



# דרכים בפרשה

שמיני



את זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת במים  
בימים ובנחלים אתם תאכלו

*These you may eat, of all things that are in water; all that have fins and scales in the waters, in oceans and in rivers; you may eat them. (11:9)*

The Gemara in Chulin (66) teaches us that any fish that has scales automatically has fins as well. This means that if one walks into the fish store and does not see the fins but does see scales, it can be assumed without a doubt that the fish is kosher. However, if there are fins without scales, then the fish is not kosher. Accordingly, the Gemara wonders why it was necessary for the Torah to even mention fins. Every child knows that you need fins and scales, and yet, the knowledge of fins seems to be irrelevant. The Gemara answers that this is one of the places that we say “*drush vekabel s’char*” – say a *drasha*, i.e. expand on it, and receive reward.

I heard from Rav Mordechai Druk z”l the following beautiful idea to explain this in the manner of *drush*.

The Gemara in Pesachim (8a-b) tells us that one who gives money to a poor person in order to have a merit for his child’s life is considered a completely righteous person. And yet, the Mishna in Avos teaches that one should not be a servant that serves the master to gain reward. This teaches that we should perform our *mitzvos* altruistically. The Maharit

explains that when it comes to *mitzvos* that are *bein adam lachaveiro* (between man and his fellow), the intention does not really matter, as the main thing is that the poor person receives his money so he can now buy his food. However, when performing a *mitzvah* that is *bein adam l’Makom* (between man and Hashem), the main thing is the intent. It is so important that in certain cases, even an *aveirah* that was performed for Hashem’s sake might be looked at as a *mitzvah*.

Briefly examining two examples of women that acted with noble intentions, we have the story of Penina and Chana, and the story of Yael. The outcome in each case was completely different: Chana had no children and Penina took it upon herself to tease Chana in order to cause her to cry out to Hashem. As a result, Chana had children, but Penina was punished for this by losing her own children. The Gemara (Bava Basra 16a) tells us that Penina acted with pure intentions, and yet she was still punished.

Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz explains that because this was between two people – although the intention was great and pure – but, at the end

of the day, she made someone else feel bad. There is never an excuse to do that. One that enters a fire even for the right reasons will still get burnt.

In the story of Yael and Sisra, she gave herself over to the general in order to kill him, thus saving the Jews. In this instance, the Gemara records that she rose up higher than Sarah Imeinu. Even though this was an *aveirah*, her intentions were purely for the sake of Hashem, and He “viewed” it as such.

Coming back to the Maharit, when we see someone that gives *tzedakah* and helps people out, we can assume that he is a good person (we can even call him a *tzaddik*), because his intentions are irrelevant. However, just watching someone *daven* a very long *shemoneh esrei* doesn't mean anything, because perhaps his mind is in Timbuktu while he is *davening*.

Chazal tell us:

וילבש צדקה כשריון – מה שריון זה כל קליפה וקליפה  
מצטרפת לשריון גדול, אף צדקה כל פרוטה ופרוטה  
מצטרפת לחשבון גדול.

Armor is made from a bunch of small bits of metal, like scales, joining together to make something big. Similarly, a bunch of small coins given to *tzedakah* can join together to make something big. From this connection to *tzedakah* we can derive that the “*kaskeses*” (scales) refers to *mitzvos* of *bein adam*

*lachaveiro*. On the other hand, the Gemara tells us that the *snafir* (fins) refers to something that is sharp. That may be the sharpness found during a person's performance of Hashem's *mitzvos*.

Connecting these thoughts, Rav Druk explained that at times, when it comes to Hashem's *mitzvos*, people are extremely sharp and zealous, ready to pounce on the next person. However, when it comes to being kind to another, at times that sharpness is lacking.

Therefore, the Gemara is teaching us that when we see someone with scales, i.e. *tzedakah* and acts of kindness to others, we can automatically assume that he is kosher. At the same time, just seeing fins, i.e. sharpness in areas of Hashem's *mitzvos*, does not tell us if the person is kosher or not. We still need to check if the scales, i.e. acts of kindness are there as well.

Rav Druk mentioned that as an example of a true zealot, Rav Yoelish Teitlebaum, the Satmar Rav *zy"q*, was well-known as an extreme opponent to Zionism. At the same time, he was well known for his great acts of *tzedakah*, with many stories of Mizrachi Yidden that approached him for help and would walk out with all of their needs met. This, Rav Druk explained, is the true litmus test to see if someone is real or not.

**מרדכי אפפל, Good Shabbos**



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