



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**

No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

13 - 19 January, 2019
7 - 13 Shevat, 5779

Torah :

Exodus 13:17 - 17:16

Haftorah:

Judges 4:4 - 5:31

■ **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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THE BONES OF JOSEPH

They say adapt or die. But must we jettison the old to embrace the new? Is the choice limited to modern or antiquated, or can one be a contemporary traditionalist? Do the past and present ever co-exist?

At the beginning of this week's Parshah we read that Moses himself was occupied with a special mission as the Jews were leaving Egypt. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him (Exodus 13:19). Over a hundred years before the great Exodus, Joseph made the Children of Israel swear that they would take him along when they would eventually leave Egypt. As viceroy of Egypt, Joseph could not hope to be buried in Israel when he died, as his father Jacob was. The Egyptians would never tolerate their political leader being buried in a foreign land. But he did make his brethren give him their solemn undertaking that when the time would come and all the Israelites would depart they would take his remains along with them.

And so it was that while everyone else was busy packing up, loading their donkeys, and getting ready for the Great Trek into the Wilderness, Moses himself was busy with this mission, fulfilling the sacred promise made to Joseph generations ago.

Now Joseph was not the only one to be re-interred in the holy land. His brothers, too, were accorded the very same honor and last respects. Yet, it is only Joseph whom

the Torah finds it necessary to mention explicitly. Why?

The answer is that Joseph was unique. While his brothers were simple shepherds tending to their flocks, Joseph was running the affairs of state of the mightiest superpower of the day. To be a practicing Jew while blissfully strolling through the meadows is not that complicated. Alone in the fields, communing with nature, and away from the hustle and bustle of city life, one can more easily be a man of faith. But to run a massive government infrastructure as the most high-profile statesman in the land and still remain faithful to one's traditions — this is not only a novelty, this is absolute inspiration.

Thrust as he was from the simple life of a young shepherd boy into the hub of the nation's capital to juggle the roles of viceroy and Jew, Joseph represented tradition amidst transition. It was possible, he taught the world, to be a contemporary traditionalist. One could successfully straddle both worlds.

Now that they were about to leave Egypt, the Jews were facing a new world order. Gone were slavery and oppression, and in their place were freedom and liberty. During this time of transition, only Joseph could be their role model. They would need his example to show them the way forward into uncharted territory, the new frontier.

That is why the Torah mentions only Joseph as the one whose remains went along with the people. They needed to take Joseph with them so that, like him, they

too would make their own transition successfully.

Ever since leaving Egypt, we've been wandering. And every move has brought with it its own challenges. Whether from Poland to America or Lithuania to South Africa, every transition has come with culture shocks to our spiritual psyche. How do you make a living and still keep the Shabbat you kept in the shtetl when the factory boss says "Cohen, if you don't come in on Saturday, don't bother coming in on Monday either!" It was a test of faith that wasn't at all easy. Many succumbed. But many others stood fast and survived, even flourished. It was the test of transition — and those who modeled themselves on Joseph were able to make the transition while remaining committed to tradition.

Democracy and a human-rights culture have made that part of Jewish life somewhat easier, but challenges still abound. In all our own transitions today, may we continue to learn from Joseph.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

THE BONES OF JOSEPH

When the Jewish people left Egyptian slavery forever, the Torah tells us that "Vayikach Moshe et atzmot Yosef imo" — "Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him" (13:19). Our Rabbis (Sotah 13a) comment that all Israel was busy with the new-found wealth from the drowned Egyptians and Moshe busied himself with Yosef's remains. What connection is there between Israel's riches and

Yosef's mortal remains? Moreover, we are told that the bodies of all Yosef's brothers were taken out of Egypt. Why, then, is only Yosef's name singled out?

Yosef's career was strikingly different from that of his brothers. Generally, they were always together — in warfare, in work, in traveling to Egypt, in Goshen — while Yosef spent many years alone. The brothers lived fairly stable lives, with few ups and downs in their fortunes. Yosef, in contrast, was the favored son of his father, then a slave and a convict, and finally a supreme ruler of a mighty kingdom. Despite the vicissitudes of his life, Yosef himself never changed. In his father's house or in Potiphar's, in prison or palace, Yosef staunchly maintained his identity and his ways of Torah observance.

