

LAMPLIGHTER

20 Kislev
Parshas
Vayeishev

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading relates how, out of jealousy, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, how he served as a servant in the home of Potiphar, and how he was framed and thrown into prison.

While Joseph was in prison, Pharaoh became enraged with two of his courtiers, the butler and the baker, and threw them into the same cell. They awoke with sorry faces and yet Joseph did not share his misery with them. Instead, he did everything he could to lift their spirits.

Now that's the sign of real character. Too often, we get caught up with ourselves and our problems, real or imagined. We worry about the problems we face and we blow them out of all proportions. Have you ever seen a major executive become all flustered and raving just because he misplaced his keys? Even when our problems are genuine, heaven forbid, we can't allow them to take over our lives.

Joseph had real problems. He had been taken from his family and was imprisoned with no real hope of being set free, and yet he was able to look beyond his own difficulties and grant others hope and strength.

Not only should we look at Joseph's conduct as ideal, we should also probe to discover the factors that empowered him to act in this manner. Although it is important to point to spiritual leaders as heroes, we have to focus on the principles that motivated the exemplar to express them.

What gave Joseph the ability to focus on others rather than on himself, was his awareness and his trust that everything that happened to him came from G-d. Later on when his father passed away and his brothers feared that he would take revenge for their selling him into slavery, he told them: "Although you meant to do me harm, G-d intended it for the good." And this wasn't merely hindsight. On the contrary, Joseph maintained an ongoing awareness that whatever happened to him was transpiring because G-d so desired. That enabled him to maintain his inner strength and hope. For nothing that G-d does is for the bad. On the contrary, His intent is always for the good and ultimately, that positive intent will be manifest in our lives as well.

This was the secret of Joseph's ability to look beyond his troubles. When a person has a locked treasure chest and has been promised the key, he won't be upset if it takes a while before the key arrives. Joseph's trust in G-d was real, not just a spiritual belief. And because it was real, it gave him the power to experience inner peace and happiness and share that peace and happiness with others.

Adapted from the Works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

How Joseph Maintained His Serenity

By Rochel Holzkener

The Baal Shem Tov instigated a grassroots revolution all across Europe, called Chassidism. At the centre of the Chassidic philosophy he placed the tenet of *hashgachah pratit*, divine providence, the belief that G d is *really* in charge, managing every detail of our lives. He had many opponents who challenged him. Perhaps they were frightened that this belief would cause people to shirk responsibility and become passive. But the Baal Shem Tov taught that a true understanding of *hashgachah pratit* breeds proactivity, not passivity.

How's that? An examination of the biblical account of Joseph's narrative can shed light on the matter.

The Torah's description of Joseph leaves no doubt that he was a man with an absolute commitment to his belief in divine providence. When Joseph reveals his true identity to his brothers, he helped them heal from their paralysing guilt by sharing with them his take on being sold:

"But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that G d sent me before you. For already two years of famine [have passed] in the midst of the land, and [for] another five years there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. So G d sent me before you to make for you a remnant in the land, and to preserve [it] for you for a great deliverance."

True, his brothers had taken him, a precocious son in Jacob's illustrious family, and converted him into a piece of meat to be auctioned off in a marketplace. But he wasn't angry with them, because he didn't consider them responsible for his humiliation. In his mind it was G d, and only G d, directing his destiny.

Joseph's time in Egypt went from bad to worse. Initially he was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian dignitary, where he was quite successful-but then he was arrested. His alleged crime was fabricated by Potiphar's wife as revenge for Joseph's rejecting her seductive advances. Joseph was forced to sit in prison for years.

All the while, Joseph remained true to his belief that G d was steering the course of his life, and that there was meaning behind all the chaos.

And then, one day, Joseph noticed that two of his fellow inmates were downcast. Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker had been imprisoned for culinary misdemeanors. Their pain concerned Joseph and he approached them. "Why do your faces look so down today?"

"We've had a dream," they responded, "but there is no one to interpret it."

Joseph accurately interpreted their dreams. Two years later, the chief butler recommended Joseph to Pharaoh when he too had some disconcerting dreams. Joseph successfully interpreted Pharaoh's dreams; the rest is history. He became Pharaoh's viceroy, and saved Egypt and his entire family from starvation during the famine.

