might have become indifferent. But Joseph realized that he must deal with the reality which presented itself. As the servant of Potifar, he fulfilled his duties to the best of his ability. It soon became apparent even to Potifar that it was in Joseph's merit that his household enjoyed its material blessings.

This, then, is the task of every Jew: No matter how adverse the circumstances, each Jew must live up to his full potential and fulfill his duties to the best of his ability.

But how was Joseph repaid for his loyalty? He was thrown into prison! Why? Because he refused to betray his master by succumbing to the advances of the master's wife. Not only didn't Joseph's honesty and integrity bring him any positive benefits, these very qualities caused him to be incarcerated. Was Joseph discouraged? Did he reject his lifestyle and renounce his high standards? Joseph's response to adversity was to continue in the same path, acting honestly and in good faith. Eventually his behaviour and virtue drew the attention of his jailers.

This is the history of the Jew as well: No matter how depraved and corrupt his surroundings, he remains undeterred from his faith in G-d and His Torah.

When Joseph noticed that two of his fellow inmates, Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, were distressed for some reason, he rushed to their aid, without thought of rejoicing at their misfortune or of taking revenge for the role they played in his downfall. Joseph could not bear to see people in need, and so he immediately offered his assistance. He was able to bring them relief by interpreting their respective dreams.

In return, Joseph did not ask for monetary payment or special treatment. He merely requested that the chief butler mention his name to Pharaoh when he was freed, which he didn't do. In his unbending faith in the goodness of man and in ultimate justice, Joseph believed that fairness would prevail if only Pharaoh was presented with the facts.

This theme has been played out time and again in Jewish history. Joseph unfortunately learned the hard way that this world is full of lies and deception. Yet when he later found himself in a position of almost unlimited power, he refused to exact revenge on those who had harmed him. This is not the way of the Jew. Joseph faithfully used his office to steer the Egyptians and the whole world from potential catastrophe during the years of famine, enacting, for the first time, the historic role the Jews have played during their exile among the nations.

*(Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe).*

## Don't Tell Me to Cheer Up

*By Yossi Ives*

You are walking down the street when you pass an old friend whose head is down, a deep frown etched on his face. You instinctively say to him, "Cheer up," hoping to lift her spirits.

Well, it won't. It will, however, make her angry, frustrated and more depressed. You are being an insensitive boor and you don't even know it. If that's all you've got to say, keep quiet and offer a friendly smile, not a trite comment. If I am going through a hard time, I don't want someone to tell me to be cheerful-I want someone to understand why I am miserable.

"Cheer up" implies that I have no reason for feeling bad. Let's face it: chances are that I'm not sad for the sheer fun of it. Something is obviously troubling me, causing me to be melancholy. Telling me to cheer up is effectively denying me the right to feel upset about it. Imagine the burden I now carry: I not only have a worrying problem, I'm not even allowed to feel bad about it!

It is also an insult to imply that becoming cheerful is simple and easy. It is like saying, "What's wrong with you? Pull yourself together." When someone is depressed - over finances, a troubled marriage, or whatever - the last thing they want is to be made to feel inadequate for feeling low. If it were that easy for them, they would have cheered up without your sage advice.

Take a leaf out of the book of the biblical Joseph. He was languishing in an Egyptian jail with two of Pharaoh's ministers, when one morning he notices they are in a foul mood. What does Joseph tell them? Does he tell them, "Cheer up"? Actually, he doesn't tell them anything-instead he asks them a question: "Why are you sad today?" which is their cue to unburden themselves to Joseph.

Joseph did something very profound. He didn't tell them how to feel; instead he gave them an opportunity to talk about their problems. Joseph realized that in 99% of cases people are upset for a reason. The way to help them is to encourage them to talk about the problem and to help them work towards a solution.

