

In Parshat Miketz, Yosef makes several recommendations to Pharaoh following his interpreting the royal dreams of the cows and the barley-corn. Yosef suggests, "*V'Chimaish et Eretz Mitzraim.*" This is usually translated as, "Prepare the Land of Egypt." The Hebrew "*Chimaish*" has the same root as the number five; it probably meant (according to many commentaries) that Pharaoh should store a fifth of the produce harvested during the good years for use during the famine years.

Since this Parsha is always read during Chanuka, the Bnei Yisoschar sees in the letters of the word "*Chimaish*" a reference to the Mitzvot the Greek-Syrians attempted to ban: *Chet – Chodesh* (specifically Rosh Chodesh but referring to the entire Jewish Calendar) *Mem - Milah* (as in *brit*) and *Shin – Shabbat*.

My Father-in-law, the late Rabbi Shlomo Rapoport z'l, suggested that the timing and length of Chanuka might reflect this truth. After all, its eight days include both at least one Shabbat and also Rosh Chodesh. And the eight days themselves correspond to the period before which a Brit Milah takes place, showing that on the eighth day, just as a male baby is consecrated to service of Hashem, so too were our people and Temple reconsecrated.

My Father-in-law z'l also taught that these three points symbolize the cardinal principles of our faith – the Brit/Covenant with Hashem, the Shabbat and the Jewish calendar. Affirming these mitzvot shows how we can sustain Jewish life and not become overwhelmed by the culture around us. By rededicating ourselves to Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Yomtov as well Hashem's Covenant, we can acknowledge the dimensions of our existence as a people.

Shabbat Shalom and Happy Chanuka!

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