

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 168

Pinchas | Cleaving to G-d and Removal of any Separation

MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

...*~* PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL *~*...

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Parshat Pinchas

Those Who Mourn Jerusalem Will See Its Joy

We are now in the midst of the 'Three Weeks'.

These days, spanning from the 17th of Tammuz to the Fast of the 9th of Av, mark the period when the enemies of Israel entered Jerusalem and wreaked havoc upon the people of Israel, culminating in the destruction of the First Temple, as well as the Second Temple about 490 years later.

These sorrowful days are called 'Between the Straits' based on the verse in the Book of

Lamentations: "All her pursuers overtook her between the straits" (Lamentations 1:3).

Because of these great tragedies, the Jewish people adopted several practices of mourning during these days over the destruction of both Temples, as well as over the harsh and prolonged exile that followed.¹

In truth, one who is G-d fearing should mourn over the destruction and the exile of the Divine presence not only during these three weeks, but all year round, as codified in the

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

1. Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky shared the following story ("Doresh Tov - Bein HaMetzarim," page 705):

In his old age, the Chafetz Chaim rested in a secluded cabin in the forest.

Alongside him were several great heads of yeshivas and a select handful of students who accompanied them.

The Chafetz Chaim's companions were

careful not to disturb him and only allowed a small group to gather during prayer times.

However, when the third meal of Shabbat arrived, the Chafetz Chaim requested that all the yeshiva students staying there join him for the meal.

During the meal, they sang songs of emotion and devotion, and then the Chafetz Chaim stood and began to speak about the redemption.

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He quoted the verse "Behold, He stands behind our wall" (Song of Songs 2:9) and declared that all the signs mentioned by the sages had been fulfilled to the greatest degree:

"Poverty had increased, and troubles flowed like a river; sons rose against their fathers, and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law. The kingdom turned to heresy, and the wisdom of the scribes was corrupted. So why hasn't the Moshiach come yet?

He answered the question. The verse states: "As in the days when you left the land of Egypt, I will show him wonders" (Micah 7:15). The future redemption will be akin to the exodus from Egypt.

What happened then? Moses, the redeemer of Israel, had already been born, and the severity of the slavery had already reached the 400-year deadline, yet nothing happened.

When did things begin to change?

The verse states: "During those many days, the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel groaned from the labor, and they cried out, and their cry went up to G-d from their affliction; G-d heard their moaning" (Exodus 2:23-24).

Only after the people of Israel groaned and cried out, did G-d reveal Himself to Moshe and say: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry; Behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me" (Exodus 3:7-9).

The redemption only came when they cried out.

The suffering of Israel was immense, and G-d had already paved the way for redemption, but despite this, it could not arrive, because the cry was still missing.

The Chafetz Chaim continued: Our suffering is immense, and G-d has already paved the way for redemption, but despite this, it cannot arrive.

In heaven, they are waiting for our cry, and we are not crying out.

The Chafetz Chaim then said: "I want to travel to Rabbi Chaim Ozer of Vilna, and together with him awaken our hearts and cry out and truly ask for the redemption."

The Chafetz Chaim concluded his words, and sat in silence, waiting for the end of the Shabbat to make Havdalah.

When Shabbat ended, he requested that they quickly summon the driver to immediately take them to Vilna.

The dirt roads in the forest were narrow and rough, and full of bumps and obstacles. The difficult journey for the Chafetz Chaim was life-threatening.

They hurried and summoned the great Rabbi Shimon Shkop, head of the Grodno Yeshiva, to try to dissuade the Chafetz Chaim from his risky plan.

He quickly came over and reminded him of the Talmudic teaching that one should not set out on a journey at night (Bava Kamma 60b, Ta'anit 10b).

Parshat Pinchas - Those Who Mourn Jerusalem Will See Its Joy

Shulchan Aruch (1:3): 'It is fitting for all who fear Heaven to be distressed and troubled over the destruction of the Temple.'

The Holy Shla”h writes (Taanit, Torah Ohr 1):

“From the words of the prophets, the writings, and our sages in the Talmud, Midrashim, and the Zohar, it is explained

the great obligation incumbent upon us to mourn over the destruction of the Temple and the long exile.

This is due to the honor of the Divine Presence, which is in exile due to our sins. The impure forces have overpowered the pure forces and prevailed, and the glory of G-d's house was burnt.

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

The Chafetz Chaim wondered aloud: 'In your opinion, if a fire breaks out in the house, G-d forbid, should they stay in their place and not travel until sunrise?'

The entire Jewish people are suffering and groaning, and the redemption can be hastened, and we should delay?'

Rabbi Shimon tried to suggest that nothing would happen if the trip were delayed by a few hours.

The Chafetz Chaim insisted: 'I hoped that your honor would help me, I did not expect you to try to hinder me.'

Rabbi Shimon fell silent, and the Chafetz Chaim again instructed that they summon the driver once more.

They went to bring him and instructed him what to say.

The driver arrived and apologized: “Rabbi, it is very dangerous to travel at night on such a rough road.”

'Very well,' the Chafetz Chaim said - 'Come again at dawn.'

The night is very short in the Polish summers, and the Chafetz Chaim waited eagerly for the daylight.

