



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

Melave Malka Parshas Chukas 5771

We are in the *Beis Medrash* of my grandfather zy”a, whose primary *avoda* was to acquire the attribute of *anava* - humility and *shiflus* - lowliness. His exceptional efforts in this area inspired all who knew him. He truly believed that any Jew was superior to him, and was a greater source of *nachas ruach* to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* than he was.

In this week’s *parsha*, we find a powerful lesson regarding the attribute of *anava*.

The Torah describes (במדבר כ"א:ל"ג-ל"ד) - Og the king of Bashan and all of his nation go out to attack *Am Yisrael*. *Hashem* tells Moshe אל תירא אתו כי בידך נתתי אתו ואת כל עמו ואת ארצו - Do not fear him, for I have given him, and all of his nation, and his land, into your hand.

Rashi explains that Moshe feared going to war because of the possibility that the merit of Avraham would protect Og. In *Parshas Lech Lecha*, the Torah (בראשית י"ד:י"ג) describes a refugee who informed Avraham that Lot had been taken captive. This was Og who escaped from the Rephaim who struck King Kedorlaomer and his allies at *Ashteros Karnayim*.

Everyone wonders how it could be possible that the merit of that one good deed of Og, which led to the rescue of Lot, could be so powerful. How could it compare to the countless merits of Moshe Rabeinu, who redeemed *Am Yisrael* from *Mitzrayim*, and brought down the Torah that he learned directly from *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* to *Am Yisrael*? Doesn’t the Torah tell us that there never was and never will be a *navi* like Moshe Rabeinu?



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In addition, *Chazal* explain that even that one good deed of Og was motivated by self-interest. His intention was that Avraham would be killed in the war so that he could then take Sara as his wife. How could such a deed, even if it did have a positive aspect, overcome the merits of Moshe Rabeinu?

Many *mefarshim* address this question with a variety of approaches.

The *Chizkuni's* explanation teaches us a fundamental principle of *Avodas Hashem*.

“And if you will say, why was Moshe Rabeinu afraid? In *Parshas Lech Lecha*, Rashi himself explained that Og’s intention was that Avraham should be killed and he would then marry Sara.

However, we can say that nevertheless, this act was a *zechus* for him. As *Chazal* say in *Maseches Horiyos* (:))

‘Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, ‘A person should always involve himself in Torah and *mitzvos* even *shelo li’shma* (not for their own sake), for in the merit of the forty-two *korbanos* brought by Balak the king of Moav, he merited to have Rus the daughter of Eglon descend from him. As R. Yossi said, ‘Rus was the daughter of Eglon, the grandson of Balak the king of Moav.’

This is also the reason that Moshe Rabeinu feared that the *zechus* of informing Avraham that his nephew had been captured, would protect Og, to the extent that Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe not to fear him.”

The deep message of the *Chizkuni's peirush* is that even though Moshe Rabeinu attained the crown of Torah to its greatest extent, and lived a life replete with good deeds, his *anava* led him to fear the *zechus* of Og’s one good deed. For he understood that the reward of a *mitzva* isn’t determined according to the estimations of physical human beings, but rather according to those of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, the judge of truth.



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Hashem takes into account everything in the universe when evaluating a person's actions or thoughts. How much effort did someone invest in fulfilling a certain *mitzva*, or in breaking his *midos* and desires to avoid an *aveira*?

As the *Rambam* writes (הלכות תשובה פ"ג א-ב)

“Each and every person has *zechuyos* and *avonos*. One whose *avonos* exceed his *zechuyos* immediately dies as a *rasha*....

And so too, the entire world, if their *avonos* exceeded their *zechuyos*, they would immediately be destroyed.

And this isn't measured according to the quantity of *zechuyos* and *avonos* but rather according to their magnitude. There is a *zechus* that is equivalent to many *avonos*, and an *avon* that is equivalent to many *zechuyos*. This is only weight by the understanding of *Kel Deos* - and He is the one who knows how *zechuyos* are compared to *aveiros*.”

Therefore, Moshe Rabeinu, despite being aware of everything that he had accomplished, feared that the *zechus* of Og would overcome even his own *zechuyos*. He understood that it is impossible to ever know the true measure of any Jew, or even of a non-jewish *rasha*.

It is well known that in the *tzavaa* of the *Beis Aharon* of Karlin zy”a, he asked that they continue say *Kadish* and learn *Mishnayos* on his behalf, even after twelve months from his *petira*. He requested this even though *Chazal* say that the sentence of *reshaim* in *Gehinnom* is no more than twelve months, (עדיית בי) Nonetheless, he was concerned that initially, he may not even have the *zechus* to enter *Gehinnom* at all!

This wasn't simply because he worried about all possible scenarios, even the most remote. He truly felt that he was worse and lower than the sinners of *Am Yisrael*. My grandfather zy”a followed that same path throughout the ninety-three years of his life. He constantly strove to reach the utmost levels of *anava* and *shiflus*.



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Therefore, both the *Parsha* that we read, and our presence in the *Beis Medrash* of my grandfather zy”a, should inspire us to strengthen our quest for *anava* and *shiflus*. We should take an honest look at ourselves and realize that when it comes to *Torah* and *mitzvos*, we are impoverished! How can we even consider arrogantly looking down on others. *B’ezras Hashem* - when we acquire the *midos* of *anava* and *shiflus*..

נזכה להשראת השכינה בתוכנו, בחינת אני והוא יכולין לדור, אשכון את דכא, אכי”ר



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