Respect & Suspect



**#1**

**Questions:**

* **Do you consider yourself to be an honest person?**
* **Do you think people around you are honest?**

**#2**

**CASE**

A rumor spread in town that your neighbor, Mr. Gold, a prominent businessman, has been caught engaging in illicit business deals.

**Questions:**

* **What is your initial reaction?**
* **Will you try to find a possible explanation for his behaviour?**

**#3**

**TODAY'S LEARNING MATERIAL**

After the forty-day flood, Noah assesses the situation outside the ark by sending out the raven and the dove:

**Torah Bereishis 8:6-12**

*After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark, and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.*

*Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground.*

*But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark.*

*He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark.*

*When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.*

*He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.*

**Rashi (Commentary of the Torah, Bereishis 8:7)**

***and it (the raven) kept flying back and forth:*** *Going and encircling around the ark, but it did not go to fulfill its errand because the raven suspected Noah concerning its mate ...*

**Talmud Sanhedrin 108b**

*How do we know that Noah and his wife, and all the animals, were forbidden to have sexual relations while in the ark?*

*Because the verses switched the order of the entry to and exit from the ark. When they entered it is written “You shall go into the ark–you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” (Torah Bereishis 6:18) while when they left it is written “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you” (Torah Bereishis 8:16).*

*...the raven had sexual relations while aboard the ark, despite the Divine prohibition against this ...*

**#4**

**Sigmund Freud, Case Histories II**

Psychological projection is a defence mechanism in which the human ego defends itself against unconscious impulses or qualities (both positive and negative) by denying their existence in themselves while attributing them to others.

**Talmud Kiddushin 70a**  
*Everyone who sees imperfections in others actually sees his own imperfections in himself.*

**Questions:**

* **How do you understand these statements?**
* **How do we react when people around us are constantly doing something that bothers us? What can our reaction teach us about ourselves?**
* **When you judge someone negatively, does it mean that you have this trait as well?**
* **Do these statements imply that if you want to consider yourself as a decent human being that you have to be naive with people around you and pretend that everyone is an angel?**
* **What happens when the world around us doesn’t share our positive traits?**
* **What happens when we are let down multiple times?**

**#5**

**Shemos Rabbah 19:4**

*G-d does not invalidate anyone.*

**Question: Is it possible to change your negative perception/ initial reaction when dealing with people? If yes - how?**

**#6**

**Talmud Shabbos 97a**

*One who suspects an innocent person will be punished.*

**Questions:**

* **What is one to do if faced with someone performing suspicious activity despite a sterling reputation?**
* **Can one’s desire to protect another’s reputation be reason enough to overlook behavior which might be detrimental or dangerous to a third party?**

**#7**

**Talmud Bava Metzia 75b**

*Anyone who has money and lends it without witnesses, transgresses ‘Don’t place an obstacle before the blind’. Reish Lakish said, he brings a curse upon himself.*

(The “obstacle before the blind” is that the borrower will be tempted to deny the loan, thus engaging in a transgression.)

**Tractate Kallah Rabasi 9:1**

*Other people should always be like thieves in your eyes, yet respect them as if they were Rabban Gamliel* (an especially honored and dignified Torah leader).

**A Common Hebrew Expression**

*Respect them and suspect them.*

**Question: Here, we are encouraged to suspect others in dishonesty. What is the fine line between trust and distrust?**

**#8**

**Question: What’s your takeaway from today's discussion?**