

G-d's Favoritism and Bribery?!

There is a place for "Bribery" with G-d, as the verse states (-Numbers 35:31), "You shall not accept ransom (for one who has fled to his city of refuge, to allow him to return to live in the Land, before the kohain has died)." Meaning that there does exist a ransom before G-d, just not for murder. The reason for there being an acceptable ransom for one's soul is due to (-Exodus 18:11), "For with the thing that they plotted, [He came] upon them," which is the Torah rule of, "a measure for a measure." Therefore, being that (-Tanya Chapter 37), "Our Sages so greatly extolled the virtue of charity... you will find no other mitzvah in which the vital soul is clothed to the same extent as in the mitzvah of charity...surely all the strength of his vital soul is clothed in (i.e., applied to) the effort of his labor or in any other occupation by which he earned this money (which he now distributes for charity). Thus, when he gives to charity this money (to which he applied all the strength of his vital soul), his entire vital soul ascends to G-d. Even he who does not earn his livelihood from his labors, nevertheless, since he could have purchased with this money (that he gave for charity sustenance for) the life of his vital soul, he is actually giving his soul's life to G-d in the form of charity," hence, one's giving from the money he earned with all his soul is acceptable ransom for his soul.

So too, there is a place for "favoritism" with G-d, as the verse states (-Numbers 6:26), "May the L-rd raise His countenance toward you," defined by Rashi as, "by suppressing His wrath." Meaning that even when one has transgressed, and there is a reason for G-d's wrath, nevertheless, G-d shows favoritism, "suppressing his wrath." The reason being because, "you," are dedicated and belong to G-d, even though you have transgressed His will.

However, the Torah is telling us that here what G-d is primarily asking of us (even deeper yet than observing, and not transgressing His commandments) (-Deuteronomy 10:12), "And now, O Israel, what does the L-rd, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear the L-rd, your G-d." Therefore, in continuation with this, G-d is now telling us (-ibid 10:17), "For the L-rd, your G-d... will show no favor, nor will He take a bribe." Meaning that while there can be favoritism or ransom for transgressions, however, there can be no favoritism or ransom when one who completely throws off the Yoke of Obedience to G-d from upon his shoulders, saying (-ibid 29:18), "I will follow my heart's desires."

After this, come along *Ethics of Our Fathers*, the book of, "Beyond the Letter of the Law," and adds on yet another understanding, telling us (-Chapter 4, Mishna 22), "Blessed is He, for before Him there is no... favoritism, and no taking of bribes." Here the Sages are speaking of one who is observing Torah and Mitzvot ("Beyond the Letter of the Law,"), and therefore, obviously of one who carries the Yoke of Obedience Before Heaven." Thus, the Sages are telling him (-Maimonides' Commentary on the Mishna), "He not take the good [deeds] as a bribe. Such that if a man did a thousand good [deeds] and one evil, G-d, may He be blessed, will not forgive the one sin for the multitude of his good [deeds] and remove one or more goods from his thousand goods. Rather, He will punish for that one evil and reward him for all of those goods. And this is the matter of 'takes no bribes.' And it is like, 'shows no favor' - that He punishes one great in virtues for a small thing; like our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him... and the reward of Esau the evildoer for honoring father and mother and of Nebuchadnezzar for the honor of G-d, may He be blessed... And that is the matter of no favoritism of persons." Being that each mitzvah is the observing and each sin is the transgression of the Will of G-d, and thus, each mitzvah and each sin is a concept of its own.

The "Bribery" and "Favoritism," that G-d does accept for transgressions is that of (-Midrash Tehillim on Psalms 17:2), "But as for You, who takes bribes from the wicked in this world, they should do repentance, good deeds, and prayer." Being that "repentance" is so exalted and reaches so high, that not only it concede unto man for his transgression, but even changes the past deed of man, that it be, (-Yoma 86b), "(past committed) maliciousness becomes as unintentional mistakes," and even more so (-ibid), "(past committed) maliciousness becomes as merits," and even more so (-Tanya Chapter 6), "(past committed) maliciousness becomes truly merits."