Contrary to his usual practice, he prayed alone at dawn and sent someone to see why the driver was delayed. The messenger returned and said that the driver was not willing to travel so early, he needed to feed the horses and prepare the carriage. He added that he preferred shorter trips over the long trek to Vilna.

The close disciples had been truly concerned for his health, and they went and paid the driver for the full cost of the trip, provided that he did not come.

The Chafetz Chaim sighed a heart-wrenching sigh: 'Once again the redemption has been delayed, and the opportunity has been missed.'

Parshat Pinchas - Those Who Mourn Jerusalem Will See Its Joy

There are no more offerings or sacrifices, prophecy and the Holy Spirit have ceased, the spirit of impurity spreads, and G-d's people, the Jewish nation, were

given to pestilence, sword, famine, captivity, and disgrace.²

Even today the Jewish nation is among the nations like a sheep among wolves, in disgrace and

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

2. Rabbi Sholom Meir Wallach shares the following story ('Maayan HaMoed - Bein HaMetzarim', page 21):

About six hundred years ago, in the month of Tammuz of the year 5151 (1391), a hundred years before the expulsion from Spain, the head priest of Spain, a wicked oppressor named Martinez, incited the Christian masses in Seville, who in their great rage, stormed the Jewish quarter, setting the homes ablaze and killing whoever the saw without mercy.

Four thousand Jews were martyred - may G-d avenge their blood - and many were sold into a bitter life of slavery.

In just one day, one of the oldest and most glorious communities in Spain was destroyed.

The oppressor did not stop there.

From Seville, he moved on, and on the 17th of Tammuz, the day the walls of Jerusalem were breached, the walls of the Jewish quarter in the communities of Cordoba and Toledo were also torn down.

Thousands of Jews sacrificed their lives in the sanctification of G-d's name, refusing to convert to christianity and were brutally

slaughtered, and at their head were the grandchildren of Rabbeinu Asher (the Rosh).

The sword of the oppressor sought to strike down the young scholar Rabbi Ephraim Ankawa, not before his own father was slaughtered before his eyes.

They struck his arm and drew much blood.

Rabbi Ephraim immediately fell to the ground and pretended to be dead, and the attackers left him amidst the pile of dead bodies and continued their rampage of murdering and plundering.

In the evening, Rabbi Ephraim rose under the cover of darkness, weak and wounded, after losing so much blood.

He managed, with divine assistance, to miraculously escape from the city of blood and set his sights on the port city of Malaga.

He faced countless adventures and hardships until he finally arrived at the port and boarded a ship sailing to North Africa.

A week later, he set foot on Moroccan soil, reaching Marrakesh, which became one of the most important Jewish communities of the time.

ridicule, and all this is a desecration of G-d's great name.

Woe to us, for our fathers have sinned and we have not been cleansed.

By taking this to heart with fasting and weeping, and arousing our heart to cry out: 'Return us, L-rd, to You and we will return', the cloud of evil and impurity will evaporate and disappear - the impure powers will diminish, and we will have been purified through our sorrow and regret.'

This is the source of the obligation to rise at midnight, or at least before dawn, and arrange 'Tikkun Chatzot' with a broken heart and deep sorrow over the destruction and the exile, over the deaths of the righteous, and over the disgrace of the glory of the Torah and Israel."

As long as the Temple remains destroyed and the exile continues to extend, the Holy Presence is in immense sorrow to a degree that cannot be described.

The Holy Shla"h (Tractate Shavuot, Ner Mitzvah, 5) relates an

awe-inspiring event that occurred with Rabbi Yosef Karo, of blessed memory, who sat with his holy companions and learned without interruption the whole night of Shavuot.

They merited that a Divine spirit appeared in their study hall and spoke with them from the mouth of Rabbi Yosef Karo with a loud and clear voice:

"For so many years my crown has fallen, and there is no comfort for me, and I am thrown into the garbage heaps. If you could fathom even one thousandth of a millionth of the sorrow I am engulfed in, joy would not enter your hearts nor laughter in your mouths upon remembering that due to your actions I am thrown into the dust.'

Anyone with a heart of flesh would surely tremble to hear these words.

This is true all the more so during the 'Three Weeks' - when the destruction itself occurred, and when everyone must strive to feel the sorrow of the Divine

Presence, and strive to avoid things that cause joy.³

There is another interpretation on the verse 'All her pursuers overtook her between the straits':

The period of 'Between the Straits' lasts twenty-one days (from the 17th of Tammuz until the 9th of Av). There is a parallel period that spans twenty-one days, namely the days from Rosh Hashanah until Hoshana Rabbah.⁴

This comparison is not coincidental, between these two periods there is much in common.

As is known, the days from Rosh Hashanah until the night of Hoshana Rabbah are great spiritual times of exaltedness, and one who sanctifies themselves properly during these days merits to receive a great measure of holiness.

Similarly, these three weeks contain, albeit in a hidden manner, great spiritual treasures, and one who sanctifies themselves during these days and feels deeply the sorrow of the Divine presence and the Jewish people in their bitter exile, will merit to receive an immense and abundant spiritual bounty.⁵

—*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~* —

3. As codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim, 551:1-2) the various customs of refraining from joyous activities during the period of "Bein HaMetzarim" (between the straits), from the 17th of Tammuz until the 9th of Av. This is a time of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temple and the many tragedies that befell the Jewish people throughout history.

