



Adapted from the sefer **במוצאי שבת** a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Ki Sisa 5763

The *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* that we learned tonight contrasts Eisav and the *navi* Ovadyah.

“Come and see how different are the descendants of Yaakov from the idolators who descend from Eisav. The Jews who left Mitzrayim had one mitzvah that was more precious to Hakadosh Baruch Hu than a hundred mitzvos. What was the one mitzvah? That they joined together as an *agudah achas*, and made a covenant to do *chesed* with each other, to keep the *bris milah*, not to abandon the language of *beis Yaakov* and not to learn the language of the Egyptians because of their idolatrous ways. But the descendants of Eisav weren't like them. As long as Yitzchak was alive, they kept the *bris milah*. However, once Yitzchak died, they immediately abandoned *bris milah*. As the *pasuk* says, (Mishlei 15/25) **בֵּית גִּבּוֹרִים יִשְׁחָהוּ וְיִצְבַּע גְּבוּל אֶלְמָנָה** (Hashem will uproot the house of the arrogant and will establish the borders of the widow) **בֵּית גִּבּוֹרִים יִשְׁחָהוּ** - this was the house of Eisav. **וְיִצְבַּע גְּבוּל אֶלְמָנָה** - This is the house of Ovadayah.”

Why did Eliyahu Hanavi attribute the arrogance of Eisav and his descendants to their abandonment of the *bris milah*? And why did he choose Ovadyah from among all the *tzadikim* in Tanach, as the counter example to Eisav.

Sefer Derech Pikudecha tells us that the *bris milah* “is a mark placed upon us by *Melech malchei hamlachim* so that we should remember that we are his *avadim* who are dedicated to his service.” This teaches us that the rejection of *bris milah* is rooted in arrogance. It expresses



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refusal to accept the mastery of anyone else, and certainly not to accept a physical sign of servitude. This is why Eliyahu Hanavi referred to the house of Eisav as “the house of arrogance. The Jewish people however express their true humility and submission by rejoicing in their status as *avdei Hashem*.

This admirable approach relates to a theme in our parsha. In *Maseches Megillah* (25b) we learn that the story of Am Yisrael’s sin with the *eigel hazahav* is read with the *targum* translation. The Gemara asks, “*pshita*”, this should be obvious, and answers that we might have thought that we should refrain from translating that portion in order to protect the honor of the Jewish people. The *halacha* teaches us that in fact the Jewish people would want it to be translated so that they can atone for their sin.

The *Meiri* explains that we don’t worry about the honor of the Jewish people, because it is fitting that we should cause ourselves embarrassment with the reading. That will inspire us to change our ways.

This halacha exemplifies the Jewish people’s aspiration to be humble for that *middah* enables us to change our ways for the better.

We are *zocheh* to sit together at *melaveh malkah* on the *Yahrzeit* of the Rebbe R. Elimelech of Lizensk zy”a. In his *sefer Noam Elimelech*, he comments on the first *pasuk* of Parshas Emor, where we find the repetition, *Emor el Hakohanim...V’amarta aleihem*.

He explains that there are two types of *tzadikim*. Some are descendants of great *tzadikim* and they inherit *kedushah* from their holy forefathers. Other *tzadikim* are descendants of people with little knowledge and understanding, and despite that, they achieved great levels of *kedushah*. This second type of *tzadikim* will not easily fall from their *madreigah*, because they have nothing to rely upon. They are humble and constantly watch over themselves. However, those *tzadikim* who are descendants of great *tzadikim* and have filled themselves with *Torah* and *mitzvos* with the assistance of their ancestor’s merits, may become arrogant because



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of their noble lineage, and quickly fall from their *madreigah*. That is the message of the *pasuk*, *Emor el hakohanim bnei Aharon*. The *tzadikim* who descend from *tzadikim* must be warned not to even think about their *yichus*. They should forge a new path of *kedushah* for themselves with great vigilance without focusing on their *yichus*, lest they become arrogant in any way. This is why the *pasuk* repeats, “*Emor, V’amarta*”, a double warning to *kohanim bnei Aharon*, *tzadikim* who descend from *tzadikim*.

The *Noam Elimelech* helps us understand what led to Eisav’s downfall. He was born to Yitzchak and Rivkah and was destined for greatness. However, he lost everything because he felt that he could rely on the *zchus* of his ancestors. This led to his speedy downfall, and led his descendants to reject the *bris milah* and become a “house of arrogance”.

Now we can understand why Eliyahu Hanavi chose Ovadyah Hanavi as the counterexample. In *Maseches Sanhedrin*, Chazal tell us that Ovadyah was chosen to deliver the prophecies foretelling the destruction of Eisav’s nation Edom. “R. Yitzchak said, let Ovadyah who lived between two *reshaim* and didn’t learn from their deeds, deliver the prophecies about Eisav the *rasha* who lived between two *tzadikim* and didn’t learn from their deeds. Ephraim Mekishaah the *talmid* of R. Meir said in the name of R. Meir that Ovadyah was a *ger Edomi*, a convert from the nation of Edom.”

We see that not only did Ovadyah not have *zchus avos* as Eisav did, he was particularly humble because he was a *ger* from Edom. That *middah* enabled him to reach the elevated position of a *navi*.

Unfortunately, we are all afflicted with the arrogance that leads us to look down on those who seem to be people “without *yichus*”. In *shiduchim*, we only want to consider a *shiduch* that comes from *yichus*. The *Noam Elimelech* taught us that someone with impressive *yichus*, even if he is a *tzadik* who has achieved great levels of Torah and *mitzvos*, may swiftly fall from all of his *madreigos*, specifically because



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of his lineage. Not only do we brag about our *yichus*, but even worse, we separate ourselves from others and establish “homes of arrogance”. Even if there is a *maalah* to marry someone from families whose lineage is known, arrogance and snobbery are far more dangerous. While it can be reasonable for people to look for a *shiduch* from a family of similar background in order to build a home that will easily continue the ways of their ancestors, we must avoid arrogance and anything that resembles it in any way.

The way of *chasidus* is to see the good in every individual, even the simplest Jew. It is well-known that the Baal Shem Tov zy”a abandoned the high *madreigos* he had reached in his *avodah*, preferring to travel to the cities and villages in order to strengthen the broken hearts of ignorant Jews, who barely knew how to read and write. He showed them how special they are, for they personified the opposite of “houses of arrogance”.

What greater example do we have than my Grandfather zy”s who came from the great *yichus* of Chernobyl and even beyond that up to David Hamelech. He was a descendant of the Baal Shem Tov, the Magid of Mezeritch, The Rebbe Reb Zusha, Rozhin, Saveran, Apta and more. Despite that, he never paid attention to his *zchus avos* or relied on it. He kept as far away as he could from any form of honor, walking great distances to the courts of other *tzadikim* with *mesirus nefesh* and submission. When some great leaders of the generation told him that this practice belittled the honor of his forefathers, he paid no attention and continued his *avodah* of travelling with *bitul* to the *tzadikim* of the generation. This *avodah* was unheard of, and was uniquely his.

On the *yahrzeit* of the *Noam Elimelech* zy”a, at the *seudah* of David Hamelech a”h, in the *Beis Medrash* of my Grandfather zy”a, we have a unique opportunity to rid ourselves of arrogance. We should commit ourselves to live only according to the ways of Torah and *chasidus* with humility and submission, so that we can merit the fulfillment of the prophecy, וְיֵצֵב גְבוּל אֶלְמָנָה אִבְיָר,



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