

Although Parshas Miketz usually coincides with Shabbos Chanukah, there are years that Parshas Vayeshev also coincides with a Shabbos Chanukah, including the rare occasion that Parshas Vayeshev is the only Shabbos Chanukah for that year. Since Chazal are of the opinion that the Torah portion read on a holiday or religious occasion is connected in some way to that occasion, we must understand the connection between Parshas Vayeshev and Chanukah.

Jacob sent Joseph to inquire as to the welfare of his brothers who were tending their flocks. "And he sent him from the Valley of Hebron". Rashi comments that this is a reference to "from the depths of the idea of that great Tzadik who was buried in Hebron", referring to Avraham Avinu. Hashem promised Abraham in the *Bris Bayn HaBesarim* that his children will be enslaved in a distant land. Ultimately, that debt had to be paid and Jacob and his children would be responsible to fulfill the promise. The purpose of the drama associated with the sale of Joseph was to pave the way for bringing Jacob to Egypt. The Midrash says that had Jacob not gone to Egypt under the pretext of seeing Joseph he would have been brought there regardless, in chains if necessary, to fulfill the *Bris Bayn HaBesarim*.

Jacob was well aware that the brothers hated Joseph, yet he sent him to them anyway. What was the purpose of sending Joseph to his brothers? If they were in need of help, of what benefit would Joseph, who was younger than the others, be to his stronger and older brothers? Jacob acted contrary to reason. This is what Chazal meant when they commented, as cited by Rashi, from the depths of the idea as revealed to Abraham. It was the divine will that guided Jacob that fateful day to act in an irrational manner and send Joseph to his brothers in order to facilitate the keeping of the promise "For your children shall be strangers in a land that is not their own". On the day that Jacob sent Joseph from his house to seek his brothers, the divine roadmap of Jewish destiny began to unfold.

Our Rabbis said that on that very day Hashem was engrossed in the light of the Moshiach. The events of that day initiated the great drama that is the Nation of Israel, a drama that continues to this day, and will continue till "the saviors climb Mount Esau". On that fateful day the prophecy given to Avraham expanded itself beyond the exile in Egypt, and set in motion the chain of events marked by our national history and those that are yet to befall the Jewish Nation till the arrival of the Moshiach. In addition to the story of Joseph that initiated our exile period, Parshas Vayeshev is also preoccupied with the story of Judah and Tamar, culminating with the story of the birth of their twins, one of whom is the ancestor of the *Melech HaMoshiach*. In summary, in Parshas Vayeshev we find both the

beginning of the long night of exile as well as the planting of the seeds that will lead to the dawning of our ultimate redemption from that exile.

Drawing from ideas of the Rav ZT”L from other Chanukah related Shiurim, I would add that Rambam characterizes Chanukah as having the positive aspect of returning Jewish Monarchy for a period exceeding 200 years. Though the Hasmoneans were Levites and monarchy was reserved to the tribe of Judah, they are credited with restoring pride to a physically and spiritually downtrodden people and raising the Jewish profile till the end of the second Temple and commonwealth. However, the rededication of the Temple by the Hasmoneans was incomplete as it required access to a prophet to determine the appropriate constitution of the rededication process and set of sacrifices to be brought. In *Maoz Tzur*, “*Az Egmor B’Shir Mizmor Chanukas HaMizbeach*”, we have a reference to the days of Moshiach, when we will complete (future tense) the unconsummated rededication of the Temple started by the Hasmoneans so many years ago after their victory over the Hellenizing forces arrayed against them.

At that time we will also mark the completion of the circuitous Jewish Journey that began so many years ago with the simple mission that Jacob sent Joseph to perform, to inquire as to the welfare of his brothers. The Parshios associated with Chanukah, Vayeshev and Miketz, describe the detachment of Joseph from his father, brothers and homeland, and are symbolic of the exile and detachment felt by the Jewish people from our Father, from each other and from our home land. Similar to the Hasmonean triumph celebrated by Chanukah, we draw inspiration, admiration and pride from Joseph’s model of stalwart commitment to Hashem, family and land in overcoming the obstacles of poverty, oppression and even affluence he was presented with. Though their relationship reached a nadir in Vayeshev with the contemplated murder and ultimate sale of Joseph into slavery by his brothers, Joseph ultimately reconciled with his brothers. Similarly the coming of Moshiach will forever heal the rift between the children of Israel and reunite us as a people with Hashem. It will usher in a period of peace, tranquility and knowledge of Hashem and His ways as symbolized by the light of the Menorah on Chanukah. May it be speedily in our days.

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