

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



פרשת בהר-בחוקותי תשע"ה No. 32

Forgiving Another (I)

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

Not Paying Back

The **Torah** forbids one from taking revenge against another who wronged him. Why does the *Torah* forbid this? **Chazal** explain the rationale with a simple analogy: If a person were to cut himself accidentally, would he slap himself as a reprimand? Surely not! Similarly, if a person learns to consider his fellow *Yid* as part of himself, just like himself, he will not even think of acting vengefully.

(ירושלמי נדרים פ"ט ה"ד)

Sefer HaChinuch explains: A person must realize that all that happens to him, whether positive or negative, comes from *HaShem*. Therefore, when someone is treated badly, he should not have thoughts of taking revenge against the perpetrator, for ultimately, it is his own *aveiros* that brought this about.

(ס' החינוך מצוה רמ"א)

The **Raavad** clarifies that one who refuses to loan his tool, out of concern for the tool, is not guilty of revenge (*nekamah*). If, however, he does not lend something because he hates the other person (which in itself is prohibited), he also transgresses the prohibition against revenge.

(פ' הראב"ד לתו"כ פ' קדושים)

The Need to Forgive

Rava said: "If someone is forgiving, all his *aveiros* are forgiven." **Rashi** explains that since such a person is not so particular with the faults of others, *HaShem* is not so particular with him.

Rav Huna fell ill and **Rav Papa** visited him. Seeing his hopeless situation, he instructed those around him to begin preparing *tachrichin* (shrouds). Rav Huna, however, recovered, leaving Rav Papa quite embarrassed. When they questioned Rav Huna he told them that indeed he was about to die, but he heard *HaShem* say: "Since he is not particular with others, we will not be particular with him."

Conversely, if a person is unforgiving to those who anger him, the **Shelah HaKadosh** warns that the *malochim* will demand that he be repaid exactly, measure for measure.

(ראש השנה י"ז ע"א, של"ה שער אותיות עונה)

The **Rayatz of Lubavitch** once said that the title *chossid* describes one who overlooks wrongdoing done to him and forgives it. This level can be reached quickest with the study of *Chassidus*, which causes one's intellectual grasp of the concepts be put into practical *avodah*, until it affects the *middos* of the heart.

(סה"ש תרפ"ז ע' 174)

Responses to Insult

Our **Chachomim** teach: "Those who are insulted but do not insult in return, who hear their disgrace but do not retort, who act with love and who rejoice in their own suffering, – concerning them it is written that "Those who love Him shall be as the sun when it comes out in its might." That is, they will merit the revelation of the *Shechinah*.

(שבת פ"ח ע"ב)

Rebbi Elozor, the *tanna*, faithful to his task as the *parnas tzedoko* of his community, would always have guests visiting his home. Once upon, returning from the *beis midrash*, he asked his family what had occurred while he was out. They told him that the people whom they had just served had praised him highly. This left him unhappy. On another occasion, he was told that a group of guests, after being served food and drink, had spoken of him nastily. To this he cheerfully responded: "Now we've received a good reward!"

(ירושלמי פאה פ"ח ה"ו)

The **Ramak** would say that suffering from an insult provides the most effective atonement, more than can be attained by all other kinds of *teshuvah*. If people would realize this, they

would even ask others to insult and embarrass them.

(קול בוכים לר"א גאלאנטי)

The **Chida** relates a story which he personally heard from the **Or HaChayim HaKadosh, Reb Chaim Ben Atar**:

A wealthy man with powerful influence in the kingdom once insulted a *talmid chochom*. Fearing the possible repercussions, the *Or HaChayim* asked the *talmid chochom* to forgive the rich man.

He replied: "I did so on the spot, because the *Zohar* says that the *aveiros* of the *Yidden* are a burden for the wings of the *Shechinah*. I didn't want to burden *HaShem*, so I quickly forgave him."

The *Chida* was so pleased with this story that in his *seforim* he repeated it numerous times – "because it is precious to me, and it is a fundamental in *avodas HaShem*."

