

# LAMPLIGHTER

1 Tevez  
Chanukah  
Mikeitz  
**1065**  
14 December  
5773/2012

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

We read in this week's Torah portion, Mikeitz, that when Yoseph's brothers began to be plagued by troubles in Egypt, they realized that they were being punished for having sold him. The effect this had was that they started to regret what they had done. "And they said to one another, 'Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us and we would not hear.' Therefore is this distress come upon us."

As soon as Reuven saw that his brothers were repenting of their sin he told them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not sin against the lad,' and you would not listen?" Reuven reminded his brothers that he had tried to prevent them from selling Yosef. Unfortunately, they had not been deterred.

A question is asked: Why did Reuven add additional pain and suffering to their already troubled state of mind?

Indeed, the natural inclination when one sees a person regretting his transgressions is to console him and offer encouragement, not to add to his burden of guilt by recounting his misdeeds. Why then did Reuven dredge up the events of the past, rather than attempt to comfort his brothers? What kind of exemplary conduct is this for the "firstborn of Israel?"

To explain:

Reuven deliberately recounted his brothers' sin in order to bring them to genuine teshuva (repentance). Reuven saw that his brothers regretted having sold Yosef only because of their troubles; accordingly, their repentance was not altogether genuine, as it had only been prompted by punishment.

True teshuva is only attained when one recognizes the severity of one's sin and deeply regrets having transgressed, not because one wishes to escape the sin's consequences.

Teshuva that is done because of an external factor is not a true teshuva, for if not for the punishment, the sinner would never have repented in the first place.

Reuven wanted his brothers to regret having sold Yosef not because of their troubles, but because their sin was in fact reprehensible. He therefore recounted the chain of events leading up to their transgression, reminding them that he had counselled them against selling their brother.

Reuven added to his brothers' guilt and remorse for the purpose of bringing them to true repentance. By chastising them instead of offering comfort, he helped his brothers return to G-d with a whole heart.

*Adapted by Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Volume 30*

## The Unidentified Brother

By Elisha Greenbaum

Two old ladies meet up after a hiatus of 50 years.

"You wouldn't believe it," one later recounted to a grandchild, "but Millie swore that I didn't look a day older than when she'd seen me last!"

"What did you say to her?"

"I lied too."

In this week's Parshah we read how, 22 years after being sold 'down to Egypt, Yoseph is reunited with his brothers but this time under much reversed circumstances. They who had mistreated him, abandoned him in a snake-infested pit before ultimately selling him into captivity, were now cast as supplicants begging for famine relief, while Yoseph had become the ruler of the Egyptian empire.

*"And Yoseph recognized his brothers, and they did not recognize him" (Genesis 42:8).*

The last time they'd seen Yoseph was as a callow youth barely 17 years old, setting off into slavery. Now he was a man, a leader of the world one and only superpower, surrounded by lackeys and brocaded in regal finery. Was it, a) the change in his circumstances the reason they didn't identify him? b) the clothes? c) the beard? (Parenthetically, allow me to state for the record my deeply held belief that men look better in beards).

Or was it, d): None of the above.

Over time people change, and develop. Personalities progress and one's character evolves. Barring radical plastic surgery however, most of us remain relatively similar physically and facially throughout our lives.

The brothers were confused, not because Yoseph was unidentifiable, but because they weren't expecting him to look as he did.

The sons of Yaakov were shepherds. Pasturing sheep is not the most labour-intensive of occupations. Plenty of time left for prayer, solitary meditations and communing with one's maker. *They did not recognize him* because the worldly nobleman they were encountering, beset and besieged by the cares of virtually the entire civilized world, existed on a plane so far removed from their more humdrum existence. From their perspective, this could be no brother of theirs. But he was.

To walk with kings and be personally unaffected, to spend one's day entwined in the machinations of state but remain the son of Yaakov, this was an attainment that the other brothers simply could not envision. Yoseph the dutiful son, the shepherd boy sold into slavery, was still the same Yoseph ensconced in Pharaoh's palace, untarnished by all he had encountered.

And of all the brothers, it was Yoseph who scaled the greatest of spiritual heights, who through his foresight saved the world from famine and whose children are constantly invoked as the ideal model for Jewish children throughout history.

Who among us has not on occasioned yearned for a simpler life? Downscale, withdraw from the rat-race, retire to the farm and relax?

Don't do it. Don't cop out on life.

It is precisely through facing up to the world, taking on reality on its terms, living as a proud Jew and ultimately bringing goodness, kindness and spirituality to the daily grind that we make a difference to the world we live in, to our families, loved ones and not least importantly; we fulfill ourselves.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Vanishing Flame

By Yerachmiel Tilles

It was the first night of Chanukah. Outside a snowstorm raged, but inside it was tranquil and warm. The Rebbe, Rabbi Baruch of Mezhibuz, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, stood in front of the menorah, surrounded by a crowd of his Chassidim. He recited the blessings with great devotion, lit the single candle, placed the *shammash* ("servant candle") in its designated place, and began to sing *HaNairot Halalu*. His face radiated holiness and joy; the awed Chassidim stared intently at him.

