

Toldot Shimshon

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Published Livorno 1776*

Chapter III – Mishnah 13

רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר, המחלל את הקדושים, והמבזה את המועדות, והמלבין פני חבירו ברבים, והמפר בריתו של אברהם אבינו, והמגלה פנים בתורה שלא כהלכה, אף על פי שיש בידו תורה ומעשים טובים, אין לו חלק לעולם הבא.

Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in said: [Regarding] one who profanes consecrated [items]; and one who treats the Festivals with contempt; and one who causes his fellow's face to blush in public; and one who breaches the covenant of our father Abraham; and revealing aspects of the Torah that are not in accordance with halacha—even though he has to his credit [knowledge of the] Torah and good deeds, he has no share in the World-to-Come.

מאמר הפנא "הליכות עולם לו", בפרק י"א דסנהדרין, דבר אחר, "פי דבריה בזה", זה המגלה פנים בתורה. "ואת-מצותו הפר", זה המפר ברית בשר. "הפרת בעולם הזה", "תפרת" לעולם הבא. מכאן אמר רבי אלעזר המודעי, "המחלל את הקדושים, והמבזה את המועדות, . . . והמפר" וכו', אף על פי שיש בידו תורה ומעשים טובים, אין לו חלק לעולם הבא. והקשו המפרשים מהו "מכאן" אמר רבי אלעזר המודעי, והיא רמיזי בקראי אלו השלושה דברים. ותירוציהם דחוקים.

Regarding the above statement of the Tanna, Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in, **“His ways are eternal.”¹ In the 11th chapter of tractate Sanhedrin, we read:**

[The Mishnah teaches that those who have no share in the World-to-Come include] one who says: The Torah is not from Heaven.

The sages taught [in a *Baraita* that with regard to the verse]: “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned and His commandment that was violated, that person shall surely be cut off [הפרת תפרת] [*hikaret tikaret*]; guilt will be upon him,”² this is one who says: The Torah is not from Heaven.

Alternatively, “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned,” [this is referring to] an Epicurean.

Alternatively, “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned,” [this refers to] **revealing aspects of the Torah** [that are not in accordance with halacha]. **“And His commandment that was violated,”** [this refers to] **breaching the covenant of the flesh**, i.e., circumcision. **“That person shall be cut off,”** [this

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¹ Habakkuk 3:6.

² Num. 15:31.

refers to being cut off] **from this world**. “Surely,”³ [this refers to being cut off] **from the World-to-Come**.

From here, Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in says: “[Regarding] **one who profanes consecrated [items]; and one who treats the Festivals with contempt; and one who breaches** the covenant of our father Abraham; and one who reveals aspects of the Torah that are not in accordance with halacha; and one who causes his fellow’s face to blush in public—even though he has to his credit [knowledge of the] Torah and good deeds, he has no share in the World-to-Come.

- Sanhedrin 99a

The commentators⁴ ask, what is the meaning of the Gemara saying, “From here, Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in said,” and where are these three things hinted at in the verses? I.e., Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in lists five types of people. Sanhedrin states that Num. 15:31 is the source for two of them, viz, being contemptuous toward the Torah by teaching aspects of it in a manner that departs from the halacha, and breaching the covenant of circumcision. What is the source for the other three things that Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in teaches: profaning consecrated things, despising the Festivals, and embarrassing another? **Their solutions are difficult.**

