



G-d Knows Man's Intentions
Parshas Mishpatim

The two young men burst into my office, and exclaimed: "Rabbi, everything is lost," and even though I barely knew them, I managed to calm them down and then I heard their unbelievable story.

Their brother Yosef was eight years old when it was discovered his kidneys were failing. He was treated with dialysis three times a week, while one of the parents was forced to stay away from work to accompany him. Over time, the house ceased to function properly.

Their deteriorating socioeconomic situation affected the rest of the household, some of whom began to roam the streets. When this happened 25 years ago, there were no proper social programs to treat them.

The siblings subsequently discovered that a kidney transplant was available in Boston. They had to raise several hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund the operation and treatment, and the two brothers spent an entire year collecting the funds.

At this point, a person who passed himself off as a benevolent concerned friend – but was somewhat of a “wheeler and dealer” stepped into the picture and offered to help them in return for a substantial percentage of the funds collected. This person did negotiate the price of the treatment and surgery - and did manage to lower the costs.

Two months after meeting the man, they began to suspect something was not proper. First, they received a notice that the patient did not meet the required criteria for the treatment. How could that be? The man was supposed to take care of all the bureaucracy?

Then they discovered that the tickets the man ordered were from a company that went bankrupt, and thus they lost thousands of dollars in air fees.

Then he notified them that his house was broken into and that the remaining funds designated for the operation were stolen.

At this point the siblings confronted the man and demanded that he return their money. He claimed innocence, but they lost their tempers, beat him and took several possessions from his house as a form of compensation.

This is when they came to me. After hearing the saga, I was unsure if the police was after them - and would burst in any second.

I was shocked by their story, as I knew the man as good person, and I found it hard to accept that he was so corrupt.

I explained that we needed to take a closer look at the facts and that we must not jump to conclusions. They accepted my advice, despite their immense pain.

Our weekly parsha discusses a long list of laws given to the Israelites after their receiving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai.

"**And** these are the ordinances that you shall set before them"¹ the first verse reads, as a continuation to the revelation on Sinai.

One can easily be moved by an immense event such as the receiving of the Torah from G-d, nonetheless, on a day to day, daily basis find it hard to remember from where the laws originated.

Therefore, the Torah emphasizes that all **these** law originate from one source.

One of the laws commands "you shall not accept a false report."²

Our Sages teaches that this is a prohibition against accepting slander.

What is slander in this context? It is when one person suspects another with all the justifications in the world, but even though, he is commanded "not accept a false report."

How many times does one speak ill of his peer before checking the facts?

G-d has already told the prophet Shmuel" for it is not as man sees, (what is visible) to the eyes, while the Lord sees into the heart."³

Man, with his limited vision, will never be able to comprehend the full picture. Only G-d can really know man's motives. Until we attain such an unattainable status, we must not suspect anyone until a proper investigation is conducted.

I calmed them down and began to sing with them.

When is the surgery scheduled, I asked. They gave a date, three months away.

I told them to believe in G-d, who is the one who heals all the sick and is the one who enables doctors to cure. Why worry?

I told them to remove all suspicion from the man in question and focus on the good he has done. I implored them to ask his forgiveness, and G-d would do as He desired.

I called the man and shared the brothers' story. He told me he was searching for the two since the morning, for he had good news for them.

It turns out that as he called the police, they were looking for him to tell him that the thief who stole the funds was caught and the monies were recovered.

G-d, who knows man's true intentions, “redeemed” them, and saved their brother's life in merit of their assigning merit to the man.

¹ Shmot 21:1.

² Shmot 23:12.

³ Shmuel I 16:7.