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## THE ORIGIN OF THE MEKALLEL

The Torah tells us a story about a person in the *midbar* who cursed Hashem and they put him in prison. That was a very rare occurrence. The prison system wasn't common. It wasn't common at all in Klal Yisrael. They put him in prison until it would be clear what his *din* was. When they found out that he was supposed to get *sekilah*, everybody subjected him to *sekeilah*.

It says ויצא בן אישה ישראלית הוא בן איש, a son of a Jewish woman went out, and he was the son of a Mitzri (Vayikra 24:10). This is a big story. It started from when Moshe Rabbeinu, at the beginning of his career, when he was a *bar mitzvah bachur*, went out to see Klal Yisrael and witnessed an Egyptian beating a Jew. Moshe Rabbeinu stepped forward and he put the Mitzri down. He put him to rest forever. That evil Mitzri man was trying to beat to death this Jewish man, whose wife he had assaulted the night before. She became pregnant from the Mitzri and had a child. The child was Jewish. This fellow followed his mother's path and he attached himself to the Jewish nation and he went through the episode of *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

## AN EMBARRASSING ENCOUNTER

One day this fellow grew up and he had a challenge. This challenge he got into was with another Jewish person whose father was Jewish. What happened was he came to move into the neighborhood of his mother's tribe. His mother was from Shevet Dan and he wanted to take up residence with his mother. So this other man, a Jewish man with a Jewish father, told him that he wasn't welcome to live in the camp with the Jewish nation. His father's not from Shevet Dan. He was Mitzri. The guy tells him he's got to move out. These are all things we could relate to. It's not far out, esoteric things.

Now, we can understand that that's humiliating. It's belittling. This guy was one of these sticklers to the *halachah*, one of these black and white fellows. And he told him, "You got to go."

So, ויקב בן האישה הישראלית את ה', "and the son of the Israelite woman cursed Hashem" (v. 11). You hear that? He said the name of Hashem. He said the name of Hashem which he had heard at Sinai, as Rashi says. And then he uttered a curse against Hashem. That was a funny response because the guy wasn't in a fight with Hashem. The guy's argument was with another Jew. So if anything he should have cursed the other Jew. He gets angry at Hashem over here?

The *mefarshim* explain that the *ben ish Mitzri* got angry at Hashem because the Jew reminded him that, "Your father was laid to rest by Moshe uttering the *shem hameforash*." That's how Moshe got rid of this fellow. Or the *pshat* is the guy was sticking the *halachah* to him in the face. You know sometimes, a guy comes over to you and says, "You know what the *Shulchan Aruch* says? You know what Hashem says? You're not allowed to talk in *shul*." So the guy gets angry at Hashem, not the guy who told him off. The one who made that law gets him ticked off. So this guy also got ticked off, and uttered a curse against Hashem.

## WHERE HE WENT OUT OF - THREE OPINIONS

Now, the *passuk* begins with the words ויצא בן אישה הישראלית. What does that mean? What's the translation of those words? ויצא בן אישה הישראלית? *Pashtus* it means he "went out." But what does it mean he went out? The Ibn Ezra says you know what he went out of? He went out from his tent. After he moved into the neighborhood and he parked himself there and unpacked all his stuff, he went out to check out the neighborhood. ויצא בן אישה הישראלית. But if you look in Rashi, he quotes from *Chazal* who says, מהיכן יצא, where did he go out from? So it says, רב לוי אמר, Rav Levi says, "he went out of his world." You hear that? Have you ever heard of a person going out of his world? I heard of people going out of their minds. That I heard of. I heard people going out of *yeshivah*. That I heard of too. I never heard of a person going out of his world.<sup>1</sup>

The next opinion cited by *Chazal* says, "he went out of the previous *parshah*." The previous *parshah* talks about the *lechem hapanim*, which they had a special *shulchan* for in the *Mishkan*. They had these breads that were put on the *shulchan* on Shabbos and taken off the following Shabbos. When the fellow heard about this, he decided to bring out his good humor. He made *leitzanus* and he said, "Is this what a king eats? Is this what a *melech* in the *Mishkan* eats? You serve bread that was there for so many days? Who does that?" So ויצא means he came away from this *parshah* and said his cute *leitzanus*.

