



The Chinese Chanukah Miracle

Parashas Vayechi

Leilui Neshmas Meira Chaya Nechama Bracha A"H

Bat David Mordechai V'Zelda Shaindel Sheychu

Odelyah was a young Israeli woman who had moved to China and joined a sect that practiced Hindi philosophy and Yoga.

For the past five years, my dear grandson, Rabbi Dov Ber Henig, has been working in China to offer Judaism to all who sought it, and Odelayah began to visit his Chabad house and learn of her heritage, although she did not leave her sect.

On one of the nights before the recent Chanukah holiday, Rabbi Dov held a special event and told the participants of the significance of the lights of the holiday. He asked them to light the candles to add light in the world and gave them each a menorah.

On the first night of the holiday, he received a phone call from Odelyah. She wanted to light the candles but did not have them with her. What should she do? She will only be home late at night?

Rabbi Dov thought for a moment and then told her to light the candles together with the members of the sect and recite the three blessings.

Odelyah promised to do so, and Rabbi Dov joined those who had come to celebrate with him at the Chabad house.

Odelyah felt embarrassed but decided to carry through with the candle lighting. She initially tried to light the candles in a side room, but the sect leader told her to light them in the center of the place they were at.

Thus, she recited the blessings and brought light into this place of darkness.

When my grandson saw a video of the event he knew that good had been done, but he did not know how far the good had gone.

In our weekly parsha we read of Yaakov's request to his son Yosef: "you shall deal with me with lovingkindness and truth; do not bury me now in Egypt."

Yaakov feared that Egypt's "soil is destined to become lice," and wanted to be buried in Israel "because those who die outside the Holy Land will not be resurrected except with the pain of rolling through underground passages. Also, so that the Egyptians will not deify me."

We learn that Yaakov feared of being in a place of idolatry as he feared he himself would become a worshipped idol.

After Yaakov passed away and was buried, Yosef's brothers approach him and said to him: "Your father commanded [us] before his death, saying, 'So shall you say to Joseph, "Please, forgive now your brothers' transgression and their sin, for they did evil to you. Now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'"

Rashi explained that they meant that "although your father is dead, his God is alive, and they are His servants."

A question arises – if the brothers feared Yosef would disdain them, why threaten him with this sentence, that "although your father is dead, his God is alive."

The holy books explain that the brothers told Yosef that the godliness which their father instilled within their hearts remains forever. That godliness follows them everywhere, in all places of darkness, even in Egypt."

Father has died, but his spirit lives on. When Yosef heard this he cried, knowing they were speaking the truth and that they were carrying Yaakov's light even after his death, even in the darkness of Egypt.

The phone call Rabbi Dov received the next day was surprising. A Jewish person whom he did not know and had never met called in tears.

It turns out that he was a member of the sect and had participated in the candle lighting with Odelyah, which reminded him his childhood.

He shared that he had left his home in Israel at the age of 15 and has since been roaming the globe and seeking the truth. He was disconnected from his family and past and was lonely in the world.

Suddenly, a light appeared in a place of darkness, to which he had escaped fleeing his Judaism. The flickering flame brought him back home. Godliness had returned to dwell within him.

