



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of
maamarim
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Melave Malka Parshas Korach 5760

In this week's *Parsha*, *Am Yisrael* complain;

כל הקרב הקרב אל משכן ה' ימות האם תמנו לגוע
Mishkan of Hashem will die, have we been abandoned to die?
(במדבר י"ז:כ"ח)

Rashi explains their concern;

“We can't be careful enough. We are all allowed to enter the courtyard of *Ohel Moed*, yet one who will draw a bit closer than another and will enter the *Ohel Moed* itself will die. Have we been abandoned to die?”

It is difficult to comprehend their fear. Why is the command that they not enter *Ohel Moed* so difficult to implement. Someone walking along a cliff makes sure to keep his distance from the edge so that he doesn't fall. Shouldn't *Bnei Yisrael* be capable of similar caution regarding *Ohel Moed*?

Perhaps we can explain their alarm with a story that an old *Belzer Chasid* told me. He heard this story from Rav Yaakov Yosef of *Skver zy" a* who heard it from his *mechutan* Rav Pinchas of *Ostelia zt" l hy" d*.

Once, Rav Pinchas' brother in law Rav Aharon of *Belz zy" a* became very ill as a result of his intense *avoda*. They brought a doctor from the big city who examined him and prescribed a variety of medicines. The Dr. then warned the Rav's family that under no circumstances was Rav Aharon to immerse himself in a *mikva*, for it could be life-threatening.



His family were afraid that Rav Aharon wouldn't follow this instruction, so they went to his father, Rav Yissachar Dov of *Belz zy" a*, and asked him to decree that if Rav Aharon will *toveil* himself in the *mikva* against his father's will it will be a transgression of *Kibud Av V'eim*. Rav Yissachar Dov immediately went to visit his son, and told him that as his father, he forbids him to immerse himself in the *mikva*.

The next day, well before sunrise, Rav Pinchas saw Rav Aharon quietly leave his house and walk towards the *mikva*. He was shocked for he knew that Rav Yissachar Dov explicitly commanded him to refrain from *tevila*. Rav Pinchas quietly followed his brother-in-law, and observed him as he entered the *mikva* building and undressed. Rav Aharon approached the water, stood there for a minute, and then put his clothes on and left.

At this point, Rav Pinchas felt compelled to ask Rav Aharon to explain his actions. Rav Aharon said that he was afraid that if he didn't go to the *mikva*, his motivation might not be the *Mitzva of Kibud Av V'eim*, but simply laziness. Therefore, he rose early and hurried to the *mikva* with great *hishtokekus*. Only when he had approached the water of the *mikva* could he rest assured that he refrained because of his father's instruction and not because he was lazy.

He added that his father never commanded him not to leave his house. Therefore, he did everything he could to get as close as possible to immersion in the *mikva*. When he had undressed and stood by the water, he had done all that was in his power while still taking care not to disobey his father. Hashem could then complete for him that aspect of *mikva* that he was unable to fulfill, as the *pasuk* says *לֹא-לִי גָמַר עָלַי* - to Hashem who completes for me. (תהיליםנ"ז:ג)

This story reminded me of another story that I heard from Rav Eliyahu Grosberg z"l. He said that before dawn one Shabbos morning, he saw the *Gaon V'tzadik* Rav Dovid Baharan zt"l, one of the heads of *Kehillas Ha'perushim* in Yerushalayim, on his way to the *mikva*. When he came to



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the *mikva* building, he undressed, approached the water, and put his hand in the water to test the temperature. The *minhag* of the *Perushim* was to refrain from *tevila* on Shabbos in hot water, so after determining that the water was hot, he quickly got dressed and left.

Rav Eliyahu asked him why he first undressed and then went to check the temperature of the water. He could have determined that while still fully clothed.

Rav David explained that he suspected that if he hadn't undressed, in his lazy reluctance to get undressed might have caused him to sense that the water was hot even if that wasn't the case. Therefore, he removed his clothes first, in order to eliminate the self-interest which could have led to self-deception.

Like Rav Aharon of Belz, Rav David also explained that *tevilla* is a process that involves steps of preparation. He wanted to at least perform every step of that process that he was able to. Only when he determined that the water was hot, did he refrain from the final step of immersion in the *mikva*.

There was a similar story with my grandfather *zy" a*. He wasn't feeling well and the doctor prescribed a few weeks of total rest in order for him to regain his strength.

When *Shabbos* came, my grandfather told me that he wants to accompany me to the *Gerrer Beis Medrash*. I reminded him that the Doctor had stated that exertion could negatively impact his health. Certainly, a long walk from *Bayit Vegan* to the *Beis Medrash* should be out of the question.

Nonetheless, my grandfather insisted, and he began to walk with me. When we reached the edge of the neighborhood, he wished me *Gut Shabbos* and turned to walk back home. I asked him what his initial intention had been and what had changed his mind. He explained that a



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person must do everything in his ability to get close to his Rebbe. Therefore, he walked as far as he was able to in the direction of his Rebbe's *Beis Medrash*.

All of these stories help us explain the *pesukim* in our *Parsha*. The people who were afraid that they would inadvertently enter *Ohel Moed* were part of a generation whom *Chazal* referred to as דור דעה - a knowledgeable generation. They knew that it was forbidden for them to step from the courtyard of the *Mishkan* into the *Kodesh*. However, the knowledge that they wouldn't be able to enter the inner areas of the highest *kedusha* didn't prevent them from coming as close as they could. They never felt, "If I can't do everything, why do anything?"

In fact, they ran with enthusiasm and yearning to the courtyard of the *Mishkan*. This very enthusiasm was the source of their concern. Because they wanted to get as close as possible within the parameters of *halacha*, they feared that they might not stop in time, and may step into the *Kodesh* thereby forfeiting their lives.

This is an important lesson for all of us. We must each do everything in our power to serve Hashem, even if it's just a small action that brings us a fraction closer than we were. If we truly yearn to do all that we can, we will be *zoche* to *Siyata D'shmaya* that will help us complete our tasks, and enable our aspirations to become reality. אכי"ר



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