



FORGIVING ANOTHER (1)

NOT PAYING BACK

The Torah forbids one from taking revenge against another who wronged him.

Why does the Torah forbid revenge? *Chazal* explain the rationale by a simple analogy: If a person were to cut himself accidentally, would he slap his own hand as a reprimand?! Similarly, if a person learns to consider his fellow Yid as part of himself, just like his own hand, 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 treats him badly, he should not have thoughts of taking revenge, 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 his 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.

(פי' 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."

If, instead, a person is unforgiving to those who make him angry, 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 עננה)

At a *farbrengen* the Frieddiker Rebbe said that a *chossid* is one who overlooks wrongdoing done to him and forgives. This level can be reached only through translating *haskalah*, one's intellectual grasp of the concepts of *Chassidus*, into *avodah*, so that 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"ה ע"ב)

Rabi Elozor, the *tanna*, faithful to his task as the *parnas tzedoko* of his community, would always have guests visiting his home. Once, 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.

He cheerfully responded: "Now we've received a good reward!"

(ירושלמי פאה פ"ח ה"ו)

The Ramak would say that suffering from 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')

The Rebbe writes in a letter that the appropriate way to respond to a verbal attack is by acting as if it was not noticed.

In another letter, the 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.

(אג"ק ח"ב ע' ס"ב, לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 598)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why are we inclined to take revenge? How will digesting the abovementioned concepts hold one back from *wanting* to take revenge?
- Who stands to benefit from forgiving another?

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A WAY OF LIFE

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOWL

What is the din if genes of a predatory bird (which is not kosher) were inserted into an egg of a chicken, causing the hatched chick to exhibit predatory tendencies although it looks exactly like a chicken, possessing all the signs of a kosher bird? Is it kosher?

- In defining the kashrus of birds, the Torah lists all the non-kosher birds, but does not give us signs as to which birds are kosher, as it did with animals and fish. However the *chachomim* describe three physical signs shared by all kosher birds.
- There is a *machlokes* amongst the *rishonim* if these signs can be relied upon to rule a bird as kosher, or is a *mesorah* is also necessary (a tradition that this bird was customarily eaten). The ruling of the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema is (albeit with slight variances between them) that only species with a *mesorah* may be eaten.
- However if a bird possesses the kosher signs but displays predatory tendencies, then even according to those who rely on the kosher signs some say it is forbidden. The *Maharshal* regards the predatory tendencies as an abnormality and therefore permits the bird. The *Shach* (as explained by *meforshim*) writes that we must be concerned that perhaps the kosher signs are the irregularity, but truly the bird is not kosher.
- In our case where we can attribute the predatory tendencies to the genes that were inserted, there is no reason for concern. Therefore it is possible that all *poskim* would agree that we deem the bird as kosher, and that its predator traits are abnormal. However in practice it is proper to refrain from eating such a bird, since we find that the *Rema* was very stringent concerning the *kashrus* of birds.

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CURRENT EVENTS

ה' כסלו

MAHARSHA

Reb Shmuel Eliezer Halevi Eidels, known as the Maharsha, was born in the year ה'שט"ו (1555), in Krakow, Poland. He married the daughter of Mrs. Edel Lifschitz of Posen, and then moved to Posen and established a *yeshiva* there. For twenty years, all the expenses of the *yeshiva* were covered by his mother-in-law. In appreciation of her support, he adopted her name as his surname. After her death, he served as Rabbi in the prominent communities of Chelm, Lublin and Ostroh. He wrote the *Chiddushei Halachos*, a commentary on the Gemara, as well as an extensive commentary on the *aggados* of the Gemara, known as the *Chiddushei Aggados*, which reflect a wide knowledge of philosophy and *kabalah*. He passed away on the 5th of Kislev, ה'שצ"ב – 1631.



The Maharsha was loved and respected not only for his great learning, and sterling qualities of character. He was very modest, to the point that at first, he did not disclose the authorship of his commentaries. His house was always open for the needy, and his door is said to have had the following inscription, quoted from *sefer Iyov*: "No stranger shall stay outside overnight; my door is open for every guest."



Hundreds of *talmidim* flocked to the *yeshiva* of the Maharsha to learn from him, and soon the the *yeshiva* building was unable to contain everyone. The community decided to erect a new big building. On the day the corner stone was to be lain, a man approached the *shamash*, asking to buy the honor of laying the stone. He was willing to donate up to 500 gold coins, as long as his donation would remain a secret.

Sure enough, when the auction began, the *shamash* raised the bid until the anonymous donor won. Prior to the auction, the man had told the *shamash* that he wanted the honor to be given to the Maharsha. After the groundbreaking event, the Maharsha instructed the *shamash* to bring forth the donor who had bought him the honor. Upon meeting the Maharsha, the man said, "I am not such a wealthy man, but I have no children. I wanted to have the merit of supporting Torah, and therefore gave 500 coins, which is almost all my savings, for this purpose. Hearing this, the Maharsha *bentched* the man that in this merit he should have a son who would actually learn in the *yeshiva* his father had helped build. Sure enough, the bracha was fulfilled in its entirety.

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A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

THE REBBE'S CONDITION

The *chozer* Reb Yoel Kehan related:

"One *Shabbos*, an extremely wealthy individual drove up to *Seven Seventy* and said that he must see the Rebbe. He was told to wait until *Motzoei Shabbos*.

When he entered the Rebbe's room, he told the Rebbe that his daughter is extremely ill, and he wishes to ask for a *bracha*. He added that he is ready to pay ten thousand dollars for the *bracha* (an exceptionally large sum in those days, especially considering the limited budget of *Lubavitch*).

The Rebbe did not even address the offer, and said that his *bracha* is on the condition that he don *tefillin*, keeps *kashrus* and *Shabbos*. After increasing the sum a few times, and seeing that the Rebbe would not be moved, he agreed to the Rebbe's conditions. Within a short while the girl recovered.

The Rebbe then sent a message to all the *mosdos* not to accept any donation from this person, so he should not think that it was done for his money *chas v'sholom*."

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