

Sefer Bamidbar

THE RAHMANI FAMILY EDITION

FOR THE HATZLACHA, HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS
OF OUR FAMILY AND ALL KLAL YISROEL

פרשת פינחס

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Light of Renewal

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Part I. Our Light

The Rosh Chodesh Present

Every Rosh Chodesh, during the *mussaf tefillah* we quote the following words from this week's *sedrah*: וּשְׁעִיר עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת לַיהוָה – On the first day of every month one male of the goats is brought as a sin-offering to Hashem (Pinchas 28:15). And when we say those words we are expected to remind ourselves about one of the most important functions of the first day of the month, that it's a זְמַן כְּפָרָה לְכָל תּוֹלְדָתָם – a special time set aside for achieving atonement for whatever we did wrong the past thirty days. And even today, when there's no Beis Hamikdash anymore, that still remains the function of Rosh Chodesh (Cusari 3:5).

That's why we say רָאשֵׁי הַחֳדָשִׁים לְעֹמֶד נִתַּתְּ – You, Hashem, gave Rosh Chodesh to your people. *Nasata* means that You gave it to us as a gift. And what is the gift of Rosh Chodesh? The *siddur* tells us right away, זְמַן כְּפָרָה לְכָל תּוֹלְדָתָם – it's a day of atonement, a miniature Yom Kippur.

The Monthly Jolt

Do you know why it's a day of atonement? Because all of a sudden we get a jolt – we become aware that a month has passed by! “Oy vey, a month! What did I accomplish this past month? In very many cases, nothing at all! And maybe I did worse than nothing – maybe I did some sins too.”

That's why when Rosh Chodesh comes along it's good to keep in mind that it's an opportunity to make up for all the errors of the past month. Not for the entire year – that's Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – but at least for the month that just passed. The wise Jew utilizes his Rosh Chodesh; he looks back on the past month and considers whether he made any mistakes, whether he was disloyal to the Torah in any way.

At least five minutes you should give to thinking about the past month: “Did I live in the most successful manner available to me?” Of course, five minutes is not nearly enough. If you only gave five minutes for inventory on your business you won't be able to succeed – but at least it's something! If you do it for five minutes every Rosh Chodesh, then you're already a head taller than the rest of the people.

The One Minute Baal Teshuva

Even one minute is something! If you're serious about it, then even in one minute you can become a *baal teshuva*. Like when they write a *get*, the Rav who is *mesader* the *get* brings in two kosher Jews and they have to be *eidim* (witnesses). And before they start, he

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tells them, “Be *meharher b’teshuva*.” That’s what the Rav tells the two *eidim*, “Think about doing *teshuva* for a minute.” Now, the *eidim* didn’t have *aseres yemei teshuva*. They didn’t have Elul. So what’s going on here? It’s serious business to do *teshuva*! In this one minute before they read and sign the *get*, they’ll be able to become *baalei teshuva*?

The answer is yes! Certainly! And the Chofetz Chaim added, he said that they’ll do it even for just a couple of dollars. That’s how it was, the *eidim* were paid – that’s why they’re doing it. For a few dollars they’ll do *teshuva*. And it’s still something! It’s such a something that they’re kosher *eidim* now! And so you see that in one minute a person can become very great. In five minutes, even greater. Imagine what dedicating one day every month can do for a person’s stature in the next world!

Questions and Progress

Did I make progress in *bein adam lamokom* this past month? What happened with my *tefillah*? What about my learning? How did I behave when it came to my obligation to give *tzedakah*? How did I use my Shabbosim this month? Did I spend at least a few minutes at each *seudah* thinking about what Shabbos is trying to teach me? What about Hakodosh Boruch Hu? Did I think about Him enough? That’s a question you probably haven’t asked yourself – most people forget about that question even when Yom Kippur comes.

Did I accomplish in *bein adam lachaveiro*? Did I wrong my fellow man? Did I make mistakes in dealing with my neighbors? Also, how did I behave to people on the street? How was my behavior between me and the members of my family? How did I speak to my wife or my husband this month? Did I say something I shouldn’t have on the first day of the month that just passed? What about the second day? And the third day. Think about the wrong things you said, the wrong way you reacted.