The third opinion says that he went out of the *beis din* of Moshe Rabbeinu. What does that mean? Because when he came to move into the neighborhood of Dan, one of the fellows who met him asked him, ממה טיבך לך? ("what gives you the right to come here?")

The *gemara* (Pesachim 4a) says that Dan's nature was very much black and white *halachah*.<sup>2</sup> The *gemara* says in *Pesachim* there was a man, who every time you got into a discussion with him you know what he would say? "Let's go to *beis din*. Let's go to court." The *gemara* says they researched that guy's history to find out where he comes from because who talks like that? Most people don't talk like that. When you have a discussion with someone you say, "Let's go to *beis din*?" No. Most people don't say that. So they checked out this man and they found that משהבט דן קאתי. He came from Shevet Dan. Dan was very *medakdek*. So this fellow who met him told him, "Al pi *halachah*, are you allowed to be here or not?" The guy said, "My mother is from Shevet Dan." They said, "Who cares? The *passuk* says *lebeis avosam*." So they went to court. They went to Moshe Rabbeinu's court. You know what Moshe Rabbeinu said? "I'm sorry, but you have no legal rights to live in this neighborhood." Oooh. So the guy got ticked off. *Amad vegidef*, he got up and he cursed Hashem. He was cursing the *halachah*.

That's how people are. People get angry at the *halachos*. When *halachah* doesn't agree with people, people sometimes get all bent out of shape.

We have to understand something with this *medrash*, with these three opinions. Why are there three different opinions as to where the guy "went out" of? Why doesn't it say the *pashtus pshat*? He went out of his tent. He went out of his house. Like the Ibn Ezra says, יצא מאהלו, he went out of his tent.

*Chazal* are teaching us something here. When you're living *mamash* with Hakadosh Baruch Hu's presence - you have the *amud eish*, the *amud anan*, and you're living in such an elevated *hashra'as hashechinah* situation, how does a

<sup>1</sup> ויצא בן אישה הישראלית. מהיכן יצא? רבי לוי אומר מעולמו יצא, רבי ברכיה אומר מפרשה שלמעלה יצא, לגלג ואמר "ביום השבת יערכנו" דרך המלך לאכל פת חמה בכל יום, שמא פת צוננת של תשעה ימים, בתמיכה ומתנייתא אצרה מבית דינו של משה יצא, מתיב, בא לטע אהלו בתוך מחנה דן, אמרו לו מה טיבך לך? אמר להם מבני דן אני, אמרו לו "איש על דגלו באת לבית אבתם" כתיב (במדבר ב), נכנס לבית דינו של משה יצא מתיב, עמד וגדף (ספרא, ויקרא לאב):

<sup>2</sup> ההוא דאמר: דונו דיני. אמרי: שמע מיהה מדן קאתי, דכתיבי: "דן דינו עמו קאסד שבטי ישראל".

person fall to such a degrading *matzav* that he mentions Hashem's name, the *shem hameforash* and he curses Hashem's name?! That doesn't happen from walking out of your house. *Chazal* reveal to us that it happens from something much deeper and something much more sinister. A story like that has to have very unique beginnings.

## THE CHIYUV TO GUARD YOUR PERSONAL WORLD

Rav Levi said, "You know where it came from? *Meiolamo yatza*." Now what does that mean? So Rabbeinu Bachaye says that *meiolamo yatza* means every person is a small world.<sup>3</sup> Did you ever think of yourself as a small world? You may have thought of yourself as a small person, as a small human being. Some people think of themselves as grasshoppers. By the *meraglim* it says that. But a small world? Yes. You're a world. A person, he says, is the king in that word. You're the ruler in that world. A person has a responsibility to maintain himself in his world and to make sure he doesn't go out of his world. Throughout a person's entire life, he has to be *shomer* himself, to guard and maintain himself, and not engage in behavior that takes him out of his world. Most people think that, "Nah, I'm never gonna be out of my world. I'm not out of my world. I'm a person who behaves this way, but I'll be okay the rest of my life even when I'll do *aveiros*. I'll do this. I'll do that." You have to know that a person could lose his world quite easily. And this אישה ישראלית went out of his world.