4. The 'Maor Vashamesh' (Parshat Pinchas) writes:

The days between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av are also twenty-one days, corresponding to the twenty-one

days between Rosh Hashanah and Hoshana Rabbah.

However, the divine light these days is in concealment, while in the days from Rosh Hashanah to Hoshana Rabbah this light is in revelation.

5. Rabbi Shlomo Levinstein related the following story ('U'matok Ha'or - Yitzchak Avinu', page 23)

Rabbi Shabtai Scheinfeld, a Chassidic Jew who immigrated from Vienna to the United States, had a friend who also emigrated from Europe to the United States. This friend had

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arrived alone while trying to obtain papers for his wife and children, who remained in Europe, to emigrate to America.

Even after obtaining the documents, the friend was anxious.

The voyage from Europe to the United States would take several weeks, and then his wife and children would arrive at the famous Ellis Island.

More than two percent of the immigrants were not medically approved and sent back to their country of origin, and his friend's wife had some small medical issue.

The exhausting journey ended, and the wife and children finally arrived at Ellis Island, but unfortunately, his friend was informed that his wife was denied entry!

In great distress, he hurried to his friend, Rabbi Shabtai, updating him on the negative developments and concluding, "I cannot live without my wife and children.

I tell you, if they are not approved for entry - my life is over!"

He even described how his life would end, which Rabbi Shabtai was horrified to hear.

"Go to the Rabbe of Kopyczynitz!" - he advised him.

The friend entered the Rebbe's chambers, told him everything, and concluded with that same dark warning.

The Kopyczynitzer Rebbe pondered for a few moments and then said: "I promise

you that within two weeks, their entry will be approved."

Encouraged, the friend left the Rebbe's room and began counting the days. Two weeks passed, and indeed, unbelievably, the wife and children were approved for American citizenship!

The miracle spread across New York and its surroundings.

A curious man, taking advantage of the opportunity, decided to inquire how such a miracle was performed. Was there still divine inspiration in our times?

In a conversation with his friend, Rabbi Avraham Schreiber, a grandson of the Chatam Sofer, he revealed his intention to enter the Rebbe's room and inquire about it.

Rabbi Avraham warned him sternly not to dare do such a "chutzpah", and that ended their conversation.

Time passed, and the man approached Rabbi Avraham again, and told him: "What do you think? Did I listen to your advice? Of course not!

I entered the Rebbe's room and asked how he could promise a person that within two weeks the problem would be solved. What is this, divine inspiration?!"

"I'll tell you," said the Rebbe.

"When the man finished speaking, with his dire warning to take his life, I thought to myself: Pikuach Nefesh! We must save this Jew. But how?

Parshat Pinchas - Trust in G-d

This is hinted at in the verse in the Book of Lamentations: "All her pursuers overtook her between the straits" (Lamentations 1:3) - meaning, anyone who pursues G-d during these days - 'between the straits' and seeks His closeness, is assured

to achieve and accomplish this closeness.⁶

In our discussion to follow, we will focus on this interpretation of the verse.

But first, let us begin with a story.

Trust in G-d

Rabbi Meir Pachtolz lived in Haifa and worked at one of the banks in the city.

He shared the following story:

One year, before the holiday of Shavuot, I approached the bank manager, requesting time off for the holiday, starting the morning of Shavuot eve until after the day following the holiday. To the

manager's surprise as to why I needed three days off, I replied that I am traveling to celebrate the holiday in the vicinity of my Rabbi in Bnei Brak, and I do not leave there until the afternoon following the holiday's conclusion.

'Who is your Rabbi?' the manager inquired.

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I promised him that the problem would be solved.

But I didn't have any idea how. What if it wouldn't be solved?

I figured that at most, I would come out of the story a liar. But at least I saved a Jewish life.

It would be very unpleasant for everyone to know that I lied, but at least he would continue to live.

What did I do? As soon as the man left the room, I took the Book of Psalms in my hands and began to pray and ask G-d: Please send salvation to this Jew - at the very least so that I don't turn into a liar!"

(This story was told by the current Kopyczynitzer Rebbe, as he heard it from Rabbi Avraham Schreiber himself).

6. Excerpted from 'Imrei Noam - Mo'adim (Maamarei Bein Hameitzarim, Essay 1).

I answered: 'The great Rabbi Chaim Mordechai of Nadvorna.'

"I will grant you the requested leave," the manager - a religious man - replied, 'but on the one condition that you tell your Rabbi that it was I who allowed you this leave, and that in return, all I request is that he send me a unique Torah insight through you.'

Following the holiday's conclusion, as I parted from the Rabbi, I told him that my bank manager released me from two additional days of work so that I could travel to the Rabbi for the holiday, on the condition that the Rabbi would share a Torah insight especially for him.

The Rabbi consented and shared:

'It is stated in Psalms - "For the L-rd knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (Psalms 1:6).

A novel interpretation is that the way of the righteous is, that whatever befalls them, they say: 'The L-rd knows' - the L-rd surely knows best what He is

doing, for He governs the entire world and orchestrates all things, and everything that He does, is for the good.

However, 'the way of the wicked will perish' - as soon as the wicked encounter any distress, they lose their trust and their faith perishes, and they imagine their world collapsing upon them.'

When I returned to work, the bank manager immediately approached me, eager to hear the Torah thought.

