



The M.A.P.S Page

Empowerment Through Personal Guidance

BS"D
Parshas Emor 5785
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לע"נ אבי מורי משה אהרן בן יהודה ואמי מורתי פערל לאה בת יצחק הכהן סטאלאו



The Challenge of Unfairness

In the latter part of Parshas Emor, a sorrowful narrative unfolds regarding a man who blasphemes God and faces capital punishment for this grave offense. The story begins with the words 'Vayaitzei ben isha Yisraelis', a son of a Jewish woman who exited. Rashi, referencing the Midrash, explains the word exit as referencing his exit from Moshe's court after an unfavorable ruling, and then proceeded to utter curses against Hashem.

The matter brought before Moshe concerned the encampment designated for this individual. He was initially thought to be the son of Dasan, however, his survival alongside Dasan and his family indicated that he was the son of the Egyptian taskmaster who had violated his mother around sixty years ago in Egypt. The Tribe of Reuven expelled him from their camp due to his lack of tribal connection. He then pitched his tent among his mother's tribe, Dan. The tribe of Dan, however, also expelled him, as tribal identity is traced through the father. Moshe ruled that, regrettably, he was a man without a tribe and would have to reside among the Eruv Rav, the mixed multitude that had joined the Jewish people. In his anger, he lashed out and cursed Hashem, denied the Divine origin of the Torah, and the teachings of Moshe. As a result, he was condemned to death by stoning for the crime of blasphemy.

Compassion or Justice

This individual had no say in the tribe he could identify with. Nevertheless, this was a crucial element in his downfall. Should Moshe not have acknowledged that he was a casualty of his circumstances? Why subject him to such severe consequences for having an emotional response? Is a person not allowed an off moment?

Sadly, there are occasions when the outcomes of actions are profound and can adversely affect the lives of innocent individuals. While this may have been a painful and discouraging experience for the individual concerned, it is essential to understand that actions in this world have both intended and unintended repercussions. Thus, Moshe's judgment in this case could only have been derived from the Torah's legal framework, rather than by feelings of compassion for the petitioner.

Under Control or Under-controlled

Life regularly presents challenges that are beyond our control. A person has no say in the family they are born into. The core human task is to transform these conditions into opportunities for growth, exercising control over one's thoughts and actions, and making intentional decisions aimed at self-improvement.

A significant portion of the population perceives their existence through a lens of fair versus unfair. This viewpoint cultivates a life filled with extensive dissatisfaction and hostility towards the world around them. Individuals commonly blame their situations for their inability to thrive and attain their desired way of life. Even trivial disruptions are interpreted as instances of unfairness. For example, being stuck in traffic or encountering rain during a walk is presented as proof of the world being unfair to them. Consequently, they live life as passive onlookers without control over the outcomes.



In Loving Memory of Moshe Aharon & Perel Leah Stolov ob"m



Overcoming Life's Unfairness

The first crucial step in addressing life's inequities, whether they arise from circumstances predating one's birth, such as the family into which one is born, or from personal experiences like the sorrowful early loss of a parent or loved one, is acceptance. It is important to note that acceptance must be approached appropriately. Fatalism represents a variant of acceptance, where a person acknowledges their circumstances and concludes that there is no avenue for enhancement or the pursuit of a joyful and meaningful life.

True Acceptance

The key lies in accepting life's circumstances as a custom-tailored opportunity for growth. Rabbi Menachem Feifer, of Agudas Yisrael of Bayswater, NY, tells a story of a rabbi who was lecturing at an outreach retreat, and discussing that challenges and struggles in life were growth opportunities and that Hashem has a plan for every person. After the lecture, a young man approached the rabbi and declared, 'Hashem has a plan for me?' He then proceeded to describe his life of pain, loss, and suffering. "What could Hashem have planned for me and expect from me with this life he has given me?"

In silence, the rabbi looked at the young and troubled soul before him, embraced him, and then, finding his voice, said, 'I cannot provide an answer to your question, yet I foresee a time ten years from now, walking through Manhattan and entering the main branch of Barnes and Noble, heading to the self-help section, selecting a book titled 'Triumphing Over Life's Trials,' and seeing your name as the author.' This sentiment defines genuine acceptance. There are obstacles we cannot alter, yet our responses and future are ultimately ours to shape.

Proper Response

In this week's Parsha, the individual accused of blasphemy encountered significant difficulties, many of which were beyond his control. However, it was his attitude and the decisions he made that ultimately led to his downfall. He perceived life as inherently unfair, lamenting, 'I have done nothing wrong; why must I suffer for my father's misdeeds?' A more constructive response would have been to pursue the opportunities that could have allowed him to become his best self, despite not being allowed to live in either camp he felt entitled to. His frustration with his circumstances incited him to engage in disputes and conflicts, culminating in his cursing of Hashem, which ultimately led to his execution.

Interestingly, the Torah begins this Parsha with a similar message. This week's Parsha begins with the Torah outlining the responsibilities and obligations that the Kohanim, or priests, are expected to uphold. They are informed about the locations they are permitted to visit and those they must avoid. The congregation has access to certain sections of the Mishkan, while other areas are reserved exclusively for the kohen. Everyone is assigned a distinct role and status in life, which they are expected to fulfill. This role is shaped and influenced by the specific conditions and circumstances they face. Although individuals cannot choose their circumstances or challenges, they must wisely select their responses, as this is crucial for fulfilling their role and leading a fulfilling life.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Binyomin Stolov

This week's edition is written in loving memory of my mother, Perel Leah bas Yitzchok Hakohen ob"m, whose yahrzeit is this coming Tuesday, 22 Iyar.



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