

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

MIKESS

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

DECEMBER 14-15, 2012

2 TEBET 5773

7TH DAY OF HANUKAH

**DEDICATIONS: In Memory of my Grandmother Esther Bibi bat Leah – 11 Tebet**

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PHOTO: In a show of solidarity,  
people from the Five Towns and  
Far Rockaway joined the Long  
beach community for the Public  
Lighting of the Menorah on  
Saturday night in Long Beach –  
From left to right Rabbi Eytan  
Feiner the rabbi of the White  
Shul, Congregation Kneseth  
Israel in Far Rockaway, Rabbi  
Chaim Wakslak of the Young  
Israel of Long Beach, Rabbi  
Yosef Colish and Rabbi David  
Bibi of Benai Asher, The  
Sephardic Congregation of Long  
Beach

## Editors Notes

Last week's sale of Yosef  
represents the disunity of the  
children of Israel. The brothers  
though felt that Joseph  
represented a danger and  
justified their sale of Joseph.

We see from this week's portion  
the extent of the self-sacrifice  
that the brothers are willing to  
make for each other.



I told over a beautiful thought this  
week that was sent to me by  
"weekly devar".

Parshat Miketz tells of the sons of  
Yaakov traveling to Egypt to buy  
food and bring it back to their  
father. Yosef tries to foil their  
plans by accusing his brothers of  
being spies because their father  
wouldn't have to send all 10 sons  
to get food, and the brothers  
respond that "we are all sons of  
one man" (42:11). How does that  
explain why they were all sent?  
The suspicion Yosef raises still  
exists!?

In Majesty of Man, Rabbi  
Leibowitz explains that when  
Hillel and Rabbi Akiva  
emphasized loving our fellow man  
as ourselves, they were  
describing fundamental principles

of the Torah. As the Ramban  
explains, although the trip to  
Egypt was long and dangerous,  
Yaakov felt that developing the  
brothers' feeling of unity and  
brotherhood was worth the risk.  
This Ahavat Yisrael (love for a  
fellow Jew) is so critically  
important that Hillel and Rabbi  
Akiva stressed it, and Yaakov  
risked his own sons' safety for it.  
If we neglect each other's needs  
in the outside world, in the  
workplace and at home, we're  
placing ourselves in danger of  
losing the comm"unity" we strive  
to be a part of.

This Friday night, most of the  
families of our Synagogue will be  
getting together for a Friday night  
meal. The meal is being  
sponsored by the young children  
of Ohr Emet in Toronto under the

leadership of a brilliant educator, Rabbi Zvi Kamenetsky. The idea to link the Sephardic Yeshiva and our Sephardic Synagogue was spearheaded by my dear friends Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetsky and Rabbi Dr. Chaim Abittan.

The children each wrote a note to us and we've put together a 75 page book of Chizuk to be distributed at the meal. We'll read some of the notes and ask some people to get up and tell us about a kindness they experienced during the past six weeks.

One child from wrote, "I have heard what happened to you and it's such a sad story. We, the students of Joe Dwek Ohr HaEmet Sephardic School in Toronto are more than happy to help. Even though we are in Toronto, Canada, some of us have relatives in New Jersey. After our menahel - principal showed us the damage that occurred, we felt your pain in a strong way and decided we would all pitch in and help raise money. Our school has raised over \$2000.

Be'Ezrat Hashem – With G-d's help – all the families that are currently suffering will see their circumstances return to normal and return to living the peaceful lives they lived before these troubled times."

The idea of getting together and having that get together hosted in some way by children five hundred miles away, was so appealing that even families who have temporarily moved to other parts of the area will be returning this weekend and staying with friends for this Shabbat of unity.

On the one hand those who have lost their homes and are trying to rebuild their lives are in need of millions of dollars in donations. At the same time, even the smallest donation from a child with a good



word has an amazing effect. Rabbi Abittan z'sl would save if you give a poor man a dollar, you get one misvah, but if the dollar comes with a good word you get five misvot.

In addition to the kindness from Toronto, we were blessed with kindness from two communities in New Haven, The Westville Synagogue and Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel.