True to my word, I repeated the Rabbi's words to him, and the manager suddenly stood up from his seat, evidently very moved, and without uttering a word, rose and exited the bank.

He later returned and told me, "Know that your Rabbi saved my son's life." He did not explain or elaborate.

Sometime later, the manager shared the events that had happened.

His son, an officer in the army, was accused of criminal

Parshat Pinchas - Trust in G-d

negligence, was arrested, and released on bail until the trial.

The son was greatly frightened and was convinced that he would be found guilty in his trial, since the accusations against him were very serious, and had attempted several times to take his own life.

When the manager heard from me the Rabbi's inspiring words, he immediately went to his son

and conveyed the message to him, and to his surprise, the words were received well by the son, who promised to wait patiently until the trial, and to abandon his intention to harm himself.

Not long after, the trial took place, and to everyone's amazement, the son was completely acquitted of all charges and found innocent.⁷

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

7. While we are on this topic, let's share another story:

Rabbi Mordechai Chaim of Slonim recounted ('Maamar Mordechai - Stories,' page 209):

As is known, the holy Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apta, known as the "Ohev Yisrael" (Lover of Israel), passed away on Thursday, the 5th of Nissan, 5585 (1825).

On his last Shabbat, on the 29th of Adar, during the time of the third meal, he said the following:

"The passing of a righteous person from this world, is like a person removing weekday clothes and putting on Shabbat clothes. If so, why do the righteous need to fall ill before their passing?

It is merely so that people will not say that they died a strange and sudden death, G-d forbid."

Shabbat ended, and the Ohev Yisrael performed Havdalah, and within a few minutes, he fell ill.

This caused a great commotion, and everyone quickly spread out to the tombs of the righteous to pray for him.

On Thursday, the 5th of Nissan, his son, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir, along with the entire community, went to the communal cemetery to awaken mercy, leaving the Ohev Yisrael with his attendant at home.

When everyone left, the Ohev Yisrael rose from his bed, approached the table where he had studied Torah for years, and took leave of it. Then he went to the bookshelf and took leave of it and the many Torah books in his possession. He then likewise, approached the mezuzah and took leave of it.

Parshat Pinchas - The Jews Lacked Self-Esteem

‘From that day on,’ Rabbi Meir concluded his story, ‘the manager held me in high esteem, and constantly reminded me that it was thanks to me his son was saved.’

The path of the righteous is indeed awe inspiring. Let us move on now to discuss the greatest prophet of all, Moses.

The Jews Lacked Self-Esteem

The feet of Moses tread through the desert sands, yet Moses is in another world, distant and concealed.

His holy thoughts ascend to pure and spiritual realms, his

mind's eye beholds the celestial hosts, and in his ears resonate the song of creation.

Suddenly G-d revealed Himself to him, saying: "My beloved children, the people of Israel, are

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He returned to his bed and began reciting the first phrases of "Ha'aderet Veha'emunah", and then made a blowing motion with his mouth, and his soul ascended to Heaven.

In the days before his passing, he had vowed that he would not rest in the World to Come and would not enter his place in Gan Eden (Paradise) until Moshiach comes!

Sometime after his passing, troubles intensified, and difficult times befell the Jewish people.

Many community members approached his son, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir, and asked him: "Didn't your holy father promise that he would not enter Gan Eden as long as we don't experience salvation?"

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir closed his eyes, and the natural appearance of his face took on a bright, clear, white hue.

After some time, he opened his eyes and said, "My holy father appeared to me and said to me in these words:

'We imagined, L-rd, your kindness within Your Temple' (Psalms 48:10) - everything that we imagined here as being of the attribute of judgment (The name 'Elohim' - 'L-rd' represents the attribute of judgment), in the Temple above, in Heaven, is seen to be all kindness ('Your kindness within Your Temple').

He therefore cannot ask for the removal of troubles and hardships."

Rabbi Mordechai Chaim of Slonim wept terribly as he told this story.

Parshat Pinchas - The Jews Lacked Self-Esteem

in a harsh and bitter exile. Now, I am sending you on My mission to 'bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt'" (Exodus 3:10).

Moses hears the divine commission and surprisingly responds: "What if they do not believe me or listen to my voice and instead say, 'The L-rd did not appear to you'!" (Exodus 4:1).

Something here seems amiss.

Surely, the dream of every slave is to be freed. This holds true for just about any slave, all the more so the Jewish slaves in Egypt, who endured horrific and dark years under the despised Egyptian rule, surely, they too longed for redemption and liberation. Why then did Moses think they would not believe him or listen to him?

To understand Moses' response, we need to go a bit back in time:

A few years after the people of Israel descended to Egypt, the entire previous generation passed away, and the new generation that arose lacked knowledge in spiritual warfare, and found

themselves facing the formidable forces of impurity which amassed strength and prepared to wage war.

The spiritual battleground was filled with combatants, and inflamed hearts gave way to illusionary wants and cravings.

Sins, iniquities, and crimes overwhelmed the souls of the Jewish people in Egypt, and then one bright day, without any prior notice, the physical enslavement began.

The people of Israel felt that G-d had rejected them, and simply desired them no longer.

But strangely, they accepted their fate meekly: 'Well, of course, how could sinners like us not be despised, how could G-d care for lowly creatures like us?'

