

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
TZAV

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT  
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

# תצא

## MANKIND: A MIXED BAG

At the end of *Parshas Tzav*, Hashem instructs Moshe to assign Aharon as *Kohein Gadol*.<sup>1</sup> Why did Aharon deserve such an honor? The *Medrash*<sup>2</sup> describes the difficult decision that Aharon *HaKohein* faced when confronted by the *Bnei Yisrael*, who wanted to create the Golden Calf. If he protests, they will kill him, and will have killed a *Kohein* and *Navi* in the same day, will then quickly build an altar, which would be directly attributed to the *Bnei Yisrael*. But if Aharon states that he'll build the altar to an idol, they won't kill him, he can build the altar slowly and stall for time, and even if he does finish it, the idolatry will be his fault, and not a direct action of the *Bnei Yisrael*. Aharon decided on the latter, choosing to potentially save *Klal Yisrael*, despite the personal involvement in idolatry.

Because of Aharon's level headedness, and willing to do whatever it takes to save the *Bnei Yisrael*, he was rewarded with the amazing honor of becoming the *Kohein Gadol*.

With this in mind, the *Be'er Yosef*<sup>3</sup> (Rav Yosef Tzvi Salant, 1885-1981) questions the following explanation of *Rashi*.<sup>4</sup> *Rashi* writes, in the account of *Nadav* and *Avihu's* death when they entered the *Mishkan* without permission, that Aharon and his four sons deserved to die for their role in the sin of the Golden Calf. In fact, the only reason they did not die is because Moshe prayed on their behalf.

How can we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory narratives? Did Aharon do something good or bad?

The *Be'er Yosef* uses this to highlight a stark difference between the way Hashem views mankind, and the way humans view each other. We are generally disposed to thinking in "black-and-white" terms. Things, people, and actions are either good or bad.

Hashem, though, is totally different. Nothing escapes His notice, and everything is taken into account. Hashem responds to each part of an action - rewarding the commendable, while condemning the reprehensible. For his role in the creation of the Golden Calf, Aharon deserved to die. But in his role as saviour of *Klal Yisrael*, Aharon received great reward.

Our system of judging others is not the same as Hashem's system. We need to be mindful that our ability to pick up on the whole picture is very limited. Recognizing our human limitations and our tendency to organize people or actions into categories can create more flexibility to view others through a more positive lens.

1 *Vayikra* Chap. 8

2 *Vayikra Rabbah* 10:3

3 Vol. II, p. 210-213

4 *Vayikra* 10:12 s.v. הנותרים

**We need to be mindful that our ability to pick up on the whole picture is very limited.**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

How do we view people in a favourable light, especially when we feel we've been wronged by them?

One way is to put ourselves in their shoes. We all make mistakes, forget things, or are apathetic to others. But we forgive ourselves, let our mistakes slide, and accept ourselves for who we are. By understanding that other people are people too, and people do indeed make mistakes, we can be more accepting of injustices.

There's another technique to finding an explanation for others' behaviour. No one thinks that they are a bad person, every person has a rationale for their actions.

If that's true, perhaps we can use some thought to figure out what explanation our antagonist would give, if we were to ask him or her.

Even if we don't agree with their reasoning, it still changes the other person from 'a bad person' to one who you have an honest disagreement with.

That step in the right direction may then assuage hurt feelings, and allow for even more understanding of other people.

## You Make a Difference!

Partner with us, as we distribute across the globe, from New York to Israel to Australia!

Please contact us at [info@ohr-yisrael.com](mailto:info@ohr-yisrael.com) or 732-451-GROW (4769)

# A MILE IN THEIR SHOES

We live across the street from a girls' dormitory, and like many families in the neighborhood, we try to make the girls feel at home. A while ago, we lent our blow dryer to one of the girls in the dorm. She sent it back to us through someone else, and when my daughter tried to use it, she saw it was broken. I was extremely annoyed, as you can well imagine. The girl didn't have the decency to tell me, to apologize, or to offer to pay. I went about my business, but a few times during the day I heard myself saying, "What a *Chutzpah!*"

Something was gnawing at me, though. I couldn't put my finger on it. It wasn't only the girl's irresponsibility; something else was in the back of my mind refusing to come forward.

And then this scene from many years before reappeared.

My friends and I were studying for a test at someone's house. There was a blackout. We lit some candles so that we could continue studying. A few minutes later, my friend screeched, "Look, Esti! The candle!" One of the candles I had lit had fallen onto the upholstery and burned a hole in the couch. I felt terrible. But I never did anything about it. Nothing. I didn't talk to the people, I didn't call them . . . and I never offered to pay. Why? Because I was so embarrassed, I just didn't know how to face them. Thinking back, I can hardly believe I did something so irresponsible.

With that memory fresh in my mind I thought sympathetically, I bet that girl is so perplexed that she just can't bring herself to face me - just as I couldn't face those people then.

It's easy for us to judge others, not knowing the thoughts and feelings that go into their decisions. Sometimes, though, we can put ourselves in their shoes, and recognize that not everything is as it seems.

*\*Adapted from "The Other Side of the Story" by Yehudis Samet*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- If you judge others in a positive way you will be judged in a positive way by Hashem.<sup>1</sup>
- Judging others favourably is not just a nice idea, it's a *Mitzvah* stated in the Torah, "בַּדָּק תִּשְׁפֹּט עִמֵּיתְךָ" - "With righteousness shall you judge your fellow."<sup>2</sup>
- If we habituate ourselves to judge others favourably, though we may quantitatively have more *Aveiros* than *Mitzvos*, Hashem will judge our *Aveiros* with compassion and will result in being resurrected during *Techiyas HaMeisim*.<sup>3</sup>
- One should especially judge his teachers and *Chavrusos* favourably because otherwise one will not benefit anything from them.<sup>4</sup>

1 *Shabbos* 127b

2 *Vayikra* 19:15, *Shavuos* 30a

3 *Shmiras HaLashon, Sha'ar HaTevuna* Chap. 4 s.v. והנה לפי

4 *Tiferes Yisrael* on *Avos* 1:6, note 29