The flame of the candle was burning strongly. Rebbe and Chassidim sat nearby and sang *Maoz Tsur* and other Chanukah songs. All of a sudden, the candle began to flicker and leap wildly, even though there wasn't the slightest breeze in the house. It was as if it were dancing. Or struggling. And then, it disappeared!

It didn't blow out, there was no smoke, it just was not there anymore. It was as if it flew off somewhere else. The Rebbe himself seemed lost in thought. His attendant went over to re-light the wick, but the Rebbe waved him off.

He motioned to the Chassidim to continue singing. Several times, between tunes, the Rebbe spoke words of Torah. The evening passed delightfully, and the Chassidim present had all but forgotten about the disappearing Chanukah candle.

It was nearly midnight when the harsh sound of carriage wheels grating on the snow and ice exploded the tranquillity. The door burst open and in came a Chassid who hailed from a distant village. His appearance was shocking. His clothes were ripped and filthy, and his face was puffy and bleeding. And yet, in stark contrast to his physical state, his eyes were sparkling and his features shone with joy.

He sat down at the table, and with all eyes upon him, began to speak excitedly. "This isn't the first time I came to Mezhibuz by the forest route, and I know

the way very well. But there was a terrible snow storm this week, which greatly slowed my advance. I began to worry that I wouldn't get here in time to be with the Rebbe for the first night of Chanukah. The thought disturbed me so much, I decided not to wait out the storm, but to plod ahead and travel day and night, in the hope that I could reach my destination on time.

"That was a foolish idea, I must admit, but I didn't realize that until too late. Last night, I ran into a gang of bandits, who were quite pleased to encounter me. They figured if I was out in this weather, at night, alone, I must be a wealthy merchant whose business could not brook delay. They demanded that I surrender to them all of my money.

"I tried to explain, I pleaded with them, but they absolutely refused to believe I had no money. They seized the reins of my horses and leapt on my wagon. They sat themselves on either side of me to keep me under close surveillance, and then drove me and my wagon off to meet their chief to decide my fate.

"While they waited for their chief to arrive, they questioned and cross-examined me in great detail, searched me and the wagon, and beat me, trying to elicit the secret of where I had hidden my money. I had nothing to tell them except the truth, and that they weren't prepared to accept.

"After hours of this torture, they bound me and threw me, injured and exhausted, into a dark cellar. I was bleeding from the wounds they had inflicted, and my whole body ached in pain. I lay there until the evening, when the gang leader came to speak with me.

"I tried to the best of my ability to describe to him the great joy of being in the Rebbe's presence, and how it was so important to me to get to the Rebbe by the start of the holiday that it was worth it to endanger myself by traveling at night.

"It seems that my words made an impression on him, or else he was persuaded by my adamancy even under torture. But whichever it was, thank G-d he released me from the handcuffs, saying:

"I sense that your faith in G-d is strong and your longing to be with your Rebbe is

genuine and intense. Now we shall see if this is the truth. I am going to let you go, but you should know that the way is extremely dangerous. Even the most rugged people never venture into the heart of the forest alone, only in groups, and especially not in a storm and at night. You can leave and try your luck. And I am telling you, if you get through the forest and the other terrible conditions safely, unharmed by the ferocious wild beasts or anything else, then I will break up my gang and reform my ways.

"If you actually reach the outskirts of the city, then throw your handkerchief into the ditch next to the road, behind the signpost there. One of my men will be waiting, and that is how I will know that you made it.

"I then became terrified all over again. The hardships I had already endured were seared into my soul, and now even more frightening nightmares awaited me. But when I thought about how wonderful it is to be with the Rebbe at the menorah lighting, I shook off all my apprehensions and resolved not to delay another moment. My horse and carriage were returned to me and I set off on my way.

"There was total darkness all around. I could hear the cries of the forest animals, and they sounded close. I feared that I was surrounded by a pack of vicious wolves.

"I crouched down over my horse's neck and spurred him on. He refused to move in the pitch blackness. I lashed him. He didn't budge.

"I had no idea what to do. At that moment, a small light flickered in front of the carriage. The horse stepped eagerly towards it. The light advanced. The horse followed. All along the way, the wild animals fled from us, as if the tiny dancing flame was driving them away.

"We followed that flame all the way here. I kept my end of the bargain and threw my handkerchief at the designated place. Who knows? Perhaps those cruel bandits will change their ways, all in the merit of that little light."

