

The *Klausenberger Rebbe, zl*, saw Hashem amidst his misery. The story is told that he was shot in the arm by a German soldier. His arm was bleeding profusely, and, if he had not stopped the bleeding soon, he would have succumbed to a loss of blood. He came upon a tree and ripped off some of its leaves, using them as a makeshift bandage. It took time, but the bleeding eventually stopped. The *Rebbe* vowed that, if Hashem spared him from the Holocaust, he would express his gratitude to Him by building a hospital where Jews could receive proper medical attention. He saw Hashem amidst the darkness and desolation of the Holocaust. To those who asked, "Where was G-d during the Holocaust?" the *Rebbe* responded, "Where was He not?" Hashem manipulated world events. He saw His Guiding Hand.

Laniado Hospital is the centerpiece of the *Rebbe's* work in Netanya, Israel. It is, however, not all that he built. Those who survived the Holocaust were undoubtedly emotionally traumatized. This is especially true of those young people who became lonely orphans overnight, without family, with nothing and no one to care for them. The *Rebbe* was very sensitive to the needs of orphans – once again, seeing G-d's message amidst darkness and hopelessness.

One morning, the *Rebbe* opened his front door to discover some children standing there, bearing a note. The children's mother could no longer care for them. She implored the *Rebbe* to take over and become their surrogate father and mother. Seeing the children, the *Rebbe* recognized a need. He immediately ordered that the original plan for a building which was in the process of construction to fill a specific need, be changed, so that it would, instead, be turned into an orphanage.

The *Rebbe's* concern for the children who lost their parents heralded back to

his tenure in the DP, Displaced Persons, camps. One *erev Yom Kippur*, shortly following the liberation, there was a knock on the *Rebbe's* door. The principal of the girls high school that the *Rebbe* had established in the DP camp informed him that the girls were quite upset that they had no living parent to bless them before *Yom Kippur*. It was late; the *Rebbe* still had to prepare himself for the Holy Day of Atonement. Nonetheless, in his typical manner, he ignored his own needs and instructed the principal to have the girls form a line outside his window. He blessed every single child. Every Jewish child deserves to be exposed to a loving and caring environment.

The *Klausenberger Rebbe* did not lose himself in depression. He saw Hashem amidst the greatest misery. Thus, after the war, he knew that he had to share this feeling with others, so that they, too, would see Hashem everywhere. In the midst of the greatest *tzaros*, troubles, Hashem is to be found. When we sit down with our families, our students, we should underscore this verity. There is always an opportunity for rejuvenation. *Imo Anochi b'tzarah*; "I am with him in his troubles": Hashem never forsakes us. Why should we forsake Him? We must always look toward rebuilding.

## VA'ANI TEFILLAH

וּחֲנוּנוּ מֵאַתָּךְ דְּעֵנָה – *V'chaneinu meitcha de'ah*. Grant us from You *de'ah*, knowledge.

*Chaneinu l'chonein* means to endow graciously, to grant someone something more as a gift or favor, rather than to give something in return. *Chonein* is derived from the word *chinam*, free of charge. Our intellect is

apparently a gift from Hashem (as is everything else). We do nothing to deserve this gift. Why is this?

*Vaani Tefillah* explains that, actually, Hashem has no "obligation" to grant us wisdom and understanding. It says in Sefer Tehillim 111:10, *Reishis chochmah yiraas Hashem, seichel tov l'chol oseihem*. "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Hashem, good understanding to all their practitioners." The key to wisdom and understanding seems to be *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven. *Chazal* (*Niddah* 16b) teach that *yiraas Shomayim* is not Heavenly ordained. It is solely in the hands of man. Thus, only someone who has worked hard on himself in order to achieve *yiraas Shomayim* deserves wisdom. He has the key. The rest of us have to ask for a special dispensation: a favor; a gift, a *chaneinu* – grant us. Without the gift, we are left hopelessly lost.

לִיפְשָׂא בַת ר' חֲנִינָא הַלּוּי ע"ה  
זכור נשמת

In fond memory of Mrs. Lillian Hefter, member of the founding staff of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland. She was a mentor to thousands, imbuing them with a passion and love for Torah. Her animated style of teaching made the Torah lessons come alive, leaving a lasting impression on her students.