Now, he never planned on leaving his world and doing such terrible things, and cursing Hashem. It was unheard of! You're with Hashem and you curse Hashem?! It's something I can't even imagine. Today, if a guy curses Hashem, *chas v'shalom*, he doesn't know what Hashem is. He thinks Hashem is another being. So he curses Hashem. It's all the same to him. But then? When he was exposed to real closeness with Hashem? How was it possible?

This means he wasn't careful. When a person walks out into the world, and he becomes exposed to challenges, he has to be ready for them to come at him. Throughout your life you will hear of scandalous episodes, people behaving in a way that is almost unbelievable. It's almost unimaginable to think how a person could do such behavior.

I heard of these scandals all my life. So many people appeared to be respectable people. And they fell. You know why that happened? Because they weren't *shomer* themselves. They thought they're a *muchzak*. They said to themselves, "I am good to go. I can't fall. I can't have that *yeridah*." So you're not *shomer* yourself, and you don't watch yourself. And when you don't watch yourself and you're not careful, you have to know, like the *Mesillas Yesharim* says, you're walking at the edge of a cliff.

I read about a couple of episodes of fools who decided to take their pictures with their phone. So one lady walked over to the edge of a cliff, she put one foot out and then she put the camera in front of herself and she took a picture. But she forgot that a cliff has a very big drop and she ended up dead. This other *chacham*, a young man, decided to climb a mountain. He made it to the pinnacle. I saw a picture of this mountain. The picture itself scared me. It was one of these unbelievably high peaks. The guy decided to do a handstand on this peak of the mountain. He obviously was in good shape. But he wasn't *shomer* himself. The next thing he knew he was hurtling down. He was competing with the *se'ir leAzazel*.

Now that's called *yatza meiolamo*. You're not *shomer* yourself, you're *yotzei meiolamo*. You have to know that every person - not only if your father is a *goy* - could fall into this trap. Even if your father is a *Yid*, you could fall into this trap. A human being who does not guard himself in his world can do awful things.

<sup>3</sup> ויראה לי כי לזה רמזו זז"ל במדרשם שאמרו ויצא בן אשה ישראלית, ר' לוי אמר מעולמו יצא. ולכך נסמכה פרשת ויצא למילת עולם. ופירוש מעולמו יצא כי האדם עולם קטן, וזהו שכתוב (יחזקאל לו) ומארצו יצאו, וכתיב (שם טו) מהאש יצאו, אשו של בשר ודם, זה מבואר.

In the last month, I was called a number of times for situations where very respectable people, people who had a lot of *kavod*, *derech erez*, teachers of Torah, people who are *mechazek* others, were *yotzei meolamam*. A number of people called me over and they said, "How is it *shayach*?" I said, "If you're not *shomer* yourself, that's what happens. That's what happens." It's like a guy taking selfies on the edge of a cliff with one foot hanging off the cliff.

The first lesson over here is you've got to know, don't leave your world. Don't engage in dangerous behavior. Don't engage in careless behavior. Be very careful and not careless. It's heartbreaking.

## THE DANGER OF LEITZANUS

And the *gemara* says there's another reason the guy fell so low. You know what that was? He made *leitzanus*. He heard about the *halachah* of *lechem hapanim*, and to his mind, somehow, it was cute. It was funny. This is how you respect Hashem? "Nine day old bread is what you're serving the king? This is what you're offering the *kohanim* in the *Beis Hamikdash*?" Nu, the guy made *leitzanus*. לֵיצְנוּת אַחַת דּוּחָה מָאָה. תּוֹכּוּחַת. You have to know if a person has in himself the *koach* of *leitzanus* the guy will end up making a mistake and not knowing when to make the *leitzanus* and when not to make the *leitzanus*, and he's going to make *leitzanus* at the wrong time.

I was once at a *bris* and I asked the father of the baby, "Who are you giving the *sandakaus* to?" He told me he's giving it to his father. I told him, "Don't give it to your father under any circumstances." He said, "Why not?" I said, "Because your father, you should excuse me, is a *rasha* and if you give it to him you're being *makriv* your kid to the Molech! I'm telling you your kid is not going to have a chance to grow up *frum*." "Nah," he said. "Rebbi, you're getting extreme. You're always dramatic." I said, "I'm trying to save your life."

