

אלו המתפארים עצמן בשקר בגדולות ונפלאות, וכאלו

Those Who Boast Falsely

THE TEACHING

Some boast falsely of great wonders (גדולות ונפלאות), as if nothing is beyond them, and some even lead the generation. Their power comes only from the great tzaddikim (צדיקים), true tzaddikim with a holy mouth (פה קדוש) who really do speak of great things, and whose holy speech carries two meanings, so the liars can twist it.

From simple tzaddikim, who serve Hashem plainly with Torah, prayer and good deeds, they draw no strength. And in truth the liars are even good for the true tzaddik.

MAIN POINTS

- The imitators copy the great tzaddikim's very words, "בְּקוֹר", "like a monkey." So with the prophets: Yirmiyahu prophesied "הִנְנִי שֹׁכֵר אֶת קֶשֶׁת עֵילָם" (ירמיה מ"ט:ל), "I will break the bow of Eilam", and the false prophet Chananya ben Azur used the same words, turned upside down.
- The simple tzaddikim (צדיקים פשוטים) don't speak of great things; they serve with simple, whole service, so the liars have no hold on them.
- The true tzaddik receives his holy speech from those who give charity (צדקה): "נְדָבוֹת פִּי רֵצָה נָא הִי" (תהלים קי"ט:קח), Charity is water: "הִהפְכִי הַצֹּר אֶגֶם מַיִם" (תהלים קי"ח:ה), it turns a heart of stone (לֵב אֶבֶן) into a soft heart.
- The tzaddik is "בְּכוֹר נוֹטֵל פִּי שְׁנַיִם" (דברים ל"ג:יז), and "בְּכוֹר נוֹטֵל פִּי שְׁנַיִם", "a firstborn takes a double portion": his holy words carry two meanings, and that is the liars' hold.
- Charity makes יִבְק: unity, blessing and holiness (יְחִיד, בְּרָכָה, קְדוּשָׁה), all said of water. When wicked people give it, that flow is spoiled and harms the tzaddik's speech. So it is good that they turn to the liars and give to them; the true tzaddik is spared.
- This is Rabbi Zeira's question: "מֵאִי טַעֲמָא גְמָלָא זֹטְרִי גְנוּבָתָהּ וְתוֹרִי אֲרִיכָא גְנוּבָתָהּ" (שבת ע"ז), "why is the camel's tail short and the ox's long?" The camel is the simple tzaddik, "כְּגִמְלָל עָלִי אִמּוֹ" (תהלים קלא:ב), "like a weaned child"; the tail, the false prophet, is short there. The ox is the great tzaddik, the firstborn ox.
- The camel "דְּאֶכְלִי קוֹצִי", eats thorns: the simple tzaddikim's constant Torah and prayer consume the thorns. The ox "דְּדִירִי בְּאֲגָמִי", lives in the marshes, the waters of charity, and must swat the gnats (בְּקִי), the spoiled יִבְק of the wicked's charity: its long tail, the liar, draws that charity away.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

A simple, honest service of Hashem is the safest path. There is nothing in it for falsehood to hold on to.

In the full shiur: 1. Where False Leaders Get Their Power · 2. The Camel and the Ox

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