



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 Tetzaveh 5761

This week's portion of *Tana D'vei Eliyahu* compares the reward of Elkana to that of the Chizkiyahu *Hamelech*.

"Elkana used to go up to Shilo four times a year, three as required by the Torah, and one time that he accepted upon himself as a *nedava*. Elkana's wife, children, brothers, sisters, and all of his relatives would join him. He would say to them, 'Learn the way of *avoda* from the *Kenaanim* and idolators who travel to their *avoda zara* even though it is empty and meaningless. *Kal Va'chomer*, you should do the *avoda* of travelling up to stand before the *Aron Bris* of Hashem, who is the living G-d may his name be blessed forever.'

He instructed them to go up with him. As they travelled, they would sleep in the town squares. The people of the city would notice them and ask about the destination of their journey. They would tell the people, 'To *Beis Elokim* in Shilo, for it is the source of Torah and *maasim tovim*. And why don't you come with us and we will travel together?' The townspeople would begin to cry and say, 'We will go up with you!'

The next year five households joined him, and the following year, ten households. The year after that everyone felt the desire for *aliya l'regel* and sixty households joined him.

He never travelled the same route from one year to the next (to encourage more communities to go up to Shilo). Eventually, all *Yisrael*



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would go up to Shilo. Elkana brought Am Yisrael to be judged favorably and taught them *mitzvos*...

Hakadosh Baruch Hu, who sees what lies in people's hearts said to Elkana, 'You caused Am Yisrael to be judged favorably, and taught them *mitzvos*. Many people benefitted from your actions. I will bring out from you a son who will cause all of Am Yisrael to be judged favorably and will teach them *mitzvos*. Many will benefit from his actions.

From this we learn that as a reward for his actions, Elkana became the father of Shmuel.

On the other hand, as a result of his actions, Chizkiya became the father of Menashe.

From here we learn that when one eats at the same table as idolators it is considered as if he served *Avoda Zara* and ate from the sacrifices of idols. If he is a *talmid chacham*, this behavior is disrespectful to his Torah and desecrates the name of his Father in *shamayim*. He wastes his money, and destroys his children, causing them to fall by the sword and to be exiled from their land.” (תנא דבי אליהו רבה – ח"ד)

Initially, this is very difficult to understand. Why was Chizkiya cursed to have a son like the *rasha* Menashe, rather than being blessed like Elkana to have a son like Shmuel? Chizkiya did much more for Am Yisrael than Elkana did. As we learn in *Maseches Sanhedrin*, (צ"ד:)

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יָסוּר סֶבְלִי מֵעַל שִׁכְמֶךָ וְעָלָו מֵעַל צוּאָרְךָ וְחָבַל עַל מַפְגֵּי שְׁמִי.

“R. Yitzchak Nafcha said, the yoke of Sancheriv was broken because of the oil of Chizkiyahu. Chizkiyahu used to light oil lamps in *batei knesiyos* and *batei midrashos*. What did he then do? He stuck a sword above the entrance of the *beis medrash* and said, ‘Whoever is not involved in learning Torah will be stabbed by this sword.’”



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They checked from Dan to Beer Sheva and didn't find one *Am Ha'aretz*. They checked from Geves to Antiphras and didn't find one boy or girl, man or woman, who wasn't well-versed in the *halachos* of *tumah* and *tahara*."

We know that *talmud Torah k'neged kulam* - The learning of Torah is equivalent to all *mitzvos*. Chizkiyahu's great accomplishments of fostering *Talmud Torah* throughout Eretz Yisrael, certainly must have accomplished more than Elkana's effort to increase the observance of a single *mitzva* - *Aliya L'regel*. Why then, was Chizkiyahu punished by having an idolatrous son like Menashe, while Elkana became the father of *Shmuel Hanavi*?

Perhaps we can resolve this difficulty with a lesson that my father-in-law Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Weissblum zt"l heard from Rav Yehoshua Dov of Belz zy"a. It was on *Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim*, and the Rebbe presented a novel explanation of the *pasuk* הַנִּסְתָּרִית לֵה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ וְהַנִּגְלִית לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד הַנִּסְתָּרִית לֵה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ - The hidden matters are to Hashem and the revealed matters are to us and our children forever. (דברים כ"ח:כ"ט)

Every *mitzva* is composed of a physical act, and the spiritual *tikun ha'olamos* and *yichudim* that result from our performance of the *mitzvos*. Therefore, vis-à-vis Hakadosh Baruch Hu, it would have been enough if Bnei Yisrael would accomplish the spiritual *tikun ha'olamos* by *kavanos* and *yichudim* of Hashem's holy names, without having to first fulfill the *mitzva* physically.

