



AMON AND MOAV MAY NEVER BE MEGAYER

In this week's parshah, it says 'לא יבוא עמוני ומואבי בקהל ה', that somebody from the nation of Amon or Moav cannot become part of the Jewish nation (Devarim 23:4). It says 'גם דור עשירי ה', even after ten generations, 'לא יבוא להם בקהל ה', they can't come bekahal Hashem, 'עד עולם', forever. Why not? 'באמתכם בלחם ובמים', because of the matter that they didn't present you with bread and water, 'בדרך', on the road, 'בצאתכם ממצרים', when you were leaving Mitzrayim (ibid., v. 5).

Now, this is an amazing thing. Does the fact that somebody didn't give you lechem and mayim mean that they can't become part of the Jewish nation? I can think of a lot of other nations that did some very nasty stuff to the Jewish nation, a lot worse than not offering lechem and mayim, and they could come into the Jewish nation. They could be megayer (convert).

And another question: When did they not offer this bread and water to Bnei Yisrael? When they were in the midbar approaching Eretz Yisroel, they had mann that fell down. They had mayim, water, from the Be'ero shel Miriam. They didn't need any food from the Amonim and the Moavim, so what was the big deal?! If the Yidden were starving, okay, but the Yidden had the best water – the Be'ero shel Miriam. Why was Hashem so upset at Amon and Moav that they didn't offer this?

One more diyuk in the passuk. In the passuk it says 'לא קדמו אתכם על דבר'. The word 'על דבר' is seemingly superfluous. It could have said 'לא קדמו אתכם', because they did not present you with lechem and mayim. Why does it say 'על דבר', "over the matter"? It's a very unique wording.

THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY A LACK OF KIND WORDS

So, there is a sefer authored by Rav Yosef Caro (1488-1575). It's called Derushei Maharika.¹ And over there he says a pshat, which answers all these questions. He says the words, 'על דבר' wants to teach you something. He says a gevaldige chiddush. He says 'בעבור שלא נתנו להם דברים טובים וניחומים', because the Amonim and the Moavim – who are related to the Jewish people – did not speak good and comforting words to this nation who was wandering in the desert. He says 'על דבר' refers to 'על דיבור'. It's not because they didn't give them food and drink. It's because they didn't say, "Do you need anything?"

He brings a ra'ayah that davar could mean words. It says in the parshah

¹ ז"ל: 'על דבר אשר לא קדמו וגו' לא תדרוש שלום. יש לומר למה צווה השי"ת שנתעב אותם כל כך בעבור שלא נתנו לישראל לחם ומים דבר מועט כזה ועוד כי לא היו צריכים אותו שכבר היה להם מן, ד"ש לומר שאמר על דבר, רצונו לומר בעבור שלא נתנו להם דברים טובים וניחומים, וזה שאמר על דבר: בשביל הדבור וגם כן תמצא שאמר הכתוב וזה דבר הרוצח כמו ששינוי שיאמר רוצה אני אל תכבדוני [מכות י"ב,ב], וגם כן וזה דבר השמיטה ר"ל שידבר ויאמר משמט אני, ואם אמר לו אע"פ כן יקח ממנו [שביעית פ"י משנה ח'] ע"ל.

זוהו דבר הרוצח, when a rotzeach (an unintentional murderer) goes to the ir miklat, (the city of refuge) it says: זוהו דבר הרוצח (Devarim 19:4). The gemara (Makkos 12b) says what does davar mean? The rotzeach is supposed to say something to the people if they're nice to him and they want to respect him. He's supposed to say, "Don't be mechaved me. I'm a rotzeach." In another place in the Torah it says (Devarim 15:2), זוהו דבר השמיטה ("this is the matter of the Sabbatical year"). The guy is supposed to say, "I obliterate all the loans" (Gittin 37b). So here also, in our parsha, he writes when it says על דבר it means that Amon and Moav didn't present Klal Yisrael with any comforting words regarding the needs of Klal Yisrael.