תְּהִי זְכוֹרָה בְּרוּךְ

PENINIM  
ON  
THE TORAH



פְּנִינִים  
עַל  
הַתּוֹרָה

Parashas Miketz

תשע"ז

פרשת מקץ

### וייטב הדבר בעיני פרעה The matter appeared good in Pharaoh's eyes. (41:37)

Pharaoh accepted Yosef's interpretation of his dreams. It is not as if Pharaoh did not have his own wise men who were quite articulate in interpreting Pharaoh's dreams. He heard what they had to say, but it was not to his liking. The dreams were not speaking to him personally. After all, he was a king, an individual responsible for an entire country. Instead, Pharaoh was enamored with Yosef's interpretation. A clever king understands that the vision which he sees is not personal. It must embrace an entire country and must influence the lives of his subjects. Yosef told Pharaoh that he was fortunate to be privy to Hashem's plans for the future. They were being revealed to him, so that he could make provisions for the future. The wise man is one who sees the unfolding of G-d's purpose in the general scheme of things and shapes his life accordingly and must influence the lives of his subjects. Yosef told Pharaoh that he was fortunate to be privy to Hashem's plans for the future. They were being revealed to him, so that he could make provisions for the future. The wise man is one who sees the unfolding of G-d's purpose in the general scheme of things and shapes his life accordingly.

Furthermore, Yosef interpreted Pharaoh's dreams with a sense of foresight concerning the future. Pharaoh dreamt of seven well-fed cows, followed by seven lean cows, who quickly swallowed up their predecessors. Then he dreamt again, a similar dream, but with different players. Seven full ears of corn were being devoured by seven withered ones. Pharaoh's advisors saw seven daughters to be born to Pharaoh, but these daughters would die. His advisors, like so many people, thought in terms of the past, with no message for

the future. That was the thinking in the decadent Egyptian society of the time: live and die and be forgotten; no legacy for the future – no thoughts about tomorrow.

Yosef was a Jew. We do not live in the past. We never forget the past, but we always think of the future. In his wisdom, Yosef taught Pharaoh a new way to view life, a rich, new philosophy, a philosophy which thinks of – and prepares for – the future. He understood the importance of not ignoring any opportunity to prepare during the good years for the lean years that are certain to come. He emphasized that tomorrow must go hand in hand with yesterday. Do not live in the past; take the past with you as you look toward the future. You will not survive tomorrow unless you prepare for it today.

"Today" is the link between "yesterday" and "tomorrow." Today determines whether there will be a tomorrow. Today must carry over from yesterday, or we will have no tomorrow. Of the three *Avos*, Patriarchs, Yitzchak *Avinu* is described as the one who represents and exemplifies the *middah*, attribute, of *gevurah*, strength: not Avraham *Avinu*, who was the founder of the Jewish faith; nor Yaakov *Avinu*, who triumphed in his battle against Eisav and Eisav's angel. It is Yitzchak, who succumbed to Eisav's guile and was "deceived" by Yaakov (who came in dressed as Eisav). Yitzchak is portrayed as holy, the *Olah Temimah*, perfect sacrifice, but not as strong. Yet, he symbolizes *gevurah*. Why? *Dayan Moshe Swift, zl*, explains that, in a chain, the middle link must be strongest, because it holds together the first and last, the front and back. Yitzchak was able to accept the *Mesorah*, Tradition, from Avraham and transmit it to Yaakov. He succeeded in imbuing his son, Yaakov, with the *emunah tehorah*, pure faith, of his father, Avraham. This took enormous strength.

Hillel and Shammai debated concerning the lighting of the *Chanukah menorah*. We decide the *halachah* like Hillel, who says that we kindle one light on the first night and then recite the blessing. On the second night, we kindle two candles, one for today and one for yesterday. On day three, we light three candles, two for the days gone by and one for today. We progressively increase the candles by working our way backwards, today, yesterday, the day before, *k'neged yamim ha'yotzim*, corresponding to the days "gone by." This is because we cannot make a blessing for today unless yesterday accompanies it. There is no Judaism for the Jew unless he considers the past.

