



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

ז"ג אב תשע"ז – ואתחנן – 5th August 2017 - Volume 10 - Issue 4

## News This Week

### Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush this week sponsored by Mr Steve Mills in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father - Chayim Aruchim

### Holiday Time!

Tisha B'Av is behind us and the holiday season has begun we remind those in town to please support the Shul Minyonim.

### The Middah of Rachamim **Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)**

"And pays back His enemies in their lifetime to destroy them." — Devarim 7:10

Rashi explains this posuk to mean that HASHEM pays back His enemies in this world so that there will be nothing owing to them in the World to Come, and then they can be destroyed.

The Rishonim tell us that one of the worst punishments a person can possibly suffer is to be paid back his reward in this world. Since our stay on this planet is so fleeting, if a person is paid the reward for his good deeds in this world, rather than in the World to Come, it is to his eternal misfortune, and is something that HASHEM will only do in retribution for wickedness.

This concept is difficult to understand. If this person is an enemy of HASHEM, why does HASHEM have to pay him back any reward at all, whether in this world or the Next? Why not simply destroy him?

To better understand this question, it will be helpful to focus our perspective.

One of the manifestations of the immature person is a sense of entitlement. I am entitled to every benefit under the sun. I am entitled to life, health, and well-being. That is a given; that is the starting point. It's all coming to me. And even if I grant that you have done something for me, what have you done for me lately? This attitude of entitlement strains many relationships, and is one of the most difficult parts of our serving HASHEM.

The Chovos Ha'Levavos explains that one of the realities of life is that a person isn't entitled to anything. A person has to earn what he enjoys. We are the recipients of much good, not because we are entitled, not because anything is coming to us, but because HASHEM gives freely. HASHEM owes us nothing.

In reality, we are deeply indebted to HASHEM for everything that He does for us. If a person ever wanted to enter into judgment with HASHEM, comparing what HASHEM has given to him versus what he has given back, even the greatest tzaddik would fall woefully short and would have no reward waiting for him. However, as long as a person lives in accordance with the Torah, then what he receives in this world remains a gift, free to him without expectation of anything in return, and his reward remains intact in the World to Come.

Therefore, this question is powerful. If the Torah describes someone as an enemy of HASHEM, then HASHEM should simply act with strict justice, charge him for all he received in this world, and there would be no reward left. Why does HASHEM have to bother even paying him back with reward in this world?

The answer to this question lies in understanding why HASHEM created this world.

The first most basic understanding that a person must come to if he

wants to relate to HASHEM is that HASHEM lacks nothing. HASHEM is complete. When HASHEM created this world, it wasn't for Him. It was for us. It was to give of His good to others. We are the recipients of that good. When HASHEM put us on the planet, it was so that we could earn our reward in the World to Come – the ultimate good for man. There we can enjoy HASHEM's presence, there we can bask in His glory, and there we can enjoy the ultimate happiness that man can find. There is nothing in it for HASHEM. HASHEM is the Giver.

HASHEM also recognized that man will likely veer of course during his lifetime. According to strict judgment, man should then immediately lose his lease on life. The King of Kings created you and told you not to do something, but you had the audacity to violate His will! The punishment should be immediate and severe. However, man will inevitably sin, so the world cannot survive strict judgment. Therefore, HASHEM created the world with the system of rachamim. Now when man fails, the middah of rachamim calls out to forgive him and overlook what he has done. According to strict judgment, of course, he is completely guilty. But rachamim says, "There were mitigating factors that influenced him – environmental, social, and personal factors." And so, HASHEM has mercy.

This seems to be the answer to the question. The attribute of mercy is so powerful that it comes into play even with someone whom the Torah calls an enemy of HASHEM and who deserves to be eliminated. The middah still calls out in his defense. For that reason, if it could be, HASHEM feels obligated to at least pay back this wicked person in this world, as if to say, "Pay him back for whatever good he did so that I can be rid of him."

This concept has great relevance in our lives. Many times a person may feel, "What right do I have to ask HASHEM for help? After everything that HASHEM has showered upon me, do I serve Him as I should? Most of the time, I don't even feel grateful for what was given to me. How can I now have the audacity to ask HASHEM to intervene on my behalf?"

