

Hidden Talents

As far as you can tell, Joe is a regular, ordinary guy. Although you don't talk to him often, you know that he pretty much comes to work, sits at his desk, and seems to get his job done by the end of the day. Office gossip, company politics, socializing near the coffee machine- these are just not his speed. All things considered, you conclude that Joe works hard but will probably never amount to anything important in the company- or for that matter, in life.

Then you are chosen to cover for Joe when he is suddenly called out of town to assist in a family medical emergency.

Your first revelation is that Joe handles at least double your workload, and that his efforts add untold profits to the company coffers.

Second, you notice files about special projects Joe is working on for the CEO. It is clear that although you do not place much value in Joe's stock, the boss certainly feels quite differently about your co-worker.

You soon become aware of other files, crammed with information about Joe's many philanthropic pursuits. Before long, you are fielding assorted requests for favors, as well as his notes and calls from many different people thanking Joe for his involvement and concern with their problems.

When you add all of this to the fact that Joe has several major family issues to deal with, one conclusion becomes clear; Joe is quite a special guy, and your estimation of his worth was all wrong. (Rabbi Raymond Beyda - One Minute with Yourself)

Whatever you Say

There was a wealthy Hassid who was a fervent follower of the Rebbe of Chortkov, R' Yisrael Friedman. He was a successful businessman who traveled far and wide in the varied interests of his prosperous enterprises, but he would always make the time to visit his Rebbe to discuss important matters and seek his advice on many facets of his personal and professional life.

Early in the spring of 1912, he was scheduled to travel overseas to the United States on important business issues. As news of the completion of the huge passenger luxury liner, the Titanic, swept throughout the world, he decided to travel in style on the "grandest ship in her Majesty's fleet." He bought a ticket and prepared for his voyage.

Before his voyage, he visited his Rebbe in Chortkov. The Hassid explained that he was planning to travel to America very soon and he requested a blessing for a successful trip and a safe passage back and forth.

R' Yisrael listened quietly. Then he looked at the Hassid and cryptically replied, "Give my regards to the American G-d!"

The Hassid blinked hard in confusion and astonishment. Of all the things he was expecting to hear, he never dreamed of the unusual statement that the Rebbe just said. He was totally at a loss and remained quiet, swallowing hard.

Finally R' Yisrael broke the silence. "What I meant is that the same G-d that can help you in America can help you here in Europe. Why must you travel there to be successful? If Hashem wants you to succeed, He will do the very same thing here!"

The Hassid nodded in understanding. The Rebbe disapproved of his trip to America and was telling him not to go. He cancelled his plans and returned home. How fortunate he was and how utterly amazed at the *Ruah Hakodesh* of his spiritual mentor when he and the rest of the world learned of the enormous tragedy and loss of life that took place just a few days later. His belief in the words of the Sages was what saved his life from the ignominious fate of the Titanic. (*Torah Tavlin*)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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SHABBAT VAYESHEB ✪ עֶשֶׂת יְמֵי

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

DECEMBER 11-12, 2020 26 KISLEV 5781

Friday Minhah: 3:00 & 4:12 pm

Shir Hashirim (midrash): 4:02 pm

Minhah (midrash): 4:12 pm

Candlelighting: 4:12 pm

Evening Shema after: 5:10 pm

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: 6:11, 6:40, 8:00, 8:15, 9:00 am

Morning Shema by: 8:57am

Shabbat Minhah: 3:50 pm

Shabbat Ends: 5:10 pm (R"Y 5:42 pm)

Sunday Minhah: 4:15 pm

This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell & Robin Antar
in memory of her father, Mr. David Shamula

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת דָּוִד בֶּן אֶסְתֵּר

This bulletin is dedicated by Morris Sutton
in memory of his mother, Rachel Sutton

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת רַחֵל בַּת וְקִטּוֹרִיָּה

We will be having an early *minhah* on Friday at 3:00 pm so that you can pray *minhah* before lighting Hanukah candles. Please be careful to get back to *shul* for *arbit* before 4:25 to avoid violating the Shabbat.

Rosh Hodesh Tebet will be celebrated on Wednesday, December 16.

Mabrook to Shimmy & Ida Azoolay on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, Robby & Sheryl Levy.

Mabrook to Ike & Sabrina Sasson on the engagement of their son, Jo-Jo, to Jen Anteby.

A Message from our Rabbi

"הנרות הללו אנחנו מדליקין על הנרות"

"These lights we kindle upon the miracles..." (*Hanerot Halalu*)

There is a famous joke:

Yoni (not his real name) was a good Jew. He would do all the *misvot* he could and occasionally find time for some learning. However, with every *misvah*, he would always look for the most lenient opinion, always happy to rely on the one Rabbi who said that it was ok to do less. But at least he had someone to rely on in every *misvah*, and he was happy with how he lived his life.

After 120 years, Yoni was summoned to the Heavenly Court. Yoni wasn't scared; he knew that he had kept all the *misvot*, even if every one of them had been according to whichever leniency he could find. So he waited for the verdict. "*Gan Eden*" was the call. Just as Yoni had expected! So off he went with his accompanying angels towards *Gan Eden*. After a long journey, the angels finally showed him a wooden door with a little window and ushered him inside. Slightly surprised, Yoni peeked inside and saw a small room containing a bed and a desk and nothing else. As the angels turned to leave he exclaimed, "I think there has been a mistake. Didn't you hear I was told that I can go to *Gan Eden*?" With a smile on their faces the angels responded, "This is *Gan Eden* according to the most lenient opinion!"

Hanukah is a time of *Mehadrin min Hamehadrin*, where we light our Menorahs using all the stringencies we can. Many light with oil and everyone increases the number of candles each night, even though only one flame is necessary. In fact, most things we do on Hanukah are far beyond the strict letter of the law. Why is this?

R' Moshe Kormornick explains: The Greeks did not try to physically kill us. They tried to prevent us from learning Torah and keeping *misvot*. They tried to destroy us, something far worse than a physical death. This is why we specifically perform the *misvot* of Hanukah to the best of our ability. Because by showing Hashem how much we value our spiritual lives and treasure our connection with the Torah and its *misvot*, we demonstrate our value for the relationship we have with Hashem. Happy Hanukah.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Prisoner of Unconscious

Near the end of this week's *perashah*, the Torah tells how Yosef is falsely accused of adultery and is sent to prison. During Yosef's detention "Hashem was with Yosef, He was endowed with charm and had much favor in the eyes of the warden. In fact, the warden placed all the other prisoners in Yosef's custody and Yosef was in charge of all their duties. The warden trusted everything that Yosef did and, everything that Yosef discharged was successful."

In addition to the Divine Providence that cloaked Yosef, another striking incident occurred. Back at Pharaoh's palace, the king's was served wine with an insect floating in it, and a foreign substance was baked into Pharaoh's bread. The baker and butler were both jailed, and were placed in Yosef's charge. After a year in prison, they both dreamt a strange dream. Yosef, Divinely ordained, interpreted each dream in amazingly accurate fashion. He predicted that the baker would be executed while the wine steward would be returned to his former position. Yosef then implored the wine steward, "If only you would think of me when Pharaoh benefits you, and mention me to Pharaoh, then you will get me out of here." Yosef erred. The wine-steward completely ignored Yosef's requests and left him to languish in prison for another two years.

The *Midrash* explains that this response, or lack thereof, was a Heavenly punishment. Yosef should not have urged a mortal man to be the vehicle of his release. He should have rather placed more faith in Hashem. Many commentaries are bothered by this *Midrash*. They ask, "Is it not one's duty to employ the help of others? What is wrong with asking for help from below instead of relying solely on Hashem?"

Rabbi Ya'akob Kamenetzky had a keen sense of direction, not only in spiritual life, but on the streets of the city as well. He was once in a car with a colleague, a *Rosh Yeshiva* of a prestigious Yeshiva. That particular *Rosh Yeshiva* was a nervous individual and panicked when the driver, a student of his, lost his way in an area of the city that was not accustomed to welcoming Rabbis with open arms.

"Please," pleaded the *Rosh Yeshiva* of his student, "Ask a policeman!"

Reb Ya'akob interrupted. "You needn't ask. I know the way. Continue for two blocks, make a left. After the first light, you make another left. Make an immediate right and you will see the entrance to the highway that we need."

Reb Ya'akob's colleague was not convinced. "Please," he insisted of the driver, "ask a policeman!" The student felt obliged to listen to his *Rosh Yeshiva*, and spotted a police car on the other side of the street, two blocks away. Quickly he made a U-turn, drove the two blocks, and stopped the officer. "Excuse me, officer, asked the nervous driver, "how do you get back on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway?"

The officer began to explain the directions. "First of all, turn back around and go four blocks. Then make a left. After the first light, you make another left. Make an immediate right and you will see the entrance to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway."

Reb Ya'akob turned to his colleague and smiled. "Nu, my friend, now that a stranger said it, do you feel better?"

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (who incidentally was not the other *Rosh Yeshiva*) explains that there are two types of individuals. There are those who have no Heavenly signs, and the thought of Hashem is quite distant from them. Then there are those whose every action is blessed with the guidance of a spiritual force. It is almost as if Hashem is walking hand in hand with them or even as if Hashem is sitting next to them. Yosef should have realized that the events that transpired in the prison cell were supernaturally Divine. Within one year of entering prison, he is charged with the welfare of every prisoner. Then, two Egyptian stewards were sent to be with him, and each had a dream that Yosef, Divinely inspired, interpreted in prophetic fashion. At that point, Yosef should have understood that his freedom was imminent. Hashem, through His own mysterious yet miraculous ways would surely get him out of jail. The wine-steward was extremely impressed when Yosef's interpretation proved correct. Yosef did not have to implore the steward twice with requests for mercy.

When G-d is driving, there is no need to ask for directions. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

A Life Worth Living

Our *perashah* opens: "Ya'akob settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan." *Rashi z"l* writes: "Ya'akob wished to live *B'shalvah*, at ease, but the trouble relating to Yosef suddenly came upon him. When the righteous wish for *shalvah*, Hashem says, 'Are the righteous not satisfied with what is in store for them in the World-to-Come, that they want *shalvah* in This World too?!'"

Why is it wrong for a *sadeek* to want to live at ease? asks R' Yosef Yozel Horowitz, the Alter of Novardok. He explains: "*Shalvah*," which Ya'akob sought, is not the same as "*Menuchah*, rest." A person has *Menuchah* when he lacks nothing—not because he has everything that one could want; rather, because he does not desire all that other people desire. Such contentment results from having *Bitahon*, trust in G-d, which imbues a person with the belief that all that was meant for him will come to him. Indeed, such a person feels as if all that is intended for him has already come to him.

Menuchah, continues the Alter, is not free of *Nisyonot*, trials. But trials do not disturb a person's feeling of *Menuchah*, because he knows that the purpose of a *Nisayon* is to help him realize his latent potential and to give him the opportunity to practice the trait of *Bitahon*. A person who is tested and who grows from those tests is "alive," writes the Alter, whereas a life with no tests is not life.

Shalvah, on the other hand, refers to a life of complete ease, a life with no tests. Ya'akob and other *sadeekim* are not permitted to have such a life because that is a life without growth, a life not worth living. (Rabbi Shlomo Katz)