



King Antiochus was determined to enforce his vicious edicts upon the Jews, effectively destroying their attachment to the Torah. He forbade the observance of all religious laws; anyone found with a Torah would be executed; circumcision, kosher food, Shabbat, all vestiges of Judaism were outlawed. Phillip was appointed governor of Judea, and he set out to ruthlessly enforce the king's edicts. He decided to begin his campaign with the arrest of the notable Sage and High Priest, Elazar. Elazar thwarted Phillip's design by choosing martyrdom over submission.

Soon after, Chana and her seven sons were arrested. When the king, who was returning to Antioch, heard about the events in the Holy Land, he decided to take an active role in enforcing his decrees. The mother and her sons were bound and brought before the king.

Antiochus tried to convince the eldest boy to abandon the Torah. The youth responded with great confidence, "Why do you bother with this long speech, trying to inflict your abominable religion upon us? We are ready for death for the sake of our holy Torah. Go ahead and kill us!"

The king was furious and ordered the boy's tongue, hands and feet severed and placed in a fire. The soldiers proceeded to torture the boy, forcing his mother and six brothers to watch his excruciating pain. Antiochus was sure that this sight would intimidate his prisoners into unquestioning submission.

Instead, the martyrdom spurred the family to a deep resolve to accept their fate and to sanctify G-d's name. When the second brother was brought to the king, even the members of the king's retinue begged the boy to obey the king. The boy, however, replied, "Do what you will with me. I am no less than my brother in devotion to G-d." The second son's torture was as bitter as his brother's had been. As he died he told the king, "Woe to you, pitiless tyrant! Our souls go to G-d. And when G-d will awaken the dead and His martyred servants, we will live. But you-your soul will dwell in a place of eternal abhorrence!"

To the amazement of all, the third brother unflinchingly suffered the same fate. The fourth brother echoed his brothers' exhortations, and faced his brutal death with firm resolve. Before he was killed, the fifth brother turned to Antiochus and said: "Don't suppose that G-d has handed us over to you to exalt you or because He hates us. It is because He loves us and has granted us this honor. G-d will take His vengeance upon you and your progeny."

The blood-lust of the king was not assuaged, and the sixth brother was brought to the same end as his brothers who proceeded him. His words bespoke his deep faith that G-d would ultimately requite the suffering of His servants.

Throughout this horrible sequence Chana stood by her sons, giving them strength and encouragement. Now, only the youngest child remained to face the king. When they brought the boy, the king offered him gold and silver if he would do his will. The seven-year-old boy displayed the same courage as his brothers and taunted the king to carry out his threats.

The king couldn't believe such words coming from a mere child, and he called for Chana to be brought to him. Chana stood before the murderer of her children. "Woman, have compassion upon this child. Persuade him to do my will so that you will have at least one surviving child and you too will live." She pretended to agree and asked to speak with her son.

When they stood together, Chana kissed the boy, then said, "My son, I carried you in my body for nine months, I nursed you for two years and I have fed you until today. I have taught you to fear G-d and uphold His Torah. See the heaven and the earth, the sea and the land, fire, water, wind and every other creation. Know that they were all created by G-d's word. He created man to serve Him and He will reward man for his deeds. The king knows he is condemned before G-d. He thinks that if he convinces you, G-d will have mercy on him. G-d controls your life's breath and can take your soul whenever He desires. If only I could see the greatness of your glorious place where we would be illuminated with G-d's light and rejoice and exult together."

Chana returned to the king, saying, "I was unable to prevail upon him."

The exasperated king again addressed the child who answered him, "Who are you seeking to overpower with your enticements? I laugh at your foolishness. I believe in G-d Whom you blaspheme. You will remain an abomination upon all mankind, loathsome and far from G-d."

The king was enraged. According to the Talmud, Antiochus gave the boy a chance to save himself by bowing down to retrieve his signet ring, but the boy refused. As they removed him,

Chana begged to kiss him one last time. As if speaking to all seven children, Chana said, "My children, tell your ancestor Abraham, "You bound only one son upon an altar, but I bound seven." Then Antiochus ordered that the child be tortured even more than his brothers.

Chana was left surrounded by the mutilated bodies of her sons, a prayer exalting G-d on her lips. Then the distraught woman threw herself from a roof and rested beside her martyred sons.



And his master saw that G-d was with him, and that G-d made all that he did prosper in his hand (Gen. 39:3)

Blessing and abundance from Above are directly contingent upon one's Torah and mitzvot, as it states, "If you will go in My statutes...I will cause it to rain in the proper time." Nowadays, this cause and effect relationship is often obscured by our sins and by the concealment of G-dliness that characterizes the exile. For Joseph, however, there was no such concealment; it was obvious to all that his righteousness and good deeds were responsible for his success in all areas of life. (*Sefer HaMaamarim*, 5672)

When she gave birth there were twins...and he called his name Peretz, and afterwards his brother...and he called his name Zerach (Gen. 38:27-30)

Peretz is the direct ancestor of King David and Moshiach. The Midrash notes that "Before the first enslaver of Israel (Pharaoh) was born, the ultimate redeemer of Israel (Moshiach – Peretz) was already born." G-d thus brought about the remedy and cure before the affliction – before the Egyptian exile and all the exiles that would follow thereafter – including our own. This "light of Moshiach" that was created with the birth of Peretz confers upon Israel the strength and ability to succeed in their exiles to "break through" (the meaning of the name "Peretz") all the obstacles that try to impede their service of G-d until Moshiach is revealed. (*The Rebbe, Shabbat Vayeishev*, 5751)

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt (Gen. 39:1)

"He reigned over them," the Midrash relates, explaining that the word "brought down" is linguistically related to the word "reign." As proof of this, the Midrash cites a verse about Moshiach, "He shall reign from sea to sea." What is the connection between Joseph's descent into the cesspool of ancient Egypt, and the rule of Moshiach? The Jewish history of exile actually began when Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and, as the prototype of all other exiles to follow, its true purpose was the elevation and ascent of the Jewish people which would follow its suffering. The objective of our present exile is likewise the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption. (*The Rebbe*)



4:12 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
22 Kislev/Dec 16
Torah Portion Vayeishev
Blessing fo the new month Tevet
Shabbat ends 5:16 PM



The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

נוסד תוך ימי השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson

"My help comes from G-d, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2) Year of Unity - Hakhel



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

In the Torah portion of *Vayeishev* we read about Joseph being put into a pit by his brothers, then being sold to passing merchants. They eventually bring him to Egypt, where he is sold as a slave to Potifar. In Egypt, Joseph was so capable and successful that Potifar put him in charge of his entire estate. The Torah tells us about Joseph, that he was "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance."

When Joseph was named by his mother Rachel, the verses reads: "She named him Joseph, saying, 'May G-d grant me yet another son.' " Chasidic teachings explain this verse to mean that Joseph's main purpose was to bring another - a person who didn't know G-d – into a relationship with Him.

What was the key to Joseph's success? That he was "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance." This verse is understood allegorically, that Joseph's beauty was also spiritual. It is explained that "build" refers to the positive commandments and "appearance" refers to the prohibitions.

Joseph's success with other people was as a result of his being "of beautiful build and beautiful appearance." His beauty encompassed the "Do's and the "Don't's". His own character, his own self, was perfect in all areas of human activity.

We are all Josephs. We are all obligated to be a positive influence on the people we encounter, to help them come closer to G-d. In order to do this, we must first improve ourselves. First work on correcting yourself and then have an influence on others.

This doesn't mean that you have to be perfect in order to have an influence on others. If that were the case, then very few people would be able to affect those around them. However, we should at least be working on bettering ourselves. Otherwise, we will not be able to affect another positively, because people are intuitive and they can sense when someone is not genuine. And then we can have the opposite effect, G-d forbid, pushing them further away from G-d.

In other words, working on yourself is not only a personal endeavor, but it also has its effect on your surroundings and acquaintances. Working on yourself takes on a whole new significance. By working on yourself, you positively influence the world around you. And if you don't work on yourself, it is not just hurting you, but the world around you as well.

