

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas
Vayechi
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Vayechi, we witness a conversation between the aged patriarch Jacob and his son, Joseph. Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob for his blessing. He placed Menashe, the first born, near Jacob's right hand and Efraim, the younger of the two, near Jacob's left hand. However, when Jacob blessed the youngsters, he crossed his hands over and placed his right hand on Efraim's head and his left on Menashe's head.

Joseph explained to Jacob, "It is not so, my father." Moving Jacob's hands, he continued, "for this is the first-born."

"I know, my son, I know," was Jacob's reply. "Also he [Menashe] will become a people. He, too, will be great. But his younger brother will be greater than him."

According to our Sages, neither Jacob nor Joseph made a mistake. Rather, their priorities were different.

Menashe and Efraim symbolize two distinct aspects of a Jew's G-dly service. Joseph believed that the G-dly service represented by Menashe was more advantageous, whereas Jacob felt that Efraim's was higher.

Joseph named his oldest son Menashe - "For G-d has caused me to forget ("nashani") all of my toil and all my father's house." This name intimates Joseph's anguish over being distanced from his father's home and his native lifestyle. His younger son, he called Efraim - "For G-d has caused me to be fruitful ("hifrani") in the land of my affliction." Here, Joseph thanks G-d for the benefits that he reaped specifically because he was living in exile.

When Joseph brought his sons for his father's blessing, his feelings of sorrow over being separated from his family ruled. The spiritual service this parallels is the desire to cleave to G-d, even in exile. Jacob, however, viewed the exile differently, represented by the name Efraim. He saw that there is an "advantage" of exile; in exile, one changes darkness into light. And the light which follows darkness is much brighter, much more noticeable.

The paths of Joseph and Jacob should both be manifested in our lives. We must realize that we are far away from our "father's house"; we are still in exile and the final Redemption has not yet come. Just as important, or possibly more important, is to realize that we can actually light up the darkness of exile. This comes about through studying Torah and observing the commandments.

When a Jew finds himself in a situation or surroundings which are uncomfortable, he must not only be troubled by it and think of the day when he can escape. Rather, he should work to his utmost ability to change that which is bad to good; the dark to light, for this is the entire purpose of being in exile.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Practical Learning

By Naftali Silberberg

The first verse of this week's Torah portion tells us that Jacob lived his last seventeen years in Egypt. The Biblical commentator *Baal Haturim* notes that the number seventeen has the numerical value equivalent to the Hebrew word "tov" (good). He, therefore, infers that Jacob's finest years were those spent in Egypt, reunited with Joseph and surrounded by his entire family.

These seventeen years were not lived in the Holy Land. They were spent in Egypt, a land renowned for its decadent and immoral population. Yet Jacob thoroughly enjoyed his stay there, because of the Yeshiva which had been established in the land. According to the Talmud, before Jacob agreed to travel to Egypt he sent his son Judah ahead to establish a Yeshiva in Goshen, the Egyptian territory where Jacob and his children settled.

Fully aware that his descendants would face difficult and harrowing times in Egypt, Jacob realized that only the Yeshivas could give them a strong Jewish identity, enable them to withstand all the difficulties and persecutions, and insulate them against the threat of assimilation.

Of all the twelve brothers, everyone a righteous and worthy Torah scholar in his own right, Jacob chose Judah to establish the Yeshiva. Why him? Indeed, the Midrash tells us that Joseph was Jacob's primary student, and in the years preceding his sale to Egypt Jacob imparted to him all he had learned throughout his many years of study. Wouldn't then Joseph have been the appropriate choice to head the Egyptian School of Advanced Torah Study?

An understanding of the difference between Joseph and Judah will answer this question. Both of them were royal personalities; Joseph in Egypt, and Judah was the king of the brothers, and the progenitor of the Royal House of David. According to Chassidic teachings, Joseph and Judah possessed different strengths; each one "king" in his unique domain. The name *Yehudah* (Judah) is rooted in the Hebrew word "*hoda'ah*," which means acknowledgement and submission. Judah represents action; an acknowledgment that we are merely servants of the Creator who must implement the Divine will whether or not we comprehend its meaning. The name *Yosef* (Joseph) means to increase. Joseph represents the powers of intellect and emotion, qualities which develop and mature with age and experience, as opposed to action which qualitatively never changes. The three year old girl lights Shabbat candles just as her mother does, the difference between the two lies in the understanding and appreciation of the mitzvah.

