

לעילוי נשמת ר' אברהם יוסף שמואל אלתר בן ר' טובי ז"ל ורעייתו רישא רחל בת ר' אברהם שלמה ע"ה

תורה תבלין

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שבת קודש פרשת ויחי

Shabbos Parshas Vayechi

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הדלקת נרות שבת - 4:24	(Monsey, NY)	מנחה גדולה / שבת - 12:32
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פתח לבי בתורתך

וישאו את בניו ארצה כנען ויקברו אתו
במערת שדה המכפלה וגו' (ג-יג)

איתא בגמ' (סוטה יג.) מעשה כשהביאו את מיטת יעקב אביו למערת המכפלה לקבור אותו. בא עשו וטען שהמערה שייכת גם לו, כי רק חלק הבכורה מכר ליעקב אבל לא הזכות של מקום קבורה. אמרו לו שמכר את כל זכותו, ושלחו את נפתלי להביא את שטר המכירה שמכר אפי' חלקו במערת המכפלה. היה שם חושים בן דן, ואזניו כבדו משמוע, ושאל מדוע מתעכבים לקבור את יעקב? אמרו לו שמחכים לנפתלי שיביא את השטר ממצרים. א"ל וכי עד אז יהא כבודו של סבא מוטל בבזיון? נטל מקל וכת את ראשו של עשו ע"ש. ויש להבין, מדוע התעורר דוקא חושים בן דן לדאוג לכבודו של יעקב אביו יותר מכל בני יעקב שבטי קה-העומדים שם מול אביהם המוטל בבזיון?

אלא מבאר מרן הגמ"ר חיים שמואלביץ זצ"ל, בס' קובץ שיחות, שבני יעקב עמדו והתווכחו עם עשו, ובכל משפט שאמרו לו חשבו שהם מנצחים אותו וכבר יוכלו לקבור את אביהם, ועי"ז התארך הענין. אמנם יעקב בינתיים מוטל היה בבזיון, וכתוצאה מהתרגלותם למצב הזה, לא חשו בבזיונו.

לא כן חושים בן דן, כבד השמיעה, שלא ידע כלל על הויכוח עם עשו. לעיניו נתגלה המצב של "אבי אבא מוטל בבזיון". ומיד ללא אומר, נטל מקל וכת את ראשו של עשו! לא התרגל למצב, ובטרים יפול ברשת ההרגל, שם קץ לעניו.

ויקרא יעקב אל בניו ויאמר האספו ואגידה לכם
את אשר יקרא אתכם באחרית הימים וגו' (מט-א)

עיין בדעת זקנים מבעלי תוספות שכתבו וז"ל בקש יעקב לגלות הקץ ונסתלקה ממנו שכונה, ותמה ואמר למה אלו אין ראויים לגלות להן הקץ, והלא אין בהם חטא, כלומר, אין בכל שמות השבטים לא "ח" ולא "ט"? השיבו רוח הקודש, גם אין בכל אותיות שמות השבטים לא "ק" ולא "צ", א"כ אין ראויין לגלות הקץ עכ"ל. והדבר הוא להפלא!

ומפרש הרה"ק מו"ה משה גרינוואלד זצ"ל, בס' ערוגת הבשם, עפ"י מה שמבואר בחובות הלבבות, שחסיד אחד אמר לתלמידיו, "אלמלא הייתי יודע שלא חטאתם, הייתי מתירא מדבר שהוא גדול מכל החטאים - היינו הגדלות, שדבר זה שמדמה בנפשו שלא חטא, הוא גדול מכל החטאים." פירוש, על אף שאין הצדיק חוטא ונקי הוא מכל עון, מ"מ עי"ז יכול הוא לבוא לידי התנשאות וגאווה שמורידים את האדם עד שאול תחתית.

והנה יעקב אבינו ע"ה אמר לבניו שנסתלקה הימנו השכינה ואינו יכול לגלות להם הקץ, כמבואר בגמ' (פסחים נו). ובכן היה ראוי לכל אחד ואחד מבניו לפשפש במעשיו ולהרהור בתשובה, כי ברור שמחמת מעשיהם לא היו ראויים לדעת. אמנם מה השיבו? אמרו שאין תיבות "ח" ולא "ט" בשמותם כיון שלא חטאו מעולם. ולזה השיבו רוח הקודש, שגם אין "ק" ו"צ" תלוי בהם, שאין ראוי לגלות להם הקץ, לפי שהם לקויים בחטא הגדלות.

