

# LAMPLIGHTER

1 Teves  
Parshas Mikeitz  
Shabbos Chanukah  
**1276**  
30 December  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

As we see from this week's Torah portion, Mikeitz, there are several essential differences between the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh.

Joseph dreamt that he and his brothers were actively gathering sheaves of grain. Pharaoh, however, was merely a passive bystander, observing the events that transpired around him; any indication of human activity was absent.

Joseph's dreams were in the realm of holiness: G-d bestows His blessings on us as reward for our labors. A Jew has to work to be worthy of receiving them, just as Joseph was actively involved in binding the sheaves in his dream.

Joseph's dreams were characterized by an upward progression in holiness. In his first dream Joseph took individual sheaves of grain and bound them together to create a unified whole. This shows an ascent from separateness and division to a higher level of union and oneness.

The subject of Joseph's second dream also represents an ascent. After he had dreamt about earthly matters, sheaves of grain, he dreamt about the sun and moon, celestial matters.

Pharaoh's dreams, by contrast, were characterized by a downward progression. Pharaoh's first dream was about seven cows, the animal kingdom, but his second dream involved a lower category of life, ears of corn. Also, the dreams themselves were descending in nature. The seven healthy cows were followed by seven sick cows that swallowed them up; the seven robust ears of corn were followed by seven blighted ones.

Moreover, the fulfillment of Pharaoh's dreams came about in a descending order. First came the years of plenty, which were followed by a famine of such magnitude that it was as if the years of abundance had never existed. Every detail connected with Pharaoh's dreams was marked by decrease.

Holiness, the realm of Joseph, is characterized by perpetual ascent: "One must always go up in matters of holiness." Holiness is eternal. Anything that is not holy, the realm of Pharaoh, does not endure, and will only deteriorate and dwindle until there is nothing left.

This contains a practical lesson for every Jew: If we want to merit G-d's blessings, we must work for them, as it states, "If someone tells you he has toiled and found what he was looking for, you may believe him." If a Jew expends the effort he will be more than amply rewarded, and in far greater measure than his actions warrant. The G-dly influence he receives will increase, in an ever-expanding manner.

If, however, a Jew wishes to benefit from G-d's blessings without effort, the influences he receives will be the same type as Pharaoh's: from a source other than holiness. But this type of influence will not last; it will continue to decrease until nothing remains of it at all.

## Oil and Wine

By Yanky Tauber

*Oil permeates the entire substance of a thing - Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 105:5*

*When wine enters, secret emerges - Talmud, Eruvin 65a*

Oil is in. Oil shuns superficiality--you won't find it riding a fad or angling for a photo opportunity. When oil comes in contact with something, it saturates it to the core, permeating it in its entirety.

When set aglow, oil is the master of understatement. Soundlessly it burns--not for the oil lamp, the vulgar cackling of firewood or even the faint sizzle of candlewax. Its light does not burst through the door and bulldoze the darkness away; instead, it gently coaxes the gloom to shimmer with a spiritual luminescence.

Wine is a tabloid reporter. Wine barges past the security guard of mind to loosen the lips, spill the guts and turn the heart inside out. Wine smears the most intimate secrets across the front pages of life.

Chanukah is oil, Purim is wine.

Chanukah is the triumph of the Jewish soul. The Greeks had no designs on the Jew's body; it was the soul of Israel they coveted, seeking to indoctrinate her mind with their philosophy and tint her spirit with their culture. The Jew fought not for the freedom of his material self but to liberate his spiritual identity from Hellenist domination.

Haman and company did not bother with such subtleties. They had one simple goal: the physical destruction of every Jew on the face of the earth. Purim remembers the salvation of the Jew's bodily existence.

Chanukah is commemorated with oil. Chanukah celebrates the innerness of the Jewish soul, the essence which permeates and sanctifies every nook and cranny of the Jew's life. Chanukah celebrates the secret glow of the spirit, which, rather than confronting the darkness, infiltrates it and transforms it from within.

On Purim we pour out the wine. Purim is a noisy party, a showy parade, a costumed extravaganza. Purim celebrates the fact that the Jew is more than a soul--he is a body as well. Purim celebrates the fact that our Jewishness is not only an internal spirituality but also a palpable reality; that it not only permeates our beings from within, but also spills out into the externalities of our material lives.

# Slice of LIFE

## A Modern Chanukah Miracle

*Join me on a journey to Kaliningrad, Russia, to hear about a modern-day Chanukah miracle.*

In September of 2011, Lena, a sophisticated young woman arrived at the office of Rabbi David Shvedik, Federation of Jewish Communities representative and emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Kaliningrad. "Lena applied for a position as an English teacher at the local Ohr Avner Day school. But she had no teaching experience so we could not hire her. She told me that she had not worked in many, many months. She would be willing to take any job that we could offer," recalls Rabbi Shvedik. "I explained that the only other work we had was in our soup kitchen, setting and clearing the tables. She jumped at the opportunity."