As a result of their collaborative efforts under the leadership of former Long Beach resident Leora Katz (Dahan), to help victims of Sandy living in Long Beach, more than three large boxes of full of toys were collected, including over 70 gifts to distribute to children of all ages this Chanuka and were delivered to Rebetzin Ida Abittan yesterday. (SEE PHOTO) In addition they raised funds to aid the 140 Jewish families who were displaced from their homes by the storm which we will earmark for special children's programs this winter to assist all the Long Beach families.

Their generosity and thoughtfulness has made this holiday of lights truly bright. The appreciation we have in knowing that people outside of our community continue to be concerned with our well-being in these difficult times is heartwarming. Any other communities who can bond with us would be greatly appreciated. We would love to hear from you. We are all brothers and are thankful that you are there for us and have been. Write me at [DavidBibi@gmail.com](mailto:DavidBibi@gmail.com) or Mail a check to The Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach, C/O David Bibi 979 Third Avenue, Suite 1705, NYC 10022.

A special thanks to my cousin Shelly Antebi, who not only sent me a check for \$2600 in memory of a which we distributed at the outset but who with her partner sent me a check for another \$1000 from Shelly & Renee productions.

The musicians had a telethon this week and raised 60 million dollars, we hope to have a radiothon this Saturday night and

raise just as much. We're calling it: LET'S LIGHT UP LONG BEACH! - We Stood Together in Darkness - Let's Join Together in Light.

**Sat Night Dec 15  
Last Night of Chanukah  
10 PM- 3 AM  
WMCA 570 AM Metro NY  
WJPR 1640 AM Highland Pk  
Online:www.talklinecommunications.com  
Listenline: 212-419-4240 x 1  
Hosted by Zev Brenner And a  
Variety of Stars and  
Community Leaders  
Including Howard Jonas, Willie  
Rapfogel & Chaim Kiss  
ALL FUNDS RAISED ARE FOR  
JCAP (Jewish Community  
Assistance Program)  
of the United Jewish  
Community of Long Beach and  
Lido Beach helping  
People recover from Hurricane  
Sandy -  
www.jcaplongbeach.org**

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

PS ... Many people enjoyed last weeks articles. Some were a bit confused. Take a look at this piece by Daniel Greenfield and let me know your thoughts:

**The Deadly Israeli House /  
Posted By Daniel Greenfield**

There are few weapons as deadly as the Israeli house. When its bricks and mortar are combined together, the house, whether it is one of those modest one-story hilltop affairs or a five-floor apartment building complete with hot and cold running water, becomes far more dangerous than anything green and glowing that comes out of the Iranian centrifuges.

Forget the cluster bomb and the mine, the poison gas shell and

even tailored viruses. Iran can keep its nuclear bombs. They don't impress anyone in Europe or in Washington, DC. Genocide is equally not worthy of attention when in the presence of the fearsome weapon of terror that is an Israeli family of four moving into a new apartment downwind from Jerusalem.

Sudan may have built a small mountain of African corpses, but it can't expect to command the full and undivided attention of the world until it does something truly outrageous like building a house and filling it with Jews. Since the Sudanese Jews are as gone as the Jews of Egypt, Iraq, Syria and good old Afghanistan, the chances of Bashir the Butcher pulling off that trick are rather slim.

Due to the Muslim world's shortsightedness in driving out its Jews from Cairo, Aleppo and Baghdad to Jerusalem, the ultimate weapon in international affairs is entirely controlled by the Jewish State. The Jewish State's stockpile of Jews should worry the international community far more than its hypothetical stockpiles of nuclear weapons. No one besides Israel cares much about the Iranian bomb. But when Israel builds a house, then the international community tears its clothes, wails, threatens to recall its ambassadors and boycott Israeli peaches.

You can spit on the White House carpets and steal all the gold in Greece. You can blow up anything you like and threaten anyone you will, but you had better not lift a drill near Gilgal, where Joshua and a few million escaped Hebrew slaves pitched their camp.

