



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

Melave Malka Parshas Bo 5766

In tonight's portion of *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* we find a reference to our *parsha*.

"In the future, the *tzadikim* will sit in *Gan Eden* and Hakadosh Baruch Hu will sit at the head of the *tzadikim*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will bring the light that was hidden for *tzadikim* and increase its illumination three-hundred and forty times. And Yisrael will say before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "This is the light we were looking forward to...Now that you shine your light for us, what is this darkness?" Hakadosh Baruch Hu will tell them, "This darkness will cover the children of Amalek, the children of Yishmael and idolators.

As the *pasuk* says, (ישעיה ס"ב):

כִּי הִנֵּה חֹשֶׁךְ יִכְסֶה אֶרֶץ וְעָרָפֶל לְאֻמִּים וְעַלִּיף יִזְרַח ה' וְקִבֹּדוֹ עָלֶיךָ יֵרָאֶה

For behold the darkness will cover the land and fog will cover the nations, and Hashem will shine upon you, and his honor will be seen upon you.

And we also find that in the redemption from Egypt, the Jews experienced light, while the Egyptians experienced darkness. As it says, (שמות י': כ"ב-כ"ג)

"וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ אֲפֹלָה בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לֹא רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו וְלֹא קָמוּ אִישׁ. תַּחֲתֵּיוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְלֹכֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֵּתָם."

"And there was deep darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. No one saw his brother, and no one rose up from his place for three days. And for Bnei Yisrael, there was light in their dwellings."

(תנא דבי אליהו זוטא כ"א:ז)



[1]

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We must try to understand Bnei Yisrael's question, "Now that you shine your light for us, what is this darkness?" Why should they concern themselves with the darkness if they are basking in the *Or Haganuz* that was hidden for *tzadikim*?

We also need to understand Hakadosh Baruch Hu's response, "This darkness will cover the children of Amalek, the children of Yishmael and idolators". What eternal lesson are we meant to learn from this description?

Eliyahu Hanavi concludes with the Torah's description of *makas choshech* - the plague of darkness. The Toldos Yaakov Yosef (פרשת יתרו ד"ה ונראה) - explains the *pasuk* quoted by Eliyahu Hanavi as follows:

"No one saw his brother, meaning that because of the barrier of darkness, no one saw or paid attention to his fellow man. This is the opposite of how people should relate to each other. A person is supposed to look out for his brothers because of *arvus* - a sense of mutual responsibility. Therefore, the result was, לא קמו איש מתחתיו - no one ascended from *madreiga to madreiga* because the path of a fool is always correct in his eyes, and they considered themselves to be wise."

In other words, the essence of *makas choshech* was the inability of each Egyptian to see his fellow Egyptians. This is a very devastating plague, for if people don't stop to see those around them and, notice what they need, they are truly in a state of deep darkness. For someone who doesn't notice and feel the pain of those around him, won't be able to progress and reach higher *madreigos*.

This concept enables us to gain a new understanding of a *pasuk* in Yeshayahu (ה:ב):

הוי האמרים לרע טוב ולטוב רע שמים חשך לאור ואור לחשך שמים מר למתוק ומתוק למר
"Woe to those who that that evil is good and good is evil. They define darkness as light and light and light as darkness, they define bitter as sweet and sweet as bitter."



[2]

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Who are the people described in this *pasuk*? Is the *navi* dealing with fools who ignore what their eyes see and declare that light is dark and dark is light?

It must be that the *pasuk* is describing someone who suffers from a plague of darkness similar to the one which afflicted the *Mitzrim*. The person described in the *pasuk* doesn't see others. He only sees himself. As far as he is concerned, if he is enjoying life, no one else matters.

Unfortunately, someone with that outlook causes himself great harm. People stay away from a person who is so self-centered. Eventually he will find himself alone, with no one willing to help him in his time of need. He thought he lived in a world of light, but that was because he mistakenly defined darkness as light, and light as darkness.

We can now understand the depth of Elyahu Havavi's words. After Hashem enables Am Yisrael to bask in the light of the *ohr ha'ganuz* they will ask why this darkness was created. Hakadosh Baruch Hu explains that the darkness was given to *bnei Amalek V'Yishmael* and idolators, for they lived as the Egyptians did during *makas choshech*. They didn't see each other or care about the pain or needs of others.

However, Am Yisrael live differently. וְלִכְל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבֵתָם. They care for each other and try to bring goodness and light into the lives of those around them. They share the sorrows of others as well as rejoicing in the joy and success of others.

This is why specifically at the moment that they finally experience the greatest illumination, they ask Hashem about the purpose of darkness. That question expresses their care and concern for those who don't benefit from the *ohr haganuz*.

This is the aspect of Moshe Rabeinu that the Torah emphasizes when first describing his activities (שמות ב:יא) וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אָחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסִבְלָתָם: And Moshe grew up and he went out to his brethren and saw their



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suffering. As Rashi explains, נתן עיניו ולבו להיות מיצר עליהם - he applied his eyes and heart to feeling their pain.