(דבש לפי מערכת ח')

In one letter, the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** directs a person who was embarrassed by another to undertake an additional measure of *zehirus*, vigilance, in his observance of *mitzvos*, because through him an *aveirah* was brought upon his friend.

(לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 598)

Consider This

Why are we inclined to take revenge? How will digesting the above mentioned concepts hold one back from wanting to take revenge?

Who stands to benefit from forgiving another?

Sparks of Greatness

Reb Aizik Homiler - כ"ו אייר

Reb Yitzchak Aizik of Homil was the *Rov* of Homil and one of the most famous and greatest *Chabad chassidim* ever to live. As a young man, he came to the **Baal HaTanya**, and after the *Rebbe's histalkus*, he became a *chossid* of the **Reb DovBer** and later the **Tzemach Tzeddek of Lubavitch**. He was a phenomenal *gaon* in *nigleh* and a *maskil* in *Chassidus*, and wrote several *seforim* in *Chassidus*, including *Chana Ariel* and *Shnei Hameoros*. Reb Aizik served as the *Rov* in Homil for 58 years, and passed away on the 26th of *Iyar*, 1857 (תר"ז).

In one letter Reb Aizik describes his intense yearning to recognize the oneness of *Hashem* and his journey toward reaching him:

"I exerted myself tremendously to comprehend this *emunah*, until finally, with the help of the *Rebbe's* son, [Reb DovBer], my understanding began to increase. However, I was unable to maintain this perception, and I would write many *tztelach* to the *Rebbe* begging him to explain the matter to me in a clear and lucid manner. The *Rebbe*, however, kept on pushing me off, causing me tremendous pain.

"Finally on one occasion, the *Rebbe* acquiesced and said he would recite *Chassidus* for me privately, and a crowd of about ten people gathered in the

room. Hearing the words of the *Rebbe*, I stood trembling, oblivious of whether it was night or day. As soon as the *Rebbe* finished speaking, a bright shining powerful *emunah* shot into my heart like an arrow, and I had a strong desire to run in the streets and shout out this great revelation, but for whatever reason, I decided against it.

"By *Hashem's* name, I tell you that I am not exaggerating even one bit..."

A simple wagon driver, who would drive people from Homil to Paritch, once approached Reb Aizik with a *shaaloh*, "I am a *kohen*; am I allowed to take a divorcee?" (He obviously knew that a *kohen* may not "take" a divorcee for marriage, but he was concerned that he may be prohibited from taking such a woman in his wagon as well). Reb Aizik went to a box of *seforim*, pulled out a *Smeh*, looked inside for fifteen minutes, and then turned to the man and said, "Where? To Paritch? Yes, you may."

The **Rayatz of Lubavitch** noted, "Fifteen minutes was a lot for Reb Aizik. During that time, he could have been learning in depth, but since one may not laugh at an *am haaretz* who asks a *shaaloh* (to avoid causing him to stumble on another occasion), Reb Aizik disregarded his time."

Library Sparks

The *Torah* portion of *Behar* contains the Biblical prohibition against usury: "Do not take from him any usury or increase, and you shall fear your G-d, that your brother may live with you." Immediately following this verse we are told: "I am the L-rd your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt...to be your G-d." Our Sages learned from the juxtaposition of these two verses that when a person accepts the prohibition against lending money with interest, it is as if he accepts the yoke of Heaven. Conversely one who throws off the restriction against usury, simultaneously throws off the yoke of Heaven as well.

What is so significant about usury that the Rabbis used it to illustrate the concept of subservience to G-d? How does charging interest, or refraining from doing so, express the relationship between man and G-d?

Collecting interest on money means making a profit without exerting oneself, at the expense of another person's labor. Once a person lends money to another, that money becomes the property of the borrower, even though he owes the amount to the one who lent it. A person who charges interest is therefore profiting from money which is not his, and is taking advantage of the fact that it once belonged to him.

