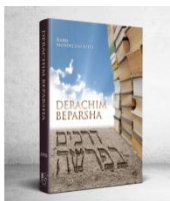


דרכים בפרשה מקץ-חנוכה

R' Mordechai Appel, is an
alumnus of the Telzer
Yeshiva and the author
of Derachim Beparsha.



ויאמר ישראל למה הרעתם לי להגיד לאיש העוד לכם אח
And Yisroel said, "Why did you do bad to me as to tell the man that you had another brother?" (43:6)

Things were spiraling downwards at a rapid pace for Yaakov Avinu. Yosef was gone and Shimon was being held as a prisoner. Back at home, Yaakov's family was facing a famine, and now he was being asked to send Binyomin down to face the viceroy of Mitzrayim.

At this low point, Yaakov complained, **למה הרעתם לי**, why did you treat me with evil, telling the ruler that you have another brother?

Chazal record a criticism of Yaakov Avinu: **רבי לוי** בשם **רבי חמא בר חנינא** מעולם לא אמר יעקב אבינו דבר של בטלה, אלא כך אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: **אני עוסק להמליך את** HaShem said, "I am involved in crowning his son as the ruler over Mitzrayim, and he says, 'Why did you treat me with evil?'" (Note: only Chazal may criticize the Avos.)

From this Midrash we learn that on Yaakov Avinu's exalted madreiga, he should have perceived the hidden yad HaShem. Not only was it not "evil," but in truth, everything unfolding was part of the orchestration of the yeshua. The Midrash itself emphasizes, **מעולם לא אמר יעקב אבינו דבר של בטלה**, — Yaakov Avinu never uttered empty words. Even here, where his complaint was understandable, it was still considered a chisaron on his level for not seeing the Divine hand guiding events.

Rabbeinu Yonah in Shaar Teshuvah teaches that this perspective is not limited to the Avos alone. In a true believing Yid, there is an expectation, each according to his level, to recognize that even the darkest moment is itself the seed of future light. **כי נפלתי קמתי כי** — **אשב בחשך ה' אור לי** — **כי נפלתי קמתי כי** (מיכה ז, ח) — Though I have fallen, I will rise; though I sit in darkness, HaShem is a light for me.

The Orchos Tzaddikim quotes Chazal on this pasuk: **אלמלא שנפלתי לא קמתי אלמלא שישבתי בחושך לא היה אור לי** — Had I not fallen, I could not have risen; had I not sat in darkness, He could not have been a light for me.

A Yid once came to a gadol during a time of intense personal difficulty. His parnassah had collapsed, his

plans lay in ruins, and he could see nothing but failure ahead. "Rebbe," he said, "everything went dark at once." The gadol answered quietly, "When a room suddenly goes dark, it is usually because someone is about to light a candle. But if a person panics, he never waits long enough to see it." (This story is said over in the name of Rav Yisroel Salanter.)

This story mirrors the teaching of Yosef HaTzadik, who despite being sold by his brothers, said to them: **ואתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלקים חשבה לטבה למען** — "You meant to do evil to me, but Hashem meant it for good, in order to do as it is today, to preserve the lives of a great people."

This idea is powerfully illustrated by a poignant vort of the Sfas Emes on the song Yevanim Nikbitzu Alai that we sing each night of Chanukah. We mention that the Greeks defiled all the oil, and in the very same breath we say, **uminosar kankanim**, that one jug remained, from which the miracle of Chanukah emerged.

The Sfas Emes explains that the downfall of Yavan lay in their ambition to attack the Torah in its entirety. They were not satisfied with causing portions of Torah to be forgotten; they sought total erasure. **בימי מתתיהו וכו' להשכיחם תורתך** — their goal was complete spiritual annihilation. Yet they made a fatal miscalculation. HaShem promised, **כי לא** — the Torah will never be forgotten from the offspring of Klal Yisroel. Parts may be obscured, but it can never disappear entirely.

By pushing Yavan to overreach, HaShem ensured their failure. Had we lived in that generation, we would likely have cried out in despair: "A little persecution we can endure, but all of it? Oy Ribono Shel Olam, save us!"

Chanukah revealed the opposite truth. They went ahead and **השמינו** — they attempted to defile all the oil. Oil, symbolic of Torah, cannot be entirely destroyed. Precisely because the darkness was so complete, the yeshua was inevitable. Something had to remain. And so, **ומותר קנקנים** — one jug was left, and from that remnant the light of Chanukah burst forth.

אלמלא שנפלתי לא קמתי אלמלא שישבתי בחושך לא היה אור לי — Had I not fallen, I could not have risen; had I not sat in the darkness, He could not have been a light for me. **Good Shabbos and a Freilichen Chanukah, מרדכי אפפּעל**