



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Seudah Shlishis Parshas Vayeshev 5780

The *Pnei Menachem zy*"a used to quote the *tzadikim* of previous generations who said that "the *parshiyos* of the winter wear a heavy fur coat". In other words, the stories in these *parshiyos*, such as the selling of Yosef, contain lessons that are hidden deep below the surface of the simple reading of the stories.

In the end of the *parsha*, (ח"י:ד), Yosef asks the *Sar Hamashkim*;

כי אם זכרתני אהדך כאשר ייטב לך ועשית נא עמדי חסד וזכרתני אל פרעה והוצאתני מן הבית הזה

But think of me when all is well with you again and do me the kindness of mentioning me to Pharaoh, so as to free me from this place.

Chazal (שמו"ר ז"א, הובא ברש"י מ:כ"ג) said, "Yosef only deserved to be imprisoned for ten years because he spoke ill of his 10 brothers. Because he asked the *Sar Hamashkim* to remember him, he was imprisoned for two more years."

Rabeinu Avraham ben Ha'Rambam in his commentary on the Torah, asks a powerful question.

"They said that because Yosef depended on the *Sar Hamashkim*, by asking him to save him, he was punished by the *Sar Hamashkim* forgetting about him for two years. However, it is possible that the trust that Yosef placed in a human being is viewed as negative for a *tzadik* like Yosef, but not for another person. For if the *bitachon* of a person with *emunah* is strong in his heart, utilizing normal means won't detract from



[1]

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his *bitachon*. Yaakov Avinu already utilized a gift to save himself from Eisav. Yitzchak employed the tactic of saying that Rivkah was his sister, in order to be saved from Avimelech and his nation, as did Avraham Avinu with Sarah. None of these actions are portrayed as negative.”

In other words, Yosef’s request from the *Sar Hamashkim* was a normal form of *hishtadlus* that is permissible for any *baal bitachon* to utilize. He relies on Hashem but does a bit of *hishtadlus* in the natural way, as the Avos did. Why then, was Yosef punished for the minimal *hishtadlus* that he did. (his answer can be seen in the Sefer)

Perhaps his question could be answered by a teaching that the *Sfas Emes zy”a* brings in the name of his grandfather the *Chidushei Ha’Rim*.

“My grandfather wondered about the *pasuk* תַּמְחָה אֶת זְכָר עַמְלִיק. He asked, ‘How does Amalek have a *zecher*? (memory)? The matter of *zecher* is very lofty and deep. The only *zecher* they have is what they steal from *Yisrael*.’ In other words, if the *zecher* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is missing in the actions of Bnei Yisrael, the Torah ascribes the corresponding amount of *zecher* to Amalek.”

We need to understand why the *Chidushei Ha’rim* wondered how Amalek could have any aspect of *zikaron*. He understood that *zikaron* is a *maalah kedoshah* - a holy power that we are supposed to use *l’shem shamayim*. As Shlomo Hamelech instructs us, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת בּוֹרְאָיו – Remember your Creator. (קהלת י”ב:א).

The *Chidushei Ha’rim* answered that Amalek themselves have no aspect of *zikaron* aside from the *zikaron* that they manage to steal from Am Yisrael. Why does Amalek want to steal Am Yisrael’s *zikaron*? They hope to erase memories that may prevent Am Yisrael from committing *aveiros*. When Am Yisrael forget their connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, they enable Amalek to “steal” a corresponding amount of our *zikaron*.



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The *Chidushei Ha'Rim's* explanation reveals the deeper meaning of the *mitzvah*, תְּמַחָה אֶת זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק - We must eradicate the very concept of *zikaron* from Amalek, by retrieving every element of *zikaron* that he has stolen, and returning it to Am Yisrael.

From the *Sfas Emes* and *Chidushei Ha'Rim* we learn that the entire *midah* of *zikaron* in the world was initially given to Bnei Yisrael. They are meant to utilize the power of *zikaron*, to retrieve and awaken memories that will inspire them to do *teshuvah* and draw close to Hashem Yisbarach. For example, there are the שש זכירות, the six things the Torah commands us to remember, that are listed in most *siddurim*. Also, לא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם... למען תזכרו.

The more a person involves himself in Torah and *mitzvos*, and connects himself to חי החיים, Hashem who is the source of all life, the more his aspect of memory will increase, enabling him to live in a state of constant *dveikus B'Hashem*.

However, we can only acquire these benefits of *zikaron* by defeating the powers of *klipah* and *tumah* who fight to wrest the power of *zikaron* from Yisrael. Sometimes, they try to divert our *zikaron* to negative memories that distance us from *kedusha* and *tahara*. This is a fierce battle, and each of us has to fight with all of our strength to protect our world of *zikaron*, and prevent the powers of *klipah* and *tumah* from appropriating our *zikaron*. If we emerge victorious, our *zikaron* will remain linked to Hakadosh Baruch Hu at all times, and in all places, no matter what we are involved in.