וַיֵּשׁ לומר, שְׂרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַרְגִישׁ [קוֹשֵׁיָא] בְּדַבְרֵי תַנָּא קַמָּא, שֶׁהֵבִיא פֶרֶת עַל הַמְגִלָּה פְּנִים בַּתּוֹרָה, מִיִּיתוֹר הַכְּתוּב "כִּי דְבַר-ה' בְּזָה". וְהֵלֵא לֹא מְצִינּוּ בְּכָל הַתּוֹרָה כּוֹלָה שְׂיִתְחַיֵּיב הָאָדָם פֶּרֶת, אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן הָיָה מְפֹרֵשׁ בְּהֶדְיָא. וְצָרִיד לומר, שֶׁהוֹאִיל שֶׁסָּמָךְ הַכְּתוּב יִיתוֹר זֶה לְעִנְיָן הַעוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, וְכִבֵּר יִדְעֵנוּ שֶׁהַמּוֹדָה עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, הָרִי הוּא פְּכוּפֵר בְּכָל הַתּוֹרָה כּוֹלָה, שֶׁפִּיר מְצִינּוּ לְמִימֵר שְׂמִי שְׂכּוֹפֵר בַּתּוֹרָה, הָרִי הוּא פְּכוּבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה. וְכֵן נִרְאֶה מִדְּבַר הַשְּׁלַחֵן עֲרוּד יוֹרָה דְעָה סִימָן קי"ט סְעִיף ז', שְׂמִי שֶׁאִינּוּ מְאָמִין בְּדַבְרֵי רַבּוֹתֵינוּ ז"ל, הָרִי הוּא פְּכוּבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה. וְזֶה שֶׁמְגִלָּה פְּנִים, הָרִי הוּא פּוֹפֵר בְּאֻמִּיתוֹת הַתּוֹרָה וְהַפִּירוֹשׁ שֶׁל רַבּוֹתֵינוּ ז"ל, לְכֵן יֵשׁ לוֹ פֶּרֶת פְּכוּבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, וְנִתְרַבָּה מִ-"כִּי דְבַר-ה' בְּזָה". וְאָמַר אַחֲרָיו "הַפֶּרֶת תִּפְרָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא עוֹנָה בָּהּ", דְּמִשְׁמַע "עוֹנָה בָּהּ" לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְכִמוֹ שֶׁפִּירֵשׁ ז"ל.

It can be said that Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in felt a difficulty⁵ in the words of Tanna Kama, i.e., the source of the *Baraita* presented in Sanhedrin 99a, who brought a penalty of *karet* for one who reveals aspects of the Torah that are not in accordance with halacha. He brought this from the apparently redundant Scripture, “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned and His commandment that was violated.” But haven’t we found that in the entire Torah, a person only receives *karet* if it is explained explicitly? It needs to be said, that since this redundant Scripture relates to a matter of one who worships idolatry, and we already know that one who acknowledges idolatry is like one who denies the entire Torah,⁶ it is fine

³ The Hebrew text of the Scripture reads תִּפְרָת תִּפְרָת [hicaret ticaret], essentially a doubling of the verbal form “to cut off,” first in the past tense and then in the future tense. Such a doubling typically occurs to show an emphasis, and so it is rendered in English “shall surely be cut off.” The punishment of *karet* is given at the hand of Heaven, and could entail dying young, or dying without children, or the soul being spiritually cut off from the Jewish people after death.

⁴ See the commentaries of Rashi, the Maharsha, and the Maharal on Sanhedrin 99a.

⁵ The first edition reads ק"י, typically an acronym for קל וחומר [a fortiori]. However, this was likely a mistake for ק"י, an abbreviation for קושיא [difficulty].

⁶ Horayot 8a: “Which is the mitzvah that is the equivalent of all the mitzvot? You must say: It is [the prohibition against] idol worship.” Sifrei 111:1.

that we say that one who denies the Torah is like one who worships idolatry. It also appears from the words of the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah, siman 119, se'if 7, that one who does not believe in the words of our rabbis, of blessed memory, is like one who worships idolatry. This is one who reveals aspects of the Torah not in accordance with the halacha: he is denying the truth of the Torah and the explanation of our rabbis, of blessed memory. Therefore, he receives *karet* as one who worships idolatry, and this is expounded from the text, “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned.” Afterward, [Scripture] said, “that person shall surely be cut off, guilt will be upon him.” “Guilt will be upon him” means for the World-to-Come, as the [rabbis] of blessed memory explained.

