



הרב הראשי הרב מרדכי מלכא שליט"א נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, דרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, ת"ת דרך המלך,
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Parashat Bahaalotcha

The Joy and Privilege of Carrying Out the Will of the King of All Kings

Why the Ritually Impure Men Merited Saying the *Parasha* of the *Korban Pesach*

Rashi (8:2) asks why our *parasha*, which begins with Hashem's instruction to light the *menora*, follows the *parasha* of the *korbanot* brought by the heads of the tribes. Rashi answers that when Aharon saw that neither he nor his tribe participated in the inauguration of the *mizbeach*, he was disheartened. Hashem therefore told him that his portion would be greater than theirs, for in the future he would kindle the *menora*. Later in the *parasha* (9:7), the men who were ritually impure asked why they had been deprived of the opportunity to offer the Pesach sacrifice. Rashi comments that Moshe Rabbeinu told them that they could not offer the sacrifice because they were ritually impure, and it was therefore forbidden for them to do so. They therefore said that pure *kohanim* should throw the blood of the *korban* on the *mizbeach* for them, and they would eat the meat of the *korban* at night when they would be purified. Moshe told them to wait while he would hear Hashem's response. Rashi comments that Moshe was like a student who was assured of hearing a response from his teacher. Rashi continues that Moshe was praiseworthy that he, a mortal, could be assured of speaking with the *Shechina* whenever he wished. He concludes that this *parasha* was fitting to be said by Moshe like the rest of the Torah. Nevertheless, these individuals merited that they be the conduit through which Moshe would transmit this portion of the Torah. This is because something worthy is brought about by one who is worthy (Rashi in the name of the *Sifri*).

Questions:

- 1) If Aharon was exempt from participating in the inauguration of the *mizbeach*, then why was he distressed over it? Does the *Yerushalmi* (*Berachot* 2:9) not state that one who is exempt from something and does it anyways is called foolish?
- 2) Why were the ritually impure considered "worthy" in this case, and deserving that the *parasha* was transmitted in their merit? As we stated above, the *Yerushalmi* teaches that one who is exempt from something and does it anyways is called foolish!
- 3) We find a similar occurrence with the daughters of Tzlofchad in *Bamidbar* 27:4. They also asked Moshe why their deceased father would be deprived of an inheritance in *Eretz Yisrael* because he did not have a son. They wished to be granted an inheritance in the land, despite the fact that the Torah did not apportion land to females. Moshe therefore said that he would bring the matter before Hashem. Hashem responded that the daughters of Tzlofchad would, indeed, be granted their father's due inheritance in the land. The Gemara teaches (*Sanhedrin* 8a, *Taanit* 119a) that the *parasha* dealing with inheritance deserved to be said by Moshe, and the *parasha* about the man who desecrated Shabbat by gathering wood should also have been written by Moshe. However, the one who gathered the wood was sentenced, and the *parasha* was therefore written through him. The Gemara states that this teaches us that something dishonorable is brought about by one who is dishonorable, and something worthy is brought about by one who is worthy.

We can readily understand why the death sentence for desecrating *Shabbat* was fitting to be transmitted by the man who gathered wood. After all, he desecrated *Shabbat*. It was a shameful act and the *parasha* which stated the punishment for doing so was better off not being said by Moshe. However, in the case of the *korban Pesach* and inheritance of the land, why were the ritually impure men and the daughters of Tzlofchad worthier than Moshe? Moshe was worthy enough to transmit the entire Torah; should these laws not have been transmitted by him as well?



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The Way of the World

People commit a grave error by not fulfilling the mitzvot of the Torah that they are required to fulfill. They look for any and every reason to excuse themselves from performing a mitzva that they are obligated in. How much more so does this apply to a mitzva that they are not required to perform according to the strict letter of the law. As the well-known saying goes, "The congregation likes *al ha'michya* and *yihei Hashem*." In other words, people prefer to say *al ha'michya* and not have to recite *bircat ha'mazon*, which is a long *bracha*. Similarly, they do not wish to say *tachanun* in *shacharit*, because they wish to shorten the *tefilla*. So too does this apply to all mitzvot; people look for leniencies and reasons to exempt themselves, and they are happy this way. They even delay performing mitzvot until after the allotted time has passed, leaving them unable to fulfill them. This stems from man's viewing this world and the comforts that it offers as primary. Therefore, he is happy to be exempt from mitzvot and not to be bound by them. This is similar to the complaints of the Jews in the desert, who said that they remembered the fish and garlic that they ate in Egypt for free. Our Sages expound that their intention was that they were "free" from the yoke of the mitzvot. However, our Torah teaches us that one's perspective should be the exact opposite. Not long ago, the President of the US visited *Eretz Yisrael*, and it generated much excitement. Everyone was speaking about whose hand he would shake. People spoke about how apparent it was that he spoke slightly longer with the head of the opposing party, which indicated that he was showing him honor and respect. Everyone was wondering who would be photographed together with the President. Take Oran Chazan for example, who was so eager to be photographed together with the President. There is no doubt that if the President would have turned to someone and asked him to do something for him, it would be considered a great honor, and it would be carried out eagerly and happily. If this is how a mortal of flesh and blood, whose glory in this world is limited and fleeting, is honored, how much more so should one eagerly pursue each and every opportunity to perform a mitzva commanded by the King of All Kings. This is the very purpose for which man was created, and he must realize what a privilege it is to be able to fulfill the Will of Hashem at a minimal expense. So said the Vilna Gaon shortly before his passing. He grabbed his *tzitzit* and said that in this world, for a mere few coins a Jew can fulfill the mitzva of *tzitzit*. However, in the World to Come, even if one pays a fortune of money, it will not be possible to fulfill even one mitzva. Therefore, man must take advantage of every moment that he has in this world and fulfill mitzvot with joy.

