

# STRAIGHTENING OUT THE CAUSE AND THE EFFECT

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Miketz & Chanukah

### Straightening Out The Cause And The Effect

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 793, Oops! 3 Candles on the 2nd Night! Good Shabbos!*

At the beginning of the parsha, the pasuk says, "Miketz shnatayim yamim..." (At the end of two years) [Bereishis 31:1]. The Medrash Rabbah relates these words to a pasuk in Iyov "Ketz sam l'choshech..." (He put an end to the darkness) [Iyov 28:3]. The Almighty determined that after the two year period in which Yosef was destined to sit in prison, the time had come for his release. Since the time for Yosef's release had now arrived, Pharaoh had his dream.

The Beis HaLevi makes a very important point. We often get confused between cause and effect. A simple reading of the narrative at the beginning of Parshas Miketz gives us the impression that the "cause" was Pharaoh's dreams and the fact that his advisors could not interpret them to his satisfaction. The effect was that Yosef was brought out of jail to interpret the dreams and thereby rose to a position of authority in Egypt. The Beis HaLevi points out that the Medrash is teaching us that just the reverse is true. The CAUSE was that it was time for Yosef to be released from prison and take up a leadership position in Egypt. The EFFECT was that G-d made Pharaoh dream troubling dreams, which his advisors could not interpret.

The world has a Grand Plan. G-d makes things happen in the world so that the plan will be carried out. The Almighty calls the shots, not man.

A second Medrash also makes a very interesting comment. The Medrash contrasts the pasuk "And Pharaoh dreamt and behold he stood upon the Nile" [Bereishis 41:1] with the pasuk "And behold Hashem stood over him" [Bereishis 28:13] (written by the dream of Yaakov Avinu). The Egyptians worshipped the Nile River. And yet Pharaoh stood above the river (his god). By Yaakov, his G-d stood over him. Despite the fact that Pharaoh deified the Nile, he still believed that he was in charge and stood upon the river. It is a man-centered world. "I call the shots." Yaakov knew that Hashem stands over him. He knew that man does not call the shots. It is a G-d centered world. He manipulates the world to match His Grand Plan.

Several years ago, we commented that this is also hinted at by the grammar of our pasuk. "V'hinei Pharaoh cholem" (behold Pharaoh is dreaming) is stated in the present tense. It should really have said "After 2 years Pharaoh had a dream". But in light of what we just mentioned, it makes more sense to use the present tense: Because the two years were up and it was time for Yosef's release from prison, Pharaoh had to start dreaming.

## A Connection Between Parshas Miketz and Chanukah

The Shiltei Gibborim on the Mordechai in Tractate Shabbos writes that in most years, Parshas Miketz falls out to be Shabbos Chanukah. He notes that there is a symbolism from the expression in the Parsha "u'tevoach tevaCH V'HACHEN" (and to have meat slaughtered and to prepare) [Bereishis 43:16]: The Shiltei Gibborim notes that taking the last letter (ches) of the word "tevaCH" and putting it together with the rearranged letters of the following word "V'HACHEN" produces the letters of the word CHANUKAH.

What on earth is this supposed to mean? What does the fact that Yosef tells his servants to prepare a meal for his brothers have to do with Chanukah?

It could be that the relationship is based on what we learn in the Medrash Rabbah in Sefer Bamidbar, which says that the pasuk "The one who preceded me, I will pay him back" (Mi heekdeemani v'ashalem) [Iyov 41:3] refers to Yosef. Yosef observed the Sabbath before it was given. The Medrash cites as the source for this fact the very pasuk of "u'tevoach tevach v'hachen".

Rabbi Yochanan states that it was Friday afternoon and Yosef told them to prepare a Shabbos meal. The word "hachen" [prepare] refers to a Shabbos meal, as it is written "And it will be on the seventh day, they should prepare [v'heichinu] (ahead of time) that which they will bring" [Shemos 16:5]. Yosef is the first person who prepared a Shabbos meal ahead of time. G-d rewarded him by saying "Yosef, you kept Shabbos even before it was given, I will pay you back such that your descendant will offer his sacrifice on Shabbos, which is not the case of ordinary individuals who cannot offer private sacrifices on Shabbos."

