

LAMPLIGHTER

29 Kislev
5th Day of
Chanuka
Parshas Mikeitz
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Last week's Torah portion dealt with the subject of dreams - those of Joseph and Pharaoh's officers. This week, in the Torah portion of Miketz, we continue to delve into dreams, but this time, those of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

The common denominator shared by all these dreams is that they collectively portrayed the various stages and factors which caused Jacob and his sons to go to Egypt. As a direct result, the Jewish people were exiled there.

Every word in the Torah is necessary and precise. If the subject of dreams receives so much emphasis and we are told such a wealth of detail, there must be a fundamental connection between the concept of dreams and the concept of exile. Furthermore, by understanding the significance of dreams, we will be better able to overcome the difficulties we endure during our own prolonged exile.

Chasidic philosophy explains that a most outstanding characteristic of dreams is the ability for diametric opposites to coexist, something which cannot take place in reality. The Talmud gives as an example the image of "an elephant passing through the eye of a needle," which may appear not at all out of the ordinary in a dream.

This is also true of our own exile, an unnatural and abnormal situation, but one seemingly natural and normal to us. It is of such a long duration; we can no longer feel the contradictions inherent in the exile itself.

The same contradiction also applies to our spiritual exile. It is understood that self-love and the pursuit of worldly pleasures are the opposite of cultivating a love of G-d and holiness. Yet, we often perform mitzvot (commandments) under the illusion that we are doing so out of love of G-d and are in close proximity to Him, all the while caring only for our own egos and self-fulfillment. We simply don't perceive the contradiction in this.

Another example of our lack of logic is found in prayer. While praying, the Jew's innate love and emotional attachment to G-d can be aroused, but as soon as he finishes, it is as if he had never experienced this arousal as he returns to his preoccupation with day-to-day life. Although he stood on such a high spiritual level while actually communicating with G-d, the feelings dissipate as the individual finds himself led after the cravings of the animal soul.

Thus our very lives are lived as if we are dreaming. The spiritual exile is full of contradictions, yet we must not be discouraged and think that we perform mitzvot and pray in vain, for every positive deed leaves its mark even if its influence is not always easily felt.

Infinity in Disguise

By Tzvi Freeman

"Ten, ten the spoons weighed" (Numbers 7:86, part of special Chanuka daily reading) - the Ten Sayings by which the world was made correspond to the Ten Commandments by which the Torah was given. (Zohar)

Infinite Light is masquerading as a finite world.

There are two pieces of evidence. First of all, there's a world appearing out of nothing. Something out of nothing is entirely beyond our conception, but we can know one thing: something finite can't generate a world out of the absolute void. Creativity has its limit - there's got to be something there to start with. Unless you're infinite. Then creativity is unlimited as well.

It turns out that the light that projects the cosmos into existence at each moment is infinite. If the cosmos it projects appears finite, it must be a disguise.

There's more evidence, something nobody seems willing to take into account. Perhaps it's one of those forbidden questions. Perhaps it just breaks too many assumptions. But we'll ask it anyway: Have the properties of light changed over the centuries? Has the power of gravity weakened with time? Has matter become less material? Everything else decays and passes over time, but the basic forces of nature stand constant and unchanging. If their source was finite, shouldn't they slowly wear down?

Evidence that they are no more than finite iterations of an infinite force. The force of the One Creator who is beyond time and change. So far beyond, that He can do that as well - He can dwell within time and change, and remain immutable.

Every piece of His world contains another form of infinitude.

The very design of the world incorporates infinity. In each and every thing you can examine in this world, you will find infinite wisdom. You will never exhaust the depth, the beauty, the intricacy, the mystery of any aspect of it - whether a blade of grass or a molecular structure or an atom.

From every event, there is no end to possible outcomes. The complexity of the microcosmos and the macrocosmos is such that infinite possibilities extend from every point in time. There is infinity in every step, in every second, as there is in every inch. The appearance of simplicity, of neatness that we can measure and record confidently in a book, is a facade. It is Infinity in disguise.

He could have made a world neat and tidy and immaculately measurable. Yes, He is infinite - but that also makes Him omnipotent. If He wanted, He could have made a finite world that had nothing to do with Him - no trace of the infinite anywhere.

Apparently, that is not His scheme. As the Zohar comments on the words of the verse, "Ten, ten the spoons weighed" - "the Ten Sayings by which the world was made correspond to the Ten Commandments by which the Torah was given."

Meaning that everything was made, the design of the cosmos was determined, with an ultimate goal in mind: That the divine should be able to make itself at home in our world.

That is why each article of our world, when you turn it over a few times and rub it between your fingers, turns out to be no more than a front for the infinite. Neat and measurable on the outside, unlimited capacity on the inside. In fact, you could call it "functional design": finitude, designed to be a home for the Infinite.