Rabbi Shvedik continues; "Curious as to what had brought her to us, I asked Lena if she had any Jewish connections. 'My lineage is a mixture of many nationalities, but none of them are Jewish,' Lena explained.

"One day, a few weeks into her job, Lena came into my office looking quite distraught. 'I have to be honest with you. I feel guilty working here! You are such nice people! Throughout my entire life, I grew up hearing the Jewish people constantly being demeaned and mocked. Even in my own home, I heard comments from my parents on a regular basis about how miserly and greedy the Jews are.

"I have been supporting my elderly mother for many years now. I lost my job months ago and we were able to live on the little bit of money I had put away. But the savings ran out and my mother's small pension is not enough to pay the rent and buy food.

"Suddenly I started hearing a 'different tune' from my mother. Instead of cursing and insulting the Jews, she

said, "Winter is coming soon. We will need to pay for rent and food! The Jews are good people. They never turn anyone away. They will help. Even when they have very little, they share what they have. If they cannot offer you a job they will at least offer you food."

"I was upset that my mother's change of heart was because she wanted to exploit the Jewish people. Although I had never subscribed to the prevailing anti-Semitic attitudes, I was ashamed to ask the Jews for help now that we were in need. That is why I was so happy that you were able to give me work, no matter how menial."

"I listened as Lena unburdened herself. I told her that she is a good person, that she is doing a fine, honest job and that we are happy to employ her. I encouraged her to take home food from the soup kitchen at night for her mother. Lena left my office looking much calmer." Kaliningrad has one of 45 FJC sponsored soup kitchens and one of 159 FJC sponsored educational institutions throughout the Former Soviet Union.

One of the many programs at the Kaliningrad Jewish Community Centre is "STARS." STARS is a Jewish educational and social club for young adults. On the second night of Chanukah, STARS held a fun and informative event. Recalls Rabbi Shvedik, "I noticed that Lena had stayed late that night after work. She was sitting at the back of the room where the program was taking place. Half-way through the program, she hurried out.

"I didn't give it too much thought until the next day when Lena burst into my office. The words tumbled out. 'I left the Chanukah event, went straight home and confronted my mother. "Why when we were growing up did you always say such horrible things about the Jews but now that we are in need you have changed your tune? The Jews I meet today are generous, moral, educated people. The Jews of your days lived ethical, inspired lives despite persecution and hatred. And the Jews of ancient times, like the Maccabees, had the courage to fight for their beliefs and to make the world a brighter place!

"My mother was silent for what seemed like an eternity. And then she

began to cry. And through her tears I heard her say the following: "Your grandmother, my mother, was a Jew! She lived through the war, through persecution and humiliation because she was a Jew. And she promised herself that her children and her children's children would never suffer for being Jews. So she raised us as non-Jews. And she instilled in us a bitterness toward all things Jewish so that we would never be associated with or associate with Jews."

"I was stunned by my mother's revelation! I had visited my grandmother in Chernigov, Ukraine, many times as a youngster. I had never imagined that she was a Jew, that my mother is a Jew, that I am a Jew!"

Rabbi Shvedik immediately sent a request to the registry office in Chernigov to verify that Lena's grandmother, who had since passed away, was registered as a Jew. Before the day ended, they received a response that affirmed her Jewishness.

The next night, at 7:00 p.m., Lena finished cleaning the dining room of the soup kitchen. She had helped serve 100 of Kaliningrad's elderly or indigent Jewish men and women. She went into the ladies room with a small bag she had brought with her to work. She emerged a little while later wearing a beautiful turquoise dress, her hair neatly brushed, her cheeks glowing and her eyes twinkling.

Lena was attending the Chanukah Menorah lighting at the Kaliningrad JCC. It would be her first time celebrating Chanukah. It would be her first time attending a Jewish event as a proud Jew. Rabbi Shvedik calls it "a modern-day Chanukah miracle."

This past year, Lena has been sharing with her mother everything she learns at the STARS events and other programs she attends at the JCC. And her mother has agreed to come to a Chanukah event this year!

"My joy will be complete," Lena says, "when my mother steps into a Jewish building for the first time in her life. That will be a true Chanukah miracle, a real victory for the Maccabees."

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ISSUE 1276

## SOUL COFFEE

Matter and energy are two opposites. To energize a piece of matter requires a constant flow. Existence and nothingness are two opposites. To keep the world in existence demands a constant renewal.

Heaven and earth are two opposites. To infuse the earthly with spirituality requires a constant effort.

Woman and man are two opposites. And so courtship never ends.



# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

## Summer Vacation

Vacation time is approaching, to release youth and children, boys and girls, from Yeshivoh, Talmud Torahs, Day Schools, etc., for a long summer recess.

