

THE REAL QUESTION!

by Rabbi Label Lam

You shall set up judges and law enforcement officials for yourself in all your cities that HASHEM your G-d, is giving you, for your tribes, and they shall judge the people [with] righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show favoritism, and you shall not take a bribe, for bribery blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts just words. Justice, justice you should pursue, that you may live and possess the land the Lord, your God, is giving you. (Devarim 16:18-20)

Justice-justice you should pursue: Truth- truth you should pursue... (Targum Onkelos-Aramaic Translation)

The Sefas Emes vastly broadens the subject of pursuing justice. Since justice and truth are interchangeable then it is by definition and endless pursuit, because HASHEM is ultimate truth-reality-justice. "Therefore", he adds, "a person needs to continually deepen his comprehension until it is the truth of the truth. Truth will not be wholly recognizable until all of humanity together are singularly devoted to HASHEM Blessed is He as Emes (the letter ALEF-MEM-TOF) stretches from the beginning of the ALEF BEIS to the very end."

It seems the narrower the vision and perspective of the observer the greater the chance for living in and with deception. It's known that the letters for the word lie-SHEKER (SHIN-KUF-REISH) are clustered together near the end of the ALEPH BEIS. Truth is much harder to grasp. It requires a longer and deeper view to know what's happening today.

A story is told about a Rabbi who received an urgent call from one of his congregants shortly after prayers that morning. The man was very disturbed by something he had read in his prayers. The Rabbi listened intently as he explained. It seems he was reciting the many verses of Ashrei-Tehillim 145 and the verses were speaking about the righteous of HASHEM.

"HASHEM is just in all His ways and benevolent in all His deeds. HASHEM is close to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. The will of those who fear Him He fulfills; He hears their cry and delivers them" Then came the real difficulty. It states, HASHEM protects those who love Him and the wicked..." Why should HASHEM protect those who love him and the wicked? On his way out of Shul he could not believe what he had just read. He had to get a clarification from the Rabbi when he got to work.

As the Rabbi was absorbing the nature of his question, another phone line rang and it was a different

congregant with a similar complaint on the same verse. He read when he came late to join the service in progress, "Those who love Him and the wicked he will destroy!" Why would HASHEM destroy all who love Him with the wicked?"

Now the Rabbi had the opportunity to address both of them simultaneously. He needed to inform them of the entirety of the verse first, "HASHEM protects those who love Him and the wicked He will destroy!" That's the full context of the verse.

The Rabbi told them both, "Of course you had this serious question, because you left Shul early and you came in late. You saw only the first part of the verse and you read only the end without the beginning." A lot of what we don't understand in life is because we arrive late or we leave too soon.

From our myopic keyhole it is easy to misunderstand most of what's going on and to be tempted to accept a distorted story. Anything seen out of context is open for misinterpretation. Only when something is perceived in the grandest of all contexts can it approach truth. Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder but truth requires a grand expansion of the mind's eye to be beheld. To behold the truth or not to behold the truth... that may be **the real question!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.