Now, as unique as this pshtat is, the emes is the Beis Yosef was mechaven to an open Chazal in the Zohar (על הפ' וישמע אברהם). Midrash Hain Parshas Lech Lecha. Over there, in Parshas Lech Lecha, it says על דבר אשר לא קדמו אתכם הלוא היו נצרכו ללחם ומים והבאר, וכי ישראל נצרכו ללחם ומים, להם המן והבאר, anyone who precedes the arrival of and goes out to greet somebody who comes on the road, and he gives him shalom, מעלה עליו הכתוב, the Torah considers it כאילו ושתיה, נתן לו אכילה ושתיה, it is as if you gave him to eat and to drink. והן, and they, the Amonim and the Moavim, שלא באו, who did not come and they didn't greet them with peace, העלה עליהם הכתוב, the Torah considers it כאילו חסרו מחיתם, as if they took away from their life. As if they needed it, and they didn't deprive them of it.

This is an unbelievable chiddush. You want to know why the nations of Amon and Moav were detested and rejected? Even the Mitzri'im, a disgusting nation that enslaved us for hundreds of years - if they become Jewish - they can marry into Klal Yisrael after three generations! Even the Amalekim, it's a shaylah, if they can or they can't. But Amon and Moav are forever distanced from the Am Hashem. What was the terrible thing that they did? Because when Klal Yisrael was traveling on the road they didn't extend shalom to them and they didn't speak words of comfort to them. And for that, goodbye?! Nu?

THINK WHAT THE OTHER PERSON NEEDS

Now, this is a tremendous lesson for us to learn in our own lives. Do you know why? Because when a person goes to shul, many times he sees somebody, a new face. Obviously, it is a traveler. The person traveled from somewhere else. He's not your neighbor who started coming to your shul. He's somebody new. Have you ever had that experience? What do you do when you see a new face in your shul? You lower your head, and you walk by quickly. Maybe take your coffee. You park yourself in the corner there, and you bury yourself. You know what it says here? You're expected to offer them words of shalom. You should say shalom aleichem. And if you don't do this, you're behaving in a manner that caused two nations to be rejected from the kahal Hashem. You hear that? If a person doesn't say a good word to somebody, he's mamash a nebach.

Now, many people say, "It's not my type. I'm not that kind of person. I have things on my mind. I'm this, I'm that." I didn't say you have to hug the guy, but I'm telling you you've got to say to the person, "Shalom. Is there anything you need that I can get you?" Many times, my Zeida used to say, "When you invite somebody into your house - after he's in your house already - you know what the first thing you should tell him? Where the bathroom is. Show him where the washroom is." You know why? A lot of times, the guy comes from the outside, and he needs a washroom. He's embarrassed to let you know that he's human. Or

he's embarrassed because he doesn't know if you're one of those finicky people who don't let people use their bathroom. I know people like that. They don't let anybody use their bathroom as if it was the kodesh hakodashim and they are the kohen gadol. My Zeida said the first thing you tell them is where the washroom is.

Eliyahu Hanavi was zocheh to a tremendous level of kochos. He was able to take a meis, somebody who was dead, and be mechayeh that meis. Do you know what kind of koach that is to resurrect somebody from the dead and put him back and make him alive again?! I haven't seen that in my life. Have you ever seen that? (pointing to someone in the room) No. You're from Eretz Yisrael, and you traveled a lot. You had a lot of experiences, and still, you didn't see it. In Wickliffe, I for sure didn't see it. I've been here for decades.

You know what Chazal say? The Yalkut Shimoni asks why was Eliyahu zocheh to be mechayeh a meis? It says because he did the ratzon of Hashem. In what way? He learned? He davened? Yiras shamayim? No. Because he was concerned about the kavod, the honor of Klal Yisrael. And when he saw tzaddikim, he was so impressed that he would hug them. He would kiss them. He would tell them how much he loved them. This is what Chazal tell us. Not because he fasted. Not because of this. Not because of that. But because he was mechabed others. I've told you many times, people love to be respected and honored. When people are not given the respect that they feel is due to them, they get bent out of shape. It upsets them very much.

THE MAN WHO OFFERED MISPALLELIM SNUFF

I'll tell you an amazing story. A number of years ago, there lived in Eretz Yisrael two great Sefardic gaonim, great rabbis. They were very knowledgeable in the wisdom of Kabbalah. One was named Rav Yaakov Ades (1898-1963). He was the rosh yeshivah of Yeshivat Porat Yosef, a famous Sefardic yeshivah in Yerushalayim. His friend was Rav Yehudah Fetayah (1859-1942) who was also known for dealing with dibukim and spirits that entered people. He wrote a sefer about it. He knew how to get rid of them. These two tzaddikim learned together for many years, and one day, they made a deal with each other. One turned to the other. "Let's make a deal between us. Whoever is going to die first will come to the other one and is going to tell him what the ma'amad, what the position of lomdei Torah is in the world to come? What's their sechar? How is their learning mashpia in Shamayim? They both shook hands, tekiyas kaf, and made their agreement.

