



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

Melave Malka Parshas Eikev 5760

We have much to learn from tonight's portion of *Tana D'vei Eliyahu*

“About Moshe it says, זָכְרוּ תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עַבְדִּי אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אוֹתוֹ בְּחֶרֶב עַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, (מלאכי ג' כ"ב) חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים whom I commanded on behalf of Am Yisrael at *Chorev* the *chukim* and *mishpatim*.)

For in the days of Hoshea ben Be'eri and in the days of Yoel and in the days of Amos, and in the days of Michah Hamorashti, and in the days of all the other *neviim*, they didn't know how to pour (their hearts) out asking for Hashem to have mercy on Yisrael as Moshe Rabeinu did. That is why it says, “*Zichru Toras Moshe Avdi*” (מלאכי ג' כ"ב). Does the Torah belong to Moshe? Is it not yours Hashem?.....

However, it is called *Toras Moshe Avdi* because he stood before Hashem in *tefillah* four or five times and saved Yisrael from death. Therefore the *pasuk* describes the Torah as if it belongs entirely to Moshe..”

(תנא דבי אליהו ז' ט"ז:)

Through *hashgacha pratis* we learn these words of the *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* on Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Eikev. In this parsha, Moshe Rabeinu describes his forty days of consecutive *tefillah* for Am Yisrael after the *cheit ha'eigel*. He davened for forty days and forty nights without eating or drinking. One of his entreaties was,

אַל תִּפֶּן אֶל קִשְׁי הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶל רָשָׁעוֹ וְאֶל חַטָּאתוֹ (דברים ט"ז כ"ז)



[1]

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The Zohar Hakadosh (קדושים פ"ג) asks "Who can tell the King אל תפן - don't look at their sins. Does it not say, (איוב ל"ד: כ"א) כִּי עֵינָיו עַל דְּרָכֵי אִישׁ – (For His eyes are on the ways of man) and in Yirmiyahu (כ"ג: כ"ד) אם יסתתר איש במסותרים ואני לא אראנו (If a man conceals himself in hidden places, will I not see him?)

Doesn't Hashem oversee everything, watch all actions, and judge them as good or bad? As it says in Koheles, (י"ב: י"ד) האלקים יבא במשפט על כל נעלם (Hashem will bring judgement on all hidden things - whether good or bad) and Moshe said אל תפן - Do not look?!"

We learn from the words of Eliyahu Hanavi that the only reason that the Torah is called *Toras Moshe*, is because he was *moser nefesh* to save Am Yisrael from destruction. He learned the Torah directly from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He taught the Torah to the entire nation so perfectly that the Torah describes it as שימה בפהם (place it in their mouths). None of those unique *madreigos* enabled him to merit having the Torah called *Toras Moshe*.

I remember that once, when I had the *zchus* to meet privately with the Gerer Rebbe, the Beis Yisrael zy"א, he explained Rashi's commentary on the *pasuk*

ואחר באו משה ואהרן ויאמרו אל פרעה כה אמר ה' אלקי ישראל שלח את עמי ויחגו לי במדבר (שמות ה"א: א')

(And afterwards Moshe and Aharon came and said to Pharaoh, so says Hashem the G-d of Yisrael. Send out my people...

Rashi comments, "But the *zekeinim* (whom Moshe and Aharon had gathered. See שמות ד"ב: ט) slipped away from Moshe and Aharon one by one, before they reached Pharaoh's palace, because they were afraid to enter. Hashem punished them at Har Sinai as it says, ונגש משה לבדו אל ה' (שמות כ"ד: ב'). (And Moshe alone will approach and they will not approach). Hashem made them (the *zekeinim*) go back (and remain distant from Har Sinai."



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The Rebbe asked, “All of Hashem’s *midos* work מידה כנגד מידה (measure for measure). How does preventing the *zekeinim* from ascending Har Sinai correspond to their transgression of “slipping away” before entering Pharaoh’s palace?”

He explained that the *zekeinim* were the Roshei Yeshivah of Am Yisrael. (As Chazal say, זקן is an acronym for זה קנה חכמה (One who has acquired wisdom). As they followed Moshe Rabeinu to the palace, each of them began to think to himself, “While saving Am Yisrael is certainly important, it really isn’t for *Roshei Yeshiva*. There are *askanim* who specialize in this type of thing. If I go along with Moshe Rabeinu, it will cause *bitul Torah*.” One by one, they went back to learn Torah. Hashem prevented them from going up to Har Sinai at *Matan Torah* מידה כנגד מידה, so that they would recognize their mistake.

They assumed that they would ascend Har Sinai because of their deep connection to Torah. Who, if not them, should accompany Moshe Rabeinu as he went to receive the Torah?

Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted them to understand, at the moment of *Matan Torah*, that someone who doesn’t understand that the entire Torah comes to relieve the pain of a Jew, has no real connection to Torah. They decided to learn rather than confront Pharaoh, so they had to remain behind at Har Sinai. Moshe Rabeinu who undertook the “askanus” of saving Am Yisrael ascended the mountain to receive the Torah.

