

# THE GOOD TIMES ARE ROLLING

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since G-d has informed you of all this, there can be no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace and by your command shall all my people be sustained...(Breishis: 41:39-40)

This chapter in the story of Joseph should be used as a primer for those who are seeking employment. We are privy to one of the greatest job interviews of all time. After Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh he gives a detailed job description and Pharaoh hires him on the spot. In moments he is elevated from prison to become the highest-ranking officer.

All Joseph did was interpret a few dreams. Maybe he deserved to become the court psychiatrist. What in his resume' convinced Pharaoh that he would make a worthy project manager?

The Chovos HaLevavos- Duties of the Heart describes a deeper dimension of the human condition in a way that might help shed some light on the success of Joseph's job interview.

A child is washed upon the shore. A committee welcomes him. They promptly crown him "the king" and cloak him in royal robes. They carefully shower him with all of his personal needs as is fitting a true king. The food is tailored to his particular tastes. His attendees dress him and wash him upon demand. A cabinet of wise advisers surrounds him.

One day, in a fit of curiosity, the young king asks one of his advisors, "How did I become "the king"? How long am I "the king"? Where do I go when I am no longer "the king"?

The wise men tell him that he was installed as king when he was washed up on the seashore. He will remain the king until the next king is washed ashore. They show to him, through a telescope, a deserted island, the place that is to be his future residence. "The king" didn't want to believe his ears or his eyes.

At first he is dismayed and later overcome with new courage, declaring, "I am "the king", He calls his ministers to an emergency meeting. They begin to plan a paradise to be installed at that empty plot. Little by little over the course of years he builds beautiful buildings, transcribes libraries, and plants lush gardens and orchards.

Not too soon a young baby is washed upon the shore and declared "the new king". "The old king" now yields to those who remove his royal garbs. He is escorted with joyful anticipation to revel in the splendor of the treasure-full island he thoughtfully prepared during his term in power.

"The new king", however, was not so wise and had allowed himself to become distracted and intoxicated with power. He forgot to ask some basic questions. When he was suddenly confronted with those who rushed to remove his royal robes, he resisted violently and was forced into a small boat. We cannot fathom the endless frustration of confronting a barren island, like getting a blank check and then no pen.

This may help explain the language of the Mishne which is quoted at the beginning of every chapter of Pirke' Avos, "All Israel have a portion to the world to come". It is not said that everyone has a portion "in" but rather the preposition employed is "to" the world to come.

Each person is like that little king, for a brief time, till future generations come to roam the earth. Understanding the Talmudic aphorism that "the wise one sees what will be born in the future" doesn't mean he picks good stocks. It means to see clearly the ultimate consequences born of today's activities and invest accordingly.

Joseph was the obvious choice for the job. He understood best the urgency of the day. The one who owns the clearest vision is the most motivated man in the kingdom. Who else would be able to apply the necessary discipline to save up and prepare for a world unseen when now the good times are rolling?

Good Shabbos!

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