

# LAMPLIGHTER

29 Kislev  
Parshas Mikeitz  
Shabbos Rosh Chodesh  
Shabbos Chanukah

1221

11 December  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion of Mikeitz we read that Jacob reluctantly acceded to his sons' request that they be allowed to return to Egypt together with their youngest brother, Benjamin. The viceroy, whom they did not recognize as their brother, Josef, had ordered them not to return to Egypt for more grain unless they brought Benjamin. Jacob's reply to his sons was: "May G-d, Almighty grant that the man have pity on you and release your other brother and Benjamin."

Jacob's fear and trepidation was greater than that of his children. Although they, too, were aware that this whole event had unfortunate undertones, as they themselves said, "We deserve to be punished because of what we did to our brother...that is why this great misfortune has come upon us," nevertheless, they looked upon it as a personal misfortune.

Jacob, however, saw this event as a continuation of his previous hardships. Jacob viewed all events that transpired with, or were related to, him as a "sign" and forerunner of events that will occur with later Jewish generations.

The tribes, however, were only able to view them in terms of a personal misfortune.

Since Jacob was on a far superior spiritual plane than the tribes, he was able to see these events as they transcended the boundaries of nature.

This closely relates to the festival of Chanukah. Although the events surrounding Chanukah actually came about through miraculous means, superficially one may think that these miracles were bounded by nature. One may be led to think so, because the salvation of the Jewish people and their deliverance from the hands of the Syrian-Greeks involved actual physical warfare.

In truth, the victory involved nothing less than miracles that completely went beyond the realm of nature. The reason for this is that the victorious Jews overcame vastly superior odds - "the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few..." (from the Chanukah Al HaNisim prayer).

Whenever a Jew engages in something, even if it seems to be completely within the realm of nature, he should not think that one's only response is the natural. His actions must always be preceded by prayer to G-d that he should succeed in his actions.

When a Jew acts in this manner he merits to see the miracles that are clothed in the garments of nature, the miracles that totally transcend nature, and ultimately, the miracles that will be revealed with the coming of our Righteous Moshiach.

*Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

## Responsibility for the World

*By Tali Loewenthal*

A situation which has occurred many times in the history of the Jewish people: the non-Jewish ruling power appoints a wise Jew to a senior position as advisor or administrator. This week's Torah reading, Mikeitz, tells of the appointment of Joseph as Viceroy of Egypt, in charge of storing and distributing grain.

Later in the Bible, the Book of Daniel tells of a plan by the ruler of Babylon to have a group of Jewish children brought up in the palace. His idea was that they would become a group of Jewish advisors helping him to run the country. Daniel himself was the foremost of this group.

Jews often held such positions in medieval Spain. One example among many is "Samuel the Prince," who was aide to the ruler of Granada in the 11th century. Samuel was a general of an army, and also wrote an introduction to the method of the Talmud, which is printed in the standard edition.

Naturally, one challenge for people in this kind of position is the effort to maintain their own level of Jewish observance and life.

Thus, in the case of Daniel we read of his insistence on having kosher food in the Babylonian palace. He refused to eat the meat or drink the wine, and asked for vegetarian food instead. The steward in charge of providing his food was unhappy about this-if Daniel and his friends did not look healthy, the steward himself would be put to death! "Try us out for ten days on a vegetarian diet," asked Daniel. This was successful-Daniel and his friends looked healthier than the other youths, and from then on received only vegetarian meals.

Another challenge is the need to try to elevate the moral and religious standard of the country. There have been attempts in this direction in the past: for example, the rabbis tell us that Joseph sought to introduce belief in one G-d into polytheistic Egyptian society. However, this had only a limited effect.

It is in our own time, more than ever before, that virtually every Jew has the opportunity to make this attempt and to seek to communicate the "Seven Noahide Laws," the basic universal teachings of Judaism. By accepting this responsibility for wider society we begin to fulfil what the Torah is demanding of us as individual human beings and as Jews, the Chosen People.

This links with the theme of Chanukah. The Talmud tells us that the Chanukah lights should be lit "at the entrance to one's house, on the outside." For various reasons, this is not the general custom today outside Israel. Nonetheless, many people follow the similar custom of placing the Chanukah lamp in the window, and the large public Chanukah Menorah has become a familiar feature in most Jewish communities around the world.