It was only then that the Chassidim noticed that the Rebbe's Chanukah light had returned. There it was, burning in the elaborate menorah, its flame strong and pure as if it had just been lit.

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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Symbolically, 'seven' is associated with the natural world, created in six days and completed with G-d's rest on the Seventh, Shabbat. 'Eight,' however, represents the infinite and supernatural, in contrast to the finite and natural. The seven-lamp Menorah of the Holy Temple illuminated the natural world, but Chanukah goes even beyond. It is a foretaste and reflection of the era of Moshiach, a higher level, one which is above and beyond our worldly limitations.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d  
25 Sivan, 5712 [June 18, 1952]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## Greeting and Blessing:

... From your letter I surmise that you are an engineer, though it is unclear to me whether your work involves the construction of buildings or is in the field of measuring distances or areas or the like. In any case, fundamental to all of the above is the science of geometry. And what is one of the things that the nature of this science can teach us?

Geometry has the characteristics of an exact science as well as of an applied science. The same is true of our holy Torah (lehavdil ad infinitum). For though the Torah is the wisdom of G-d--the ultimate in truth and exactitude--and "no man can know its worth... and it is hidden from the eyes of all living," nevertheless, as its name, Torah (from the word hora'ah, "instruction"), implies, its purpose is to instruct our daily lives in this physical and material world. Thus, the difference between these two disciplines (Torah and geometry) can enlighten us as to the fundamental and infinite difference between the Torah, of which it is said "for it is your wisdom and understanding before all nations," and the wisdom and understanding of the nations and also of the intellect of the "animal soul" of the Jew.

All human sciences, including the "exact sciences," are founded upon axioms that are wholly unscientific. For science, especially exact science, accepts only proven facts, while the axioms of all sciences, mathematics and geometry included, are not proven in any way, so that a person is free to accept them or reject them. This is most apparent in the science of geometry, which has three different systems, each of which is founded upon a number of axioms, and the axioms of one system are contradictory to the axioms of the others.

In other words, no science can present to a person anything definite, only a series of contingencies. It can only say: if you accept a number of axioms as true, and you accept a particular method of deduction from them, the results will be such and such.

There are two points here: a) It is the person's prerogative whether to accept the axioms or not. b) Also in the case that he does accept them, there is nothing to compel him to act in a manner that is consistent with the results of the particular method. For all the method says is, "If you act this way, the result will be such and such." But if the person is willing to accept the adverse consequences, there is nothing that compels him not to act in any way he desires. In other words, science does not instruct life, but only narrates--as a sort of fortune-teller--a sequence of events, maintaining that according to past experience, and based upon certain axioms which we fancy to accept as true, things will unfold in such and such a manner.

Utterly different is our holy Torah. As the wisdom of the Absolute Existence--the Almighty--it is absolute. Its axioms, as well as the rules that dictate the manner in which laws are to be derived from these axioms, are utterly true. And since this is the wisdom of the Creator of the entire world, man included, it is self-understood that these laws obligate a person to act in concurrence with them, and in no other way.

This is one of the points that you, as a scientist, ought to engrave in your mind: there can be no refutation of Torah by science, since the Torah is absolute truth, while science itself attests that it is not absolute, but dependent upon the person's willful acceptance of certain givens; that the science has full license to establish several contradictory systems, all legitimized by the person's choice to accept their axioms, as is the case with the three systems in geometry--the Euclidean, Lobachevskian and Riemannian....

## CUSTOMS CORNER

We find in Leviticus in a number of verses the Torah gives preference to the right side of the body. Therefore in most commandments we give preference to the right before the left.

When making a blessing on food or a Mitzvah we always hold the article in the right hand.

When dressing we are also careful to put on the right side of the clothing before the left.

When washing netilas yadain we wash the right hand first.

The Mezuzah on the door post is affixed on the right as well. Therefore when setting up the Menorah in a doorway for Chanukah, the Menorah is put on the left, in order to be surrounded by Mitzvos, on the left and the right.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*The Chanukah candles provide us with a clearly visible expression of the teaching, "A Mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light." In regard to other Mitzvos, the Mitzvah's function as a lamp is not as apparent. In contrast, the Mitzvah of Chanukah candles produce discernible light and spread that light throughout one's surroundings.*

*The Chanukah candles are lit for eight days. This does not mean that the same Mitzvah is repeated eight times in succession. Just as in a physical sense, new candles are lit each night, in a spiritual sense too; each night represents a new light: a new Mitzvah to be fulfilled with new fire.*

*The newness of the Mitzvah is further emphasized by the custom of adding a new candle every night. Beginning from the second night, for seven successive nights -- once on each of the days of the week -- we increase the number of candles we light. This reflects how we must constantly increase our efforts to spread the "lamp" of "Mitzvah" and the "light" of "Torah."*

