



IT HAPPENED ONCE

Reb Moshe Leib Sassover was a student of the great tzadik, Reb Shmelke of Nickolsburg, who was a student of the great Maggid of Mezritch. Once, Reb Moshe Leib was traveling with some of his students and passed through the town of Brod. When the people heard that Reb Moshe Leib was in town, they all wanted to go and ask his advice and blessing.

A woman came to ask for a blessing for her sick daughter. Weeping, she placed a small bag of coins for charity on the table, and told Reb Moshe Leib that the doctors had given up all hope of her daughter's recovery.

Reb Moshe Leib looked at the poor woman and said, "I don't want this money, but there is something else I would like. I believe you have a silver menorah in your house."

The woman was surprised. How did Reb Moshe Leib know that she had a silver menorah? It had been passed down in her family from her grandfather! Why would Reb Moshe Leib want her grandfather's silver menorah? And how could she give it away?

Despite these thoughts, she decided to do exactly as Reb Moshe Leib asked, and give him the menorah. In her heart, she prayed that everything would turn out for the best! "I will go and get the menorah for you at once," she said.

"One moment," said Reb Moshe Leib. "I don't want you to just give me the menorah. I want you to give it to me happily."

The woman answered, "All right. I will get it right away. Please pray for my daughter." Quickly, the woman went and brought back the menorah for Reb Moshe Leib. "Thank you," said the tzadik. "May your daughter have a speedy recovery." By the time she arrived home, her daughter was already beginning to feel better. It was a miracle! In Brod, everyone began speaking about the great miracle that had happened.

Everyone wondered, "Why did Reb Moshe Leib want this woman's menorah? Didn't he already have his own menorah, which had been given to him by Reb Shmelke of Nickolsburg?"

Chanukah came. Everyone was curious to see which menorah Reb Moshe Leib would use. Reb Moshe Leib's secretary set up the same menorah he always used, the one that had been given to him by Reb Shmelke of Nickolsburg. Just before he lit the menorah, Reb Moshe Leib turned to the Chasidim who were present, and said, "Is Reb Yechiel Tzoreif here? Reb Yechiel, come and stand next to me."

Reb Yechiel was very surprised at such an honor. After Reb Moshe Leib lit the menorah, he said, "Now I am going to tell you a story about your grandfather, whose name was also Reb Yechiel Tzoreif. Your grandfather was a very poor man. When it came time for him to marry off his daughter, he could not pay for all the expenses. He had no choice except to try to borrow money for the wedding."

"But everyone knew that Reb Yechiel was very poor, and no one wanted to lend him money. They thought he might never pay it back. So he started traveling from city to city, trying in vain to collect a few coins here and few coins there. The little he made was far from what he needed. One day Reb Yechiel heard about a very rich man who gave a great deal of charity specifically for poor people to marry off their children. He made his way to the man's house, and asked him for help with his daughter's wedding. 'The rich man wanted to know who he was. When he heard that he was Reb Yechiel Tzoreif, the silver smith, he said, 'Oh! I've heard of you! Don't you own a silver menorah which you made from coins that you had from the great tzadik Reb Zusia of Annipoli?'"

"Your grandfather answered that he did. 'If you will give me that menorah, I will pay for your daughter's wedding,' the rich man said."

"Reb Yechiel did not want to give away the menorah, since the coins had been given to him by his Rebbe, the holy Reb Zusia. But the rich man insisted. And so, with a broken heart, Reb Yechiel gave away the menorah, in order to pay for his daughter's wedding."

Dedicated in memory of a dear friend
of the Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr Jerome Belson OBM

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"Some years later, the rich man passed away. When his soul went before the Heavenly Court, many angels that had been created by his charitable acts came to testify on his behalf. There was only one problem. He had done a very selfish thing. He had taken the menorah away from Reb Yechiel. He had acted callously and thoughtlessly, and he had broken the heart of Reb Yechiel. Despite all his mitzvot, he could not go into the Garden of Eden."

"Do you see this menorah?" Reb Moshe Leib asked Reb Yechiel Tzoreif. Take it. It belongs to your family. It was made by your grandfather. Recently the granddaughter of the rich man gave it to me. He deserves his reward in Heaven. This way the menorah returns to you, and the rich man will have his reward, as it should be."

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THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And he woke up...and behold, it was a dream (Gen. 41:7)
There are two kinds of dreamers: those who know that they are dreaming but enjoy the dream anyway, and those who do not realize that they are dreaming and mistake it for reality. The first type of person is able to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and realizes that his dream is deceptive. But the second kind cannot make this distinction, and holds his delusion to be true. (*The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Joseph I. Schneersohn*)

Seven fat, handsome cows emerged from the Nile... Then, just as suddenly, seven other cows emerged after them, very badly formed and emaciated. (Gen. 41:18-19)
Pharaoh's dream, in which he dreamt of two opposites, is like the exile. In exile we are faced with opposites all the time. One minute we pursue eternal, spiritual goals and the next minute we want things that are mundane and transitory. When the Redemption comes we will no longer feel this dichotomy. We will see how the purpose of everything in the world is purely for holiness and G-dliness. (The Rebbe)

And he sought to weep, and he entered his room and he wept there...and he restrained himself (Gen. 43:30-31)
The soul "weeps" because it does not want to be imprisoned in a body; it abhors its fleshly confinement and longs to be reunited with G-d. Nonetheless, it "restrains" itself and overcomes its inclination, recognizing that G-d wants the body and soul to work in tandem to observe His mitzvot (commandments). (*Ohr HaTorah*)



L'Chaim

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
... "I have called out to the Lord and He answered me" (Psalm 120:1)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In this week's Torah portion of *Mikeitz* we read that Jacob reluctantly acceded to his sons' request that they be allowed to return to Egypt together with their youngest brother, Benjamin. The viceroy, whom they did not recognize as their brother, Josef, had ordered them not to return to Egypt for more grain unless they brought Benjamin. Jacob's reply to his sons was: "May G-d, Alm-ghty grant that the man have pity on you and release your other brother and Benjamin."

Jacob's fear and trepidation was greater than that of his children. Although they, too, were aware that this whole event had unfortunate undertones, as they themselves said, "We deserve to be punished because of what we did to our brother...that is why this great misfortune has come upon us," nevertheless, they looked upon it as a personal misfortune.

Jacob, however, saw this event as a continuation of his previous hardships. Jacob viewed all events that transpired with, or were related to, him as a "sign" and forerunner of events that will occur with later Jewish generations.

The tribes, however, were only able to view them in terms of a personal misfortune.

Since Jacob was on a far superior spiritual plane than the tribes, he was able to see these events as they transcended the boundaries of nature.

This closely relates to the festival of Chanukah. Although the events surrounding Chanukah actually came about through miraculous means, superficially one may think that these miracles were bound by nature. One may be led to think so, because the salvation of the Jewish people and their deliverance from the hands of the Syrian-Greeks involved actual physical warfare.

In truth, the victory involved nothing less than miracles that completely went beyond the realm of nature. The reason for this is that the victorious Jews overcame vastly superior odds – "the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few..." (from the Chanukah *Al HaNisim* prayer).

Whenever a Jew engages in something, even if it seems to be completely within the realm of nature, he should not think that one's only response is the natural. His actions must always be preceded by prayer to G-d that he should succeed in his actions.

When a Jew acts in this manner he merits to see the miracles that are clothed in the garments of nature, the miracles that totally transcend nature, and ultimately, the miracles that will be revealed with the coming of Moshiach.

Once the courts had found a way to cast trees and wreaths as "secular," their

Chanuka Forever

As Chanukah draws to a close, we mark the 25 year anniversary of the historic issuing of the "Hanukkah Stamp." In 1996 the United States Postal Service issued a stamp jointly with Israel.

Since then, new designs, stamps and denominations were unveiled in 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2020.

From the issuing of the first stamp in 1996, no longer did Jews have to feel second class or bulk rate during the winter holiday season when all of America is festooned with the decorations of the holiday of the majority religion.

The revolution began with the public Chanukah menorahs championed by the Rebbe more than four decades ago. These public menorahs instill pride in Jews as they encounter recognition of their faith and traditions throughout the world.

The modern day custom spread to exotic locations like the Kremlin and the Eiffel Tower, with the same message proclaimed all over: After centuries of persecution in country after country, generation after generation, finally a Jew need not hide his identity, and even more so, he can proudly publicize his faith, practice his religion freely and even shout it out on the steps of City Hall.

This message of religious freedom and the right to hold one's head high is the true meaning of the public menorahs. Of course, some opposed the Rebbe's innovation, whether because they were not secure in their own Jewishness, at least in public, or because to join rather than fight would have meant an admission of defeat in their own fruitless campaign to purge American public life of the observance of the non-Jewish winter holiday.

So, as we tuck away a few stamps with the Chanukah gift-wrap to be used next year (when the stamps will surely be obsolete, as all Jews will be reunited in the Holy Land with Moshiach and we will be posting our Chanukah greetings from there) let's adopt the motto of the U.S. Postal Service of years gone by: Neither rain nor sleet nor dark of night... will deter us from practicing our Jewishness openly and proudly.