A SERIES IN HALACHAH
LIVING A "TORAH" DAY

הלכה למעשה

Proper Respect for Mitzvos - Handling Tefillin

Last week, we discussed the laws of proper respect for *Tzitzis*. *Tefillin* are even holier and have their own set of even stricter laws. When one puts on his *Tefillin* each day, he should be careful not to let the straps hang down to the floor, and certainly he must never tread on them ⁽¹⁾. Some authorities hold that one should not even let the straps dangle in the air without touching the ground, even for a brief time ⁽²⁾. It is advisable to put on one's *Tefillin* over a table or some other wide surface in order that the straps will never be left hanging down.

It is permitted to put on one's head *Tefillin* by holding just the knot and straps and lowering the *Tefillin* into place. Even though the *Tefillin* may be hanging for a few seconds, it is permitted, because as part of the *mitzvah* of placing the *Tefillin* on the head, it is not considered disrespectful to the *Tefillin* ⁽³⁾. Yet, some are extra stringent and hold the knot in their right hand, the *bayis* (the actual black box - the main part of the *Tefillin*) in the left hand, and place it on their head without the *bayis* hanging even momentarily ⁽⁴⁾.

Avoiding the Ground

One must be extra careful not to put the *bayis* on the ground or floor, nor let it fall there ⁽⁵⁾. Some auditoriums used for *davening* have a raised stage, which is considered a floor

(1) מחצית השקל מ"ד (2) עוד יוסף חי-פרשת חיי שרה יב' ט"ז לאא (4) של"ה תפילין דף ר"א (5) מגן אברהם מג"ג (6) שם (7) מהר"י ברוך קכ"ז (8) שם (9) אליהו רבה מה

and *Tefillin* should not be placed there. If one's *Tefillin bayis* fell onto the floor, it is customary to fast one full day ⁽⁶⁾:

1) It is considered a Heavenly message that one should do *Teshuva* and correct or improve his deeds (which is the purpose of every fast day). 2) - To atone for the negligence involved in the falling of the *Tefillin*.

If one has not yet eaten, he should fast that day and say "ענני" in *Shemona Esrai* ⁽⁷⁾, even though he did not accept the fast the afternoon before, because *Hashem* has put this necessity to fast upon him (like fasting for a bad dream) and no previous acceptance is required. If one already ate that day, or cannot fast that specific day for whatever reason, he should pick the next possible day and accept the fast in *Minchah* of the day before. If one cannot fast at all, he should give to *tzedakah* the approximate worth of one day's food and/or learn extra hours as an atonement ⁽⁸⁾. If the *Tefillin* fell while enclosed in its protective box, it is enough to give a nickel to *tzedakah* and no fasting is necessary ⁽⁹⁾.

WEEKLY CHIZUK # 11

After *Shabbos Parshas Vayechi*, we begin the six weeks of *Chizuk* which have been designated by the Kabbalistic sages (and mentioned by the Halachic sages) as a special time for strengthening oneself in *Tahara* (purity). This refers mainly to purity of the eyes, i.e. being careful not to see inappropriate sights or material. One who is careful in this area, brings upon himself holiness, understanding of *Torah*, and the best blessings in life.

הוא היה אומר...

R' Simcha Bunim of P'shischa ZT"L would say:

"*Hashem* did not allow *Yaakov Avinu* to disclose the 'קץ' - the period of time in the future when the Jews will experience the true *geulah* - redemption. Because in order to do so, he would have to mention the generation preceding *Moshiach*, a generation which will be known for their *chutzpah*, their ignorance and their lack of *mitzvah* observance - and *Hashem* did not want *Yaakov* to say anything bad about *Klal Yisrael*!"

R' Moshe of Premishle ZT"L (Mateh Moshe) would say:

"*Yaakov Avinu* blessed his son *Yosef* with an extra portion which he took from the *Emori* 'בחרבי ובקשתי' - 'with my sword and my bow.' *Chazal* tell us that this refers to *Tefillah* - prayer. Thus, all prayer incorporates both the 'sword' and the 'bow.' Like a bow and arrow, the *pesukei d'zimra* - preliminary psalms of praise, cut through all obstructions, preparing the way for the *Amidah*, which may then reach its mark with all the efficacy of a sharp sword."

R' Chaim Zev Wolf ZT"L would say:

"Don't concern yourself over what is already lost. Instead, guard what you still have."

MAZEL TOV TO MR & MRS MORDECHAI SCHILLER ON MENACHEM BECOMING A BAR MITZVAH
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miracles were attributed to their holy *Chacham*. *Chazal* tell us (תענית ה'): "יעקב אבינו לא מת" - "*Yaakov Avinu never did die*." His presence was, and is, continuously evident within the greater population of Jews all throughout the world, and our nation's very identity - בני ישראל - *Children of Yisroel* - is viewed through our holy Patriarch Yaakov, in name and action. Rabbeinu Hai Tayeb was similarly held in very high regard. In fact, after he passed away, a poem was composed and chiseled on his tombstone, ending with the words: "Ribi Hai Tayeb is not dead, he lives on." As far as the hearts of Tunisian Jewry was concerned, this statement was not an exaggeration; these words actually proved to be prophetic, as well.

The graves of *tzaddikim* have always been popular pilgrimage sites in the Old Country, and stories of the many *Sephardic* righteous men are likewise handed down from parents to children. Today, these stories, transmitted in book form, are the equivalent of religious "best-sellers" in every *Sephardic* community. One of the best-known stories about the great *Chacham* Yitzchok Hai Tayeb, took place in 1942, after the Germans invaded Tunisia to confront the Allied armies stationed in Morocco, Algeria and western Tunisia. The occupation lasted less than a year; but that was ample time for the SS war machine to set up an efficient, true-to-form Nazi operation, which included confiscation of property, creation of local labor camps, and regular shipments of Jews to the European gas chambers.

Towards the end of the occupation, in 1943, the Allies began bombing Tunis every day, hoping to force the Germans to surrender. The city took a massive pounding and the Jews, who had lived through confiscations, hunger, roundups and deportations, were at least fortunate to still have roofs over their heads. But now this, too, threatened to disappear. They had only one resort, which had kept them through centuries of occupations and invasions: heartfelt prayer by the gravesites of the *Chachamim*.

The Jews of the Hara (ghetto) gathered and went in a group to the cemetery, to the grave of their *tzaddik*, *Chacham* Yitzchok Hai Tayeb. The bombers droned toward the city even as they walked and the terrified masses straggled along. Upon arrival at their destination, they started reciting *tehillim* and tearful petitions.

The explosions, distant at first, became louder as the air force hit new targets. The prayers continued and so did the bombing, nearer and nearer to the cemetery. Finally a lone plane flew over the cemetery, with the earsplitting drone of weapon deployment. The huddled Jews froze. The sound was unmistakeable. They threw themselves face down on the ground as a huge bomb began its whistling descent right down on top of their heads. With a tremendous thud, the errant bomb landed beside the gravesite, directly in front of the horrified Jews, and then ... nothing happened! The Jews waited, hearts still. After a hair-raising moment, they looked up and saw half a bomb protruding from the earth. It was a dud! When they grasped what had happened, they jumped up and shouted praises to *Hashem*. Their *tzaddik*, Ribi Hai Tayeb was indeed not dead; he was watching over them at that very moment, protecting them and keeping them alive!

משל למח הדבר רומה

זבולן לחוף ימים ישכן והוא לחף אגיות ישישכר חמר גרם רבץ בין המשתפים וגו' (מט-יג,יד)

משל: One year on *Shavuot* night, the **Beis HaLevi**, **R' Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik ZT"L** came into the *Beis Medrash* and found a wealthy businessman, who was not particularly known for his generous support of *Torah*, saying *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*.

The *Rov* approached him and said, "It is well known that a soldier who abandons his unit in the thick of battle to join another more to his liking is committing a terrible crime. Such a person deserves hanging just like one who deserts the battleground entirely."

R' Yosef Dov turned to the man and said, "Close your *sefer* and go get some sleep. Leave the *Torah* study at this time of night to the *yungeleit* and the

yeshivah students who kill themselves in the tents of *Torah*. You do not belong here!"

נמשל: A man has to understand his place and realize that his role in life may be to be a *Zevulun*, a supporter of *Torah*. He is not be permitted to think of himself as a *Yissachar*, whose job is to toil in the study of *Torah*. He must know that his primary obligation is to support *Torah*, and that in trying to shirk that obligation he is only deluding himself.

For this reason, Yaakov blessed *Zevulun* before *Yissachar*, to announce to the world that a person who is committed to supporting *Torah*, is no less worthy than the person who commits to studying it.

וחד יעקב בארץ מצרים
שבע עשרה שנה וכו' (מ-כז)

Sefer Bereshis is called ספר הישר - *Book of the Just*, as it narrates the lives of our ancestors, whom *Chazal* refer to as ישרים - *Just*. *Bereshis* is the "blueprint" for all Jews; it teaches us how a Jew is supposed to live. This idea is expressed in the name of each unique *parsha*.

The first *parsha* is called **בראשית**, which instills the basic awareness that this world was created for the *Torah* and for *Klal Yisroel*. The second *parsha*, **נח**, alludes to the ultimate objective in the world's creation: to bring נחת רוח - *pleasure*, to *Hashem* by fulfilling His desire. **לך לך**, describes the dynamics of how this is done: The soul is forced to "go out" - to leave the spiritual realms and become ensconced in a corporeal body, where it must transcend the level it has already attained and climb to the next. **וירא** refers to *Hashem's* special revelation to every Jewish soul, which assists us in our Divine mission. Just like Sarah - **חיי שרה** - who lived 127 years, which is a mystical allusion to the soul's powers. Once *Hashem* gives us these capabilities, we are then able to create **תולדות** - *descendants*, as *Chazal* write: "*The descendants of the righteous are their good deeds*."

Now, a Jew's service is further elucidated in the next *parsha*, **ויצא**, which describes *Yaakov Avinu's* journey from Beersheva to Charan; a reference to a Jew's spiritual journey to even the lowest levels of existence for the purpose of elevating them. A Jew must then send out "messengers" to Esav - **וישלח** - symbolic of the antithesis of holiness, to purify and refine these realms as well. **וישב** alludes to *Bnei Yisroel* living in peace and tranquility, by **מקץ** - *the end*, the successful completion of our mission. All Jews will then draw close to *Hashem* - **ויגש** - which will culminate in eternal life - **ויחי** - with the resurrection of the dead. (מפי השמועה)

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ויכל יעקב לצות את בניו ויאסף רגליו אל המטה ויגוע ויאסף אל עמיו וגו' (מט-לג)

Every traditional *Sephardic* community has its favorite *Chachamim*, *Poskim* and/or *Kabbalists* who become almost legendary figures of towering stature, with the passing of every generation. They are an inseparable part of the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Jewish heritage, who never knew an irreligious, "enlightened" culture, as did many of their European counterparts. These *Sephardic Chachamim* are perceived as heroes among their people. They are not only part of the community; they have always been part of the individual Jew who identifies with them and takes strength and example from them.

The great *Chacham* of Tunis, **Rabbeinu Yitzchok Hai Tayeb ZT"L** was one of these beloved rabbis. He was born in Tunis in 1743 into a family of *Chachamim* and served the Tunis community for many long years, until his death at the age of 94, in 1837. His community adored him and hung onto his every word and many

TORAH GEMS

אחד אדם כי עז ועברתם כי קשתה
אזולקם ביעקב ואפיצם בישראל (מט-י)

Rashi writes: "*We do not find paupers, scribes and school teachers, except from (Shevet) Shimon, in order for them to be dispersed. While the tribe of Levi, who was required to make the rounds of the threshhouses for Terumos and Maasros (tithes), was dispersed in a honorable manner.*" *Yaakov Avinu* understood that Shimon and Levi had an issue with controlling their anger and thus, it was imperative for them to be separated, lest they band together and cause destruction. But was it absolutely necessary for *Shevet Shimon* to become paupers and *Shevet Levi* to become reliant on their Jewish brethren, in order to properly separate them?

In *Pirkei Avos* (ב-ו), *Chazal* teach us: "אין הקפן מלמד" - "*An irritable person cannot teach.*" Why? Says **R' Meir Dan Plotzky ZT"L (Kli Chemdah)**, because who is going to listen to the rants of an angry teacher? No one. Thus, Yaakov in his great wisdom, devised an iron-clad plan to rid his two sons of their ignominious trait of anger. By "blessing" Shimon that his descendants become penniless school teachers, he forced them to moderate their behavior since who would hire an out-of-control *rebbe* to teach his children? The same goes for Levi. If he was to be dependent on the masses, he had no choice but to tone down his rhetoric, since who would open the door for a man with a raging fury, let alone supply him with food?

R' Moshe Sternbuch Shlit'a adds that in society it is common to find wealthy tradesmen and *baalei batim* embroiled in dispute. Thus, Shimon and Levi had to be poor *rebbeim* living off the largesse of their brethren, for had they been rich businessmen, their fierce tempers might have consumed the entire nation!