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Chambers of Light

Parshas
Shoftim
5784

// The True Judgement

"Shoftim v'shotrim titen lecho b'chol she'orecho". Judges and police shall you appoint at all your towns / gates.

In this world, interaction with police usually happens before reaching a court and judges. The job of a policeman is to warn a person not to reach a situation where he needs to come before a judge. A person who sees a police car is careful and keeps the law. One who breaks the law and is caught - he is the one who comes before a judge.

However, the posuk states 'shoftim' before 'shotrim'.

// A Rare Judge...

This brings us to the true understanding of Teshuvoh and particularly to the 'kavonos' of Chodesh Elul: the Rebbe teaches that although, of course, we need to be like a "shoter" - to be very vigilant with ourselves about behaving correctly, nevertheless, first a person needs to be strong in his mood, strong in positivity. This is the Rebbe's concept of judgement. "Shoftim" – that if I did something improper, I immediately judge myself i.e., ascertain that this was not right, return to Hashem – teshuvah; then start anew – forget the past.

In a court of this world, they impose punishment on one who breaks the law. Even in a Jewish beis din. A Dayan / judge will write the psak / report, and maybe have more or less mercy, but the judgment remains inflexible.

But this is only the superficial way we are treated. In the Neshomoh world, the penimiyus, inner world, the judge is the tzaddik, who cautions the person to return to the right path; but in a positive way; he strengthens you that even if you transgressed the laws - you can return. If you think about this, this is quite unusual. Where will you find a person who comes before a judge, and the judge begins to encourage him: "You transgressed and were caught… make sure you strengthen yourself! Return!"

The tzaddik-judge explains to you: "See here, you transgressed the law, you did something improper, fix it! I am not here to punish you! I am here to warn you and teach you that, indeed, you have foolishness in your heart - the proof is that you 'transgressed the law' - you didn't keep halochoh and did not succeed in standing strong against temptations. What will you do now? Will you become disheartened? Will you fall apart? No!

I will show you the way to judge yourself; clarifying that which you need to fix. And then strengthen yourself anew."

// First One Must Know How to Judge

The Rebbe calls the concept of hisbodedus and personal prayer: "mishpot", where a person judges himself and makes a cheshbon hanefesh, an accounting.

Such an accounting should be performed in a positive way, something like this: "Ribbono Shel Olam, I did not want to do that..., this was not from my true self and inner soul, this came only

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Gemstone

The Kavonos of Elul are a tikkun for pegam habris (blemish of the covenant - immorality). The main avoda of elul is to hear your shame but remain silent. When a person hears himself being disgraced, when others insult and shame him, and he remains silent and does not answer, this (pain) rectifies bris – cleanses immoral desires. Through this, one will find one's shidduch and marital peace, Sholom Bayis.

(Likutei Moharan # 2: 87)

Questions and Answers

What should be done with children who don't listen to their parents?

Q

Dear Rabbi Leser Shlita

I was greatly inspired on Shabbos, thanks to the weekly shiur, and I got rid of my smartphone. I would appreciate some encouragement on this matter.

Secondly, about my sweet children, especially the two older ones: I'm having a very difficult time with them. I feel a lot of helplessness and lack of good communication. They don't listen to me, they're disrespectful, they speak rudely, hit each other, and fight. I simply feel despair and just pray that they'll turn out to be good people. I feel like I don't know how to educate them at all.

A

Be'ezras Hashem, Erev Shabbat Kodesh, Parshat Shlach, 18 Sivan 5782

Dear…

Greetings to ... may you live and be well.

I received your letter and was happy to hear good news from you, especially about the well-being of the baby ... may his light shine. May it be God's will that he grows to be a true Tzaddik and Torah scholar, and that you derive much nachas dikedushoh from him and all your other children.

I was also glad to hear that you got rid of the smartphone. With Hashem's help, this will bring you an abundance of holiness and great heavenly assistance in all matters. Over time, you'll notice that you don't miss it at all.

Regarding the education of children, education requires a lot of patience and tolerance. We need to come down to the children's level and give them a lot of attention and consideration. Children need to hear many compliments and positive words, and only then will they grow up with self-confidence and self-esteem. There are children who grow up without ever hearing any good or positive word from their parents. They never receive any compliment or appreciation for the good things they do. When they grow up and get married, they don't know how to give a compliment or say a kind word

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at home, and this leads to all kinds of problems in their marriage and sholom bayis. They have absolutely no idea where these problems come from. But it all stems from not receiving warmth and love from their parents in their youth, and the inevitable consequence - they lack the ability to give it to others.

Therefore, try your utmost to equip yourself with patience and forbearance, and utilize every opportunity to compliment the children and give them appreciation and attention. Over time, you'll see how they will do whatever they can to receive another compliment and another kind word, and maybe even a prize. The atmosphere at home will be entirely transformed, and you will feel renewed and imbued with strength to raise them with joy and love.