After a number of years, Rav Fetayah passed on. All the gedolei Yerushalayim, rabanim, went to give him his last kavod and accompany him to his final resting place. Rav Yaakov Ades remembered the promise they made to each other and he was waiting anxiously to see if his friend would come to visit him. At the end of the shivah, Rav Yehudah Fetayah suddenly appears to Rav Yaakov Ades in a dream, and he says, "When I came up to Shamayim they showed me what goes on in the olam ha'emes and what's the sechar that a person gets for every mitzvah that he does. You should know I can't reveal to you what the sechar is that you get for limud haTorah because as long as you're downstairs in that world, you have no possibility to grasp and understand the amazing sechar for lomdei Torah."

"But one thing," he said, "I do have reshut to tell you. So listen up," he

said. “Do you remember a certain Yid who was niftar a number of years ago and he used to drey zach in the shuls of Yerushalayim?” He was a shlepper. In Yerushalayim, they have a lot of those. In America you don’t have so many. “Do you remember that Yid? Do you remember what he used to do when he went to the shuls? He used to always pull out snuff tabak.” Snuff. I remember many times in Yerushalayim, even now sometimes when I’m there, I daven in a certain shul and I know one of the main gabba’im who’s there who is a big macher in the chevra kadisha always comes over to me with his special blend of snuff, and he says, “Let me honor you with a little snuff.” I take a pinch with my forefinger and my thumb, I take a deep breath, and usually I give a sneeze and the man smiles from ear to ear. He says to me, “Ze is gut nein, it’s good, no?” “Absolutely the best,” I tell him.

“So you remember that Yid who used to go around from shul to shul and give out the snuff to people?” said Rav Yehuda Fetayah. “I want you to know the guy did it to make people happy, and he wanted them to daven better and to learn better. That’s why he did it. If people would know what kind of sechar that person is getting in that world because he brought joy to others and he caused pleasure to others, they would run around and dish out snuff tabak all day long nonstop.” He said, “Somebody who causes a small simchah, a small joy to somebody, there’s awaiting for him sechar rav, lots of sechar and amazing sechar.” Unbelievable! This is like offering someone simple things – things we take for granted.

People who get involved in their old trivial lives, they just don’t think, “I have an opportunity to make another person happy.” Let me tell you, whenever a stranger comes into a place, he feels out of place. I don’t care who he is. Unless he’s, maybe, the gadol hador. But when a regular person comes, he feels a little bit out of place. And the one thing he loves is to be welcomed. I can’t tell you how many people have come to this beis medrash, and told me afterward they were amazed how many people came over to them and welcomed them and offered them things. “What can I do for you?” Chap arein, Rabosai. That’s what you’ve got to do. If you do that you’ll have sechar rav.

Rav Yosef Caro explains, these two nationals didn’t have a good word to say for Klal Yisroel. A good word. You know what a good word is? I can’t get over that - when I think about how a simple, good word is so valuable.

THE INCREDIBLE ENTRANCE EXAM INTO GRODNO

There was a Yid who lived in New York, a rav, a famous Yid who learned by Rav Shimon Shkop (1860-1939) in Grodno. He related that his parents were paupers: “They couldn’t send me to the yeshivah by train. It was decided that I should go by foot. Two weeks by foot to get to the yeshivah. A young bachur. Nu, they gave me what I would need, they packed me up with food. They told me, ‘When you run out of food, and you will run out of food, ask help from Yidden that you meet on the road.’ I was a young bachur and I went on the road and people helped me out. I slept every night in another shul. Sometimes, I didn’t find a shul. I slept on the ground in some private corner. I had a lot of frightening moments during those two weeks. Many times, I thought I was totally lost. I didn’t know if I was going to have food the next day. I was most concerned that I would come to Grodno, to the yeshivah and I wouldn’t be matzliach in my test, my entrance exam into the yeshivah, and I would have to go the whole way back because they would send me away. Nu. And it would cause tremendous

disappointment to my parents. So the whole road, the whole way I was traveling, I was chazering over the gemara that I was to be tested on until I knew it 'cold.' And this is how I arrived in Grodno, weary and tired.

