

אלשיך, giving קטן וגדול נשם הוא ועבד חפשי מאדניו: (3:19) איוב - A comparison to small and great; to an עבד and to his master. What he is teaching is that when the pasuk says ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם ושטריתכם, these are all titles of glory and honor. All of these titles - the ראש, the leader of the community, the head of the ציבור or even a ראש ישיבה - all of these are עולם הזה terms. This is the external appearance that we are able to see is. However, to הקדוש ברוך הוא, these significances may be meaningless. And when you are standing לפני ה' אלקיכם, it's כל איש ישראל - Each person has his own merit in הקדוש ברוך הוא's eyes, separate and apart and totally unrelated to what we see here in עולם הזה. As he says on the pasuk in איוב, someone who's a small man here may be a great man there, and similarly, someone who's as low as an עבד may even be more free, have more freedom, than the אדון, his master.

R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa brings out this idea in a striking way. He says that from this pasuk we should learn that no matter what we have accomplished in this world, we should not be מחזיק טובה to ourselves. We should not be proud of ourselves. We should not think that because people call someone a צדיק or a תלמיד חכם that he really is one, or that he should see himself that way. Perhaps he is, but he should not think of himself that way. And this was exactly the approach of משה רבינו. In עולם האמת the measures may be completely different.

He gives a fascinating example. What is the הלכה by שפיכות דמים, one of the עבירות המורות? It is ייהרג. If someone is told, חס ושלום, "Kill this person or I will kill you," he must allow himself to be killed rather than murder his fellow. Why? Because, as the Gemara in Pesachim (25b) says: מאי חזית דדמא חשיב? why do you assume your blood is redder than his? How do you know you are more חשוב? Perhaps that person is greater than you.

Now imagine the example he brings. Someone comes to the גדול הדור, a person whose name is known throughout the world, שמו מפורסם בכל העולם. And he is told to kill a child with Down syndrome, or a garbage collector, or some other Jew who appears not to be on his מדרגה. Even in such an extreme example, the halacha says he cannot do it. Why? Because perhaps, בעיני שמים, that person's blood is redder than his.

In שמים they know the truth. They know each person's real standing. It doesn't matter what people say about you or think about you. A person must know for himself that he is just one regular Jew in ישראל. Never think of yourself as more than that.

And the best example is משה רבינו, עניו מכל האדם. He never thought of himself as anything. He davened to Hashem like a פשוט person to enter ארץ ישראל. This shows us that the scales in שמים are not the same as ours.

A very clear and simple example, but expressed so beautifully that I wanted to share it with you. We must think less of ourselves and more of the others around us, always assuming that we are not on their מדרגה.