So on the next occasion that you are tempted to tell another to "cheer up," consider that perhaps you are merely furthering his or her misery with your insensitive remark. Here is a simple rule: when something is the matter with another person, it is almost always better for them to do the talking, not you. Whatever your huge brain conjures up will almost certainly be irrelevant, and potentially offensive.

When you ask someone, "How are you?" are you really prepared to wait for the answer? That is the real reason we say "cheer up" - it is quick and easy. We convince ourselves that with our nugget of wisdom we have done our part for humanity, while in reality the recipient of your brilliant aphorism is bursting inside, "I hate you for saying that!"

Remember, once the words have gone out, they cannot be put back in. Maimonides wisely advised not to say anything without reviewing it in one's own mind three or four times. On these occasions five or six would not be amiss, and assiduously observe the rule: if in doubt, say naught.

If you care about someone going through a rough patch, find some time to listen. If you are not good at listening, offer a hug or - very Jewishly - a cake . . .

# Slice of LIFE

The rain was falling, the bus was waiting for them outside the gate and the Rabbis wanted to get home.

"HALLO!!" one of them who knew a bit of Spanish yelled at the gentle guard sitting in his little booth on the side; "Que Pasa?" Que Pasa el Porta?" But it didn't help, the guard refused to open up.

The scene is a cattle slaughtering house in Argentina. The bearded Jews were all Shochatim; religious Jews trained in all the details of 'ritual' slaughtering. They had come from all over the world, about fifty of them, to work here for a few months, earn enough money to support their families and return to their homes.

The work was hard, with long hours, the slaughterhouse was a good hour's drive from town and they were tired. But ... "Hey open the door already!!" one of them pounded on the gate. "Open!"

"No no!" the guard yelled back, followed by something in Spanish.

"He says he won't open the door till everyone is here" the Spanish-speaking shochet explained, "He says someone is missing and he's not opening till he's here."

"NO one is missing!!! He's probably drunk. Just tell him to open up!!" shouted one of the men. "He's making us crazy!! Open up already!! We want to go home and we have a long ride ahead of us!"

But the guard wouldn't budge. So they talked it over between themselves; they had to come up with a plan of action.

"Listen," one of them suggested, "either we force him to open the door or we make a count and see if he's right. Maybe someone IS missing." And sure enough.... One man was missing!

NO one could figure how it happened, but they counted again and Zalman the Chabad Chassid wasn't there. Zalman was a quiet fellow so they didn't notice his absence, how the guard noticed no one could figure out, but now besides wanting to go home they began to get worried about their colleague. They went back to the factory to find him.

They searched and searched for a half and hour to no avail. He had disappeared into thin air.

"Hey! Maybe he didn't come today", one of them suggested.

"No, he was on my shift," said another. "I even talked to him today. But where is he?"

They looked in the offices, in the kitchen, in the restrooms, maybe he fell asleep. Until someone yelled out, "I found him! Here he is! Call an ambulance! Come quick!! Help!! Help!!!"

It seems that Zalman had entered one of the huge freezer rooms and while he was deep inside someone closed the door and turned off the lights. Maybe Zalman had become confused, or perhaps he tripped in the darkness, but in any case when they found him he was laying unconscious on the floor almost frozen to death.

They pulled him out, covered him with blankets and began rubbing his body, and by the time the ambulance arrived he was already on his feet, drinking hot soup and ready to go home. It was nothing short of a miracle and of course they couldn't stop telling Zalman how the guard was the one who saved him.

When they all returned to the gate the guard smiled, pressed the button that opened the door and everyone filed past shaking his hand and blessing him. No one knew Spanish well enough to explain to him what happened but when it came Zalman's turn he gave him a big hug, looked

him in the eyes and said "Amigo."

But there still remained a few mysteries. First, how did the guard notice one Jew from fifty was missing? After all, they all looked and even dressed pretty much alike. Was he some sort of genius?

The shochet that knew Spanish went back to ask him and several minutes later returned with the explanation.