Slice of LIFE

Recognizing G-d Along the Way (Road Bumps Notwithstanding)

By Esther Vilenkin

“OK, everyone in the other car just finished saying Tefilat Haderech (traveler’s prayer)” confirmed my daughter Chaya after the text message came through. Our family was split up between two overloaded minivans as we began our trip leaving the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, N.Y., to our Chabad House in Chautauqua.

We were schlepping everything we needed for the entire summer; the minivan I drove contained enough to fill a commercial fridge and three freezers! Our kids were divided according to age and temperament, providing for a harmonious (albeit cramped) trip. They enjoyed keeping tabs on each other as our vans would become obscured by cars and trucks that came between us.

A few hours away from Chautauqua, we were minutes behind my husband’s minivan when we suddenly caught up to them because they had abruptly pulled to the side of the road. My husband immediately called and told us not to stop, but to keep traveling; everything was under control.

What really happened was truly a miracle! Initially, my husband heard a very loud noise and thought the car had hit something. He stopped on the side of the road, looked the car over and noticed nothing. Then he did a more careful examination and saw that one of the tires, while appearing fine superficially, was actually almost completely peeled off. If he would have gone a foot or so more, it would have unraveled, causing a major blowout on the highway at 70 miles an hour!

Then the next part of the miracle happened: The AAA operator told my husband that they contacted the nearest repair center in Elmira, which at 7 PM was closing up for the day. Remarkably, when they heard that a family was stuck

on the highway, they said they would wait. By the time the police, a taxi and the AAA tow truck finally arrived, nearly two hours had passed. Yet they received my husband graciously and fixed the vehicle, enabling my family to continue on to Chautauqua.

The last segment of the trip was through heavy rain and thunderstorms . . . right after the car was safe and secure. I can’t imagine what an ordeal it would have been had the rain started earlier, or if the only repair center was closed. My children marveled at how our prayers for a safe trip were answered!

I arrived first at our new Chabad House, hours before my husband. As I was unpacking, lugging in the boxes under the gusty rain, I realized a further sign of Divine providence: my minivan was the one loaded with all the perishables that needed immediate refrigeration. My husband’s minivan had all the rest of the stuff.

The next morning, we received a call from the department of religion of the Chautauqua Institution. We were invited to attend a special luncheon for all denominational houses (religious centers), where an overview of the summer’s program would be shared by the president and all the heads of the various departments. (A special plate of whole fruits was prepared for us.) Since we were inaugurating a new Chabad House, they thought it would be wonderful if we would introduce ourselves and describe what our center would offer the community.

We knew exactly what we would share in this golden opportunity of introducing Chabad at the luncheon.

Since the Rebbe urged everyone to publicize and share stories of miracles, we would now share our very own road-trip miracle! The Rebbe explained three reasons for sharing stories of miracles.

First, the Rebbe said it is our duty to acknowledge what G-d has done for us and express our gratitude. Secondly, a miracle is a flash of truth that enables us to transcend our preoccupation with materialism, which causes spiritual numbness. Miracles open our perception to see and feel how G-d is in this world and a part of our lives. This spiritual awareness is uplifting and invigorating; it serves to dispel apathy towards Divinity, and is an antidote to spiritual numbness. The impact of miracles not only inspires the people who experienced them, but influences those who hear of them as well.

Lastly, the Rebbe said that recounting miracles brings Moshiach closer. Publicizing miracles furthers the awareness of G-d in this world, thus hastening the world’s redemption.

Reflecting on the Rebbe’s words, we felt that sharing our miracle story would be the best way for us to introduce the mission of Chabad: to bring the awareness of G-d into our consciousness, to affect our everyday lives in a tangible way and to bring the Redemption.

To our amazement, the story didn’t end there. After my husband finished detailing our experience to the luncheon audience, Rev. Paul Womack was called up to give a benediction.

He began by saying that he was finally retiring from being a pastor in Chautauqua, as well as previously serving as a U.S. Army Reserve chaplain and colonel in Iraq. Since he was embarking on a new chapter in his life, he found a most suitable prayer that requested G-d’s protection and guidance on this new path before him. He mentioned that he found this prayer in material given to chaplains by the Chabad-affiliated Aleph Institute, based in Florida. He chose to recite the Jewish prayer for travel, Tefilat Haderech. (The very same prayer we recited before our trip!) He also expressed how he felt that this prayer was relevant and meaningful for the position he had as a chaplain in the army. He shared it with many soldiers, asking G-d to protect them before they went out on missions.

My husband and I were blown away by this open display of Divine providence! Who would believe that this benediction and accompanying words would be the Jewish prayer for travel that we just spoke of? It contained the premise of what a miracle achieves—the awareness that wherever you go, you are in G-d’s Hands.