Moshe saw his people leaving the land of oppression, the land of the Goshen-ghetto, the land of the bread of poverty and affliction. In all their troubles they never forgot who they were. Their names were Jewish names, their clothing was distinctive, their language — the Sacred Tongue. Now they were en-route to a new land — one where they would dwell in peace and tranquility. They were loaded heavily with gold and silver. Here was a new temptation, one Moshe feared they could not withstand properly.

He could hear the arguments: Judaism survived as a result of anti-Semitism; exclusion forced the Jews to seek within themselves and among themselves; poverty and ignorance of the world kept the Jews pious and forced them to concentrate on their own culture. He feared the erroneous argument that "Torah Judaism was viable in the closed society of Eastern Europe, but cannot survive in the free world of democracy, opportunity, and culture."

Moshe had to demonstrate — not with words but with an example based on experience — that Torah and Yiddishkeit are not meant only for the small shtetl Jew of Europe, not only for poverty, not only under oppression and isolation, but equally for those blessed with material wealth, with recognition and honor. Yosef, he showed his people, was the same loyal devout Jew whether unjustly imprisoned or at the summit of power. Whether under the shadow of a saintly father or in a licentious Egyptian household, Yosef never compromised his standards and ideals.

Homiletically, the words "atzmot Yosef" which literally mean "the bones of Yosef," can also be explained as the atzmiyot — the essence — of Yosef. Moshe showed the people Yosef's true nature, what he represented and the model he had left for posterity.

Moshe did not attempt to discourage the people's pursuit of wealth. He did not admonish them for being immersed in materialism. On the contrary, he wished them well in their endeavors but beseeched them to never let the essence of Yosef out of their minds. Hashem is not envious of His children and wishes them the very best of everything. He has just one request: that they not forget Him and His Torah.

By Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky

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.

In Jewish History

Wednesday, 10 Shevat, 5779 - January 16, 2019

Passing of the Rashash (1777)

Rabbi Shalom Sharabi, known by his name's acronym, the RaShaSH, was born in Yemen, and as a young man immigrated to Israel. He was quickly recognized for his piety and scholarship, especially in the area of Jewish mysticism, and was appointed to be dean of the famed Kabbalistic learning center in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Yeshivat ha-Mekubbalim.

He authored many works, mostly based on the teachings of the great kabbalist, Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Ari. Rabbi Sharabi's most famous work is a commentary on the prayerbook, replete with kabbalistic meditations.

His mystical works are studied by kabbalists to this very day. He is also considered to be a foremost authority on Yemenite Jewish traditions and customs.

Passing of Rebbetzin Rivkah (1914)

Rebbetzin Rivkah Schneerson was born in Lubavitch in 1833; her maternal grandfather was Rabbi DovBer, the 2nd Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. In 1849 she married her first cousin, Rabbi Shmuel, who later became the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe. For many years Rebbetzin Rivkah, who survived her husband by 33 years, was the esteemed matriarch of Lubavitch, and Chassidim frequented her home to listen to her accounts of the early years of Lubavitch. She is the source of many of the stories recorded in the talks, letters and memoirs of her grandson, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak (the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe). The Beth Rivkah network of girls' schools, founded by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak in the 1940's, is named after her.

Yahrtzeit of R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1950)

The sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, passed away on Shabbat morning, the 10th of Shevat, of the year 5710 from creation (1950)

Lubavitcher Rebbe assumes leadership (1951)

At a gathering of Chassidim marking the first anniversary of the passing of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, the late Rebbe's son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, delivered a Chassidic discourse (maamar) entitled Basi LeGani ("I Came into My Garden"), signifying his formal acceptance of the leadership of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

Friday, 12 Shevat, 5779 - January 18, 2019

Warsaw Ghetto Insurgency Begins (1943)

On January 18, 1943, the Germans began their second deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, which led to the first instance of armed resistance. The deportation was halted within a few days; only 5,000 Jews were removed instead of 8,000 as planned. The Nazis retreated, only to return three months later, at which time the Warsaw uprising started in earnest.

PASSOVER

Please begin working with the Rabbi/Chaplain to ensure the paperwork is being processed for Passover.