The *Beis Yisrael’s peirush* reinforces the *Tana D’vei Eliyahu’s* explanation of why the entire Torah is called *Toras Moshe*. Time and time again he devoted himself to saving Am Yisrael. He knew that the primary purpose of the Torah is to relieve the pain of a Jew.

I heard from a reliable source that at a gathering of *Gedolei Yisrael* in Europe, the Rabbanim were discussing lofty Torah ideas. Rav Mendel of Vorka zy”a, who was present, said, “We must discuss the terrible *gezeirah* of the government to take poor Jewish boys to the army. We



[3]

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have to help them!” One of the great Rabbanim objected saying, “This is certainly a very important issue, but a gathering of *Gedolei Hador* isn’t the right forum for the discussion. This is something the *askanim* need to discuss and take care of.”

Rav Mendel responded by quoting the Gemara in Maseches Makos (כ"ב:) “Rava said, ‘How foolish are those people who stand up for a *sefer Torah* and don’t stand up for a Talmid Chacham. For when the Torah said that someone must receive forty lashes the Rabbanim reduced it by one to thirty-nine.’”

It’s very surprising that from among the thousands of statements and *halachos* in Shas, Rava decided to illustrate the great power of the *Chachamim* with this specific example. “From here we see”, said Rav Mendel, “that the true power of *chachamim* is only expressed by their ability to save Bnei Yisrael from suffering and to ease their pain.”

In order to understand Chazal’s viewpoint, we should remember that the Jew in Rava’s example has already been convicted of wrongdoing in Beis Din, and sentenced to receive lashes. Nonetheless, when the *chachamim* saved even such a Jew from the pain of one additional lash, Rava viewed that act as a true expression of what it means to be a Talmid Chacham.

Don’t think that a Talmid Chacham’s responsibility to relieve the pain of their fellow Jew is limited to *psak halachah*. It extends even to Chazal’s statement in Maseches Brachos, (י"ב:) “He has to make himself sick on his behalf”. In other words, the *tzadikim* accept *yissurim* upon themselves so that Bnei Yisrael won’t be harmed. They follow in the footsteps of Moshe Rabeinu who said (מדרש רבה דברים ז"י:) “Ribono shel Olam, let Moshe and a hundred like him die rather than let the fingernail of one of them (Bnei Yisrael) suffer harm.”

In the writings of Chabad, I saw a powerful story that was related by the Rebbe, Rav Yosef Yitzchak Shneerson zy”a.



[4]

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“Once, two little sons of the Rebbe *Maharash* were playing. They were around five or six years old. They decided to play “Rebbe and Chasid”. Zalman Aharon, the older boy, playing the Rebbe, sat on a stone and received his “*chasid*”, Shalom Dovber. (Later to become the Rebbe *Rashab* of Lubavitch).

Shalom DovBer approached the “Rebbe” and told him of his troubles. Zalman Aharon put his hand on his forehead, (as he had seen his grandfather the *Tzemach Tzedek* do), answered his brother, and gave him a *brachah*.

Shalom DovBer told his older brother, “You won’t be Rebbe. Something is missing in your *avodah*.” “What”, asked his brother, “is missing”? The young *Rashab* answered, “You certainly imitated our grandfather accurately. However, the most important element was missing. Before the Rebbe responds, גיט ער א קרעכץ, he sighs from the pain that he feels together with the *chasid*. You, however, answered immediately, without the *krechitz*.”

ואהבת לרעך כמוך – זה כלל גדול בתורה - Feeling someone else’s pain, is *Toras Moshe*. If someone wants to test the quality of his Torah learning, he should take a moment for introspection after learning. Is his heart more aware of and sensitive to others than it was before he opened the *sefer*? Does he care more about others, or does he disregard them? If he feels *ahavas Yisrael* beating in his heart, he has achieved the *tachlis* of learning *Toras Moshe*.

If, however, after learning, he has become more arrogant and looks down on others, he should realize that just spent his time learning some other Torah and not the Torah of Moshe Rabeinu.

Here in the Beis Hamedrash of my grandfather zy”a, we remember how he wholeheartedly rejoiced together with any Jew whether they celebrating a wedding or a birthday. In times of trouble, he poured out tears when hearing about others’ suffering. We should undertake a



[5]

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commitment to try harder to love other people, just as they are, even Jews who have sinned and were declared guilty by Beis Din.

When we follow in his path and increase *ahavas chinam*, his merit and the merit of Moshe Rabeinu who was *moser nefesh* to save Am Yisrael, will enable us to experience the fulfillment of Yeshayahu's prophecy.

כִּי נַחֵם ה' צִיּוֹן נַחֵם כָּל חֲרִבְתֶּיהָ וַיִּשָּׂם מִדְבָּרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן וְעֲרִבְתָּהּ כָּגֹן יִהְיֶה שְׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה
יִמְצָא בָּהּ תִּנּוּחַ וְקוֹל זְמִירָה - אִמֵּן כֵּן יִהְיֶה רָצוֹן



[6]

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