This message resonated profoundly with our family; with Rev. Womack, who had shared it with so many soldiers overseas in battle; and with all those at the luncheon.

This whole experience was a gift of inspiration that kept giving. We repeated this story throughout the summer season. And we were delighted to see how it resonated with so many people. Our story began with my children recognizing that for a safe trip, you turn to G-d. G-d answered that prayer with a series of miracles, showing us clearly how much He is with us in all our ways.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

The importance of physical health; the need to heed a doctor's directives

[This letter was sent to a chassid whose name was not released.]
B"H, 17 Iyar, 5710

Greetings and blessings,

I was sorry to hear that you feel your health is weakening and that, in addition, you are not careful [in heeding] the directives of the doctor.

On several occasions, I heard the following statement from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, in the name of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab]: "How dear is a Jewish body! For it, so much is sacrificed!" For it is well known that the Torah and its mitzvos were given to souls as they are en clothed in bodies and not to angels.

If the Creator cherishes the body so much, [then,] as a matter of course, it is understood how much care a person must give to this article entrusted to him from Above.

Our Sages (Berachos 60a) informed us that a doctor was given license to heal. If so, the doctor is acting under the authority and the command of the Torah. Thus it is clear that if by listening to the instructions of a doctor one temporarily negates the observance of a desirable custom, the meticulous practice [of a particular mitzvah], or the like, the Torah will not remain a debtor. Through nullifying the custom or the meticulous practice for a brief time, one will receive the potential to add strength to his observance of the Torah and its mitzvos manifold times for a lengthy and good span of years.

With wishes for a complete recovery and much satisfaction from all of your descendants as per the everlasting blessings of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe,

M. Schneerson

A WORD

from the Director

The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, taught, "We must listen carefully to what the Chanuka candles are saying."

Throughout the ages, the lights of the Chanuka Menora have carried a message of hope, strength, and the eternity of our sacred heritage. The candles carry an additional message, the reminder that we must publicize this message and the miracle.

There is a mitzva on Chanuka of "pirsumei nisa," publicizing the miracle. We fulfill this special mitzva by lighting the Chanuka Menora. In fact, many of the laws and customs involved with lighting the Menora emphasize this concept of publicizing the miracle. We are told that the Menora should be lit "at the outside of the entrance of one's home," and that the candles should burn into the night. Thus, the Chanuka candles illuminate the public domain, especially when it is covered in darkness

Lighting the candles at night is symbolic of the mission of every single Jew. We live at a time when G-dliness is concealed by the night of exile. By learning the Torah and fulfilling its mitzvot, we illuminate the world and elevate it so that G-dliness may be revealed.

The darkness also recalls the dark situation of the Jewish people in the time of the story of Chanuka. The Greeks physically conquered and controlled the Land of Israel, and they sought to impose their culture upon its inhabitants. The Jews suffered in physical and spiritual darkness under the influence of the Greeks. It was the Maccabees who illuminated their situation, who instilled the Jewish people with both physical strength to fight off their oppressors and spiritual fortitude to withstand their influence.

When Moshiach is revealed, it will be the ultimate "publicizing of the miracle." The entire world will be cognizant of G-d's greatness and dominion over the world. May this happen immediately.

J. I. Gutterman

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Is the Torah Timeless?

Question: *I wonder about how the Orthodox view the fluidity of the Torah and the teachings of the past. Clearly there are aspects of the Torah that have been outdated since it was written, such as stoning etc.*

What relevance do such passages have to us today?

Answer: The Torah cannot be read like any other book. It is G-d's wisdom, and thus has infinite levels of depth. There is no word in the Torah that is outdated; as G-d is above time, so is His wisdom. It is just that different levels become more relevant at different times. While some laws of the Torah are no longer applied literally, their mystical and deeper meanings are still as relevant today as ever.

Let's take the example you gave — stoning.

Today the Jewish court does not stone people for sinning. But the message behind stoning still applies. Even today we are "stoned" by our wrongdoings. The Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) teach that when we sin our heart turns hard and cold like stone. By engaging in evil acts we become desensitized to what's good and right. After repeating a sin a few times, we start to justify it. Soon we feel that it isn't bad at all. When we are criticized for it, we respond with righteous indignation, having convinced ourselves that we are actually acting morally. This is all because we are metaphorically stoned — we are cold and impervious to the voice of our own soul.

On Rosh Hashanah, the sound of the Shofar pierces a hole in the stone blocking our heart, and the layers of indifference start to melt away.

That is the mystical view of the law of stoning in the Torah, and it explains a lot of the evil in the world today.

This is just an example. Every law, story and idea the Torah teaches can be taken literally but also has layers of meaning beyond the surface. It is an exhilarating and inspiring journey to discover how those lessons speak to us today.