The Chanukah lights are intended to light up the darkness "outside." Inside the home is holy. "Outside" suggests the opposite. In a spiritual way, the Chanukah lights transform the outside and illuminate it. They do this through their constant increase: one light the first night, two the second, and so on. This also expresses the power of the individual Jew to illuminate the world, through his or her own personal advance, step by step. Then, ultimately, the darkness itself will shine.

# Slice of LIFE

## The Song of Chanuka

By Svetlana Weissman

Let me share with you my story about the small cruse of oil that has remained pure though hidden in Jewish hearts in the former Soviet Union despite 70 years of communism and oppression.

Our family is typically Russian. My grandparents moved from Poland to the Kuban region of Southern Russia since 1953. My grandparents were devoted communists and they raised my mother to be faithful to communist doctrines as well. My grandmother Larissa Michaelovna was the one who actually educated me, as well, since my mother Olga passed away when I turned one.

Grandmother just allowed Russian to be spoken at home. In fact, she was known as the best Russian language teacher in our town. She never spoke about her past. We only knew that she was from Poland. The only time I ever heard Polish was when she would take out her violin and play some old, Polish melodies. At those times, Grandmother would cry and laugh at the same time. She would gaze up high as if she were in some distant place for, far away, with tears rolling down her cheeks. I would say, "Babushka," over and over again, asking, "Why are you crying?" She would just smile and kiss me the way only Babushka could.

My birthday was in the middle of December, and my grandmother would always celebrate by taking out her violin and playing a Polish song that she said reminded her of me. "Oy Chanukah, oy Chanukah, a yontif, a sheina." I didn't understand the Polish words of the song but Grandmother would always look at me as she played and sang, and I knew that it must mean something very wonderful.

Around the time of my birthday in 2001, something happened that changed our lives forever. It was the middle of the winter when she came home with a young look on her face. Even though she was already 78-year-old she looked 20 years younger. I will always remember the look of delight and contentment in my grandmother's eyes when she showed me her shopping bag filled to overflowing. I never saw my grandmother come home with so much food at once. It was around 10-12 kilos of flour, oil, canned vegetables, dried fruit and candy I never saw in our stores.

I was in shock. I knew that on her 3,850 rubles pension she could not possibly afford to buy all at that at once. My grandmother saw my curious look and told me the following.

"Svetochka, my child, we are Jews. Your real name is Sheine. I asked your mother to give you that name in memory of my mother Sheine who was murdered with my entire family in Auschwitz in 1944. I am not Larisa, I am Leahle. I am not Polish, I am Jewish. You see this tattoo on my arm? It's not just a number; it's my identity. I promised myself after the War that I would forget my past, and start a new life with no oppression. I didn't want your mother and future generations to suffer anymore. I was angry with G-d and I didn't want Him to be a part of my life. My 'religion' became communism.

"But that all changed a week ago. It was when I was taking my regular daily stroll in the park. I heard music. It was the song that I play on my violin for your birthday. My feet had a mind of their own and I began walking toward the music. Right there, in the park in Krasnodar, Russia, I saw them. It was the boys I last saw 60 years ago. They reminded me of my brothers and cousins. They were dancing to the music that came from their car and they were stopping people, asking them questions, and then giving them something.

"One of them came over to me and asked: "Izvinti, vi Evreika?" (Excuse me, are you Jewish?) I couldn't answer. Tears began rolling down my cheeks. I could only nod my head "yes." He gave me a box, with a tin candle holder. Look, here it is. It is called a menorah. And he gave me candles and a volchok (dreidel).

"The package had a leaflet with holiday instructions and contact information. It took me several days before I actually called the number. Then I was invited to be introduced to Rabbi Shneur Segal, the director of the Krasnodar Jewish Community Centre and a Chabad rabbi. He spoke to me in Yiddish. It's been 60 years since I've spoken Yiddish. He asked if he could give me a Chanukah package. It was this bag full of goodies. I declined. I said other people might need and deserve it more than me. But he was insistent. I want you to meet him Sheine. He invited us to the Chanukah celebration at the JCC... I want you to meet him, Sheine.

As they say, the rest is history. We went to the Chanukah celebration at the JCC. And we started going there for Shabbat and during the week for classes and events. The most difficult part for Babushka was when I went to study in the Machon Chamesh Jewish Institute in Moscow. But she encouraged me to go there. "You must be a living legacy for our family. Go, learn to really be a Jew," she blessed me.

