

In the beginning of G-d's creating. (1:1)

Elokim is the Name of Hashem which denotes the attribute of *Middas Ha'Din*, Strict Justice. *Rashi* quotes the *Midrash* that posits that: *Bitchilah*, at first, *alah b'machshavto*, it entered "His mind" to create the world with *Din*, Justice; *Ra'ah*, He saw, that *ein ha'olam miskayeim*, the world under strict judgment cannot survive; He added *Rachamim*, the Attribute of Mercy, to temper the *Din*. Justice is the ideal state of the world, with man being treated as he deserves. If he acts inappropriately – he is punished. If he is virtuous – he receives reward. It is tit-for-tat, according to one's deeds. However, as we probably all know, man is not perfect and he certainly is unable to survive under such harsh scrutiny. Without compassion from upon High we do not stand a chance. Hashem knew this; thus, He added a dose of mercy.

We derive from here that *Din* and *Rachamim* are in partnership with one another, working in tandem, so that man may survive. Thus, in 2:4: *B'yom asos Hashem Elokim es eretz v'shomayim*, "In the day that Hashem (Mercy) *Elokim* (Justice) made earth and heaven," Mercy preceded Justice, in order for us to make it. *Horav Leib Heyman*, *zl*, explains that, with Mercy as the tool for tempering Strict Justice, we are able to understand somewhat and come to grips with some of the more "challenging" events throughout history.

First and foremost, the Holocaust stands alone as the most dreadful, cataclysmic destruction to strike our People. Whoever survived; whoever lived through that dark period in time; whoever has studied it in history, reading about it, getting to know it through various forms of media, is immediately confronted with the question: How could such a tragedy happen? There is no clear historic parallel to the insidious evil, the brutality, the torture, the death followed by cremation to which we as a nation were subjected. Undoubtedly, many Jews reneged their faith as a result of the overwhelming questions that gnawed at them, while others became stronger, more deeply committed. We have no right to stand in judgment, when we cannot even begin to fathom what these people endured. The purpose of this thesis is to learn, to see, to acknowledge and to appreciate how *Middas Din* and *Middas Rachamim* work together to maintain Hashem's world.

When our people were slaves in Egypt, Moshe *Rabbeinu* "complained": *Lamah ha'reisosa la'am ha'zeh?* "Why have You done evil to this people?" *U'mei'az baasi l'Pharaoh*, "From the time I went to *Pharaoh*." (*Shemos* 5:22) Moshe said to Hashem that the enslavement worsened for the Jews from the time that he appeared before *Pharaoh*. Later, as they all stood at the banks of the Red Sea following the drowning of the Egyptians, Moshe sang, *Az Yashir*, a song to Hashem commencing with the word, *az*; the same word with which he had complained, he now sang praise.

This is the secret: patience. Wait it out. Moshe now understood why the Jewish nation had to undergo the crucible of Egypt. The revelation to which they had been privy at the Red Sea could never have occurred had they not lived through the Egyptian slavery. In accordance with a powerful dynamic evinced throughout history, redemption is the consequence of suffering. Moshe now saw the relationship between the exile and the redemption with clarity. The ambiguities that

had earlier plagued him had dissipated; the smoke had cleared. He saw the connection. Without the exile, there would have been no *Krias Yam Suf*, Splitting of the Red Sea.

As mentioned earlier, a full partnership exists between *Rachamim* and *Din* in this world. Whatever portion one removes from the “kitty,” the other must likewise remove a portion. Each action that one performs warrants a parallel action from the other. Thus, when *Din* has its day in court, when the Attribute of Strict Justice sees to it that man’s actions are scrutinized and disciplined, then Mercy must have an equal share consoling, comforting, soothing and manifesting the love that has never left.

In the well-known *pasuk* in *Sefer Iyov* (8:7), *V’hayah reishischa mitzaar v’acharischa yisgeh me’od*, “Then, though your beginning was insignificant, your end will flourish exceedingly”, *Mitzaar* is translated as: little/of no consequence/insignificant. The *Midrash Yalkut Shemoni* translates *mitzaar* as being derived from *tzaar*, pain/trouble. Thus, the *pasuk* is teaching: One who suffers in the beginning will eventually have it good at the end. Mercy has to have its portion.

Let us return to the Shoah. No one questions that those were very dark years for our people. The days were dark because the average person had great difficulty seeing Hashem. He was so overwrought with pain and troubles that his mind was too clouded, his heart too heavy and his eyes too myopic to see Hashem’s Presence orchestrating events. Every survivor has a book of miracles which he could publish. We did not understand then. Three years later, however, when the nations of the world, who normally lose no love for the Jews, assembled and declared that Eretz Yisrael should be returned to the Jewish People – they still did not understand! Nothing “just happens”! The Middas HaDin played itself out. Now, it was Rachamim’s turn. The Jewish People had suffered immeasurably. Eretz Yisrael has always belonged to us. It is ours forever. It is our eternal gift from Hashem. We could go on with this theme with regard to all aspects in life, but I want to impress upon the reader that Hashem allows for a sort of shutfos, partnership, in the running of the world. At times, we think that all we see is Din. Well, gam zeh yaavor, this, too, will pass. Rachamim will have its turn, unless we give up hope, and when Rachamim surfaces, we will not be there. Let us not lose sight of this important principle.