

THE DEPTH OF BRIBERY

BRIBERY SWAYS THE MIND AND THE SENSES

Parashas Shoftim contains the Torah's commandment of "Do not take a bribe, for a bribe sways the eyes of the wise" - a judge in Beis Din may not take shochad (*a bribe*) from anyone.

The Torah explains the reason why a judge may not take a bribe: it "sways the eyes of the wise". A bribe doesn't allow a person to see something objectively as it is. It overpowers the rational intellect.

A bribe overpowers even the physical senses. It can even cause him to see the matter in an entirely different light, now that he has taken the bribe and he has become biased. When a person is bribed, he will hear the facts differently, and even his physical vision will show him something else; he doesn't even see accurately, now that he has become bribed\biased, in how he views the situation. A person might even be told what the facts are, yet he continues to see the facts differently and he hears what he wants to hear, because the bribe that he has taken is distorting the reality that he sees.

THE DEPTH OF OUR BECHIRAH (FREE WILL)

It is a halachah of the Torah that a judge may not accept a bribe, but we are taught by the Sages that each person must view himself as his own judge. Thus, just as a judge in Bein Din must avoid a bribe - so must we avoid bribery in our souls.

How can a person be his own judge? Every person has situations where he must judge and decide what the correct course of action is. Not only must we "judge" others favorably, but we must always see two options in front of us, what truth is and what falsity is, and decide between them. That is a judge's purpose: to see both sides, to see which of them is true and which is false, and decide upon the truth.

On a personal level, man must know how to decide between good and evil, when he uses his power of bechirah, free will. Our bechirah is enabled by the fact that we are each our own judge. If a person chooses something simply because he wants it, this is not called making a proper judgment. But if a person has chosen to do something because he has decided between true and false - as the Rambam describes our bechirah - this is what it means to be our own judge.

Sometimes we are faced with total falsity, and sometimes we must discern subtle falsities that are contained even in truth. There are levels and levels to truth and falsity. Our avodah of bechirah is to see what truth is, where the falsity is, and to decide upon truth.

This is how a person makes himself into his own judge. It means to pit truth against falsity and decide between them. There is a lot that we have to decide, and this is where a large part of our avodah on this word is.

Q&A

1. BIRTH CONTRACTIONS PRECEDING THE GEULAH 2. MASHIACH BEN DAN

QUESTION

It has been told to me in the name of the Rav shlit" a that until now we have been experiencing the birth contractions of the birth pains (*chevlei Mashiach*) preceding Mashiach's arrival and now "the head of the baby is in the middle of coming out." Can the Rav elaborate on this? Does this mean that the Geulah has actually started and that there can't be a "stillborn" now that the birth of Mashiach has started? Does the Rav mean that the Geulah is imminent and not in a long time from now since the birth has started? The Rav wrote a few weeks ago that the war can drag on for a few more decades chas v'shalom if we are not zocheh now to the Geulah – is the Rav now saying that the Geulah is definitely imminent?

Also, can the Rav please explain the role of "Mashiach ben Dan"?

ANSWER

PART 1 – THE BIRTH OF MASHIACH'S ARRIVAL

A human pregnancy lasts 9 months which climaxes in birth contractions that can take a few hours or a few days. The pregnancy of the Divine clock of the 6000 year era we are in climaxes in a birth that is able to last several years – but the birth has begun!

The time of birth is a time of danger which can either usher in another life, or it can bring about a death, chas v'shalom. The wars taking place now as well are a time of danger, and it can either usher in more life, or it can bring death, chas v'shalom.

PART 2 – MASHIACH BEN DAN

The beginning of the war is waged through Mashiach ben Dan, and this is the depth of the words of Chazal that "In the seventh (*Shemittah*) year there are wars" – it is a Redemption brought about through Mashiach ben Dan. This began with Chushim the son of Dan who killed Esav, and it continued with Shimshon who came from the tribe of Dan, and it will be completed by Sherayah (*from the tribe of Dan*), as stated in the Zohar (*Balak 194b*). Refer also to the words of the Ramchal in Otzros Ramchal (*Yeshayah 9, 5*) and Kinas Hashem Tzevaos (*98a*). See also Beraishis Rabbah 91:10 where Chazal said that Yaakov thought that Shimshon (*who comes from Dan*) will be the Mashiach.

In Yaakov's blessing to Dan he is compared to a lion. Chazal (*Yalkut Shimoni Beraishis 49, 160*) said that this refers to Mashiach ben Dovid, who will come from two different tribes – the father of Mashiach comes from Yehudah, and the mother of Mashiach comes from Dan. Both Dan and Yehudah are compared to a lion in Yaakov's blessing.

The root of Mashiach's maternal roots in Dan is Chushim the son of Dan. The word Chushim, without the letter Vov, is the same letters as the word Mashiach. (*See the commentary of Ben Yehoyada to Talmud Bavli Sotah 13a, sefer Koheles Yaakov on Mashiach, cited in Yalkut Reuveini parshas Mikeitz, and see Pardes Yosef on Beraishis 46:23.*) Rav Yehudah HaChassid says that the verse "Dan is a serpent lying on the road" is equal in gematria to the word Mashiach.