Each year that I was away in Moscow I would make sure to be at my Babushka's for my birthday. She would take out her violin and play our special song. But from that Chanukah on, I knew what the words meant. "Oy Chanukah, oy Chanukah, a Yontif, a sheine..."

*Sheina Weissman, a social worker, lives in Rishon L'Tzion, Israel, with her husband Meir and daughter Rachel. The Krasnodar JCC is a member of the Federation of Jewish Communities of CIS and Baltic States, the umbrella organization for JCCs in 454 cities across the former Soviet Union. They provide religious, cultural, educational and humanitarian aid to Jews throughout the FSU.*

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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Chanukah was founded on the miracle of the oil, and oil is cited in the verse in Psalms, "I have found David, My servant; with My sanctified oil I have anointed him." David's descendent, Moshiach is called thus in reference to "ha'm'shicha b'shemen - the anointment with oil." From Moshiach will come the complete revelation of the oil of Torah (the secret secrets of Torah), for he will teach "the secret of the reasons [underlying the commandments] and its hidden mysteries" (Rashi). The concept of redemption is especially preeminent on Shabbat Chanukah, for Shabbat is connected with redemption - as underscored in the "Song of the Day" for Shabbat: "A Psalm, a song for the Future Era, for a day that is entirely Shabbat (rest) and tranquility for all eternity." (*The Rebbe, Shabbat Mikeitz, 5752-1991*)



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

15 Kislev, 5738 (1977)  
To All Jewish Detainees, Everywhere  
G-d be with you -

## Greeting and Blessing:

In connection with the forthcoming days of Chanukah, I extend to each and all of you prayerful wishes for a bright and inspiring Chanukah, coupled with the fulfillment of your hearts' desires for good in every respect.

Chanukah brings a meaningful message of encouragement - in keeping with all the festivals and commemorative days in our Jewish calendar, which are meant to be observed not just for the sake of remembrance, but also for the practical lessons they provide in our daily life.

One of the practical teachings of Chanukah is as follows:

The special Mitzvah [commandment] pertaining to Chanukah is, of course, the kindling of the Chanukah Lights, which must be lit after sunset - unlike the Shabbos candles which must be lit before sunset; and unlike also the lights of the Menorah that were kindled in the Beis Hamikdash [Holy Temple] even earlier in the day.

The meaningful message which this emphasis on kindling the Chanukah Lights after sunset conveys is:

When a person finds himself in a situation of "after sunset," when the light of day has given way to gloom and darkness - as was the case in those ancient days under the oppressive Greek rule - one must not despair, G-d forbid, but on the contrary, it is necessary to fortify oneself with complete trust in G-d, the Essence of Goodness, and take heart in the firm belief that the darkness is only temporary, and it will soon be superseded by a bright light, which will be seen and felt all the more strongly through the supremacy of light over darkness, and by the intensity of the contrast.

And this is the meaning of lighting the Chanukah Lights, and in a manner that calls for lighting an additional candle each successive day of Chanukah - to plainly see for oneself, and to demonstrate to others passing by in the street, that light dispels darkness; and that even a little light dispels a great deal of darkness, how much more so a light that steadily grows in intensity.

And if physical light has such quality and power, how much more so eternal spiritual light.

What has been said above pertains to our Jewish people as a whole, as well as to each individual Jew, man or woman, in particular.

The conclusion that follows from it is, that though our Jewish people is still in a state of Golus (Exile), and "darkness covers the earth," a time when "nations rage and peoples speak vain things," etc., there is no reason to get overly excited by it; we have only to strengthen our trust in G-d, the "Guardian of His people Israel, who slumbers not, nor sleeps," and be confident that He will protect His people wherever they be, and will bless them with Hatzlocho [success] in all things, and in a growing measure; and that He will hasten the coming of our Righteous Moshiach to bring us the true and complete Geulo (Redemption) which is fast approaching.

Similarly in regard to each individual, those who find themselves in a state of personal Golus - there is no cause for discouragement and despondency, G-d forbid; on the contrary, one must find increasing strength in complete trust in the Creator and Master of the Universe that their personal deliverance from distress and confinement is on its speedy way.

