



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

9 - 15 December, 2018
1 - 7 Tevet, 5779

Torah 1:
Genesis 44:18 - 47:27

Haftarah:
Ezekiel 37:15-28

■ CALENDARS

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

■ FAMILY PROGRAMS

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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ONE AND THE SAME

In the hometown of the saintly defender of Israel, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Bardichev, the community was finishing up their daily morning services. Some of those present notice something which disturbed them. One of the men, still wrapped in his Tallit and Tefillin, had stepped outside and had begun greasing the tires of his wagon, preparing it for the day's work. As he greased, he continued murmuring the final words of the morning prayers. The community members frowned and scoffed as they looked out the window at this disturbing scene.

Their discussion was interrupted when the voice of their Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, was heard. "Master of the universe!" he called out, "Look and see how precious are your children, the nation of Israel. Even while doing such mundane tasks as greasing wagon wheels - their mouths do not cease to utter words of your praise!" This week's Torah reading we conclude the story of Joseph's reunion with his brothers, and how he asked them to bring his father Jacob down to Egypt.

An obvious question is raised by this entire story: Joseph was seventeen years old when his brothers sold him into slavery. Only thirteen years later, his physical appearance had certainly changed, but to the extent that his own brothers with whom he had lived all those years, couldn't recognize him? To resolve this question, we

have to understand the difference between the spiritual makeup of Joseph and that of his brothers. Joseph's brothers were shepherds - as were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob before them. Why did they choose this profession? Because caring for sheep brings about almost complete separation from worldly people and things. One spends much time in the fields and there is the opportunity for contemplation. In such a setting, a person can easily stay in touch with the spiritual. Now the brothers knew that Joseph was certainly spiritually oriented as much, if not more so than they were. But when they saw a man busily involved with single-handedly running Egypt's entire economy, there was not a chance in their minds that this could possibly be Joseph, regardless of what kinds of resemblances he might have shown. Joseph, so involved in material things, buying and selling? Impossible!

What in fact was he secret to Joseph's ability to maintain his spiritual standards while occupying himself so with the mundae? Did Joseph sacrifice his spiritual consciousness when he became viceroy of Egypt? Chassidic masters explain that the exact opposite was true. It was precisely because of his heightened spiritual consciousness that enabled him to act as he did.

There are those who choose the spiritual over the physical. They look at the spiritual and the physical as opposites, and opt for the spiritual. There are, however, certain select individuals

whose spiritual awareness is so great that it enables them to understand how Godliness encompasses the physical realm as well.

Rabbi Binyamin Kletzker, a devout follower of the first Chabad Rebbe, was also a successful businessman. At the same time he was known to often blur the lines between his spiritual and the physical. Once, for example, while filling out his business reports at the end of a season, he filled came to a line at the end which read, "Bottom Line:"

Without thinking twice he wrote he words, "Ein Od Milvado - There is nothing besides God." So in tune was he with the fusion of the two worlds that regardless of his monetary calculations and financial gains or losses, the bottom line remained the same - there is nothing in the world besides God.

This was the nature of Joseph's awareness. He did not see the need to retreat from material involvement to be involved with the spiritual. Because of his single-minded devotion to G-d, he was not separate from Him although he was involved in material tasks. Although he embraced worldly activity, it did not take him away from his spiritual consciousness.

This is something which everyone can achieve to some extent. Regardless of what we may be involved with on a daily basis, regardless of how mundane and Godless our occupations may

10 TEVES

12/18/2018 is the Fast of Teves, request bag lunch.

or may not seem, the bottom line should always remain the same. God is in charge, it is all His plan, and there is nothing which we could ever do to change that. We need only to do our part in the worlds of business, family life, and daily social interaction and let God do the rest.

ONE GOOD DEED OVER A THOUSAND SIGHTS

During a heart to heart conversation with a friend, the topic turned to his deep-seated wish to be thin and fit. He wanted to be able to run long distances without getting fatigued, or even to be able to bend down and pick up the newspaper without breaking a sweat. Being in the same boat, I naturally asked him which methods or diets he had tried and why they hadn't worked. With raised eyebrows he looked somewhat bewildered. "Now, why in the world would you assume I'd ever want to diet?"

In this week's Torah Portion we read about the touching, tearful reunion between Joseph and his baby brother, Benjamin. Joseph had eleven brothers, but only with Benjamin did he share both a father and mother. The Torah tells us that Joseph wept on Benjamin's neck, and Benjamin in turn wept on that of Joseph.

The talmud explains that they cried over future tragedies which they each foresaw. Joseph cried over the to temples in Benjamin's territory which he saw would ultimately be destroyed due to spiritual deficiencies amongst the Jewish people, and benjamin wept over the Shiloh sanctuary which stood in the portion of Israel assigned to be Joseph's Territory, that would be destroyed as well for the same reason.

The two brothers wept over the spiritual deficiencies in the other's territory, i.e. the dimension of Israel's relationship with God that they each represented, but why were they not crying over their own? Shouldn't one be more concerned about his own affairs first before concerning himself with those of his brethren? Should i not take care of my own deficiencies before worrying about someone else's? But Joseph and Benjamin had the right idea. They realized that the only one who could repair what was lacking in Joseph's dimension of Israel's relationship with God was Joseph, and only Benjamin could repair his.

And so they wept and empathised, feeling the pain and loss of the other. But they both knew that when it came to their own spiritual shortcomings, there was no point in crying. They demanded action from themselves to rectify the situation.

If I want to change my physical endurance, improve my stamina, reach my weight-loss goal, I need to translate my wants into actions. I cannot only wish it, I must do it. Joseph and Benjamin teach us that we can complain about our problems, both physical and spiritual, and we can seek support, but ultimately change must come from within.

By Rabbi Nissan Aizek

15 SHEVAT

15 of Shevat (January 21, 2019) is the new year for trees, please make arrangements to purchase dates or figs from the commissary.

PASSOVER

We will be distributing the Passover order forms in the next few weeks.

Please begin working with your Rabbi / Chaplain to ensure the paperwork is being processed and the necessary arrangements are being made.

In Jewish History

Sunday, 1 Tevet, 5779 - December 9, 2018
Esther made Queen (362 BCE)

"And Esther was taken to King Achashverosh, to his palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won his favor and kindness more than all the virgins; he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in Vashti's stead" (Book of Esther 2:16-17). This set the stage for the miracle of Purim six years later, on the 13th and 14th of Adar of the year 3405 from creation (356 BCE).

Monday, 2 Tevet, 5779 - December 10, 2018
8th Day of Chanukah Miracle (139 BCE)

On the 25th of Kislev in the year 3622 from creation, the Maccabees liberated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after defeating the vastly more numerous and powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the people of Israel. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the Temple to the service of G-d. But all the Temple's oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; when the Jews sought to light the Temple's menorah (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained. In commemoration, the Sages instituted the 8-day festival of Chanukah, on which lights are kindled nightly to recall and publicize the miracle.

Thursday, 5 Tevet, 5779 - December 13, 2018
Sefarim victory (1987)

Tevet 5 is celebrated as a day of rejoicing in the Chabad-Lubavitch community. On this date in 1987, U.S. Federal Court issued a decision in favor of Agudas Chasidei Chabad ("Union of Chabad Chassidim") regarding the ownership of the priceless library of the 6th Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. The ruling was based on the idea that a Rebbe is not a private individual but a communal figure synonymous with the body of Chassidim. The Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's son-in-law and successor) urged that the occasion be marked with time devoted to study from Torah books ("sefarim") as well as the acquisition of new Torah books.