The mission of Mashiach ben Dan is described in the Zohar (194b) [following is a summary of the Zohar not a translation]: Mashiach ben Dan has the role to assist Mashiach ben Yosef in the final war. Dan is compared to a serpent which bites the horse at the heel and causes the horse and its rider to fall backwards. This is what Mashiach ben Dan will do in order to aid Mashiach ben Yosef in the war. His name is Sherayah, and he comes from the tribe of Dan, and he will come together with Mashiach ben Yosef, and he will take revenge on the nations of the world.]

He is compared to a snake because he is a spark of the soul of the Mashiach that was concealed within the Serpent. The gematria of the word "Nachash" (*Serpent*) equals "Mashiach". He is the Serpent on the side of holiness to counter the Serpent on the side of evil. See Heichal Beracha (*Kamarna*) to parshas Vayigash.

The Arizal (*Sefer Likutim, Vayakhel 35*) says that Mashiach will come from the tribe of Yehudah, and Sherayah will come from Dan. Sherayah will have a special connection to Mashiach ben Dovid who comes from Yehudah, since both Dan and Yehudah are compared to a serpent. There is also a special connection that Mashiach ben Dan will have with Mashiach ben Yosef. Moshe Rabbeinu said "And this song will answer me forever", and this is the power of Dan who gathers together all the camps. Mosheh is the unification of the two redeemers – he is the middle line between them. Dan (*Sherayah who comes from Dan*) is also a unifying point between the two redeemers by being a vessel, or the Malchus, through his role of gathering together all the camps. Malchus is connected both with Hod and Netzach, and the Malchus within Hod is where Mashiach ben Yosef is found, and that is also where Sherayah, the Mashiach ben Dan, is found. (*See Pri Tzaddik (Chanukah 25) and sefer Koheles Yaakov (on the topic of Mashiach ben Dovid and the topic Zaisim).*)

Sherayah, the Mashiach who comes from Dan, is equal in gematria to 515. This is the amount of tefillos which Moshe davened in order to enter Eretz Yisrael. On a deeper level, Moshe was really davening to become connected with Sherayah, the Mashiach ben Dan. This is because Moshe is the secret of the upper Daas on the masculine side, while Mashiach Ben Dan is the secret of the lower Daas on the feminine side. Thus, Mashiach ben Dan is connected to Yehudah, Yosef, and Moshe.

It is through Mashiach ben Dan that the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt. Mashiach Dan is equal in gematria to Bayis, "home" (*referring to the Beis HaMikdash*). Now that we are found in a degree of a war that is the beginning of the Geulah, this is all through the power of Mashiach ben Dan, and the beginning of the war is started through him, as Rav Tzadok HaKohen teaches.

We should become connected to the concept of Sherayah in our avodas Hashem by way of accessing the power of Sherarah [*princely status of being the chosen people of G-d*] and Shirah [*song – singing to Hashem as a strong expression of emunah*].

ISRAEL-HAMAS

QUESTION What is the root of Galus Yishmael? It is not counted as one of the four exiles (Bavel, Paras-Madai, Yavan, Edom) but some views consider it as part of Galus Edom, the Maharal views it as part of Galus Paras-Madai, while others say it is a fifth exile. Since we can see that right now the Arabs (Yishmael) waging war are from Iran (Persia, Paras) does this prove that the Galus Yishmael is really part of Galus Paras-Madai?

ANSWER The hidden inner root of it is in the Eirev Rav. For this reason they are called Arabs, from the word Erev. But in the revealed aspect of Torah, they are rooted in the Amalek that became revealed through Galus Madai-Paras as in the times of Haman *[who was of Amalek]*.

QUESTION Why is it that the irreligious Arabs (*who don't pray to G-d*) don't hate Jews whereas the Arabs who pray 5 times a day to G-d are the ones who hate Jews and wish to kill Jews in any way they can?

ANSWER "A craftsman hates his competitor" *[hence it is only the religious Arabs who hate the Jewish people, because they see the Jews as their competition, since they both pray to the same G-d. The secular Arabs though who don't pray to G-d don't see the Jews as competition]*.

QUESTION Why do the Arabs hate the Jewish people? Is it because they inherited the jealousy of Yishmael towards Yitzchok, and as they claim that they suffer because of Israel? Or is that just an excuse for their hatred and really they hate Israel as all the other nations do, just as Esav hates Yaakov?

ANSWER The root of the Arabs' hatred is because they are rooted in the Eirev Rav, and there are good parts of the Eirev Rav that can be discerned amongst them.

QUESTION What is the source of the barbarism of the Arabs? Wasn't it Esav who inherited the way of "By your sword you shall live"? Did they learn this from Eisav, when Eisav married Yishmael's daughter? Or are they in essence barbarians because they are called *pereh adam (wild man)*?

ANSWER See above answer. They are Eirev Rav, which is Esav and Yishmael together.

QUESTION Hamas claims that they don't hate Jews in essence, they just hate the State of Israel. As proof, there are some Jews living in Iran and Lebanon whom they leave alone. Are they telling the truth when they say this, or do they really wish to kill all the Jews whom they have taken hostage, and it is just that they are temporarily allowing the hostages to live for political reasons? Is there anything substantial to what they say?

ANSWER There is nothing substantial to what they say.

QUESTION When Hamas kills Jews, is it because they want to kill Jews just as all other goyim deep in their hearts wish they could kill Jews (*and it's just that they need a good excuse to do it*), or is it all because of nationalistic reasons they have?

ANSWER It is because they are from the Eirev Rav which opposes the Jewish people for being a "nation that dwells in solitude".