If we work on ourselves, and we start to see the world as good and there to help us, we will surely be successful in our personal service to G-d, and we will have a tremendous effect on the people and the world around us. We will uncover the G-dliness that is the essence of everything as it says, "the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d like the waters cover the sea." May it happen soon.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Glimpses

The Bluzhever Rebbe was in Bergen-Belsen. On Chanuka, he scraped together a Menora comprised of potato peels and uniform threads and kindled the "menora" for everyone in the barracks. He recited the blessings over the lighting of the Menora and then paused. It was time to recite *Shehecheyanu*, where we express our gratitude for G-d having brought us to this time and place, to this opportunity. And the Rebbe paused. *Shehecheyanu* for arriving at this place? At this time?

Then the Rebbe gazed at the excited faces, the eager eyes watching his. His heart melted. The marvel of these men! They were caught up in the worst time and place ever, with no miracle in sight. And what had excited them? Chanuka. A miracle of long, long ago. What a soul! What a faith! What a display of that quintessential supernatural optimism. And the Rebbe realized that he was indeed grateful for having been brought to this room, on this night, if only for the opportunity to see openly the miracle of the Divine power in the human heart. He said the *Shehecheyanu* and lit the Menora.

How many times throughout history have the Jews prayed for a miracle to happen? And how many times did the miracle happen? And yet, every time the miracle did happen, we celebrated as if pain had been eradicated from the world forever. And we continued celebrating it even as the pain returned. Even as we marched through the centuries-long valley of tears, we celebrated the great miracles of the past, the rare miracles of the present, and the elusive miracles of the future.

Chanuka celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple and the rekindling of the Holy Menora. But less than 200 years later, the Temple was utterly destroyed by our enemies. Why didn't we cancel Chanuka? Why didn't we declare the miracle insufficient and incomplete and revoke the holiday? And why today, when the Temple and the Menora are still missing 1,900 years later, do we still rejoice over this ancient, unfinished miracle?

Who can explain this? And how can Jews celebrating Chanuka in Bergen-Belsen be

explained? The answer is "glimpses."

Ever since the revelation at Mount Sinai, we have known the truth, not merely believed it. Our eyes beheld it, our souls tasted it, our ears heard it and our DNA was changed by it. Even when it was over and we "came back to earth," we were permanently changed; we would never be the same. We knew that G-d existed and we knew that everything was G-d.

We had seen reality – and we were determined to see it again. And thus began the hunt. We searched for G-d behind every disguise. We knew He was there. It wasn't a question of if, only a question of how. We looked and we looked. And every blessed once in a while, in a fleeting moment, we caught a glimpse. A miracle there, a miracle here. They were like chinks in the cosmic suit of armor He was hiding in, and we caught a glimpse of the truth we knew.

It didn't matter that the glimpse came only once in a while. Every glimpse was a cause for rejoicing. In our hearts we knew that the soul had never lost sight of Him; only the eyes struggled to see. And when the right moment came and even the eyes could see – the celebration was tremendous.

The Bluzhever Rebbe caught a glimpse in Bergen-Belsen. And Chanuka was a historic, national glimpse. Yes, it was fleeting, but it was a good, solid, albeit brief, sighting of G-d, and it carried us for centuries. It carries us even today. And thus, Chanuka is more than a celebration of a miracle; it is a miracle of a celebration.

This is the secret of the unstoppable Jewish optimism of old and of now. We aren't curious detectives hunting for evidence in a mystery thriller. We are best friends separated, yearning for one another's company, and waiting every minute of every day for even the faintest regards, even the briefest postcard with a simple "hello." And every time we get something like that, it touches off a celebration for the ages, with *l'chaims*, songs and dances, and the tearful, grateful refrain: "A great miracle happened here."

Rabbi Eli and Shaina Friedman direct Chabad of Calabasas, California. Adapted from Rabbi Friedman's weekly email to his community.

SLICE OF LIFE

When or Where?
by Rabbi Chaim Greisman



We made the “mistake” of first visiting Stockholm, Sweden on a beautiful summer day. The weather was glorious, the scenery picturesque, and the people, friendly and cheerful. We were taken with stunning Stockholm and quickly made the decision to make it our new home and to join the Rebbe’s army of Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries.

