

LAMPLIGHTER

27 Kislev
Parshas
Mikeitz
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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 Chanuka 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 Chanuka 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.

The Mystic Brother Not much has changed in 3,600 years...

By Yaakov Paley

Ten strapping shepherds and a stay-at-home scholar. These were the sons of Jacob, forebears of the tribes of Israel.

The ten brothers spent their days in the mountains and meadows of Canaan, advancing their father's successful sheep industry (the twelfth brother, Benjamin, was too young to join them). Joseph, on the other hand, spent year after year absorbed in his father's teachings; his father Jacob had amassed a wealth of knowledge studying at the ancient academy of Shem and Ever, and was privy to the mystic secrets passed down the generation from Adam, the first man on Earth and the last man in Eden.

Well, one day, Joseph the mystic tells his hard-working brothers about a vision of their future. It included the brothers' willing acceptance of himself as their guide.

Their reaction was immediate and volcanic:

"Just who do you think you are?! You? Hold influence over us? We are the breadwinners who confront reality on a daily basis; we support the family, allowing you to dream away your days. You, on the other hand, hardly see further than the front-door; you, with your head in the clouds, your dreams and visions... You're the last person we would submit ourselves to – or even give the benefit of our attention!"

In an attempt to escape destiny and create their own future, the brothers tried to do away with the bearer of the vision.

Time passed and the same ten brothers journeyed to a foreign land – Egypt. There, however, they had no qualms at all about slavishly calling Tzafnas Pane'ach, the Egyptian President, their "master." They found plenty of respect for the ruling house that had – not so long ago – abducted their grandmother Sarah. They practically battled their father to be allowed to fulfill the President's whim and remove Benjamin from his ancestral land.

Why did they find it so very difficult to accept the guidance of a mystic brother, yet so easy to be subservient to a foreign Pharaoh? For sure, they didn't see eye to eye with Joseph – but he was certainly closer to them and their goals than the head of a foreign state with a documented history of anti-Semitism.

In the end, they wound up being skillfully shepherded by kind brother Joseph, who also happened to control the entire Egypt! Only then the brothers realized that their blessings lay in the wisdom nurtured by their "unworldly" stay-at-home sibling; he could guide them better than their own understanding.

History had a large wardrobe with many garments of different hues – but of the same cloth and similar measure.

Many of our brethren find themselves once again pursuing their livelihoods in the pastures of former Canaan. They are men of effort, tempered by fierce winds of war, facing harsh realities on a daily basis and supporting the large "family" that is modern Israel.

Again they scorn their brother Joseph and with seething resentment declare:

"Who are you to tell us how to conduct our affairs? What do you know about reality, mystic brother? Closeted away in a Torah-lifestyle, living on foreign soils, spouting ancient traditions and teachings while we tend our nation's life and land. Only Israelis – not Jews – have a right to an opinion on our affairs! Only our own leaders – not Joseph-Rabbis – may have a say! Listen, Diaspora-Jo, either join us in the fields of Canaan or keep your heads in your books."

However, when it comes to the opinion of an American President, Secretary of State, a European leader and so on, our brothers then run to submit themselves before their "masters" and lay their affairs open to the whims of the Pharaohs.

Why, just this week, world Jewry was told in no uncertain term: "Don't dare interfere with our future; we will not be controlled by foreign Jews!"

Yet, at the very same time, they have flown to the modern land of the pyramids to prostrate themselves before foreign Christian and Muslim leaders, ready to hear their commands and eager to obey. Even if it means removing little brother Benjamin from the safety of his house and ancestral land? "Yes, Master!"

What makes them assume that nations who abducted their grandparents in all too recent times have their best interest at heart, while their mystic brother Joseph is a useless dreamer, a fanatic and a nuisance?

Inevitably, says the unwanted voice of the ancient vision, another Joseph will arise; he will be a kindly mystic of the highest order and quite probably lacking a modern Israeli accent. Then, however, not only will our brothers acknowledge the superiority of his opinion and happily follow his decisions, but he will hold complete sway over America, Europe and the other "masters" as well!

His identity? Moshiach.

The obvious question: Why waste so much energy – and so many precious lives – in a doomed attempt to compel our present to clash with our past and future?

Slice of LIFE

THE YOM KIPPUR WAR MENORAH

Sa'id and Yihya the sons of Yosef the silversmith, lived in the city of Sanaa, Yemen. They were beautiful children, with brilliant dark eyes and long curly peyot in the style of the Yemenite Jews.

Every morning Sa'id, who was older than Yihya by a year, would take his younger brother to their teacher's house, where they would learn Torah for hours on end. The children sat on mats arranged in a circle, their legs folded under them. Everyone would read from the one book that was placed on a small stool in the center.