Since they accepted this reality, they did not pray and ask for mercy. They were sure that there was no chance in the world that G-d would accept them.

Now we may understand Moses' reaction to G-d's command:

Parshat Pinchas - Israel, My firstborn

Moses turned to G-d and said: "Master of the Universe. You want me to go to the people of Israel and announce: 'Beloved children, the time of your redemption has arrived?' - They will not believe me, for they do not believe that they are worthy

of being redeemed. They will be startled and say, "we are beloved? Are you talking to us?"

They so deeply lacked proper 'self-esteem' that they didn't even cry or shed a tear over their sorry fate...

Israel, My firstborn

G-d turned to Moses and said: "You are correct. I must make the people of Israel understand that I love them with a great and immense love, an unconditional and true love. To accomplish this, I will do two things:

A. I have arranged My world in a meticulous order, called 'nature', but to show them My deepest love, I will rearrange and defy all the systems of nature.

For their sake all the natural laws on earth, in the heavens, and everything in between will be altered.

B. I will declare that: "Israel is My firstborn" (Exodus 4:22), and this very declaration itself will awaken within them belief in My deep love for them.

And so, this sense of belonging and love, began to be weaved between the people of Israel and G-d.

When the people of Israel merited to stand at the foot of Mount Sinai, this bond was completed and became a solid bond for all eternity.

As Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, related:

At the foot of Mount Sinai, G-d asked the entire people of Israel if they wanted the Torah, and they responded: "We will do and we will listen" (Exodus 24:7).

Subsequently, G-d presented the general conditions, which the people of Israel immediately agreed to.

Parshat Pinchas - The Breaking of the Tablets

A covenant was then formed, cementing and finalizing the connection.

The relationship between G-d and his people of Israel is not merely a matter of commandments, but of belonging, love, and closeness.

The entire Torah and its myriads of commandments is an allegory for this relationship.

"The Song of Songs, composed by Solomon," (Song

of Songs 1:1) essentially expresses longing for the giving of the Torah. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (ibid., verse 2), the giving of the Torah was like a kiss between G-d and the people of Israel.

This is a foundational concept in Judaism, as the well-known saying of the Zohar states succinctly: "The Holy One Blessed be He, the Torah, and the people of Israel are truly one".

The Breaking of the Tablets

The day after the revelation at Mount Sinai on the 6th of Sivan, Moses ascended the mountain for forty days to receive the Tablets of the Covenant and the Oral Torah.

Beforehand, Moses explicitly informed the Jewish people that he would descend only after forty days, at midday.

The forces of impurity pounced at the opportunity. They began to spread an atmosphere of dread and anxiety in the camp. The evil powers were not going to idly stand by and let the deep connection to G-d be formed.

Tragically, these powers were quite successful.

The people of Israel, who had counted forty days a day early, eagerly waiting for Moses, were alarmed to see that the time had passed, and yet Moses had not returned. They sadly concluded that Moses must have died atop the mountain, creating the Golden Calf to serve in their lead in place of Moses.

On the 17th of Tammuz, as Moses was in the Heavens studying the Torah from G-d himself, G-d turned to Moses and said: "Go and descend, for your

Parshat Pinchas - The Commandment of the Daily Sacrifice

people whom you brought up from the land of Egypt have corrupted their ways" (Exodus 32:7).

Moses returned to the camp of Israel and broke the Tablets of the Covenant.

As far as it seemed, the deep connection that existed between the people of Israel and G-d, had been shattered, and the Tablets which signified the covenant between them, was destroyed.

The Commandment of the Daily Sacrifice

As is known, after the sin of the Golden Calf, the people of Israel repented, and G-d commanded them to make a Sanctuary, so that He would dwell among them.

The Sanctuary was the spiritual center and place where the Divine Presence was revealed.

Many services were performed there, but the main service was the offering of sacrifices.

The sacrifices were divided into two groups: communal and individual.

The Individual sacrifices were explained at length in the book of Leviticus, while the communal sacrifices are explained in our weekly Torah portion of Pinchas.

In our portion, we are commanded regarding the daily

sacrifice, which is the obligation to offer two lambs on the altar every day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

They are called the "Tamid" - the 'continual offering', as the verse states:

"Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering, my bread of fire, as a sweet scent before Me, you shall offer Me in its time" (Numbers 28:2).

Rabbi Shlomo David Klein writes ('Mekadesh HaShabbat' - page 276):

The role of the continual offering was to connect the Sanctuary of G-d's glory with His people Israel, and through it, reaffirm and reestablish the attachment of the Jewish people to the Holy One, Blessed be He.

Parshat Pinchas - The Fivefold Tragedies of These Days

This sacrifice is therefore called bread ('My offering, my bread of fire') - just as bread has the power to connect the soul to the body, and without which, there is no union of the body with the soul, so too, the continual offering holds together the people of Israel with G-d and creates a connection of attachment between them continually, morning and evening.

From the time they were commanded about the continual offering, the people of Israel never ceased to sacrifice it constantly, morning and evening, until the 17th of Tammuz in the year 3338 to the creation of the world, when the continual offering was annulled,⁸ and the perpetual connection with G-d was impaired.

The Fivefold Tragedies of These Days

Thus, twice on the same date of the 17th of Tammuz, a rift in the connection between G-d and His people occurred.