We moved to Stockholm a few months later in a city that was almost unrecognizable. The cold winter weather mangled the landscape, throwing a dark, gloomy cast over the city, and sent everyone scurrying for the cozy hibernation of their homes.

But it would take a lot more than cold weather to dampen our excitement and passion, however. And I think the following stories, just the “tip of the iceberg” will help you understand why!

I got a call from the Jewish association director in Umeå, a small city in northern Sweden, about an hour’s flight from Stockholm. She asked me to arrange a Chanuka party for their small community.

Umeå is close to the Arctic Circle. In the winter, daylight breaks around 10:00 a.m. and they enjoy the sunlight for a few hours. I landed just

over an hour before sundown. When I finally arrived at the venue, it was only a few minutes before sunset. Before starting with the Chanuka event, I quickly asked if anyone had not yet put on *tefillin*, eager to use those last minutes of daylight to help a Jew fulfill this mitzva.

One man raised his hand. “I haven’t,” he said, “but I’ve never put on tefillin in my life, so you’ll need to help me.”

When Amichai* shared how he came to be at a Chanuka party in Umeå, of all places, I was amazed by the incredible Divine workings that affected his multi-generational story:

“After World War II, Sweden accepted a lot of immigrants, scattering them throughout the country. That’s how a young Jewish woman from Lodz, Poland, found herself in Umeå. There were no other Jews around, so she ended up marrying a Swede. Together, they had two children, Klaus and Anna.

“Anna also married a Swede, and raised the third generation of Jews in Umeå. Anna’s daughter, Nina, decided to spend a year on a kibbutz in Israel. There, she met my son, Omar. They got married and moved back here to Umeå. I’m here to visit my beautiful new grandson, who was just born. I myself grew up in a kibbutz in northern Israel. In all my 60-plus years, I have never put on tefillin,” concluded Amichai.

Listening to his story, I was struck by the Divine providence of an Israeli man who had to travel to a small, desolate town near the Arctic Circle to put on tefillin for the first time in his life, two minutes before sunset on a Chanukah afternoon.

Another story: Mr. Ferenc Göndör was a Holocaust survivor. He authored a book in Swedish describing his incarceration in Auschwitz and frequently traveled to schools to share his personal recollections.

Towards the end of his life, he tired easily and it was difficult for him to leave home. He called me one morning and asked for my assistance. The knots of his tefillin were too loose for his shrinking body and he needed them to be adjusted.

After I resized them properly, he asked me to help him put them on.

I agreed, marveling at the great holiness of Mr. Göndör who concerned himself with tefillin in the last few months of his life. “This is Jewish revenge,” I reflected as I gently covered the blue tattooed numbers on his arm with the strap of black leather.

Franny was a sweet, elderly woman who attended almost every class we gave. I never heard her mention her husband, so I assumed he’d passed, or that they’d divorced and were no longer in contact. She called me up one morning with a surprising request.

“Rabbi, my ex-husband is in hospice. He asked to speak to a rabbi. Could you visit him?”

I immediately drove over to visit this man, whose existence I’d only just learned of minutes before. The atmosphere in his room was heavy, as his family gathered around his bedside to say their goodbyes. I greeted Franny, her two daughters, and her grandson, a young man, about 18 or so.

I spoke to the patient for a while and chatted with the family. “By the way,” I said to the teenager, “did you ever have a bar mitzva?”

“Not really,” he answered. “I started to take lessons, but it was too hard, so I just stopped. I never actually had a bar mitzva.”

“Would you like one now?” I asked with a twinkle in my eye.

He agreed, and I wrapped the tefillin straps around his arm and guided him in the recitation of *Shema*. I then turned to his grandfather and asked him if he would like to don tefillin as well.

“Why not?” he said, rolling back his hospital gown sleeve.

As I removed the tefillin from his arm and replaced them in my bag, he looked me straight in the eye and said in a voice laden with emotion, “I put on tefillin twice in my life: at my bar mitzvah, and now on my deathbed.”

He passed away two days later.

I am still overwhelmed by the magnitude of that moment: grandfather and grandson donning tefillin together; one for the first time, the other for the last.

