

*Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason
Parshas Vayeishev November 23, 2013*

Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates

Three days a week after he finishes teaching school in western Wales, Steffan Hughes drives more than an hour to a track in Cardiff, where he runs sprints for two hours before driving back home. Steffan is training for the Paralympics, but he isn't disabled. The 28-year-old is a guide runner for Tracey Hinton, a blind sprinter who needs Steffan's eyes to make it across the finish line. The two run with their hands tied together, matching their strides and arm movements as closely as possible. "It works a bit like a three-legged race, but with your arms," he says. Not all visually impaired runners use guides, but many do. Some train with them but don't use them in competitions. Others do the reverse.

Tracey, who lost her sight through retinal cancer when she was four, found Hughes about 10 years ago by placing an ad in a newspaper. The time commitment is demanding. During the summer months Steffan often travels with Tracey on weekends to competitions around Europe. He says he does it because it's challenging and "an honor to be Tracey's guide." Guides often help their partners off the track, too. Steffan says he tries to show Tracey around unfamiliar hotels or apartments when they travel, and cuts her meat and potatoes at restaurants "to make life easier."

In the book of Numbers, Joshua is chosen to be leader of the Jewish people. What were the characteristics of Joshua that made him the worthy successor of his teacher Moses? Jewish tradition requires leaders who can bring out the best in others, as the Torah describes it, "one who will lead them out and bring them in." (27:17) Not many have the stamina and talent to be a guide runner. But like Steffan Hughes -- and Joshua -- we can all bring out the best in others.

Parshas Vayeishev Genesis 37:1-- 40:23

Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph incites his brothers' hatred. Their jealousy increases when Joseph tells them about two dreams which indicate that they will one day be subservient to him. Jacob sends Joseph to check up on his brothers, and upon seeing him approaching they plot to kill him. Reuben convinces the brothers not to kill Joseph, but is unable to totally save him as the brothers sell Joseph into slavery in Egypt. After dipping Joseph's coat in blood, they return to their father who assumes that his beloved son was torn apart by a savage beast.

The Torah then digresses to relate the story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. The narrative then returns to Joseph in Egypt, where he becomes an extremely successful slave and is placed in charge of his master's household. His master's wife repeatedly tries to seduce Joseph, and when he refuses he is thrown into prison. Ten years later, Pharaoh's chief butler and baker are placed into the same prison. One night they each have a perplexing dream that Joseph accurately interprets, setting the stage for his release from prison.

Rabbinical Ruminations

Want to change how you're feeling? Change what you're doing. In a study by [Shafir et al., \(2013\)](#) people who jumped up and down felt happier than those who made neutral movements. In other words: it's not just the joy of any movement, it's specifically the joy of jumping up and down. And the jumping had to be actually done, just watching another person jumping didn't work.

The concept that our actions can enhance and even create emotional moments extends beyond a jump for joy. Psychologist/philosopher William James (1842-1910) was one of the first theorists to notice this counter-intuitive process. He believed that emotions arise out of the bodily actions we take in response to what is happening in our lives. It is not, James theorized, that, "we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival and angry and strike." In fact, he argued, "this order of sequence is incorrect...the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble." James' theory formed the basis for the

behavioral treatment referred to as *behavioral activation*; change behavior in order to experience a change in mood.

Students of modern psychology may be unaware of a considerably earlier source for *behavioral activation*. The Sefer HaChinuch ('Book of Education'), published anonymously in 13th century Spain, is a work which systematically discusses the 613 mitzvos of the Torah. In Mitzvah 16 the author writes, "The hearts are drawn after the actions ... gradually (these) actions will have a powerful effect upon his emotions, and he will come to true humility and reverence of G-d."

Action changes emotion. A reliable way to change how you're feeling is to change what you're doing. When you feel bad, don't wait to feel good to do what you love. Start doing what you love. Good feelings will likely follow.

Quote of the Week

The purpose of art is to wash the dust of daily life off our souls. -- **Pablo Picasso**

Joke of the Week

Always Read the Label

One day, a housework-challenged husband decided to wash his sweatshirt. Seconds after he stepped into the laundry room, he shouted to his wife, "What setting do I use on the washing machine?"

"It depends," she replied. "What does it say on your shirt?"

He yelled back, "Texas A & M."