



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

Melave Malka Parshas Vayechi 5767

Among the *brachos* that Yaakov Avinu gives to his children, we find the *brachah* of Yisachar who is compared to a donkey.

שְׁשָׁכָר חֲמֹר גָּרָם רֹבֵץ בֵּין הַמְּשֻׁפְּתִים (בראשית מ"ט: י"ד)

Yisachar is a strong-boned donkey, crouching among the boundaries.

The Yalkut Shimoni (במדבר רמז תשס"ז) explains the meaning of that comparison.

“Yaakov said to Yisachar, ‘Who caused you to become a Ben Torah? It is because you crouch (like a donkey) in dirt and rubbish. רובץ בין המשפתיים”

Yisachar, who is a true Ben Torah, doesn't pay attention to his own honor. He sits in the dust of the feet of *tzadikim* and *lomdei Torah*. This is why he had the *zechus* to become great in Torah.

In the Zohar Hakadosh (ח"א רמב:) R. Elazar comments on this *brachah*.

“If Yisachar is called a donkey because of the effort he devotes to learning Torah, we should call him a horse, a lion, or a leopard. Why a donkey? However, it is said that when you take a donkey from place to place, he doesn't kick his master as other animals would. He has no arrogance, and has no problem sleeping in a place that isn't clean. So too, Yisachar works hard to acquire Torah, and doesn't kick (rebel against) Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He has no arrogance, and cares nothing for his own honor, only for the honor of his master.”



[1]

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The *mara d'asra* of this Beis Medrash, my grandfather zy”a, personified this *middah*. All of his life, he looked for opportunities to be *meshamesh tzadikim* and *talmidei chachamim*. Even in his old age, he dragged his legs from place to place in order to “roll in the dust of the feet” of the *tzadikim* of Gur and Rachmistrivka.

Who can forget how he would stand at the *tish* of the Beis Yisrael zy”a, behind rows of sweating Gerer *bochrim* who pushed forward in the hope of seeing their Rebbe. He would watch them lovingly, delighting in their *bitul* to their Rebbe.

I heard from Rav Shlomo Goldshtof z”l, that his father-in-law, the Tchebiner Rav once sat next to the Beis Yisrael at the *tish* celebrating the *bris* of the Pnei Menachem zy”a’s oldest son. The Rav suddenly noticed some *avreichim* who were lying under the table. The Beis Yisrael sensed the Rav’s astonishment and told him, “They are fulfilling the Tana’s instruction in Pirkei Avos **הוי מתאבק בעפר רגליהם**.”

When the Beis Yisrael quoted those words from the Mishnah, he pointed at the Tchebiner Rav, indicating that it was the dust of the Rav’s feet that they were rolling in.

After the *tish*, the Tchebiner Rav told his son-in-law that he was jealous of those *avreichim* who actually fulfilled Chazal’s instruction by lying down under the table. This statement was very befitting, because the Tchebiner Rav himself, the *Sar Hatorah*, always learned Torah with humility and modesty. He sincerely admired and envied those young men.

A special *yid* named Rav Moshe Tzvi Neiman z”l told me a story that he heard from his uncle. In his youth, his uncle lived in the same city as Rav Meir Yechiel Halevi of Ostrovtza zy”a.

Once, they travelled together in order to spend Purim with Rav Elimelech Shapira of Grodzisk zy”a. Rav Moshe’s uncle described the *geonus* and *hasmada* of the Ostrovtzer. On the way, the Ostrovtzer gave him a



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Gemara Bava Basra, and proceeded to spend the entire trip reciting and reviewing the Gemara, Rashi, Rashbam, and Tosfos from memory, as Rav Moshe's uncle followed along from the Gemara.

Before the *tish* on Motzaei Purim, the *gabaim* realized that there weren't enough *challos* to feed the large crowd who had come for Purim. They asked the owner of the local baker to open up and start baking more *challos*. They also announced that if any of the *chasidim* knew anything about baking, they should please join in and help the baker.

It is well known that the Ostrovtzer's father baked bagels. As soon as he heard the announcement, he closed his *sefer* and went to help bake *challos* for the *tish*. Meanwhile, the Rebbe came out of his room and began the *tish*. He began to pour cups of wine, and poured one specifically for the *avreich* Rav Yechiel Meir of Ostrovtza. The *gabaim* searched for him in the crowd in order to give him the wine, but they couldn't find him. Eventually someone mentioned that they had seen him helping the baker.

Rav Elimelech raised his hands and said, "When an *avreich* so full of Torah and *yirah* cares so little for his own *kavod* and runs to bake *challah* for Bnei Yisrael, it's impossible to imagine the magnitude of his reward in this world and the next."

This is the true level of *chassidus* described in Pirkei Avos לא עם הארץ חסיד "and ignoramus can't be a *chasid*". One who knows all of Torah *shebaal peh* and still travels to roll in the dust of Tzadikim's feet, a *talmid chacham* who still runs to bake *challah* for Bnei Yisrael personifies true *chassidus*. He understands and fulfills the true purpose of our presence in *olam hazeh*.

This is a lesson for us. Even if we are far from being true *bnei Torah*, the *yetzer hara* still manages to trick us into becoming arrogant. Even those who have only learned one *pasuk* or *Mishnah* become *baalei gaavah*. We need to remember that any amount of learning, great or small, must be



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learned with humility and submission. If we try to follow this path, we will have the *zechus* to go from strength to strength, להגביר חיילים בתורה, בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרוב כל, אכי"ר



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