Assembly Notes
PARSHAS VAYIGASH 5785
Dvar Torah

the lubavitch multi-academy trust
lubavitch girls' school

There are different types of strategies to cope with bad experiences. One way is to *suppress* difficult memories. But then they are still actually there beneath the surface and. always prone to come back to life. A better way is to *rise* *above* the negative, to throw oneself into positive activities, focusing on happier events.

(The Rebbe advised me in a Yechidus (private audience) 65 years ago how to eliminate negative or inappropriate thoughts. Don't fight with the undesirable thought; instead, replace it with positive thoughts, if possible Torah thoughts.)

There is a third option, the best of all. This is to work on reframing, and finding a positive aspect in one's suffering. This *transforms* our perception and the challenge becomes an opportunity and a positive.

In the Parsha Vayigash we see the incredible example of Yosef. His life was interrupted at age 17 and he was forced to spend decades isolated from everything familiar and everything holy. Sold by his own brothers! Enslaved, imprisoned, the challenges to his moral and spiritual integrity. What does he do when all is done? He tells his brothers that what really happened was that he was sent by G-d to be a provider! He is a Shliach!

(To be clear, the brothers sinned grievously by selling Yosef, and therefore had to do Teshuvah. That is because their intention was bad. But Yosef viewed it all as an opportunity to bring G-d's blessings to the world).

Yosef did not say let's forget the past, let's draw a line under it, let's move on, let's focus on the future, etc. Yosef said let's focus on the blessing, the benefits that come from the saga of the past.

Our situation is often totally beyond our control; but our reaction is totally within our control.

Perhaps this can be connected with a lesson that we can take with us from Chanukah. If there is darkness, one banishes it by lighting a light. But Kabbalah and Chassidic teachings say that the spiritual source of Chanukah is much higher. It doesn't only bring light to *replace* darkness; rather it makes the darkness *itself* shine.

Shabbat Shalom!

Good Shabbos!

גוט שבת!