



A Taste of Torah

Truly Fair Judgement

By Rabbi Mordechai E. Fleisher

Listen here, mister: You committed a crime, you got caught, and now you're off to the slammer. But you deserve it, no? You did do something you shouldn't have done. You had your fun - now pay for it!

What's that you say? You have a wife and four children? Who will now lose their breadwinner? Their husband, their father? Sorry, pal, you should've thought of that before you did it.

I'm sure the above conversation, or something similar to it, has taken place many a time in courtrooms throughout the world. Or in the courtroom of the mind. And, truth be told, there is no way around it. If a person commits a crime, and is punished for it, others will be affected. And, in a Beis Din, a Jewish Court of Law, the same holds true: justice must be meted out, despite the collateral damage.

Hashem Himself, however, deals with us differently. In this week's parsha, Moshe teaches the Jewish People the Song of Ha'azinu. In it, he begins by praising Hashem. And one of the things he says is, "The Rock, perfect is His work, for all His ways are justice, a G-d, faithful, without iniquity." (Devarim 32:4) Rabbi Yisroel Salanter (1810-1883), the father of the Mussar Movement (which places an increased focus on improving one's character), is puzzled: Is this any great praise of Hashem? That He is just? Without iniquity? We would expect the same of any decent, upright human being! Certainly G-d Himself is just!

Rabbi Salanter explains that Hashem dispenses justice differently

than we mere mortals, because He takes everything into account. And I mean everything. If a person is deserving of Divine retribution due to his misdeeds, Hashem, before imposing the punishment, first examines who else will be affected. Is there an elderly neighbor who will now be without someone to shovel his snow? Will there be a child without a father to teach him Torah? Is there a grocer who will lose some income because this fellow buys lunch at his store every day? This, and all the myriad other ripple effects that will occur due to one individual's suffering, are taken into account. Hashem must decide whether all these people deserve to be affected. And if they don't, then Hashem has to find another plan of action. And sometimes, Hashem may decide to hold off on the punishment, because the time is not yet ripe for all the people involved to suffer. The needs of others may just tip the scales in favor of the sinner, and grant him an extension, a chance to make things right.

It may sound very complicated to us puny humans. And it is - unless you're an omnipotent G-d. He, and He alone, can determine how justice should be meted out without anybody being affected in a way they don't deserve. This is truly a tremendous acknowledgement of G-d's greatness.

There's another important lesson that we need to take out of Rabbi Salanter's words. As we approach Yom Kippur, the day when our fate for the coming year is sealed, we wonder what we can do to deserve another chance, another shot at making things right. Yes, we have failed in many areas, and we have been given numerous chances, but we still come

Stories For The Soul

'You Have a Father'

Bud Marshall had a small box in his bedroom where he kept several important mementos, including the medals he had earned for his service in WWII. These medals were very precious to him, particularly the Purple Heart and the Medal for Bravery at Okinawa.

His eight-year-old son, Mark, used to sneak into his father's room, pry open the box, and play with the medals, even though he wasn't supposed to.

One day Mark showed them to his friend Brian. A few days later Mark snuck into the room, opened the box and was horrified to discover that the medals were gone.

The next day in school, he saw Brian showing the medals to their classmates and telling them that his father had earned them.

Mark went right to his father and told him the whole story.

"I'm bigger than Brian, I can go beat him up and get back your medals. Should I do that?"

Mr. Marshall put his arm around Mark and said, "Brian lost his father when he was two years old. The reason he's doing this is because he wishes he had a father. You're lucky, you have a father. Let him keep the medals."

Rosh Hashana is the Day of Judgment. We hope that G-d judges us favorably and mercifully. We can merit a more favorable judgment if we judge others favorably and compassionately.

Adapted with permission from Shul-Week by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

Kollel Happenings

KNOW THY ENEMY TUES. AT AISH

Join Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers in studying the tactics and strategies of the Yetzer Hora, and develop your own battle plan for the greatest challenge of your life - the war against the Evil Inclination. Based on the classic work Chovos Halvevos. Tuesday mornings 7:55-8:25 at Aish. For information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at rmh@denverkollel.org or 303-820-2855.



THE LATE SHOW: THURS. NIGHT SEDER AT AISH

Join the Chevra for learning and cholent at Aish. Maariv is at 9:00 p.m. followed by learning and refreshments. For chavrusas or other information, contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at rmh@denverkollel.org or 303-820-2855



LIBERATED PARENTS, LIBERATED CHILDREN WITH MRS. AVIGAIL STEINHARTER

Join Mrs. Avigail Steinharter for "Liberated Parents, Liberated Children: Your Guide to a Happier Family." This six part series for moms integrates the timeless wisdom of the Torah with the approach of the world-renowned Dr. Haim Ginott. Classes will be held on Tues., Nov. 1, Nov. 8, Nov. 15, Nov. 22, Nov. 29, & Dec. 6 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.. Cost: \$80 for all six classes. For information, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org

Interpersonal Issues

Consenting to Wait

One who agrees to work for an employer who has the unfortunate reputation of not paying on time has effectively waived the mitzvah of bal tolin, for it is considered as if he agreed not to be paid on time.

If the employer is known not to pay until he makes an exact calculation for the wages, he is also exempt from

bal tolin until the calculation is made. However, if he is accustomed to paying part of the wages even prior to the final calculation, that amount would have to be paid on time.

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

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continued from front

to Hashem and beg for another year of life, a year of health and prosperity and happiness, a year that will be utilized to its fullest.

Our Torah leaders, both past and present, tell us that we need to make ourselves as indispensable as possible to as many people as possible. The more others are intertwined in a person's life,

the more chance he has of their needs outweighing the immediacy of the need for exacting justice.

So get involved in your local synagogue. Pledge some financial support to a worthy charity. Seek out those who need a listening ear, a friendly pat on the back, an arm around their shoulder. You may end up helping yourself more than them.

Ask the Rabbi

Order in the Court

Kevin from Johannesburg asked:

Dear Rabbi,

I understand that Rosh Hashana is the day of judgment, and Yom Kippur is the day of repentance and forgiveness. Shouldn't Yom Kippur be first? Wouldn't we be better off doing Teshuva (repentance) before Rosh Hashana, and go into Rosh Hashana to be judged, already having been forgiven?

Dear Kevin,

On Yom Kippur, Hashem showers the world with forgiveness: But just like a shower, if you want the cleansing effect, you have to get into the water!

'Getting into' Yom Kippur, however, is easier said than done. We earthlings

relate to things that are tangible, i.e., french fries and phone bills. Spiritual matters - Mitzvot, Olam Haba (the world to come), repentance, etc. - are harder for us to get excited about.

Therefore, we have Rosh Hashana first. On Rosh Hashana all our physical needs are determined - Will we live or will we die? Will we have money for the phone bill? Once we begin thinking about these issues, asking Hashem for a year of health and wealth, we can then hopefully go one step further, asking Hashem to enlighten us, forgive us, and to help us towards Teshuvah (returning to the way of Torah).

Sources:

Kochvei Ohr, Ma'amar 83.

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