

Provided he did not kneel by מודים

והוא דלא כרע במודים –

OVERVIEW

We are taught that if one does not kneel by מודים his spine turns into a snake seven years after his death. תוספות will explain why he deserves this punishment in particular, and what exactly is the nature of this punishment.

לפי שמצוה לכרוע וכי זקיף זקיף כחויא -

For it is a מצוה to kneel by מודים and when one straightens up, he should straighten up like a snake -

כדאשכחן ברב ששת במסכת ברכות (דף יב,ב ושם) -

As we find by ששת in רב ששת, that he would straighten up (after kneeling by מודים) like a snake,¹ therefore one who does not kneel by מודים and therefore is not זוקף כחויא is punished -

מדה כנגד מדה ונעשה נחש זהו עונשו שגנאי הוא לו במה שנעשה נחש:

Measure for measure and he becomes a snake; this is his punishment for it is shameful for him that he becomes a snake.²

גליון.

The following is a marginal addendum:

ויש מפרשים משום דאמרינן במדרש³ שיש עצם⁴ בשדרו של אדם -

And others explain (the punishment) since it is stated in the מדרש that there is a bone in the spine of the person -

שממנו נוצר לעתיד לבא ואותו עצם חזק וקשה כל כך שאין האש יכול לשורפו -

From which he will be created in the future (by תחיית המתים) and that bone is so strong and hard that (even) fire cannot burn it -

והשתא כשאותו עצם נעשה נחש אינו חי לעתיד לבא -

And now that this bone becomes a snake, he cannot live in the future (by תחיית המתים).⁵

¹ See בד"ה כחויא רש"י there who explains that a snake raises his head first, and then he rises slowly. A person should also raise himself in the same manner to show that the kneeling was not a burden.

² תוספות is explaining how is this a punishment, that his spine becomes a snake seven years after his death. תוספות answers that this causes him embarrassment. See 'Thinking it over'.

³ בראשית רבה כחג.

⁴ The מדרש refers to this bone as שדרה של.

⁵ The מפרשים were dissatisfied with תוספות interpretation for it is not a sufficient punishment. They maintain this is a more appropriate punishment.

rejects this interpretation:

ואין סברא לומר שיהא עונש גדול כל כך בשביל עון זה -

And it is illogical to assume that there should be such a severe punishment on account of this sin (of not kneeling by מודים) -

דהא כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא:

For all ישראל have a share הבא לעולם! This indicates that even people who did certain sins, yet they have a share הבא לעולם; why should this person who transgressed a minor transgression be denied ⁶!? עוה"ב

SUMMARY

After one kneels by מודים, he should rise like a snake; therefore one who disregarded and did not kneel by מודים, his spine will be tuned into a snake which will cause him embarrassment. [However it cannot mean that since his spine [including the לוז עצם] became a snake that he will not merit תחיית המתים (for such a minor transgression), since כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעוה"ב].

THINKING IT OVER

תוספות states that it is a גנאי for him that he becomes a נחש. Does תוספות mean that it is a גנאי for him after he passes away, or does it mean that since he is aware in his lifetime that he will turn into a נחש; this גנאי will assure that he will be כורע by מודים?

⁶ See נח"מ who explains that the משנה concludes חלק לעוה"ב mentioning various categories, but does not include מי שאינו כורע במודים; this proves that he has a חלק לעוה"ב.