Obama has yet to respond to the Muslim Brotherhood coup in Egypt. The gangs of paid rapists assaulting women in Tahrir

Square on behalf of the Sharia state are nothing for the White House to worry about. Everyone has their standards and he and the international community have theirs. There are things that we all cannot abide. And for all the Miss America answers about ending war, hunger and people who wear plaid in public, the one thing that everyone will stand up against or sit down in opposition to is the Israeli house.

White House officials are already insisting that Netanyahu "humiliated" Obama by authorizing the building of houses. This is the worst Israeli crime since two years ago when the city of Jerusalem passed some houses [through one stage](#) of a multi-stage approval process while Biden was visiting the country.

Hillary called it an insult and spent two hours yelling at Netanyahu over the phone. Axelrod declared it an affront. Biden was so furious that he refused to come down for dinner until an hour later. For weeks the media howled that Netanyahu had humiliated Obama through the dastardly act of allowing one of the country's mayors to approve housing while the sacred presence of Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. was intersecting with Israeli airspace.

Now that Netanyahu has gone to the mattresses, literally, by authorizing new housing, the media has begun braying that Israel has humiliated Obama all over again. They say that every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings. But every time an Israeli jackhammer roars, Obama stands, like that famous trash-mourning fake Indian, off Highway 1 between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, with a tear slowly making its way down one glistening cheek at the sight of another humiliating Israeli house.

According to the New York Times, which is never wrong, building more houses makes peace impossible. Peace, which is not in any way obstructed by rockets, suicide bombers, unilateral statehood bids and declarations of war, comes up against only one obstacle. The stout unyielding wall of the Israeli house. You can shell Israeli houses, bomb them and break inside to massacre the people living inside, but then after all that, Israel goes and builds more of those damn things.

Hamas shoots thousands of rockets and Israel builds thousands of houses. But Israeli houses generally stay where they're built, while Hamas rockets are as likely to kill Gazans as they are to put holes in the roofs of those dastardly houses. And in the arms race between houses and rockets, the Israelis appear to be winning. And that's not good for peace. If Israelis get the dangerous idea that they can just keep building houses and outlast all the talented rocketeers who spend their time with the Koran in front of one eye and the Anarchist's Cookbook in front of the other, then what hope is there for peace?

That is why no one cares much about Hamas rockets, which only kill Israelis, who most reasonable people in London, Paris and Brussels think have it coming anyway, but get into a foaming lather about an Israeli house. Killing Israelis has never been any obstacle to peace. Twenty years of killing Israelis has not dissuaded a single Israeli government from sitting down at the table to dicker with the terrorists. But an Israeli family living in a house is holding down territory that it will be harder to then cede to terrorists.

This peace plan, which has worked as well as fighting fire with gasoline, has not in any way been endangered by two decades of terror, but trembles down to its toes every time an Israeli hammer falls on an Israeli nail in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Because that land must go back so that rockets can be shot from it into Israel, so that Israel can invade it and reclaim it, and then sit down for another peace process to return the land from which the rockets will be fired, which will be invaded, which will be given back... for peace.

And Israeli houses endanger this cycle of peace and violence. They endanger it by creating "facts on the ground," a piquant phrase that only seems to apply to houses with Jews. Muslim houses in no way create facts on the ground, even though they are built out of the same material and filled with people. Or perhaps they create the good kind of facts on the ground. The kind of preemption of negotiations that the professional peacemakers approve of.

UN Chief Ban Ki-moon has declared Israeli houses to be an "almost fatal blow" to the peace process. It is, of course, only an "almost fatal blow" because the peace process, like Dracula, cannot be killed. Israeli houses, fearsome as they may be with their balconies and poor heating in winter, are never quite enough to kill it.

Like the monster of a horror movie, the peace process always comes back and no matter how many blows the Israeli house delivers to it, a year later there's a sequel where the Israeli house is being stalked by the peace process monster all over again.

The army of lethal Israeli houses, which may not be built for another five years, if ever, seem formidable in the black newsprint

of the New York Times, in the fulminations of Guardian columnists and the shrill talkingpointation of CNN talking heads, but its actual potency is limited to housing Jewish families and infuriating international diplomats and their media coat hangers.

