

# Deserving Compassion

Often our perceptions of Hashem and our purpose in this world are developed through a plethora of sources. Some sources emphasize Hashem's kindness, while others stress His strict justice. It is quite common for one to be left feeling confused and lacking clarity, resulting in frustration in addition to misconceptions. It is therefore integral that we understand the system of Yiddeshkeit, to enable us to see everything we learn within that context, which will facilitate a life of harmony and order.

תלמוד בבלי tells us in Tehillim, עולם חסד יבנה, the world was built on kindness. Hashem created the entire world for the sole purpose of giving us goodness. With this insight into Hashem's motivation for בריאת העולם in mind, Rashi's comment on the words "ברא אלקים" seems perplexing. Rashi tells us that originally Hashem's plan was to create the world exclusively with strict justice. However, upon seeing that the world would not last in this state, He preceded compassion and partnered it with strict justice. How does Hashem's original design of a world in which strict justice would not only reign supreme, but would also rule by itself, fit with the concept of a world built on kindness?

This quandary can be resolved by clarifying the concept of the highest level of kindness. It is known that

**"Hashem  
created the  
entire world for  
the sole purpose  
of giving us  
goodness"**

one of the loftiest forms of צדקה is attained by employing someone in need, which allows him to earn his own money, thereby circumventing the suffering of embarrassment and shame from receiving a free unearned gift. Our Sages tell us that Hashem wished to provide for us with this high level of kindness. It was therefore necessary to eliminate any feeling of shame one would feel from an unearned gift. Thus, the original plan was to create the world solely with justice, as this would be the ultimate way to avoid what our Sages call נהמא דכיסופא, the bread of shame, and would be the means to give the greatest kindness.

However Hashem saw that this חסד was out of reach to man, unless He partnered it with רחמים. Often this statement of Rashi is misunderstood, causing confusion in the system of רחמים and דין. Rashi does not merely mean that Hashem saw the world would not survive so he tempered the justice with compassion, nor that He held back the justice with compassion. If interpreted in this way, it would mean that every time we receive רחמים we are receiving the 'bread of shame', as we are undeserving of this compassion. A system set up this way would be in opposition to Hashem's purpose in creation, which again, was to give a kindness devoid of shame. Explaining Rashi in this way would not fit with the words, "He partnered them together." Partnership means they are not in opposition, but rather a team working together. It seems that Rashi is learning that the system Hashem designed was one in which the compassion is incorporated within the justice. He put into the system of justice the concept of earning and deserving compassion. Instead of Hashem ruling the world as a judge, He would rule it as a benevolent judge. In this design, one only receives compassion if he deserves it, and at the same time feels no shame when treated with compassion. In this way Hashem can fulfill his original plan of giving the ultimate good while still being compassionate.

We can glean from here a tremendous insight into the interplay between Hashem's compassion and justice. They are not two separate tracks functioning independently. Rather, they both work together to help us achieve the ultimate good.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח  
לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר  
לרפואה שלמה רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה