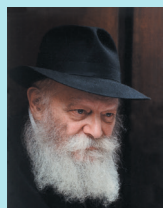


# L'Chaim



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

*from the teachings of the Rebbe  
on the Torah portion*

In this week's Torah portion, *Mikeitz*, we read about Joseph's two children, Menasheh and Efrayim. These names are full of meaning: Menasheh – "G-d made me forget all my hardships and my father's home"; Efrayim – "G-d made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

Joseph was well aware that G-d had brought him down to Egypt to affect Egypt in a positive and G-dly way. At the same time, however, Joseph needed to insure that he would not lose his unique identity, something that is a very possible result of mingling in a foreign culture.

The names of Joseph's sons addressed these sentiments. Menasheh refers to connecting with his past; although Joseph talks about forgetting, he is referring to the anguish he suffered, not his Jewish way of life and the Torah he had studied. Efrayim, to be fruitful in the land of his suffering, speaks of the importance of involving himself with and affecting Egypt.

What lesson can we take from Joseph? Why did he name his first son "Menasheh"? And how does this connect to Chanuka?

Joseph sets the standard for all Jews of all times. We are Joseph! We are meant to affect the world around us by participating in and influencing our surroundings with Torah values. It is obvious that this is true, because G-d put us here in a physical world.

The challenge is to influence but not be influenced, especially when we find success. This is why Menasheh comes first. In order to be effective and not be swept away, we must constantly develop and strengthen our essential bond and foundation in Judaism. This needs to come first, if we want to be effective in our mission to change the world in a positive way.

In the story of Chanuka, many if not most of the Jewish people succumbed to the licentious lifestyle of the Greeks. They lost their way, and sense of moral superiority, their connection to Torah and holiness. The Maccabees, outnumbered and weak, saved the day and saved Judaism. Not because they were great warriors, but because they were true to G-d and His Torah. When you are on G-d's side you will ultimately be victorious.

Today, we again find ourselves in a world of lies and confusion. Anti-semitism and its twin, anti-Israel sentiments, are growing. Decency, morality and truth are in decay. At this time we must strengthen our essential Jewish foundation. We must, like the Maccabees, stand strong for what we know to be the truth and the highest standard of living, the Torah way.

May the light of Chanuka light up the world and may we soon dedicate our Holy Temple again.

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

## Choose Olive Oil

"Choose olive oil over other types of fat," recommends the world-famous Mayo Clinic.

As we conclude the Chanuka holiday, many of us are promising ourselves that we won't taste another latka or doughnut until next year!

But, we might still want to look at the "choice oil" to see what lessons we can glean from it that can last us throughout the year.

The Greeks defiled the Holy Temple. They offered pigs as sacrifices. They erected statues of their gods and goddesses. And they opened the little bottles of pure olive oil that were used daily to kindle the menorah.

The Greeks were content to let the Jewish people live. What they would not accept was the Jewish belief that there is something higher than the mind, something more sublime than human wisdom, something greater than their gods and goddesses who were no better than people save their immortality.

All of this was symbolized by the purity of the olive oil.

They defiled the oil by breaking the seals. And their message to the Jews was loud and clear: "Go ahead, use the oil now. Use the impure oil in your menorah. For we don't believe that there is such a thing as purity. There is no such thing as spirituality. There is no such thing as an All-knowing, All-powerful G-d. Man is the apex, man's understanding is the utmost, man's physical prowess and power are the peak."

But the Jews refused to give in to the Greeks physically or spiritually. When

the Holy Temple was recaptured by the famed Maccabees, they searched for a bottle of oil that still had the High Priest's seal. Having no other option, they were allowed to use the tainted oil. But this they would not do, for then they would have won the war but lost the battle.

Just as the Greeks made a statement by defiling the oil, the Jews made as strong of a statement by refusing to use that oil. They cried out, "We believe that there is something higher than our own intellect, we believe in the all-powerful, all-knowing G-d, we believe that good will prevail and that G-d will ultimately bring the time when everything will be totally pure, forever more."

The main custom of Chanuka – lighting the menorah – revolves around oil, thus commemorating the miracle of the small bottle which lasted not one but eight days. Commemorating, too, the strength of the Jewish spirit.

