



Adapted from the sefer **במוצאי שבת** a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Shemos 5759

When Moshe Rabeinu encounters one Jew hitting another, he asks "רשע למה תכה" (Rasha! Why are you hitting your friend?).

We have to find the deeper meaning of this pasuk. What shocked Moshe Rabeinu when he saw the two men fighting? He certainly wasn't naïve, and he knew that wicked people interact by arguing, cursing, and even hitting.

We also have to understand Moshe Rabeinu's question in the context of Shlomo Hamelech's instruction in Mishlei (ט"ח): "אל תוכח לץ פן ישנאך, הוכח חכם ויאהבך" (Don't chastise a scoffer lest he hate you, chastise a wise man and he will love you).

From these words, Chazal in Maseches Yevamos (ס"ה:), derived the lesson, "כשם שמצוה לומר דבר הנשמע, כך מצוה שלא לומר דבר שלא נשמע" (Just as it is a mitzva to say words that will be accepted, it is a mitzva not to say words that will not be accepted). Why then, did Moshe Rabeinu chastise these two men when it should have been obvious that they wouldn't listen to him?

We also need to understand the response of the antagonists "הלהרגני אתה אומר?". Rashi explains that these men saw Moshe Rabeinu kill the Egyptian overseer who was beating a Jew, with "אמירה", by pronouncing one of the names of Hashem. If so, how could they risk taunting Moshe Rabeinu? When they challenged him with the question "מי שמך לאיש שר ושופט עלינו?", shouldn't they have feared that he would kill them as well?

Surprisingly, their comment seemed to cause Moshe Rabeinu to fear them, "ויירא משה ואמר אכן נודע הדבר" (And Moshe was afraid and said, truly the matter is known). Why should he fear them or anyone? He could destroy any attacker with a word?



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We can answer these questions by explaining the pesukim with a lesson from the Baal Hatanya, zy" a in his sefer Torah Ohr. He explains the words of Yeshayahu, "וישוב אל ה' וירחמנו", not as describing Hashem's mercy for the baal teshuva, but rather imploring the sinner to have mercy on the נִצּוּץ הָאֱלֹקִי, the divine spark inside of himself.

The Baal Hatanya teaches us that every single Jew has within him a neshama kedusha, a divine spark that is "חלק אלוהים ממעל". This spark never leaves a Jew, no matter how "unjewishly" he behaves. Negative actions envelop that spark in קליפות (husks) of טומאה, but can never extinguish it. Yeshayahu begs us to have mercy on the imprisoned spark of our own kedusha, and to free it from טומאה by returning to Hashem.

Each generation has tzadikim who, with the clarity of their eyes and the purity of their neshamos, see that divine spark in every Jew, no matter how deeply it is enveloped in טומאה. Such tzadikim gather wounded, rejected Jews, and help them reveal the name of Hashem that is, and has always been, part of them.

Such was the avoda of Dovid Hamelech:

"ויתקבצו אליו כל איש צר ומצוק וכל איש אשר לו נשא וכל איש מר נפש, ויהי עליהם לשר" (And every man who was in distress, and every man who had a creditor, and every man of embittered spirit gathered themselves to him, and he became a chief over them....) (שמואל א כ"ב:ב)

In our generation, those who saw the avoda of my grandfather, zy" a saw the embodiment of this principle. At all times, and in all circumstances, he only saw the name of Hashem in each person. Suffering and troubled people were always drawn to him, as they were to Dovid Hamelech.

I remember a time when a מחלוקת broke out between two communities of frum Jews. My grandfather, zy" a tried, with all of his strength, to extinguish the fire of the מחלוקת. As part of his efforts, he approached one of the great poskim of the generation, and asked for his assistance in bringing peace. That gadol asked my grandfather what motivated him to get involved with a difficult situation that was clearly draining his strength. My grandfather responded that when he heard that one



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camp called the other, רשע, it caused him great pain. "How", he asked, "can anyone describe another Jew as a רשע?"

We can now understand Moshe Rabeinu's discussion with the two Jews who were fighting. Moshe Rabeinu's gaze penetrated the envelope of טומאה which they had created, and saw the divine spark in each of them. When he cried out למה תכה רעך, he meant, "how can you do this to Hashem who is inside of you?". Chazal, commenting on the pasuk in משלי (כ"ז:י) "אל תעזוב", (Do not abandon your friend and the friend of your father), explain that רעך refers to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Moshe Rabeinu, in his righteousness, felt that these men must have descended to such depths, that they were no longer aware that Hashem was still present in each of them. He implored them to have mercy on רעך, the divine spark inside of them. When they saw that Moshe Rabeinu viewed them as people who carried Hashem's name, they felt confident that he wouldn't kill them, and responded "הלהרגני אתה אומר".

At that point, Moshe Rabeinu understood that these men cared nothing for the name of Hashem inside of them. He became afraid, and said "אכן נודע הדבר". His fear stemmed from discovering how distant these Jews were from their true identity.

Our task, as מאמינים בני מאמינים, is to constantly remember the name of Hashem that we bear within ourselves, to have mercy on it, and ensure that it remains undamaged and untarnished. We will then merit the closeness described by Yeshayahu.

וישוב אל ה' וירחמהו, ואל אלקינו כי ירבה לסלוח אכי"ר



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