*Names changed to preserve anonymity. Rabbi Chaim and Mina Greisman direct Chabad of Stockholm, Sweden, which they established in 2001. Adapted with permission from DollarDaily.org

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

11th of Kislev, 5739

Blessing and Greeting:

...Thank you very much for your good wishes in connection with the Festival of Lights. In light of the saying of our Sages, “One who blesses others is blessed by G-d Himself,” G-d will surely bless you generously with a happy and bright Chanukah.

As you know, the Chanukah Lights, which are kindled in increasing numbers from day to day, symbolize the light of the Torah and mitzvos [commandments], which should likewise be on the increase from day to day, thereby also widening the channels to receive G-d’s blessings in a growing measure, both spiritually and materially – in the good that is plain to see, even as the Chanukah Lights are visible to the human eye.

Furthermore, the Chanukah Lights teach us a clear lesson that matters of goodness and holiness, Torah and mitzvos, should be on the increase event in the case of those who have attained a high level of “hiddur” [beautification] in Torah and mitzvos – contrary to a prevalent view that, having attained a high and satisfactory level, it is sufficient to maintain this high level on an even keel. Apart from the fact that merely maintaining the high level does not comply with the rule of “*Maalin b’Kodesh*,” [ascending in holiness] the Chanukah Lights clearly and emphatically indicate that even in hiddur itself the same principle applies. For on the second night of Chanukah, the greatest possible hiddur is to light two candles; yet if one should light two candles on the third night of Chanukah, the mitzvah of Ner [light of] Chanukah will be fulfilled, but the hiddur would be lacking. And even after one lights three candles on the third night, showing that one knows of, and is complying with, the rule, it is still not sufficient to do so only once or twice, but it is necessary to add an additional candle each subsequent night, for a total of seven days of hiddur. Seven consecutive days, of course, constitute a basic period in time, a complete week, corresponding to the Seven Days of Creation. Thus, by practicing Hiddur Mitzvah

of Ner Chanukah for seven consecutive days, the absolute rule is established that hiddur in Torah and mitzvos must be practiced every day of the week, each day exceeding the previous day, however satisfactory it was.

Needless to say, these basic lessons of Chanukah are not limited to Chanukah itself, but apply each and every day of the year, as in the case of the teachings and instructions of all our festivals. To cite one example, although Pesach is celebrated once a year, the experience of Yetzias Mitzraim [leaving Egypt] is not confined to Pesach alone, but has to be experienced every day of the year, in terms of spiritual liberation through the Torah and mitzvos without restraint. Similarly in the case of Chanukah and the Chanukah Lights, which have to be reflected in our everyday life throughout the year, making each day brighter with the light of Torah and mitzvos than the foregoing day, as mentioned above. There is surely no need to expand on any of the above points, since you can do it yourself on reflection....

P.S. I trust you have heard of the well known teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that a Jew should derive instruction in *avodas HaShem* [G-dly service] from every experience. This in conjunction with another point, as quoted in the opening chapter of *Shaar Hayichud v’Haemunah*, to the effect that the Hebrew name of anything reflects the real essence and vitality of the thing, prompts the following observation with reference to your position as “Mazkirah” [secretary] at the Yeshivah.

Although the duties of a “Mazkirah” – in the ordinary sense – involves secretarial work and the like, the Hebrew word “Mazkirah,” of course, means “one who reminds.” In other words, the real function of a “Mazkirah” in a Yeshivah is to remind people about the purpose of a true Yeshivah, especially in Old Jerusalem.

Parenthetically, “Old Jerusalem” is not the real name, for the Holy City is still bound up with its original holiness and with the special dinim that apply to it now as in days of old. It is called “Old” Jerusalem to distinguish it geographically from the “New” Jerusalem, which covers an extended area that is united with the Old. The real essence of Jerusalem is, to quote the Prophet Isaiah, (*Ki miTzion Seytzei Torah u’dvar HaShem m’Yerushalayim*) “For the Torah shall go forth from Zion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem.” However, some people may, for one reason or another, sometimes overlook the real purpose of a Yeshivah and someone has to remind them about it – hence, a “Mazkir” or “Mazkirah.”