But oil is significant for another reason, a reason which gives us additional insight into oil's message in our lives in general and the Chanuka miracle in particular.

Oil, like wine, symbolizes the secrets of Torah, the mystical aspects of Judaism. These formerly hidden concepts are becoming more revealed as we come closer to Moshiach's imminent arrival. For the Messianic Era will be a time when all of the Torah's secrets will be known and understood by everyone.

Until the moment comes when Moshiach is anointed with the sacred oil, however, it is imperative that each of us learns as much of the "oil" of Torah as possible, thus preparing ourselves for Moshiach's imminent arrival.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## *Tzama Lecha Nafashi* by Rabbi Mendel Cohen



*Rabbi Sacks: Mendel, is it as big as they say it is?*

*Me: No. Bigger.*

*RS: Then I need more time to prepare.*

*A few weeks later:*

*Me: Have you thought about going?*

*RS: I have spoken to Rabbi Shmuel Lew. I'm ready to go.*

I was privileged to have a seat in the Study Hall of St. John's Wood Synagogue next to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory. It was during one of those occasions that we had the above conversation. We were discussing the Chabad International Convention of Emissaries of the Rebbe.

I first met Rabbi Sacks in the early 90s as a young boy in Leeds. He visited our *Shtibel* on Shabbat afternoon. I vividly remember the fast pace with which he walked in and the distinguished and personal smile he gave each of us children as we shook his hand. The very same smile and handshake he gave my children when he and Elaine graced our Shabbat table in St. John's Wood 20 years later.

I want to share a few of the personal moments that I had with Rabbi Sacks. Like the conversation above, some were short and poignant. Others were ongoing, they were never meant to end.

Rabbi Sacks would spend a few months a year writing, during which time he could not be disturbed with other things. He once told me there were few

people that he can describe his writing time to. "No one understands me when I say I am in *Atzilut*" – referring to the highest of the four Kabbalistic spiritual worlds.

I would get countless requests from people across the world for a message, a visit, or an opinion from Rabbi Sacks. I was in no place to have influence on this. But one such call from Rabbi Slavin in Sydney I could not overlook. He wanted a signed book from Rabbi Sacks for George.

George, a Greek-Australian had arrived at Rabbi Slavin's office one day, recently released from many years behind bars. He wanted to give back to the Jewish community. Why? Because throughout his incarceration this non-Jewish convict had been inspired to change by Rabbi Sacks writings. He read them each week. Now a free, and a changed man, he wanted to give back. He now manages meals for the homeless out of "Our Big Kitchen."

When I told Rabbi Sacks this story he wrote the inscription, he then asked me to repeat the story again, he then asked me to say it a third time to his wife Elaine. "I don't always know the direct influence that my writings have, I am happy you shared this with me."

In one of the last Shabbats that Rabbi Sacks visited communities before lockdown he spoke to the parents of our Hebrew School. It was one of the most moving and intimate talks I ever attended. He spent a long time explaining to the parents the importance of Jewish education. He told parents that much of what a child learns in school is information that barely affects them in the course of life. Not so Cheder and informal Jewish education.

Rabbi Sacks then told us that when he was davening with the Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah after services he was invited to lunch. There was one other guest a non-affiliated songwriter. Just the two of them. Rabbi Sacks asked him how he had arrived at the Rebbe for Rosh Hashana? He responded that he was driving through his town one day and started hearing a song in his mind, it was a childhood memory, a tune from Hebrew classes. He was awakened, and he did a u-turn and drove all the way for many hours straight to 770 where he arrived in time for Rosh Hashana with the Rebbe.

"You never know," Rabbi Sacks concluded, to a group of teary-eyed parents, "Which tune will come in to your child's mind one day. But it will, and it will bring them back."

Rabbi Sacks loved songs, and especially [Chassidic] *niggunim* (melodies). In 1991 he was a guest on Radio 4's Desert Island Discs – where the castaway chooses eight tracks, a book and a luxury. Rabbi Sacks shared the soundtrack of his life. One of the tunes and his 'castaway favourite' was the Chabad *niggun* based on the words from King David's Psalm "*Tzama Lecha Nafshi*; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You, In a desolate and weary land with no water. So, too, may I see You in holiness."