This understanding of *zikaron* can help us explain the story of Yosef Hatzadik. We must begin by realizing that we don't have the slightest understanding of the *midah* of Yosef Hatzadik. Nonetheless, we can propose a possible explanation for his request from the *Sar Hamashkim*. Yosef's request that the *Sar Hamashkim* speak on his behalf to Pharaoh was a permissible form of *hishtadlus*, similar to those performed by Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Nevertheless, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is



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medakdek with Tzadikim, holding them accountable for even a hairsbreadth of deviation. Therefore, it could be that that there was a very subtle aspect of *cheit*, in Yosef's repetition of the request that the Sar Hamashkim remember him. As the *pasuk* says, כִּי אִם זְכַרְתִּנִּי אֶתְדָּ כְּאִשֶּׁר יֵיטֵב לָךְ וְעָשִׂיתָ נָא עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְהִזְכַּרְתִּנִּי אֶל פְּרַעְהָ.

Chazal revealed that because of this repetition, Yosef had to spend two more years in prison. Because Yosef Hatzadik was on such a high *madreigah* of righteousness, he was held accountable for a repetition which gave a certain aspect of *zikaron*, a *midah* which is designated for Am Yisrael, into the hands of the corrupt and lowly *Sar Hamashkim*. This is why the Torah then says, וְלֹא זָכַר שֶׁר הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכַּחְהוּ – And the *Sar Hamashkim* didn't remember Yosef, and he forgot him. "את שוכחו" (בראשית מ"ב:ג). Chazal comment on this *pasuk* in the Midrash, "ואני לא אשכחהו" – "You (the *Sar Hamashkim*) forgot him, but I won't forget him. In other words, when Yosef depended upon the memory of the *Sar Hamashkim*, he gave the *Sar Hamashkim* an aspect of *midas hazikaron*. However, as soon as the *Sar Hamashkim* forgot Yosef, the *midah* of *zikaron* returned Am Yisrael, and Hashem declared וְאֲנִי לֹא אֲשַׁכַּחְהוּ. I won't forget him.

Chazal tell us, (יומא ל"ה:) That Yosef obligates *reshaim*. In other words, Yosef Hatzadik utilized his great powers to withstand the greatest *nisayon* that a Jew has had to face throughout history, and to defeat the onslaught of the *yetzer hara*. His victory empowers every Jew throughout the generations to withstand any *nisayon* and any attack of the *yetzer hara*.

Yosef's subtle error in giving an aspect of *midas hazikaron* to the *Sar Hamashkim* was repaired by his remaining in prison for two years, enabling Am Yisrael to protect their *zikaron* against any attempts of negative forces to divert our *zikaron* to forbidden memories. All of us can now utilize the power of *zikaron* to become closer to Hashem.



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Each year, we read *parshas Vayeishev* either during or close to Chanukah. Chazal established Chanukah so that we would remember the miracle of the *menorah*, as the Rambam writes:

“If someone had only one coin which he could use either for *kiddush* on Shabbos, or for lighting *ner Chanukah*, purchasing oil for *ner Chanukah* takes precedence over purchasing wine for *kiddush*. Since they are both מצוות מדברי סופרים (Mitzvos D’rabbanan), it is better to give precedence to *ner Chanukah* שיש בו זכרון הנס - for it has in it the remembering of the miracle.”

During the days of Chanukah, we have special *siyata di’shmaya* that can help us acquire the true *midah* of *zikaron* which will enable us to remain connected to Hashem at all times.

The Sfas Emes (מקץ תר"ם) brings a fascinating idea from his grandfather, the *Chidushei Ha’Rim*. The Zohar Hakadosh, (מקץ קצג) explains that the miracle of Chanukah is the exact opposite of Yosef’s weakening the *midah* of *zikaron*. Since the Yevanim had the goal of להשכיחם תורתך - to cause Am Yisrael to forget the Torah. It resulted in Am Yisrael being given more *zikaron*.

This, says the *Chidushei Ha’Rim*, may be what the Chachamim hinted to in the *Sheiltos* (וישלה שאילתא כ"ו ד"ה ברם) “The *mezuzah* is on the right, the *ner Chanukah* on the left, and the *baal habayis* wearing a *talis* with *tzitzis* in the middle. The *mezuzah* and *tzitzis* are both *mitzvos* that help us remember *malchus shamayim*. The word שכחה - forgetting, has the same letters as the word חשכה - darkness. *Zikaron* is light as the *pasuk* says in the *parshah* of *tzitzis* וראיתם...וזכרתם. This is why gazing at *ner Chanukah* brings *zechirah* in the same way that looking at *tzitzis* brings *zechirah*.

Now is the time to strengthen and increase our *midah* of *zikaron*. If we do so, Hashem in his great mercy will bless us with increase *zikaron*. ויעלה זכרונו לטובה לפניו, וימהר ויחיש לגואלנו ויבנה בית מקדשינו ותפארתנו אכי"ר



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