Both Judah and Joseph are necessary components of a Jew's life. We are commanded to *understand* Torah and *love* G-d, but these qualities do not suffice; ultimately a Jew must serve G-d simply because this is what He commanded us to do. Undoubtedly, Judah also studied Torah and laboured on refining his personality, and Joseph certainly unconditionally submitted to G-d's will; the difference between the two tribes was emphasis. Judah emphasized the primacy of action whereas Joseph stressed the importance of developing our G-d-given talents.

Jacob chose Judah to establish the Egyptian Yeshiva, because in times of exile, turmoil, and hardship, it is Judah's legacy which ensures our continued allegiance to G-d and His holy Torah. The heart and mind can be manipulated and swayed by decades and centuries of suffering, but the Jew's inherent submission to G-d, which stems from the very essence of the Jewish Soul, can withstand any challenge which the most gruelling exile may present. Yes, the Yeshivas must teach our youth how to study Torah, but that is not their most important goal. The key to Jewish survival is educators who follow the spirit of Judah, imbuing our children with a sense of duty - their duties towards G-d, the world, and their fellow Jews.

Slice of LIFE

Jury Duty

As a creature of habit, I hate change. I live a very orderly life. When I leave for work I repeat the same routine each and every day. I say goodbye to my wife Linda, pet Louie the wonder dog, get in the car, turn on the same jazz radio station, back out of the driveway and go to work. Coming home, I stop at the mailbox in my complex to get the mail.

Recently, I noticed an official-looking letter addressed to me from the Marion County Court House. To my chagrin it summoned me to appear for jury duty. The subpoena indicated that this was going to be a serious case, and if selected, I would be out for 2-3 weeks.

Arriving in court, I found 400 other "candidates" in the room. I exhaled a sigh of relief, figuring I had a better chance of getting on 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' than getting selected for this jury. Two days later I found out this was not to be.

Of the 400 potential jury members, I had the good fortune to be the twelfth and final one selected. The judge, a serious and intimidating woman, looked down at us from the bench and informed us that we'd begin each day "PROMPTLY" at 8:30 am, break for lunch "PROMPTLY" at noon, start "PROMPTLY" again at 1:15 pm and adjourn for the day, you guessed it, "PROMPTLY" at 5 pm.

Visions of showing up late and being held in contempt of court flowed through my mind. But I regard jury duty as a serious responsibility, so I rearranged my schedule to make all the judge's deadlines. The trial began at 8:30 a.m. on a Tuesday. True to her word, the judge ran her courtroom by the clock. Each day for the first three days we were in at 8:30 a.m. and out at 5:00 p.m.

As I walked out of the courthouse

Thursday night, a little voice inside me asked, "What about Shabbos?"

"What about Shabbos?" I thought. My wife Linda would light the Shabbos candles, I'd make Kiddush, say the blessing over the two Challas, have a wonderful dinner, enjoy a little l'chaim as always. Suddenly I panicked. I realized that if we adjourned on Friday 5:00 pm, I wouldn't be home before the start of Shabbos.

I never thought about Shabbos. I was so caught up in the excitement of the trial that I hadn't considered what time we'd get done on Friday. My pulse began to race! I knew what I should do, but I couldn't muster the courage to do it. The little voice kept telling me, "Go talk to the judge, she'll understand."

Understand?! Hey, there are more Elks in Oregon than Jews. A New York judge might understand. A Los Angeles judge might understand. But in Salem, Oregon, no way was a judge going to understand Shabbos!

Before I continue I have to tell you that of all the lessons I've learned, and all the holidays I've celebrated since discovering Chabad, I've grown to love Shabbos the most. I love everything about it. The traditions, the smells, the kugel, the l'chaim, the davening, the Fabrenging, the rest and relaxation. I love Shabbos!