Why did Hashem have to create a miracle whereby the oil from the past continued to burn? He could have sent down fresh oil from Heaven or new olive oil from the earth. Such a miracle would probably have had more impact. Why use an old flask of oil that would only suffice for one day? The lesson is obvious (I think): Better one drop of the good "old" oil than all of the new. New does not always last; the old lasts. Indeed, it is still here. *Chanukah's* message is to seek out the old, keep it, learn from it, and build upon its "shoulders."

There were those, however, who refused to light the "old" *menorah*. They sought a new *menorah*. They slowly extinguished the light of the *menorah* of the past, replacing it with a new, more modern *menorah* – one that sadly has been unable to withstand the winds of change, ignorance and neglect. Yosef insisted on keeping yesterday's light burning. Allow it to inspire you as you transmit its glow to your children. Then your children will follow you by carrying on the flame and passing it to their children – until we are able to greet *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* with it.

ויקרא יוסף את שם הבכור מנשה כי נשני  
אלקים את כל עמלי ואת כל בית אבי  
Yosef called the name of the firstborn  
Menashe, for "G-d has made me forget all  
my hardship and all my father's  
household." (41:51)

Is forgetting one's youth, his home, his parents, something to be happy about? Yosef seems to have emphasized "forgetting" to the point that he named his firstborn Menashe. *Horav* Yosef Nechemiah Kornitzer, zl, *Rav* of Cracow, explains that educating children is not about rebuke and pointing out what to do and what not to do. Children learn best when they have a positive role model in their parents. Seeing how a father speaks, his choice of words, how he interacts with others, his total demeanor, is probably the most effective manner of teaching a child how to act. Our actions speak to our children. They teach them the way we want them to act and live. Thus, we must take great pains to see to it that the lessons we teach are worthy of emulating.

Yosef *HaTzaddik* was musing: "During all this time away from home, I was compelled to constantly reiterate the lessons of my youth in my mind. In order to protect myself from the vile Egyptian influence, I was not allowed for a moment to forget who I am and my background. Growing up with my brothers in my father's home kept me spiritually alive – because I never forgot my home. Now that I have my own home, my own son, I have my personal responsibility to imbue my family with the proper values. I have to serve as the example. I finally can 'forget' my home, because, *Baruch Hashem*, now I have a home of my own. This will be my motivation."

This is a powerful lesson which we should all take to heart. Growing up, many of us do not pay heed to the lessons we learned at home, the lessons imparted to us by determined parents, hopeful that their children will follow suit. It did not always work. We get a second chance when we marry and start a family of our own. Whatever we were able to get away with in our youth will not stand up to our children's scrutiny. Indeed, the most powerful deterrent to negative behavior is when one sees his children mimicking him.

וירא יעקב כי יש שבר במצרים  
Yaakov perceived that there were  
provisions in Egypt. (42:1)

When the *Baal HaTanya*, zl, was taken to prison in St. Petersburg, he asked one of his *Chassidim* to take a *kvittel*, written petition asking for a blessing, to his *mechutan* (father of child's spouse) and close friend, *Horav* Levi Yitzchak Berdichever, zl. The Berdichever asked the messenger for *Rav* Shneur Zalman's mother's name. The *chasid* did not know. *Rav* Levi Yitzchak took out a *Chumash* and made a *goral*, lot, a means of turning pages in such a manner that the last page will have a *pasuk* which reveals the answer to one's question. Obviously, only a Torah scholar of great repute is qualified to employ the *goral*. The *pasuk* which appeared to him was the *pasuk* above: *Va'ya'ar Yaakov ki yeish shever b'Mitzrayim*. *Rav* Levi Yitzchak said, "The word *shever* – *shin, beis, raish* is an acronym for Shneur *ben* Rivkah. Probably, the *Baal HaTanya's* mother's name was Rivkah." The messenger asked, "Perhaps her name was Rachel?" The Berdichever replied, "The *pasuk* is coming to 'help.' The word *shever* has two letters – *bais* and *reish* of the name Rivkah, while it only has one letter of the name Rachel."