All the more so when this trust is expressed in a growing commitment to the fulfillment of G-d's Will in the daily life and conduct in accordance with His Torah and Mitzvos - of which the Mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah Lights is particularly significant in that it symbolizes the illumination of the soul, the "Lamp of G-d," with the light of the Torah and Mitzvos, "for a Mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light," - illuminating it in an increasing measure from day to day, to bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy: "The people wailing in darkness (of the Golus) will see a great light" - the light of the Geulo.

With blessing for Hatzlocho and good tidings in all above,

## 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. Gutnick*

## CUSTOMS CORNER

### The Shabbos of Chanukah

1. On Friday afternoon one must light Chanukah candles during the daytime before Shabbat begins. Nonetheless, one may not light earlier than one hour and fifteen minutes before sunset.
2. One should light Chanukah candles before Shabbat candles. It suffices to light one of the Chanukah candles and while finishing to light the rest of the candles, the woman of the house can start lighting the Shabbat candles.
3. One should pray Mincha before lighting candles, but if one can't find an early minyan, some say it's better to light candles and then daven Mincha with a Minyan.
4. One needs to put in enough oil that the candle will burn for a half hour after the stars come out.

# IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The good news spread throughout town. Rebbe Mordechai of Chernobyl would be visiting to celebrate the first days of Chanukah! In addition to the usual excitement that a Chasid feels upon being in his Rebbe's presence, there were others things to be excited about, as well.

The Rebbe would honour one of his Chasidim with hosting him for the evening tea. At this "tea party," which all of the Chasidim would attend the Rebbe share words of Torah that would delight the souls of his followers.

In addition, the Rebbe would bless the host at the end of the evening with material and spiritual bounty. Lastly, everyone knew that the 18 rubles that the Rebbe "charged" for the honour of hosting him would be given to charity. Thus, the host would give charity through the Rebbe's own holy hand.

Itche the Miser went with all of the other Chasidim to greet the Rebbe when he arrived in town. Itche's father had been a prominent businessman. Like his father, Itche was also a Chasid. Unlike his father, Itche's main focus in life was his business, his luxurious home and all of its exquisite furnishings. Also unlike his father, Itche found it hard to part with even a copper for charity. So, one can only imagine how Itche felt when the Rebbe arrived and suggested, "Itche, would you like to host me for tea?"

Of course, Itche said, "It would be my honour, Rebbe." Inwardly, though, Itche panicked. Tea with the Rebbe and all of his Chasidim! They would destroy his home! Then an idea came to him; he would stand at his front door and allow only the Rebbe in. A marvellous plan! Itche was relieved. It would cost him 18 gold rubles but at least his expensive carpets and antiques would remain intact. Itche was sure his idea would work until the Rebbe said, "Itche, could you please personally transport me to your home?"

Now Itche's mind worked feverishly. If he drove the Rebbe in his carriage and they travelled quickly to Itche's home, they would arrive long before the Chasidim who were walking and he would still have time to bolt the front door so that no one else could enter. Ahhh, Itche sighed in relief.

Finally it was the first night of Chanukah. Itche lit the Chanukah menorah with his family. He sat by the Chanuka lights for a little while. He took one last look at his beautiful home and then went to pick up the Rebbe. When Itche arrived, the Rebbe lit the Menora and recited the blessings after which the Chasidim all answered "Amen." Then they began to sing nigunim, wordless soul melodies, as the Rebbe meditated on the light of the small flame. An air of tranquillity permeated the room, except in Itche's corner.

Finally, the Rebbe motioned to Itche that they would go now. Itche pressed his coachman to drive as quickly as possible, certain that with G-d's help he could put a fair distance between his carriage and the Chasidim.

But, halfway through the journey, the Rebbe ordered the carriage to stop. He turned to Itche and said, "I didn't realize your house is so far. Such a long journey was not included in my original price. If you want me to come any further you must pay me another 18 gold rubles." With the Chasidim nearly catching up, Itche had no choice but to agree. Eighteen gold rubles was still less than it would cost to replace his precious carpets and furniture!

Within a few moments, they arrived at Itche's home. The Rebbe stared intently at the 15 steps that led up to the door. "I had no idea you had so many steps, dear Itche. That was not included in my original price. If you want me to go inside your home, you must pay me 18 gold rubles for each step!"