Europe is furious, Obama is seething, the UN is energized, and somewhere in Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wipes the grease out of his mustache and wonders what he could do to get this much attention. He briefly scribbles down some thoughts on a napkin but then dismisses it as being too implausible. As much as it might get the world's attention, there is just no way Iran can put up apartment buildings in Jerusalem.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: The year is 2229 and Yoseph has been in prison for 12 years. Pharaoh has two similar dreams and demands their interpretation. The wine steward remembers Yoseph and his gift for dream interpretation, and Yoseph is rushed into Pharaoh's presence.

2nd Aliya: Yoseph interprets Pharaoh' dream and suggests to him how to best administrate the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine. (The extent of Yoseph's brilliance will first be revealed in next week's Parsha.)

3rd Aliya: Yoseph is appointed viceroy over Egypt, and puts into effect the plan that he had outlined to Pharaoh. He marries the daughter of Potiphar (the daughter of Dina) and has two sons, Menashe and Ephrayim.

4th Aliya: The seven years of famine begin, and the only food

available is in Mitzrayim. Yoseph, unrecognized by his brothers, recognizes them when they come to buy food. He accuses them of treachery and imprisons them for three days.

5th Aliya: Yoseph demands that Binyamin be brought to Egypt and keeps Shimon as a hostage. The brothers relate their adventure to Yakov who refuses to send Binyamin. The increasing famine forces Yakov to concede to Yehuda's guarantee that Binyamin will be safe, and the brothers return to Egypt.

6th Aliya: The brothers are reunited with Shimon and invited to eat at the table of Yoseph. All appears to be forgiven and Yoseph sees Binyamin for the first time in 22 years.

7th Aliya: Yoseph hatches his final plot against his brothers. His famed chalice is planted in the Binyamin's saddlebag forcing the brothers to return to Mitzrayim and a confrontation with Yoseph. The year is 2238.

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"There was only enough to light one day; a miracle happened and it lit eight days." (Talmud Babli Shabbat 21:)

One may ask, why is the miracle of the Hanukah oil so great? The Gemara tells us a story of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa . On a Friday afternoon, there was no olive oil and all they had was vinegar. The Rabbi declared , "The One who tells oil to light can tell vinegar to light!" Miraculously the vinegar lit for the entire Shabbat. Why don't we celebrate that miracle?

Rabbi Yitzhak Hutner zt"l answers that Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was a great saddik. All of his actions were with so much

self-sacrifice that he lived a life above and beyond nature. Hashem always acts measure for measure with man. Since the Rabbi lived above nature in his relationship with Hashem, so did Hashem relate to him in a miraculous way, and the vinegar lit. The most amazing part of the miracle of Hanukah was that this was a miracle for all the Jews of that time. Therefore they must have all been on the spiritual level to merit such a miracle.

One Hanukah, Rabbi Abraham Twersky visited an elderly friend, Lazer, who was quite ill in the hospital. Lazer was depressed, having received a poor prognosis from his doctors. Although the hospital forbade lighting any fire, Rabbi Twersky pleaded that Lazer be allowed to light the Hanukah candles. He assured the nurse that Lazer's wife would remain with the candles as long as they burned. The hospital agreed, and Lazer was overjoyed.

"Listen," Lazer said, "the oil in the Bet Hamikdash could only burn naturally for one day, yet it burned for eight days. The doctors say I have only one year to live – but that's according to nature. Hashem can turn one year into eight, or even more!"

The doctors could not understand how Lazer actually survived another ten years without any treatments. The powerful radiance of the Hanukah candles were able to help him where the radiation therapy could not. Apparently, Lazer's belief in Hashem was so great that he merited this great miracle.

Shabbat Shalom.  
Rabbi Reuven Semah

**The Midrash tells us that Pharaoh saw signs of kingship on Yosef**, and when he interpreted the dreams correctly and suggested that Pharaoh

appoint someone to lead the country Yosef was the obvious choice. What did Pharaoh see on Yosef that showed kingship?