The purpose of the above is only to demonstrate the various ways in which the Torah's verses may be interpreted. Indeed, in *Chassidic* literature, the word *shever*, which is the root of *mashbir*, is interpreted as "to break," rather than "food." In *pasuk* 6 it says, *V'Yosef...hu ha'mashbir l'chol am ha'aretz*, "Now Yosef...he was the provider to all the people of the land." *Horav* Avraham, zl, m'Slonim says that, through the power of Yosef *HaTzaddik*, with the power generated by one's righteousness, the individual is able to break himself before Hashem. The Almighty seeks a person with a broken heart, a heart that realizes the effects of sin. A *tzaddik* reaches up to Hashem via his broken heart. The *Kotzker Rebbe*, zl, was wont to say, "There is nothing so whole as a broken heart." The *tzaddik* stands before Hashem, broken, lost, entreating His favor, yet feeling unworthy of His kindness. The attitude defines his "wholeness."

The holy *Horav Menachem Mendel*, zl, m'*Vitebsk* once said, "When I arrived in Russia, I met people with torn garments and whole hearts. During my tenure, I saw to it that they had whole clothing, but torn hearts." What the *Vitebsker* meant was that, in order for a Jew to beseech Hashem, he has to feel broken hearted, lost without the Almighty. He realizes that his behavior leaves much to be desired and that he is unworthy of Hashem's favor. It takes a holy man, a *tzaddik*, to "break" someone's heart, by teaching him what it is that Hashem asks of him, and what his shortcomings are. A *tzaddik* imbues a person with humility by showing him how distant he is from achieving closeness with the Almighty. It is through the power of Yosef *HaTzaddik*, the power of the righteous, that a person is able to be *mashbir*, break the hearts of his fellow Jews, so that they can properly turn to Hashem and succeed in their entreaty.

על כן באה אלינו הצרה הזאת  
This is why this anguish has come  
upon us. (42:21)

Yosef challenged his brothers, declaring that they were spies. They, of course, denied his allegations. As proof to their insistence that they were all brothers, Yosef demanded that they leave one brother in Egypt as "security," while the rest would return home and come back with Benjamin. The brothers now realized that all was not well. Something was wrong. Hashem was sending them a message. The word *eileinu*, which is translated "upon us," really means "to us." The *pasuk* should rather have been written with the word *aleinu*, which means upon/on us.

In his *Lekutei MoHaran*, *Horav Nachman Breslover*, zl, explains that Hashem sends us messages in the guise of occurrences, incidents. Things do not "just happen" as the popular maxim of contemporary, secular society would have us think. Everything that occurs concerning a person is all by design – Hashem's design. He is to use his head to discern why this is happening to him: What does Hashem want of me?"

The brothers knew that the issue concerning Yosef was no simple occurrence. This was obviously retribution for something. They were

being judged for something that they had done. They immediately began to think: "What could we have done; how far back does it go? They decided that the issue was their lack of compassion concerning Yosef. They erred and their inaction now required reparation. Thus, they said *eileinu* – "to us." It is a message that Heaven sent to us. On us/upon us would not accurately define their feelings.

Hashem speaks to us all of the time. Alas, we are not always listening. At times, it is just simple incidents which occur, observations to be made, which make the difference in our lives. These, too, are messages – to those who take "time off from their busy schedules to listen."

*Horav Aryeh Levin*, zl, was reverently known as the *Tzaddik* of Yerushalayim. He distinguished himself in his empathy for all Jews, regardless of religious persuasion, background, or financial portfolio. *Rav* Aryeh was known for his perpetual smile. Once queried concerning the origin of his "smile," he said, "When I came to the Holy Land, I was utterly alone – and quite hungry. [Being alone and hungry can have a seriously depressing effect upon a person.] I went to the *Kosel*, put my hands firmly upon the massive stones and said, 'Hashem, *Ribbono Shel Olam*, I am so lonesome here. Please, I beg of You, be with me.'

"At that moment," he continued, "I had a strong, clear feeling that Hashem was really with me, and I returned home with a smile on my face." That smile never left his visage. His countenance was a trademark. When an individual came in contact with him, he would feel the smile on *Rav* Aryeh's face permeate the visitor. After all, the smile represented *Rav* Aryeh's recognition that Hashem had listened to him.