But let's go back to his original question, which spawned the whole sequence of events that followed: "Why do your faces look so down today?"

If Joseph would have felt helpless and irate-the way almost anyone in his position would have felt-he would have been incapable of responding to anyone's pain but his own. Angry people don't notice other people who are hurting. And why would Joseph have reached out to employees of a government that had wrongfully imprisoned him?

But Joseph wasn't angry-not at the government, not at Potiphar's wife, and not at his brothers. And as such, he retained his serenity even in jail.

And so Joseph was in tune with another person's pain, and was therefore capable of doing that one small act of goodness and kindness. Little did he know that it would change the world.

The conviction that G d is right here, directing all that happens, is like a spiritual chiropractic adjustment-shifting our focus from frustration to curiosity. The instinctive response-"This is wrong; it shouldn't have happened to me!"-becomes: "This is an opportunity-why else would it happen to me?"

Our job is to look for opportunities to make a difference. And sometimes a small window of opportunity brings in a whole new world of fresh air.

Slice of LIFE

In the city of Leon, France there is a flourishing Chabad House. Several years ago at one of their annual dinners, one of their richest and strongest supporters took the podium and told an emotional story.

"I want to tell everyone how the Lubavitcher Rebbe made me a rich man.

"I was always proud to be Jewish and that is what connected me with Rabbi Gurevitch here in the Chabad House, but I was not always very observant.

"Then, years ago, I had this novel idea to build a hotel and in it a college for hotel management. After months of searching I succeeded in finding investors and was about to begin building when Rabbi Gurevitch suggested that I first receive the blessing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I flew to New York and that next Sunday I was standing in a line of several thousand people in front of the Rebbe's headquarters. But when I was finally face to face with him, I was speechless. The Rebbe just took two dollars from a stack next to him and said "One is for you and the other is for success in your new school." Then he added, "Just be sure that you put a Mezuzah on every door in the new building."

"I was astounded! I don't know how he knew me and my idea but he gave his blessing! I returned to France certain of success! But I was in for a bitter surprise.

"Everything started off like a dream. Within a year the building was finished. We made a grand opening with much publicity in the papers and on T.V. the biggest celebrities in France were there. But for some reason it didn't work. After five years I was millions of francs in debt and had no choice but to declare bankruptcy.

"And that is when the big troubles began. The government suspected foul play and after a few days an official inspector came knocking at my door. I opened up to see a mean-looking fellow that seemed to be a bit of an anti-Semite as well; when he entered my office and saw the picture of the Rebbe on my wall

he wrinkled his nose and mumbled something, asked to see my accounts and ordered me to leave the room and close the door.

"My worst fears proved true. After several hours he left without saying a word and several days later I received a subpoena to court. I was to be tried for fraud in one month's time.

"Things looked bad but I only realized the real hopelessness of my situation when I began looking for lawyers and not one was willing to take the case. Now, all this time I wrote several letters to the Rebbe asking for help but never received an answer and I couldn't figure out what was going on.

"Anyway, the day of the trial arrived. The media had been sure to sensationalize the whole thing and the court was packed while I just sat there reading psalms, praying for a light sentence.

"The first to testify was the investigator himself. He took the podium, was sworn in, turned to the Judge pointed his finger at me and began. I sank into my seat and cringed.

"He said, 'Your honour, after thorough examination of the defendant's books I had no doubt that he was a thief and that he should be prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law.'

"The courtroom was silent and he continued. 'But after recent reexamination of the material I am not ashamed to admit that.... I was seriously mistaken!'

"It is now clear to me beyond the shadow of a doubt that the failure of this business was not due to fraud or even the mismanagement of the accused, but rather to an extraordinary series of events beyond the defendant's control.

"The inspector surprised everyone. He even said that for the sake of justice, of the economy and the glory of France the court should do all it can to make sure my project is re-established, and succeeds.

"The courtroom was abuzz the Judge called him to his desk for consultation and after he returned to his seat the Judge pounded on his desk and announced, that I was innocent of all charges!

"Of course after such a dramatic turnabout from the prosecution the government had little choice other than to pay my debts, support my project and this

time, thank G-d, fortune began shining.

"But two things bothered me. First, why did the business fail so miserably at first? And second, what caused that anti-Semitic inspector to change his mind?