Now, I know you don’t do it – that’s why it’s a good thing you came here tonight. I’m talking to myself too – it’s easy to say but it’s not too hard to do, only you have to know that this is what Rosh Chodesh is for;

you have to utilize this special day that the Borei gave to us.

The People of the Moon

Now we have to note that *lamcha nasata* – Hashem gave Rosh Chodesh as a special gift to his nation; it’s something unique for us – the world doesn’t make any fuss about the moon because they follow the sun in their calculations. We are the ones who follow a lunar calendar and celebrate the renewal of the moon; and we’ll see now that the Torah even chooses the moon to be a symbol of the Am Yisroel.

Everybody knows that once a month we go outside and make a special blessing on the renewal of the moon. And when we make that *bracha* we say as follows: *וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר* – Hashem spoke to the moon, *שְׁתַּחֲוֶה* – and He commanded that it should renew itself, *עֲטֶרֶת תְּפָאֶרֶת לְעַמּוּסֵי בֶטֶן* – to be a symbol, a crown of glory for those who have been carried from the belly. “Carried from the belly” is the Am Yisroel, like Yeshaya (46:3) describes us, *הָעַמּוּסִים מִנִּי בֶטֶן* – the nation that has been borne by Hakodosh Boruch Hu since its inception.

It means that the moon was created for us, as a sign of our function in this world. That’s why when Hakodosh Boruch Hu was about to create the moon, He said it should be *לְהָאִיר עַל הָאָרֶץ ... לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים* – it should be for signs, and for appointed times ... and to give light (Bereishis 1:14-15). It says there as clear as could be – the moon is an *os*, a symbol of something.

The Calendar in the Sky

Now, that the moon is for “appointed times,” that it’s a calendar for us, that we understand. Dovid HaMelech points that out: *עָשָׂה יְרַח לְמוֹעֲדִים* – He made the moon for our festivals (Tehillim 104:19). It means that Hashem hung a Jewish calendar in the sky just for the Jewish people. Imagine that you would see a great calendar suspended in space; a Jewish calendar! And its pages are inscribed with stars instead of letters and it’s telling you when Pesach will fall out, when Shavuos and Sukkos will fall out. That’s exactly what it is! The moon tells us when *rosh chodesh* is and from that we know all the *moadim*, all the holidays.

And so if a Yisroel, a Jew, let's say in Soviet Russia doesn't have a calendar but he knows a little of calculations, so more or less he can understand when the *moadim* are approaching. He looks up in the sky and he sees a calendar that was created for him. That's what it means that the moon is *lemoadim*.

The Nightlight in the Sky

And *lehair*, to give light, that too is simple. We understand that the moon is a nightlight for us. It's a bedroom lamp that Hakodosh Boruch Hu hung for us in the sky. That's why it's smaller than the sun. Naturally a bedroom lamp has to be small.

When you go to somebody's home to sleep and he wants to give you a nightlight he won't give you a huge lamp that illuminates the room like the sunshine. You want a quiet little light, enough that in case you want to sleep with the light on you could. It's not too strong that it should keep us awake but it's just big enough to help us out if we have to go out on the street. If your wife or the children want to sleep comfortably they can – the moonlight won't disturb them – but you still have enough light to go to the *beis hamedrash*. That's *lehair*; the moon is a lightbulb for us.

The Lessons in the Sky

But you'll note that the purpose of being a calendar and illuminating the earth are written after *le'osos*. The first one, the most important purpose, is *le'osos* – *it's going to be a sign*. It means that among all of the benefits we get from the moon, the greatest is that it's supposed to be used as a sign, a symbol – it represents ideas that we're expected to study.

Now don't be surprised at this; be patient with me and get used to hearing this fundamental principle of the Torah – the Am Yisroel is the purpose of creation and that means that even something as natural and scientific as the moon was actually hung in the sky to teach the Am Yisroel lessons for life.

Now, the most evident lesson is the one we mention every month at *kiddush levanah*. We look up at the moon that is renewing itself now – it's the beginning of the month and the moon is visible again

– and we have to know that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is telling us something.