The *Midrash* (שמות רבה ב:י"א) elaborates further.

“He would see their suffering and cry saying, ‘Woe to me for your suffering, would that I could give my life to help you.’ And he would shoulder the burden together with each person in order to help them. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, ‘you set aside your involvements in order to see the suffering of Yisrael, and you treated them as your brothers. I will set aside the *elyonim* and *tachtonim* in order to speak with you.’”

This is the way each Jew should behave. Rather than dwelling in the darkness of לא ראו איש את אחיו, we must focus our eyes and hearts on Am Yisrael, feeling the pain of each Jew with all of our heart and soul.

I often point out a very disturbing phenomenon. Unfortunately, many people suffer from a variety of serious illnesses. Often, their relatives and friends post notices in shuls and in different periodicals, providing the person’s name and his mother’s name, asking people to daven for Hashem to have mercy on him and send him *refua shleima*.

Who prints and distributes these notices? They are our fellow Jews who are overwhelmed with worry and fear. They turn to us, hoping and expecting that those who see their request will join them in davening for their loved one to be healed. Each of us should think back to the countless times we have encountered such notices. Did we stop and daven? Did we write down the name of the *cholim* so that we can include them in our *tefillos*? Where is the empathy that we should have for the suffering of our fellow Jews? Those who posted the notice aren’t asking us to perform physical tasks or to donate money. They simply ask us to daven for *ploni ben plonis*.

How can we calmly glance at those notices and simply move on, ignoring the cry of pain that echoes from that small piece of paper?



[4]

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A few weeks ago, on Erev Shabbos, the tenth of *Teves*, Yerushalayim experienced an unusually severe snowstorm. Many houses lost electricity, and had to endure cold and darkness for days. A person's behavior during those days can serve as a litmus test which reveals how much he cares about his fellow Jews. When his house regained electricity, did he check that the electricity had returned to his neighbors' homes? Did he check if his neighbors needed any kind of assistance? Or was he afflicted by the plague of darkness, seeing only himself and his needs, without caring about anyone else?

We are sitting together at *Meleve Malka*, the *seuda* of David Malka Meshicha. Even though David Hamelech eventually ruled over all Am Yisrael, his initial *chabura* didn't consist of *rabbanim* and *Roshei Yeshivos*.

וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ אֵלָיו כָּל אִישׁ מִצוֹק וְכָל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לוֹ נָשָׂא וְכָל אִישׁ מִרַנֵּשׁ וַיְהִי עֲלֵיהֶם לִשָּׁר
And there gathered to him all men who were in distress and all men who were in debt and all men whose souls were embittered, and he was their leader (שמואל א כ"ב:ב).

His *chabura* consisted of the embittered and the downtrodden, the lowly and the pitiful. David Hamelech cared for them and tried to illuminate the souls of all Am Yisrael so that they too would notice and care for their brethren.

This is also a *seudas sheva brachos*, and the *chassan* is a grandson of the great *chasid* Rav Mendel Gefner zt"l. Every day of Rav Mendel's life was devoted to loving each Jew with all of his heart and soul, and to acts of *gemilus chasadim* whether with his strength, his money, or any of his abilities. Not only did he and his Rebbetzin raise a family of seventeen children in a one and a half room apartment, but they took in orphans, and hosted one lonely, needy person after another. All of this was done wholeheartedly with warmth and a smile.



[5]

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How was it possible? The *Gemara* in *Maseches Sanhedrin* quotes a person who said, “When our love was strong, my wife and I could both sleep on the edge of a sharp sword. Now that our love isn’t strong, a bed of sixty *amos* isn’t big enough for us.” (סנהדרין ז.)

My grandfather *zy”a* told a beautiful story about his dear friend Rav Mendel Gefner *zt”l*.

Rav Mendel established the custom of the mass *Birkas Kohanim* at the *Kotel* on *Chol Hamoed*. My grandfather *zy”a* always went to that *Birkas Kohanim* even though it required *mesirus nefesh* in his older years. One year, he returned from *Birkas Kohanim* and said that he had to tell me something amazing that he observed at the *Kotel*. After *davening* was over, and thousands of *mispallelim* were leaving, he saw Rav Mendel doing all that he could to find someone travelling to a certain far-off destination.

When Rav Mendel finally found someone who was going in that direction, he introduced him to an elderly woman who was standing nearby and asked him to please take her along. My grandfather asked Rav Mendel if this woman was his relative, or came from a family of his close friends. Rav Mendel answered that he didn’t know the woman at all. He simply overheard her searching for someone travelling to that distant location. He knew that it wouldn’t be easy for her to find a ride so he did all that he could to help her.

This story should serve as a lesson to each of us, inspiring us to increase *ahavas Yisrael* for each and every Jew. We must see each other, help each other and encourage each other.

ובזה נזכה שלכל בני ישראל היה אור במושבותם, כשאור חדש על ציון יאיר ונזכה כולנו
במהרה לאורו אכ”ר



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