Now at the *bris*, during the *sandakaus*, this *rasha* tried to compete with יִפְתָּה וּפִתָּח, and he opened his mouth and he started making *leitzanus* about the *bris*. I had to control myself. I was thinking of feeding him a knuckle sandwich right there, to start his *seudah* earlier. I remember the hairs on my neck stood up. He was *mamash melagleg*. I said, "This kid doesn't stand a chance." He never did stand a chance. The kid became *frei* at 13. It was bad news!

Just recently, I had another story where somebody called me up and told me about his son. Actually, first, the son called me up secretly. This *bachur* was a very good *bachur* in a *yeshivah*, but he told me he has a strong interest in being rich. He comes from a family that's very *frum* and has no *shaychus* to anything modern. He told me he likes to have nice clothing. The kid was torn. I spoke to him. The father called me up and said to me "My son wants to go to a therapist to discuss." I said, "Who was your son's *sandek*?" He told me. I said, "What kind of behavior does that person exhibit?" He said, "Exactly the behavior my son exhibits." He said, "The man is sitting on ten million dollars, and all day long, and all night long, his wife has to listen to him complain about how poor he is and how tight he is and how he doesn't have enough money." And he likes clothing and he likes *shtusim vehavalim*. You hear that? The man insisted he become the *sandek*, so the father was *makriv* him on that *mizbeach*. Of course, you don't want to make any issues, any fights. You don't want to have any. So the kid now has to suffer.

A person has to know that there are certain people who have a nature of looking for the mockery, for the weakness, in anything that's *chashuv*. It's almost like a nature. No matter what you tell them, they always have a way of twisting it and making it a *shtickel leitzanus*. Even if they don't mean to be *mevazeh* the *zach* but they have to make that joke. They can't control themselves. They have to make that joke.



name, and I seek to give it to Klal Yisrael, לך והודיעם, go and notify them.”<sup>4</sup> In the past we explained that besides for the *mitzvah* of Shabbos there is a special *matanah* in Shabbos that does not exist in other *mitzvos*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted us to know about it because Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to understand the *middah* of *ahavah* that exists in Shabbos. The Chafetz Chaim says, when somebody gives you a *matanah*, what determines the value of the *matanah*? Let’s say an *ish pashut* gives you a *matanah*. Something that is *chashuv* by an *ish pashut* won’t be a *davar chashuv* for a regular person. An *ish pashut* has a different *ha’arachah* (value) for things. He’s *machshiv* (values) things differently. Somebody who is a *chashuve mentsch* looks at things differently.<sup>5</sup>

So what determines the value of a *matanah*? Number one, you have to look at who is giving the *matanah*. Then, once you see who is giving the *matanah*, then you could understand that if he tells you, “I’m giving you a *matanah tovah*,” you know it’s a *matanah tovah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells us, “I’m taking this out of *bitai*, בית גנדי, My storehouse.” The storehouse of a farmer has grain in it, it has animal feed. The storehouse of a regular *balebus* maybe has a lawnmower in it, a couple of shovels. You have a *melech*, a *melech* has *margalios*, all kinds of precious jewels. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, “I’m taking this out of *bitai* בית גנדי and this is what I’m giving to you. And what is it called? Shabbos.” So you know it’s not *stam* a *matanah*. Let’s say a person has things he keeps on his lawn. It’s not so *chashuv*. He gives it to you as a *matanah*. Okay, it’s not a *matanah chashuvah*. But a *matanah* that comes from a *bitai* בית גנדי is definitely much more *chashuv*.

The Gemora explains that Hashem wanted Moshe to reveal the great sechar that one receives for being shomer Shabbos, which they would otherwise likely not become aware of.