I went into the room of the Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Shimon Shkop. He was mekabel me with a tremendous endearment and sweetness. He asked me my name. He asked me what city I come from. Then he said to me, 'I'm going to ask you two questions. I have two questions to ask you, that's the entrance exam. First question is, when's the last time you ate a warm meal, a hot meal?' I was shocked. I was preparing my mind for the gemara that I was getting tested on and he asked me when's the last time I ate a hot meal. I thought for a minute, and I said, 'Three weeks ago. It's been three weeks since I ate a warm meal.' Immediately, Rav Shimon, the great Rav Shimon Shkop, the Rosh Yeshivah, jumped out of his chair. He was already 70 years old plus. He said, 'I'm not a baki in knowing how to cook like my wife. My rebbetzin is not home now. But I know mashehu, I know something.' Immediately, he began to cook me a hot meal. He gave me some warm food that warmed me up. When he finished cooking, he put it on a plate, and put it in front of me.

After I finished eating, Rav Shimon said, 'Now I'm going to ask you the second shaylah.' After I had eaten, and I had a nice kabalas panim, I was much more calm, and now I felt ready to get tested. But the second shaylah that he asked him was even more surprising. He said, 'When's the last time you slept in a bed?' I was thinking and thinking. I said, 'To tell you the truth, I don't remember. I can't remember the last time I slept in a bed.' Immediately, Rav Shimon went to the bedroom and he made a bed for me and he told me, 'Come with me. Go to sleep.' He covered me with the blanket personally. He, himself, personally covered me with the blanket! I was so tired, I was out cold, and I slept straight until the next morning. The next day, in the morning, you know what I found out? He had given me his own bed. That was my test to get into Grodno Yeshiva."

This elderly rav from New York said: "I went through the Holocaust. I lost all my family. I went through such tzaros, such suffering, such torture, physical suffering, emotional suffering. You know what kept me alive all those years? The two questions that Rav Shimon Shkop asked me during my test to get into Grodno. When did you eat the last warm meal, and when did you sleep in a bed the last time." You hear that?

BE A YID WHOM THE WORLD NEEDS - SMILE!

My Zeida used to say, "You want to prepare for Rosh Hashanah? I'm going to tell you what you should do. Smile! Smile to Yidden. Show them a smile and make them feel good. And if you do that, you will be zocheh." You can't imagine what you're doing by smiling at others. But do it because you want to make others happy. Do it because you want others to feel good. You want to be mehaneh others. And if you do that, you should know your sechar in olam haba is tremendous, and you shouldn't stop doing it all day long. Come out of your hibernation. Come out of your cocoon. You have a beautiful smile, but you have to use it. Use that smile! Be mehaneh others, and if you'll do that, you'll come to the Yom Hadin and Hashem will say to you, "Ah, this Yid brings pleasure to others. Of course, I'm going to give him another year. Of course! The world needs Yidden like that." Let us be matzliach, and let us be zocheh to the kindness of Hashem.

PART 2: SHABBOS - DEVEYKUS BORNE OUT OF LOVE (5771)

A MASHAL

There is a wonderful *mashal* from the Dubno Maggid in his *sefer* Ohel Yaakov in *Parshas Vayakhel*. He says there was once a man who moved away from his city, leaving his immediate family, and his extended family. In the new city, he was always looking around to see if he would see somebody from his home town who would bring him some news about his family.

One day, somebody knocks on his door and asks him for a *nedavah*. It was a *meshulach*. He looks at the guy, and says, "Oh, you're from my *shtodt*?" He was overjoyed that he recognized this fellow. So he starts to ask him questions. And the *ani* tells him, "Why are you holding me up from me doing my work? I didn't come here to chit-chat. I came here to make money. So do me a favor." So the *yid* turns to the *meshulach*, and says, "Tell me, how much do you think you're going to make over here in the next hour?" The guy tells him, X amount of money. So the guy says, "You know what?" He puts his hand in his pocket, he pulls out the money, he puts it on the table, he says, "*Yid*, sit comfortably, relax." Nu. The *meshulach* takes his hat off, he takes his coat off. "Nu, you want to *shmuz*? Let's *shmuz*. Bring a tea out." Ahh. The *meshulach* works a hard job; it's not easy to be a *meshulach*, and now he gets a free hour. So he starts to talk to him about his family.