"A month or so later I got my answer. I received a phone call one afternoon and recognized the voice of the inspector on the other end of the line. He asked me to meet him at a certain place that evening and not tell anyone about it as it would be suspicious if we were caught talking.

"We met. He had purposely picked a deserted spot where we could speak freely and he got right to the point.

"You probably are wondering why I suddenly changed my mind about you in the trial aren't you.' He said. I shook my head yes and he continued.

"A few days before the trial he decided to go back to project and search for more evidence so I could have an air tight case against you. But as I was walking about suddenly I noticed something strange; on every door was a Mezuzah! Then he told me his secret. He looked me in the eyes and said:

"You see, my friend, I'm Jewish. I was born, raised, married and was living in Germany until the war broke out.

"My wife and I escaped here to France and, well we decided to erase any sign of our Jewishness. So that's how I know what a Mezuzah is. But I always thought it was for just the front door and you put them on a hundred doors! I even opened a few of them to see if maybe something else was inside but, no! They were all Mezuzahs! I thought to myself 'If this man is a thief, why would he spend a small fortune on these commandments? I was really puzzled.'

"So I went back to your office, looked at the picture of your Rabbi on the wall, looked into his eyes and concluded that if this is your teacher then maybe you aren't a thief after all.

"I took out your accounts again and suddenly got to thinking that maybe I made a couple of big mistakes; one about you and a bigger one about myself. I decided to return to Judaism."

"Then he took out a bag, opened it and showed me a pair of Tefillin he just bought. He finished with the words 'Who knows, maybe that is the reason your business went bad and you had to stand trial. I can't think of any other reason.'"

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

In their description of the Days of Moshiach, our Sages discuss at length about the material good that we can expect in the Future to Come. For example, regarding trees it states: "It bears fruit on the day that it is planted" (Torat Kohanim, B'Chukotai 26:4). As well, "The [actual] Land of Israel in the future will produce cakes and fine silk clothes" (*Ketubot 111b*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

From a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

As has been often said before, all matters of Torah are an inexhaustible source of lessons and inspiration for our daily life, especially when they take the form of practical mitzvos [commandments], since the Torah and mitzvos are infinite, being derived from the Infinite. I mention this here apropos of the mitzva of the Chanuka lights, especially in relation to one particular aspect which, at first, appears quite puzzling.

I am referring to the fact that although Chanuka recalls many miracles and wonders, the main event for which Chanuka was instituted was the miracle of the cruse of oil, the one and only one that was found in the Beis Hamikdash (the Holy Temple), that was intact and undefiled by the enemy, which was then kindled and which lasted for eight days, until new, pure and holy oil could be prepared.

What is puzzling about it is that the oil was not required for human consumption, nor for the consumption of the Altar, but for fuel in the Menora to be burnt in the process of giving light. It would seem, at first glance, of no consequence, insofar as the light is concerned whether or not the oil had been touched and defiled, for, surely, the quality and intensity of the light could hardly be affected by the touch.

Yet, when the Talmud defined the essence of the Chanuka festival, the Sages declared that the crucial aspect was the miracle of the oil. Not that they belittled or ignored the great miracles on the battlefields, when G-d delivered the "mighty" and "many" into the hands of the "weak" and "few," for these miracles are also emphasized in the prayer of "V'al Hanissim" ["and all the miracles"].

Nevertheless, it was the miracle of being able to light the Menora with pure, holy oil, without any touch of uncleanness, which gave rise to the Festival of Lights.

The obvious lesson is that in the realm of the spirit, of Torah and mitzvos, as symbolized by the Chanuka lights, there must be absolute purity and holiness. It is not for the human mind to reason why, and what difference it makes, etc.

To carry the analogy further, it is the purpose of the central Holy Temple to illuminate and bring holiness and purity into the individual "Holy Temple" - i.e., every Jewish home and every Jewish person, which is also the obligation of every Jew toward his fellow Jew, in accordance with the mitzva of "love your fellow as yourself." But special precautions are necessary that the Holy Temple itself be illuminated with the purest, sanctified oil, so that even the High Priest, if he should happen to be impure, could not enter the Holy Temple, much less kindle the Menora. May G-d grant you success in the spirit outlined above, truly reflecting the spirit of the Chanuka lights, lighting ever more candles and increasing their glow from day to day.