I walked into the courtroom Friday morning with a heavy heart. I knew what I should do, but was afraid of the severe-looking judge with the tight bun sitting behind the bench. I just couldn't muster the courage.

I kept thinking how Rabbi Vogel encouraged me to tell my boss in Delaware that I had to take a few days off for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach, Shavuot, Simchas Torah and Succos. The first year it was hard to approach my boss, but as my confidence grew and time passed it became easier, or as we say in Delaware, it was "A piece of Kugel!" But this situation seemed more intimidating.

As the day progressed I listened intently to the testimony but I tortured myself during the recesses. The voice kept telling me to go see the judge, but I was too embarrassed. Finally about 2:30 the judge ordered a 15 minute recess. The jury filed off to our little room for coffee and small talk. After a few minutes the judge's bailiff came into the room and asked if she could get us anything.

I rose from my chair and asked her to see if the judge would consider a request. Nervously, I asked her to tell the judge that I was Jewish and Shabbos, the Jewish Sabbath, starts at sundown and I was wondering if she could let us go an hour early so I could get home before sundown.

The bailiff eyed me with confusion. "Shoebus?" she said. "No Shabbos, the Jewish Sabbath," I said. She told me she'd ask, but didn't think the judge would let us out early because she always sticks to schedule.

The minutes clicked by until the bailiff came back and told us the judge was ready to reconvene. We went back to the jury box and sat down. The judge looked at the jury and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we will continue for another seventy five minutes and then 'Promptly' adjourn for the day at 4:00 pm." She said one of our jury members has to get home by sundown for religious reasons. She went on to tell us that the individual in question should remind her next week too, in case she forgot.

The next seventy five minutes were filled with objections, posturing and lengthy discussions between the two attorneys and the judge. When the clock struck four the judge promptly stopped the proceedings, told us to report back on Monday "Promptly" at 8:30 a.m. and dismissed us.

As I walked by the judge's bench she looked down, smiled and whispered, "Good Shabbos, Mr. Hyatt."

Good Shabbos indeed! The kugel was extra tasty that night.

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that [the Jewish people] rule over the entire world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted by them, nor in order that they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that [the Jewish people] be free [to involve themselves] in the Torah and its wisdom, without anyone to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to Come. (*Maimondes' Mishne Torah, Laws of Kings, ch. 12*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

This letter is addressed to R. Yehudah Leib Horowitz, a graduate of the Lubavitcher yeshiva who was active in the Jewish community in Dorchester, Mass.

Friday, 18 Kislev, 5706

Greetings and blessings,

You are the only person in your city with whom we are acquainted who realizes his responsibility for Jewish education in your city in general and in particular, for the existence of educational institutions that are under the presidency of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*. For this reason, we are turning to you with regard to the following matter.

You are certainly aware that last year, we agreed to open a girls' school with the name *Beis Rivkah* or *Beis Sarah* in Dorchester under the administration of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. In [making] our decision, we relied [on the assumption that] our friends there would endeavour to gather the financial resources necessary for the expenses of the school, enabling the school to maintain itself independently. We agreed to give the school a certain portion of its budget as a loan for a short time so that it could pay its teachers' salaries on time.

Now enough time has passed for the financial situation of the school to be established, and yet to our chagrin, we are being informed only about expenses and not about income. Nor do we see the necessary concern that the matter be righted.

The expenses of the school are not that great. When the tuition paid by the students is considered, it appears that it should not be difficult to raise the necessary sum through establishing a ladies' auxiliary for the school or through raising income from other sources.

It is necessary for you to know that the [financial] situation of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch does not enable it to send checks to a teacher without receiving the funds for this from you.

You certainly realize that the responsibility for the education of girls is very great, as reflected by the verse: *"The wise among women builds her house"*; see also *Shmos Rabbah*, ch. 28, which states that the perpetuation of the giving of the Torah is dependent on women. In addition, the existence of all the institutions of proper Torah education and their success in educating students is largely dependent on the existence of girls' schools.