All of a sudden, the *mushalach's* eyes start to droop. He's getting relaxed over here. The pressure is off! The *balabos* is asking him questions, and he is trying to answer them, but he's half-asleep. So he turns to the *balabos* and says, "Do me a favor. You don't know how tired I am. I've been running around since the morning. I just came last night, late. It caught up with me. Maybe you have a bed for me, where I could rest for a half hour?" So the guy says, "What!?" The guy gives a *shrei* on him. He says, "I don't understand you! I paid you for an hour. I paid you for your break. I'm the one who gave you the rest, and I gave you the rest on the condition that you tell me about my family. Now you want to go to sleep on me? You think I'm paying you to go to sleep!?"

HOW MUCH OF SHABBOS IS FOR HASHEM?

Says the Dubno Maggid: All week long, a *mentch* is busy. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to *schmuz* with him all week long, but the *mentch* says, "Listen, Ribono Shel Olam, I have no *taanos* here. I'm busy. I've got to feed my family. I've got to work. I'm *asuk in chayei olam hazeh*." So what does Hakadosh Baruch Hu do? Hakadosh Baruch Hu tells him, "I'll tell you what. Come Shabbos, you don't have to worry about *parnasah*." Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "*Ani porei'a*, Shabbos is on my *cheshbon*."² You can have *gutte seudos*, *mamash* עם מְדוּשֵׁי עוֹג. I'll give you the best. But, Hashem says, "But on Shabbos, you spend time with me." Nu. What happens?

The guy comes back from his work week; he's finished working. He has it good on Hashem's *cheshbon*. He has such a *seudah sheleimah* like Shlomo Hamelech *beshaato*, and then it's time to talk to Hashem a little bit. But the *mentch* says, "Hashem, I'm tired - zzzzz. I'm going to sleep." And the next

² מאי "כי קדושת ה' היא מעצבם?" אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי אליעזר ברבי שמעון: אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא ל'ישראל: בני, לוו עלי, וקדשו קדושת היום, והאמינו בי ואני פורע (ביצה ט"ז ב:יח)

morning, it comes to *seudah shniya*, Hashem says, “Okay, maybe Friday night I’ll give you a break. But Shabbos *bayom*? Everybody knows the *yom* of Shabbos is made for Torah.” But the guy eats to his heart’s content, and then he says, “Ribono Shel Olam, sorry, I need to get to bed.” The next thing you know, he’s at *seudah shlishis* already. Hashem says, “Nu, when are we talking? I guess I’ll see you next week.”

Zogt de Maggid, dos is dos. A mentch has to know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu removed the *ol of parnasah* from upon the shoulders of mankind on Shabbos, and Hashem removed all the *hotzaos* of Shabbos. Hashem says, “It’s on My *cheshbon*, so you can be totally *panui*, totally free to spend time with Me.” But when a person doesn’t, it’s not something that is *mesameach* Elokim. It’s not something that gives Hashem *nachas*.

When a guy comes home from a whole week of work, and then it comes Shabbos, and he *shlofs avek* the *gantze* Shabbos because he’s tired – with that kind of behavior, Hashem says, “I want you to work on Shabbos.”

Now, you have to know that this tremendous *dveikus*, this *bris* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu made with us over Shabbos, is a special *madreigah*. What does that mean?

Generally, how do we relate to Hashem? ‘מה ה' שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה אותו’ ראשית חכמה יראה ה. That’s where it starts. *Yiras Hashem* is where things begin.

ALL WEEK, YIRAH; SHABBOS IS AHAVAH

But you have to know that just like Elul is *rachamim*, *kulo rachamim* and a *darga* of *chessed she’ein kemoso*, you have to know, *zogt de Vilna Gaon*, Shabbos is unique that it relates to *ahavas Hashem*. The *kiyum* of Shabbos, the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of Shabbos has to do with *ahavas Hashem*. That is the *ratzon* of Hashem. The Vilna Gaon says in *Parshas Vaeschanan* in Kol Eliyahu, that the *Aseres Hadibros* are alluded to in the first parshah of Kerias Shema. He enumerates where the *Aseres Hadibros* is alluded to in each word. He says, you know where the fourth *dibur* which is *זכור את יום השבת* is alluded to? In the words of *ve’ahavta*. That’s where it is. He says, *ve’ahavta* corresponds to *זכור את יום השבת*. Why is that? He says, because the main relationship during the *yemos nachol* is *yirah*. But Shabbos is a *darga* of *ahavah*.