The importance of a restful vacation is obvious. However, certain aspects of vacation time should be examined carefully. Is vacation time a stoppage of study, or is it a transition from one form of activity to another?

In all living forms, there is no such thing as a stoppage of life, followed by a completely new start, for a stoppage of life is death, and cannot serve as a temporary rest period. There can be a transition from one form of activity to another, but not a cessation or stoppage.

For example: The two most vital organs in our body are the heart and the brain. The heart is the principal seat of "physical" life; the brain is the principal set of "intellectual" life. Because the heart and the brain have supreme control of the body, they are called "the Sovereigns of the Body." Now, these organs not only do not cease to operate in a living body, but they do not even undergo a radical change in their form of activity. And inasmuch as the actions of the other organs are being led by the activity of the heart and brain, it follows that the other organs of the body, though they may seem to be in a state of inactivity, as in the case of sleep, do not in reality stop working.

This is even more obvious in the case of breathing. We find that during sleep breathing is slowed down considerably, but it never stops, for the "breath of life" must always be there.

Similarly in the case of students, boys and girls, studying our Torah, "Toras-Chayim" — "The Torah of Life," restful vacation does not mean interruption and stoppage of Torah and Mitzvos, G-d forbid. It means only just another way of furthering their course of study, a period during which they renew their mental abilities and increase their capacities for a more intensive study later on.

Therefore, my friends, bring light and holiness into your vacation time, by remembering always that it is the time of preparation in order to improve the quality and quantity of your studies during study-time to follow. But let it not remain so only in your thoughts and intentions; be always united with our holy Torah in your everyday actions and conduct. Let not a single day pass without the "breath of life" provided by the "Torah of Life." Let everyone have appointed times for the study of Chumash, Mishnah, Gemorah, and so on, each one according to his or her standard of Torah education.

At this time, I wish everyone who is resolved to use his or her vacation in this productive "living" way—much success, both during vacation, as well as on returning to normal study later on.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

### Do Jews Cross Fingers?

**Question:** *Is it wrong for a Jew to say "I'm keeping my fingers crossed" for good luck? And if so, is there a Jewish equivalent to crossing fingers? I'm waiting to hear back about a job interview, and need all the luck I can get...*

**Answer:** Crossing fingers is a Christian practice. It originated in medieval England, when Christians believed that the cross symbol had the power to ward off evil and bring good fortune. If you bumped into a witch and didn't have a cross handy, the easiest way to form one was by curling one finger over another.

These days, most finger-crossers don't associate it with any religious belief. But it is still not a Jewish thing to do.

And I don't think there is a Jewish version of crossing fingers. You could try twisting them into a Star of David, but that is more likely to bring arthritis than good luck. Besides, we don't believe that good fortune comes from signs and gestures. We pray to G-d, do good deeds and have faith in the future.

The language we use shapes the way we think. So rather than say "I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I'll get the job," say "If G-d wills it, I'll get the job." If it's not meant to be, no finger contortion can change that. And if it is G-d's will, no "witch" can get in the way.

## A WORD

*from the Director*

*An important part of most Jewish holidays is the holiday meal, when it is a commandment to eat and drink. Chanukah, however, is primarily celebrated by saying special prayers and lighting the Menorah. This is how we commemorate the miraculous victory of the small Jewish army overpowering the mighty Greek war machine and the jar of pure oil miraculously keeping the Temple candelabra lit for eight days.*

*Our Chanukah observances are more "spiritual" because the victory of Chanukah was a victory of the spirit. The Greeks wanted to make the Jews forget the Torah and transgress the Divine commandments. Thus, it is fitting to celebrate the holiday with less emphasis on food and more emphasis on spiritual activities.*

*The difference between other holidays and Chanukah can be better understood by comparing water, bread and wine - foods served at holiday meals, with oil - used for the Chanukah lights.*

*Water, bread, wine and oil are all metaphors for the Torah. Water and bread are the staples of our everyday existence. In contrast, wine is not a daily necessity, it contributes an element of pleasure to our existence. Oil is not required for our day-to-day existence and is never served as a food in its own right. It is used in small quantities to add flavor to other foods. Thus, it too, is associated with the quality of pleasure.*

*Water and bread are metaphors for the concepts of Torah that are necessary in order to know how to observe the mitzvot properly. Like bread and water, this knowledge is necessary for our very existence. In contrast, wine and oil are metaphors for the inner dimensions of Torah, the study of which adds pleasure and vitality to our observance of the Torah and mitzvot.*

*Taking this a step further, there is a difference between oil and wine. Wine is drunk as a beverage, while oil is not. In regard to the symbolic meaning of the two, wine refers to the inner dimensions of the Torah that can be perceived by a sensitive eye. In contrast, oil refers to the deepest secrets of the Torah, those that transcend revelation. And Chanukah is associated with these deepest levels of Torah.*

*J. I. Gutnick*

IT HAPPENED



A huge group was gathered on the other side of the large table and looked in the direction of their rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Wienberg, the Slonimer Rebbe (1804 - 1883). He stood opposite the wicks in the Chanukah Menorah, meditating and contemplating, for an unknown reason not yet ready to kindle the Chanukah lights.

