



Adapted from the sefer **חמין במוצאי שבת** and **דעותא דזעיר אנפין** collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Lech Lecha 5777

Many *Meforshim* try to reconcile the discrepancy between Avraham Avinu's refusal to accept any of the spoils of war from Bera, the king of *Sedom* and his earlier request from Sara Imeinu.

אמרי נא אחתי את למען ייטב לי בעבורך וחיתה נפשי בגללך - Please say that you are my sister so that it will be good for me for your sake, and my soul will live because of you.

Rashi explains **אמרי נא אחתי את למען ייטב לי בעבורך** means "they will give me gifts". Soon afterwards the *pasuk* tells us

ולאברם היטיב בעבורה ויהי לו צאן ובקר וחמרים ועבדים ושפחות ואתנת וגמלים - And he (Pharaoh) was good to Avrohom for her sake and he then had sheep and cattle and donkeys and servants and maidservants and jennies and camels. (בראשית י"ב:ט"ז).

The *Baalei Tosfos* and other *Rishonim* ask why he accepted gifts from *Pharaoh* but refused to receive even a thread or a shoelace from the King of *Sedom*. There are myriad approaches to solving this conundrum.

It is possible to suggest an approach based on the *pasuk* in *Yeshaya* (ל"ב:ז)

אמרי נא אחתי את למען ייטב לי בעבורך וחיתה נפשי בגללך - A miser's vessels are bad. The *Mefarshei Ha'Pshat* explain this in a variety of ways. The deep explanation is that the miser's **עין** (outlook of avarice) infects even his vessels and possessions with the negative energy of his *tzarus ayin*.



[1]

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The Torah describes the people of *Sdom* as רעים וחטאים לה' מאד - extremely evil and sinful towards Hashem. For them, extreme miserliness was a way of life.

As *Yechezkel Hanavi* described their sin:

הנה זה היה עון סדם אחותך גאון שבעת לחם ושלות השקט היה לה ולבנותיה יד עני ואביון לא החזיקה. (ט"ז:מ"ט)

Behold this was the sin of *Sdom* your sister, arrogance, abundant bread, tranquility and ease were hers and her daughters. But they did not support the hand of the poor.

The *Sifri* (עקב פיסקא מ"ג) states:

“The people of *Sdom* only rebelled against *Hashem* from a state of satisfaction and plenty. Because of their great wealth, (described in *Sefer Iyov* (כ"ח ה-ח)), they said ‘We have food. We have gold and silver. Let us establish laws that eliminate the practice of allowing visitors to be guests in our land. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* said to them, Because of the bounty that I have bestowed upon you, you wish to prevent anyone from visiting your land? I will eliminate you and cause you to be forgotten from the world.”

Chazal describe in great detail the cruelty with which they treated guests, for the very concept of *hachnassas orchim* was repugnant to them. *Rashi* (י"ט:כ"ו) explains that Lot's wife became a pillar of salt because she sinned with salt. For when Lot asked her to give a little salt to the guests, she said “You wish to bring even this evil custom here?”

Bera the king of *Sdom* was the very essence of evil. He was the root of the *klipa* of *tzarus ayin* that became the culture of *Sdom*. Therefore, any of his property or possessions were permeated with terrible evil and *tzarus ayin*. That is why *Avraham Avinu* refused to accept even a thread or a shoelace from *Bera*.



[2]

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My grandfather zy" a used to tell a story about his ancestor the *Meor Einayim* zy" a (whose *yohrzheit* is today). Once a wealthy man gave him a *pidyon nefesh*. As soon as the Rebbe received the money, he immediately returned it. He said that he sensed *tzarus ayin* in that money, for even though the *gvir* gave the money, he did so grudgingly. The Rebbe didn't even want to use that *pidyon* for *tzedakah* or other *mitzvos* as was his custom.

This story teaches us how careful we must be to avoid the *mida* of *tzarus ayin*, for avarice changes not only our nature, but even the nature of our inanimate possessions. That influence can have very far-reaching consequences.

As always, it is important to remember *mida tova meruba* - the power of the corresponding good *mida* is always far greater than that of the negative one. Those who view the world, and act with *ayin tova*, imbue their surroundings and possessions with the blessing of *ayin tova*. This will also cause them to be viewed from above with great *ayin tova*.

וטוב עין הוא יבורך במילוי כל משאלותיו ובכל מילי דמיטב אכי"ר



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