The Chief Function

Did you ever wonder about that? Why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu make such a thing, a luminary that waxes and wanes? After all, if the moon is meant to be just a nightlight, so a night lamp you need the whole month. Why does it wax and wane?

So right away you'll tell me that it's the motions of our calendar. It's true but that's not all. Maybe you'll say that the phases of the moon control many things – the moon has very many beneficial effects on this earth. Do you know that the moon controls the tides? And it plays a role in many other functions of the earth that are very important for us.

But that's not the most important function of the waxing and waning of the moon. Listen to this *chiddush* – it's in the blessing we say when we stand outside and look up at the moon. וְלִלְבָנָה אָמַר שְׁתַּחַדְדֶיךָ – Hashem told the moon to renew itself, עֲטֹרַת תְּפִאָּרַת לְעַמּוּסֵי בְּטָן, – so that it should be a crown of glory for the Am Yisroel, שְׁהֵן עֲתִידִין לְהִתְחַדֵּשׁ בְּמוֹתָהּ – a sign, an os, that they too will someday be renewed exactly like the moon renews itself. We may become smaller and sometimes it seems that we're invisible in the world, that we're not noticed. But we are destined to come out in our full glory. וְלִפְאֹר וְלִיֹּצְרֵם עַל שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלִכְוֹתוֹ – One day we're going to glorify the Creator because of the splendor of His kingdom.

All For Us

That's the purpose of the moon; it's an os, a testimony. And that's part of the Rosh Chodesh lessons, to take note of its reappearance as a symbol that our nation which is now dispersed among the nations without a country of our own will someday come back together. Even though we are all in *golus* someday we will all come back together and we will shine again like the moon when it reappears in the beginning of the month. It's an os that we will also reappear in history and we will illuminate the world.

Yes, that big phenomenon of the moon was put into space to serve as a symbol for the history of the

Am Yisroel! Now I know that this seems exaggerated to our modern day ears; but that's why you come here. In this place we de-Americanize our minds! Absolutely it's all due to a plan – and it's a plan that centers around the Am Yisroel.

And that's why Rosh Chodesh is such an important part of our lives. Because we can only achieve the future glory that is set aside for us if we make use of the analogy between the Am Yisroel and the moon. That's what Rosh Chodesh is intended to be – a day dedicated to *hischadshus*, to renewing ourselves for *avodas Hashem* by means of studying the moon the way Hakodosh Boruch Hu intended. That's the most appropriate way of making the day a *zman kaparah lechol toldosam*.

Part II. The Darkness

World of Darkness

Now we should follow this analogy and study it a little further. Because if the Am Yisroel is symbolized by the moon, we have to ask ourselves, why was the nighttime chosen for its appearance? The moon that symbolizes the Am Yisroel is *l'memsheles halaylah*, it rules at night, and if the domain of moon is in darkness we have to study that.

And now we come to one of the great secrets of creation – it's a secret that helps us better understand the function of Rosh Chodesh as a day of *teshuva* and renewal in our *avodas Hashem*.

We'll begin with a gemara in Bava Metzia (83b); our sages bring a *possuk* from Tehillim (104:20), תָּשַׁח וְיָהִי לַיְלָה – You, Hashem, made the darkness and it became night, and they tell us that it's not talking only about the darkness that comes every evening – it's talking about this world in general: *Zeh olam hazeh hadomeh l'laylah* – this world is a night which means that it's a place where we do not see. We live in a world in which the truth is concealed.

Designed Darkness

It's very important to get that into our heads. When you walk outside in the afternoon, in broad

daylight, you have to realize that it's midnight; it's pitch dark and you're not seeing anything. It means that from one end of the world to the other, *Olam Hazeh* is a place of falsehood. And unless you make the effort to be a light in the darkness, to see things as they really are, you'll remain lost all your life.

Now we should pay attention to this *possuk* because it says *tashes* – You made the darkness. It doesn't say it became dark, that it happened by accident. That's a fundamental understanding of this world: You, Hashem, You're the Creator of everything, and You intentionally made the darkness of *Olam Hazeh*. It's not an accident – it's Your plan from the beginning, to make this a world where the truth is buried under a huge mountain of falsehood.