Last year our community held a Shabbat dinner with Rabbi Sacks. Chassidic singer Shulem Lemmer was also a guest. As he often did, he motioned to me and said: "Nu Mendel, a Niggun."

I introduced *Tzama Lecha Nafshi*, explaining the historical context of King David describing his yearning to experience G-d while in Judean desert far from the Sanctuary. How befitting then it was to be with Rabbi Sacks on a desert island.

I ended with the words of the Baal Shem Tov on this verse: "*Halevai Bakodesh Chazisicha*" – King David wished that when he returned to the Sanctuary, he should have the same yearning as he did while away.

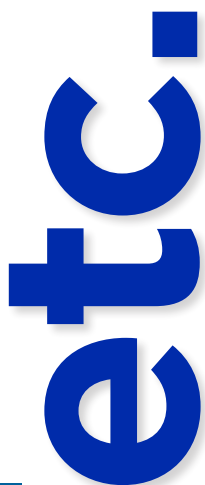
After Shulem sang the song, Rabbi Sacks told a story about violinist Yehudi Menuhin, a cousin of one of his heroes the British philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin—both descendants of the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad Chasidism. When Yehudi was granted a coat-of-arms he asked Rabbi Sacks to design it, using the three prongs of Chabad, which he did. While the design was not used, Rabbi Sacks remarked that Yehudi demonstrated that wherever one's life takes them, ultimately one's Chassidic past and one's soul, even though concealed, never goes away, *Ken Bakodesh Chazisicha*.

I later asked him, if he felt the same way, perhaps he was inspired to tell this tale to awaken his Chassidic past and its soul?

No, he replied, mine is very much alight.

At Rabbi Sacks' funeral, his dear friend Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld sang this song and quoted Rabbi Sacks words from Desert Island Discs: "*Tzama Lecha Nafshi* – My soul thirsts for You. Quite simply I hope one day something like that will be my epitaph – that his soul thirsted for G-d." *Ken Bakodesh Chazisicha* – may he see You in holiness, and May G-d bind his soul in the bond of eternal life.

*Rabbi Mendel and Chai Cohen serve as rabbi and rebbeztzin and to The Saatchi & St. John's United Synagogue, London.*