In the evening, Sa'id and Yihya arrived home at the same time their father was returning from his workshop in the marketplace. Together they would go to pray the evening service at the Sallah synagogue, not far from their home. Afterwards, they would all sit down to enjoy the delicious evening meal their mother Saada had prepared.

Life continued as usual, until rumors began to circulate that giant "metal birds" were taking Jews from Yemen to the Holy Land. Yosef wanted very much to emigrate, but was reluctant to give up his steady source of income for the great unknown. He continued to weigh the pros and cons but could not come to a decision.

In the meantime, Yemen was plunged into a state of political turmoil. The king was overthrown in a bloody coup by his second-in-command, who was then promptly overthrown by the murdered king's son, Prince Ahmad. In a beneficent gesture, the new ruler announced that Yemen's Jews were free to leave

the country.

The situation in Yemen was very unstable. No one could predict how long the latest regime would last, or if the newly-opened gates to freedom might suddenly come crashing down. It was a very frightening time for Yemen's Jews.

In the end, Saada and Yosef decided that they couldn't leave just yet. But they would send their two children, Sa'id and Yihya, on to Israel ahead of them. It was a daring and brave move, but the anguished parents felt that it was the best alternative. G-d willing, they would join the children in a short while.

But life in the Holy Land wasn't exactly what the two brothers had anticipated. For a few months the boys were in a temporary transit camp. Then, tragically, the brothers were separated and sent to different kibbutzim. Sa'id, who had meanwhile changed his name to Chaim, was taken to Kibbutz Ein Shemer. From that day on he lost contact with his younger brother.

The only memento Chaim had of his former life was a small silver Chanukah Menorah his father had fashioned especially for him. Right before leaving, Yosef had hastily thrust it into the boy's knapsack. Chaim remembered that his father had also made one for his younger brother. Every year on Chanuka, when Chaim took it out and kindled its lights, he would be filled with sad and distant memories.

Years passed. Chaim grew up and served in the Israeli Defense Force. Soon afterward he married and became a father. Then the Yom Kippur War broke out, and Chaim was again called upon to defend his country. At first his regiment was stationed in the north, but a few days later it was sent to the Egyptian front. With G-d's help, the Jewish soldiers were able to fight off the enemy.

When Chanuka arrived, Chaim was still stationed in the Sinai Desert.

Luckily, he had remembered to pack in his small silver Menorah. That night, as he lit the first candle, his thoughts as always returned to the past. He missed his wife and children, but at that moment he longed for his childhood home more than anything. Oh, how he missed his mother and father, his younger brother Yihya, his beloved teacher, his native Sanaa...

For a long time Chaim sat in front of his tent, staring into the candles. Then, when they had almost burnt down, he decided to stretch his legs and go for a walk. Wandering about the campsite, Chaim didn't realize that he had covered quite a distance. Suddenly, he noticed a tiny light flickering in a tent doorway. He ran over and saw that it was a Chanuka Menorah.

He was about to turn away and return to his tent when he noticed something that stopped him in his tracks. Why, that Menorah looked very familiar... He bent down to take a closer look and his heart began to pound. The Menorah before him was the exact duplicate of his own.

"Whose Menorah is this?" he called out in a trembling voice.

"Yaron's," a soldier answered from within the tent.

"Yaron?" Chaim repeated the name. A moment later a soldier appeared at the entrance and stuck his head outside. "Did someone call me?" he asked.

It was the sound of his voice that confirmed it, the familiar inflection that brought back a flood of memories. A second later the two men were staring at each other, their eyes locked. "Yihya?" Chaim whispered. For a split second there was no reaction, then a shiver went through Yaron's body. "Sa'id, my big brother..." he said in a voice choked with emotion. The two brothers fell on each other, crying and embracing.

Tears flowed freely throughout the entire camp when word spread of the brothers' reunion.

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Religion, State, and the Ten Commandments

... You write concerning those who are thinking to "separate between religion and state"...

The Jewish faith unites two extremes (which only seem to be in contradiction to each other). On the one hand, it includes the most abstract concepts, such as the unity of G-d, the unity of creation, [the concept that the world was created] ex nihilo, etc. On the other hand it instructs the daily life of man down to its most minute details, including the most simple and mundane things.

We see this also in the Ten Commandments, which begin with the commandment "I am the L-rd your G-d...", whose inner meaning is the negation of any true reality save the reality of G-d, and concludes with commandments such as "Do not kill," which pertain to the lowliest instincts in man.

