



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

Parashat Ki Teitzei

Hashem's Judgments are True, Totally Righteous

Our *parasha* states (21:22) "And if there will be a man who has sinned and been sentenced to death and killed, you should hang him on a tree."

Question of the Ben Ish Chai

The Ben Ish Chai teaches that many times we see a *tzaddik* or G-d fearing individuals who are suffering, anguished, and unsuccessful in their endeavors. This person then begins to complain about his misfortune - why is this happening to him? According to the Arizal this is what the Torah is asking in the aforementioned *pasuk*: "If a man (*ish*)" – the word *ish* connotes an esteemed individual, "who has sinned (*chatah*) and been sentenced to death" – the word *cheit*, literally translated as "sin," can also mean "lack." In other words, this esteemed individual is lacking a reason as to why he received the death penalty – what did he do wrong? The Torah's answer is, "And you should hang him on a tree." We must understand the Torah's answer.

Life Questions

Sadly there have been a number of tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people recently. Jews have drowned, there were crib-deaths, accidents, and more incidents, unfortunately. Usually, even if not publicly, but at least privately, the question arises in man, *why were these individuals taken at such a young age, leaving parents mourning and children orphans?* These questions cannot be answered though, for as the Torah states in *Parashat Nitzavim*, "The hidden things are for Hashem, our G-d." Only He understands these mysteries, but we will not be able to comprehend His ways until we reach the World to Come. Our job presently is simply to strengthen our faith in Hashem and to know that He is "a G-d of faith without iniquity; righteous and upright is He," and that "the judgments of Hashem are totally righteous," as we will explain.

The Ben Ish Chai's Explanation of Reincarnation

The Ben Ish Chai explains with a parable: There was once a lion that had been starving for several days. He searched for prey and finally met a thin fox. The lion was happy that he had at least found something to eat. The fox realized what the lion's intentions were, so he immediately turned to the lion with a piece of advice, saying that he certainly realizes that the King of Beasts is hungry and that he is certainly ready to sacrifice himself on behalf of the king. However, devouring him will prove futile since he is thin and therefore will not satiate his hunger. "I therefore advise," said the clever fox, "that you allow me to take you to a place where there is chubby fellow; not only will you eat him and be satiated, but you will even have left-overs." The lion agreed and they set off together. They arrived at a cliff overlooking a



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valley. On the side was a heavy-set individual praying to Hashem. The fox said to the lion, "Now go and eat to your heart's content." However, the lion refused, claiming that he feared receiving a punishment for hurting a man who was in middle of praying, and totally innocent as well. The fox replied that he has a tradition from his ancestors that when a man sins, it is not **he** who is punished; rather, his grandson is punished. "Therefore you have nothing to fear," said the fox, "for you are starving and according to the *halacha* if one's life is threatened, it takes precedence over everything else." It is worthwhile for you to eat him; whatever will happen to your grandson should not interest you." The lion was persuaded, and jumped, intending to reach the other side and eat the man. However, he was unsuccessful, falling into the deep valley beneath them. The lion began to scream to the fox, "You trickster! How could you say that I would not get punished and that only the grandchildren would get punished? You see with your own eyes that I was punished!" "You fool," answered the fox. "**Your** grandfather tried to do the exact same thing as you just did, and now you, **his** grandchild, are being punished because of him! You deserve it too, because you, as well, did not think to have mercy on your grandchildren." The explanation of the parable is as follows: Even if man does not deserve a punishment because of his deeds in this lifetime, nevertheless, because of his deeds in his previous life – the "grandfather" in the parable – he is now being punished. This is the intention of the *pasuk*, then, "If a man" – an esteemed individual, "lacks a reason for why he has been sentenced to death - you should hang him on a tree." In other words, you should attribute his punishment to the soul which lies at the root of his presently reincarnated life. For it is because of the sins that were committed by your soul in a former life that you are being punished now.