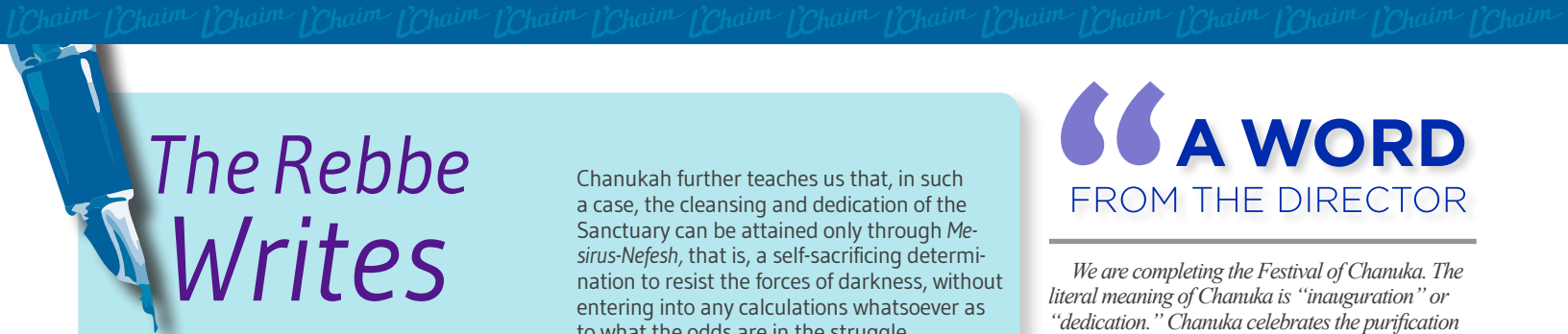
## More Than 100 New Emissary Couples

Before this year's annual Conference of Chabad Emissaries it was announced that more than 100 couples have established new Chabad Centers or moved to cities in order to bolster or expand the work of the existing centers since the start of the Covid pandemic! Included amongst them are: **Rabbi Aharon and Chaya Mushka Mergui** have established Chabad in the village of **Ville-d'Avray, France**, a small community to the west of Paris. **Rabbi Chaim and Ofra Tverya** and **Rabbi Menachem Mendel and Miryam Matusof** have established new centers in the hipster/artsy neighborhood of **Florentin, Tel Aviv, Israel**. **Rabbi Mendy and Mazal Sternbach** have establish a Chabad Center in Africa's most populous city, **Lagos, Nigeria**, with the continent's fourth largest economy. This is the second Chabad-Lubavitch Center in Nigeria. The city of **Niterói, Brazil** – just a ferry ride across the Guanabara Bay from Rio De Janero, has welcomed **Rabbi Shlomo and Shterna Sarah Ossowiecki**.

## WHO'S WHO

**Yehuda HaMaccabee (Judah)** was the third son of Matitياهو, a Kohen who lived in the village of Modiin. In 167 b.c.e. Matitياهو and his sons started a revolt against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes. After his father's death, Yehuda assumed leadership of the revolt in accordance with his father's wishes. The First Book of Maccabees praises Yehuda's military talent. The name Maccabee is an acronym for Yehuda's battle-cry, the verse (Ex. 15:11) "*Mi kamokha ba'elim Hashem* – Who among the gods is like You, O G-d?"





# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence  
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Freely translated

5th Chanukah Candle, 5709 (1948)

...On Chanukah we celebrate two miracles: the victory of the Maccabees over the forces of Antiochus on the battlefield, and the miracle of the oil at the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, following the victory.

The former is expressed in a prayer which we recite during Chanukah – privately. The latter is expressed through the lighting of the Chanukah candles – for public display.

The form of our Chanukah celebration thus emphasizes the relative importance of the material and spiritual in our lives. The victory in the battlefield, although miraculous, was a material one. The miracle with the oil, on the other hand, enabled our people to observe the mitzvah of lighting the menorah in the rededicated Holy Temple.

Thus it is also in the life of the individual.

Material blessings are only used to their fullest extent if they serve as a means to enable us to live our spiritual life in accordance with the dictates of the Torah. The material must be subordinated to the spiritual; the body to the soul. "The soul of man is G-d's candle," and it fulfills its purpose by spreading the light of the Torah and mitzvot in its entire environment. This is the symbol of the Chanukah lights

5th Chanukah Candle, 5716 [1955]

With the impression of the Festival of Lights still fresh in everybody's mind – which, I trust, will have a lasting and practical influence in every-day life throughout the year – I wish to emphasize two or three essential points in connection with Chanukah, which have a timely lesson for all of us.

Chanukah reminds us that even so holy a place as the Holy Temple can be defiled under certain circumstances, though outwardly remaining intact.

Chanukah further teaches us that, in such a case, the cleansing and dedication of the Sanctuary can be attained only through *Mesirus-Nefesh*, that is, a self-sacrificing determination to resist the forces of darkness, without entering into any calculations whatsoever as to what the odds are in the struggle.

The application of these lessons to our times is clear. Our Sages say that since the destruction of the Holy Temple, G-d's Divine Presence can be felt most in the "four cubits" of Torah learning, that is wherever the Torah is studied, especially in Yeshivah. But that in itself does not make a Yeshivah immune from defilement any more than the Holy Temple of old. In order to preserve the purity and holiness of a Yeshivah it is necessary that the study of the Torah be conducted in an atmosphere permeated with a fear and love of G-d – something that, nowadays more than ever requires *Mesirus Nefesh*...

4th of Tevet, 5722 [1961]

...Inasmuch as you wrote your letter during Chanukah, when the lights of Chanukah are kindled in increasing numbers, thus illuminating the home as well as the "outside" in a growing measure, may this be so also in your case. Our Sages say that G-d does not deal despotically with His creatures, and He wants to send His blessings in a growing measure, but at the same time He expects the Jew to provide the channels and vessels to receive His blessings, namely, all matters of Torah and Mitzvos, which He also expects in a growing measure.