"The guard said that he has no idea which one Zalman is. Just that every morning when we arrived and everyone would file past him, the only one that would say 'hello' to him was Zalman. Then when we finished every day the same Zalman was the only one that would say goodbye to him on the way out!

"So today he remembered that he had heard a 'good morning' but no 'good bye' so it wasn't hard for him to figure out that someone was missing! Zalman's greetings saved his life.

But that wasn't the end of it. They had another question. Zalman was probably the most introverted of the entire crowd!

"Of all people, why was it you that always said hello?" they asked him.

"I'll tell you why" Zalman answered. "Did you ever see the Lubavitcher Rebbe giving out dollars, (for several years tens of thousands of people would file by the Rebbe every Sunday morning to receive directly from him a blessing and a dollar to give to charity) or saying "Lechiam" to thousands of Chassidim, one by one? Well I did and it really impressed me.

"I thought to myself, if such a great person as the Rebbe can give so much time and attention to everyone, I should at least be able to say hello to people.

"So I decided that even though it's completely against my nature, I'm going to do it. And it saved my life."

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ISSUE 1013

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the times of Moshiach, when one will walk down the street and he will not be occupying his mind with words of the holy Torah, the stones and trees will shout out to him "why are you stepping on me? What makes you any better than me? So too if one will take a fruit off a tree and attempt to eat it without saying a blessing, the tree will call out "say a blessing"



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter by the Rebbet Mr. Shneur Zalman Shazar (president of the State of Israel in the years 1963-73), dated Tevet 14, 5714 (December 20, 1953), in which the Rebbe touches on the parallels between the spiritual light unleashed on Kislev 19 and modern-day lighting methods.

It was with pleasure that I received the news that electrical power has been installed in Kfar Chabad, and that farbrengens (gatherings) were already held by its light on the luminous day of the 19th of Kislev. I am told that the matter was arranged thanks to your effort and vigour, and I thank you and congratulate you on this.

It is an age-old Jewish custom to seek a deeper meaning and instruction in every occurrence, as per the saying of the Mishnah, "Who is wise? He who learns from every man", to which the Baal Shem Tov adds that one must also learn something from every event and its every detail.

From the day of his redemption on the 19th of Kislev, the double light of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi began to spread, free of all disturbances and obstructions, and in a manner that could reach also the simplest of folk. Indeed, this is the elementary principle of Chassidism: to draw down and connect the ultimate heights with the lowest depths...

The electrical force is one of the hidden forces of nature. It cannot be perceived by any of the five senses--we know of its existence only through its causations and effects. Yet this hidden force most potently banishes darkness and illuminates the night. Thus, electricity is a physical analogue for the spiritual force of Chassidism, whereby the hidden element of Torah and its most arcane secrets--as revealed via Chassidic teaching and the Chassidic way of life--banish the darkness of the material world and illuminate the murkiness of the physical existence.

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The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter by a young woman who wrote to him with several questions regarding faith and religion, and prefaced her letter with the statement, "I do not believe in G-d, having found no convincing proof of His existence." In his reply, the Rebbe discusses, at some length, the logical and moral necessity for belief in G-d, and addresses her question. He then adds:

I have written all of the above in reply to your letter. In truth, however, not only do I not believe you when you say that you do not believe in G-d (G-d forbid), but it is also clear to me that you do not believe so either.

My proof of this is that on every occasion that you witness injustice in your surroundings, or when you think of the Holocaust perpetrated by Hitler (may his name be blotted out), as you mention in your letter, you are outraged. But if it were the case that the world has no Ruler and Planner, why should it surprise you that there transpire unjust things, and that whoever is bigger and more powerful than his fellow swallows him alive?