A king is someone who is concerned about his people. To rule others doesn't only mean control and power, it means caring and doing for others. When Yosef was in jail and saw the butler and baker depressed because they had dreamt disturbing dreams, Yosef asked them what was bothering them and whether he could help. Even though Yosef was in trouble himself, he cared about their plight and did something about it. Later on when Yosef was appointed viceroy, he was in charge of feeding everyone during the famine. The Midrash says that Yosef would not eat until everyone else was fed first. This trait was evident on Yosef when he stood before Pharaoh, and that's why he chose him as viceroy!

We all have areas that we are in charge of, our families, or committees, or businesses. If we want to exhibit signs of leadership, it is how we can take care of those we are responsible for. The more we are concerned and devoted to others, the more we show signs of leadership! Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### LAW OF AVERAGES

"How are you doing?"  
Yaakov asked Shelomoh.

"Well, to be honest, not so good," replied Shelomoh sadly. "It seems every business deal or job that comes my way ends in disappointment. But how are you, my friend?"

"I am also having a hard time with my economic situation, but unlike you, I am doing great!" was the cheerful reply.

"I don't understand," Shelomoh replied, looking puzzled.

"Let me explain," Yaakov calmly answered. "I used to think like you. If life wasn't perfect, I felt it wasn't good at all. Then one day I was glancing at the sports section of the Times while sitting in the barber's chair, and I read about a twenty-four-year-old athlete who signed a \$50 million contract with our local baseball team. I looked at his stats and saw that he had a .348 batting average. That means he gets a hit only once every three or four times he comes to bat. Six times out of ten he fails to get a hit – yet he is considered one of the best in the game!

"Well, I have a very special wife, good children, and a decent job. My home is no palace, but it is comfortable. I live in a nice community, and, thank Hashem, I have my health. Some things that people consider important I don't have – but I am certainly batting better than .348! I'm a \$100 million player."

Are you batting better than .348? All things considered, you probably are. So, rather than complain, why not bask in the knowledge that you are a multi-million-dollar star! (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### **Rabbi Wein**

The main point in this week's parsha is that Yosef recognizes his brothers while they don't recognize him. The obvious reason for this is that Yosef, pursuing the fulfillment of his heavenly dreams, is looking for his brothers, while they, the brothers themselves, are not partners with Yosef in the dreams and therefore they cannot

imagine that they are bowing before Yosef.

There are dreams that are private, personal, and many times impossible to share with others. However, sometimes there are dreams that are so transcendent and affect generations and nations that they must be shared with others. Yosef's dreams are of this very nature. The brothers misinterpreted Yosef's words as being an attempt to rule over them and control them. The dreams however truly implied that Yosef would save Yaakov and his family in a time of hunger and crisis.

Yosef wished that his dreams would be shared by his brothers as well. The brothers, who saw those dreams as being malevolent, did not want any part in their fulfillment or accomplishment. On the other hand, Yaakov does share in Yosef's dreams and though he reprimands Yosef for his attitude towards his brothers, he guards the message of the dreams and is somehow certain that they will be fulfilled.

Someone who does not share in the dream will find it difficult to identify with the dreamer or even to recognize affinity with him. Yosef who wishes his dreams to be their dreams immediately recognizes his brothers. The brothers, who as yet do not share Yosef's dreams, cannot really recognize him or identify with him.

The Jewish people over the ages have dreamt many dreams. Some of them were private dreams. As such, they did not really have a lasting effect. However, there were grand, national, and even universal dreams that were part of Jewish tradition and society. These dreams included the return to the Land of Israel, establishing a just and moral Jewish society

based on Torah values, and a general commitment to further civilization and improve human society.

The test of the Jewish continuity and loyalty was whether the individual Jew shared in these great dreams. Those who did not eventually could no longer recognize their own brothers. Because of this, these Jews eventually became negative forces in Jewish society and in world society as well. Jewish education over the ages not only taught Torah knowledge and Jewish tradition but it also implanted within the Jewish soul and mind the visions and dreams that are the lifeblood of Jewish survival. Many of the problems that exist in today's Jewish society, here in Israel, but especially in the diaspora, result from the fact that Jewish dreams are no longer shared by many Jews.

This explains much of the negativity and bitterness that is unfortunately present in the Jewish world. We need to see the dreamers as heroes and the visionaries as being the true leaders of our people. Yosef still lives with his dreams, his stubbornness, his hopes and his goodness. May we, his brothers, be wise enough to recognize him in our midst

### **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Parsha Parables**

See separate attachment

### **Sir Jonathan Sacks Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth**

Joseph is now the ruler of Egypt. The famine he predicted has come to pass. It extends beyond Egypt to the land of Canaan.

Seeking to buy food, Joseph's brothers make the journey to Egypt. They arrive at the palace of the man in charge of grain distribution:

Now Joseph was governor of all Egypt, and it was he who sold the corn to all the people of the land. Joseph's brothers came and bowed to the ground before him. Joseph recognized his brothers as soon as he saw them, but he behaved like a stranger and spoke harshly to them . . . Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. (42: 6-8)

We owe to Robert Alter the idea of a type-scene, a drama enacted several times with variations; and these are particularly in evidence in the book of Bereishit. There is no universal rule as to how to decode the significance of a type-scene. One example is boy-meets-girl-at-well, an encounter that takes place three times, between Abraham's servant and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and Moses and the daughters of Jethro. Here, the setting is probably not significant (wells are where strangers met in those days, like the water-dispenser in an office). What we must attend to in these three episodes is their variations: Rebekah's activism, Jacob's show of strength, Moses' passion for justice. How people act toward strangers at a well is, in other words, a test of their character. In some cases, however, a type-scene seems to indicate a recurring theme. That is the case here. If we are to understand what is at stake in the meeting between Joseph and his brothers, we have to set it aside three other episodes, all of which occur in Bereishit.

The first takes place in Isaac's tent. The patriarch is old and blind. He tells his elder son to go out into the field, trap an animal and prepare a meal so that he

can bless him. Surprisingly soon, Isaac hears someone enter. "Who are you?" he asks. "I am Esau, your elder son," the voice replies. Isaac is not convinced. "Come close and let me feel you, my son. Are you really Esau or not?" He reaches out and feels the rough texture of the skins covering his arms. Still unsure, he asks again, "But are you really my son Esau?" The other replies, "I am." So Isaac blesses him: "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field blessed by G-d." But it is not Esau. It is Jacob in disguise.

Scene two: Jacob has fled to his uncle Laban's house. Arriving, he meets and falls in love with Rachel, and offers to work for her father for seven years in order to marry her. The time passes quickly: the years "seemed like a few days because he loved her." The wedding day approaches. Laban makes a feast. The bride enters her tent. Late at night, Jacob follows her. Now at last he has married his beloved Rachel. When morning comes, he discovers that he has been the victim of a deception. It is not Rachel. It is Leah in disguise.

Scene three: Judah has married a Canaanite girl and is now the father of three sons. The first marries a local girl, Tamar, but dies mysteriously young, leaving his wife a childless widow. Following a pre-Mosaic version of the law of levirate marriage, Judah marries his second son to Tamar so that she can have a child "to keep his brother's name alive." He is loathe to have a son that will, in effect, belong to his late brother so he "spilled his seed," and for this he too died young. Judah is reluctant to give Tamar his third son, so she is left an agunah, "chained," bound to someone she is prevented from marrying, and unable to marry anyone else.

The years pass. Judah's own wife dies. Returning home from sheep-shearing, he sees a veiled prostitute by the side of the road. He asks her to sleep with him, promising, by way of payment, a kid from the flock. She asks him for his "seal and its cord and his staff" as security. The next day he sends a friend to deliver the kid, but the woman has disappeared. The locals deny all knowledge of her. Three months later, Judah hears that his daughter-in-law Tamar has become pregnant. He is incensed. Bound to his youngest son, she was not allowed to have a relationship with anyone else. She must have been guilty of adultery. "Bring her out so that she may be burnt," he says. She is brought to be killed, but she asks one favour. She tells one of the people to take to Judah the seal and cord and staff. "The father of my child," she says, "is the man to whom these things belong." Immediately, Judah understands. Tamar, unable to marry yet honour-bound to have a child to perpetuate the memory of her first husband, has tricked her father-in-law into performing the duty he should have allowed his youngest son to do. "She is more righteous than I," Judah admits. He thought he had slept with a prostitute. But it was Tamar in disguise.

That is the context against which the meeting between Joseph and his brothers must be understood. The man the brothers bow down to bears no resemblance to a Hebrew shepherd. He speaks Egyptian. He is dressed in an Egyptian ruler's robes. He wears Pharaoh's signet ring and the gold chain of authority. They think they are in the presence of an Egyptian prince, but it is Joseph – their brother – in disguise.

Four scenes, four disguises, four failures to see behind the mask. What do they have in common?

Something very striking indeed. It is only by not being recognized that Jacob, Leah, Tamar and Joseph can be recognized, in the sense of attended, taken seriously, heeded. Isaac loves Esau, not Jacob. He loves Rachel, not Leah. Judah thinks of his youngest son, not the plight of Tamar. Joseph is hated by his brothers. Only when they appear as something or someone other than they are can they achieve what they seek – for Jacob, his father's blessing; for Leah, a husband; for Tamar, a son; for Joseph, the non-hostile attention of his brothers. The plight of these four individuals is summed up in a single poignant phrase: "Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him."

Do the disguises work? In the short term, yes; but in the long term, not necessarily. Jacob suffers greatly for having taken Esau's blessing. Leah, though she marries Jacob, never wins his love. Tamar had a child (in fact, twins) but Judah "was not intimate with her anymore." Joseph – well, his brothers no longer hated him but they feared him. Even after his assurances that he bore them no grudge, they still thought he would take revenge on them after their father died. What we achieve in disguise is never the love we sought.

But something else happens. Jacob, Leah, Tamar and Joseph discover that, though they may never win the affection of those from whom they seek it, G-d is with them; and that, ultimately, is enough. A disguise is an act of hiding – from others, and perhaps from oneself. From G-d, however, we cannot, nor do we need to, hide. He hears our cry. He answers our unspoken prayer. He heeds the unheeded and brings them comfort. In the aftermath of the four episodes, there is no healing of relationship but there is

a mending of identity. That is what makes them, not secular narratives but deeply religious chronicles of psychological growth and maturation. What they tell us is simple and profound: those who stand before G-d need no disguises to achieve self-worth when standing before mankind.

#### **AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL**

"The cornerstone which was despised by the builders, became the top (exalted) of the edifice" (Tehillim 118:22).

This week we say the complete 'Hallel' for the full eight days of Chanukah. David Hamelech included this principle in the wealth of thoughts of praise, gratitude and excitement found in Hallel.

Yosef Hatzadeek was at the most desperate point in his career. He was sold into slavery, taken to a foreign land, unjustly accused and thrown into jail for 12 years. "The cornerstone which was despised by the builders," referring to Yosef who was also rejected by his brothers.

Now Pharoh does something unprecedented, irresponsible and unexpected. He could have just given Yosef a great reward for interpreting the dreams. Pharoh takes the King's ring off of his finger and puts it on Yosef!! This evokes feelings of wild excitement in us. Yosef is King of Egypt!!

Just like the elation experienced by our Nation at Chanukah when the single flask of oil miraculously stayed lit for 8 days. And also when we saw that suddenly Haman was hanging on the tree and the King's ring was placed on Mordecai's finger. All of these revelations by Hashem are indications that:

"Hashem is with His Jewish People."

The next verse of the Hallel reveals the true purpose, that of gaining Emunah.

"This (unexpected surprise) is from Hashem, it is (meant to be) a wonder in our eyes."

(ibid.188:23)

Hashem operates the world utilizing 'surprises' throughout history in order to reveal that it is He who manages the affairs of the world with His Providence.

Some examples are, Yishmael was older but Yitzchak was chosen. Esav was the first born but Yaacob was the chosen one. Yosef was younger and despised by the Brothers yet through it all Yosef was chosen. David was the youngest and his lineage was suspected however he became King David.

The Jewish nation is the most despised and very small in numbers yet we are the Chosen of Hashem and will become "the top of the edifice" at the end.

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