

misvah or good deed our deserved punishment has been mitigated or even reprieved. (Peninim on the Torah)

The Human Alarm Clock

“Before the break of dawn, the rooster has an understanding that it will soon be light, and he crows to announce that a new day is about to begin. The crowing of a rooster was once used as an alarm clock. Only Hashem gave the rooster this wisdom of intuition.

Intuition is a built-in trait gifted to us by Hashem. It is an Alarm Clock planted in our brains to help us distinguish right from wrong. (Norman D. Levy; Based on Rabbi Miller’s, Duties of the Mind)

A Perfect Host

When Rav Shabsi Frankel proudly showed the Steipler Gaon his monumental revised edition of the *Rambam*, the Steipler smiled broadly and glowingly declared, “The *Rambam* and his commentators will wait to greet you in *Gan Eden!*” Reb Shabsi used his means to assemble the various manuscripts that would help to improve the accuracy and quality of the *Rambam*. Tens of scholars worked diligently for many years on the project. But perhaps what is most amazing about this undertaking is the fact that during all those years, Reb Shabsi never held himself higher than his colleagues and employees. He always made them feel important and integral to the success of the project. The following episode illustrates his refinement and humility.

Stored inside his home were many manuscripts worth millions of dollars. Acquiring these documents from universities and collectors was a process that took many years.

Once, Reb Shabsi was sitting at his table working with another respected *talmid hacham* on a recently purchased manuscript. For hours on end they labored, analyzing the nuances in the scripts and comparing them to one another. This intense process required endless patience and a skilled eye. Noticing the need for some refreshments, his wife brought two cups of coffee, one for her husband and the other for a guest he had brought to observe and help out with the new manuscript. Although Reb Shabsi saw the coffee being brought in, his guest did not, and when it was placed down on the table he inadvertently turned around and to his horror knocked it over onto the priceless manuscript. Not only would it cause a loss of thousands of dollars, but now the documents were rendered completely useless!

Reb Shabsi jumped out of his seat and ran into the kitchen. He most certainly was distressed that his valuable manuscript was ruined, but he did not want to cause his colleague any shame or embarrassment. And so two minutes later he emerged from the kitchen with a fresh cup of coffee. “I figured since the first one spilled, you would probably want another one.”

The man smiled. He knew that what had happened had probably caused Reb Shabsi to be disappointed and upset. But he also knew that Reb Shabsi understood that it was an accident, an accident anyone could have caused. The Steipler’s comment about the *Rambam* and his entourage had never rung truer. “The *Rambam* and his commentators will wait to greet you in *Gan Eden!*” But maybe not because of the reason we had thought. (Touched by a Story 3)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition
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SHABBAT KI

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Haftarah: Yeshayahu 54:1-10

AUGUST 24-25, 2018 14 ELUL 5778

Friday Shir Hashirim/ Minhah: 6:19, 7:00, 7:13 Shaharit: 5:18, 6:40, 8:10, 9:00, 9:10

Candlelighting: 7:23 pm

Morning Shema by: 8:47 am

Evening Shema after: 8:21 pm

Shabbat Classes: 6:00 pm

Shabbat Minhah: 7:00 pm

Shabbat Ends: 8:19 pm (R”T 8:51 pm)

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Sunday Minhah: 7:00 pm

This bulletin is dedicated by Morris Sutton in honor of his son Charlie’s birthday.

This bulletin is dedicated by Ralph Hazan and family
in memory of Leon Hazan לעילוי נשמת אלקהו בן סלחה

This bulletin is dedicated by Sammy & Pamela Kassin
in loving memory of Ike Kassin לעילוי נשמת יצחק בן מרים

Bircat Halebanah may be said until Saturday night, August 25.

A Message from our Rabbi

”כי תבא בכרם רעהו ואכלת ענבים”

“When you come into the vineyard of your friend you may eat grapes.”
(Debarim 23:25)

Our *parashah* discusses the law of a worker who is working in the vineyard. He has permission to eat grapes while he is working. However, he is not permitted to place the grapes into a utensil. He may only eat with his hands.

This reminds me of a time when I was in a local supermarket. While I was there I noticed a man who took a peach and ate it. After he finished the peach he took a nectarine and ate that also. He was eating every fruit there, and as you know, the price of fruit is pretty high. If not for supermarket-rage (a form of road-rage), I was considering telling him that this is considered stealing. The Torah permits a worker to eat, not a shopper.

There is an interesting detail to this law. The Rabbis point out that he can eat while he is working. Even during the time that he walks from one ridge to another in order to gather the produce, that “walking” is also considered like working.

This teaches us that when a Jew wakes up in the morning and dedicates his day to serving Hashem, even the time he is involved in business dealings in order to support his family is also considered part of serving Hashem, as the purpose of his work is so he can have the food and resources to serve Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Yishmael's Salvation

This week's *perashah* contains one of Torah's most perplexing set of laws – the rebellious son. The *ben sorer u'moreh* is a young man who has begun on a path of life that *Hazal* say will eventually lead to destruction and bloodshed. The *Talmud* says, “Let him die ‘while innocent’ rather than die after having committed a capital offense.”

Rav Elyahu Mizrahi asks that this implementation of justice based on projection of future evil deeds appears to contradict a principle the Torah introduces in *Parashat Vayera*. When the young Yishmael was dying of thirst in the desert and crying out in the throes of death, an Angel appeared before his mother, Hagar, and told her “Do not fear, for *Elokim* has heard the voice of the lad *b'asher hu sham* [in his present state].” Our Sages say that the angels came before Hashem at that time and protested, “Master of the Universe, this person, whose descendants are destined to kill your children by forcing them to die of thirst – for him you miraculously provide a well to save his life?”

