



FORGIVING ANOTHER (2)

REPAYING WITH LOVE

The Midrash says: One must take a lesson in forgiveness from Avraham Avinu. When Avimelech took Sarah away he caused Avraham tremendous suffering; yet when Avimelech asked to be forgiven, he forgave him immediately. Moreover, he *davened* for the wellbeing of Avimelech and his family.

(מדרש הגדול וירא כ, ז)

The *Midrash* relates that when Yosef HaTzaddik was in the pit, his brother Shimon had him stoned. Nevertheless, when Shimon fell in his hands in Mitzrayim, he took good care of him and had him served the best delicacies. The *Zohar* writes that like Yosef, one should repay evil with good.

(ילקוט שמעוני וישב קמ"ב, תניא ספ"ב)

The *tanna* R. Abba was once sitting near the entrance of Lud and witnessed the following scene. A weary traveler sat down on a boulder protruding from the edge of a mountain, and fell asleep. As he was sleeping, a snake crept out and was making its way towards him, when suddenly another creature attacked the snake and killed it, saving the man's life.

When the man woke up, he walked away, and at that moment the protruding boulder broke off the mountain and tumbled down the cliff. R. Abba approached the man and said, "Tell me what special deed you have done to merit these two great miracles. They must have been *earned*."

The man replied, "When anyone wrongs me, I immediately make up with him. At any rate, I do not go to bed before forgiving him. I then try to be extra kind to them in the future."

R. Abba said: This man's actions are greater than those of Yosef, for this man forgave people who were not his brothers, on whom one is inclined to have mercy.

It is for this reason that before *krias shma al hamitah*, we recite *Ribbono shel Olam*, forgiving anyone who may have hurt us throughout the day.

(זהר מוקץ רא ע"ב, וראה מגילה כח ע"א)

The King of Spain respected R. Shmuel

HaNagid so highly that he appointed that brilliant and righteous talmid chacham his second in command. However, in the shadow of the king's palace stood a store belonging to a *goy* who envied the sage. Whenever he saw him passing by, he would go outside and curse him, but Reb Shmuel never paid any attention. Once, when Reb Shmuel was taking a walk with the king, the *goy* came out and, as usual, cursed him. The king was furious and commanded Reb Shmuel to cut off the storeowner's evil tongue.

After some investigation, Reb Shmuel found out that this *goy* was a pauper, so he began sending him money regularly, and this softened his heart. After some time, when Reb Shmuel again took a walk with the king, the *goy* came out and began to praise him. The king, who had not heard what the *goy* had called out, asked Reb Shmuel why he had not followed his instructions to cut off that man's tongue.

"I did do as you commanded," answered Reb Shmuel. "I cut off his bad tongue and replaced it with a good tongue..."

(כצאת השמש בגבורתו ע"ק)

When Reb Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, the author of *Tosfos Yom-Tov*, was chosen to be the *rov* of Prague, he instituted a fair system for collecting the tax which the government imposed. Previously, the wealthy citizens would unload the whole burden on their poorer townsmen and free themselves from the obligation. Little wonder, then, that they were angered by the new system, which required every individual to pay according to his means.

The most violent opponent of the *rov* was a magnate called Refael, who constantly contrived schemes to have him removed from his position. Since many of the king's courtiers owed him money, he offered to reduce their debt to him on condition that they help him execute his plan. He then asked two *lamdonim*, who were strongly opposed to the *rov*, to use excerpts from a *sefer* of his, to prove that he was harmful to the kingdom. Their libel was successful, but more severely than they had ever imagined: the *rov* was arrested and sentenced to death. In addition, it was decreed that all the Yidden be expelled from the city.

However, *Hashem* had already prepared the

cure for this calamity. During that time, the *rov's* son, Shmuel, who was studying in a *yeshiva* in Metz, saved the French ambassador's wife and son from death. Out of gratitude, the ambassador intervened and had Shmuel's father released, though he was forced to pay a fine that threw him into heavy debt. He fully forgave the individuals who had concocted the libel, but nevertheless they were punished from Heaven.

At this time, Refael fell ill and realized that his turn for punishment had come. The *Tosfos Yom-Tov* debated with himself whether to visit the wealthy man or not, for perhaps Refael would think that he had come to celebrate his downfall. Just then, Refael's servant came and requested that the *rov* come quickly: his master had something important to tell him. As soon as he arrived, Refael apologized profusely and assured him that he had not intended his libel to go so far. Bursting into tears, he begged the *rov* to forgive him and asked that he *daven* for him – which of course he did with all his heart.