Darkness of Dharma

That's easy to see immediately because the majority of the world are either Christians, Mohammedans or Hindus, the Far Eastern religions. Now, the Far Eastern religions, all of them are idol worshipers. If you study them a little bit – not the way they're presented by fakers who come to America to get money and glory – but when you go back to their origin you'll see that it's nothing but idol worship. And a lot of wickedness too; all the attendant evils of idolatry.

The truth is that up until recently this *dharma*, this “way of life” included burning the widow of a husband who had just died. That's part of their religion – in order that the widows should go to the next world with her husband they would burn her alive. There was one king who died and they burned 2,000 of his widows alive.

And it didn't stop because they reformed it. No! What happened? The Mohammedans came with scimitars, with their swords – the Mohammedans know no *chochmas* – and they started chopping off heads. And then the British came too with their bullets and that's how it stopped. Otherwise it would still continue today because idolatry is wickedness incarnate. That's the Far East; it's only a sample but it tells you all you need to know about the cloud of darkness that covers a large part of the world.

The Tremendous Lie

But it's not only out there in the Far East. Because when you come to Western Civilization you see that the developed world in large part believes in a fairy tale. The plain truth is that Christianity is a fable – the whole thing is a manufactured story; all lies from beginning to the end. The New Testament is nothing but one huge web of lies.

When you see great cathedrals, you have to know that they're monuments to a tremendous lie! Big churches, with large congregations, all dedicated to *sheker*. Now of course American Jews need a lot of retraining to understand that. They want to say, "Well, we don't believe in him but we're not going to be so extreme like that and say such things." Oh no! In this place we say the truth and the truth is that **הַשָּׁמַיִם הָאֵלֹהִים** – Hashem blanketed the whole world with this lie. That's exactly what it is, only that I'm understating it.

A Wicked Fraudster

And then you go into the realm of Islam; dense darkness again! Here you have a big liar who claims he was standing on the mountain of the Beis Hamikdosh with a horse and his horse took off through the clouds, and hundreds of millions of people all over the world have fallen for it hook, line and sinker.

Mohammed constantly preached that every word in the Koran was revealed to him by Allah. "Every word!" he said. This fraud who said, "How wicked is the person who claims that the Almighty spoke to him if He didn't speak to him," he claimed that to him Allah revealed every word in the Koran!

Now, if you look in the Koran, you see what a liar he is, what an ignoramus he was. But you have to know there are two billion people – billion! – who follow the Koran. So therefore when we say that this world is a place of darkness, it's not difficult to understand.

Darkness of Evolution

We can go further. Today it's easier to see that it's a dark world because the whole world is filled with universities teaching evolution. The theory of evolution is the darkest of all theories and it covers

the world. On all sides, there's a loud din as if it was a *davar poshut*, an accepted fact! It's considered the standard teaching of science today everywhere!

And the truth is that it's as silly as can be. It's so ridiculous that people should be bulldozed by the fairy tale that reptiles became birds. "It was an accident," they say. "Reptiles came out of the water and became land reptiles. Then they saw that they were being pursued by enemies and needed a place of refuge and so they looked at the trees and thought, 'How good it would be if I could fly up into the tree,' and so they started flipping their flippers or their scales and after millions of years of attempts, it finally turned into feathers."

Where Are the Evolvers?

Anybody who could think even a little bit should ask: During these millions of years – before they grew feathers; they couldn't fly yet – how did they survive? Or, "Why isn't it happening today? Why did it happen only millions of years ago?" If you walk into the university and grab the professor by his long hair and say, "Where is there a case of one reptile, just one little poor reptile, maybe somewhere in Africa, whose scales are turning into feathers? If it happens by accident, why isn't it happening now?!" It's such an open question!

So he tells you, "Oh, it takes millions of years for that transition. It doesn't happen all of a sudden."

So alright, millions of years. But millions of years weren't only millions of years ago. We're in the middle of millions of years right now, so let's see where it's happening right now, at least a little bit. Let's see a reptile who's half feathers and half scales. At least a tenth feathers and nine tenths scales.

