



## MIKETZ/CHANUKAH

This week, as we are celebrating Chanukah, we read Parshat Miketz. To fully understand the story-line of the parsha, you need to be familiar with last week's reading (Vayeshev) and be aware that the story continues right into next week's (Vayigash). In brief (very brief), last week we read about how Yosef's brothers became jealous of him and sold him down to Egypt, and how he ended up in prison there; this week, we read about how Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dreams correctly, gets promoted to being the second to the king, and how his brothers actually come down to Egypt and bow down to him (fulfilling Yosef's original dream)! When will the brothers realize that this is Yosef? Tune in next week...

However, there is an important lesson to be gained from Yosef's words in this Parsha. What do you want to be when you grow up? Whatever you do, you (hopefully) want to do it well. You want greatness in your field. How do you achieve that greatness? The Medrash on this week's parsha gives us an answer.

"And Pharaoh said to Yosef, 'I dreamt a dream, but no one can interpret it'. Yosef replied, 'That is beyond me. It is Hashem who will answer about Pharaoh's welfare.'" The Medrash states, "Hashem heard this and said, 'You do not want to elevate yourself? So be it that you will rise to greatness and royalty.'" Therefore, we see that one of the secrets of greatness is humility. One who does not ascribe his good qualities and accomplishments to himself, rather he gives the credit to Hashem, is destined for greatness. In a sense, he has already achieved greatness, because the realization that Hashem is the source of all the good that we have is a great accomplishment indeed. We certainly have a right to feel proud in our many accomplishments, but we must always remember from where we get the power!

Unrelated to the above, but in honor of Chanukah, I have found a very beautiful Chanukah story on the web, written by a Jewish medical doctor, that I'd love to share with you, so here it is:

*It Should Again See Light*  
By Blair P. Grubb, M.D.

Several years ago, a physician from southern France contacted me. His granddaughter had taken ill with a disease that baffled the physicians there. He called after reading several of my articles on disorders of the autonomic nervous system. His granddaughter's symptoms seemed to match those I had described, and he asked me if I could help. I readily agreed, and for many months, I collaborated with the child's French physicians by telephone and by fax, directing their diagnostic testing.

At last we came to a diagnosis, and I prescribed a course of therapy. During the next several weeks, the child made a seemingly miraculous recovery. Her grandparents expressed their heartfelt thanks and told me to let them know should I ever come to France.

In the summer of 1996, I was invited to speak at a large international scientific meeting that was held in Nice, France. I sent word to the physician I had helped years before. Upon my arrival at the hotel, I received a message to contact him. I called him, and we arranged a night to meet for dinner. On the appointed day we met and then drove north to his home in the beautiful southern French countryside. It was humbling to learn his home was older than the United States. During the drive he told me that his wife had metastatic breast cancer and was not well, but she insisted upon meeting me. When introduced to her, I saw that despite her severe illness, she was still a beautiful woman with a noble bearing.

After dinner, we sat in a 17th-century salon, sipping cognac and chatting. Our conversation must have seemed odd to the young man and woman who served us because it came out in a free-flowing mixture of English, French, and Spanish. After a time the woman asked, "My husband tells me you are Jewish, no?" "Yes," I said, "I am a Jew." They asked me to tell them about Judaism, especially the holidays. I did my best to explain and was astounded by how little they knew of Judaism. She seemed to be particularly interested in Chanukah. Once I had finished answering her questions, she suddenly looked me in the eye and said, "I have something I want to give to you." She disappeared and returned several moments later with a package wrapped in cloth. She sat, her tired eyes looking into mine, and she began to speak slowly.

"When I was a little girl of 8 years, during the Second World War, the authorities came to our village to round up all the Jews. My best friend at that time was a girl of my age named Jeanette. One morning when I came to play, I saw her family being forced at gunpoint into a truck. I ran home and told my mother what had happened and asked where Jeanette was going. 'Don't worry,' she said, 'Jeanette will be back soon.' I ran back to Jeanette's house only to find that she was gone and that the other villagers were looting her home of valuables, except for the Judaic items, which were thrown into the street. As I approached, I saw an item from her house lying in the dirt. I picked it up and recognized it as an object that Jeanette and her family would light around Christmas time. In my little girl's mind I said 'I will take this home and keep it for Jeanette, till she comes back,' but she and her family never returned."

She paused and took a slow sip of brandy. "Since that time I have kept it. I hid it from my parents and didn't tell a soul of its existence. Indeed, over the last 50 years the only person who knew of it was my husband. When I found out what really happened to the Jews, and how many of the people I knew had collaborated with the Nazis, I could not bear to look at it. Yet I kept it, hidden, waiting for something, although I wasn't sure what. Now I know what I was waiting for. It was for you, a Jew, who helped cure our granddaughter, and it is to you I entrust this."

Her trembling hands set the package on my lap. I slowly unwrapped the cloth from around it. Inside was a menorah, but one unlike any I had seen before. Made of solid brass, it had eight cups for holding oil and wicks and a ninth cup centered above the others. It had a ring attached to the top, and the woman mentioned that she remembered

that Jeanette's family would hang it in the hallway of their home.

It looked quite old to me; later, several people told me that it is probably at least 100 years old. As I held it and thought about what it represented, I began to cry. All I could manage to say was a garbled "merci." As I left, her last words to me were "Il faudra voir la lumiere encore unefois" -- it should once again see light.

I later learned that she died less than a month after our meeting. This Chanukah, the menorah will once again see light. And as I and my family light it, we will say a special prayer in honor of those whose memories it represents. We will not let its lights go out again.

Shabbat Shalom, and Happy Chanukah,  
Rabbi Cohen