The Greatness of the Daughters of Tzlofchad

Now we can explain the questions we asked on the *parasha*. I once heard a nice idea from R' Yosef Zelicha [*shlita*] *zt"l*. He said that the merit of the ritually impure men was in their asking, "*lama nigara*, why should we be deprived?" They did not wish to be deprived of the mitzva of offering the *korban Pesach*. The greatness of this claim lied in the fact that they were actually exempt from offering the *korban* since they were ritually impure. They could have simply accepted it and saved themselves from the effort involved in performing the mitzva. Yet they did not accept it. On the contrary, they searched for a way to fulfill the mitzva. Since they displayed such a great love for the mitzva, they merited being the conduit to bring it to the world. So too, regarding the daughters of Tzlofchad. We must understand that receiving an inheritance in *Eretz Yisrael* was not merely receiving a plot of land. Rather, each tribe was apportioned land that was in accordance with the specific strengths of that tribe. Zevulun, who was involved in commerce, received a plot by the seashores, while Asher received a plot of land that was rich with oil. However, about Yissachar the Torah states (49:14), "He rests between the boundaries." He did not receive a land that was rich in marketable produce nor ripe for agriculture. Nor was he apportioned land by the seashore. This was because Yissachar's purpose was to toil in Torah study. This is why the daughters of Tzlofchad so desired a portion of the land, to help them utilize their strengths to serve Hashem. Since they had such a great love for the mitzva of settling *Eretz Yisrael*, they merited being a conduit to bring the mitzva to the world. This is our Sages' intention when they stated that a worthy item is brought about by a worthy individual.



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Aharon's Merit in Envyng the Tribal Leaders

Similarly, the Midrash stated in the beginning of our *parasha* that when Aharon saw that he was not included amongst the tribal leaders to bring a *korban*, he was very distressed. Hashem therefore told him not to be upset, because his portion would be greater than theirs. Aharon would merit lighting the *menora*, a mitzva which would continue for many generations. The Ramban explains that Hashem was alluding to the mitzva of kindling the Chanuka lights, which would be practiced even after the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash*. This teaches you about Aharon's greatness. He was exempt from offering the *korban*, yet did not simply accept it. Rather, he desired to do it nevertheless. Therefore, he merited a mitzva that was even greater than theirs, kindling the candles for many generations to come.

I Would Make a Celebration

This is as R' Chanina taught us in *Masechet Kiddushin* (31a). He said that one who performs a mitzva that he is commanded to do is on a higher level than one who performs a mitzva that he was not commanded to do. R' Yosef, who was blind, said that originally, if someone would have told him that the *halacha* was in accordance with R' Yehuda, who said that a blind man is exempt from performing mitzvot, he would have staged a joyous feast for the Rabbis. He was happy because he was blind and exempt, but still performed the mitzvot. But now that he heard that that one who performs a mitzva that he is commanded to do is on a higher level than one who performs a mitzva that he was **not** commanded to do, if someone would tell him that the *halacha* is **not** in accordance with R' Yehuda, he would then stage a feast. R' Yosef wished to obligate himself to perform the mitzvot, and did not wish to exempt himself. He was even willing to make a celebratory feast for anyone who could prove to him that he was indeed obligated. Therefore, every individual must yearn to perform mitzvot, since the primary purpose for man in this world is his soul and spiritual existence. Our Sages teach that this world is but a corridor to the next world, which is the eternal life. They also say that one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world, are better than all of life in the next world. Someone who has this perspective views mitzvot as a merit and the purpose of his existence. He will certainly search for one mitzva after the next and try adding to his mitzvot. He will not try to exempt himself from performing mitzvot.

The Benefit of Selling Mitzvot

I read that the first Bobover Rebbe said that there was a benefit in selling the *aliyot* for the Torah reading. He exclaimed that when each bidder adds money to outbid the other one, the Jewish people provide Hashem with *nachat* by displaying how beloved the mitzvot are to them.

Dancing With the Matza

One of the family members of the great *gaon* and *tzaddik*, R' Moshe Kopshitz related how he would tell them every year, several months before Pesach, how he so awaited holding the matzot. All the more so, did he yearn to actually fulfill the mitzva of eating the required amount of matza Pesach night. When the matzot would be brought to his home on *erev Pesach*, he would grab them, hug them, and kiss them. He would begin to dance joyously with all his might and sing songs about the matza. This is *simcha shel mitzva*, knowing how to value each mitzva and rejoice over it as if he was rejoicing over earning a great fortune.

Words of Mussar

We have learned from our *parasha* that one who yearns to fulfill a mitzva is praiseworthy. This is as David HaMelech lauded someone who greatly desires to do mitzvot saying, "He tremendously desires His mitzvot." Similarly, our Sages teach us that "*mitzva ha'ba le'yadcha al tachmitzena*," that one should not procrastinate in the performance of a mitzva. This way he and his entire family will merit both in this world and the next. This is because every single mitzva is a commandment from the King of All Kings. If he rushes and takes great pride in being chosen to serve a respected individual, how many times more must he rejoice and run to fulfill the Will of the King of All Kings. This is not only a great honor, but his reward will also be increased many times by performing the mitzva happily. For there is no comparison between a mitzva performed out of joy



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and one that is performed like it is a burden. This is as the *pasuk* states that the Jews would be punished, "*Tachat asher lo avadita et Hashem Elokecha be'simcha*, because you did not serve Hashem with joy." The *pasuk* does not state that "you did not serve Hashem"; rather it states that the Divine service was not performed out of joy. Therefore, everyone must garner strength and instill the yearning and joy of mitzvot into his heart and the hearts of his children. By doing so, he and his family will be blessed with all the blessing written in the Torah. *Amen ve'amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka