

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Miketz	28 Dec. 2019	30 Kislev 5780	Gen.41:1-44:17; Num. 28:9-15; 7:42-47	Zec. 2:10-4:7	John 10:22-28

In this week's Torah portion, Miketz, we first need to understand from the last week's Torah portion, Vayeshev as they are all interconnected. The brothers of Yosef, after putting him in a dry well, they sat down to eat. It is written, "And they sat down to eat a meal." (Gen. 37:25) In Hebrew, וַיֵּשְׁבוּ, לֶאֱכֹל-לֶחֶם (vai-ye-she-vu, le-'e-chal-le-chem). Rather, it should be read as לְהַאֲכִיל (le-ha-'a-chil), translating the verse, "They sat to feed (לְהַאֲכִיל) bread," in word play, for it was through the brothers' sale of Yosef to the Yishmaelites that he came eventually to sustain the world as viceroy of Mitzrayim.

In Beresheet 42:6, the Hebrew word, מַשְׂבִּיר, (*mash·bir*) has been translated as one who 'sold grain.' The verse is saying that Yosef was the provider, the feeder, the source of food. That was Divinely ordained, that that should be his role on account of his purity that he was able to be the *mash·bir*.

It is written (41:1), "And it came to pass at the end of two full years." The Torah is stressing that Hashem was now beginning to bring about the events that would directly lead to the exile of Yisrael in Mitzrayim by means of famine and rise of Yosef as viceroy. Even though the decree of exile was mentioned to Avraham over a hundred years ago (Gen. 15:13), the Torah is reminding us that Hashem set a limit to darkness.

The Midrash¹ begins with Yyov (28:3), "An end to darkness he has set, and to every limit he is searching, to rocks in deepest darkness." This verse teaches us that Hashem fixed an amount of time for the world, for how many years it would exist amidst the darkness of the evil inclination. Why would Hashem set a limit to the darkness? Because as long as the evil inclination exists in the world, there is gloom and the shadow of death in the world. The evil inclination serves the invaluable function of enabling the righteous to be rewarded for overcoming it.

When Yosef was sentenced to prison indefinitely with a false accusation, it was Pharaoh's dreams and his need for an interpreter that Yosef gained an early release. Therefore, when his time was up for release from the prison, Hashem gave dreams to Pharaoh to set in motion for release of Yosef from prison. Now, the dreams were not the cause of Yosef's release, rather it was predetermined time of Yosef's sentence that was the cause of the dream that brought about his freedom. As mentioned above, since it was Hashem who created the "darkness" with a set of limited time, the Torah is letting us know it was His Divine Providence, not men.

For example: Ya'akov made for Yosef a fine woolen tunic (Gen. 37:4). Because of this favoritism, the brothers resented Yosef that eventually lead to his sale as a slave to Mitzrayim. In the course of events Ya'akov and his family descends there which ultimately resulted in exile. Thus, it seems like it was the "tunic" that was the cause of the exile. Yet this is belied by the fact that the exile was predestined and revealed by Hashem to Avraham at the Covenant Between the Parts (15:13).

Now, we can say, "If Ya'akov did not give the tunic to Yosef, the exile would not have happened." This is a confusion of cause and effect. Even if the tunic was not given to Yosef, the exile would still happen by some other events as it was decreed by Hashem. Whether

¹ Rabbah, 89:1

Another example: Let's take an example of successful business man who became very wealthy. People assume that his business enterprise is the cause of his wealth. If not for the enterprise he would never have made a fortune. Yet, in fact, the opposite is true. The man was destined to become rich and therefore Hashem provided him with a lucrative enterprise to make that destiny a reality.

The author of Beis HaLevi concludes that a person should not be concerned about the success or failures of any enterprise, because, in any case, it is not the enterprise that yields the results. The results are determined by Hashem and will come to pass one way or the other.

The Zohar² says that the "darkness" is the demonic forces that derive from *Gevurah* on the left side of the *sefirotic* tree. The demonic realm originates in *Gevurah*, the attribute of *Din* (Judgment) which is symbolized by darkness. *Gevurah* is also pictured as gold, which after the refining process of emanation leaves behind a dross of evil. The Book of Yyov describes the darkness as "the land of darkness and the shadow of death." (Job. 10:21) The Talmud³ describes Satan's role, "He descends and leads astray, ascends and arouses wrath, obtains authorization and seizes the soul."

Therefore, we are to engage in Torah day and night in order to discover and ponder His words for the Torah calls out every day before a person, "Who is simple? Let him turn in here!" (Prov. 9:4) Thus we are to engage and cleave to the Torah as said, "She is a tree of life to those taking hold of her, And blessed are all who retain her." (ibid, 3:18)

When we grasp the Tree of Life in this world, meaning by engaging in Torah, we grasp it in the World To Come. For as souls depart this world, correspondingly rungs, meaning how firmly we grasped Torah on earth, are arranged for them in the world that is coming.

The Tree of Life embraces many rungs, meaning various levels of understanding in Torah, distinct from one another, whether it is bark, leaves, trunk, and roots, yet all is one. Similarly, when we engage in Torah, we are enhanced, grasping the Tree of Life. All scions of faith grasp the Tree of Life: some joined to the actual tree, to its trunk; to leaves, etc. The one who engages deeply in Torah grasps the trunk and thereby the entire tree, just as in *sefirotic* terms, *Tiferet* encompasses the entire divine organism.

"It happened at the end." What is at the end? R' Shim'on said, "A place without remembering, and this is End of the Left." The demonic side, which culminates in oblivion, caused the cupbearer to forget about Yosef as it is written, "'But remember me when it is well with you," (Gen. 40:14) for he thought, "Surely, the cupbearer would remember this dream!" But he was wrong as the cupbearer "did not remember Yosef, but forgot him." (ibid, v. 23) Yosef should have trusted in Hashem alone.

"At the end of two years' time" symbolizes two of the cosmic days of Creation, *Yesod* and *Shechinah*, whose reunion overcame the oblivion brought about by "the end". Once *Shechinah* returned to *Yesod* – the *sefirah* of remembering – Yosef was remembered through the episode of Pharaoh's dream.

² The Zohar, Vol I, 193a-b

³ Bava Batra, 16a