Indeed, our sages say in the Mishnah (Ta'anit 4:6):

'Five calamities befell our ancestors on the 17th of Tammuz: The Tablets were shattered, the Tamid offering ceased, the city walls of Jerusalem were breached, Apostomos burned the

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

8. In the destruction of the First Temple, on the ninth of Tammuz, the walls of the city of Jerusalem were breached (it was in the Second Temple's destruction, that the walls were famously breached on the 17th of Tammuz).

The enemies entered the city, wreaking havoc, but could not enter the Temple compound because of the priests who fortified it and continued the service of G-d there until the seventh of Av.

From the 13th of Tammuz onwards, the priests ran out of sheep for the daily offerings, since they had always inspected sheep in the courtyard four days before the sacrifice.

What did the priests do? They bribed the Babylonian soldiers standing below, lowering large amounts of gold and silver, and receiving sheep in return.

This continued until the 17th of Tammuz, when the Babylonians refused to supply them Sheep any longer, and the daily offering was discontinued.

Parshat Pinchas - Jerusalem United as One

Torah, and an idol was placed in the Temple sanctuary'.

Similarly, on Tisha B'Av five great tragedies occurred which we mourn every year, as the Mishnah continues, saying (ibid.):

'Our ancestors were decreed not to enter the land of Israel, the first and the second Temples were destroyed (nearly 500 years apart from each other) Beitar was captured, and the holy city of Jerusalem was plowed over.'

During the period of the 'Three Weeks' between the 17th of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av, the Jewish people had one last opportunity to return in repentance, which they sadly did

not actualize, and the Temple was destroyed in their sins.

Thus, the characteristic common to all of these three weeks of calamities is the disconnection of the bonds of attachment with G-d. When there is, G-d forbid, a disconnection between G-d and the people of Israel, the verse of reproof is then fulfilled: "And I will surely hide My face on that day for all the evil that they have done since they have turned to other gods" (Deuteronomy 31:18).

Since we are now in the Shabbat following the 17th of Tammuz, we will continue to discuss the above events that occurred on this day.

Jerusalem United as One

When G-d created the world, He first created the holy city of Jerusalem, and then attached clumps of soil around it, and the earth spread out vastly in all directions, and thus the earth sphere we are all familiar with was formed.

Since that time, Jerusalem was chosen to be the place for the

dwelling of the Divine Presence, and its revelation in the world.

Our sages reveal (Ta'anit 5a) that corresponding to the physical city of Jerusalem, there is also a Jerusalem in the higher worlds, and when both were connected, holiness and blessing were bestowed upon the entire world.

Parshat Pinchas - He gave us His Own Torah

When the people of Israel dwelt within Jerusalem, they were united with the Jerusalem of Above through their divine service and devotion to G-d, and were connected in a true bond to G-d as well as to each other in unity and brotherhood.

As Rabbi Joshua ben Levi interpreted the verse (Jerusalem Talmud, Hagigah 3:6):

"Jerusalem that is built as a city that is connected together" (Psalms 122:3) - 'it is a city that makes all of the people of Israel friends.

However, on the 17th of Tammuz, the walls of Jerusalem

were breached, and Titus the wicked and his legions broke into the city, beginning to kill and plunder, and after three weeks, the Second Temple was destroyed.

The walls of Jerusalem were breached, and the connection between the Jerusalem of Above and the Jerusalem of Below was damaged, and the Divine presence there as well as in the Jerusalem above was diminished, as Rabbi Yochanan said (Ta'anit 5a):

The Holy One, blessed be He says: I will not enter Jerusalem above until I enter Jerusalem down here on Earth.

He gave us His Own Torah

The law written in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim, 47) is that before a person speaks words of Torah, they must recite the blessings of the Torah.

In the blessings of the Torah, we thank G-d: 'Who has chosen us from all peoples and given us His Torah'.

The Bach (47) explains these words of the blessing:

"G-d's intention was for us to engage in the Torah, so that our souls be united with the essence and spirituality and holiness of the source of the Torah.

Therefore G-d granted the Torah of truth to the Jewish people as a gift, that it not be forgotten by us, and that our soul and body - by its 248 limbs and 365 sinews - connect with

Parshat Pinchas - The Sanctuary - The Connection Point

the 248 positive commandments and the 365 prohibitive commandments of the Torah.

By studying the Torah, the soul becomes attached to the essence of the Torah's holiness and spirituality.

For this reason, we bless and thank G-d for having "chosen us from all peoples" at the revelation of Mount Sinai, and for "giving us *His* Torah" meaning the Torah that he delights in, all so we attach our souls to the essence of the Torah's holiness and spirituality, and bring down the Divine Presence among us."

The primary connection between a Jew and his Creator is through studying the Torah. When a Jew studies Torah, at that moment, their mind and intellect grasp the wisdom of the Torah,

which is G-d's will and wisdom, and at the same time the Torah's wisdom encircles the person's intellect, and the person merits to be unified with the Infinite Light of G-d, encapsulated in the Torah.

The more we grasp parts of the Torah, the greater our understanding and comprehension of G-d, and the more the bond with Him will intensify.

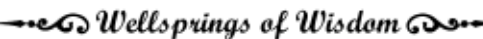
The sin of Israel which had greatly intensified in the times of the second Temple, allowed the forces of impurity to dominate over the Torah, and on the 17th of Tammuz, Apostomos (a high-ranking Greek lieutenant) burned the Torah.

