

**It would be a sacrilege to You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the righteous along with the wicked; so the righteous will be like the wicked. It would be a sacrilege to You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?” (18:25)**

Certainly, everyone at one point or another has wondered about the continued good fortune of the hypocrite, a person who is a self-professed *tzaddik*, publicly acting like a righteous, virtuous Jew, while covertly carrying out activities that are ethically and morally depraved. He is living a life of sham and piety. His only concern is about putting on a good show so that he can fool people. In the privacy of his mind and behind closed doors, he is a different person. He has no problem cheating others – regardless of their financial standing or positions in the community – including those with whom he uses his mock friendship to maintain appearances.

In his Responsa, *Teshuvos Zayis Raanan*, **Horav Moshe Yehuda Leib, zl, m’Kutna**, explains this anomaly. He begins by questioning the redundancy of the above *pasuk*. Why does Avraham Avinu repeat, *Chalilah lecha*, “It would be a sacrilege to You”? He explains that two types of *tzaddikim* are in the world. The first is the righteous person who is thoroughly righteous – in the eyes of Hashem and man – but, at least, in the eyes of Hashem. This is the real *tzaddik*: no airs, no show; simply a pious and virtuous person. The second type of *tzaddik* is the one who is outwardly righteous, presenting a picture of virtue to the outside world, while concealing the truth about himself: it is all a show.

This is what Avraham argued to Hashem. Hashem would not kill a *tzaddik* together with a *rasha* – even without my prayer. What is right is right. One cannot argue with this scenario. Concern arises when someone is *k’tzaddik*, like a *tzaddik* – but not thoroughly righteous. Concerning this, the *k’tzaddik*, like a *rasha*, makes sense. After all, he just appears to be a *tzaddik*. Nonetheless, *chalilah lecha*, “It is a sacrilege to You,” because it will engender a *chillul Hashem*, desecration of Hashem’s Name, since people who are unknowing will certainly complain and say, “Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?” We now understand the two “sacrileges” and, perhaps, we are now also able to come to terms with all of the sham *tzaddikim* who are availed the good fortune that should really be the lot the real *tzaddikim*. Regrettably, people are not usually able to discern the difference between the “chameleon” and the real thing, thus causing them to question Hashem when the imposter receives his due.