This teaches us that there cannot be any separation between religious and mundane matters in Jewish life. On the contrary: as is the case on the micro-level of personal life, unity and harmony on the macro-level of social life can be achieved only via the synthesis of the two domains--by integrating the spiritual into the material and thereby refining the material. Hence the all-time motto of our sages, of blessed memory: "The essential thing is not study, but deed." Though they occupied themselves with the study of the secrets of the Torah and the most sublime concepts, they also elaborated, in exacting detail, on practical matters, including matters--such as eating and drinking--that seem petty and insignificant. But this is the touchstone of any individual or ideology...

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

What's With the Candles?

Question: I notice that lighting candles is a big part of Judaism. We light candles every Friday for Shabbat, we light candles on every festival, and Chanukah is all about candles. What is the connection between candles and spirituality?

Answer: There is something about a candle that makes it more spiritual than physical. A physical substance, when spread, becomes thin. Spirituality, when spread, expands and grows.

When you use something physical, it is diminished. The more money you spend, the less you have; the more gasoline you use, the more empty your tank becomes; the more food you eat, the more you need to restock your pantry. But spiritual things increase with use. If I use my wisdom to teach, the student learns, and I come out wiser for it; if I share my love with another, I become more loving, not less. When you give a spiritual gift, the recipient gains, and you lose nothing.

This is the spiritual property that candles share. When you use one candle to light another, the original candle remains bright. Its light is not diminished by being shared; on the contrary, the two candles together enhance each other's brightness and increase light.

We sometimes worry that we may stretch ourselves too thin. In matters of spirit, this is never the case. The more goodness we spread, the more goodness we have. By making a new friend, you become a better friend to your old friends. By having another child, you open a new corridor of love in your heart that your other children benefit from, too. By teaching more students, you become wiser.

Keep lighting your candles. There is an endless supply of light in your soul. You will never run out of goodness.

A WORD

from the Director

This Friday evening we will be lighting both Chanukah and Shabbat candles. These are two types of lights which play a significant part in Jewish life. A third type of light significant to Jewish life was the seven-branched Menorah that was lit daily in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

It would be interesting to compare the differences between these three types of lights:

The Shabbat candles sit proudly on the Shabbat table. The Temple Menorah's place was also inside, in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. But the Chanuka lights are kindled in a place where their light can be seen from outside.

The Shabbat candles must be lit before sunset. The Temple Menorah was lit even earlier. But the Chanuka lights are lit after sunset (except on Fridays when they must be kindled before the Shabbat lights so as not to desecrate the Sabbath).

Finally, of all three types of lights, only the Chanuka lights increase each day.

The lesson of the Chanukah lights is manifold but clear. It is not enough to light up one's home (like the Shabbat candles), or even the synagogue or Jewish school (like the Temple Menorah) with Judaism. Every Jew has the responsibility to be a shining light to the outside, to one's social and business environment, too.

In addition, it is especially when it is already dark outside - after sunset - when conditions are not as favorable, that we must kindle the lights of Judaism. At that time, in times like ours, it is not sufficient to kindle the same number of lights each time, as with the Temple Menorah or Shabbat lights. We must increase our light, as with the Chanukah candles. This is accomplished through the ever-steady increase of Torah and mitzvot.

J. I. Gutnick

A Story From Our Past

Karl the Janitor

There was once a poor but righteous man who lived on the road leading to Liozna. Every day, he would walk to Liozna, where he would teach Torah to some neighborhood children in exchange for a few pennies from their impoverished parents.

His wife further supplemented their income by baking pastries, which her husband would distribute to customers in town every day.

One winter's night, the family lay sleeping. Suddenly, they were awakened by a knock on the door. Clutching a candle, the teacher hastened to open the door. There he found a man half frozen and covered in snow.

The wayfarer was quickly brought inside and given a steaming cup of tea to drink. After the stranger had warmed himself, the teacher took his sleeping children from their paillasse on the stove (which was the warmest place in the house) and bade the traveler to lie down and stretch his weary bones there.

Early the next morning, the stranger departed. The children, still groggy with sleep and stiff with cold, crept back onto the stove to finish their sleep.

Suddenly, a call rang out. "There's something hard and lumpy in the bed!"

Upon further inspection, the teacher and his wife realized that the stranger had left a pouch with a significant sum of gold coins.

They waited a few days for the guest to claim his property, but he never returned.

Unsure of how to proceed, the man turned to the Alter Rebbe, who lived in Liozna at the time.