That’s why we find in the *tefillos* of Shabbos something that we don’t find in the *tefillos* of *chol*. We mention *באהבה וברצון הנחילו*. We mention that in the *kiddush*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us the Shabbos out of tremendous love. When is the last time a person looked at Shabbos as a gift of love from Hashem? When you love somebody and you want to interact with somebody, there are two things you can do. I can give you something and I could say, “Go enjoy it.” Or, I could say, “I’m giving you a gift of love that I want to spend time with you. I want to be together with you.” It’s also a gift of love.

A person has to understand that Shabbos is *באהבה וברצון הנחילו*.

Now, R’ Shimshon Refael Hirsch (1808-1888) in his unique, inimitable way, states that the *chiluk* between Shabbos and other *yomim tovim* is as follows. All the *simchos* of the *regalim* are Hakadosh Baruch Hu giving us specific *matanos* for us to enjoy, to grow from. Like the *matanah* of *cheirus*, or of Hakadosh

Baruch Hu giving us Torah. There is the *chag ha'asif*. But he says Shabbos is not *talui* on anything or any episode. It is dedicated just for us to be *masur* (giving oneself over) to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That's the whole gift of Shabbos. Hashem said, "I'm freeing you from everything, for one purpose. Give yourself to me." And no other *machshavah* is *masiach* a person's *da'as*.

In his words, *בשבת, האהבה בטהרה ממלאת את לבינו בשבת*, love in its purest form fills our hearts on Shabbos.

We have to start looking at Shabbos this way. The problem is we are so far away from this concept. We have been conditioned to think Shabbos is just for me. We just struggle with not doing things we like to do; don't put on lights, don't switch on the radio, the cellphone, don't go here, don't go there. It's all about the don'ts, the *morah* of Shabbos. But the goal of Shabbos is *ahavah*. That's why Shabbos was given. We have to change our way of thinking.

The *gemara* (Shabbos 10b, Beitzta 16a) says in a number of places, *amar rav*, someone who gives a *matanah* to his friend, he needs to notify him, *צריך, שמידי באה לו*, it says in the *passuk*, *לדעת כי אני ה' מקדשכם*, להודיעו שנאמר, By Shabbos it says, "I am giving you the Shabbos to know that I am *mekadesh* you." The *gemara* says, *אמר, למתנה טובה יש לי בבית גזי ושבת שמה*, *ולו*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe Rabeinu, *ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל*, its name is Shabbos, go and notify them.

THE GIFT OF SHABBOS

So Rashi says the following. Rashi says, why do you have to tell it to them? *שמידו באה לו*, *שצריך להודיעו*, you need to tell the person who is receiving the gift, *שאתה אתה הנותן*, that you are the giver of the gift, *כי יהא אוהבו*, because with this he will end up loving you. We have to realize Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us the *matanah* of Shabbos so that we should dedicate this day to loving Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That's why on Shabbos, even though it is the *techilah* of the *mikra'ei kodesh*, there are no *mitzvos maasiyos* on Shabbos, unlike on Pesach, Sukkos, etc, because the whole idea of Shabbos is to be *masur* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Now you understand what my Zeide used to always say, all the time, *mamash* every Shabbos. He would thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu for this tremendous gift. What would he emphasize? He would say, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu could have made us fast every single Shabbos. Shabbos should have been a day of complete fasting. It should be *אין נפשתיכם* just like Yom Kippur. You should have no *shaychus* to *olam hazeh*, no *shaychus* at all to *chumriyos* and your whole *shaychus* should be just with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, because that is the reason Hashem gave you this day off. But instead of that, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'You know what? I'm giving you *mamash seudas melachim*.' Unbelievable. *Mit kol tuv*. All kinds of things, *basar vedagim vechol matamim*."

You have to realize, my Zeide used to say, "The purpose is to remember Hashem. To remember *השבת* *זכור את יום השבת*."