Now, a person gets *sechar* only if he’s *machshiv* something. That’s a very big *yesod* we have talked about many times. Let’s say a person learns Torah and for him Torah is not important. It’s more important if he has a job and he makes \$25 an hour. He feels like a millionaire. That’s the *derech*. But for Torah, Torah has no value to him. So when that guy comes to the next world he’s going to say to Hashem “Don’t I get any *sechar* for my Torah? Isn’t *talmud Torah keneged kulam*?” And Hashem is going to say, “Well, you weren’t *machshiv* it *keneged kulam*. You decided that Torah was worth nothing because when somebody gave you a job for \$25, you know what you said to the Torah? ‘Have a nice life. I don’t need it.’ The Torah didn’t have any value to you.” Or if somebody offered you to go for a nice walk instead of learning Torah, and you went for a walk.

<sup>4</sup> ואמר רבא בר מנסיא אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב: הנותן מתנה לטבירו, צריך להודיעו. שצאמר: “לדעת כי אני ה' מקדשכם.” תנאי אני הכי: “לדעת כי אני ה' מקדשכם”, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה: מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנדי ושבת שמה, ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל, לך והודיעם. מכאן אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל: הנותן פת לתניוק, צריך להודיע לאמו. מאי עביד ליה? אמר רב פפאי: ליה מאותו הפנין. כוחלא, והאידונו דתישינו לכשפירי? אמר רב פפאי: ליה מאותו הפנין.

<sup>5</sup> כאשר יתבונן האדם מי נתן לו גם חיות לכל רמאח אבריו, ומי נתן לו הדעת גם שם אשר בלתי הדעת כבהמה נחשב, ומי מזמין לו שם פרנסה, הלא זה הוא אשר הוא מחיה את כולם, והוא הנותן דעת, והוא נתן לחם לכל בשר, הכזה גמול על כל מפעלו הטוב, ואלו יאמר האדון לעבדו קפין כספו, אני מרשה לך שכל הימים תעבוד ולעצמך ותעבדני רק יום אחד בשבוע ואף שבביל יום זה אתן לך מתנה טובה, כמה מהאבה היה ניתוסף בלב העבד לרבו שבביל זה, ואף בעינינו, הלא עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ועשינו כולו בלם היו בחומר ולבנים, והוציאנו השם יתברך משם ברוב חמלתו, ולקחנו לעבדים לו, והרשנו שבכל יום מששת ימי המעשה נוכל לעשות לך מלאכתנו, אך ביום השבת לא נעשה שום פעולה לכבודו, ורק נראה לקשר את היום הזה ולזכור כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים והארץ ושבת ביום השביעי, ומי יאמר כאשר נתבונן כי הוא אדון על הכל, והוא מחיה אותם כחסדו, נראה להאבה אותו בלבבנו ונפשנו ואחר כל זה עבור זה היום גופא גם כן יתן לנו שכר מרובה לעולם הבא. [וכמו שאמר חזקאל אמר לו הקב"ה למשה מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנדי ושבת שמה ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל לך והודיעם, והוא מרמז על המתן שכר כמו שאמר בגמרא [שבת 1] ובודאי באוצרותיו של הקב"ה נמצאו דברים נחמדים מאד כי לפי ערך כל מלך כן אוצרותיו, וכיון שהקב"ה משבח אותו הדבר ואומר מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנדי מסתמא השכר גדול בלי גבול]. כמה אנו צריכין לשמור דבריו ברוב חבה וליקח על זה רוב תודה על זה המינים שנמצאים בעולם. וכלל שהמלך גדול יותר, ודאי גם אוצרותיו גדולים, ענין שבת, וזו: [איתא בחז"ל (שבת, 1):] אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנדי ושבת שמה, ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל: לך והודיעם כו'. ואבאר מאמר זה בדרך משל: ידוע שישנם בעולם הרבה סוגים של אבנים טובות ומרגליות, ואפילו הם שרים גדולים ושאינם מופלגים, ואפילו באוצרותיהם של מלכים אדירים, קשה למצוא אצמלם כל המינים שנמצאים בעולם. וכלל שהמלך גדול יותר, ודאי גם אוצרותיו גדולים, וחשובים יותר מאוצרותיו של מלך שהוא בדרגה נמוכה ממנו. והנה, קל וחומר בן בן על חומר, השם יתברך שהוא מלך מלכי המלכים, ובודאי נמצאים בבית גנזיו כל חמודות הכסף והזהב והאבנים הטובות הנמצאים בעולם. ומכל המתנות הטובות לא השתבח הקב"ה בהן כי אם באותה ששבתא שמה, והיא נקראת אצלו בשם “מתנת טובה”, ובודאי אין שיעור לשיחיתוהי טובתה. ומתנה כזו של הקב"ה לישראל, על ידי שמירת השבת. ואם כן כמה צריך האדם לשתוק חלק במתנה טובה זו שיש עליו על ידי שמירת השבת כפ"י.]

