



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 Shemos 5766

In tonight's portion of *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* we learn;

“Every day the *midas ha'din* becomes stronger and stands before Hakadosh Baruch Hu saying, ‘Ribono Shel Olam, you wrote in your Torah לא תשבעו בשמי לשקר - Do not swear falsely in my name. Yet Bnei Yisrael hurry to the marketplace in the morning where they swear falsely, covet their friend's possessions and their wives. They speak *lashon hara* about their friends. Could it be that there is favoritism before you?’

Hakadosh Baruch Hu, however, speaks well of Am Yisrael, and tells the *midas ha'din*, ‘Am Yisrael get up early to go to *batei kenesiyos* and *batei medrash*. They bring their children to learn Torah and give them *bris milah*. Above and beyond that, I created for them *teshuvah* which is equivalent to all the *korbanos* in the Torah. So how do you say that there is favoritism before me?’”

At first glance, these words of Eliyahu Hanavi seem incomprehensible. How did Hakadosh Baruch Hu respond to the arguments of the *midas ha'din* by saying that Bnei Yisrael do *mitzvos*. Chazal already said, (סוטה כא.) - עבירה מכבה מצוה - an *aveirah* extinguishes a *mitzvah*.

Certainly, the power of *teshuvah* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu describes at the end of his response, can be understood. Once they do *teshuvah* all of the *aveiros* listed by the *midas ha'din* will be forgiven. But what does the fact that they get up to go to shul and *beis medrash*, bring their children to *bris milah* and to *cheder* have to do with their *aveiros* of swearing falsely, and spreading *lashon hara*? The *midas ha'din* asked if it is not favoritism for them not to be held accountable for those sins. Hakadosh Baruch Hu's response doesn't seem to address the *midas ha'din's* question.



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We find a similar theme in this week's Parsha. Moshe Rabeinu said, וְהֵן לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלִי - And they won't believe me and won't listen to my voice (שמות ד:א). In Maseches Shabbos (ד.) "Reish Lakish said, 'One who suspects the innocent, his body is punished. For Moshe Rabeinu said 'They won't believe me', but it was revealed before Hakadosh Baruch Hu that Bnei Yisrael were faithful. He said (to Moshe), 'They are מאמינים בני מאמינים - believers who are sons of believers.' How do we know that he was physically afflicted? For it is written

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לוֹ עוֹד הֵבֵא נָא יָדְךָ בְּחִיקֶךָ וַיִּבֵּא יָדוֹ בְּחִיקוֹ וַיּוֹצֵאָהּ וַהֲגִהָ יָדוֹ מִצַּרְעַת כְּפֶשֶׁלַג

"And Hashem told him further 'Place your hand in your chest. And he placed his hand in his chest and removed it, and behold his hand was afflicted with *tzaraas* as white as snow.'"

This also needs to be understood. Moshe Rabeinu, the אוהבן של ישראל certainly wouldn't simply accuse Am Yisrael falsely by saying "They won't believe me". He certainly wouldn't make such an accusation before Hakadosh Baruch Hu who knows all. It must be that Moshe Rabeinu said what he did because he knew Bnei Yisrael. As the Midrash says, (שמות רבה א:ל") "Moshe Rabeinu wondered, 'What sin of Am Yisrael caused them, among all nations, to be enslaved. When he heard the words, (of the Jew who reported that Moshe killed the Egyptian overseer) he said, 'There is *lashon hara* among them, how will they be worthy of redemption?'"

In addition, the Zohar Hakadosh (ח"ב קע:) relates that Rahav, the *malach* of Mitzrayim said before Hakadosh Baruch Hu,

"They are all guilty before you. These worship the stars and constellations, and so do those. These sin with *giluy arayos* and so do those. These spill blood, and so do those."

Therefore, if Bnei Yisrael were guilty of *avodah zarah* and the other most serious *aveiros*, why should Moshe Rabeinu think that such people would believe him?

