

FATHERLY LOVE

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

There is a beautiful *Medrash* which says that following the incident of the spies, G-d said to *Moshe* that He would destroy the Jewish people. *Moshe* replied, "Master of the Worlds! You are slow to anger. With any servant, if his actions are proper, and his master hears of it, and his master smiles and acts favorably towards him, the servant does not think how kind and good his master is.

"When does the servant think how kind his master is? When the servant does not do what he should, but behaves improperly, and nonetheless the master still smiles and acts favorably towards him!

"So too, You should ignore their stiff-necked behavior." (as it says [Deut. 9:27], "Do not turn to the stiffness of this nation").

The Holy One, Blessed be He, replied, "for your sake, I will forgive them." (as it says [Num. 14:20] "And *HaShem* said, 'I have forgiven, as you said.'")

No one believes (or should believe) that s/he is doing everything that s/he should. There is always room for improvement - but never reason to give up. Even when a person is doing everything wrong, *HaShem* waits for the person to improve. All the more so - if we are at least moving in the right direction!

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The author is the Director of Project Genesis.