However, this is not what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted. He commanded *Bnei Yisrael* to fulfill his *mitzvos* by external physical actions in this world. If the *mitzvos* were only fulfilled in the hidden, spiritual world, the *olamos ha'elyonim* would be transformed, but the *mitzva* would leave no impression on our physical world. A *mitzva* that is fulfilled by tangible, visible actions, transforms the world of all who are present. The Torah teaches us that *niglos* - *mitzvos* that are visible in this world, will



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be לנו ולבנינו עד עולם. They will leave a lasting impression on the current and future generations.

When our children and grandchildren actually see *kiyum mitzvos*, the *kedusha* of the *mitzva* takes root in their hearts and draws them to Torah and *avoda*.

All of the hidden *kavanos* of a *mitzva* must be “clothed” in a garment of physicality that will be seen and appreciated even by little children. Then, we will be able to fulfill the continuation of the *pasuk*.

לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת - To fulfill all the words of this Torah. The impression left by the *mitzvos* that little children see, and experience will result in a generation that will fulfill all the words of the Torah.

We can now reexamine the *Tana D'vei Eliyahu's* statement about Chizkiyahu. Even though he was responsible for the proliferation of *batei midrash*, and *limud Torah*, those weren't the result of his own physical actions. He sent emissaries to provide oil and establish *batei midrash*. Because those around him didn't see his actual physical performance of the *mitzva*, his descendant was Menashe.

Elkana, on the other hand, only strengthened the observance of one *mitzva*, that of *Aliya L'regel*. However, he accomplished this by his own physical actions. He would sleep in the street in order to publicize the *mitzva*. Therefore, he was rewarded by the fulfillment of והנגילות לנו - as embodied by his son Shmuel Hanavi.

Our *Parsha* also emphasizes the power of visible, tangible actions to bring about internal change. As the Rambam explains in *Moreh Nevuchim* (ח"ג:מ"ה);

“The constant guarding and patrols around the *Mikdash* are meant to honor, glorify, and elevate the *Beis Hamikdash*. Those who are to serve in the *Mikdash*, the Kohanim and Leviim, were also separated and



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elevated. Hashem commanded that they should wear the special, beautiful *bigdei kodesh*, for the purpose of *kavod v'tiferes*. For the masses don't appreciate a person because of his true stature, but rather because of his physical appearance and the beauty of his clothes. The intention of all this is so that the *Beis Hamikdash* will be great and glorified in everyone's eyes.

This is also a central aspect of Purim. All Mitzvos of Purim are fulfilled by physical activities. Reading the Megilla, *Matanos L'evyonim*, *Mishloach Manos*, *Seudas Purim*, and even the drinking of wine on Purim are seen and experienced by young and old alike.

The *avoda* of Purim is very different than that of Yom Kipur. On that day, our *avoda* of fasting and *teshuva* is very private and internal. The *Tikunei Zohar* declares that Purim is greater than Yom Hakipurim, for Kipurim can be read K'Purim - like Purim. This implies that Yom Kippur is almost, but not quite at the level of Purim. Perhaps Purim is greater because its *mitzvos* are visible and tangible, הנגלות לנו ולבנינו leading to לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת.

We see that after the defeat of Haman, the Megilla declares ליהודים היתה אורה. Chazal (מגילה ט"ז) explain that אורה זו תורה, the light referred to in the *pasuk* is Torah. The aspect of Torah expressed by light is the proliferation of that light to others. הנגלות לנו ולבנינו - the revealed observance of Torah that illuminates the lives of current and future generations.

Chizkiyahu certainly fostered the learning of Torah. However, unlike Elkana, he didn't accomplish this by his own physical actions. Therefore, even those great spiritual accomplishments didn't leave a lasting impression on those around him. That is why *goyim* were able to come and enjoy eating with him at the same table. If he had actually thrown himself into the physical activity of spreading Torah, those *goyim* wouldn't have been able to enter the holy environment of his dining room.



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Like Elkana, David Hamelech himself went out and acted on behalf of Am Yisrael, rather than simply sending emissaries. The Gemara (ברכות ד.) relates that David Hamelech declared that his hands were stained by blood due to his involvement in *Hilchos Tahara*. Even though he certainly had *batei din* who could take care of these matters for him, he went out to participate in these endeavors, setting in motion an everlasting inheritance of Torah.

Those of us in the *mukafin* - (Walled cities from the time of Yehoshua), are fortunate enough to have three days of Purim. According to all opinions, a threefold repetition creates a *chazaka*, enabling us to defeat the Yetzer Hara by fulfilling the *mitzvos* of Purim, and all *mitzvos*, in a public, tangible manner.

ובזכות מצוות אלו נזכה להשראת קדושה בכל סביבותינו אכי"ר



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