The answer to this dilemma can be found by asking one revealing

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת ואתחנן

Mincha  
Candle Lighting  
Seder HaLimud  
Shacharis  
סוף זמן ק"ש  
1st Mincha  
Ovos uBonim  
2nd Mincha  
3rd Mincha  
Rov's Shiur  
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos  
Sun  
Mon / Thurs  
Tue / Wed / Fri  
Mincha & Maariv  
Late Maariv

### שבת נחמו

7.15pm  
7.23pm-7.40pm  
8.40am  
9.00am  
9.22am  
2.00pm  
5.00pm  
6.00pm  
8.53pm  
Following  
9.58pm  
7.15am / 8.20am  
6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am  
6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am  
7.45pm  
10.00pm

question: Before I was created, what did I do to merit being created? By definition, the answer is nothing. I didn't exist; therefore, I couldn't merit anything. Once I come to grips with that concept, I now have a starting point to understand my relationship with HASHEM.

I am the recipient of good, not because I am entitled, not because it is coming to me, but because HASHEM gives freely, without holding back and without expecting anything in return.

As I stand here today, I may have sullied myself, and I am therefore not deserving of anything from HASHEM, but very little has changed since my birth. Before I was created, I wasn't worthy of anything. Yet HASHEM created me because He is giving. So too now, I am surely not deserving, but I can trust in the kindness of HASHEM to have mercy and provide for me.

Much like a rebellious child who knows that his father will always love him and that he can always turn to him, so too we are called children of HASHEM. We can always rely on that mercy.

For that reason, provided that we follow the Torah's system and sincerely attempt to serve HASHEM and improve ourselves, we can always rely on HASHEM, even if it is true that we aren't deserving.

## **Extreme Nechamah** **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)**

Nechamah is good. A double dose is even better.

A medrash relates the doubling of the consolation in the haftarah (nachamu, nachamu ami) to the transgressions that precipitated the destruction for which we need consoling. Chet chatah Yerushalayim, Yirmiyahu lamented. This doubled expression of chet called for the doubled destruction spoken of by Yeshaya: "for she has received double for all her sins." This in turn demanded a doubled consolation. If the medrash meant that Bnei Yisrael sinned prodigiously, it would have said that they "sinned much," not that they "sinned doubly." The medrash's choice of words points to a qualitative, not quantitative increase in the transgression.

Several approaches come to mind. Each teaches us something about the nature of the aveiros we often commit.

The Saba Kadisha of Slonim provides us with the first approach we will consider. Imagine, he says, a prince who grievously disregards his father's command. He is really guilty of two crimes. The first is the deed itself. Any action explicitly forbidden by the monarch is illegal, a crime by authority of the Crown. This level applies equally to all of the king's subjects. The second misdeed is the insult to the king's honor. When someone close to the king, when his own son flouts his will, he undermines his authority and sullies his prestige to an even greater extent than a stranger.

The double crime calls for a doubled penalty. If the son, however, repents his ways and is reconciled with his father, he feels relieved and unburdened, as would anyone convicted of a crime whose sentence was commuted. Additionally, the son feels the warmth of the mutual love between father and son that was jeopardized by his actions, and is now restored. He is consoled in two distinct ways.

Hashem's message of consolation in the aftermath of Tisha B'Av takes on a second level of meaning when we realize that it emphasizes the love between Father and child.

Another approach to the doubled nechamah is sourced in a teaching of the Besht that was often on the lips of the Bais Avraham. The Besht observed that every aveirah must be considered for both the illicit activity itself, and for the inner quality of that activity. At times, the apparent aveirah is quite serious, but it might lack the inner component of sin for a variety of reasons.

The Besht illustrated with a mashal. Travelling to the hinterland of his kingdom, a child from a simple village family threw a rock at him. On the face of things, the act is a serious incident of lese majeste, a terrible affront to the dignity of the crown. An enlightened and compassionate monarch, however, might quickly take note of the boy's failure to understand anything at all about kings and the honor due them.