ומכאן מצא מקום רבי אלעזר המודעי להביא אף שלושה דברים שיש בהם שמץ עבודה זרה, וכלהו נפקו מ"פי דבריה' בנה", דומיא למאי דאמרינו בעלמא, מפדי שקולים הם ונבאו שניהם, דהי מיניהו מפקת. תדא, המסלל את הקדשים. ולמה האיש הזה מסלל הקדשים, יותר משאר מצות. וצריך לומר, שאיסור הקדשים קל בעיניו, לפי שעיקר טעם הקרבנות שצינונו הקב"ה, הוא להרחיקנו מן העבודה זרה, כמו שפיתבו המפרשים, וקרא קא צנוח "ולא יזבחו עוד את זבחתיהם לשעירם אשר הם זנים אחריהם", ומשום הכי החמיר כל כך שלא לשחוט בחוץ. ולפי שאליהו התיר לשחוט ולהקריב לשמים חוץ למקדש, אפשר שיעלה בדעתו לסלל את הקדשים. וכינו שמסלל קדשי שמים, אם כן הוא משנה אותם לזבחי עבודה זרה, והוא בכלל "פי דבריה' בנה" האמור בעבודה זרה.

From here, Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in found room to also bring three things that have a trace of idolatry, and thus all of them issued from the same verse, “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned.” This is similar to what is said generally, “Since [both interpretations] are of equal [validity], let both of them come [and be derived from the verse], as which of them will you exclude?”⁷

First, “one who profanes consecrated [items].” Why would this person profane consecrated [items], more than violating other commandments? It's necessary to say, that the prohibition against profaning consecrated [items] is insignificant in his eyes, because the principal reason of the sacrifices that the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded us, is to distance us from idolatry. This is as the commentators wrote,⁸ which the verse explicitly refers to, “and that they may offer their sacrifices no more to the goat-demons after whom they stray.”⁹ Because of this, [the Torah] was very strict that [people] not slaughter consecrated animals outside the Temple.¹⁰

The *Toldot Shimshon* presents another possible reason why a person might profane consecrated items. Because Elijah permitted slaughtering and bringing a sacrifice to Heaven outside the Temple,¹¹ it's possible that it might have occurred to [this person] to profane consecrated [items]. Then, since he profaned [items] consecrated to the Heavens, if so, he equated them to the sacrifices of idolatry, and he is in the category of “Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned,” that is spoken of regarding idolatry.

⁷ Bava Kamma 3a.

⁸ Rambam, *Moreh Nevuchim* III:32.

⁹ Lev. 17:7.

¹⁰ Avodah Zarah 51a–b; *Mishneh Torah*, Firstlings 2:18; *Mishneh Torah*, Sacrificial Procedure 18:16.

¹¹ I Kings 18:23 ff.

This is a degradation of the [Divine] King, for man is made in His image and the Israelites are His children. **This is a parable of twin brothers** who closely resembled each other: one became king and the other was arrested for robbery and was hanged. Whoever saw him on the gallows thought that the king was hanged.

- Rashi on Deut. 21:23

Also, as we learned in the 6th chapter of tractate Sanhedrin:

Rabbi Meir said: [The verse, “for a hanged body is an affront [קללת] [kilelat] to G-d” can be understood as:] **When a man suffers**, what expression does the Shechina use? I am distressed [קלני] [kallani] about My head, I am distressed about My arm.”

- Sanhedrin 46a

ועוד, שרבי אלעזר המודעי היה בזמן חרבן בית שני, שנהרג חמשים וששים שנה אחר פו, כדאיתא בספר יוחסין, ובנדאי שזכותו הגדול היה לו לעבד הפורענות, כמו שקמב הרב גאלנטי על פסוק "שרים בידם נתלו". ולא הועיל זכותו, לפי שבגני דורו היו רשעים ופושעים, כדכתיב "ויהיו מלעבים במלאכי האלהים ובזוים דבריו ומתעתעים בגבאי עד עלות חמת־יהנה בעמו עד־לאין מרפא".

Also, Rabbi Elazar from Modi'in lived at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, for he was killed 52 years afterward, as is brought in *Sefer Yochasin*, which relates that he was an uncle of Bar Kochba.¹⁸ Certainly his great merit had delayed retribution, as Rav Galanti wrote¹⁹ on the verse, “Princes have been hanged by them.”²⁰ The prayers of Rabbi Elazar from Modi'in protected Beitar from Hadrian's siege for three years. But his merit didn't avail him, for the people of his generation were wicked and criminal, as it is written, “But they mocked the messengers of G-d and spurned His words and taunted His prophets until the wrath of the L-rd against His people grew beyond remedy.”²¹ Thus, he was falsely accused of wanting to make peace with the Romans, and his nephew Bar Kochba kicked him, killing him. This was on Tisha B'Av, and Beitar fell to the Romans the same day.