Moshe Saw the Reincarnations of the Jewish Nation

In his *sefer Pnei David*, the *Chida* finds an allusion in the *pasuk*, "*Kol zachar le'gilgulotam*, Every male according to their headcount," to the secret of reincarnation. While *gilgulotam* literally means "headcount" its source is word *gilgul*, "reincarnation." He writes that this is an allusion to what the Arizal teaches that most males are reincarnated, yet most women are in possession of souls that are in this world for the first time. Wouldn't it be nice if everyone could have eyes like Moshe Rabbeinu, who was able to see the history of each person's soul, how many times it had been in the world, what its deeds had been in its previous life, and what it had now come to rectify in this world? Then nobody would complain about how Hashem oversees the world and everything that happens to them would be received with love and joy. This would resolve the age old question of why the righteous suffer. However, it is not the will of the Creator to allow us to see this for it would prevent us from having free choice to follow the Torah and mitzvot. But man must believe with total faith that everything that happens to him in this world is for his benefit and for a purpose.

Limited Vision



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The Chafetz Chaim said that man's claims that Hashem does not run the world fairly can be compared to a guest visiting a *beit kneset* for the first time. He sees the *gabbai* of the *beit kneset* giving *kibbudim* only to the members sitting on the western side of the *beit kneset*, while those sitting on the eastern side look more distinguished than them. He therefore approaches the *gabbai* with a complaint, saying, "Why are you acting improperly, by honoring the inferior members, and ignoring the more distinguished members of the congregation?" The *gabbai* therefore responded, "Your complaint stems only from the fact that this is the first *Shabbat* you are here, and you therefore are not seeing the whole picture. For if you would have been here the last few *Shabbatot*, all of your claims would disappear, for you would see that I distribute the *kibbudim* in a specific order." The same thing applies, said the Chafetz Chaim, to man in this world. He comes to this world for a short number of years and sees things that appear strange to him. He therefore complains about what he sees and questions Divine Providence. This is only stemming from the fact that his vision is limited and he is not seeing the whole picture and the chain of events that have occurred. He has no idea about the concept of *gilgulim*, about his deeds in his previous transmigrations, and therefore does not understand the whole story.

The Judgments of Hashem are True, Totally Righteous

Accordingly, did the Chafetz Chaim explain the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 10), "The judgments of Hashem are true, totally righteous." It is well known that Yom Kippur does not atone for sins between man and his fellow. One who insulted his friend or hit him but did not request his forgiveness, will not have his soul rectified until he returns to this world in a *gilgul* and then asks his fellow for forgiveness. When man arrives in the Heavenly Tribunal and hears that it has been decreed that he return to this world again, he cries and screams bitterly, in anguish over the sin that caused him to receive this bitter punishment. He will cry over the fact that he had been created a rich arrogant man, for it was that which led him to brazenly strike his fellow or ridicule him. He claims that if he would have been created a pauper, he certainly would never have had the nerve to do such a thing. He will plead with Hashem to refrain from removing him from Heaven and sending him back to the lowly, mundane world. But after he realizes that there is no use in pleading now, he begs to at least be reborn as a lowly, humble pauper, or an individual afflicted with suffering. Therefore, he will not violate these sins again. However, the prosecutor in Heaven refuses to grant his request, because then his repentance would be too easy; rather, he claims that he should be reborn the same way that he was in his previous life – rich and healthy. Only after many prayers, pleading, and judging favorably on the part of the Heavenly defendants, is his request finally granted to be born impoverished and deformed. However, once he is born, he complains about his predicament. These words of the Chafetz Chaim provide man with a sound answer to his questions about why his luck is so bad or why he must suffer so much. It is likely that in a previous life, after passing away, he pleaded with Hashem to be created specifically the way he is. This is what the *pasuk* meant that Hashem's judgments are "totally righteous." In other words, we must look at man in his



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totality, in his previous transmigrations as well, and then we will see that his suffering is truly a great merit for him.

Words of Mussar

We have learned just how hidden the ways of Hashem are, and as long as man's soul is still clothed in a body, he cannot understand them. One could write an entire book filled with all the tales about things that happened in this world which illustrate how Hashem's ways are totally righteous. All of the questions people ask stem from a lack of seeing the full picture and of grasping the sequence of events. We must strengthen our faith and trust in Hashem that He is the Merciful Father who does everything for man's benefit. We will understand everything only in the World to Come. May it be His Will that by strengthening our faith in Hashem that all the harsh decrees should be nullified and that He should hasten our redemption, with kindness and mercy, *amen*.

Shabbat Shalom and Ketiva vaChatima Tovah

Rav Mordechai Malka