

*(These divrei Torah are distilled from an adaptation of the words of Rabbi Yissochur Frand.)*

In most years, not only does Parshat Miketz coincide with Shabbat Chanukah, but also within the Parsha, there is a phrase which alludes to Chanukah. In the context and honour of Binyamin having just arrived in Egypt, Yosef wishes to lay on a special meal for all his brothers. He instructs his servants: "...u'tevoach tevaCH V'HACHEN" (and to have meat slaughtered and to prepare) [Bereshit 43:16]. The *Shiltei Gibborim* notes that taking the last letter (*chet*) 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.

The deeper connection to Chanukah that can be derived from this, is found within a *Medrash Rabbah* in *Sefer Bamidbar*, which says that Yosef observed Shabbat before it was commanded and cites as its source, the phrase quoted above.

The *Medrash* states that it was Friday afternoon and Yosef gave instructions to prepare a Shabbat meal. The word "*hachen*" (prepare) refers to a Shabbat meal, as it is written "And it will be on the sixth day, when they prepare [*v'heichinu*]" (ahead of time) what they bring" [Shemot 16:5]. Yosef is the first person who prepared a Shabbat meal ahead of time. HaShem rewarded him by saying "Yosef, you kept Shabbat even before it was given, I will repay you, such that your descendant will offer his sacrifice on Shabbat, which is not the case of ordinary individuals, who are not permitted to offer private sacrifices on Shabbat."

The Torah readings on Chanukah are the readings of the offerings of the various Princes at the time of the dedication of the *mizbeyach* [Parshat Nasso]. Each of these offerings had the status of a *korban yachid* – an individual's private offering. The inviolate rule was that a private offering could never override Shabbat. And yet, says the *Medrash*, the offering of the Prince for the seventh day (Shabbat) of the inauguration ceremony, did

override Shabbat. Further, that Prince was from the Tribe of Ephraim (son of Yosef), *Elishama ben Amihud* and thereby was Yosef repaid by HaShem.

The *Satmar Rebbe* questions the counter intuitive logic behind this *Medrash*, that a descendant of Yosef, generations later, would bring a sacrifice that sets aside the sanctity of Shabbat, in the merit of Yosef having kept Shabbat. He answers that since the private offering was in preparation for the *mizbeyach*, that eventually would host the public offerings, this very act was nevertheless considered to be like a public offering and already imbued with the importance of a *korban tzibbur* (public offering). This is based on the principle that "*hazmanah milsa hi*" – preparation counts and has importance in and of itself.

We all prepare for things that are important, ahead of time. For example, no competent lawyer would arrive for a major court case without thorough preparation and expect a successful outcome. Every week, we devote time to prepare in advance for Shabbat, because of its importance and the impossibility of fully observing Shabbat without doing so. That is why the *Talmud* teaches that the *Amoraim* directly involved themselves in preparing for Shabbat. *Rava* personally salted the fish and *Rav Safra* would personally singe the head of a cow [Shabbat 119a]. They had servants who could have done these things, but they wanted to personally honour Shabbat.