## YOU GET WHAT YOU PUT IN

The value that we put on *mitzvos* is the value that we're going to get out of them. It can't be that you assess a *mitzvah* to be worth peanuts and you're going to come to the next world and they're going to surprise you and say, "Wow! Here's a check for the sweepstakes you won!" Here's a person who buys *tefillin* and he pays peanuts for it. Then when he buys a car, he pays top dollar. So that guy's car is worth much more to him than his *tefillin*. *Nebach*, the person has a tremendous *mitzvah* of a *tefillin* and to him it's worth nothing! But for a car, he's not buying a cheap car. Oh no! He wants a car that's going to be tops, and so on and so forth. When Hashem sees what you value and how you evaluate things in your life, and gives you *sechar* accordingly, it's going to be a big shock. Many are going to have tremendous shock. We'll get *sechar* for all our *mitzvos*, but if we weren't *machshiv* them...we won't receive as much *sechar* for them.

It's a big *avodah* to understand the tremendous *sechar* that Shabbos has to offer. The *gemara* says this tremendous *sechar*, this *matanah tovah*, the *sechar* of Shabbos is *לא עביד לגלויי*, you can't know what the real *sechar* of Shabbos is in this world. That, you only find out in the next world. If Hashem would never tell me that, I would never know how to evaluate Shabbos.<sup>6</sup> Let's say to me Shabbos is just a nice bowl of *cholent* and my Shabbos afternoon nap. So Hashem says, "Okay. What do you pay for a hotel? What do you pay for a nice quiet night's rest in a hotel? A nice hotel? So we'll give you that. \$50, \$100, \$200, if you want to be a big time guy."

### \$100,000 FOR PESICHAH OF NEILAH

A *mentsch* has to understand that one of the biggest *avodos* that a man has to think about is: What is Shabbos worth to me? How do I evaluate Shabbos?

Now, there's a tremendous *mashal* that Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zt"l (1917-2006) once said over, a true story. There was a *ma'aseh* that took place on Yom Kippur in a St. Petersburg *shul*. This was the capital of Russia in the time of the czar. A number of very wealthy Russian Jews, who had business contracts with the government, came to the capital city for business meetings that took place around the time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These Jews made a lot of money from these contracts. Naturally, on Yom Kippur, they all came to the main *shul*. *Nu*, like the *minhag* is throughout Klal Yisrael, they would sell the *aliyos* and they would sell the *kibudim*. Whoever paid the higher price was *zocheh*.

The *gabbai* was holding by selling the *kibud* of *pesichah* for *neilah*. For *neilah*, they keep the *aron hakodesh* open throughout the whole *neilah*. The *gabbai* began the sale by asking for five hundred rubles for *pesichah*. They had rich people there. The *shul* was raising money from this. And the bids went up and up and up. One of the most outstanding *gvirim* in St. Petersburg was Baron Yosef Ginzberg (1812-1878). Baron Ginzberg was a very wealthy man. He was

a well-known *askan* of the Jewish community and supported various Torah institutions, including Talmud Torah of Vilna, his father's hometown. He was the one who petitioned Czar Alexander II in 1869 to build the Grand Choral Synagogue of St. Petersburg, which was completed in 1880's, and is still active today. Baron Ginzberg was there, and he saw the thing was going up and up.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. note: The Rosh Yeshiva, Shlita, clarified that we are not talking about "receiving" the *sechar* for observing Shabbos, because there's no *sechar* for mitzvos in this world, as the *gemora* (Chullin 142a) says - *שכר - נכר* - *נכר* - *נכר*; rather we are discussing "understanding of the *sechar*" of Shabbos. Regarding this "understanding," Hashem decided to inform Klal Yisroel, through Moshe Rabbeinu, about everything we have to know regarding the tangible benefits/rewards of the *matanah* of Shabbos, and now we know it! The reason why Shabbos was specifically chosen for that, as opposed to one of many other mitzvos, is that Shabbos is the key to developing our relationship and connection with Hashem in this world.

