

Fascinating INSIGHTS

י"ט תמוז תשפ"ו
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Two Jews, Whole Mitzva

The gemara¹ enlightens us by telling us that מחשבה טובה מצרפה למעשה, a good thought (if one entertains the thought of fulfilling a mitzva) is regarded as a good deed. The word מצרפה doesn't seem to be the right fit in this context as it literally means to combine. Why doesn't the gemara instead say מחשבה טובה נחשב כמעשה, a good thought is considered like a good deed?

R' Zusha of Anipoli explains that many times a Jew performs a mitzva with little or no thought. Consequently, in such a situation, the מחשבה, the proper thought and intent, is lacking. However we do have the מעשה, action. On the other hand, at times, a person has the מחשבה, thought, to do a good deed but for some reason he is unable to execute it. What comes out is that one Jew has the מחשבה while the other has the מעשה. Each one is like half a mitzva. What does Hashem do? He takes these two and matches them with each other. As a result, together it is a complete mitzva because when the two are combined we have a מחשבה and a מעשה. This is why the term מצרפה is employed here.



During the Holocaust, there were Jews who surrendered their lives almost instinctively, with little time to think, giving over their bodies in sanctification of Hashem's Name. Yet there were others who consciously declared, "Hashem, I am prepared to give even my soul for You," and despite their willingness for martyrdom, they survived. These two groups together completed the fullness of the mitzvah. The first embodied the physical sacrifice, *mesiras haguf*, while the second revealed the inner spiritual yearning and conscious devotion, *mesiras hanefesh*. Together, they formed a complete expression of sacrifice for Hashem, body and soul united in Kiddush Hashem.

¹ Kiddushin 40a.

² Brachos 54b.

³ Breishis 19:29.

⁴ Shaar Hagilgulim, Hakdama 36, p. 48a.

⁵ R' Emmanuel Chai Rikki in his commentary on Tehillim (Chazeh Tzion on Tehillim 31:6) points out on בידך אפקיד רוחי, in Your hand I shall entrust my spirit, You redeemed me, Hashem, G-d of truth, that the initials of the first three words form the name רבא. He explains that it is a

The Hidden Righteous

The gemara² says that one who sees לוט (Lot) says ברוך זוכר את הצדיקים, blessed are You who remembers the righteous (because Hashem remembered Avraham as it was in his merit that Hashem rescued Lot). R' Yochanan said that even at a time of His anger, He remembers the righteous, as it says ויזכר אלהים את אברהם וישלח את לוט, Hashem remembered Avraham so He sent Lot from amidst the upheaval (the destruction of Sodom).³ Lot was saved because of Avraham so why do we say upon seeing Lot ברוך זוכר את אברהם and not ברוך זוכר את הצדיקים?

The Arizal⁴ says that within Lot's soul were contained the souls of Rus Ha'moaviyah and Naamah Ha'amonis who descended from his two daughters. The soul of Rava was contained within Naamah Ha'amonis.⁵ R' Meir Bikayam⁶ explained based on this that Lot's salvation was not due to his own merit, but rather because the souls of Rus and Na'amah were destined to emerge from him, as well as the soul of Rava. Therefore, upon seeing him, one says ברוך זוכר את הצדיקים, meaning not Avraham, but rather the souls of the righteous that were hidden within Lot, whom Hashem remembered, and for whose sake He brought Lot out of the upheaval.

Accordingly, this is the explanation in ויזכר אלהים את אברהם וישלח את לוט מתוך ההפכה, that Hashem remembered that Avraham's soul, too, had been sunk in the depths of the kelipos, forces of impurity, and nevertheless Hashem brought him out from Terach. So too He sent Lot out from the upheaval, since the souls of Rus, Na'amah and Rava were destined to emerge from him as well.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of Rabbi Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years and received semichah from Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written thousands of Torah articles on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of eleven fascinating and popular books. His writings, many of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Spanish and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. His shiurim can be found on various websites including Kol Halashon's. Rabbi Alt lectures, writes and teaches, and is passionate about inspiring Jews of all levels of observance. He can be reached at yalt3285@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at +972 54 849 5217.

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tefillah for the spirit of Rava whose rooted in Lot, so that his soul should be entrusted in the keeping of the Hashem, and not held within the kelipah, shell of impurity, of the children of Ammon. This is the meaning of the continuation, פדיתה אותי, that this soul had already been sunk deep within the kelipos, with Lot, until Avraham brought it out from there.

⁶ In his sefer Meir Bas Ayin on Brachos 54b.