Halls of Filth

That's why the colleges today – today more than ever before – are the filthiest. Much filthier than the New Testament and the Koran. If you walk into a university; when you walk out you have to air your garments, by the way. When you pass by Brooklyn College, sometimes you might have to walk by, it

smells to high heavens – you have to hold your nose as you pass by.

You can imagine as if the halls are piled high with horse manure up to the ceiling. And it's fresh and steaming and the professors are wading through it, and they're up to their hips in it. Not only that, they are washing their faces with it, and they're stuffing it down the mouths of the boys and girls.

Not only because of the darkness of evolution that fills its lecture halls. Here is a dean of the black studies. A new subject, black studies! Soul music! Other important subjects that the world needs very much. And not only are worthless subjects being taught but there's great wickedness too – the worst subjects, *chayvei kares*, are taught and raised up on a pedestal.

Lowlife Heroes

Karl Marx is *lehavdil* the Moshe Rabbeinu of the university world today. He gave them the Torah of Communism. And Karl Marx was a rotten character, a very wicked character. He was a man who went around wheedling money from people, not paying back. If you didn't want to lend him any more money, he used to curse you. He brought an illegitimate child into the world and he refused to admit it. He was a man who looked to make trouble everywhere, an unpleasant fellow from every aspect. And here in this world, in the darkness of the world, Karl Marx is a respected name.

And today when you leave the university campus and you walk on the street, you're also bathing in a great pool of blackness and falsehood. How could it be that a criminal, a lowlife, becomes a hero? Here's a man who came into a bank and he shot down the bank guards, fathers of little children. He shot them in cold blood!

The police rushed in and tried to save the situation so they put a bullet through this fellow. What happens? This piece of filth, the hold-up man, is given a royal funeral the next day. All the sob sisters in New York City, in Manhattan, come and shed tears for him. The poor man, a victim of circumstance. Slum conditions, under-privileged class. Thousands of people come

and they have a flower-bedecked car bearing his remains, and they're walking and shedding tears. You know that those tears are dynamite to destroy society? Such tears are tears that will cause billions of others tears to come, justified tears!

If a crook is gunned down, there shouldn't be tears. On the contrary, it says *ba'avod reshaim rinah* – when the wicked go lost there should be singing. When people read in the newspapers that he was gunned down, they should say “good for him!”. They should be happy and say, “*Lechaim! Kein yovdu kol oyvecha Hashem*; such should be the *sof* of all of them.

But the world just sits like dumb oxen by the radio with their mouths open and listen as the propaganda pours into their heads. They accept all the lies and all the darkness and all the falsehood that paid performers are pouring in on the airways and their minds are becoming corrupted and stultified and stuffed with garbage more and more.

The Best People

And of course, I can't leave this subject without mentioning the greatest darkness of all, the misconception which the world has formed of the Jewish people. You know, even if you're not a great patriot of the Am Yisroel, but you're a fair spectator, you'll see that they're generally a decent people. Everyone knows more or less that Jews don't commit violence. Observant Jews are not hooligans. We don't attack people. We're not housebreakers. We don't mug anyone. We're not murderers. Observant Jews, in general, are safe people. When you walk on the Jewish street at night, it's the safest place to be.

Even on Purim when Jews stagger out of the *shtibel*, nobody's afraid. If you walk by a café when *goyim* stagger out, then you have to make a detour, no question about it. But drunken Jews are safe! The only danger is they might kiss you.

And the truth is that this is not a fair evaluation of the Jewish people. It doesn't even begin to show any appreciation for them – it's the most superficial way of looking at them. They're actually infinitely better than that.

And yet, there's no people in the world that have been described in such terrible terms as the Jewish people. It's a fact! We are the most vilified nation of all – vilified means we're made into villains. The best are considered the worst! Which means that the people are walking in a dense darkness – they're not aware that it's nothing but a tremendous falsehood; one big lie from the beginning to the end.

The Little Moon

And we're learning now that it was all planned this way from the beginning. Tashes choshech – He made all of this darkness. And He made it because of us! We're here in this world to be tested and see how much we are going to try and discover the truth. That's the function of the Jew; to live in a world of darkness and remain the little moon that shines in the night.