However, the explanation is as follows. The *midas ha'din* said that Bnei Yisrael wake up early in order to go to the marketplace and swear falsely. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said that they get up early in order go to *batei Medrash* and *batei Knesses*. The *midas ha'din* certainly wasn't presenting a false claim to



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Hakadosh Baruch Hu. There must have been truth in his accusations. This leaves us with a question. What is true? Did they wake up in order to swear falsely, or in order to learn and *daven*?

We are forced to say that Bnei Yisrael woke up both in order to go to the shul and beis medrash, and also to hurry to the marketplace in order to swear falsely. However, what was the *ikar* (primary) and what was *tafel* (subsidiary)? The *midas ha'din* claimed that their primary goal was to arrive early in the marketplace in order to lie and steal. Hakadosh Baruch Hu answered that while a Jew may sin in those ways, the primary focus and desire of every Jew is to hurry to the *beis medrash*.

The evidence that a Jew's primary desire is learning and *davening* lies in the fact that he brings his children to learn in *talmud torah*, and brings them into the *bris milah*. He wants his children to grow up in an environment of *kedushah* and *taharah*. Unfortunately, even though he wakes up early in order to get to *shul*, he isn't able to resist the temptation to lie, steal and perform other *aveiros*. Nonetheless, Hakadosh Baruch Hu reveals that the Jew's primary focus and desire is the *beis medrash*.

Certainly, a Jew who commits all the *aveiros* listed by the *yetzer hara* will have to do *teshuvah* on those transgressions. Nonetheless, since the primary aspect of his life is the good portion, Hakadosh Baruch Hu rejects the accusation of the *midas ha'din*. There is no favoritism, that ignores the *din*. Hashem's judgement takes into account the fact that deep in their hearts they desire to do good, and actually do many *mitzvos*. They only sin because the *yetzer hara* entraps them, and they fall into his traps. As Chazal taught us, (ברכות י"ז.), every Jew says, "Ribbono Shel Olam, it is revealed and known before you that we desire to do your desire. Who prevents us? The "yeast in the dough" (the *yetzer hara*)."

We can now understand Moshe Rabeinu's concern that Am Yisrael wouldn't believe him. He knew that they spoke *lashon hara*, worshipped *avodah zara*, and descended to the forty-ninth gate of *tumah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu explained to Moshe that even though those *aveiros* are very serious, they are never more than *tafel* (secondary) in the Jewish soul. The *nefesh* of a Jew is חקוקה מתחת כסא הכבוד, hewn from under the throne of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It always maintains its state of *taharah*, no matter what.



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Even if a Jew descends to the deepest depths of *aveirah*, the ugliness of those actions never really represents the true nature of his soul. They should simply be viewed as בגדים צואים, filthy clothing that masks the purity of the *neshamah*. The true root and nature of the *neshamah* is Torah and *mitzvos*. This is why Hashem told Moshe Rabeinu that Bnei Yisrael *would* believe him, because their *neshamah* always identifies with the side of goodness. Even with all of their wicked actions, the *nekudah pnimis*, the inner spark of their soul is always good.

Therefore, when those Jewish *neshamos* meet the *Tzadik Ha'dor*, their *neshamah* will awaken and overcome the *yetzer hara* that tricks them. This is the true difference between Jew and non-Jew, ישראל אע"פ שחטא, ישראל הוא, A Yisrael, even if he has sinned, remains a Yisrael. However, when a *goy* sins, his *neshamah* sins for that action expresses his root and essence.

We have learned from the *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* and from the *parshah* that a Jew who sins, remains a Jew, and that his *neshamah* remains *tahor*. Therefore, every Jew can do *teshuvah* and reach the highest levels of Torah and *Kedushah*.

We must also remember, however, that Hashem judges each of our actions, and that a *mitzvah* does not extinguish an *aveirah*. These weeks of *Shovavim* are the time to strengthen ourselves and understand the even if we have fallen so far, we can get up and serve Hashem. *Im Yirtzeh Hashem*, when we try with all of our strength, נזכה לחזור בתשובה שלימה לפניו ית"ש ולעבדו בלבב שלם אכי"ר.



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