Imagine if Yishmael had not survived this episode – imagine what this world would be like. Imagine the absence of the suffering that not only *Klal Yisrael* currently suffers but the absence of the suffering the entire world currently suffers because of the descendants of Yishmael! This is the complaint of the angels to the Almighty: The one whose children are going to kill your children – you miraculously save with a well?

The Sages then record Hashem's response to the angels: “Currently, is he guilty or innocent?” The angels conceded that at this point in his life the young Yishmael was innocent. The Almighty told them “I judge people only based on their current status.”

Rav Elyahu Mizrahi thus presents a glaring contradiction: On the one hand, by the wayward son, we kill him based on future actions and, on the other hand, by Yishmael, G-d only judges a person based on present status!

The *sefer Bei Chiyah* suggests an answer. The *Gemara* [*Rosh Hashana* 18a] speaks of two people who had the same disease and also of two people who are accused of the same crime and sentenced to the same capital punishment. Despite these pairs facing virtually identical situations, it often turns out that one of the sick people is cured and one dies; one of those sentenced to death is executed and one escapes punishment. The *Talmud* asks why this is so. The answer is “This one prayed a ‘complete prayer’ (*Tefilla shelema*) and the other one prayed ‘a prayer that was not complete.’”

This answer should resonate with us as we enter the weeks leading up to Rosh HaShannah. The answer is that one prayed with total *kavanah*, with his whole heart and soul and therefore he was saved. The man who had the same illness or the same sentence but did not recover or escape his punishment did not pray ‘a complete prayer’.

We might ask – how does the *Gemara* know that the dichotomy of outcomes was due to a qualitative difference in their respective prayers? Maybe one person lived because he had many merits and maybe this other person died because he had many debits in his Heavenly ledger. How can the *Gemara* so confidently attribute their fates to *Tefillah*? The *Bei Chiyah* says we see from this *Gemara* that if a person prays a

‘complete prayer,’ he has the capacity to survive no matter what “credits” or “debts” he may have based on past actions. A person's fate is entirely dependent on the power of prayer. Everything else is irrelevant. The person who lived may have had terrible sins on his record, but the power of prayer trumped any of those negatives. On the other hand, a person who may have had merits, but did not invoke his power of prayer at the time of crises may not survive.

This can help us resolve the contradiction. The reason Yishmael was saved was not only because he was judged based on his current status. The rule of thumb is – as we see from *ben sorer u'moreh* – that a person may be executed based on future actions. However, by Yishmael another factor came into play: That factor was *vaYishma et kol ha'naar* [and He heard the voice of the lad]. Yishmael prayed. Therefore, in spite of the fact that he was destined to kill *Klal Yisrael* and should have been “judged based on his end,” his power of prayer trumped everything else.

This is something that the *Bnei Yishmael* do in fact have going for them. They are not idol worshippers and they are very serious about their *tefilot*. They pray five times a day. That is what saved them then and that – I guess – is what gives them the power to endure now as well. The only way we can trump them is also through the power of our prayers. May the Almighty hear our cries and finally bring this exile of Yishmael and Edom to an end. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Extra Protection

”לֹא־יָבֹא עִמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקֹהֶל ה'...עַל־דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־קִדְּמוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּלֶחֶם וּבַיַּיִם...וְאֲשֶׁר שָׂכַר עֲלֵיךְ אֶת־בְּלָעַם...לְקַלְלֶךָ”

“An Amonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of Hashem...Because of the fact that they did not greet you with bread and water...and because they hired Bilaam ...to curse you.”

The Torah clearly presents two reasons for banning an Amonite or a Moabite from marrying a Jew. *Rashi*, however, cites only their procuring Bilaam to effect our spiritual destruction as grounds for their exclusion. Why does *Rashi* omit their lack of character refinement as motive for barring them from *Klal Yisrael*? Rav Elyakim Schlesinger responds to this question by first addressing a similar question regarding the death of Lot's wife.

When Lot and his family were escaping the inferno which destroyed Sodom, his wife disobeyed the command not to look back. Consequently, she was turned into a pillar of salt. *Rashi* explains that her punishment was specific; it was a direct result of her refusal to serve salt, a simple condiment, to her guests. Such a punishment seems overly harsh and inconsistent with the transgression. Rav Schlesinger suggests that her insensitive treatment of her guests was not the reason for her death. Every transgression has a specific retribution consistent to the degree of its gravity.

The performance of certain *misvot* and various good deeds serve as a safeguard against punishment. Thus, retribution can be averted through the earned merit of *misvot*. Lot's wife was destined to perish and be transformed into a pillar of salt because of her violation of the angel's command. Had she had the merit of treating her guests decently by serving them properly, being sensitive to their simple needs, she would have been spared punishment. Her lack of sensitivity to others sealed her fate, but was not the actual rationale for her punishment.

Similarly, the Amonite and Moabite people deserved severe sanctions as a result of their attempts to catalyze the spiritual downfall of our people. Had they shown some

human decency when we were in need, they might have been spared. Their continued lack of character refinement sealed their ultimate doom.

We may derive from here that one should be meticulous in observing all *misvot* regardless of their apparent level of significance. We do not know by virtue of which