After hearing the man's story, the Rebbe replied, "G-d has sent you this treasure. No one will come to claim it, and it is rightfully yours. However, it is not wise for you to begin to spend lavishly, since people will suspect all kinds of things. Rather, keep your change of fortune a secret for now. Finish teaching your pupils this semester. When the session ends, come to me, and I'll tell you what to do next."

When the semester ended, the teacher came to the Alter Rebbe, who then advised him: "Rent yourself a house in town with a store. Use your coins to purchase some supplies from the local wholesaler and begin to sell them at a profit. After this succeeds, come back to me in a year, and I'll advise you further."

One year later, the erstwhile teacher reported: "Thank G-d, business has prospered and we have been living quite well. In fact, we drew just a few coins from the treasure that we found in the stove."

The Alter Rebbe then advised him to extend his business dealings, purchasing directly from the supplier in Vitebsk instead of the local wholesaler.

Another year passed, and the man reported that business had flourished even more and that he still had the vast majority of his coins to invest.

This time, the Alter Rebbe advised him to travel to Moscow, from whence the Vitebsk suppliers purchased their wares, and to sell his stock to merchants in Vitebsk and Liozna.

A year passed, and fortune continued to smile down upon him. The Alter Rebbe told him to travel to Konigsberg, which would allow him to sell even to the Moscow businessmen.

And so it was. The onetime poor teacher and pastry seller became a well-respected businessman with extensive dealings all across Russia.

Once, before departing on a business trip, the entrepreneur came to seek the blessing and advice of the Alter Rebbe. "You're traveling to Konigsberg," noted the Rebbe. "Perhaps you can bring back a gift for me."

Honored that the Rebbe deigned to ask him for a gift, the man went to the finest shop in Konigsberg and purchased an expensive golden snuff box.

"This is a fine gift," said the Alter Rebbe when the man returned, "but this is not what I had in mind."

On his next trip, the man purchased an even more expensive snuff box, but again the Rebbe said that it was not what he wanted.

Before the man's next trip, the Rebbe told him. "You're traveling to Konigsberg. Do you perhaps go to the theater there?"

A sincere chassid and pious Jew, the businessman had never been to the theater in his life, but on this trip he dutifully purchased a ticket to a show in the Konigsberg theater. He settled into the plush seat in the private box high above the stage and promptly fell asleep.

Tired from his business dealings, the man slept soundly and was only jolted awake when the janitor entered his booth to clean it.

"Where did you come from?" asked the janitor, who was not accustomed to seeing sleeping chassidim in the expensive theater seats (or any theater seats for that matter).

"From White Russia," came the reply.

"From which city?"

"From Liozna."

"Do you perhaps know Zalminyu?" said the cleaner, using a familiar appellation for the Alter Rebbe, whose full name was Schneur Zalman.

"Indeed, I do. In fact, I am a student of his."

"If so, please give him my regards."

"But what is your name?"

"Call me Karl."

Sure enough, upon his return to Liozna, the chassid dutifully gave the Alter Rebbe regards from Karl, the theater cleaner.

"Yes," exclaimed the Rebbe. "That was the gift I had been hoping for."

Before the man's next trip to Konigsberg, the Alter Rebbe gave him a small package to bring to Karl. "When you get to Konigsberg," said the Alter Rebbe, "please give this to him. And then, when you are ready to go home, please take it from him and bring it back to me."

Upon his arrival, the businessman quickly found Karl at the theater and gave him the package. When it was time to go, he again sought out the theater cleaner to retrieve the package.

"Did Zalminya say that I need to give it back?" asked Karl, opening the package. He lovingly withdrew a sheaf of papers with the Alter Rebbe's handwriting. They would soon be printed and gain fame as the Tanya, the Alter Rebbe's foundational work of Chassidic thought.

"Divine inspiration," he repeated to himself as he leafed through the pages.

"True divine inspiration . . . I don't know what will be left for Moshiach himself to teach."

With that, he closed the package and returned it to the businessman.

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 15 - 16 December	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:20	9:26
Adelaide	8:07	9:11
Brisbane	6:21	7:19
Darwin	6:50	7:43
Gold Coast	6:21	7:19
Perth	7:01	8:02
Sydney	7:44	8:46
Canberra	7:56	9:00
Launceston	8:23	9:33
Auckland	8:18	9:23
Wellington	8:32	9:42
Hobart	8:28	9:40
Byron Bay	7:21	8:20

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS MIKEITZ • 27 KISLEV • 15 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA:	7.10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	TEHILIM:	8.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.31 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MOLAD WILL BE:	MONDAY 1.41 (1 chelek) PM
	FARBRENGEN AFTER DAVENING	
	MINCHA:	8.15 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	8.25 PM
	MAARIV:	9.10 PM