All of a sudden he raises his hand and says, "Two thousand rubles for the *kavod* of *pesichah*." It was an astronomical sum of money at the time! Two thousand rubles in Czarist Russia is equivalent to one hundred thousand dollars!

*Bekitzer*, there was another man there, Baron Folk. Baron Folk was a "Yom Kippur Yid." He didn't come to *shul* all year long. He was an *am ha'arets*, and he used to just *daven* Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. He sees Baron Ginzberg paying two thousand rubles, he raises his hand and says, "I'll raise it by another five hundred rubles." Two thousand five hundred rubles the guy is offering for *pesichah* of *neilah*!

The whole *olam* was mamash in shock. Aza number! So the *gabbi* gave a bang on the *bimah*, "Zachah lo!" And he says *mechubad pesichah deneilah* Folk. Zachah lo. After Baron Folk was *zocheh* to this *pesichah deneilah*. Then Baron Folk turns to the guy sitting next to him, "Could you tell me what is *pesichah deneilah*?" The guy turns to him and says in amazement, "I don't understand. You pay such aza astronomical sum, twenty five hundred rubles, and you don't even know what you're buying here?!" He said, "What do you mean? If a great businessman like Baron Ginzburg understands that it was *kedai* to pay for this *kavod* two thousand rubles, I'm sure it's worth twenty five hundred easily, because, one thing I know about Baron Ginzburg - he knows business. He knows a good deal when he sees one. So if he wants it so much and is willing to pay two thousand rubles, I want it more! So now tell me *bemehilah*, *vos is dos*? What did I buy?"

## THINKING ABOUT THE MATANAH TOVAH ON FRIDAY NIGHT

It's the *zelbe zach* when it comes to Shabbos! A *mentsch* that's not on the *madreigah* is someone like Baron Folk. He's an *ani*, not *ashir*. אין עני אלא בדת. We're *nebechdike mentschen* and we just sit through the whole Shabbos not understanding its value and what we are meant to accomplish there. We don't understand what Shabbos is.

Instead, a person has to think about how Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself is *me'idd alehah* (testifies on you) that this is a *mitna* טובה מבית גנזי. *L'havdil*, we could say, if Baron Ginzberg calls something good, then it must be good, but *kal vahomer shel beno shel kal vahomer*, if Hakadosh Boruch says, "I have a very valuable gift for you, called Shabbos," then it really must be good! Hashem is the *Melech malchei hamelachim*. If a *stam melech* would pull out some kind of a rock, and he would tell you this is a *mitna* טובה מבית גנזי, you would look at him, "What is it?" You wouldn't know what it is. But you know if a *melech* gave it to you and he told you and he wasn't lying, this is *taka a matanah tovah*. It must have some *chashivus*. So here also we could be *somech* on Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

You have to understand, this *matanah tovah* is only given to Klal Yisrael. Only Klal Yisrael is *zocheh* to this *matanah tovah*. As we say in the *davening*, ולא נתתו לנו, באהבה וברצון, הנחלתנו. You mention it twice in the *kiddush*, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bequeathed us this amazing Shabbos, שבת קדשו באהבה וברצון. A person has to think about the *matanah tovah* when he says this. Don't think of *cholent*. Don't think of good naps. During *davening* and *Kiddush* you're supposed to think about the *matanah tovah*. You should think: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, thank You for telling me what kind of great *matanah* You are giving me!"

Now, our *avodah* is to start to be *ma'arich* (evaluate) it and to treat it like it's something *chashuv*. We should say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, how could little me, a nobody, understand the *chashivus* of something that comes from Your *beis genazai*?! It's not *shayach*! However, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I am *ma'amin* and I am *boteach* that if You told me that, then Shabbos Kodesh is a *matanah tovah* and I will try to treat it and treasure it as such!"