This act symbolized the power that was given to the evil forces to dominate over many parts and secrets of the Torah, which became lost to the Jewish people.⁹

The Sanctuary - The Connection Point

The placement of an idol in the Sanctuary was the

last breach mentioned in the Mishnah.



9. **The** Arizal is quoted in "Shaar HaKavanot" (5b):
"Know that from the day the Torah was

burned by the nations of the world, due to our many sins, its powers and secrets were handed over to the Klipot (the impure powers).

Parshat Pinchas - The Sanctuary - The Connection Point

In the Temple, there was an area called the "Heichal" (Sanctuary), where three important items were located: the Menorah (lamp), the Golden Altar of Incense, and the Table of the Showbread.

The Menorah stood on the south side, the Table on the north, and the Golden Altar was placed in the middle.¹⁰

Through the priests' service with these three items, material abundance was drawn to the people of Israel and created a

bond between the people of Israel and G-d.

Through the Menorah - vitality and health was drawn; through the Table - sustenance; and through the Golden Altar - offspring.

However, opposite this stood the impulse for idolatry that infiltrated their hearts and poisoned their minds.¹¹

However, initially this struggle remained outside the Temple walls, while inside the Temple and inner sanctuary, the connection to the divine remained intact.

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

10. And the Ark, which stood in the Holy of Holies, was at the west side.

11. The following story is told:

A Chassid of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the Baal HaTanya), had a very troublesome wife who cursed and insulted him over the slightest things.

Especially when he traveled to see his Rebbe, she would accompany him with fierce curses until he could no longer endure it.

He traveled to his Rebbe (the Baal HaTanya) and poured out his heart.

The Baal HaTanya laid his head in his arms, and after some time, lifted up his

head and said: 'Know that you are a reincarnation of a soul from the days of the Judges, about whom it is said: "They served the Baals" (Judges 10:6).

Our Sages say (Beitza 25b) that they worshiped seven types of idolatry every day, and for the sin of idolatry, one is liable for death for each such worship.

When your case came before the Heavenly Court, it was decreed that you would be given a bad wife, who causes you pain more than death.

Therefore, you should rejoice every time she causes you sorrow, for each time it is considered as if you have received a death penalty, and atone for your many sins.'

Parshat Pinchas - All Her Pursuers Overtook Her

However, on the 17th of Tammuz, an idol was placed within the Sanctuary, and demonstrated, as it were,

that their physical abundance and necessities were received from the impure powers of idolatry.

All Her Pursuers Overtook Her

Since the time of the destruction of the Temple the struggles have not ceased for even a moment.

Over the course of almost two thousand years of exile, the people of Israel may have fallen again and again.

However, despite this, the Jewish people rise anew time after time, and with repentance and good deeds, renew their commitment and indestructible bond with G-d.

This is learned through an additional interpretation of the verse: "All her pursuers overtook her between the straits" (Lamentations 1:3) - all the pursuers, the wicked powers of Israel, witness and comprehend the greatness of the people of Israel especially after they have fallen between the straits and nonetheless stand up and repent to G-d with all their strength ('Eser Tzachat zachot" by Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz, chapter 63).

A Jew Stumbles but Rises Back Up

Indeed, this stubbornness is the beauty and glory of the Jew.

When a Jew knows that everything is supervised by the G-d - 'for the L-rd knows the

way of the righteous', he knows that it is impossible to drift away from Him entirely.

A person in life not only experiences ascents and successes,

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

When the Chassid returned home and his wife continued to anger and trouble him, he would say to himself each time:

"another idolatry has been removed, another idolatry removed" (From the book "Mipi Chassidim," page 77).

Parshat Pinchas - A Jew Stumbles but Rises Back Up

but often goes through declines and falls as well.

Even a righteous person can experience difficulties and slip up occasionally, as the verse says: "For a righteous man may fall seven times over, and rise" (Proverbs 24:16).

The greatness of a person however, is measured by the fact that he does not remain low, but manages to overcome and rise from it, and return to his initial strength.

Sometimes those who have an awakening, experience afterward a period when their determination and enthusiasm wanes, and human nature and the evil inclination take them to task, and suddenly the person finds himself in the same place and with the same low spirit as he had before his awakening.

This may lead him to despair and have a lack of self-belief, thinking that perhaps he does not have the strength for it, and all his efforts were futile.

However, the truth is that this feeling of despair is an inconsistent lie.

Spiritual life and Divine service, involves advancements and ascensions to new spiritual heights and levels, and as with a ladder, it is impossible to ascend from one level to another without raising a foot to the higher rung, which exposes one to slipping, losing footing, and falling.

However, whatever one goes through, they must never wave a white flag of surrender to their evil inclination, but rather must 'shake yourself off from the dust, arise' - and continue to fight.

Even when a person experiences a spiritual decline it is forbidden for him to fall into the arms of despair, but he must strive to serve the L-rd according to his ability and capability at the time.

Ultimately, one will see that they merit and ascend to a higher next level only after overcoming and resolving an obstacle they had previously thought to be insurmountable.

This is also what the Torah commands us in the portion of Ki Teitzei:

Parshat Pinchas - A Jew Stumbles but Rises Back Up

"When you go out to war against your enemies, and the L-rd your G-d will deliver them into your hands and you will take their captives" (Deuteronomy 21:10).

