



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

Melave Malka Parshas Naso 5760

א. וַיִּדְבֹּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. ב. צוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל צָרוּעַ וְכָל זָב וְכָל טָמֵא לְנֶפֶשׁ. ג. מִזְכָּר עַד נִקְבָּה תִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶל מְחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה תִּשְׁלְחוּם וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ אֶת מַחֲנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹכָם. ד. וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אוֹתָם אֶל מְחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

¹Hashem spoke to Moshe saying:

²Command the children of Israel to banish from the camp all those afflicted with tzara'ath or with a male discharge, and all those unclean through [contact with] the dead. ³ Both male and female you shall banish; you shall send them outside the camp, and they not defile their camps, in which I dwell among them. ⁴ The children of Israel did so: they sent them outside the camp; as Hashem had spoken to Moshe, so did the children of Israel do.

The Sifrei answers that those words teach us that even the *metzoraim* themselves didn't resist when they were sent out of the camp.

The *Meshech Chochma* explains the seemingly superfluous *pasuk* in a similar vein. "The mitzva of banishing a *metzora* from the camp wasn't difficult for Bnei Yisrael to perform and didn't require special commands and warnings. However, it was difficult for the *metzoraim* to be sent outside of the protective clouds that surrounded the camp, and they could have fought with those who banished them. Nonetheless, the *metzoraim* accepted their exile happily, because they knew that it would enable them to be cleansed of their sin."

There is an even deeper level of this episode that can be revealed through the following question. It is certainly praiseworthy that the



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metzoraim didn't want to resist Hashem's command and didn't fight against those who came to banish them. However, they could have avoided the entire process by simply leaving the camp on their own accord, without waiting for messengers to arrive and remove them. They would not have transgressed any of the Torah's commandments by doing so, and they would have saved themselves, and their families, from so much public embarrassment.

Even though this option was available to them, the *metzoraim* chose the path of *mesirus nefesh* and waited for Am Yisrael to cast them out. This ensured that Am Yisrael would fulfill the mitzva of וישלחו, actually sending out the *metzora*. We have much to learn from the bravery and self-sacrifice of those *metzoraim*.

This answer also enables us to understand the words of my ancestor Rav Dovid of Tolna zy" a in his sefer *Birchas Dovid* (Parshas Naso). He quotes the *Megaleh Amukos* who pointed out that there are ג"ל - fifty-three letters in the parsha of sending out those who are *tamei*.

Perhaps the significance of this number could be explained by the *Baal HaRokeach* who writes in his *Siddur Tefillah* that there are fifty-three *parshiyos* in the Torah. If the *metzoraim* had simply left the camp, one of the *parshiyos* would have been incomplete, leaving only fifty-two complete *parshiyos*. Only in their merit do we have the full fifty-three *parshiyos*.

We should be awestruck by the *metzoraim's* heroic choice. Chazal taught us that *halbanas panim*, embarrassing someone in public, is tantamount to killing him. In Maseches Sotah (10b), we learn that "it should be more comfortable for a person to throw himself into a burning furnace rather than embarrass his friend in public". The Baalei Tosfos learn from that statement that publicly embarrassing someone is one of the sins that are יהרג ואל יעבור. (a sin that we are obligated to give up our lives rather than transgress). They explain that Chazal didn't list it together with idolatry, forbidden relations, and murder only because it doesn't have a source



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from a specific *pasuk*. Nonetheless, public embarrassment does fall under that category.

It is important to remember that Chazal teach us that most *metzora'im* and *zavim* are afflicted because of their *aveiros*. Nevertheless, these *baalei aveirah* were truly *moseir nefesh*, suffering public embarrassment so that the parsha would be complete, and the Torah would be able to state, ויעשו....

This astounding act of selfless bravery, provides strength to every Jew in history, enabling us to feel no shame when people mock us, and to remain true to the Torah in the face of scorn. It provides us with the fortitude that we need to fight, and even defeat our *yetzer hara*.

This lesson is especially appropriate in the Beis Medrash of my grandfather zy”a who personified the request, ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה (let my soul be like dust to everyone). Each of us has the ability to follow in his footsteps. In his merit, and in the merit of Dovid Hamelech נזכה לביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו אמן.



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