Rather than execute the boy, the king takes him under wing, and educates him about the responsibilities and doings of the royal court. The more the boy learns about the king, his position, and the honor that he is justly accorded by others, the more he looks back with guilt and horror at his childish act of defiance. Ironically, that experience is so painful and guilt-producing that in the course of times he pays a stiff

price for his crime. His life is spared, but he hardly escapes punishment, at least in the form of the pain that comes along with his enlightenment. The Besht linked this mashal to the opening verse of a chapter in Tehilim: "G-d of vengeance, Hashem! G-d of vengeance – appear!" Sometimes, he explained, Hashem will reveal Himself to the sinner. As the evildoer comes to understand more about Whom he has sinned against, he is consumed with guilt and remorse. Hashem "avenges" the wrongdoing by "appearing" to the evildoer and educating him.

Hashem might treat someone this way when He knows that an otherwise serious aveirah lacks the inner rebellion and awareness that figure in the deeds of other sinners. The deed is there; the inner quality of aveirah is weak.

Far more people populate this group of sinners than might be thought. We can advance an argument that most of us are members of this group. One of Bilam's begrudging blessings of the Jewish people reads in part: "He perceived no iniquity in Yaakov. Hashem his G-d is with him." What brings these two thoughts together? Why are they mentioned in the same breath, in the same verse? The point may very well be that Jews make a mess of sinning. They can never seem to get their full complement of enjoyment out of their misdeeds!

At the very moment that they fall prey to their baser nature and decide to transgress some precept of the law, part of them already pines away in regret and shame. They fail miserably at turning their backs on their Creator. As they sin, they think of the terrible price they will have to pay in distancing themselves from their beloved Maker. Hashem thus sees no undiluted iniquity in Yaakov, because even when he sins, his G-d is very much "with him," filling him with guilt and prodding him to return. We now have a second approach to the doubled sin about which Yirmiyahu wrote. The transgressions that he observed in his countrymen fully contained both elements. They were serious crimes.

The people, unfortunately, could not claim a tepid and irresolute inner aveirah experience. The inner quality of the sin was intense. They knew quite well what they were doing. They committed their aveiros with their eyes open, unperturbed by the Shechinah that dwelled amongst them.

Yet another approach will yield a dividend of solving another mystery about the churban. The first beis hamikdash was destroyed because of the most serious transgressions – idolatry, illicit relations, and murder.<sup>8</sup> Yet this is not what Yirmiyahu tells us. "How was the land lost?... Through their foresaking My Torah." Which was it – violations of the three cardinal sins, or shortcomings in their commitment to Torah study? Or was it the desecration of Shabbos, which the same navi points to elsewhere?<sup>10</sup>

Once again, bifurcating the aveirah offers us insight – and a solution. Sins are not arbitrary. Each one causes a tear in the fabric of creation. Beyond this evil that is at the heart of the sin, a consequence of the sin can be equally onerous. Whenever we sin, we distance ourselves from HKBH. Sometimes, the reason for the seriousness of a given aveirah is that it moves us intolerably far from Him. Such is the case with the three cardinal sins. Their nature is to open a huge chasm between ourselves and our Creator.

In His mercy, Hashem has prepared the road back for us, even from the far reaches of the exile in which we place ourselves through our corruption. Indeed, the first beis hamikdash was destroyed because of the incidence of the three worst aveiros in halachah. They left us remote from His presence. Yet we were not without hope. From the distance, we could have chosen several well-charted paths of return.

Torah study is one of them. Through it, a Jew can return and cling once again to his heavenly Father. The kedushah and deveikus of Shabbos offers another modality of return. From the standpoint of missing options to correct our misdeeds then, the beis hamikdash was destroyed because we did not learn enough, and because we did not value Shabbos enough. Our sin was doubled – we committed it, and we failed to accept the Hand of G-d extended to lead us back.

All of these approaches – and several more that could be offered – remind us that aveirah is far more complex than we think. Complications and consequences, often unconsidered, are part of the bigger picture. Upon reconsideration, we should not be surprised that the consolation comes in such a generous portion. We need all that we can get.