Itche nearly fainted. Before he had a chance to respond, the Chasidim - who had caught up - accompanied the Rebbe up the stairs and inside.

The scene that unfolded before Itche's eyes was just as he had imagined. He

was not able to concentrate on even one holy word that the Rebbe taught about Chanukah. The evening finally came to an end and Itche breathed a sigh of relief. As the Rebbe was about to leave, Itche suddenly remembered to ask the Rebbe to bless his family. Surely this would make up for everything.

Quickly Itche gathered together his children and grandchildren and requested, "Rebbe, please bless my family."

"Bless your family?" the Rebbe looked at Itche in surprise. "I have no blessing for them," he said, and sadly turned away.

Itche felt as if the earth had opened beneath his feet. "Rebbe," Itche cried out, in a voice filled with desperation. The Rebbe looked at Itche long and hard. "In order for me to bless your family, you will have to sign over your entire fortune to me," the Rebbe said seriously.

How could he sign over everything to the Rebbe? He would be penniless! Moments of eternity passed. But then, he looked into the Rebbe's eyes and saw within them compassion. With his last ounce of strength he said, "If that is what I must do, then I will do it." And then he fainted.

In a haze, Itche heard the Rebbe saying, "Mazel tov, Itche!" The Rebbe began to bless Itche and his entire family. "May you and your family know only joy and health and prosperity from now on." For many moments, blessings flowed from the Rebbe, each one greater than the previous one.

"Know, Itche, that you have just fought a great battle with your evil inclination. Until a few moments ago, you did not own your wealth; your evil inclination owned it! When you agreed to give me all of your possessions, I was able to wrest your wealth from your evil inclination. I now return it to you as Chanukah gelt (money). Use it well, dear Itche."

Itche thanked the Rebbe and began to take hundreds of gold ruble notes from his wallet. But the Rebbe declined. "I only accept 18 rubles for tea."

Henceforth, Itche was a changed man. Itche generously shared his "Chanukah gelt" throughout the entire year.

## Thoughts THAT COUNT

And Pharaoh was dreaming (41:1)

Should it not say, "And Pharaoh dreamed"? But this is to teach us that for those two years Pharaoh would see this dream each and every night, but would not remember it, until the time came for Joseph to come out of prison; that morning, he woke up and remembered it. (*Midrash HaGadol*)

And Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt (42:3)

Why are they called "Joseph's brothers" and not "Jacob's sons"? In the beginning they did not treat him with brotherly love but sold him; subsequently, however, they regretted it. Every day they would say, "Let us go and inquire about him and restore him to his father." And when Jacob bade them go down to Egypt, they all resolved to show him brotherly love [and seek to find him]. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And he put them all together into custody for three days (42:17)

Corresponding to the three days in which they had plotted and executed the destruction of Shechem.

They had convinced the inhabitants of Shechem to circumcise themselves in order to kill them; Joseph had done the very opposite: he compelled the Egyptians to circumcise themselves and then proceeded to sustain them and save their lives. (*Zohar*)

And [Joseph] took Shimon from them, and bound him before their eyes (42:24)

Only before their eyes did he bind him; but as soon as they left, he brought him out, gave him to eat and drink, and bathed and anointed him. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 11 DECEMBER 2015



BEGINS	ENDS
8.17 .....MELBOURNE .....	9.23
8.04 .....ADELAIDE .....	9.07
6.18 .....BRISBANE .....	7.16
6.47 .....DARWIN .....	7.40
6.18 .....GOLD COAST .....	7.16
6.58 .....PERTH .....	7.58
7.41 .....SYDNEY .....	8.43
7.53 .....CANBERRA .....	8.57
8.20 .....LAUNCESTON .....	9.30
8.15 .....AUCKLAND .....	9.20
8.29 .....WELLINGTON .....	9.38
8.24 .....HOBART .....	9.36
7.18 .....BYRON BAY .....	8.17

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD  
PARSHAS MIKEITZ • 29 KISLEV • 11 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	MINCHA:	7:00 PM	
	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:17 PM	
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:55 PM	
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM	
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:32 AM	
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM	
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:23 PM	
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI:	8:00 AM / 9:15 AM
	MINCHA:		7:00 PM / 8:25 AM
	MAARIV:		9:15 PM
	MINYAN #2 (SUN ONLY)		9:30 PM