Hundreds of Chasidim stood in awe and with great respect, watching their Rebbe as he stood preparing for this mitzva (commandment). They waited with bated breath for the glorious moment when he would take the wax candle in his hand and begin reciting the words of the Chanukah blessings.

Minutes, which seemed like hours, passed and then the Rebbe began chanting the blessings. He infused each word with kabbalistic intentions, and each chasid there was able to hook into the holiness of the moment according to his own level.

"Help me, deliver me!"

The dreadful cry tore through the hearts of all those gathered there and awakened each person from his reverie. Everyone looked in the direction of the voice.

The Rebbe, his face aflame with the holiness of the moment, also turned his head in the direction of the voice toward the end of the synagogue. There stood a woman with her hands outstretched toward the heavens, crying with a bitter heart.

It became clear that this woman was not one of the wives of the chasidim gathered there. In fact, she had no connection to the Rebbe or the Chasidic lifestyle. "Who is she?" some murmured.

The distraught woman lived with her family in this town. Her husband was a wealthy and well-respected businessman who had never in his life entered this Chasidic synagogue. He and his friends were among those who laughed at the Chasidic lifestyle and customs.

For many years the couple had not been blessed with children. When their son was finally born they were already much older. Their happiness knew no bounds. He was always given the best of everything, though he was not especially spoiled.

On the eve of Chanukah the young boy fell ill. The doctors came to his bedside and cared for him with devotion. But they could not help him. To everyone's horror his fever rose from day to day. Tonight, his situation worsened. The boy lost consciousness and the doctors who were standing around his bed raised their hands in hopelessness.

The father of the child was pacing around the house in agony and bitterness. But his mother could not stand seeing

her son's suffering any longer and left the house. Suddenly she began walking quickly. Toward what or where or whom she knew not. But her feet seemed to have a mind of their own, and before she knew it she found herself in front of the Slonimer synagogue just as the Rebbe was preparing to kindle the Chanukah lights.

"Rebbe, help me," cried the woman in a voice that echoed throughout the entire synagogue.

"Tell her not to worry," the Rebbe said quietly to someone. "She should go and return home. She should ask her husband to add to her son's name the name 'Matisyahu'. And in the merit of that great tzadik - father of the Macabbees - who gave up his life for the Jewish people and the Holy One, the sick child's life will be lengthened. And another thing, when the child is fully recovered, his father should bring a pidyon nefesh ("redemption offering") of chai - life - 18 coins which will be given to charity in the Holy Land."

The following day, at about the time when the Chanukah candles were being lit, a new face was seen in the Slonimer synagogue. It was the father of Matisyahu, who had brought to the Rebbe 18 rubles, a pidyon nefesh for his son who was fully recovered.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Joseph's imprisonment finally ends when Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows that are swallowed up by seven lean cows, and of seven fat ears of grain swallowed by seven lean ears. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of hunger, and advises Pharaoh to store grain during the plentiful years. Pharaoh appoints Joseph governor of Egypt. Joseph marries Asenath, daughter of Potiphar, and they have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Famine spreads throughout the region, and food can be obtained only in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain; the youngest, Benjamin, stays home, for Jacob fears for his safety. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him; he accuses them of being spies, insists that they bring Benjamin to prove that they are who they say they are, and imprisons Simeon as a hostage. Later, they discover that the money they paid for their provisions has been mysteriously returned to them.

Jacob agrees to send Benjamin only after Judah assumes personal and eternal responsibility for him. This time Joseph receives them kindly, releases Simeon, and invites them to an eventful dinner at his home. But then he plants his silver goblet, purportedly imbued with magic powers, in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers set out for home the next morning, they are pursued, searched, and arrested when the goblet is discovered. Joseph offers to set them free and retain only Benjamin as his slave.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 29-30 December	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:27	9:32
Adelaide	8:14	9:17
Brisbane	6:28	7:26
Darwin	6:57	7:50
Gold Coast	6:28	7:26
Perth	7:08	8:08
Sydney	7:51	8:53
Canberra	8:03	9:06
Launceston	8:30	9:39
Auckland	8:25	9:29
Wellington	8:39	9:48
Hobart	8:34	9:45
Byron Bay	7:28	8:27

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS MIKEITZ SHABBOS CHANUKAH • 1 TEVES • 30 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8.27 PM
	MINCHA:	8.35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9.05 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.39 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9.32 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.35 PM
	MAARIV:	9.20 PM