

# MOLDED FUTURE

*by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner*

The Chofetz Chaim writes that at times we perceive injustice in the way that the world is being run. We see 'bad things happening to good people', and question the ways of Hashem. Why are these righteous people being denied that which so many other people have? His actions seem far from being "perfect, righteous and straight"!

The matter, he writes, can be compared to a wealthy man whose beloved son became deathly ill. Quickly realizing that the local doctors were unable to help the child, the father, sparing no expense, involved the worlds best doctors to save his son's life. One doctor was able to diagnose the illness and prescribe the proper medication. Slowly but steadily, the son's condition began to improve. Before leaving, he warned the father to carefully watch that his child would not eat any food containing animal fat.

A few months later, before leaving on a business trip, the father instructed the household to carefully follow the dietary directives given by the doctor. The next day, however, the child smelled the aroma of meat cooking and was overcome with desire. Without saying a word to anyone, he grabbed a piece of meat, stuffed it into his mouth and ran outside.

The relapse was almost immediate. The father, upon his return, found his son hanging perilously between life and death. He immediately summoned the doctor who had previously saved his son's life. When the doctor arrived, the father pleaded with him to do whatever he could and promised that, should the son live, he would never again leave his side. The doctor was able to stabilize his condition and the child soon recuperated.

A short time later, the father invited many guests to a festive meal. As the guests entered the dining hall, they were overwhelmed by the aroma and the display of the many dishes being served. The host was graciously welcoming all of his guests and inviting them to partake when, suddenly, his son entered the dining area. To the astonishment of his guests, the demeanor of the host changed drastically and the son was literally chased from the area. Not a single person, besides the father himself, was able to understand his seeming 'cruelty'...

At times, Hashem seems to keep the righteous away from things that everyone else is allowed to partake of. Only the Master of the Universe, with His perfect knowledge of each individual, can truly understand how these seemingly cruel acts are, in fact, the epitome of kindness. "Ha'tzur tamim pa'alo... tzaddik v'yashar hoo" - His actions are perfect... He is righteous and straight.



What glimpse of an understanding can we obtain? There are times that we can see through our disappointment and realize that an occurrence really is in our best interest. A child who is wildly abusing the car that his parents bought for him understands, deep down inside, the ultimate benefit of being grounded. However, many times we are at a complete loss in understanding how a certain event is beneficial for us.

Once again, the Chofetz Chaim paints a fascinating picture, affording us a glimpse of what goes on 'behind the scenes'. At times, a person curses his rotten 'luck'. Others are successful and he flounders every opportunity. He, who is trying to do the will of Hashem is falling flat on his face, while others who are, let's say, somewhat less motivated to do the will of Hashem, seem to be doing quite well...

It is known that even Yom Kippur cannot atone for sins committed against man unless a sincere apology is made and accepted. One who embarrassed someone else and wasn't forgiven must return to this world to correct that wrong. [There is a beautiful prayer called Tfilas Zakah, said before Kol Nidrei on the eve of Yom Kippur, where one forgives all those who might have wronged him/her. The idea being that we don't want anyone to be punished on account of us. We are all children of Hashem and no parent feels kindly toward someone who caused him to punish his child.]

When a person being judged before the heavenly court hears that he must return to the physical world he grieves bitterly over the environment which caused him to sin. Why was I so wealthy?!? That caused me to feel haughty and allowed me to embarrass that person so thoroughly! Had I only been poor, I would have been so much more sensitive to the feelings of others. I never would have committed such a callous act! Please, don't send me back... who knows if I'll correct things there or if I'll destroy even further!

Once it becomes clear that he must return, he now begs to return as a poor or sickly person and not have to experience that same difficult test of haughtiness. The straight decree of justice pronounces that, in order to correct his previous misdeeds, he must overcome the same exact situation. However, the Attribute of Mercy, taking into account all of the mitzvas performed in his previous lifetime acquiesces to his pleas, and agrees to send him back as a pauper.

Who knows, the Chofetz Chaim writes, if a situation that we complain so bitterly about now, is in fact, the very situation that we pleaded and begged to be in. "Ha'tzur tamim pa'alo... tzaddik v'yashar hoo" - His actions are perfect... He is righteous and straight.

This is, in fact, the very essence of the 'malchius' of Rosh Hashana. Our accepting that all that occurs in life is directed from the 'Melech Ha'olam', the King of the Universe. There is a difference between a 'melech', usually defined as a king, and a 'moshel', usually defined as a ruler. The rule of a melech is accepted by his subjects, whereas, a moshel imposes his authority on unwilling parties. Rosh Hashana is the time for us to accept Hashem as the melech of the universe and, most importantly, as the melech of ourselves.



The very first Rosh Hashana of the world, the day on which Adam Harishon was created, was a day of judgment and forgiveness. Adam ate from the 'eitz hada'as', the tree of knowledge, was judged by Hashem and was forgiven. Chazal teach us that this serves as a sign for us, his children. We too, will be judged on this day and emerge forgiven.

At first glance, this seems difficult to understand. Let's look at Adam's 'forgiveness'... "The land is cursed due to you... thorns will grow for you... with the sweat of your brow you will eat bread until you return to the earth that you were taken from. (Breishis 3:17-19) One additional aspect of his 'forgiveness' was being banished from Gan Eden! Exactly what is the comforting sign that we, his children, are supposed to learn from Adam's judgment and forgiveness?!?!

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch writes that Adam, being drawn after the pleasures of the world, needed to be in an environment where the pleasures were not so easily accessible. Every act that we perform changes us and alters the ideal environment wherein we can best perform. Whereas Gan Eden was at first, before the sin, a true Garden of Eden for him; once he sinned, it was no longer his ideal environment. The 'cursed land' turned into his new Gan Eden - the environment which afforded him the maximum potential growth. His 'punishment' was his 'forgiveness'. Hashem dealing with the new reality and shaping the world to fit man's needs.

This is the comforting sign for us, his children. Any decree of the 'malchus shamayim', the Heavenly Kingdom, even if it appears to be severe, contains in it the forgiveness of creating for us the proper environment wherein we can best operate. It is our job, on these holy days of Rosh Hashana, to choose to play an active role in this kingdom, and to willingly accept all that this kingdom chooses for us.

K'siva v'chasima tova - may you be blessed with a year of happiness and growth. Good shabbos.

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