So therefore, we have to feel somewhat on Shabbos that, "I'm having this *seudah* because Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants me to remember Him." So it's not that the learning on Shabbos or the *oneg* of Shabbos is a *tafkid* in of itself. It's independent. No. We are supposed to remember Shabbos and connect with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Now, if you remember Shabbos, and you think, “Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I’m remembering today is Shabbos,” you’re fulfilling a *mitzvah deoreisa* of זכור את יום השבת. And you have to know, *kadmonim* write a very interesting thing, that on Shabbos, what is *meorer* a person to become attached to his *ruchniyus*?

So they say like this. On a weekday, when a person is living in *yemei hamaaseh*, the thing that elevates a person is his *tefillah*. The three *tefillos bayom* were made to be waystations where a person gets a fill up on ‘gas,’ he tops it off, and he gets connected with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And that *hisorerus* is what keeps a person going for the day. But on Shabbos it’s just remembering that it’s Shabbos and plugging into Shabbos which has a power to give a person a *dveikus* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and a *hiskarvus* comparable to the *tefillos* that we have during the week.

So therefore, rabbosai, let’s make this our *avodah* this Shabbos. As we’re getting close to Rosh Hashanah, I have explained to you that one of the aspects of Elul is *yemei hachanah*, and one of the *hachanos* for Rosh Hashanah is to prepare yourself to be *omed lifnei Hashem*, because whether you are *omed lifnei Hashem* all year or not, on Rosh Hashanah every one of us comes before Hashem *kivnei marom*. We all get our moment before Hashem specifically to be judged. So you have to train yourself to be *omed lifnei Hashem*. Rosh Hashanah is a serious time, so let us practice being *omed lifnei Hashem* or *yoshev lifnei Hashem* on Shabbos, *mitoch ahavah*.

INDEBTED TO HASHEM

That is the concept of being *modeh* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. People want to know, why do you have to say טוב להיות לה? Why is Shabbos the day of being *modeh* to Hashem? We saw a Rashi in Sotah, What does *hodayah* mean? *Hodayah* means *dveikus*, that’s what *hodayah* means. When you are *modeh* to somebody, you feel indebted to that person. You feel subjugated. That makes you *davuk*. That’s what מודים אחרנו לך means. Hashem, we feel *davuk* to You. A person has to feel that he is *davuk* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

How do you feel *davuk* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu? On Shabbos, Hashem wants it to be *mitoch ahavah*. That’s what Hashem wants. So what do we do? We think about all the wonderful *chassadim* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us during this week. It’s not just *stam* an *avodah* of *hoda’ah*. It’s not just to remember and not be a simple ingrate. It’s much more than that. The concept of being *modeh* on Shabbos is that a person should feel that Hashem has done wonderful *chassadim* for me and every time I think about it, I am very, very indebted to Him.

If somebody does me a very big *chessed*, shouldn’t I be indebted to them? I’m very indebted to them and I feel a *hiskarvus* to them. So the same thing has to be with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, to give *hodayah* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

At any time, just think: “Hashem, today is Shabbos. It’s a day you gave us with love.” You’ll be *nisorer* somewhat and then you’ll have an *aliyah leShabbos*. Number one, you’ll have a tremendous *kiyum* of Shabbos. You’ll get a taste of Shabbos. And besides that, it will be a tremendous preparation for being *omed lifnei Hashem* on Rosh Hashanah, *bezras Hashem*.

IN SUMMARY

The descendants of Amon and Moav may never enter the kahal Hashem. This is apparently because they did not offer bread and water to the Yidden when we came out of Mitzrayim. However, the extra word - *davar* - in the passuk indicates that Amon and Moav did not offer a kind word. The lack of care and concern to the fledgling nation that was wandering in the desert was tantamount to causing a deficiency in their sustenance. For this, they are forever excluded from Am Yisrael. We learn from this the great importance of a kind word. Examples of this are: Welcoming a new person in the kehillah, while thinking more about their needs than your initial discomfort, bringing joy to another person, making sure the basic needs of another person are being taken care of honorably, and smiling at others, especially when many people are stressed and serious-looking. This week (*bli neder*), I will find opportunities for sharing a kind word with another person, such as by initiating a *chessed* to a newcomer, smiling at other people, and doing acts that bring joy into people's *avodas Hashem*.

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