



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

Melave Malka Parshas Noach 5768

In tonight's portion of *Tana D'vei Eliyahu*, Eliyahu Hanavi teaches us;

“Once I was sitting before the *chachamim* in the *Beis Hamidrash Hagadol* in Yerushalayim. I asked them, ‘*Rabosai*, why was Omri the general and King of Israel different from all who preceded him? None of his predecessors placed a *Melech ben Melech* on the throne, while Omri had three descendants sit on his throne. They said to me, ‘We have not heard’.

I told them that he was rewarded for adding a city in the land of *Yisrael* that would be like Yerushalayim. For he thought that just as Yerushalayim was to the Kings of Yehuda, so would the city of Shomron be to the Kings of *Yisrael*.” (תנא דבי אליהו רבה פרק ט"א אות ב')

We can learn many lessons from these words of Eliyahu Hanavi. First of all, we must understand why Eliyahu Hanavi asked the *chachamim* why Omri was different from other kings when he clearly knew the correct answer. It seems that we could explain this based on a lesson brought in the name of the *Chidushei Ha'Rim zy"u* (אמת ואמונה עמוד ק"ט).

“A *tzadik* asked the *Baal Chidushei Ha'Rim* why he still needs to travel to the Kotzker Rebbe when he himself is qualified to be a Rebbe. He responded that the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* says ואל תמכר - Purchase truth and do not sell it. Isn't it obvious that if someone wants to acquire truth, he won't sell the truth that he already has? Rather, the *peirush* is - As long as you are able to acquire truth, continue to do so. Only in a



[1]

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state of **ואל** - when there is no truth available, then and only then should you “sell” your truth. Therefore, as long as I am able to acquire truth, it is not the time for me to sell.”

Therefore, even though Eliyahu Hanavi knew the answer to his question, he wanted to see if one of the *chachamim* had a *chidush*, some new way to address the question, for there are **שבעים פנים לתורה** - seventy faces to the Torah. He knew that once he provided his answer, the *chachamim* would remain silent, and refrain from proposing any other solutions. Therefore, he asked them, and only when they didn’t provide an answer of their own, did he present his answer.

This teaches us how “thirsty” we should be to hear *divrei Torah*. If *Eliyahu Hanavi*, from whom no secret of Torah was hidden, wanted to hear the words of the *chachamim*, *kal va’chomer*, we should pay attention and take advantage of every opportunity to hear the words of our *chachamim*.

We also learn that *malchus*, even that of *reshaim* like Achav and Omri, is a very lofty heavenly matter. If this wasn’t so, Eliyahu Hanavi wouldn’t pay such close attention to the history of their reigns and discuss aspects of it with the *chachamim*.

The primary lesson that we learn from Eliyahu Hanavi is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu never deprives any creature of their reward, even a *rasha* like Omri who was involved in theft and idolatry and was as wicked as Yeravam ben Nevat. Despite all of his wickedness, he built a great city in *Eretz Yisrael*, and merited to have three of his descendants sit on his throne. In fact, his very ascendance to the throne was a reward for building that city, as R. Yochanan says (סנהדרין ק"ב:) - “Why did Omri deserve to become king? Because he added another city to Eretz Yisrael.”

The concept of Hakadosh Baruch Hu not depriving any creation of their reward first appears in our *parsha*.



[2]

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As it says in the *Midrash Tanchuma Hayashan*:

וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת נֹחַ וְאֶת כָּל הַחַיָּה וְאֶת כָּל הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה

And Hashem remembered Noah and all the wild animals and domesticated animals that were with him in the *teiva*. If Noah was remembered, why were the *chaya* and *beheima* remembered? However, let the name of Hakadosh Baruch Hu be praised for he does not deprive any creature of its reward. Even a mouse who remained within its species and didn't intermingle with other species, was worthy of receiving reward.

All people in the generation of the *mabul* intermingled their families in forbidden ways, as the *pasuk* says, וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחָתָה - And Hashem saw the land and behold it had been corrupted. Therefore, just as He punished human beings who sinned, so too did he punish the animals and birds who sinned.

