



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

Melave Malka Parshas Vayakhel - Para 5778

In honor of the upcoming *yahrzeit* of the first Gerrer Rebbe, the *Chidushei Ha'Rim zy"a*, and *Parshas Para*, we will learn a very precious *maamar* in which he explains a well-known story found in *Maseches Kidushin*. (ל"א).

“Rav Yehuda said in the name of Shmuel, they asked R. Eliezer ‘To what extent is the *mitzva* of *Kibud Av V'em?*’ He said to them, go and see what one idolator in Ashkelon named Dama ben Nesina did for his father.

The Chachamim wished to purchase from Dama ben Nesina precious stones for the *eiphod* and offered him a price of sixty thousand. Rav Kahana said the Chachamim offered eighty thousand. However, the key needed to access the precious stones was under his father’s head, and his father was sleeping. Dama ben Nesina decided not to disturb his father, even though it meant giving up the opportunity to make a huge profit.

The next year, Hakadosh Baruch Hu rewarded him. One of his cows gave birth to a *para aduma*. *Chachmei Yisrael* came to purchase the *para*. He said to them, ‘I know that you will pay any amount of money that I ask of you. Nonetheless, I only ask you to pay the amount of money that I lost because I honored my father.’”

The *sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh* relates;

Once, Rav Yaakov Dovid of Amshinov zt”l heard people discussing that *gemara*. He said to them, " וואס שמוסט עטץ פון דעם שייגעץ - Why are you



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speaking about that *sheigetz*?" (i.e praising Dama ben Nesina)

Something that I had heard in the name of the *Chidushei Ha'Rim* helped me understand the Amshinover's holy words.

The *Chidushei Ha'Rim* said that the story of Dama ben Nesina reveals the greatness and *kedusha* of Am Yisrael. Dama ben Nesina chose to lose a large amount of money to fulfill the *mitzva* of honoring parents. However, that *mitzva* is one that is universally understood.

Chachmei Yisrael on the other hand, were prepared to pay an astronomical sum for the *para aduma* which is the quintessential *chok*, a *mitzva* without a reason we can grasp. Therefore, one shouldn't praise Dama ben Nesina's actions as superior to the deeds of any Jew.'"

In other words, we can ask why Dama ben Nesina received his reward specifically via the birth of a *para aduma*. The *Chidushei Ha'Rim* explains that when we read the story, we are impressed by a non-Jew who was willing to forego a fortune to fulfill a *mitzva* that isn't even obligatory for *Bnei Noach*. It would seem to reflect negatively on *Am Yisrael*, there are Jews who wouldn't sacrifice that much for *mitzvos* they are obligated to fulfill.

This is why Hakadosh Baruch Hu rewarded him specifically with the birth of a *para aduma*. By the *chachamim* offering a fortune for the *para*, they demonstrate that *Am Yisrael* are devoted to *mitzvos* simply because they are Hashem's *mitzvos*, even if they are *chukim*. Dama ben Nesina's self-sacrifice for *Kibud Av V'em* pales in comparison, for expressing gratitude to a parent is a universally accepted value. As the *Chidushei Ha'rim* explains, this story actually portrays how the *mesirus nefesh* of Am Yisrael is far more meaningful than that of Dama ben Nesina.

This is an important lesson for our spiritually impoverished generation. Unfortunately, the pursuit of wealth has consumed us to the extent that we forget some of our most fundamental truths. Throughout the



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generations, Am Yisrael was prepared to give away vast fortunes in order to fulfill *chukim*, *mitzvos* beyond the ability of our intellect to comprehend and explain. They viewed money simply as a means to fulfill precious *mitzvos*, not as something essentially valuable.

Today, words can't even describe how intensely we yearn to be wealthy. When a major event takes place in a community of *bnei Torah* and *chasidim*, children look up at the dais and see a wealthy man who isn't known to be careful in his Torah observance, sitting in a place of honor. Their young minds quickly internalize the concept that the Rav and the community idolize the wealthy. This leads them to think that the ultimate goal in life is to acquire as much money as possible. How can we expect these children not to sin?

From a young age, a child starts to dream about and pursue money, just like his father and all of his friends. This situation depends on us! We must transmit to our sons and daughters that the *ikar ha'ikarim* is fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos* with vitality and passion, and that the life of someone consumed by the *taava* of money isn't really a life. He doesn't have *olam hazeh* and certainly doesn't have *olam haba*.

Then, we will be *zoche* to bring up generations of children and grandchildren who are truly involved in Torah and *mitzvos* with the understanding that **כי היא חייך ואורך ימך אי"ר**.



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