We request that despite your many involvements, you immediately gather the financial resources necessary to establish the fiscal situation of the girls school. Since there are no others to stand at the head of this institution, this holy task has certainly been delegated to you. And thus you have also been given the powers to fulfill this mission.

We are awaiting your prompt response. To conclude with good wishes for the coming holiday of Redemption [*Yud-Tes Kislev*].

CUSTOMS CORNER

General laws of Brachat HaMitzva

1. As a Brachat HaMitzvah it must be said *Over LeAsiyatan*, prior to the action of the mitzvah.
2. One may not make any interruptions between the Bracha and the actual Mitzvah. Nonetheless, an action that's necessary to do the Mitzvah isn't considered an interruption between the Bracha and Mitzvah. For example, after making the bracha on Chanukah candles it's not an interruption to get candles or a match because these are necessary elements for the Mitzvah.
3. When saying a Brachat HaMitzvah, preferably one should stand, however, after the fact if one said the bracha in any position one fulfilled one's obligation.

A WORD

from the Director

This week's Torah reading, Parshas Vayechi, concludes the reading of the first Book of the Torah, the Book of Bereishis. This book is called Sefer HaYashar, "the Book of the Just," referring to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, who were just.

"The deeds of the Patriarchs are a sign to their descendants," providing them with lessons to apply in their service of G-d. Their influence begins from the Book of Shmos and continues through the entire Tanach until the Book of Divrei HaYomim. Furthermore, the name Divrei HaYomim means "chronicles," implying that this influence continues through the chronicles of the Jewish people in all subsequent generations.

Our Torah reading begins, "And Yaakov lived," implying that Yaakov's life represents the conclusion of "the Book of the Just." He thus becomes a medium to convey the influence of the Patriarchs to all their descendants, the Jewish people in the subsequent generations. This is reflected in the content of the Torah reading which describes Yaakov's blessings to his sons and to Yosef's children (for "Ephraim and Menashe will be like Reuven and Shimon for me"), who form the twelve tribes of the Jewish people.

This is reflected in our Sages' teaching, "Yaakov our Patriarch never died. Just as his descendants are alive, he (Yaakov) is alive." Yaakov's life is eternal, for he is identified with the Torah, "our life and the length of our days." And he also endows his descendants with life, the everlasting life that stems from the Torah and its Mitzvos.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Originally told by the Bobover Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, at a community gathering.

A follower of the chassidic leader Reb Mottel of Chernobyl had a particular habit which came to light when he visited Reb Mottel to request a blessing. Reb Mottel asked the visitor to recount his typical daily schedule. The young man explained that he began each day by buying goods for his business from the local landowner. Following that, he would recite the morning prayers, after which he began to sell his wares.

"Why do you buy your merchandise before you pray in the morning?" asked Reb Mottel.

The young man explained, "Why, if I waited until after prayers, the only goods remaining would be of inferior quality, if not sold out entirely!"

Upon hearing that, Reb Mottel shared a story with his follower.

There was once a teacher of Jewish studies, whose livelihood entailed traveling far from his hometown to teach Jewish children in distant cities. He was often away from his home for a year or more at a time. Meanwhile his wife and children lived the year without him, borrowing and living on credit.

This teacher was paid for his services with coins. The wealthy gave him gold coins, the middle class paid with silver coins, and people of more modest means paid with copper or nickel coins.

The teacher had made a belt for himself where he would hang the various bags. Each bag carried a different type of coin. He had a bag for his gold coins, a bag for his silver coins, a bag for his nickel coins and a bag for his copper coins.

After the year of teaching was up, he headed back home. As the first Shabbat on his voyage approached, he knew he would have to remove his belt, as carrying money on Shabbat is forbidden. But he didn't know where to hide his money bags.

He decided to bury his earnings in the ground, and retrieve them after Shabbat. But just as he was about to finish his digging, he heard some people in the distance. Paranoia set in, and he became alarmed by the possibility that if he could hear them, they could probably see him, and his money wasn't safe.

