



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

Melave Malka Parshas Emor 5760

Our parsha begins with the halacha that prohibits כהנים from becoming **טמא מת**. However, in the case of a **מת מצוה**, (someone who has no one else to bury them), Chazal derive from the pesukim, that even a **כהן גדול** who is also a **נזיר**, (both forms of kedusha that prohibit becoming **טמא מת**), must become **טמא** in order to bury a **מת מצוה**.

It is important to realize that Chazal did not obligate the **כהן גדול**, to first verify that the **מת** was an **אדם כשר**, with **יראת שמים**, who lived a righteous life. They stated the halacha with no conditions.

Therefore, even if the **כהן גדול** knew that the **מת מצוה** threw off the yoke of Torah, and lived a sinful life, he must become **טמא מת** in order to bury him. What is the halacha if the **כהן גדול** who is also a **נזיר** encounters the **מת מצוה**, **ערב יום הכיפורים** just hours before he was to perform the **עבודה**? Even though that unique **עבודה** depends entirely on the **כהן גדול**, he must descend from his levels of **קדושה**, forfeit his ability to perform the **עבודה**, and bury the **מת מצוה**. As long as the **מת** is a Jew, this is the halacha, illustrating the principle **ישראל אף על פי שחטא ישראל הוא**, (even a Jew who has sinned remains a Jew). His soul is a **חלק אלוהים ממעל**, divine in its very nature, and the **כהן גדול** must bury him.

The **חידושי הרי"ם זצוק"ל** said in the name of the Rebbe R. Bunim of P'shischa **זצוק"ל**, that if a person finds himself thinking that he is worthy of honor, and that another, lowly Jew deserves to be scorned, he should remember the following halacha. If someone tells you to kill that lowly Jew, and that if you don't, he will kill you, the halacha states that you must forfeit your life (**יומא פ"ב; פסחים כ"ה**).



[1]

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The Gemara explains the reasoning behind the halacha. "מאי חזית דדמא" (why do you assume that your blood is redder? Perhaps your friend's blood is redder than yours?) Rashi explains, "Why do you assume that you are more important in the eyes of heaven? Perhaps your friend is more important?"

R. Bunim elaborated. "Sometimes, a man was created simply to give a Jew some water. If he performs his task, he has fulfilled his mission in this world, and that act was his tikkun. We have no idea if we have fulfilled our mission in this world. Hence, this lowly Jew may be more חשוב than we are."

We must internalize the lesson of this halacha and apply it. The כהן גדול is sanctified by multiple levels of קדושה. Nonetheless, there are times when he must step down, and be מטמא himself for a lowly Jew whose lifestyle was diametrically opposed to the world of the כהן גדול. How much more so should we, simple physical human beings, see only the מעלות in our fellow Jews, and not their חסרונות. We must focus on the נקודה יהודית, the "Pintele Yid" that can be found in every Jew, which can never be erased, no matter what they may have done.

It is not enough to simply recognize the מעלות of every Jew. Sometimes, like the כהן גדול, we have to descend from our levels of קדושה, in order to help others and save them from destruction.

There is no greater example than the talmidim of R. Akiva. They were all Talmidei Chachomim, קדושים וטהורים. Nonetheless, their practice of not seeing the מעלות of their friends, and not treating them with כבוד, caused them to be punished so harshly. They all died young. After their death, Chazal described the world without their Torah as שומם, desolate. Nonetheless, their Torah knowledge did not save them from punishment.

Chazal emphasized the magnitude of their wrongdoing by instituting ספירת העומר during תקנות. The Shulchan Aruch states, "the Minhag is to refrain from marriage between Pesach and Shavuot until Lag B'omer,



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because the talmidim of R. Akiva died in that time period". Preventing Am Yisroel from performing the mitzva of פריה ורביה is a very serious matter. In Maseches Shabbos, Chazal tell us that the sons of Eli Hakohen were killed for preventing Jews from the mitzva of פריה ורביה for just one night. Nonetheless, Chazal instituted תקנות that prohibit marriage for many days, hoping that we will learn to see the positive in others, and help them out of their personal golus. This תסד based approach builds the world. The posuk in Tehillim says, עולם חסד יבנה. The world was built with, and for, חסד. If there is no חסד, there is no world.

This applies to friends, husbands and wives, parents and children. Each must see the מעלות of the other, even if they have sinned repeatedly.

אם ירצה השם, when we purify our hearts and see the מעלות of others, Hakadosh Boruch Hu will see our מעלות and lift us out of our deep golus, במהרה בימינו אכי"ר.



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