We find another example of this *mida* in the *parsha*. In *Maseches Sanhedrin* (ק"ח):

“Eliezer the servant of Avraham asked Shem, the oldest son of Noah, ‘What were your deeds in the *teiva*?’ One of the descriptions in Shem’s response related to a bird called the *orshina*. When Noah distributed food to the animals, that bird went and sat at the end of the *teiva*. When Noah found him and saw that he wasn’t eating, he asked, ‘Don’t you want food? The *orshina* answered, I saw that you were so busy, so I decided not to bother you. Noah said to him, ‘May it be Hashem’s will that you shouldn’t die.’”

Once again, we see that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave that bird a reward that seems disproportionately greater than its deeds, all because He doesn't deprive any creature of its reward.

We also see this *mida* in the life of *David Hamelech* the “*baal seuda*” of *Melave Malka*. The *Midrash Rabba* (נשא י"ב:ט) relates;



[3]

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נֹצֵר תְּאֵנָה יֹאכַל פְּרִיָּהּ (משלי כ"ז:י"ח) - One who watches over the fig tree will eat its fruit. Hakadosh Baruch Hu does not deprive any creature of its reward. Wherever a person toils and devotes his *nefesh* to something, Hakadosh Baruch Hu won't deprive him of his reward.

If you would like to know (where we see this), Shlomo Hamelech built the *Beis Hamikdash*... and because David gave his *nefesh* for the building of the *Beis Hamikdash* it is ascribed to his name, מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר הַנֶּכֶת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד. The *pasuk* doesn't say לְשִׁלְמֹה but rather לְדָוִד

We, *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to follow in the way of Hashem's *midos*. As Abba Shaul states in *Maseches Shabbos* (קל"ג:)

"וְאֶנְהוּ" (שמות ט"ו:ב) - be similar to Him, just as He is kind and merciful, so too should you be kind and merciful."

Therefore, we are also commanded to ensure that we never deprive the any creature that helped us of its reward. This doesn't mean that we must provide tangible rewards, for it would be impossible for us to do so for the countless benefits we receive. However, it does mean that we must be *makir tova* - acknowledge the benefit we have received and express our gratitude to anyone from whom we have received benefit, even if they have also harmed us.

Rav Yehonasan Eibeshitz zt"l in his *Sefer Yaaros Devash* writes,

'It is truly fitting to people of understanding, and specifically a Jew who walks in the pathways of Hashem, that if his friend does one *tova* for him, but also wrongs him in a thousand ways, to forget the wrongs and remember the love. However, *b'avonoseinu harabim*, the opposite is true. If someone does many *tovos* for a person, but then does one thing that the person views as bad, he will forget all of the *tovos* and view him with enmity as if the person has been harming him from the day he was born until now.



[4]

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This is not the *mida* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu who doesn't deprive any creature of his reward, even *reshaim gemurim* - someone who is totally wicked."

Even if we aren't yet capable of forgetting the harm caused to us by our fellow Jew, we should at least ensure that we don't forget the good that he has done for us.

This is certainly the way we must relate to our sons and daughters. If a person faces the *nisayon* of having a child or a *talmid* who sometimes veers from the straight path, that child may occasionally *daven* or learns as he should. When that occurs, a person's natural tendency might be to scold the child and say, "See you've now demonstrated that you can learn and *daven* properly when you want to! So why don't you do it all the time!"

However, a Jew isn't meant to follow his natural tendencies, but to learn from the *midos* of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, honoring and praising the child for his accomplishment, rather than judging him on the basis of his usual misdeeds. There is no doubt that when the child sees that his one-time success results in praise and admiration (and isn't utilized to find new ways to scold and denigrate him) he will be self-motivated to continue in that path.

A person must also treat himself this way. He must treasure every good deed he has done, or any good trait that he has, and cultivate healthy self-esteem based on those positive aspects. This is true even though he is aware of his countless shortcomings. This is the only way for him to draw closer and closer to *Avodas Hashem B'simcha* and to developing proper *midos*.



[5]

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If we interact with ourselves, our children, and our *talmidim* in this way, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will view us in a similar light, *mida k'neged mida*. As the *pasuk* says:

אם יש עליו מלאך מליץ אחד מני אלף להגיד לאדם ישרו ויחננו ויאמר פדעוהו מרדת
שחת מצאתי כפר (איוב ל"ג:כ"ג-כ"ד)

If there is one *malach* out of a thousand who will intercede on his behalf and declare a man's righteousness. And He will be gracious to him, and he will say, 'Redeem him from descending to destruction, I have found ransom'.

אמן כן יהי רצון



[6]

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