

In light of what we said, the *Midrash* makes perfect sense. Yosef placed his trust in the cupbearer, but after realizing his mistake, removed the cupbearer from his mind, perhaps to the extent that he even prayed that the cupbearer would forget him. Therefore the two phrases “remember me” and “mention me” are the very phrases that show Yosef’s true and unwavering trust in Hashem. (Short Vort)

Making the Holiday Beautiful

There was once a certain reception held in honor of Rabbi Berel Wein in Detroit. The person hosting the reception was a big wig in Detroit and he invited many business associates including the editor of the Detroit Free Press to this luncheon.

The editor of the Detroit Free Press asked if he could address the assemblage. This Detroit Free Press and this editor in particular had a history of being very pro-Israel and very pro-Jewish. The editor got up and said the following:

“I want to tell you why I have such warm feelings towards the Jewish people in general and towards Israel in particular. My mother came over from Ireland in the earlier part of the twentieth century. As was common with immigrants in those days, she was a housecleaner. She got a job as a maid in the house of an Orthodox Jew, a prominent member of the Jewish community, who happened to live next to a shul. The family, for whatever reason, went out of town for a couple of weeks during December and they were scheduled to come home on December 23.”

“My mother thought to herself, ‘This is terrible. They are out of town. When they come back, it will already be December 23rd at night. Where are they going to get a tree for the living room?’ Therefore, she decided, ‘They are such good people to me – I am going to go out and buy a tree.’ She bought a tree and put it in the front window of the living room, right next to the synagogue. She bought the tinsel and she put up the red and the green lights.”

When people came to shul for *minhah*, they saw the house all decorated for the Christian holiday and they started wondering – What happened with these people?

When the owner arrived home that night, he looked at his living room window and could not believe his eyes.

There are two ways he could have reacted to this. He could have told the maid to “PLEASE GET THIS THING OUT OF HERE IMMEDIATELY!!!” or he could have spoken to her gently, as he did. He called her into the kitchen and said “I want to tell you – this is one of the nicest, most sensitive, most considerate things that anyone has ever done to me in my life. I am so appreciative that I am going to give you a bigger xmas bonus than I intended.” He handed her a \$50 bill (which in those days was a lot of money). “However”, he continued, “We do not celebrate this holiday and we do not display trees in our houses. So in spite of the fact that it was such a beautiful sentiment on your part, we are going to need to get rid of the tree.”

The editor of the Detroit Free Press told the reception of Jewish leaders that his mother used to tell him this story about the tree and the Jew. It created such warm feelings in him towards Jews, Judaism and Israel. Why? It is because one Jew made a *Kiddush Hashem* that had a wide-ranging impact. One Jew did not just react to the spectacle of a tree sitting in his living room, but rather he thought about what went into it, and what the maid must have been thinking, and how sensitive that was, and he reacted in a sensitive matter. That created a *Kiddush Hashem* that had ramifications for many years to come. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

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SHABBAT MIKES ☆ .∞Efv, □X♥↑

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

DECEMBER 15-16, 2017 28 KISLEV 5778

Friday Minhah: 3:00 & 4:13 pm	Shaharit: 6:12, 6:40, 8:30, 9:15 am
Candlelighting: 4:13 pm	Morning Shema by: 9:00 am
Evening Shema after: 5:11 pm	Shabbat Class: 3:30 pm
	Shabbat Minhah: 3:50 pm
	Shabbat Ends: 5:11 pm (R"Y 5:43 pm)
These times are applicable <u>only</u> for the Deal area. Sunday Minhah: 4:15 pm	

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

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

לעילוי נשמת רחל בת וקטוריה

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 4:30 to avoid violating the Shabbat.

Rosh Hodesh Tebet will be celebrated on Monday & Tuesday, December 18 & 19.

Mabrook to Brad & Melody Seruya on the birth of a grandson.

Condolences to Ike Sasson on the passing of his mother, Renee Sasson.

A Message from Our Rabbi

"כְּשֶׁעָמְדָה מְלָכוּת יָוֶן הִרְשָׁעָה עַל עַמֶּךָ שָׂרְיָאֵל לְהַשְׁכִּיחַם תּוֹרַתְךָ"

“When the evil Greek kingdom rose up against Your people Yisrael, to make them forget Your Torah.” (*Al Hanisim*)

On Hanukah we add a paragraph known as *Al Hanisim*, in which we thank Hashem for the miracles of Hanukah. In this prayer we describe the threat posed to us by the Greeks. An attempt was made to cause us to forget the Torah and to deny us the ability to perform *misvot*. Although it is physically possible to prevent another person from doing *misvot* or engaging in additional Torah study, how is it possible to cause somebody to forget the Torah that he has already learned?

Rabbi Ozer Alport explains, that in their war against Hashem and His Torah, the Greeks understood that it was impossible for them to delete knowledge from somebody's mind. So, in their wickedness, they instead developed and promoted a new culture and value system in which Torah has no significance, and by making it irrelevant, it would naturally be forgotten.

The Greeks' new value system was one in which only externality was important. The Greeks' approach was the opposite of our Sages' advice in *Pirke Abot* (4:20) not to look at the vessel but at what it contains inside. As the Jewish People became surrounded by this culture, it began to permeate their thinking and they slowly began to forget about Torah. The Torah revolves around the internals.