I am certain that the last observation is superfluous in your case, since you are aware of it, but I made it as an extra point of encouragement, since there may be some people who like to tease and minimize the importance of the Torah and Mitzvos and the activities in behalf of this cause. That is why the *Shulchan Aruch* [Code of Jewish Law] begins with the admonition not to be discouraged by the scoffers, who may be particularly stung by the vitality and enthusiasm with which a Jew dedicates himself to the Torah and Mitzvos.

May G-d grant that you will have good news to report in regard to your communal activities as well as your personal affairs, and that you will do so with true joy, and in a growing measure.

With blessing,

time of exile. In Pharaoh's dream he dreamt of handsome, healthy cows and ugly, lean cows – two opposites. In exile we are continuously faced with opposites and contrasts. One minute we are inspired to be involved in holy matters and then next minute we want to be involved in matters that distract us from holiness. When the Redemption comes, we will no longer be carried away by our desire to do that which contradicts G-dliness. We will see how everything in the world is only here in order to help us serve G-d. (*Likutei Sichos*)

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*We are completing the Festival of Chanuka. The literal meaning of Chanuka is "inauguration" or "dedication." Chanuka celebrates the purification and rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, after its defilement by the Greeks.*

*Whenever we celebrate a Jewish holiday, the same spiritual forces that came into play thousands of years ago are reenacted, as we say in our prayers, "In those days and in our times." During Chanuka, we are imbued with an extra strength to renew and rededicate the spiritual "Holy Temple" that exists within each of us. Today, the enemy is the Evil Inclination and the difficulties of the exile, which threaten to "defile the oil" and "cause us to forget Your Torah." On Chanuka, our eternal bond with G-d is reinforced and fortified.*

*"Chinuch," which is also translated as "education," means becoming accustomed to something new. Whenever we embark on a new course, we need extra strength and incentive to succeed. For example, it is a Jewish custom that when a Jewish boy is brought to "cheder" for the first time, we throw candies at him and tell him they are from the angel Michael. The candies make the child happy, and instill in him the desire to learn. After the Holy Temple was defiled, an extra measure of holiness was required. The self-sacrifice of the Jewish people for the sanctification of G-d's Name provided this extra spiritual power that allowed the Temple to be rededicated and renewed.*

*The miracle of Chanuka involved light, which is symbolic of an intensification and increase in Torah and mitzvot, as it states, "For a candle is a mitzva, and the Torah is light." On each day of Chanuka we light an additional candle, increasing the illumination in the world. Indeed, this is a Jew's mission each day: to successfully utilize the strength we derive from Chanuka to rededicate ourselves to Torah and mitzvot, in an ever-increasing manner.*

*May the lights of Chanuka culminate in the light of the era of Moshiach, when "the night will shine like the day; darkness will be as the light."*

Shmuel Beilman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA  
לזכרון חיה י מושקא

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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## MOSHIACH MATTERS

"Suddenly seven handsome, healthy-looking cows emerged from the Nile, and grazed in the marsh grass. Then another seven, ugly, lean cows emerged from the Nile, and stood next to the cows already on the river bank." (*Gen. 41:2-3*) Pharaoh's dream is compared to our current



A huge group was gathered on the other side of the large table and looked in the direction of their rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Weinberg, the Slonimer Rebbe. He stood opposite the wicks in the Chanuka menorah, meditating and contemplating, for an unknown reason not yet ready to kindle the Chanuka lights.

Hundreds of Chasidim stood in awe and with great respect, watching their Rebbe as he stood preparing for this mitzva. They waited with bated breath for the glorious moment when he would take the wax candle in his hand and begin reciting the words of the Chanuka blessings.

Minutes, which seemed like hours, passed and then the Rebbe began chanting the blessings. He infused each word with kabbalistic intentions, and each chasid there was able to hook into the holiness of the moment according to his own level.

“Help me, deliver me!”

The dreadful cry tore through the hearts of all those gathered there and awakened each person from his reverie. Everyone looked in the direction of the voice.

The Rebbe, his face aflame with the holiness of the moment, also turned his head in the direction of the voice toward the end of the synagogue. There stood a woman with her hands outstretched toward the heavens, crying with a bitter heart.