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Tar Boy

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Many years ago in a small village a Jewish boy was orphaned. A fellow villager took pity on him and took him into his own home. The child attended the local yeshiva but try as he might, he just couldn't grasp even the most rudimentary subjects.

Finally, the boy's guardian decided to apprentice him to a tar-maker. No sooner did his master teach him some element of the work than he could perform it faultlessly. After half a year his master said, "You don't need me any longer. You are competent enough to go into business for yourself."

The boy, now a young man, opened his own business in a neighboring village. He quickly established himself amongst the villagers, for both Jews and non-Jews alike were drawn to his cheerful manner and absolute honesty. His business thrived and he married the daughter of a local tradesman. He was soon able to support not only his family, but to give charity generously to the local yeshivas and other needy causes in the town. He even had built a special guest house to feed and maintained travelers at his expense.

His only regret in life was his ignorance of Torah. His father-in-law tried to soothe him, assuring him that the charity he provided to Torah scholars was counted to him as if he himself had studied, but to no avail.

One day in his guest house he noticed a certain visitor who was suffering from sores all over his body. "How did this happen to you?" he inquired.

"I was proficient in learning Torah," the man replied, "but the study of the commentaries was very hard for me. I decided to torment my body in order that G-d would help to open my mind to my learning. With G-d's help, I succeeded and reached my goal. With His help these sores will also heal."

The young man had never heard of such practices, but he was overjoyed to learn that he still had a chance. And so every day he would go into the woods, sit in a spot where there were biting gnats and flies, and there he would expose his skin to the creatures until it bled and itched unbearably.

One day, as he sat on a tree stump with flies buzzing all about him, a stranger approached and asked, "Why are you doing this?"

The young man explained about his great desire to learn Torah. "It is totally unnecessary for you to do this. I will make a deal with you. If you will give me all of your worldly possessions, I promise to teach you Torah."

"Of course, I am willing, but I must discuss it with my wife, for it affects her as well. I will meet you tomorrow, and I will tell you our final decision."

The man returned home and related the incident to his wife. "This is what you have always wanted. Of course, you should do it without delay," was her reply. But the man was still wary. After all, he had always been a responsible person. He went to his father-in-law and asked his opinion.

"What! To sign away all your possessions to an utter stranger in return for some foggy promise that you will learn Torah! Your charity is equivalent to the learning of a great scholar!"

The young man left in confusion. But his wife told him: "It seems to

me that you aren't sure of what you want. You always professed the strongest desire to learn Torah, but now when you have the chance, you balk!"

The following day the stranger, who was none other than the Baal Shem Tov, came to the same spot in the forest, and the two men proceeded together to the young man's home. When they entered a tantalizing aroma greeted them, and they were astounded to see the table set for a lavish banquet.

"What is this?" asked the Baal Shem Tov.

The wife explained, "This is the last time we will be able to fulfill the holy mitzva of entertaining guests, and I wanted to perform the mitzva as beautifully as possible. In addition, we have reason to celebrate, for now my husband will be able to achieve his life's ambition. But I had one other consideration: There are many ways in which G-d is able to take away a person's fortune. We have the privilege of giving away all in order to 'buy' Torah learning. This is also a great cause for celebration."

After they had eaten, the Baal Shem Tov asked the young man, "What have you decided?" The young man seemed unsure but a look in the direction of his wife, gave the young man the courage to make the decision. He took a quill and signed all of his worldly goods over to the Baal Shem Tov. In accordance with their agreement, the couple was permitted use of the house and its garden as well as flour to bake bread. And in return, the would-be scholar traveled with the Baal Shem Tov to a place of Torah, where his eyes were illuminated.

True to his promise, the young man eventually became a great scholar and a tzadik. Years later, the Baal Shem Tov was heard to say about the young man's wife who sacrificed everything for Torah, that which was uttered about Rabbi Akiva's wife, Rachel, "Everything he has achieved belongs to her".

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 7 - 8 December	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	8:14	9:19
Adelaide	8:01	9:04
Brisbane	6:15	7:14
Darwin	6:45	7:38
Gold Coast	6:15	7:14
Perth	6:55	7:56
Sydney	7:38	8:40
Canberra	7:50	8:54
Launceston	8:16	9:26
Auckland	8:12	9:17
Wellington	8:25	9:35
Hobart	8:21	9:32
Byron Bay	7:16	8:14

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

5TH DAY OF CHANUKA PARSHAS MIKEITZ 29 KISLEV • 7 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	8.20 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.50 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.29 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	EARLIEST MENORAH TIME	7.05 AM
	MINCHA	8.05 PM
	MARIV/SHABBOS ENDS	9.19 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	8.20 PM
	MARIV	9.10 PM