

**Reb Pinchas
Imrie Pinchas
Parshas Bo**

Siman #88

And there was darkness [etc.] over all the land of Egypt, etc., but for all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings (Exodus 10:23). The *Ohr HaChaim* explains that this light was from the hidden light (*Ohr HaGanuz*), see there. He further clarifies that this very light itself darkened Egypt. This follows what was explained elsewhere (above, *Milchamos Hashem, Sal, 103*) in the name of the Rav, regarding how light blinds the eyes of the *kelipot* (forces of impurity), as they cannot endure an excess of light. For all the impure forces can see at night, which belongs to the domain of Gehinnom, whereas a bat cannot see at all during the day, because daylight is from the domain of Gan Eden. This is also reflected in the intent of the prayer *Aleinu* (as recorded in the *Siddur of Salari* according to *Rav Rikki* of blessed memory), where one bows deeply to draw down light, which blinds the *kelipot*, as they cannot tolerate it.

This also explains the verse in *Parashat Beshalach* (Exodus 14:20), "And there was the cloud and the darkness, and it illuminated the night." All of this is one concept: that the very same light that illuminated for Israel darkened for Egypt, as they could not bear it and were blinded. This is also what is written (Isaiah 60:2), "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the nations, but upon you shall shine the light of Hashem." And the matter of the revelation of the *Ohr HaGanuz* (the hidden light) in Egypt is as follows: This light is specifically hidden within great troubles and darkness—precisely there is the light concealed. Therefore, since Israel was close to the forty-ninth gate of impurity, the light was revealed.

Everything in the world depends on the *Ohr HaGanuz*, and without it, the world would not be sustained. As stated in the *Zohar (Terumah 149b)*: "If it were entirely concealed, the world would not exist even for a single moment... and there is no day that does not draw from it, sustaining everything, and through it, the Holy One, Blessed be He, nourishes His world," see there.

Thus, even sustenance (*parnasah*) is drawn from the *Ohr HaGanuz*. Therefore, a person should conduct his livelihood with modesty, just as the early righteous wealthy individuals would conceal their wealth, unlike today. As it is stated (*Taanit 8b*), "Blessing is found only in something that is hidden from the eye." And the reason is that since it comes from the *Ohr HaGanuz* (the hidden light), it must remain concealed and modest. Likewise, it is stated in the Gemara (*Ketubot 66b*) that one should not overly indulge himself.

Therefore, it is stated in the Midrash (*Kohelet Rabbah 3:12*) on the verse "*Hope to Hashem*" (*Psalms 27:14*)—even a hundred times. That is, if a person prays many times

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for something and is not answered, he should continue praying and not despair, since everything depends on the *Ohr HaGanuz*. And since it is revealed in the world daily, as stated in the *Zohar*, it is possible that at a particular moment the light will be revealed to a person, and immediately his request will be fulfilled. For something that is hidden, one cannot know when it will be revealed.

He (of blessed memory) said: Nonetheless, it is somewhat implied that before dawn, prior to sunrise, the *Ohr HaGanuz* is revealed. That is an auspicious time for each person to ask for his needs (as I heard in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory).

And even in the matter of serving Hashem, it is best to do so with modesty. As it is written elsewhere in the name of *Morenu Harav* Raphael, of blessed memory, quoting the Rav, of blessed memory: "Blessing rests only on something that is hidden from the eye." This means that what is recognized above is only that which no person knows. This, too, follows the reason mentioned earlier—that Torah and the service of Hashem come from the *Ohr HaGanuz* (the hidden light), and therefore, divine service should be concealed. Even though great and renowned *tzaddikim* had their good deeds and Torah teachings revealed publicly, nevertheless, what was concealed in their hearts was far greater than what they revealed to the world. As it is recorded regarding the *Arizal*, he said about himself that when new Torah insights would come to him, he was often unable to express them at all before his students due to the overwhelming abundance. He would seek a fine, narrow conduit (*tzinoor dak*) through which he could share just a small portion. And even in the little that he did say, the essence remained concealed. See *Shivchei HaArizal* (folio 3:3).

Similarly, the Rav, of blessed memory, when his sons recounted to him that the *Arizal* had said that if he were able, he could expound for eighty years and still not reveal all that he had received in a single dream about the section of the *aton* (*Balaam's donkey*), he replied: "Why is this surprising to you? Believe me, when a small insight (*shtikele mo'ach*) would come to me, I would not be able to express it even in a hundred years." Thus, it is evident that the essential wisdom and spirituality remained hidden in their hearts, and so was the conduct of all the great *tzaddikim*. And it was told from Rabbi Moshe, Rabbi Nachmanish, of blessed memory (who needed the teachings of the Rav, of blessed memory, but did not attain his level). He recounted that *Morenu Harav* Raphael, of blessed memory, was once with him on *Shabbat Parashat Terumah* and expounded on the verse "And this is the offering" (*Vezot HaTerumah*, Exodus 25:3). He explained the letters: the letter Zayin alludes to such-and-such, the letter Aleph alludes to such-and-such, and likewise for the letter Tav. Then he said: "If I wanted to explain

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what the letter Zayin truly means, I would need seven years to do so" (in another version: "I would not be able to explain it even in seven years").

And since the *Ohr HaGanuz* (the hidden light) is concealed within all afflictions, when a person believes that even within his suffering, Hashem is present, then he is freed from his suffering. As it is brought in the book of the Rav of Polnoye (*Yesod Yosef*, folio 26, column 20) regarding Nachum Ish Gamzu and Rabbi Akiva, see there. And Rabbi Moshe, may he live, the son of the Rav, of blessed memory, said in the name of the Rav, of blessed memory, that within the rebuke (*tochacha*) in the Torah are all the greatest blessings and salvations concealed. Because of the overwhelming intensity of the light, it must be hidden within an extremely thick covering—namely, the curses written there.

Thus, the greater the afflictions, the more the *Ohr HaGanuz* (the hidden light) is concealed within them. And before the coming of Mashiach, speedily in our days, G-d willing, this light will be revealed, for light shines from afar, and certainly, the wicked will suffer a great downfall.

This is the meaning of "From within distress"—specifically, "He brought them redemption and relief" (*from the Selichot: "Yisrael Noshah"*). This was the outcry of Rabbi Shlomo of Heisin, of blessed memory.

Siman #89

"But against all the children of Israel, no dog shall sharpen its tongue"
(Exodus 11:7).

I heard from Rabbi Raphael, of blessed memory, that they asked the righteous Rabbi Lipa of Chemlnik, of blessed memory, how to interpret this verse in terms of divine service (*avodah*).

He answered: The explanation is "Let a person not be 'divided' into two"—meaning, one should not have a split nature (*nehalok leshnayim*). Rather, "his tongue should be like that of a dog"—i.e., he should be loyal and consistent, not speaking one way with his mouth and another way in his heart (not being deceitful or two-faced).

Siman #90

"And you shall guard the matzot" (Exodus 13:17).

Just as one must not let matzot become leavened, so too one must not delay performing mitzvot (*Mekhilta*). In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: Just as matzah, when it becomes leavened, is not only no longer a mitzvah to eat but even

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incurs the penalty of *karet*, so too with a mitzvah that is delayed—it loses its proper essence and may even become a transgression.

Therefore, he would sanctify the new moon at the earliest possible time, even if it was not the most ideal moment, and likewise, he would pray at the first possible time rather than delaying—understand this well.

Siman #91

"And a woman shall ask from her neighbor and from the one who dwells in her house silver and gold vessels, and garments. And you shall place them..."
(Exodus 3:22).

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: It is difficult to understand—was it not stated that the Israelites did not change their clothing (*Pesikta Zutarta*, Shemot 6:6)? If so, how could they have worn Egyptian garments?

He answered: The Israelites themselves did not change their clothing, but the Egyptians did—some of them had worn the clothing of the Israelites. And it was precisely those garments that the Israelites requested from them.

Siman #92

"And I have descended to rescue them" (Exodus 3:8).

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* explains that during the Egyptian exile, the Israelites descended into the forty-ninth gate of impurity (*Mem-Tet Sha'arei Tumah*). Had they entered the fiftieth gate, they would have been completely lost, G-d forbid.

For this reason, they only reached the forty-nine gates of holiness but were not granted access to the fiftieth gate of holiness (*Sha'ar HaNun*). This was because they were not yet a nation of Torah. However, in this final exile, through the power of Torah, it is possible to refine and elevate even the fiftieth gate of impurity. And through this process, they will merit the fiftieth gate of holiness as well. See there for further explanation. And he, of blessed memory, said in the name of Rabbi Shlomo of Heisin that the statement (see *Pesikta Zutarta*, Shemot 6:6, and *Parashat Tetzaveh* on "I will take you for Me as a nation")—that Israel was redeemed from Egypt because of four things: they did not change their names, their language, their clothing, etc.—these very four things are, in essence, the Fiftieth Gate (*Sha'ar HaNun*) itself.

Had they transgressed these four things, they would have sunk into the Fiftieth Gate of Impurity and been irredeemable. And he, of blessed memory, asked: How is it possible that in this exile, people will enter the Fiftieth Gate and through it achieve refinement?

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Does this mean, G-d forbid, that they must transgress the Torah by changing their clothing and language—just as, unfortunately, we see happening before our eyes with so many? Can it be that through this they will attain purification? Rather, the explanation is that those righteous individuals who strengthen themselves not to transgress these four matters, not to change their names, language, or clothing, despite how widespread this breach has become in our times, it is through them that the refinement of the exile will take place. Therefore, we must strengthen ourselves greatly in this matter—not to alter our dress, our language, or even the slightest movement from the ways we have received from our ancestors.

[NOTE: In the days of the holy Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, of blessed memory, the government issued a decree concerning Jewish clothing, seeking to enforce changes. However, he, of blessed memory, risked his life not to alter the garments of Israel. They asked him, "From where do you derive such resolve?" He answered: "I possess a manuscript from Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz," where it is written regarding the statement of our Sages that our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt due to three merits [and he recited the entire passage written above. -It is further written there that in the footsteps of Mashiach, the final redemption will come in the merit of those few individuals who sacrifice themselves not to change the Jewish attire. **END NOTE]**

Siman #93

"Sanctify to Me every firstborn" (Exodus 13:3).

From *Morenu Harav* Raphael, in the name of Rabbi Lipa of Chemlnik, of blessed memory:

The verse can be understood as follows: When will every firstborn be sanctified? That is, when you view every person as if they are a firstborn compared to yourself—meaning, you regard others as greater and more esteemed than yourself (*alter n'd*—an elder over you).

In other words, true sanctity comes through humility, when one sees others as superior, thereby fostering respect and self-refinement.