The Torah readings on Chanukah are the readings of the offerings of the various Princes at the time of the dedication of the Mizbayach [Parshas Nasso]. Each of these offerings had the status of a Korban Yachid - an individual's private offering. The inviolate rule is that a private offering never overrides the Shabbos. And yet, says the Medrash, the Prince whose turn it was to offer his Dedication Offering on the seventh day of the inauguration ceremony - his sacrifice did override Shabbos. Who was that? It was the Prince from the Tribe of Ephraim.

The Satmar Rebbe asks on this Medrash: What is the logic behind saying that since Yosef kept Shabbos, his grandson would bring a sacrifice that pushes away the sanctity of Shabbos? It seems counter intuitive. The Satmar Rebbe answers that since the private offering was in preparation for

the Mizbayach that eventually would host the public offerings, this very act of preparation (even though it was a private offering now) for later public offerings was already considered like a public offering. It was already imbued with the importance of a Korban Tzibur. This is based on the principle that "hazmanah milsa hi" - preparation counts and has importance in and of itself.

This is the "measure for measure" reward that Yosef was granted. You, Yosef, prepared for Shabbos. You instituted the concept that preparation has importance. Therefore, I will accept your grandson's offering - even though it is private - on Shabbos. It too is preparation - preparation for a Public Offering.

What do we prepare for? We prepare for things that are important. If one has a big case or a big customer coming or is expecting an important guest - one prepares ahead of time. No lawyer worth his salt falls out of bed on the morning of a big court case and goes into court and wings it. If a person has a meeting with the IRS auditing his tax returns for the last 3 years, he does not just get his checks together on the morning of the audit and march into the IRS office hope for the best. He prepares! We prepare for things that are important. The reason we spend the better part of Friday and sometime the better part of Thursday preparing for Shabbos is because Shabbos is important. That is why the Talmud teaches that the Amoraim themselves made preparations for Shabbos. Rava personally salted the fish. Rav Safra would personally singe the head of a cow [Shabbos 119a]. They had servants who could have done those things, but they wanted to personally honor the Shabbos. That which is important deserves preparation.

This concept was introduced by the righteous Yosef, who the Medrash credits with being the first person to ever prepare for Shabbos.

The Bach writes in the beginning of the laws of Chanukah that the reason the Jewish people suffered the terrible fate of the Greeks taking over and defiling the Bais Hamikdash and stopping the Bais Hamikdash Avodah [Service] for years was that the people became negligent in carrying out the Bais Hamikdash Avodah. It was not so important in their eyes. It became "old hat", just another thing to do. Therefore, G-d took it away from them.

When the Chashmoneans refused to accept this anymore and came to fight the Greeks, there was rejuvenation in the performance of mitzvos. This is why they made such a big deal about getting the pure oil. Halachically speaking, they could have used defiled oil (based on the principle that the laws of impurity are set aside when the majority of the congregation is impure - Tumah dechuyah b'Tzibbur). However, since the whole Greek persecution came about because the Bais Hamikdash Avodah was not important in their eyes, the corrective action required elevating the Bais Hamikdash Avodah to such an important status that great effort would be exerted to see that it was fulfilled in the most optimum way possible.

The lesson of Chanukah in ten words or less is that "good enough, is not good enough." This is virtually the only mitzvah that everyone fulfills in the mode of "mehadrin min hamehadrin" (the most

perfect way possible). Why? It is because the point of Chanukah is that the Bais Hamikdash Avodah is important and we had not considered it to be important enough.

This concept of treating mitzvos with the appropriate level of importance is identical to the concept of preparing oneself ahead of time for the performance of a mitzvah. One cannot just fall into a mitzvah. One needs to prepare for it. This is the connection between Yosef and Chanukah and this is the connection between Tevoach TevaCH V'HACHEN. Yosef taught us the lesson that if something is important, one treats it so. In essence, this is what Chanukah is about. It was taken away from us because we did not treat it properly. It was given back to us when Jews once again showed that the Divine Service is indeed important to them.

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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:

Tape # 035 - Chanukah Issues  
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