

MIKEITZ-END OF DARKNESS- EVERY WEEK [FROM THE AHAVAS SHOLOM OF KOSSOV]

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The parsha of Mikeitz open with the phrase, and it was at the end of [Mikeitz] two years. The Zohar states Hashem placed an end to darkness. In the context of the parsha it is referring to the fact that Yosef waited for his freedom an extra two years. Yosef was detained to be imprisoned for an extra two years. In a broader context, the meaning is that troubles and exiles are set and have an end to them.

The Ahavas Sholom brings this statement of the Zohar in his drashos on this week's parsha. He writes that more specifically, the exile of Am Yisroel does have a set end. This is because everything that exists has to come to an end. Without an end, nothing even an exile could exist. Our job is to overcome the yetzer hara and to try to bring the end of the exile closer as Chazal tell us that if we deserve it, Hashem will bring the redemption sooner. Otherwise it will come at its time. Each one of us has to individually work on oneself to get out of his own Mitzrayim or spiritual exile. Mitzrayim could also mean *maitzar-yam*, trouble at sea referring to the yetzer hara. In Tehillim 69:19 we ask Hashem to draw our souls near to redemption. This, explains the Ahavas Sholom, is the meaning of joining *geulah*, redemption and *tefilah*, prayer. What this redemption means, practically speaking, is being free to devote all of our energies to Hashem in Torah and *tefilah* with no impediments or disturbances of any sort. Our souls need to feel free to serve Hashem. We read in Ovadiah that the house of Yaakov will be fire and the house of Yosef will be flame. The flame is to fight all harsh judgments and blockages to serving Hashem fully. Yosef is the personification of this triumph of the soul.

On a certain level, every Jew can experience some of this redemption of the soul every Shabbos at the onset. Just before we sing Lecha Dodi we recite Tehillim 29 which has the word kol, voice in it seven times. The seven expressions of kol, voice refer to the seven *havalim*, vanities of this world that are referred to a number of times in Sefer Koheles. *Hevel*, vanity and *lahav*, flame have the same letters but in a different order. When we accept Shabbos with happiness in our hearts, we overcome the vanities and harsh judgments of this world which are the domain of the yetzer hara. Moreover, in the *Ana Be-choach* prayer, we state Shavaseinu kabal, accept our cries. Backwards this reads the letters *kuf shin*. These letters stand for krias Shema as Chazal tell us that reciting Shema is a prime weapon to defeat the yetzer hara. All of this should be borne in mind as we recite the kabbolas Shabbos. When we accept Shabbos not only with gladness but also with fire of enthusiasm, we are using Yosef's tactic to defeat the yetzer hara. The yetzer hara tends to gain power during the week but at the onset of the kedusha of Shabbos we arise above it with our fire for serving Hashem on the higher level of Shabbos. This is another meaning of end of darkness is set. The tribulations of the weekday world are ended and we enter the higher domain of Shabbos and serve Hashem with the special fire brought on at the onset the holiness of Shabbos.