

## The Rock! His works are flawless, for all His ways are just. (32:4)

People go through life living a dream – a dream that allows them to believe that they can get away with what they wish. They are granted free will, so that they may choose whatever lifestyle suits their fancy. They even begin to think that Hashem does not frown upon what they do. Proof positive is that nothing happens to them. No bolt of lightning strikes them when they bite into a succulent portion of non-kosher food. They blatantly desecrate the holy *Shabbos* – seemingly with impunity. If Hashem really cares, why does He not do something about it? Apparently, the days of *shemiras ha'mitzvos*, *mitzvah* observance, are bygone and the Torah's commandments are archaic. They have convinced themselves of this foolishness, because it eases their conscience.

If we would know the pain that Hashem experiences when His children sin, we would think and act differently. Imagine an earthly father who has given his child everything, asking very little in return. When the child rebels and does everything that displeases the father, is there any doubt that the father is in pain, that he suffers greatly as a result of this child's insolence? Why do we not take this into account when we act out our fantasies, when we allow our *bechirah chafshis*, free-will, to run roughshod over everything that Hashem has commanded us not to do? The answer is that the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, has convinced us that we can get away with it. Reward and punishment are fairy tales. One need not worry. We have no accountability. This is what the *yetzer hora* would have us think.

The Torah teaches otherwise. Hashem is just. His ways are wholesome. We will be rewarded for our good deeds and positive actions, and we will pay for our sins. **Horav Lazer Brody, Shlita**, offers an inspirational analogy which is profound in its simplicity. A man enters a fancy restaurant. This is no simple food establishment. It caters only to the effete rich. The valets who are parking the cars are quite comfortable behind the wheel of a Bentley, because this is what they are accustomed to parking. After being seated at a table in the most exclusive section of the restaurant, the man begins to order. Duck liver roasted in wine. This is only the appetizer. The entrée is a two-inch Kobe steak sautéed in exotic vegetables. He orders a thirty-year-old chateau wine. For dessert, he enjoys a healthy serving of a decadent chocolate mousse cake. This is accompanied by a glass of the finest French cognac. He then lights up a Cuban cigar, and his evening is complete.

After resting for a while and checking his emails, he asks the waiter for his bill. The waiter complies and returns with his bill, ensconced in a hand-stitched leather holder. The man opens the holder, removes the bill, and gasps. He almost passes out when he sees that his little foray into the restaurant has cost him seven hundred dollars – and this does not even include the tip for the waiter! He begins to scream, "How dare you charge me so much money for dinner?" The waiter stands there calmly and replies, "Sir, it was you who ate. The prices for each course are clearly marked on the menu. You will either pay, or I will be compelled to refer you to the authorities."

The analogy is quite clear and simple to understand. The restaurant is this wonderful world which Hashem created just for us to enjoy. All of the entrees and courses on the menu are the earthly pleasures which are available for us to enjoy. There is, however, a price to pay for each bit of enjoyment. Nothing is free. We eat – we pay. It is as simple as that. There are no free rides. Those of us who choose to live a life of physical pleasure and materialism can do so. We must remember that, of course, we will have to pay a heavy price. If we are going to have an expensive meal, then the price on the bill will be equally high.

Everything which we do on this world is recorded in Heaven. At the end of our mortal journey, when we finish enjoying our worldly pleasure, we will be called to pay up. It is then that we will realize that all of His ways are just. We are not being punished – absolutely not! We are just being given the bill for our stay on this world.