YOSEF WAS RUSHED FROM THE PIT

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Miketz

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 397, Lighting Neiros in Shul; Other Chanukah Issues. Good Shabbos!

Yosef Was Rushed From The Pit

When Pharoah had his famous dream, he asked for interpretations from all his advisors. The Sar HaMashkim [chamberlain of the cup-bearers] remembered Yosef and advised Pharoah that Yosef had a good track record for interpreting dreams. The pasuk [verse] records that when Pharoah sent for Yosef, "they rushed him from the pit" [Bereishis 41:14].

Nowadays, no one is taken out of prison quickly. There is a tremendous bureaucracy. There is always a lot of paperwork. In the case of Yosef, there apparently was a "paperwork reduction act". They rushed him through.

The Chofetz Chaim inquires as to what the Torah is teaching by telling us this detail, that they rushed. The Chofetz Chaim says that we are being taught an important lesson here. The lesson is that the salvation of G-d comes in the blink of an eye. Sometimes a person finds himself in a situation in which he cannot imagine how the situation is going to be rectified, but a moment later the light appears at the end of the tunnel.

Yosef was in prison. He had no friends or connections in the country. Two years earlier he had seen a potential way of getting out, but those hopes were dashed when nothing became of his request to the Sar HaMashkim to help him out. He must have been thinking to himself, "I am stuck in prison. Nothing is happening and nothing is going to happen."

Suddenly, Yosef was speedily rushed out of the pit. G-d had decreed that Yosef must remain in jail for two years, but once those two years were over, he had to be out in the blink of an eye. That is the way G-d works. Salvation comes in a flash.

All too often, people have terrible problems. They cannot imagine how these terrible problems will ever be resolved. They need to realize that the salvation of G-d comes in the blink of an eye.

There are so many times in life when salvation of G-d comes in the blink of an eye. We can bang our heads against the wall and wail "What's going to be! What's going to be!" But things suddenly turn around. That is why the Torah emphasizes "they RUSHED him out of the pit". Things can turn around on a dime.

What Gave The Brothers Cause To Celebrate?

Parsha Miketz contains the story of the full reunification of all the sons of Yaakov. Yosef sat the brothers according to their chronological age. The brothers were astonished. Yosef gave them all presents and gave Binyamin (his only full brother) a present that was five times as great as what he gave to the others. The narration concludes with the words "They drank and they became intoxicated with him" [Bereishis 43:33-34].

Rashi comments that from the day that the brothers sold Yosef, neither he nor they drank wine. This was the first time that any of the brothers allowed themselves to drink wine since that tragic day.

However, the question needs to be asked, what kind of holiday was this for the brothers? They did not know that they were reunited with Yosef. That did not happen until Parshas VaYigash. Perhaps, we can understand why Yosef would drink wine. He knew that it was the first time that the family was together in so many years. But why were the brothers drinking wine? From their perspective, it was still a situation of "Yosef is not here" [Bereishis 42:36].

The answer is that it was like a Yom Tov (holiday) for them because they saw that they had grown as human beings. They had just witnessed their brother Binyamin being given preferential treatment. He was given a present five fold as great as their own. This was exactly like the situation that triggered their resentment -- when Yaakov showed favoritism to Yosef. It could have been a situation of "here we go again."

Each family has its own set of dynamics. There are certain things that set off squabbles and harsh sibling interaction in every family. However, this occasion was different. Despite the history of the dynamics, the brothers were not resentful when Binyamin received five times as much. They were sincerely happy for him. That was cause for celebration.

The successful conquering of one's baser inclinations is cause for celebration. The discovery that "I can change for the better and not always react in the same inappropriate manner I have always reacted to these circumstances" is a reason to party. The brothers were no longer jealous of one another. This was a Yom Tov for them. It was a justification to break out the champagne, despite the fact that they had not taken a drink of wine for decades!

Thanksgiving For The Troubles

We will conclude with an idea that finds a common thread in both the Chanukah story and in Parshas Miketz.

The Al HaNisim prayer recited on Chanukah states that these days were established for praise and thanksgiving. The Sefas Emes notes that Hallel [praise] was established in commemoration of the victory that Hashem provided for us. Hoda-ah [thanksgiving] was instituted for the gratitude we must have even for the experience of living through all the traumatic events that led up to the victory.

While this is a difficult level to achieve, a Jew should realize that when he does have troubles and does experience suffering -- these too might someday prove to be something to be thankful for. Eventually things will hopefully improve and he will emerge from those troubles. At that time he must give thanks to G-d not only for the cessation of the troubles, but even for the original troubles themselves. Such is the nature of suffering. Suffering itself is helpful for a person.

The experience was difficult. The Jews lived through catastrophic times. They were spiritually devastated; all the Temple oil was defiled. But this experience was also ultimately part of the story of deliverance and something for which we need to be grateful.

While a person is in the midst of the troubles, it may not be realistic to appreciate this. However, when the salvation from G-d eventually arrives, a person must look back and be able to say "Now I understand everything." As human beings, we are bound by time. We cannot always see and understand why things are happening. With the passage of time however, things become clearer.

Rabbi Zev Leff offers a beautiful insight. In Parshas Miketz, Yosef orders the brothers to bring Binyamin. Yaakov does not want to let him go. Eventually they are able to persuade Yaakov to allow Binyamin to accompany them. They bring him before Yosef. There are trumped up charges. Yehudah offers to have all the brothers become slaves to the Egyptian viceroy. Yosef insists, however, that only Binyamin will be his prisoner and the rest of the family may "return in peace to their father". This is the last thing that the brothers want to see happen.

That is how Parshas Miketz ends. What is the resolution? The resolution comes next week in Parshas VaYigash.

If we were dividing up the parshiyos, we would probably not end the parsha in the middle of a story. What is this -- a series? "To find out what happened to Binayamin..." Miketz leaves us sitting on the edge of our seats, waiting in anticipation to know the end of the story. Why doesn't the Torah tell us what happens?

The answer is that the Torah is teaching us a very important lesson: There are sometimes in life we need to 'wait until next week'. Sometimes we need to wait until next week and sometimes we need to wait until next year and sometimes we need to wait until the next life. Things do not always become abundantly clear, certainly not instantaneously. That is what this lesson is about. That is why the climax of the story of Yosef and his brothers does not end in Parshas Miketz as it logically

should.

The Torah is sending us a message regarding how to deal with these types of troubles. The answer is that sometimes we have to wait to see how things will resolve themselves.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Miketz are provided below:

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