Wishing you blessing and success in all your endeavors and a peaceful and blessed Shabbos.

Rabbi Yitzchok Leser

Sparks

The One Who Yields

The Gemara relates wondrous miraculous stories about Rav Ada bar Ahava (Taanis 20b), to the extent that Rav and Shmuel passed with him under a shaky wall and were not afraid, due to the great merit of Rav Ada.

Similarly, Rav Huna had wine in a broken house and was afraid to enter there due to the danger of collapse, so he used this idea, he brought Rav Ada bar Ahava to his house and spoke with him in Torah learning, thus drawing him into the house, and meanwhile he removed all the wine.

What was his greatness? That in all his days he never insisted on getting his way (even) in his own home, and he never walked in front of someone greater than him.

He was great in this middoh of Vatronus – giving-in / yielding. Generally, when there is a quarrel in the home, each one maintains that he is right, but the proper way of the vatran is to give in and say: "Fine, you are right, the main thing is that there should not be machlokes."

Similarly, one who does not walk in front of someone considered greater than him is also displays this middoh – like R. Ada, he allows everyone to walk before him, and although truthfully, he is greater than all of them, and even though he walks last, he is greater than them all.

This is the key to all of a person's success, both in gashmiyus and in ruchniyus. This was the way of the Rebbe, not to be stubborn at all – "you want it this way, let it be this way" - in the end he accomplished and brought to fruition what he wanted. Thus, one who acts with Vatronus / yielding is always victorious. Fortunate is he!

(Sichos Mohorosh # 4, Vatronus)

The Illuminating Tailor

The levaya arrived at the cemetery in the town of Polnoye. The pallbearers led the way to the burial plot, and the members of the Chevra Kadisha performed performed their holy work faithfully.

The niftar was zoche that among those accompanying him was the holy tzaddik, the Baal HaToldos Yaakov Yosef zy"a, who was immersed in his holy thoughts. The tzaddik felt a great light emanating from one of the other burial plots, a section where no one had yet been buried. With his holy faculties, the tzaddik sensed the scent of Gan Eden and a beautiful and holy light. This prompted him to ask the Chevra Kadisha to purchase the adjacent burial plot. Following his lead, the holy tzaddik Reb Leib Mochiach zy"a bought the plot on the other side.

Time passed and the holy Toldos was niftar. The grieving talmidim took care of the final kavod for their Rebbe - the levaya and burial. Then they learned something: In the plot adjacent to that of their Rebbe, a simple Yid had been buried. Is it fitting for the holy Rebbe to be buried next to a simple person?

However, since the Toldos had left a tzavo'oh that he wanted to be buried specifically there, they had no choice but to comply with his request.

What was the secret of the great light that the Toldos had sensed?

In the town of Polnoye, during the lifetime of the tzaddik, there lived a simple Yid who earned his living as a tailor. He served the townspeople faithfully, sewing and repairing clothes professionally and with a smile. But, as mentioned above, he was an extremely simple person.

However, he had one special practice:

Every day, with no living soul as witness, he closed his store and made his way to the cemetery, where he had already purchased a burial plot for himself.

The tailor would stand before his plot and shed tears, crying: "Ribbono Shel Olam! Here I will lie, here they will bury me. Help me not to be angry and not to be bitter, that I should always be happy, that I should not quarrel with anyone. Behold, here is my final station, here I finish my life, so why should I get upset and why should I be angry at any living soul?!"

This holy practice refined his neshamah, to the extent that even the various situations that could bring one to a nisoyon of anger, he would say with a smile on his lips: "Let it be so, let it be so..."

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A Yid, even the simplest, who attaches himself to Hashem, and whatever happens to him - he knows and feels that it is from Hashem, and that it is His will, fortunate is he and great is his portion!

(Based on Asher Banachal 19072)

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from foolishness of the heart."

Our job is two-pronged: Being clear – **judging** correctly our actions and our spiritual situation, both the good and the bad, making sure not to become disheartened, strengthening ourselves to rise above the past – then **policing** ourselves in making real changes into the promising future that the true judge - the tzaddik shows us.

The encouragement the tzaddik teaches isn't merely a 'good feeling technique'. For a person who does not have this middoh of 'boki b'shov' - being proficient - being capable of strengthening himself when falling, will find it very difficult to progress in life, 'boki be'rotzoi'.

The posuk begins with Shoftim, - when you start off avodas Hashem, first work on this positive judgement, becoming a proficient 'shofet' of 'boki b'shov', then you'll have the strength to 'police' yourself 'berotzoi' as a proficient "shoter".

'Veshoftu es ho'om mishpot tzedek', as this two-pronged mindset & approach will lead you onto the path of righteousness.