This applies not only to events on the scale of the Holocaust, but to the routine flow of our daily lives, in which every time we perceive something that is wrong and unjust, this disturbs our tranquillity, since we are convinced that things should not be this way. But why shouldn't they? The physical substance of the universe is not moral, and neither are the plants and animals... Obviously, our outrage over the injustice we see derives from something higher than the physical reality--higher, even, than man. This "something" exists within every human heart and is the source of the conviction, shared by every human being, that there is right and wrong, and that the world ought to conform to what is right. Thus, when we witness a wrong, we immediately seek an explanation: Why is it so? What has caused something to be other than what it ought to be?.

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### THE MENORAH

The basic elements of a kosher menorah are eight holders for oil or candles and an additional holder, set apart from the rest, for the shamash ("attendant") candle.

The Chanukah lights can either be candle flames or oil-fuelled. Since the miracle of Chanukah happened with olive oil - the little cruse of oil that lasted for eight days - an oil menorah is preferable to a candle one, and olive oil is the ideal fuel. Cotton wicks are preferred because of the smooth flame they produce.

The eight candles of the menorah must be arranged in a straight, even line, not in a zigzag or with some lights higher than others. If it is an oil menorah, the oil cups must hold enough oil to burn for the required time - at least 30 minutes on weeknights, and up to one-and-a-half hours on Friday evening. If it is a candle menorah, the candles should be large enough to burn for the required time.

Electric menorahs are great for display purposes, and are a wonderful medium for publicizing the Chanukah miracle. But the Chanukah lights used to fulfil the mitzvah should be real flames fuelled by wax or oil - like the flames in the Holy Temple.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*In this week's Torah portion, we read how Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, was informed that he was about to come to the town of Timna to shear his sheep. And it was related to Tamar, saying, 'Behold, your father-in-law is coming up to Timna to shear his flocks!'*

*The great commentator, Rashi, explains that Timna was a town located on the slopes of a mountain. He states: "You ascend to it from one direction and descend to it from the other."*

*The expression of ascent, therefore, is pertinent in the story of Tamar. Since Timna was on the mountain-slope, and Tamar was planning to go and meet Judah, she would not know from which direction he was coming unless the direction was mentioned.*

*A person's spiritual service is like ascending a mountain. A mountain climber cannot stop mid-way on the steep slope, for in that position it is almost impossible to prevent himself from losing his footing and falling. He must climb steadily upward without pause. Similarly, in ascending the "mountain of G-d" (Psalms 24:3) a constant upwards movement is vital, not only for the purpose of going higher, but also to ensure that one does not fall lower. One should not be satisfied with his present spiritual level, for such complacency is the beginning of descent.*

*The upcoming mitzva of the Chanuka lights lends particular emphasis to this teaching. Every night of Chanuka a new light must be added, for spiritual affairs must always be in ascendancy. If one failed to add an additional light on the second night of Chanuka (for example), he has not merely failed to ascend higher on that day - he has slipped down from the previous day's level. Yesterday he lit one candle, an increase from the day before; he fulfilled the mitzva with the extra devotion required; he was on the upswing, in ascendancy. Not so today. His level has fallen. To observe the mitzva today with the same devotion as yesterday, he must increase his commitment!*

*J. I. Gutnick*

## IT HAPPENED

Once...

**Anshel Rothschild's Secret Room**

By Yitzchak Cohen

Everyone has heard of the famous, wealthy banking family, the Rothschilds. The "founding father" of the Rothschild clan was Anshel Rothschild, an Orthodox Jew who lived in the middle of the nineteenth century in Austria. Anshel amassed a huge fortune and established a close relationship with the then Emperor of Austria, Franz Joseph.

From time to time, the Emperor would send visitors to the luxurious and famous palace of Anshel Rothschild. It was the most lavish, luxurious and well-appointed palace in all of Austria, and everyone wanted to see its beauty and wealth.

During one visit Anshel took his guest, an important government official, on a tour of the palace. He showed him room after room, and the guest was awed by the beauty of the gold, the silver, the furnishings, the chandeliers, the imported fabrics. Everything was a sight to behold. There existed nothing like it in all of Austria. When Anshel passed a certain door, he continued walking, but the guest asked to be shown the room behind the door.

"I am sorry," said Anshel. "This is the one room in the palace that I cannot show you."

"Why not?" asked the guest. "I would love to see every part of your remarkable palace."

"I simply cannot," answered Anshel, and continued walking. The tour concluded, and the official returned to his master, and reported everything he saw. The palace was even more than one could imagine. "However," said the official to the Emperor, "there was one room that Anshel refused to show me."

"Why not?" asked the Emperor.

"I do not know. But I can guess. You know how wealthy those Jews are. My theory is that in that room there is a magic moneymaking machine. That is why he is so wealthy. Behind that door must be a machine that creates the wealth of Anshel Rothschild."

The Emperor did not know whether to believe his official, so he sent a second government official to see the palace of Anshel Rothschild. The second official came back with the same story. And a third, and a fourth.

The curiosity of Emperor Franz Joseph was greatly aroused, so he decided to go himself and visit the palace. Anshel took the Emperor for the same tour as he did all the other visitors from Franz Joseph's

government. And when they reached the "forbidden room," the Emperor asked to go inside and see what was there.

Anshel explained that that was the one place he could not show anyone. After the Emperor insisted, Anshel gave in, and agreed to show the Emperor the secret room. He took out his keys, opened the door, and invited the Emperor to enter. Franz Joseph looked, and was amazed at what he saw. There, in a small room, was a simple pine box, and some plain white cloth on a table. That was all there was!

"What is this all about?" asked the Emperor.

"We Jews have strict rules about burial customs," explained Anshel. "When a person dies, he must be buried in a very simple coffin, a plain pine box. And his body must be enveloped in a plain white shroud. This is to maintain the equality of all G-d's creatures. No one is permitted to be buried in a fancy, expensive coffin, or in luxurious clothing. Though some may live affluent lives, and others may suffer dire, abject poverty, in death all are equal."

"But why is this here in this room?" asked the Emperor, impressed but still confused.

"At the end of each day, I come to this room, and view the coffin and the shrouds, and I am reminded that even though I have great wealth and power and I have important influence in the highest echelons of the Austrian Empire, I am still one of G-d's simple creatures, and at the end of my life, this is the end I will come to like all of G-d's other children. I do this lest after a day filled with high finance and major financial transactions, I think too highly of myself, and develop a bloated sense of myself."

Franz Joseph was amazed, and in fact, he was speechless. His respect for Anshel Rothschild grew even greater than before. He never questioned the sincerity, honesty or integrity of Anshel again.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

**And on the vine were three branches** (Gen. 40:10)

According to our Sages, the Jews are likened to the vine, the fruit of which "gladdens G-d and man." For within every Jew exists this attribute of "wine" - the innate ability to delight in G-dliness, an inheritance from our forefathers. This love for G-d is hidden deep inside, much like the wine is hidden in the grape and not outwardly discernable. Likewise, just as squeezing the grape releases the treasure within, so does personal refinement and self-nullification reveal this inner love and bring it to its potential. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

**CANDLE LIGHTING: 17 DECEMBER 2011**

BEGINS ENDS

8:20	MELBOURNE	9:26
8:07	ADELAIDE	9:11
6:21	BRISBANE	7:19
6:50	DARWIN	7:43
6:21	GOLD COAST	7:19
7:01	PERTH	8:02
7:44	SYDNEY	8:46
7:56	CANBERRA	9:00
8:23	LAUNCESTON	9:33
8:18	AUCKLAND	9:23
8:32	WELLINGTON	9:42
8:28	HOBART	9:40
7:21	BYRON BAY	8:20

**CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH**

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

**PARSHAS VAYIESHEV  
21 KISLEV • 17 DECEMBER**

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:20 PM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:00 PM
<b>SHABBOS MORNING:</b>	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:34 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:26 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM