

## “וְאַתֶּם חֲשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֲלֵקִים חֲשַׁבְתֶּם לְטָבָה”

### הֲרַב אֲלֵיהֶם שְׁטִינְהָרַט

After Yaakov Avinu’s *petirah*, the brothers were particularly scared of Yosef and what he might do to them in retribution for selling him as a slave. They approached him and begged for mercy and offered to be his slaves. His response was, “...*al tirah ki hasachas Elokim ani. V’atem chashavtem olai ro’o Elokim chashovo l’tova...*” (*Bereishis 50: 19-20*). He told them not to be afraid because even though they indeed had intended to do bad to him, Hashem turned it into a good thing. He goes on to reassure them that he will continue to take care of them.

We are faced with the following question: While it is true that Hakadosh Boruch Hu used the brothers’ sale in a positive, productive manner, *lichora* that does not *patur* them for what they did. Why are they not responsible if they performed a harmful act against Yosef?

We even find *Chazal darshen* the *posuk*, “...*al michrom bakesef tzaddik v’evyon ba’avur na’aloyim*,” (*Amos 2: 6*) that the *shevatim* sold Yosef for twenty silver coins and split it amongst themselves and each bought a pair of shoes. The *onesh* which came from this was the *Asarah Harugei Malchus* who served as a *kaporo* for *mechiras Yosef*. We see that their action against him is not absolved from “*Elokim chashovo l’tovah*.”

What then was Yosef telling the brothers that it did not matter what they tried to do because Hashem used it for good? Their responsibility remains and should have held them responsible.

We can ask a similar question on Dovid HaMelech in *sefer Shmuel Beis (19: 20-24)*. When he was running away from Avshalom during the latter’s rebellion, Shimi ben Geira cursed Dovid HaMelech. Avishai ben Tzeruya witnessed this and told Dovid not to let him off the hook because he was *mored b’malchus* and *chayiv misah*. Dovid’s response was Hashem had decreed that Shimi should curse Dovid.

Why was Shimi ben Geira not responsible for his action? Even though “*Hashem omar kalel*,” that still does not mean that Shimi ben Geira did not do anything from his own volition. It’s clear that Dovid HaMelech recognized that Shimi deserves punishment because he later instructed Shlomo to take care of Shimi (*Melochim Alef, 2: 8-9*). What did he mean, “*Hashem omar kalel*”?

It seems there is a significant *yesod* which we can learn from both Yosef HaTzaddik and Dovid HaMelech in their respective *ma’asim*. We know there exists *Hashgochas Hashem*, as the *gemara Chullin 7b* states, “*ein adam nokef etzba’o milmato ela im kein machrizin olov milmalo*.” Anything and everything that happens to a person comes from Hashem. A person sticks his hand into his pocket and gets a little cut because Hashem decreed it.

At the same time, there is *bechiro*. As Rambam says in *Hilchos Teshuva*, the whole system in this world of *s’char v’onesh* is built upon the principle of individual choice, that a person has the ability to act and do what he chooses.

It is difficult to reconcile how these two concepts work alongside one another. For example, on one hand the brothers chose to sell Yosef, but Yosef also says “*Elokim chashovo l’tovah*.” Shimi ben Geira chose to be *mekalel* Dovid, but Dovid says “*Elokim omar kalel*.” This is a big *sugya* with different *mehalchim*. Some say we cannot understand it and there are also many different ways to work out this dichotomy.

Even if we follow the *mehalech*, which does have many *ra'ayos*, that a person has *bechiro* which actually causes something to happen and had he not chosen to do so it would not have taken place, there is still an aspect of *hashgocho* present. After all, Hashem is allowing a person to carry out that action. Hashem controls everything which enables the person to do it. Hashem could certainly prevent it from happening if He so desired. Therefore, anything which happens to the victim due to the person's *bechiro* is certainly because of the *hashgocho* that the victim deserves it in the "eyes" of Hashem. There is always *hashgocho* extant in any action of *bechiro*.

Let us take for example, Reuven perpetrates an act against Shimon. Like we said, there is Reuven's *bechiro* as well as *hashgocho*. They are mutually dependant, *chas v'shalom* to suggest the *bechiro* as being exclusive because that would amount to *les din v'les dayan*. What is Shimon's reaction to Reuven's action of *bechiro* which is also from *hashgocho*? How does he view the incident? How is he *mekabel* what took place?

The Torah is teaching us the following: A *ma'amin*, in terms of his *kabolo* of events and actions which happen to or against him due to someone's *bechiro*, is *mekabel* everything as *hashgocho*. He focuses on the *hashgocho* and tells himself that Hashem wanted this to be this way. The *hashgochas Hashem* is all-encompassing and so vast and so exact that it dwarfs the *bechiro* of Reuven. The fact that Reuven decided to do something against him completely pales in comparison to the *ma'amin*'s knowledge of the *hashgocho* in play.

Even if Reuven damages Shimon and is *acharoy* to pay Shimon for it, Shimon still perceives the incident as being from *hashgocho*. Shimon knows and tells himself that he was supposed to be hit for some reason or another. Maybe Hashem is giving him a *nisayon* or a *kaporo*, but the *ikur* is that Hashem decreed and enabled this to happen. He may subsequently go to *bes din* to recoup the loss and damage from Reuven who is *chayiv min haTorah* to pay him. It may even be a *hishtadlus* on Shimon's part that he should go to *bes din* to collect from Reuven. Yet, his initial reaction is to be *mekabel* the *ma'aseh* as *hashgochas Hashem*.

Shimi ben Geira chose to curse Dovid HaMelech. Dovid's reaction was, "*Hashem omar kalel*," that it was *hashgochas Hashem*. Even though Dovid realized that Shimi must be punished for what he did, he still was *mekabel* it as first being from *hashgochas Hashem*. Maybe if Dovid had immediately told Avishai to indeed kill Shimi, it would have clouded his *kabolo* as *hashgocho protis* and shifted the focus away from that.

The *shevatim* perpetrated an act against Yosef that yielded the *Asarah Harugei Malchus*. Despite this, Yosef was *mekabel* it as "*Elokim chashovo l'tovah*." He pointed to the *hashgocho* and saw how Hashem made it that he should be in his position to help Bnei Yisroel to provide for them to grow into the massive nation they were to become. "*Atem chashavtem ro'o*," meant that they do have what to answer for, but from Yosef's vantage point it was taken and received as an act of *hashgocho*. He held that the *cheshbon* for their *onesh* was *m'din shomayim* and he never got involved in dealing with that.

This is something which is extremely relevant in our lives on a daily basis. We always experience different *bechiros* of others which affect us, sometimes negatively. The way a *ma'amin* deals with these issues which come from the choices of others is to be *mekabel* it simply as *hashgochos Hashem*. When a person can train himself to always focus and hear the *hashgochas Hashem* in everything he goes through, he can live a very happy life. He won't walk around with *taynos* on other people, being embittered and upset at others, because he knows that it only happened with *hashgochos Hashem*. He doesn't care to worry about the *bechiro* side of it.

May we all be *zoche* to live like this, with a *glukliche lebben*, happy and *geshmak*, and focus fully on *hashgochas Hashem* and live positively in the entirety of our lives.