Now pressed for time, he grabbed the belt with the bags of coins and ran to the local Jewish inn, where he handed the innkeeper the entire bundle in a furious hurry for safekeeping. Shabbat began, and the teacher was livid with himself. He had just given the innkeeper his entire year's earnings without even a note or receipt mentioning the amount of money being held. It would be so easy for the innkeeper to deny safeguarding the coins, and his whole year's pay would be lost.

Thoughts of his wife and children flooded his mind. What would they do? How would they face the creditors? His imagination took off, leaving him worried and on edge for the entire Shabbat.

The innkeeper sensed his guest's troubled condition and, as soon as Shabbat departed, he recited the evening prayers very quickly, and placed the belt with the bags of coins in front of the teacher, who was still reciting the silent Amidah prayer.

To the amazement of the innkeeper, in the middle of his supplications the teacher opened the bag of gold coins and started counting them one by one. He saw that all the coins were still there. Nevertheless, he took out the bag with the silver coins and started counting them next. All the silver coins were also still there, yet his concern and worry did not dissipate. He then started counting the nickel coins, and then the copper coins, and finally returned to his prayers. The innkeeper, who had observed the entire process, was taken aback and perplexed.

When the teacher finished his prayers, the innkeeper confronted him. "After you saw I hadn't taken any of your gold coins, why did you not trust that I hadn't taken any of your silver coins, which are much less valuable? And after you counted the silver coins too, and saw I took nothing, why didn't you trust me then? You continued to count the ridiculously less valuable nickel and copper coins."

Reb Mottel of Chernobyl turned to the young man before him and said, "I want to ask you the same question the innkeeper asked the teacher. Every single morning, G-d has given you back your soul, your body, your very life - the equivalent of gold and silver coins. What makes you think he won't also give you your livelihood-your nickel and copper coins? You should increase your trust, and believe that G-d will give you your physical sustenance too. There is no need to rush off to buy goods before morning prayers."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

And the days drew near for Israel to die (47:29)

Said Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish: the days of the righteous die, but they do not die... It does not say, "and Israel drew near to die," but "the days of Israel drew near to die." (*Midrash Rabbah*)

And it came to pass after these things, that it was said to Joseph: Behold, your father is ill (48:1)

Abraham introduced aging to the world, Isaac affliction, and Jacob illness.

Abraham requested old age, pleading before G-d: "Master of the Universe! When a man and his son enter a town, none know whom to honour." Said G-d to him: "By your life, you have asked a proper thing, and it will commence with you." Thus, from the beginning of the Book aging is not mentioned, but when Abraham came, old age was granted to him, as is written: "And Abraham was old and come along in days" (*Genesis 24:1*).

Isaac asked for affliction, pleading thus: "Master of the Universe! When a man dies without affliction, Judgment threatens him; but if You afflict him, Judgment would not threaten him." Said G-d to him: "By your life, you have asked well, and it will commence with you." Thus affliction is not mentioned from the beginning of the Book until Isaac, as is written: "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dimmed" (*ibid.*, 27:1).

Jacob requested illness, saying to Him: "Master of the Universe! A man dies without previous illness and does not settle his affairs with his children; but if he were two or three days ill, he would settle his affairs with his children." Said G-d to him: "By your life, you have asked well, and it will commence with you." Thus it is written: "It was said to Joseph: Behold, your father is ill." (*Midrash Rabbah*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 25 DECEMBER 2015



BEGINS		ENDS
8.25	MELBOURNE	9.31
8.12	ADELAIDE	9.15
6.26	BRISBANE	7.24
6.54	DARWIN	7.47
6.26	GOLD COAST	7.24
7.06	PERTH	8.06
7.49	SYDNEY	8.51
8.01	CANBERRA	9.05
8.28	LAUNCESTON	9.38
9.23	AUCKLAND	9.28
8.37	WELLINGTON	9.47
8.33	HOBART	9.45
7.26	BYRON BAY	8.25

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYECHI • 13 TEVET • 25 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.25 PM
	MINCHA:	8.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9.05 PM
SHABBOS	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.38 AM
	MINCHA:	8.20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.31 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS	SUN-FRI: 8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	7.00 / 8.35 PM
	MAARIV:	9.25 PM