



A Taste of Torah

An Angelic State

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

“Enmity and hatred, as well, are exceedingly difficult to avoid, for a person feels his shame very much, and is greatly distressed. Revenge is sweeter than honey, for it is the only means for him to achieve serenity... it is simple only for angels, who do not possess these (human) traits, not for those who dwell in houses of physical materialism...”

These words were written by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707-1746) (commonly referred to as the Ramchal, the acronym of his name), but they could have just as well been written by you or me. Anyone who has ever been egregiously wronged by another is familiar with the desire for revenge. This most basic human emotion, born of a desire to rectify a perceived imbalance, to ensure that justice is served, is felt most acutely when the perceived injustice is in regard to oneself.

Yet, strangely, the Rambam seems to say otherwise: “Even though one does not receive lashes (upon transgressing this sin), it is a very bad state of mind. Rather, it is proper for one to ignore all worldly matters, since for those of understanding, it is all vanities and foolishness, and they are not worthy of exacting revenge.” (Rambam, Yad Hachazakah, Hilchos De’os 7:7)

The Rambam tells us that anyone who truly gets the picture has no need for revenge. Yet the Ramchal says it is easy for nobody less than an angel.

Rabbi Matisyahu Salomon, Mashgiach of Beth Medrash Govoha, explains that the Rambam himself provides us with the answer. The Rambam states that those with “understanding” have no need to seek revenge, because they realize the foolishness of this world. One whose primary focus is the physical world is driven to avenge the injustices

perpetrated against him by others. On the other hand, an individual who is concerned with his spiritual state, and realizes that this world is merely a means to achieving spiritual greatness, is not affected by such things.

This is also clear from the verbiage utilized by the Ramchal. The Ramchal stated that the difficulty of overcoming the desire for revenge is for those who “dwell in houses of physical materialism...”. This terminology is a reference to the body, the physical self. The Ramchal is informing us that when one is trapped by his body, that is, his physical self, and is unable to rise above it, then the fire of revenge rages within him. But if one transcends his lower, physical self; if an individual achieves a level where his main existence is the spiritual world, not the materialistic world we must inhabit; when the pleasures and temptations of this world are recognized as vanities and foolishness; then one has indeed achieved an aspect of the angelic, and has no need to get mad or even.

This idea can be seen from the Sefer HaChinuch, as well. The Sefer HaChinuch states that one of the roots of the prohibition against revenge is that one must recognize that anything bad that occurs is not a result of the individual who perpetrated the evil, but rather because G-d willed it. There is, therefore, no reason to right the wrong, since he was merely carrying out G-d’s will.

Of course, the individual who perpetrated the crime will be brought to justice by G-d, as he had no business committing such an act against another. But just as one Jew cannot mete out justice against another for a sin that lies in the realm of man and G-d (short

Stories For The Soul

A Father’s Love

When I graduated Yeshiva high school, all I wanted was to have a good time. Regrettably, I fell in with a bad group of friends, and soon Shabbos and *kashrus* meant nothing to me.

My parents were devastated. Because of the bad influence I was having on my brothers, my father asked me to leave the house. When I moved out, I said some cruel and spiteful things. I can remember my father standing silently at the door, with my mother crying at his side.

I had no contact with my family for almost a year. I missed them a lot, but I foolishly thought that I would be seen as weak if I contacted them.

One morning, I was shocked to find my father outside my apartment building. He asked if we could talk. I only nodded and we walked to a corner coffee shop. He told me how much everyone missed me, and how I had been in their minds and hearts every second. He told me that he wasn’t there to lecture me. He just had one request. He wanted me to drive with him that afternoon to Monsey, NY, and say one chapter of *Tehillim* at the grave of a certain *tzaddik*. As far removed as I was from Judaism, I was still moved by his request.

I told him that I couldn’t go that day. In truth, I had plans to go with friends to Atlantic City. He took my hand in his and just looked at me with his tear-streaked face. I felt my own eyes begin to water, and I agreed.

We didn’t talk much during the trip. Ten minutes after we had arrived, we were on our way back. My father let me off in front of my apart-

Kollel Happenings

FATHERS & SONS

The Denver Community Kollel invites all fathers and sons to its inaugural Fathers & Sons program at the DAT Minyan, 6825 E Alameda Ave., on Lag Ba'omer, Sunday, April 28th. Shacharis begins at 8 am, followed by breakfast and father and sons learning until 9:30. There will be a story and great prizes raffled off at 9:30. There will also be ice cream sundaes! For more info, email rmf@denverkollel.org or call Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg at 732-779-1297.



A DEEPER LOOK

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issues, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed.



INSIDE THE ALEPH-BAIS

There is a unique fascination with the Hebrew language and the aleph-bet. Mystical sources explain that the letters of the aleph-bet are the building blocks of the whole world. Discover the world of the aleph-bet with Rabbi Heyman in this informative, dynamic class. For time and location, contact rmh@denverkollel.org.

Interpersonal Issues

The Laws of Lashon Hara (Slander)

The Torah forbids one to speak negatively about another. Such speech is referred to as lashon hara. One who speaks lashon hara transgresses a number of Scriptural prohibitions. Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, the Chofetz Chaim, lists in his work Chofetz Chaim tens of positive

and negative commandments that one could potentially transgress under various circumstances.

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Count D'Omer

Wendy from Westcliff, UK wrote:

When counting Sefirat HaOmer, some people say La'Omer and some say B'Omer. Which is right? Doesn't the fact that EVERYBODY says "Lag B'Omer" prove that "B'Omer" is correct and not "La'Omer?"

Dear Wendy,

Rabbi Nachman Bulman, shlita, explains that "everyone" calls the day "Lag B'Omer" because the main proponents of saying "B'Omer" are Rabbi Yitzchak Luria ~ the Arizal ~ and the Sephardi Kabbalists. Celebrating Lag B'Omer

with bonfires, music and dancing is largely rooted in their kabbalistic teachings and traditions.

Most poskim say that "La'Omer" is correct. However, both ways are valid, so there is no reason to change one's custom. In fact, even if you say "today is day such and such" ~ omitting any reference to the "Omer" ~ you fulfill the mitzva.

By the way, not everyone calls it "Lag B'Omer." The Shulchan Aruch refers to it as "Lag La'Omer."

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Stories for the Soul

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-ment building. He told me that no matter what, I was always going to be his son and that he would always love me.

The next morning I woke up to some shocking news. On the way back from Atlantic City, my friends were involved in a head-on collision with a tractor trailer. There were no survivors.

That evening, I just walked back into my parents' home, and was taken back with open arms and no questions asked.

Today, I am observant once again and have a son of my own. I try to be the kind of father to him, that my father was to me.

Two of Aharon's sons died while transgressing the Divine commandments in the Temple service. Though his love for them was great, he remained silent. One can never underestimate the love of a parent for a child.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

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of a Jewish court of law under specific circumstances), so, too, he has no right to administer justice for wrongs carried out against a fellow human - including himself.

This realization is inextricably bound up with achieving a life that focuses on

the spiritual. If a person's goal in life is to achieve material success, then it will be exceedingly difficult to focus on G-d's hand in his day-to-day affairs. If, however, one lives in this world to achieve spiritual greatness, it is simple to live on a level where one perceives G-d in all that occurs.

The Torah Weekly is made possible through a generous grant from the

Harry H. Beren Foundation of Lakewood, NJ, in memory of Harry H. Beren, z"l.

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