



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

### *Melaveh Malkah Parshas Acharei Mos 5760*

*Parshas Acharei Mos* details the *avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur. In *Maseches Yoma*, in their description of the *avodah* Chazal describe two customs of *Yakirei Yerushalayim* - the precious, honored men of Yerushalayim.

They are first mentioned in the description of what took place on the night of Yom Kippur. The *Kohen Gadol* was obligated to remain awake the entire night. Therefore, *Pirchei Kehunah* - young *kohanim* stood before him and occupied him to ensure that he wouldn't fall asleep. However, the Gemara adds that "Some of *Yakirei Yerushalayim* wouldn't sleep the entire night, so that the *Kohen Gadol* would hear the echoes of their sounds and not fall asleep. (יומא י"ט:)

They are mentioned again in the description of the *Ish Ha'iti*, the person who was assigned the task of taking the *Sair Ha'mishtaleiach* - (the goat that is sent out) from the *Beis Hamikdash* to the *Azazel* cliff in the desert. "Some of *Yakirei Yerushalayim* would accompany him until the first *sukkah*". (*Sukkos* were set up at intervals along the route from the *Beis Hamikdash* to the cliff.)

If we examine the two roles of *Yakirei Yerushalayim* on Yom Kippur, we discover a fascinating common denominator. Both of their actions were performed entirely *l'shem shamayim* - for the sake of Heaven, with no ulterior motives whatsoever.

On the night of Yom Kippur, certain *Pirchei Kehunah* were chosen to spend the night in the presence of the *Kohen Gadol*, someone who



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surpassed all other *kohanim* in Torah, *chochmah* and all positive *midos*. It is difficult to imagine their excitement and enjoyment of that experience. First, it was a great honor to be chosen for that role. Once the names of the *Pirchei Kehnuah* who were chosen became known to the public, they were the “talk of the town” in Yerushalayim. On the morning of Yom Kippur, everyone would ask them to describe what it was like, and to repeat the *divrei Torah* that they heard from the holy mouth of the *Kohen Gadol* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. These fortunate young *kohanim* certainly enjoyed being the center of such positive attention. They also had the satisfaction of knowing that the success of the *Kohen Gadol's avodah* on the day of Yom Kippur depended on their successfully preventing him from sleeping during the previous night.

The *Kohen Gadol* certainly must have appreciated the young *kohanim* who assisted him that night and almost certainly invited them to the special *seudah* he would make for his close friends after Yom Kippur. It is difficult for us to imagine their excitement and delight at being invited to that unique celebration.

The experience of *Yakirei Yerushalayim* was quite different. Unlike the young, energetic *Pirchei Kehnuah*, they were elderly men who certainly needed to sleep to fast the next day. Nonetheless, rather than sleep, they spent the night of Yom Kippur walking around outside the chamber of the *Kohen Gadol*, generating noise that would make it even easier for him to stay awake. Their efforts were made without publicity or fanfare, and certainly without any expectation of reward or glory. Their selfless actions were performed purely *l'shem shamayim*, with no ulterior motives. This is why Chazal bestowed upon them the title *Yakirei Yerushalayim*.

The next day, the *Yakirei Yerushalayim* certainly would have had the opportunity to take their places in the *Beis Hamikdash*. There they would have seen the *avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol* and heard him read from the Torah. Instead, they left Yerushalayim in order to mitigate the suffering of the *Ish Ha'iti* as he walked into the desert in the heat of the day.



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As we appreciate the selfless actions of *Yakirei Yerushalayim*, we should take an honest look at ourselves. How many ulterior motives are involved in each of our decisions and actions? We must aspire to perform even the smallest acts of *chesed* as anonymously as possible, and purely *l'shem shamayim*. Over time, we too will be like the *Yakirei Yerushalayim* whose selflessness personified the city whose name ירושלים stands for ירא שלם - complete *yiras shamayim*.

There is, however, an important caveat. The Gemara (יומא י"ט), reminds us that those who aspire to follow in the footsteps of *Yakirei Yerushalayim* must be aware of the spiritual peril they face.

“*Tanya*, Abba Shaul said, ‘Even in the *Gevulin* (areas outside of Yerushalayim), they would do so, (remain awake on the night of Yom Kippur), *zecher l'mikdash* - in order to remember what was done in the *Beis Hamikdash*, however, this led them to sin.”

The initial motivation of those outside Yerushalayim who decided to avoid sleeping on the night of Yom Kippur, was certainly *l'shem shamayim*. However, they couldn't avoid the subtle ulterior motive of hoping that people would notice their righteous behavior and praise them for it. That small imperfection led them to sin on the holiest night of the year! Chazal taught us that this is the way of the *Yetzer Hara* who first convinces someone to commit a minor transgression, and the next day convinces him to sin more seriously. Eventually, the *Yetzer Hara* will convince him to serve *avodah zara*.

We too, must be very careful that our good deeds, especially our acts of *chesed*, don't lead us to cross boundaries set by the Torah.

We are in the midst of *Sefiras Ha'omer*, days in which we are to increase *mitzvos* and *maasim tovim*, especially *bein adam l'chaveiro* - the interpersonal *mitzvos*. It is well known how much effort the *Pnei Menachem zy" a* invested in fulfilling, and encouraging others to focus on



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*mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro*. He especially emphasized the *midah* of *ayin tovah* - seeing the good in other Jews and enjoying their achievements.

Here, in the *beis medrash* of my grandfather zy”a, we should recall his constant efforts to help any Jew in any conceivable way. He never had the slightest interest in publicity or any of the ulterior motives that usually motivate simple people like us to perform acts of *chesed*. His intention was always purely *בלתי לה' לבדו* - entirely for the sake of Hashem.

For example, on *Erev Shvii shel Pesach* he used to visit a psychiatric hospital and distribute *matzos* to the patients. He would spend time with them, sing the *zemiros* of Pesach with them, and raise their spirits. He explained that since Chazal call *matzah* *מיכלא דאסוותא* - a food that heals, he gave *matzos* to those in need of *yeshuos*.

On *Erev Yom Kippur* he would bring live chickens to hospitals so that patients could fulfill the *minhag* of *kaparos*. All of this was done clandestinely. He never told others about these activities, and the idea of being rewarded or even praised for his kindness never entered his mind.

Therefore, on Motzaei Shabbos of *Parshas Acharei Mos*, in the *beis medrash* of my grandfather zy”a, we must commit ourselves to increase our efforts to internalize and express the *midah* of *chesed* correctly, without fanfare, and exclusively *l'shem shamayim*.

This will enable us to become *Yakirei Yerushalayim* whom Chazal tell us benefitted from *שתי שולחנות* - both financial and spiritual wealth.

As is illustrated by the description in *Maseches Sukkah*, (ל"ו.)

“*Tanya* - R. Meir said, ‘it was told that *Yakirei Yerushalayim* used to bind their *lulavim* with threads of gold”. *אכי"ר*



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