Hashem speaks to us; it is a pity that we do not take the time to listen. Hashem listens to us; we unfortunately, do not always pay attention to Him. As the saying goes, "Wake up and smell the roses," but one must first open up his eyes and see the roses.

וקל שקי יתן לכם רחמים לפני האיש  
And many Keil Shakkai grant you  
mercy before the man. (43:14)

The *Midrash Tanchuma* questions why Yaakov *Avinu* blessed his sons using the Name *Keil Shakkai*. They explain that our Patriarch endured much adversity in his life. While yet in the womb, he fought with his twin brother, Eisav. It was not easy growing up with such a brother, having to look over his shoulder constantly to see if Eisav was planning a terror attack against him. Finally, when the opportunity materialized, Yaakov escaped home, only to land in the home of his corrupt uncle, Lavan. After twenty years of swindling and deceit, Yaakov once again escaped. Three days later, Yaakov confronted Lavan. After listening to Lavan's empty threats, they bid good-bye to one another. Then came Eisav once again, a meeting that went surprisingly well, with each brother going his own way. As soon as this was over, Yaakov moved on and experienced the adversity of Dina, who was violated by Shechem. Then Rachel *Imeinu* died. Finally, Yaakov wanted a little bit of rest to catch his breath spiritually. This was not to be, as the *tzarah*, adversity, of Yosef engulfed him, lasting until shortly before he died. It still was not over. Shimon was taken captive, and later it was Binyamin. Yaakov was unaware that his sons were actually in the best of hands. He said to Hashem: 'Enough!' Hashem, who said to His world, *Dai*, 'Enough!' should say enough to my tears, troubles." *Keil Shakkai* is a reference to G-d, Who said, *Dai*, 'it is enough!'

The *Kotzker Rebbe*, zl, explains the *Midrash* pragmatically. When Hashem created the world, He could easily have created it in such a manner that would clearly indicate the Source of its creation. Hashem could have made loud noises and sent down a ready-made, full-blown world for all to see. There would be no question of Who was the world's Creator. It would have been such an enormous miracle that questions would be ludicrous. It could have been no different than the splitting of the Red Sea, which was witnessed or heard of by an entire world. It was without any question a miracle of epic proportion. The same idea could have applied to the creation of the world. Hashem, however, did not

want to reveal Himself (His part in the creation of the world). He concealed His glory to allow for man to have the ability to choose right from wrong. If Hashem's Presence had been compellingly clear, then man would have been forced to choose the correct path. Without choice, rewards are not relevant. Thus, Hashem set parameters to Creation, saying, *Dai*! "Enough." He who wants to deny the existence of Hashem can do so. He who is prepared to accept Hashem's Presence, however, who is able to see Hashem even in His concealed state, who can understand that such a magnificent world could only have been created by G-d – he deserves to be rewarded for his faith.

We must realize that the troubles which challenge our lives do not "just happen," as those with self-inflicted myopic vision would like us to think. Everything that occurs – both (seemingly) positive and (seemingly) negative – happens for a specific purpose: to guide and show us that Hashem is in charge; He created the world; He continues to guide every aspect of its operation. Thus, when troubles occur, we should immediately turn to Hashem and entreat Him to put a halt to our trouble.

This is what Yaakov asked of Hashem: "Say to our troubles – *Dai*! 'Enough.' Hashem, I merited to recognize Your Presence earlier, when the original troubles were sent to challenge me. I knew then the purpose of the challenge and saw Hashem amidst my adversity. I really do not require anymore 'lessons.' I have hopefully passed the test. It is time to move on." Thus, *Keil Shakkai*, G-d Who said, *Dai*, should grant you rachamim, mercy, before the Man.

Seeing G-d amidst misery is incumbent upon every one of us. The well-known question, which those of questionable faith ask, is: Where was G-d during the Holocaust? The response of any believing Jew should be: Where was He not? Anyone who survived the Nazi purgatory will concede that it was miraculous. His survival, while so many were brutally murdered, is inexplicable. Hashem was present, guiding everything. Those with acute vision saw Him.