## LEARNING TO APPRECIATE THE GIFT OF SHABBOS

Now before you get to that, you have to think of all the things the *gemara* says that are עביר לגלויי. The Rambam says in *Moreh Nevuchim* the *menuchas haguf* that a person experiences on Shabbos is also a part of the gift of Shabbos. There is a *menuchas haguf* aspect on Shabbos. In the past we spoke about the tremendous clarity and *kedushah* that a person could have to answer all his *sefeikos*. A person could clarify all of his *sefeikos*. A person could have a clarity of *emunah* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu from Shabbos which is something that's palpable, something you could recognize, sense, and feel. That's tremendous! You have to think about this *matanah tovah*. You have to think, do you want to be *mezalzel* in that *matanah*? Do you want to treat this *matanah* lightly?

I've told you many times, that learning Torah on Shabbos, doing *mitzvos* on Shabbos is worth hundreds of *mitzvos*. Doing a *mitzvah* on Shabbos is incomparable to doing a *mitzvah* during the rest of the week. *Eino domeh!* And we have to value it! This is also the *matanah tovah* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us. This is part of the *matanah tovah*. Hashem says, "If you learn Torah on Shabbos it's worth six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos*." Do you know what that means? Some say a thousand *mitzvos*. A thousand *mitzvos*! One word of Torah! You know what kind of *sechar* there is for Shabbos?! You know what kind of *matanah tovah* it is?! So what does a guy think, "Nahh, you know what I mean, just pass the *cholent*," and as soon as the *seudah* is over, he runs to his bed, covers himself in blankets and tells his wife, "Wake me up in 3 hours, please." Plus the guy is *mevaze* this time by talking *devarim beteilim* and talking *lashon hara* and *motzei shem ra* and *rechilus*, *shtusim vehavalim*.

Rabbosai, hopefully this Shabbos we'll be able to *ma'arich* this *matanah* and understand this *matanah* - and then we will be *zocheh taka* to the *matanah tovah* that Shabbos has to offer us. Ah Gutten Shabbos.

### IN SUMMARY

The Midrash mentions several reasons the מקלל fell so low to the point that he cursed Hashem - each of the reasons teaching us an important lesson. R' Levi says the מקלל "went out of his world." That means he did not safeguard his behavior. Every person is at risk of falling if they do not guard their *ruchniyus*. We have to make sure we engage only in ethical and noble behavior. *Lehavdil*, hanging off the cliff while holding a phone and trying to take a selfie, skydiving without a parachute, and similar irrational behaviors, bring tragic results. That is exactly what we do if we engage in behavior that could lead to a *yeridah*. The second opinion in Midrash says he fell to his low *madreiga* through mockery or *leitzanus*. Many people have an innate tendency in their *nefesh* to mock anything *chashuv*. If we don't understand something, we tend to mock that thing or that person. So, too, the מקלל in our *parshah*, mocked the *lechem hapanim*. can bring a person down to a level so low that he could curse Hashem r"l. A third reason was that his ego was hurt when Moshe Rabbeinu *paskened* the halacha against him. A decent person could make good choices in life, but if his ego is touched, he could act irrationally. *continued...*

This coming week, as I interact with people and go about my daily routine, I will ask myself: "Am I being extra careful to do what is right and good, acting with ethical, virtuous conduct? Do I have a tendency to minimize and mock and display *leitzaanus* towards people or institutions when I don't agree with their positions? And is my ego always being touched when things don't go my way?"

Regarding the great *matanah* of Shabbos - which Hashem gifted Klal Yisrael from His treasure house and informed us about through Moshe - it is the great *sechar* of Shabbos. Receiving the *sechar* of Shabbos - which we can only get in the next world - is directly proportional to how much we value this amazing day and its mitzvos! Our *avodah* is not only to start thinking, "What is Shabbos worth to me? How can I understand its value?" but to start treating Shabbos as something that's very important and *chashuv*. When we read באהבה עמך נתתו ולא נתתו לגויי הארצות כי אם לישראל on Shabbos morning, or say these words during the Friday night Kiddush - וּשְׁבַת קְדֻשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן הַנְּחִילֵנוּ - we have to train ourselves to feel and appreciate the gift of Shabbos. In addition, we have to try to maximize every opportunity of learning Torah and doing mitzvos on Shabbos, which have a thousand fold value assigned to them!

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