The war mentioned in this verse refers also to the inner war a person wages against their evil inclination that seeks to bring down his spirit, and to cause him to despair from

having a connection with the Creator.¹²

In this verse, the Torah encourages and guarantees: "And the L-rd your G-d will deliver them into your hands and you will take their captives."

Do not despair, or lose hope; ultimately, you will win and be victorious.

Shabbat Shalom !



Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. Thousands of years ago at the foot of Mount Sinai, G-d established an eternal covenant with the people of Israel.

In this covenant, a relationship and attachment were created between the people of Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, an eternal bond between every Jew and his Creator.

The relationship between G-d and the people of Israel is a relationship, of love, of closeness, of friendship.

The Torah and its commandments are the means for strengthening and maintaining this connection.

The giving of the Torah was also the creation of a bond and attachment.

Since then, it has been revealed that G-d, the Torah, and the Jewish people are united as one. As the well-known saying goes: G-d the Torah, and Israel are one.

2. Throughout the generations, the people of Israel have faced

difficult trials and this bond has been tested and worn out.

Most of the ensuing calamitous events occurred during the three weeks between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av.

As our sages declare: 'Five things happened to our ancestors on the seventeenth of Tammuz:

The Tablets were broken, the daily offering ceased, the city was breached, Apostomos burned the Torah, and an idol was placed in the Sanctuary.

On the ninth of Av: it was decreed that our ancestors would not enter the land, the Temple was destroyed time and again, the fortress of Beitar was captured, and the city of Jerusalem was plowed over.'

The characteristic common to all these events of the 'Three weeks' is the disconnection of the bond to the Holy One, blessed be He.

Consequently, these weeks are distressing times. For when, G-d

Parshat Pinchas - Summary and Practical Conclusions

forbid, a disconnection occurs between G-d and the people of Israel, a concealment of His presence and protection occurs in the world.

3. Despite all the trials and falls, the people of Israel have never despaired and on the contrary, always remained strong in their faith and stubborn in their love for the Holy One, blessed be He.

It is precisely in these days of concealment of His presence, that the verse is fulfilled in its positive interpretation: 'All of her pursuers caught her between the straits' - all the pursuers, the enemies of Israel, recognize the greatness of the people of Israel especially when the people of Israel succeed and persevere through crises.

4. This stubbornness is truly the beauty and glory of the Jew. A Jew knows that everything is supervised by the L-rd,

blessed be He, and continues his Divine service with usual devotion.

Every person goes through ascents and successes but also through declines and falls. Even a righteous person experiences certain declines and falls from time to time. However, the greatness of a person is measured by the fact that he does not remain in his fall but overcomes and rises from it, and returns to his initial strength.

5. Authentic life of Divine service means that a person constantly ascends and achieves new spiritual levels.

Ascending from one level to another involves going up a 'circular staircase', where one seems to be back at the same place every time they ascend, but are truly at a much higher plane.

As such, one must never wave a white flag of surrender to the evil inclination, but

Parshat Pinchas - Summary and Practical Conclusions

rather must 'Shake yourself continue to fight until an assured
from the dust, arise' - and victory.

Shabbat Shalom !



"Strengthen your heart and read the

Book of Psalms

aloud with enthusiasm

From the power of the reading of Psalms

one comes to true joy of the commandments"

(Chelev Ha'aretz).



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(Betzur Yarum).



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” A person must rejoice when the time for
prayer

as the author of the Tanya says that:

every Jew, wherever he is, receives from G-d at the time of prayer a gift called **"Mochin D'Gadlut,"** meaning that the understanding of everything is expansive before him, as is written **"Open wide your mouth and I will fill it"** ”



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**Shabbat Times
Pinchas**

21st of Tammuz, 5784



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:59 pm	9:03 pm	9:28 pm
Miami	7:52 pm	8:47 pm	9:21 pm
Los Angeles	7:41 pm	8:39 pm	9:10 pm
Montreal	8:11 pm	9:20 pm	9:40 pm
Toronto	8:29 pm	9:35 pm	9:57 pm
London	8:39 pm	9:59 pm	10:07 pm
Jerusalem	7:25 pm	8:14 pm	9:08 pm
Tel Aviv	7:22 pm	8:11 pm	9:04 pm
Haifa	7:22 pm	8:12 pm	9:05 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:20 pm	8:09 pm	9:02 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

The great and foundational thing is to do a favor for another, and needless to say, not to cause them distress or suffering. One is punished sooner or later for causing anguish to another.

Even if you were wronged, do not return in kind, but rather avoid and forgive. For if another is punished for doing you wrong, you will suffer as well eventually, "One whose fellow is punished on his behalf, is not received in the presence of G-d" (Shabbat 149b).

When your heart will be pure of all feelings of anger and grudge upon another Jew, G-d's divine presence will dwell in your heart.



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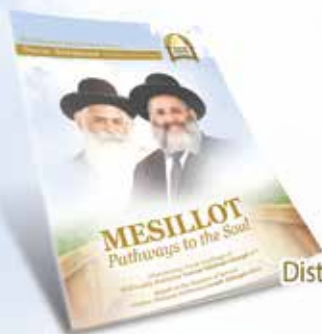
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