



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

Seuda Shlishis Ki Seitzei
(חדוותא דזעיר אנפין עמ' קצג)

In this week's *parsha* the Torah commands us to return our fellow Jew's lost property.

**לא תראה את שור אחיך או את שיו נדחים והתעלמת מהם השב תשיבם לאחריך
(דברים כ"ב)**

Rabeinu Ephraim points out that throughout the *Torah* we find the pairing of שור וחמור - the ox and the donkey. However, in our *pasuk* the examples of lost animals are שור - the ox, and the שה - the sheep. Even though the Torah goes on to say וכן תעשה לחמורו (דברים כ"ב:ג) - and so shall you do with his donkey, the question remains; Why are the ox and the sheep the primary examples of lost animals, rather than the ox and the donkey?

Rabeinu Ephraim refers us to the *pasuk* in *Sefer Yeshayahu* (א:ג)

ידע שור קנהו וחמור אבוס בעליו - The ox knows his owner and the donkey knows the feed trough of its master.

We see that the ox knows its owner and nothing else. If his owner isn't present, the ox has no idea where to go and therefore may get lost. The same applies to sheep without a shepherd.

The donkey however, recognizes not only his owner, but also the location of the food provided by his owner. Therefore, even if his owner isn't around, the donkey will find his way back to his place. When the Torah wanted to provide examples of animals who commonly get lost, the sheep



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rather than the donkey was paired with the ox, for it would be unusual for a donkey to lose its way.

The second half of the *pasuk* in Yeshaya, **יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדָע עָמִי לֹא הִתְבּוֹנֵן** - *Yisrael* didn't know, my nation didn't introspect, contains two clauses that parallel the examples of the ox and the donkey in the beginning of the *pasuk*. The name *Yisrael* refers to the Jewish people on their highest level. This exalted level is symbolized by the ox, described by *Chazal* (תענית י"ג:) as the **מֶלֶךְ הַבְּהֵמוֹת** (king of the domesticated animals). The *navi's* complaint is that this ox-king doesn't know his owner.

Someone on the level of *Yisrael* is expected to fulfill **בְּכָל דְּרָכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ** (משלי ג:ו) knowing Hashem in all of your ways, ensuring that every thought, word or action will be an expression of *Yichud Hashem*.

The term *Ami*, on the other hand, represents the simplest most basic level of Jews. They are represented by the donkey, the **חמור** whose name represents **חמירות** - physicality. The *navi's* complaint to those Jews is **עָמִי לֹא הִתְבּוֹנֵן**. Why didn't they recognize *Elokus* - G-dliness from physicality itself, just as the donkey recognizes his master from the trough of food where he finds sustenance.

Each of us, has both of these aspects, **עָמִי** and **יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Each of us must introspect and recognize *Elokus* from our "trough of food", from physicality itself. Then, we must progress to the level of *Yisrael*, **יָדִיעַת ה'** connecting every aspect of our lives to Hashem. **בְּכָל דְּרָכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ**.

Yaakov Avinu compared the *shevet* of Yissachar to a donkey. **יִשְׁשַׁכַּר חֲמֹר** (בראשית רבה ל"ב:ו) *Chazal* explain the *pasuk* **וַיְהִי לִי שׁוֹר וַחֲמֹר** (בראשית ל"ב:י) - And I had oxen and donkeys "שור is Yosef, חמור is Yissachar".

By symbolizing Yissachar, who represents greatness in Torah, with the donkey, Yaakov Avinu taught us that only one who humbles himself like a donkey, (a very unimpressive animal) can acquire Torah. Yaakov Avinu's



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blessing continues, וַיֵּרָא מְנוּחָה כִּי טוֹב וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ כִּי נְעִמָּה - He saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant. The pleasantness of the land discovered by Yissachar is the pleasure of being close to the earth, truly humble, like the donkey who is רֹבֵץ בֵּין הַמְּשָׁפְתִים - rests on the ground.

Only because Yissachar viewed himself as being on the level of a donkey, was he able to internalize Torah. As *Chazal* say, (תענית ז.) - *divrei Torah* only exist within someone who is humble.

We can now understand the statement of the *Zohar Hakadosh*, that the word חמור is an acronym for חכם מופלג ורב רבן - The wisest, and the greatest of *Rabbanan*. Only someone who humbles himself like a donkey can attain such *madreigos*.

So too, we learn in *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu* - A person should approach *divrei Torah* as an ox to the yoke, and as a donkey to the burden.

There is an even deeper message in the description וַיִּשְׁכַּר חֹמֶר גֶּרֶם. The *Baal Shevet Hamussar* in his *Sefer Yado Bakol* brings the teaching that the word גרם is an acronym for גְּזֵרוֹת רְעוּת מְבִטֵּל. Someone who is humble and attains the level of חכם מופלג ורב רבן by discovering his creator in every aspect of physicality, can also cancel or “sweeten” even the harshest decrees.

We are approaching the *Yom Hadin Hagadol Ve'hanora* - *Rosh Hashana*, when *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* himself will judge the thoughts, words, and actions of everyone in the entire world. In *Maseches Chagiga* (ט"ז.), *Chazal* tell us that “A person’s *Neshama* testifies about him, the limbs of a person testify about him. As the *pausk* says וְאַתֶּם עֵדֵי נַאֲם ה' (ישעיהו מ"ג:י"ב) - And you are my witnesses, says Hashem.

We find a “hint” to that concept in our *Parsha* which contains 74 *mitzvos* corresponding to the *gematria* of עד. The *mitzvos* which we perform with our limbs testify on our behalf. Each of us knows how few those *mitzvos* are. On the day of judgement, who can claim that he is a *tzadik*.



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We must save ourselves by grasping the lifeline exemplified by Yissachar. We must adopt the humility and submissiveness of the donkey, that will enable us to recognize and remain connected to our master, Hashem. Then we, like the donkey, won't stray and get lost. We will truly internalize the Torah that we learn with *anava*.

ואל ידי זה נזכה לצאת זכאים בדיננו ביום ראש השנה, ולשנה טובה ומתוקה. וכאשר ננהג בעצמנו כחמורים, נזכה לחמורו של משיח שיבוא ויגאלנו במהרה בימינו, אמן כן יהי רצון.



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