(מגילת איבה לבעל התוס' י"ט)

The *chossid* Reb Berke Chein was imprisoned and exiled in Soviet Russia for his efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit in the underground Lubavitch network that defied Stalin's religious suppression. Those who had him arrested were fellow Yidden, informers faithful to the regime, who had unfortunately been influenced by the communist beliefs and created the Yevsektsia, a "*Yiddishe*" branch of the NKVD. Years later, at a *farbrengen*, Reb Berke shared his story with a group of chassidim, and upon mentioning the share of those Yidden in his imprisonment, he muttered to himself, "May HaShem forgive them! They are still Yidden." He bore no grudge against them for all the pain they had caused him.

(מפי הרב אהרן דוד שי גאון)

CONSIDER THIS!

- In reality, did Reb Shmuel HaNagid 'cut off the man's evil tongue'?
- How can one bring himself to repay good to one who wronged him?

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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

THE SCOPE OF KIBBUD AV VO'EIM

A man from a non-*frum* Sephardi family grew up in an Ashkenazi environment and therefore adopted Ashkenazi customs, *nussach* and pronunciation. When the man was thirty five years old his father became *frum* in accordance with Sephardic tradition. The father then demanded that the son return to his Sephardic roots. Must he obey his father's demands under the mitzvah of 'kibbud av'?

- The obligations of a child towards his parents are twofold: 'kibbud' and 'morah'.
- The mitzvah of 'kibbud' is defined as caring for one's parents, providing them with all of their needs. Any requested activity does not directly benefit the parent is not required by 'kibbud'.
- 'Morah' is defined as reverence for parents such as not seating in their place and not contradicting their words. There is a dispute amongst the *poskim* whether 'morah' requires one to fulfill even those requests which bring no direct benefit to the parent.
- Even those who include obedience in 'morah', do not require it when it would cause a loss to the child. Since ignoring a parent's request without a good reason constitutes a lack of reverence for the parent; ignoring the request out of concern for loss does not.

In conclusion: Since in this case, it would be very disruptive for the son and his family to change it's *halachic* lifestyle so significantly, therefore the son is not required to honor his father's request that he do so .

רמב"ן יבמות ו ע"א ד"ה מה להנך, רשב"א שם ד"ה מה להנך, ריטב"א שם ד"ה יכול, ביאור הגר"א יו"ד ר"מ ס"ק לו, מקנה לא ע"ב ד"ה ת"ר איזהו, קובץ תשובות ח"א סי' יב

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CURRENT EVENTS

י"ב כסלו

MAHARSHAL

Reb Shlomo Luria, often referred to as the Maharshal, was one of the great Ashkenazic *poskim* and Rabbonim of his time. With his strong and unwavering character, he was undaunted to argue on many *halachic* issues. He is known for his *seforim* Yam Shel Shlomo, Chochmas Shlomo, as well as his many corrections on *Shas*. He was born in the year ה'רע"א (1510), and passed away on the 12th of Kislev, ה'של"ד (1573).



The Chida writes in his *sefer* Shem Hagedolim: "When the Maharshal served as a Rov, he asked a *maggid* to come to him every day and give him *mussar*, just like everyone else. Every day, upon the *maggid's* arrival, the Maharshal would wrap himself in a tallis, sit with awe in front of Hashem and listen to the words of the *maggid*."



The Magen Avraham writes that the Maharshal would not eat fish on Rosh Hashana because he enjoyed its taste. The Maor V'shemesh explains that although the Gemara says to eat foods with a good *siman* on Rosh Hashana, including fish; its power is dependent on being eaten purely with the proper intention. Since the Maharshal enjoyed the taste, he disregarded the minhag of eating fish on Rosh Hashana.

(או"ח ריש סי' תקצ"ז)

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"HAYITOCHEN?"

Reb Gershon Shusterman shared the following personal story:



"I was twelve years old, learning in the *cheder* on at Ocean Parkway, when I received a message that the principle wants to see me. At the principal's office, he dropped a bombshell. Harav Chodakov, the Rebbe's *mazkir* had asked to see me! I was to come at nine o'clock to his office, knock once, and wait. I felt nauseous, and I was literally trembling. But at the appointed time, I was at the office, my little knees pounding against each other.

Harav Chodakov had a message for me. He showed me a recent test I had taken at *cheder*, (which had been included in the reports the Rebbe received regularly) on which I had received an unacceptable mark. Next to the mark, in pencil, and in the unmistakable handwriting of the Rebbe, was etched one word: *Hayitochen* (How's this possible?)

The Rebbe did not say I was bad, or even that I had done badly. This word meant one thing; I know you could have done much better. It was uplifting, but certainly very demanding."

לע"נ ר' אפרים ארי' ב"ר אליעזר ע"ה ומרת דבורה בת ר' משה ע"ה