By understanding this concept, we understand why avoiding usury is so crucial: G-d's goodness

and blessings are only bestowed as a direct result of our labor. Both physical and spiritual rewards are only attainable after much toil and effort. The 613 commandments of the *Torah* are practical expressions of this principle, each one a specific deed to be performed in order to help us reach a higher spiritual level.

But why is all this work necessary? Couldn't G-d, the source of all good, have bestowed that goodness upon us without the labor? The answer is that it is precisely because of G-d's goodness that He chose this system, for we can only truly appreciate that for which we have worked.

An undeserved gift is called "bread of shame," and provides neither joy nor satisfaction. But when a person works toward a goal and then receives his reward, the value of that gift is appreciated and his happiness is that much greater. That is why we are obligated to expend so much effort in our worship of G-d. Spirituality must be attained through hard work and not conferred as a gift.

The *mitzva* which best illustrates this principle is the prohibition against usury. When a person refrains from it, according to G-d's will, he confirms G-d's plan for the world, that profit may only be accrued as the result of man's work. A person who charges interest defies, with his behavior, this basic principle which is a foundation of the entire *Torah*.

Halacha Sparks

Purchasing from Yiddishe Businesses

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

Is there a halachic basis to give priority to patronizing Yiddishe businesses if a non-Jewish store is cheaper or more convenient?

Chazal derive from the *possuk*, "O'i konoi miyad amisecha," (or buy from the hand of your fellow) that one should give commercial priority to his *Yiddishe* brethren. This *halacha* is not mentioned in *Shulchan Aruch* and some *achronim*² argue that *Chazal* intended this merely as "proper advice". However numerous *poskim*³ cite it as a binding *halacha*.

Poskim also debate whether the law applies if the non-Jew sells for cheaper. The *Rama*⁴ holds that the *din* applies even when there is a significant price difference between the two and there will be a loss in buying from the *Yid*. Many⁵ *poskim* differentiate between a minimal price difference – where one should purchase from a *Yid*, and a significant price difference – where one need not.

According to those who permit in a case of a price difference, there is a further debate⁷ what constitutes a significant difference. Some say more than a sixth of the price (approx. 16%-20%) and others say that it depends on one's standard of living whether the amount is considered significant to that particular person⁸.

There is a difference⁹ between an individual purchasing for private use and buying merchandise to sell for a profit. Since the profit is the livelihood of the merchant he need not purchase from the *Yid* at a more expensive price.

If a *Yid* sells for the same price as a non-Jew and the only issue is a minimal inconvenience it is proper to purchase from the *Yid*¹⁰.

If a *Yiddishe* storeowner will be driven out of business and lose his livelihood, there is a greater obligation to support him based on the *mitzvah* of "vehechzakta bo", which requires one to ensure that another *Yid* has a livelihood so that he won't end up needing *tzedakah*¹¹. Therefore, if the customer can afford it, he is obligated to patronize this *Yid* despite the price difference.

1. ויקרא כה.יד. תורת כהנים בהר ריש פרשה ג.
2. מוסד על פסיקתא ויקרא כה. יד. קרבן אהרן על ת"כ שם, תורה תמימה ע"ה"פ ועוד.
3. בנוסף בשו"ת סי' י.
4. תשב"ץ ח"ג קנ"א, וראה במשפט שלום ריש סי' קפט. מנחת יצחק ח"ג קכ"ט, שו"ת עטרת פז ח"ג ח"מ י.
5. תלוי אי אמרין דרך בשיעור הפסד מרובה נפטר מלקנות מיהודי, ובשיעור הפ"מ גופא נחלקו הפוסקים אם יש שיעור כלל או הולכים בתר עשרו של אדם וכו', ואם יש שיעור מהו השיעור ואכ"מ. או אזלינן בתר תתות כמו לענין אונאה. במנח"י שם נשאר בצ"ל למעשה עיי"ש. כן ראיתי מובא משו"ת פסקי עוזיאל סי' מ"ח.
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