



DELVING DEEPER

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR RABBI ADI ROLAND

Treating the Man, Not the Act

WHEN WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE TOPIC OF A MALE Jewish "slave," we see wisdom and foresight in the way Hashem gently leads His people back onto the proper path.

If someone is caught stealing, and he doesn't have enough assets to pay back what he stole, a Beis Din (Jewish court of law) can sell the thief and use the money to pay back the victim. In a classic case, the thief is sold for six years. At the current minimum wage, for a normal work-week, this amount of money would total more than \$90,000!

Prevailing jurisprudence in the State of Ohio would label a theft of this amount a class 4D felony, with a jail sentence of anywhere between six and eighteen months. With whom would this thief be incarcerated? Other like-minded criminals, some of whom would have committed far more horrible crimes. We can only imagine the impact that living with these individuals would leave on our thief. That doesn't even include what the thief's family would go through during this time. How would the thief emerge at the

end of his time served? One can only hope that at least he wouldn't be any worse than when he first entered!

The Torah, however, takes a different tack. There are specific laws that govern the owner of a Jewish slave. Many amenities and comforts that the owner enjoys have to be provided for his slave as well—even, at times, at the expense of the owner's own comfort. Not only does he have to provide physically for the slave, the owner must also support the thief's wife and children, as they have lost their breadwinner. This means that the thief, his wife, and their children become temporary members of the buyer's family. There are also certain jobs that the owner cannot ask his slave to do, as they are considered psychologically difficult.

Who would purchase such a slave, then—and, more importantly, whom would the Beis Din be willing to sell him to? Who would keep all these laws? The buyer would have to be nothing less than very righteous, aside from having the means to do all this.

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TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

After the onset of World War II in Fall, 5699 (1939), communication between yeshivos in Europe and the Va'ad Hatzalah (a rescue council for war-torn yeshivos) became difficult. The Va'ad Hatzalah and its president, Rabbi Eliezer Silver, sought a messenger who could travel to Europe to re-establish contact and work together with Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, the leader of Torah Jewry in Europe, to plan rescue activities. At that same time, Samuel Schmidt, editor of the Cincinnati newspaper *Every Friday*, wrote an article lamenting the uprooting of the European yeshivos, writing that "they were the source of our cultural heritage." European-born Schmidt was not religious himself, but he had befriended Rabbi Silver. After reading the article, Rabbi Silver asked Schmidt if he would go on the mission to Europe. Schmidt deliberated about the wisdom of traveling to a war-torn area, but then decided that, if he was sincere about what he wrote, he must do what he could to save these institutions. Schmidt traveled to New York and met with the Va'ad Hatzalah in preparation for the trip. ❧

A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

DO NOT COOK A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK. (34:26)

From these words, we derive that it's forbidden to eat, cook and even benefit from *basar b'chalav*, a mixture of meat and milk.

Our Sages typically were reluctant to add prohibitions unless absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, since both meat and dairy are permitted foods and normally eaten, the Sages felt that numerous protective barriers are required to guard against transgressing this Torah law.

One custom mentioned in the *Magen Avraham* (O.C. 509:11), which has been accepted by Ashkenazi Jews, is not to *kasher* meat utensils (purge them of any trace of food they have been exposed to) for dairy use or vice versa. The concern is that if someone does so regularly, he will eventually forget a utensil's status (we'll use the term "gender," for the sake of convenience) and use the pot or dish for the wrong type of food by mistake.

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A RIDDLE FOR YOU

I have a good, kosher pair of *t'fillin*, and there's nothing wrong with my arms, but I only wear the *t'filla* that goes on my head. Who am I, and why?

The answer will appear in two weeks.

PREVIOUS RIDDLE:

Q Which non-kohein ate from the *Lechem haPanim* (Showbread)?

A King David. (Sh'muel I 21:7) ❧

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

Authorities allow some exceptions to this rule:

- If a vessel becomes *treif* (not kosher), its “gender” can be changed once it is *kashered*. *P’ri M’gadim* (O.C. 451:11) even allows one to make a utensil *treif* deliberately, in order to switch it from meat to dairy.
- Similarly, someone who *kashers* pots or cutlery for Pesach may change them from one “gender” to the other. Since the *kashering* is primarily for Pesach use, one is not in violation of the custom. (*Chasam Sofer*, quoted in M.B. 451:19)

Maharsham (Responsa 2:241) lists a few additional scenarios where it would be permitted to make such a change:

- If a utensil hasn’t been used for a year.
- If someone is selling a vessel. This apparently applies to purchasing a pot or receiving one as a gift, as well.
- If someone *kashers* using the *libun* process (exposing the utensil directly to fire until the vessel turns red hot).
- If someone *kashers* a meat pot to make it *pareve* (neutral) and, after a while, decides to use it for dairy.

Even though some of the above may look like ways to evade a rule, authorities are okay with these deviations—the rule is merely a custom, and these exceptions don’t directly contradict it. Additionally, these cases don’t lend themselves to the kind of repetition that the custom was designed to avoid. 🕒

Treating the Man CONTINUED

But here is where we see Hashem’s wisdom and the proper way He deals with His creations.

What causes a person to steal? A lack of respect for others and their property, a callousness towards adherence to the Torah’s laws, and also, possibly, desperation. When the thief and his family come to the home of his new master, they will interact with this man and his family. They will see the respect the owner affords his slave and his family, through their interactions with him, and by that which he is not allowed to ask the slave

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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

HERE’S A POSTSCRIPT TO LAST WEEK’S STORY.

Years had passed since the fateful car auction, when Yoni had lost a thousand dollars. Yoni’s younger brother was now engaged, and Yoni bought himself a long-awaited new suit.

The day came to travel to the wedding, which was taking place outside New York.

Sara called her husband at work. “I want to get on the road as soon as possible after you get home,” she said, “so I’m packing the car now.”

Yoni agreed, and a half hour after he returned home, they were on the road.

The next day, as Yoni was getting dressed for the wedding, he asked Sara where she had put his suit. Sara began to look... and look... and she couldn’t find it.

“I guess I forgot it in New York, Yoni. I’m so sorry!”

to do. They will see the dedication that the master and his family have to Torah. They will also know no want, as the owner will ensure that they are at least as comfortable as he and his family.

Yoni felt a twinge of frustration, but then he remembered the car auction. Now was his chance to repay his wife for her kindness.

“It’s fine, Sara. I was wearing a suit when we drove, anyway, so I’ll wear that one. It’s not a big deal.”

A short while later, Yoni looked through the door, which was slightly ajar, and saw his wife sitting with their children gathered around her. He stopped and listened in.

“*Kinderlach*,” he heard Sara say, “I want to tell you what a special father you have.” She proceeded to tell them about her mistake of leaving the brand-new suit behind.

“Many fathers would have gotten upset and they might have even started yelling—but not your father. He didn’t act upset in any way at all. I want to give you all a blessing, that you should grow up to be like your father!” 🕒

After six years of such treatment and being around the master and his family, do you think the thief will emerge better or worse than when he first came in?

How incredible is Hashem’s wisdom! 🕒

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