That's why the moon symbolizes the Jewish nation – because we have to be the light in the darkness. And that's why on every Rosh Chodesh we stop to make an accounting – the moon that is being renewed now and begins to shine now once again reminds us to make a *cheshbon* with ourselves about how this darkness is affecting our lives and whether we're succeeding in our mission of seeing through the *Olam Hazei hadomeh li'laylah*.

Part III. Illuminating the Darkness

The Great Darkness

Now, the Am Yisroel is symbolized by the moon in the night not only because of the light they are expected to shine into the darkness of the outside world. It's true, that's a very important function of our lives but there's another darkness that is much worse – more than the darkness of the scientists and the false religions, more than the darkness of the universities and the street – the darkness that's most difficult to see through, the truth that's most difficult to search out and discover is *the truth about one's self*.

That's the most difficult of all – the greatest of all dangers is the danger of being deceived about oneself, of not recognizing who we really are. There are good people who are doing wicked things all the time and don't realize it! And that's because when it comes to oneself, not only is it dark but you're totally blind.

It states in the Torah (Devarim 16:19) הַשֹּׁחַד יְעוּר עֵינַי הַחֲכָמִים – *bribes blind the eyes of even wise men*. It means that there's no such as taking a bribe and remaining impartial. Impossible! And what's the biggest bribe in the world? The biggest bribery in the world is love of one's self. Everybody loves themselves more than anything else and that means we are all as blind as can be – when it comes to seeing one's own faults everybody is totally blind. We imagine that we are always right no matter what. You *know* you're a good fellow and all the arguments that can be imagined to defend yourself are always at your fingertips.

Even when you kick yourself, when you bang your head against the wall and you say, "I was wrong! Why did I do it?!", so while you're banging your head against the wall, you're thinking, "What a nice fellow I am that I'm doing this."

Breaking the Darkness

You know how you know you're a good fellow? Because your mother knocked it into your head. We've deceive ourselves just because when we were very little our mothers did a good job on us, letting us know how good we were.

Here's a little boy sitting in his high chair; this little monarch is sitting on his throne and his mother is on her knees in front of him. She kisses him! She showers him with open signs of love, "Oh my darling!" she said and she kissed the little boy on one cheek and then on the other cheek, and then on another cheek and another one. There are only two cheeks but she went back and forth back and forth until finally he got the idea, "there must be something good about me". He sees his mother is going crazy over him and he falls in love with himself. If others fall in love with him, he *surely* does.

That's why when a mother from time to time can disillusion her little hero by giving him a little slap,

that's also good. Whoooo! That's a shock to him, a trauma. He sees it's not all exactly like he thought. Little cracks of light suddenly appear in that dense darkness. That's why a slap is a wonderful thing from time to time. Little girls too. A slap for little girls is wonderful. Otherwise, they grow up with an impenetrable curtain of darkness all around them.

Window Dressing

That's why when they get married, these boys and these girls, they're never wrong. When you listen to couples arguing, nobody is wrong. Sometimes as part of their nobility they learn how to say, "I'm not saying I'm all right; I know there are two sides to every question." But that's only window dressing. Actually what she's really saying is, he's no good, or he's saying she's no good. "I'm the one who is perfect," that's what he's saying.

Now, he wouldn't say that in these words. People are too cultured, too sensible to say that, but whatever they say, that's what they mean; that's the *pshat* of everything you hear. When people are talking, they're talking about how good they are. "I'm not like that." "I don't do things like that." "I hate crookedness." "I hate dishonesty," says the man who is actually in this moment stealing from his boss. While he's talking to you, on his office telephone, he's stealing from his boss.

Remembering the Great Crook

All the crooks love themselves. Everybody remembers our hero Al Capone of unblest memory. The young generation doesn't remember him, but Al Capone was one of the great underworld heroes – he murdered a lot of people and he ordered a lot of people murdered. And when they finally caught up with him – in those days they used to catch up with criminals eventually – so when Al Capone finally ended up in prison, a reporter came to interview him.

It's America, you have freedom of speech, so Al Capone said, "I don't know what they want of me. I was giving people a good time." That's what he said when he was gunning down opponents in his gambling dens. In his great and moral quest to supply the public with

gambling places and innocent fun, people got in his way. "It's not my fault," he said. "Why are these fellows getting in my way? What else could I do? Naturally I had to gun them down; it's common sense. I don't want to kill anybody but who told them to horn in on me?!" They already had the places before he moved in but he called that horning in on him. And he said it sincerely. He was very hurt that they did that to him.

You remember Dillinger? John Dillinger was a dangerous criminal who killed policemen. In those days it was still a crime to shoot police. What happened finally? The police closed in on him and they were shooting it out. The police were shooting and he was shooting back. And as he lay in his blood dying, somebody heard his last words. "What do you want of me?!" he said. He didn't understand. He was trying to make a living. Only the policeman got in his way.

There Is Accountability

But we're not concerned about Dillinger and Capone. I'm talking now about the Orthodox, the very Orthodox. Many people think they're *tzaddikim gedolim*, that they're perfectly righteous, but they're sinning constantly. Now, people who are not righteous will be glad to hear this; they love to hear that the righteous people are sinners. They knew it all along! But they have to know that they are a thousand times worse. And everyone is going to be held accountable!

Pay attention to this *posuk*. In Mishlei (21:2) it states: *כָּל הַרְדֵּ אִישׁ יֵשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו* – *The path of a every man is right in his eyes; every man thinks that his path is right,* *וְיִתְכַן לְבוֹת הַשָּׁם* – *but Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the one who measures a man's heart.* Shlomo HaMelech is telling us that you may think that you're right, but you must know that you're going to be held accountable to Hashem who knows the truth about you.

The Basement of Consciousness

Now the question arises, if you really think you're right, that you're innocent – *yashar bi'evinav* means that you genuinely believe that you're innocent – so why should you be blamed? If I'm convinced that I am right, then why should I be held accountable?

And the answer is there are levels of consciousness, levels of awareness. Here's a man, let's say, who has a store and in the store he's doing a legitimate business. But underneath in the basement he's renting it out to people who are selling dope to children. But he never looks to see what's doing; he keeps his eyes closed to what's going on and he imagines that he's a free bird, that it's not his problem.

So when the police come into his store and he's standing behind the counter, he says, "What do you want from me? I'm running a legal business."

So they say, "No, no. We want to go down in the basement and see what you're doing there."

Oh, now he's in trouble. Once the police open up the basement door he's finished.

That's our story. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "You're running a legal business in your conscious mind but you're deceiving yourself. Because if you would take the trouble to descend one level below your consciousness, you'll be amazed to see what I see in you – you're living a life of falsehood. And you are knowingly deceiving yourself because if you really wanted to know the truth, you would discover what your real attitudes are."

Darkness Is a Gift

It means you have to spend time thinking about yourself, looking into the basement of your mind – and there's a lot there to clear out. Some people have so much in their basement that they even have a lot of things on the first floor. And so everyone has their work cut out for themselves. You'll never be able to see through the darkness in your basement unless you go down the steps and turn on the light.

Now, don't be upset when you hear such things. Don't become dejected and give up hope. Because to live in a world of darkness, that itself is the greatest gift! Absolutely! Because that's our success in this world – to see through the darkness of this world and to prepare ourselves for our permanent station in the world to come.

Night and Day

That's why among Jews, we have the practice of beginning the day with the night before. That's the system of the Torah, **וַיְהִי עֶרְבַּ וַיְהִי בֹקֶר** – *it was evening and it was morning*.

Lehavdil the *goyim* begin the day in the morning. That's their new day. Tell your gentile boss that on Saturdays you can't come to work, so he says, "Alright, so come Friday nights."

So you tell him, "No, our Saturday starts sundown Friday."

He doesn't understand that! The night comes before the day?! He thinks you're just trying to get out of doing your work!

But we understand that it represents something. Our days begin at night because it symbolizes our program for life, the reason why we came to this world. **וַיְהִי לַיְלָה חֹשֶׁךְ וַתֵּשֶׁת הָאָרֶץ** means that Hakodosh Boruch Hu made this world a place of darkness because it's only by means of first making our way successfully through the darkness of this world that we come to the light of the next world. Like the *possuk* says, **וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַיּוֹם כַּמָּוֶל וַיִּבְרָא אֶת הַלַּיְלָה כְּמִשְׁמַח הַיּוֹם** – *the sun will shine like the light of morning*. And our sages say (Pesachim 2a) that it's talking about the World To Come – the night is *Olam Hazeih* and the morning is *Olam Habo*. And therefore by us, every day starts with us with the preceding night in order to impress upon us this fundamental truth.

Preparing For the Next World

Isn't it a pity we don't know that? The night before day and the moon that shines at night is meant to impress upon us our function in this world. Every night when the clouds of darkness begin to appear over the horizon we are reminded that you can't get to the next world unless you first pass through the darkness of this world.

We live in the midst of the darkness of this world in order to get ready for the morning when *Olam Habah* will begin to shine. That's when the real sun will rise, a sun that will open our eyes. Then we'll see everything. But right now, we don't see anything

unless we work hard, we study and try to discover what could be seen right now.

And it's only by means of taking stock of our lives that we can succeed at seeing. There's no other way! *Bo'u cheshbon!* Come and make calculations! Once in a while you must stop your headlong rush through life and make an accounting.

And that's why we say about Rosh Chodesh, *le'amcha nasata*, that You gave it to your nation as a gift. One day a month we stop our lives and we remind ourselves about the truths of this world and our function of seeing through the darkness. And by means of thinking, it becomes a day of atonement; Rosh Chodesh is transformed into a day of *hischadshus* and rededication to our purpose in this world of preparing for that great day of *שְׁמַשׁ בְּקֶרֶב יְיָ*. That's the great day when we will finally be renewed and merit fulfilling the words we say every month, *שָׁהָן שְׁתִּירֵן לְהִתְחַדֵּשׁ כְּמוֹתָהּ* – *they are destined to be renewed just like the moon, וְלִפְאֵר לְיוֹצְרָם עַל שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלְכוּתוֹ* – *and we're going to glorify the Creator because of the splendor of His kingdom.*

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Renewing the Moon and Illuminating the Darkness

Rosh Chodesh is a gift from Hashem to encourage me to see through the darkness of this world that causes me to not see clearly, so from now on I will make use of the *matanah* the way He intended – as a *zman kaparah*.

Beginning next week on Rosh Chodesh I am accepting upon myself *Bli Neder* to spend five minutes every Rosh Chodesh making an accounting of the previous month. I will focus on seeing through the darkness of my own mind, the bribery of self-love, and making practical plans to make the following month a more successful one.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

149 - He Made Darkness | 421 - Rosh Chodesh and the Moon
491 - I Created All Of Them For You

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

How did Pinchas show his love for Klal Yisrael when he killed Zimri?

A:

The answer is, if you want Hashem to love the Jewish people you have to stand up for the honor of Hashem. When you're a *kanai'i* – it means if you get angry when you see *reshaim* doing wicked things and you get up and you show your zeal and you stand up for the ideals of Hakodosh Boruch Hu – then Hashem loves the Jewish people. You have to be a fire for the truth, a fire against the *reshaim*. Protest! Speak up! If you do that, then Hakodosh Boruch Hu loves the Jewish people more. “My children are speaking up for Me!” He says. “I love them for that!”

But if you're quiet; if you see people trampling on the Torah and you don't say anything – it doesn't affect you; you don't care about it – so Hashem says, “That's My people?! My people have to take up for Me!” It says you have to love Hashem and hate Hashem's enemies! Dovid said, *הלא משנאיך השם* – “Hashem; don't I hate Your enemies?! I hate those who rebel against You.”

Don't be like the fake liberals who say, “We love everybody.” They love everybody except the decent people. Everybody they love except good people.

And therefore Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “If you want to be beloved by Me, you have to say that you're not a friend of My enemies.” And you have to mean it. And therefore those who speak up against the enemies of Hashem, they increase His love for the Am Yisroel. Hashem loves *kanaim*.

TAPE # 799