Sadly, the battle is not over, and these struggles continue today. Western culture once again attempts to entice us to abandon the internal world of spirituality for the pursuit of the temporal pleasures of the world.

As we light the Menorah we should remind ourselves of the flames' message. They represent the spiritual world that we hold dear.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Rocky Road

The great famine has already hit the Land of Canaan. Ya'akov, tells his sons to go down to Egypt and procure food for the family. The Torah tells us, "So, Yosef's brothers – ten of them – went down to buy grain from Egypt." *Rashi* points out that until now, the Torah always referred to the brothers as "Ya'akov's sons." Here, for the first time, the Torah calls them "Yosef's brothers." *Rashi* elaborates: This teaches us that they regretted his sale and set their heart to act towards him with brotherhood and to ransom him for any price his captors might set.

They had sold him as a slave and they assumed he was still working as a slave. They were prepared to ransom him from slavery, no matter what the cost. They were beginning the first steps of *teshubah*.

I saw an interesting question from Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch. We all know the story – Yosef recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. He accuses them of being spies. The rest of this *perashah* and the beginning of *Parashat Vayigash* narrate Yosef putting his brother through "the seven levels of *Gehenom*".

Is it not ironic, Rav Rabinovitch asks, that their troubles start after they are already doing *teshubah*, deciding that they will redeem their brother regardless of what it costs, and regretting their earlier action? Given the fact that they are already on the road to repentance, why does Yosef put them through the torture?

Rav Rabinovitch cites a very interesting observation of the *Sefat Emet*. The *Sefat Emet* points out that in last week's *perashah*, Yosef faced a great temptation – that of the attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife. Yosef withstood the test, and earned the title "*Yosef Haszadik*" [the righteous Yosef].

What happened to Yosef immediately after he withstood this test? They threw him into the dungeon. For this act of piety, Yosef's immediate "reward" is to be thrown into a pit and kept there for years? Where is the justice here?

The *Sefat Emet* explains: When a person does an act of righteousness and when a person initiates the process of repentance, then Hashem knows he is on the path to *teshubah* – and helps him do a complete *teshubah* by punishing him for his past deeds. Yosef had to do penance because he did speak *lashon hara* to his father about his brothers. Up until this point, Yosef was not ready to endure the punishment that Hashem felt that he needed to endure. Once he achieved this great spiritual level of

righteousness – that he withstood this great temptation – then the Almighty said "You have already started the process of *teshubah*, now I am going to help you do complete repentance. How am I going to do that? I am going to throw you into the dungeon as an atonement for your sin of *lashon hara*, so that when you come out of that dungeon, you will come out as pure as fresh snow.

That is why, specifically after the incident with Potiphar's wife, Yosef was thrown in the dungeon. Therefore, Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch says, the same logic and the same reasoning explain what happened with Yosef's brothers: Precisely because now they started the process of *teshubah*, they are now fit to complete the process of *Teshuva* – by enduring the terrible travails through Yosef. This completed their *kaparah*.

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch adds the following interesting idea. Sometimes a person decides to become a *baal teshubah*. Slowly but surely, he becomes more and more religious. The fellow has a fantastic business and a wonderful family and he decides to do *teshubah*. He closes his business on Shabbat through great self-sacrifice.

Then what happens? The sky falls in. The business goes down the drain. He has family problems. Half the family does not want to have anything to do with him. They think he is off his rocker. Here the fellow is a sincere *baal teshubah*. What happened after all this? His life goes sour!

What is the theological meaning of this? I have seen this happen too many times for it to be considered a rare coincidence. We would think that since this fellow became a *baal teshubah*, the Almighty should shower him with all types of reward!

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch says it is this same phenomenon. Until now, he was not up to withstanding these tests. Now, he has begun the *teshubah* process. He has reached a different level. The Almighty wants him to complete the *teshubah* process. In order to complete that process, perhaps he must endure *yisurim* [difficulties] to give penance for his former lifestyle. Therefore, rather than immediately reaping the benefits of being a *baal teshubah*, he sometimes must endure hardships. Certainly, the eventual goal of all this is that he will in fact emerge from this ordeal as a much purer person. He is ready to endure it because he has already shown that he has the mettle that it requires to become a *baal teshubah*. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Forget About It

(Beresheet 40:23) "וְלֹא־זָכַר שְׂרָה־מְשֻׁקִים אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכַּח־הוּוּ"

"The chief cupbearer did not remember Yosef and he forgot him."

Rav Mordechai Miller presents a novel way to understand this verse. When it says, "and he forgot him," it is actually referring to Yosef who forgot the cupbearer. As soon as Yosef asked the cupbearer to remember him and to tell Pharaoh to have him released, he realized that he had put his trust in man ahead of Hashem. He immediately regretted what he had done and 'forgot him,' meaning that he no longer relied on the cupbearer, but put his faith only in Hashem.

Some go further to say that Yosef actually prayed for the cupbearer to forget him, so that he would stay in prison for an extra two years as a punishment for his request to the cupbearer. All this so that his salvation would only be from Hashem!

This sheds light on a perplexing *midrash*. At the end of *Bircat Hamazon*, we say "Fortunate is the man who places his trust in Hashem." The *Midrash* says that this alludes to Yosef who did not look to 'the arrogant ones'; because he said to the cupbearer "remember me" and "mention me," two years were added to him. Why is Yosef called someone who put his trust in Hashem, when this very act was the only time that he did not put his trust in Hashem?!