נקרוב לומר, שהיו פושעים בשלושה דברים אלו ממש, ש"ויהיו מלעבים במלאכי האלהים", הוא נגד "המלכין פני חברו" וכו', והמלאכים הם המלאכים השומרים את הפנים של האדם, ועליהם נאמר "הכמת אדם תאיר פניו", כגודע. ועוד, כי הצדיקים נקראו מלאכים, והנעלבים ואינם עולבים, עליהם אמר הפתוב "ואהביו" וכו', ואם הם אוהבי ה', בנדאי שהם צדיקים. "ובזוים דבריו", הוא נגד "המבזה את המועדות", שהרי הם מבזים דברי הקב"ה, דהיינו סמיכות הפסוקים הנ"ל. "ומתעתעים בגבאי", הוא נגד "המחלל את הקדשים", שהם מתעתעים במה שעשה אליהו שהיה נביא, בהר הפרמל.

We can hastily say that [the people in his generation] were wicked precisely in these three things, viz, that they mocked the messengers of G-d, and that they spurned His words, and that they taunted His prophets.

¹⁸ Rabbi Abraham Ben Samuel Zacuto (1452–c. 1515), *Sefer Yochasin* (“Book of Lineage”) (1498).

¹⁹ Avraham Galante, *Kol Bochim* (Prague 1621).

²⁰ Lam. 5:12.

²¹ II Chron. 36:16.

First, **“But they mocked the messengers of G-d,”** which corresponds to **“one who causes his fellow’s face to blush in public.”** The angels are the angels guarding the face of the man, and it is said about them, **“A man’s wisdom lights up his face,”**²² as is known.²³ Also, the righteous are called **“angels,”**²⁴ and they are called **“those who are insulted but do not insult back,** who act out of love and are joyful in suffering, **about them the verse says: ‘And they that love Him are as the sun going forth in its might’ (Judges 5:31).”**²⁵ **If they love G-d, then certainly they are righteous.**

Second, they **“spurned His words,”** this corresponds to **“one who treats the Festivals with contempt,”** for they spurned the words of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which refers to the adjacent verses mentioned above, viz, **“You shall not make molten gods for yourselves,”** and **“You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread.”**

Third, **“they taunted His prophets,”** which corresponds to **“one who profanes consecrated [items],”** that they taunt what Elijah did, for he was a prophet, on Mount Carmel.

וכינו שראה שארע זה בנימיו "עד עלות תמת־יהנה בעמו עד־לאין מרפא", טרח בקממתו למצוא רמז לדבר זה בתורה. וכששמע שהתנא הביא מפסוק "כי דברה' בזה" זה "המגלה פנים" וכו', גם הוא הוסיף לקרוש בו כנ"ל.

Since [Rabbi Elazar of Modi'in] saw that this happened in his days **“until the wrath of the L-rd against His people grew beyond remedy,”** he took pains in his wisdom to find a hint to this matter in the Torah. When he heard that the Tanna of the Baraita cited in Sanhedrin 99a brought from the verse **“Because it was the word of the L-rd that was spurned”** that this was **“revealing aspects of the Torah in a manner not in accordance with the halacha,”** then he also continued to derive from [the verse], adding the other three points, as discussed above.

ותנא ברישא "המחלל את הקדושים" וכו', לומר שזה שנים למפר בריתו וכו' ולמגלה פנים וכו'.

Also, he taught at the beginning, **“one who profanes consecrated [items],** and one who treats the Festivals with contempt,” to say that they are equal to one who has breached the covenant of Abraham, and to one who has revealed aspects of the Torah that are not in accordance with halacha, and to one who causes his fellow’s face to blush in public.

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²² Eccl. 8:1.

²³ Midrash Tehillim (Shocheh Tov) 17:8.

²⁴ Tanchuma, Vayikra, siman 1.

²⁵ Shabbat 88b; Gittin 36b.