It became clear that this woman was not one of the wives of the chasidim gathered there. In fact, she had no connection to the Rebbe or the Chasidic lifestyle. “Who was she?” some murmured.

The distraught woman lived with her family in this town. Her husband was a wealthy and well-respected businessman who had never in his life entered this Chasidic synagogue. He and his friends were among those who laughed at the Chasidic lifestyle and customs.

For many years the couple had not been blessed with children. When their son was finally born they were already much older. Their happiness knew no bounds. He was always given the best of everything, though he was not especially spoiled.

On the eve of Chanuka the young boy fell ill. The doctors came to his bedside and cared for him with devotion. But they could not help him. To everyone’s horror his fever rose from day to day. Tonight, his situation worsened. The boy lost consciousness and the doctors who were standing around his bed raised their hands in hopelessness.

The father of the child was pacing around the house in agony and bitterness. But his mother could not stand seeing her son’s suffering any longer and left the house. Suddenly she began walking quickly. Toward what or where or whom she knew not. But her feet seemed to have a mind of their own, and before she knew it she found herself in front of the Slonimer synagogue just as the Rebbe was preparing to kindle the Chanuka lights.

“Rebbe, help me,” cried the woman in a voice that echoed throughout the entire synagogue.

“Tell her not to worry,” the Rebbe said quietly to someone. “She should go and return home. She should ask her husband to add to her son’s name the name ‘Matitياهو’ [Matithias]. And in the merit of that great tzadik – father of the Macabbees – who gave up his life for the Jewish people and the Holy One, the sick child’s life will be lengthened. And another thing, when the child is fully recovered, his father should bring a ‘pidyon nefesh’ of chai – life – 18 coins which will be given to charity in the Holy Land.”

The following day, at about the time when the Chanuka candles were being lit, a new

face was seen in the Slonimer synagogue. It was the father of Matitياهو, who had brought to the Rebbe 18 rubles, a pidyon nefesh for his son who was fully recovered, to the Rebbe.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

### It came to pass at the end of two years (“shnatayim yamim”) (Gen. 41:1)

It often happens that a person reaches the end of his allotted years on earth, only to discover that he was essentially “sleeping” (“shnatayim – related to the word “sheina,” “sleep”) through all his “yamim” – “days.” (Rabbi Meir of Premishlan)

### Pharaoh said to his servants: Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom there is the spirit of G-d (Gen. 41:38)

Why would Pharaoh think that warehousing grain before an impending famine requires “a man in whom there is the spirit of G-d?” Rather, Pharaoh understood from Joseph’s words that he was not merely unusually wise, but spoke with the “spirit of G-d.” Accordingly, implementing the storage and distribution of the grain could only be accomplished by such a person. How did Pharaoh come to recognize Joseph’s qualities? In relating his dream to Joseph, Pharaoh had deliberately changed certain details. Joseph, however, interpreted the dream according to its true nature, rather than according to Pharaoh’s slightly altered account. (Marganita D’Vei Meir)

### Jacob saw that there was food in Egypt (Gen. 42:1)

According to Kabbalistic teachings, the world is filled with “holy sparks” that must be redeemed by the Jewish people through Torah and mitzvot. These “sparks” are the result of “shevirat hakeilim” (literally “breaking of the vessels” – the Midrashic account of the building and destruction of primordial worlds prior to this one; shevirat is similar to “shever,” the Hebrew word for “food” in the above verse). Jacob, with his prophetic vision, recognized the unusually high number of “sparks” that had fallen to Egypt, which was the reason for the Egyptian exile. (The Magid of Mezeritch)

### And he said to them: You are spies (Gen. 42:9)

Of all the possible accusations he could level against them, why did Joseph accuse his brothers of espionage? Joseph was afraid his brothers would utilize their visit to Egypt to investigate his whereabouts. By accusing them of being spies, he prevented them from asking too many questions. For no one who is accused of espionage is likely to make too many inquiries about a head of state... (Rabbi Avraham of Pshischa)



## 4:13 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area  
3 Tevet // Dec 18  
Torah portion Mikeitz  
Shabbat ends 5:17 pm