With blessings,

P.S. One of the essential messages of Chanuka is the need to preserve the purity of the Torah and mitzvos, especially in the education of our children, for the miracle of Chanuka occurred with the cruse of pure and undefiled oil.

CUSTOMS CORNER

"Rosh Hashanah of Chassidism" - Tanya study cycle

The Rosh Hashanah ("new year") of Chassidism, marking the liberation of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi and the subsequent blossoming of Chabad Chassidism, is celebrated for two days, Kislev 19-20. (The Rebbe was released from prison on the 19th, but his full freedom was only obtained late in the evening -- Kislev 20 on the Jewish calendar.) The two days are celebrated with farbrengens (Chassidic gatherings) and an increased commitment to the ways and teachings of Chassidism. Tachnun (supplication) and similar prayers are omitted. We begin anew the yearly cycle of the daily study of the Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman's major Chassidic work (as part of the "Chitas" daily study program.)

A WORD

from the Director

Yesterday, the 19th, as well as today the 20th of Kislev (known as "Yud Tes - Chof Kislev"), we are celebrating the Festival of Redemption of the founder of Chabad Chasidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Imprisoned on false charges of anti-government activity, Rabbi Schneur Zalman was released after 52 days of incarceration and interrogation, in the year 5559 (1798). His liberation vindicated Chasidic teachings, and established Chasidus as the primary way to prepare the world for Moshiach.

Before Yud Tes Kislev Rabbi Shneur Zalman would deliver very brief discourses in Chasidic teachings, after he was released however, his discourses were lengthened, he expounded on Chasidic Teachings in a broader way, bringing the understanding of the secrets of the Torah and G-dliness to a whole new level. In fact the primary purpose in the revelation of Chasidus was for this very reason, that even the simplest of us can understand the deep esoteric meanings behind our the words of Torah, and to bring it in a practical manner. This is why this day is celebrated as one of the most auspicious days amongst the Chasidim, and all Jews for that matter.

The first public observance of Yud Tes Kislev was held in 5562 (1801), when thousands of Chasidim came to celebrate with the Alter Rebbe in Liadi. On that occasion, the Rebbe delivered a Chasidic discourse on the verse in Psalms, "G-d has redeemed my soul in peace." (By Divine Providence, this was the verse the Rebbe had been reading in prison at the exact moment he was informed of his release.) Before delivering the discourse, the Alter Rebbe sang a famous Chasidic melody to the words "You are my G-d and I will praise You; My L-rd, I will exalt You."

Yud Tes Kislev has ever since been celebrated as the Chasidic "New Year," with festive gatherings of family, friends and acquaintances. It is a particularly auspicious day to rededicate ourselves to Torah, deeds of kindness, and prayer.

As the Rebbe wrote in a telegram to Chasidim: "May you be inscribed - and may that inscription be sealed - for a good year in the study of Chasidus and in Chasidic ways of conduct."

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

December 1700. It was a cold winter in Poland and a blanket of snow covered the entire country. The city streets were bustling with rosy-cheeked people bundled up in fur coats and the countryside peasants were busy warming their homes with wood, and themselves with vodka. The holiday season was approaching, and everyone was in good spirits.

But in the Jewish Ghetto of Krakow gloom and fear filled the air and moaned from every corner; the children were dying of smallpox. The only thing that gave them a bit of joy was being taken from them.

It was the beginning of an epidemic. The doctors were helpless to stop it and the various home remedies did nothing. Every day the town was visited with more heartbreaking tragedies. The only one they could rely on, as usual, was their Father in Heaven, and He didn't seem to be helping much either.

The Rabbi of the community had declared a day of fasting and prayer, then another, then three days of prayer and self-examination. But nothing seemed to work. A week of supplication was announced, but before it began, the thirty elders of the community decided they had to make a "Shaalas Chalom" (a request from a dream).

It was a drastic move, but they had no other choice. They purified themselves, fasted, said Psalms non-stop, immersed in a Mikva, and then prayed to G-d according to ancient Kabbalistic formulas, that He send them some sort of sign that night in their sleep.

Early the next morning they met in the Shul (synagogue) and the results were frightening: The previous night they all had identical dreams!

An old man in a white robe appeared and said: "SHLOMO THE BUTCHER MUST PRAY BEFORE THE CONGREGATION!!".

It was clear what they had to do.

The thirty of them solemnly walked to Shlomo's home and knocked on the door. When his wife opened, she almost fainted at the sight of them.

"Ye..yes?" She stammered, pushing her loose hair under the kerchief on her head.

"We want to speak to your husband. Is he home?" said one of them as pleasantly as possible. "May we come in?" asked another.

She told them to wait and in a few moments Shlomo himself came to the door, shook everyone's hands and invited them in. He ran around for a few minutes looking for chairs and when he found a few and everyone was seated one of them began:

"Shlomo, we made a Dream request yesterday. We asked G-d to tell us what to do about the epidemic and last night we all had the same dream. We dreamed that you have to lead the prayers today."

Shlomo was dumbfounded. If it weren't such a serious matter he would think it was a joke.

"I...should lead the prayers?" stammered Shlomo " Why I...I can't even read properly. I can't.... I mean, what good will it possibly do?"

The elders looked at poor Shlomo, then at each other and then took turns trying to convince him. "Listen Shlomo, just come and do what you can. You don't have to really lead, just pray in front of everyone. Maybe there will be a miracle, maybe you will begin to read. We don't understand it either but.... just come and give it a try. Everyone is in the Shul (synagogue) waiting. Just come and say a few words. Anything is better than what we have now."

So Shlomo, with no other choice, left his house and accompanied them. But no sooner had they entered the crowded Synagogue that Shlomo suddenly broke away, ran back outside and by the time they realized what happened and ran outside after him he was nowhere to be seen.

What could they do? He disappeared. They didn't even know where to look. They had no choice other than to wait.

About half an hour later the door opened and in came Shlomo pushing a wheelbarrow covered with a cloth.

All eyes were on him as he went up to the podium, pulled off the cloth, and lifted an old set of scales out of the barrow. He brought his butchers scales into the Shul!

They were heavy but he lifted them over his head and although his face was red and contorted with the effort, it was obvious that he was crying.

"Here" he yelled out to the ceiling. "Here, G-d! Take them! Take the scales! That must be why you want me to lead the prayers, right? So take the scales and heal the children! Just heal the children. Okay?!!"

He was crying pretty loudly by then and so was most of the congregation. A few men rushed over to help him put the scales on a table on the podium and the congregation began praying.

The next day all the children got better.

You can imagine the joy and festivities that followed. They even made a nice glass case for the scales and left the whole thing there permanently for all to see.

But after a few days when the excitement died down, the elders had to admit that they couldn't figure it out. What was so special about Shlomo's scales? After all, there were tens of shops in the Ghetto that had scales and all of them were owned by G-d fearing Jews. What could be so special about THESE scales?

The answer was soon in coming. When they went around checking all the other scales, they discovered that every one of them without exception was a bit off, certainly never enough to constitute bad business, but inaccurate nevertheless.

It seems that Shlomo would check his scales twice every day, "That's what G-d wants" he explained, "I just check and don't ask questions", while the others checked only occasionally.

The legend has it that these scales remained proudly displayed in that Shul for over two hundred years until the Germans destroyed everything in WWII.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Israel loved Joseph more than all his children... And his brothers envied him (37:3, 11)

"Love is strong as death" (Song of Songs 8:6)--this is the love with which Jacob loved Joseph... "Envy is harsh as the grave" (ibid.)--this is the envy of the brothers to Joseph. What can love achieve in the face of envy? (*Midrash Tanchuma*)

Said Resh Lakish in the name of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah: A man must not discriminate among his children, for on account of the coat of many colours which our father Jacob made for Joseph, "They hated him..." (*Midrash Rabbah*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 12 DECEMBER 2014

BEGINS		ENDS
8:18	MELBOURNE	9:24
8:05	ADELAIDE	9:08
6:18	BRISBANE	7:17
6:47	DARWIN	7:41
6:18	GOLD COAST	7:17
6:58	PERTH	7:59
7:41	SYDNEY	8:44
7:54	CANBERRA	8:57
8:20	LAUNCESTON	9:30
8:15	AUCKLAND	9:20
8:29	WELLINGTON	9:39
8:24	HOBART	9:11
7:19	BYRON BAY	8:18
6:41	SINGAPORE	7:33



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS VAYEISHEV
20 KISLEV • 12 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:18 PM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:00 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:33 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:24 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:25 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM
	MINYAN #2 (STARTING TUES)	9:40 PM