



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 Ki Teitzei 5762

In our parsha, the Torah forbids plowing with mixed team of an ox and a donkey. Rishonim (*Daas Zekeinim L'Baalei Hatosfos, Rosh*), bring a fascinating *taam* for the mitzva. An ox chews its cud, whereas a donkey does not. If the ox and donkey work side by side, pulling a plow, the donkey will notice that the ox is always eating something. He will feel *tzaar* because he has no food, and no way to acquire food. In order to prevent the *tzaar baalei chayim* of the donkey, the Torah forbids a farmer from plowing with this combination of animals. If he transgresses this command, *beis din* will punish him with *malkos*.

We have to pay attention to the Torah's message. If the Torah takes the possibility of inadvertently causing *tzaar* to an animal of limited understanding so seriously, we should approach the danger of hurting other people even more seriously. We aren't simply careless with words or actions that can inadvertently cause pain. We directly inflict *tzaar* on others. How can we face Chazal's statement that Yom Kippur will not atone for *aveiros bein odom l'chaveiro*, until we appease the victims of our misdeeds (Yoma 85b).

The sefer *Imrei Pinchos* brings a tremendous chidush.

“Be very careful not to transgress the aveira of *onaas devarim* (hurtful words), even if you had no intention to hurt your fellow Jew. All aspects of *Kedusha* depend on this mitzva.”

In other words, someone who fails to observe mitzvos *bein odom l'chavero*, will inevitably transgress *mitzvos bein odom l'Makom*.



[1]

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The two areas of *avodas Hashem* are interlinked.

This is a frightening concept. How can we ask Hashem to forgive us, when we have committed so many of these *aveiros*? It seems that our only hope lies in verbally committing ourselves, from this moment on, to doing anything possible that will prevent us from hurting any of Hashem's creations. This commitment alone will ensure that we will be more sensitive to others.

The success of this commitment depends on our ability to look at ourselves honestly. People as lowly as we truly are, have no right (and certainly no obligation), to speak ill of others. It should go without saying that none of us can ever justify hurting or harassing any other creature in Hashem's world.

The ability to receive *parnassa* and any physical *shefa* also depends on this behavior. The *sefer hakadosh Degel Machane Ephraim (Beshalach)*, comments on the Torah's description of the *מן* as *גַּד הוּא*. "The *gemara* in *Maseches Shabbos* (:קנא), teaches us that one who has *rachamim* on Hashem's creatures, will receive *rachamim* from *shamayim*. The *posuk* tells us *והמן*, *parnassa*, is the *זרע*, the result, of *ג"ד*, the acronym for *גמול דלים*, giving to the poor. Hashem's *rachamim* towards us, reflects the mercy and kindness we express in caring for his creations."

Everything depends on our *avoda* in the days of *Elul* and *Aseres Ymei Teshuva*. We must open our hearts to all Jews, no matter what their status or situation, have mercy on them, and love them. Certainly, we must avoid causing them *tzaar* directly or indirectly, with our actions or words.

This *derech* will enable us to receive great *shefa* and *parnassa* from Hashem's full and giving hands. *תכלה שנה וקללותיה, תחל שנה וברכותיה, אכי"ר*.



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