*The Chanukah lights also reflect the light of the Jewish soul. As the Tanach teaches, "The soul of man," -- i.e., each and every Jew, young or old -- "is the lamp of G-d." The Mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles enables each person to fulfill the purpose of his soul's descent in the world -- to spread G-dly light, not only in his home, but in his surroundings, and even, as expressed in the Menorah lightings which we have just witnessed, in the furthest removed corners of the world.*

*J. I. Guterlich*

## IT HAPPENED

## Once...

## STEADY HANDS

An elderly Jew with a large black Yarmulke once appeared at the Chabad counter in Ben Gurion Airport in Israel. When he was asked if he would like a cup of coffee gratis, he answered that he would, but only if it was full to the brim.

The perplexed Chossid standing behind the counter did as he said; they filled the cup, with his constant encouragement, to the point that the slightest quiver would cause it to spill. Then to their amazement the old fellow lifted the cup without spilling a drop and drank it.

When he finished he smiled proudly and said, "I did that to show you how great your Rebbe is!"

"I'm not a Chabad Chossid," he explained "My name is Rabbi Baker and years ago I was the Rabbi of a large *shul* in New York City. We had a *mikva* for women and everything. But then, like so many *shuls* in the U.S.A, the older people either died or moved away and the neighbourhood filled with gentiles. The board of directors of the *shul* began hinting that they would like to sell out and make a nice profit, but I strongly opposed it.

"First of all, it is forbidden to sell a Synagogue and, not only that, men kept coming to *shul* and women kept using the *mikva*. Furthermore, an interesting thing was happening. The lady that was in charge of the *mikva* told me that almost every evening the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shneerson, would call her up, ask her how she was feeling and encourage her work.

"This continued for several months. Then, one evening while I was in the middle teaching a class in Talmud in the *shul*, she burst into the room and shouted almost hysterically that someone had put a large lock on the *mikva* door.

"I understood that it must have been the directors trying to discourage women from coming but I didn't know what to do. I am not the strongest of people and I held myself to be an honourable Rabbi, certainly not one to go fighting battles.

"Well, I don't know how I did it but I ran to my car, somehow found a metal saw (to this day I don't know how it got there) ran to the lock and began sawing away in public. A bunch of people even stopped

to look but I didn't care. About a half hour later the door was open and the women were able to enter.

"The next day the *mikva* lady told me that the Rebbe called her the previous night after the incident, and when she told him what I had done, he said, 'Blessed be the hands that sawed off that lock.'

"That is what I wanted to show you," the elderly Rabbi concluded. "Today I am over ninety one years old, yet you see that my hands are steady as a youth's. Clearly it is because of the Rebbe's blessing."

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

And it came to pass at the end of two years (41:1)

Every affliction to befall man has a set time to end; as it is written, "An end He set to darkness, and every limit He investigates" (Job 28:3). This is said regarding Joseph, who was ten years in prison [when he asked the chief butler to intercede for him] but G-d investigated and saw that it is necessary for him to be imprisoned for another two years...

"In every sorrow there is profit" (Proverbs 14:23).

This, too, is said in regard to Joseph, who suffered in prison and then profited from it [in becoming] ruler over Egypt... (*Midrash Tanchuma*)

And [Joseph] collected the food... the produce of each city's surrounding fields he placed within it (41:48)

Each part of the land preserves its own produce; one mixes from the local dust into the grain and this keeps it from spoiling. (*Rashi's commentary*)

Also the produce of man requires some "local dust" as a preservative, lest it rot.

The greater a persons achievements, the more susceptible they are to corruption. A fruitful yield in life--material or spiritual--may breed an arrogance that corrodes all that is good and G-dly in it. The solution is a dose of dust. One who saturates his successes with humility and self-effacement, guarantees their preservation as positive and constructive forces in his own life and the lives of his fellows. (*from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

## CANDLE LIGHTING: 14 DECEMBER 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
8:20	MELBOURNE	9:25
8:07	ADELAIDE	9:10
6:20	BRISBANE	7:19
6:49	DARWIN	7:42
6:20	GOLD COAST	7:19
7:00	PERTH	8:01
7:43	SYDNEY	8:46
7:56	CANBERRA	8:59
8:22	LAUNCESTON	9:33
8:18	AUCKLAND	9:23
8:31	WELLINGTON	9:41
8:27	HOBART	9:39
7:21	BYRON BAY	8:20



## CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS MIKEITZ  
1 TEVET • 14 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING: MINCHA: KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:20 PM 6:30 PM 9:05 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: MINCHA: SHABBOS ENDS::	10:00 AM 9:34 AM 8:20 PM 9:25 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: MINCHA: MAARIV:	9:15 AM 8:30 PM 9:20 PM