word “reign.” As proof, the Midrash cites a verse about Moshiach, “He shall reign from sea to sea.” What is the connection between Joseph’s descent into the cesspool of ancient Egypt and the rule of Moshiach? Exile actually began when Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and, as the prototype of all exiles to follow, its true purpose was the elevation of the Jewish people that would follow. The objective of our present exile is likewise Moshiach and the Final Redemption. (*The Rebbe*)

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In the upcoming days of Chanuka we emphasize the miracles that G-d wrought for our ancestors, “In those days, in our times.” The first miracle was the victory of the small Jewish army over the vastly superior and more numerous Greek army. The second miracle, and this is the miracle which we symbolically celebrate each time we kindle the Chanuka menorah, is the miracle of the one small cruse of pure olive oil which lasted for eight days rather than the one day for which it was intended.

That G-d was and is willing to perform miracles for His people shows His tremendous love for us. But, G-d’s expression of love for us depends on our expression of love for each other. Thus, in addition to the love we should show our fellow Jews because they are our brothers and sisters, we must show them additional love because G-d loves them. The importance of loving our fellow Jews is emphasized by the fact that this course of conduct will enable each person, his family, and the entire Jewish people, and ultimately the whole world, to leave the exile in the immediate future.

The Chanuka lights that we kindle in our home on each night of Chanuka are a symbol of G-d’s love for the Jewish people. They have their source in G-d’s light, in the light of the miracle of Chanuka, a miraculous light. As we kindle the Chanuka lights on Chanuka, let us remember the miracles they represent, the Source of the miracles, and why G-d performed those miracles for us. And let these thoughts spur us on toward greater love of our fellow Jew, especially including, of course, those closest to us.

May we merit not only the lights of Chanuka this year, but also the Great Light of the Final Redemption, through the revelation of Moshiach, NOW.

Shmuel Butman

L’ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
לזכרון חיה י מושקה

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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Chairman Rabbi David Raskin ז"ל
Director Rabbi Shmuel Butman
Program Director Rabbi Kasriel Kastel
Secretary Rabbi Moshe P. Goldman
Administrator Rabbi Shlomo Friedman
Editor Yehudis Cohen
Associate Editor David Y. B. Kaufmann ז"ל
Chairman Editorial Comm. Rabbi Nissen Mangel
Rebbe photo S. Roumani

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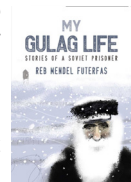
World’s Largest Menora

Be part of the Chanuka celebrations at the World’s Largest Menora at Fifth Ave. and 59th St. in New York City. The Menora will be lit all the nights of Chanuka. On Sunday, Dec 18 – Thursday, Dec 22 and Sunday Dec 25 at 5:30 p.m. On Friday, Dec 23 at 3:45 pm. Saturday night, Dec 24, after Shabbat at 8:30 pm. On Sundays *latkes* and chocolate Chanuka *gelt* for the kids! For more info call Lubavitch Youth Organization at (718) 778- 6000.



My Gulag Life

Reb Mendel Futerfas was a legend in his own time. He endured eight years in the Soviet Gulag and a 17-year separation from his family. Released from the Soviet Union in 1963, he eventually rebuilt his life as a mentor in Israel. Interweaving Reb Mendel’s moving stories and biographical sketches, *My Gulag Life* offers a nuanced portrait of an iconic Chasid. By Dovid Zaklikowski, Published by Hasidic Archives.



Hakhel – Unite

Our Sages say that, “*Hakhel* was **like** the day the Torah was given at Mount Sinai.” “Like” seems to imply that Hakhel isn’t as great as the Giving of the Torah. But from the Talmud’s teaching “In matters of holiness we ascend” it seems that since Hakhel was after the Giving of the Torah, it has to be greater. (Similarly, regarding the coming of Moshiach, where it is written “I will show you wonders, **like** I did during the days that you went out of Egypt,” the word “like” means the Exodus and the Redemption are similar but the Redemption is greater than the Exodus. (*Hitaaduyot* 5747) Find out more at hakhelnation.com

MOSHIACH MATTERS

“Joseph was brought down to Egypt” (*Gen. 39:1*) we read in our Torah portion. The *Midrash* relates, “Joseph reigned over them,” explaining that the Hebrew word for “brought down” is related to the