

Messianic Rabbi: Don't Let a Bee Get Stuck on Your Face

I believe that G-D created and placed everything on the earth, from the rocks on the ground to the clouds in the sky, not just to function for an existential purpose. Each piece of G-D's awesome creation has a part in the education of all mankind.

The focus and goal of our divinely designed education is to learn how to love G-D and love our neighbor. I am sure that as you read the preceding words you began, even if only for a second, to think about some of the lessons you have learned based upon some of the things G-D purposefully put in our universe as objects for object lessons. For instance, as much as we dislike ants at a picnic, there is so much we can learn from them—not only about their work ethic, but also their community-centered existence and sacrifice for the same. Ants will freely give their lives to protect their colony.

I not only believe that G-D created everything with a teaching purpose in mind, I also believe that every time we come in contact with one of G-D's creations, no matter which of our human senses connects with that piece of creation, it was also by G-D's design. In other words, I believe that G-D uses His creations, both sentient and non-sentient, to guide us through our lives with the ultimate goal of conforming us to His image.

If this is true, and I believe it is, then every situation in our lives and every interaction that we are involved in was or is part of G-D's greater plan. A plan intended to guide us and shape each of us into a vessel of honor, one He knew our clump of clay could ultimately become. So not only is every rock, fish, bird, cloud and gust of wind designed to be a blessing for all humanity, but each and every one that interacts and

intersects with your life's path was designed specifically to inform, teach and complete your creation process.

The above understanding provides a foundation for an example of one of these life-changing spiritual lessons, one that I learned from a dog. I hope it will encourage you to look at the events of your life through the lens of G-D's lesson plan designed specifically for you.

Recently I became a grandparent to a puppy, a beautiful goldendoodle. If you know anything about goldendoodles, they are both loving and energetic, and like most puppies, very inquisitive. Not long ago the dog was staying at our home and out in our backyard. It was almost sunset and raining lightly. When the puppy walked back into the house, we noticed that he was acting agitated and scratching at his face with his paw. When we looked closer, we saw that a very large bee was attached to his face, just below his eye. I knocked the bee off his face, and the puppy seemed to relax and act normally.

After a while he lay down in his bed and went to sleep, as did the rest of our family. A little while later I heard him howling; he was shaking violently, having a seizure of some kind. I immediately ran over to where he was lying down and tried to comfort him. However, he began to angrily growl and snap at me. I backed away and sat down to watch him as he recovered and settled back down.

Understand, this puppy loves me. When I am around, he spends a lot of time on my lap or at my feet. He is also an exceedingly loving dog. To my memory, I had never before heard him growl in anger. Yet in his distress he looked directly at me and growled, baring his teeth, clearly telling me to stay away. Let me start by saying that while I believe everything that happens includes learning opportunities for each of us, I do not believe that G-D forced that bee to sting the puppy just so that I would learn something. I do believe G-D uses the results of choices to teach us lessons.

In this case, a sweet little puppy engaged with a bee, which was much smaller than he was. I am sure, knowing the temperament of this particular dog, that he meant the bee no harm and was just being inquisitive. In other words, he saw something interesting and wanted to know what it was. I am sure he looked at that bee and thought, "It's so small; what harm could it be to me?"

This is exactly what happens to so many people when they engage with sin. Just like that dog they see themselves as larger, stronger and more powerful than the sin. But just like our little puppy, they learn that like that bee, sin causes pain and will oftentimes attach itself to you, often so tightly that without help you are unable to escape its clutches.

I cannot tell you the number of people over the years that I have watched run around in pain trying their best to knock the "bee" off their face, stumbling over and over, as with our dog, running away from the very people who could help remove the bee and help stop the pain.

But the lesson didn't stop with the understanding of how a small sin can attach itself to someone and become horribly painful and disorienting. Even after the bee was removed from the dog's face, the effects of the attack continued.

Hours later, the dog was by himself resting when a secondary attack hit him. This attack was even more violent than the first. When the bee was still on his face, the dog was still mostly in control of his body. He could walk, run and even make attempts at dislodging the bee on his own. Yes, he stumbled and ran into things, but he was mostly in control of his actions.

However, when he had the seizure, he was no longer in control of anything, even his body. It shook violently and was totally out of his control. While he was disoriented and shaking, he

also became very combative. He went into fight-or-flight mode, and because he could not flee, his only option was to fight. This loving teddy bear of a dog growled violently at me and snapped at my hands.

Now because I knew what happened to him, and because I know his normal nature, I just moved a distance away and let him come to himself again. It was during this time that I learned the very valuable lesson that I hoped I could share today.

When people engage in sinful actions, many times they are just like this puppy. They start out thinking, "It's just a little thing; what harm could it do me?" Then seemingly suddenly that sin has attached itself to them. They do everything they can to knock it off and stop their pain. As they do this they may stumble and fall. They often damage things and people around them.

When we see someone that has allowed themselves to get a "bee" on them that is now stuck on their face, it is up to us to help them get the "bee" off their face. But that isn't the end of our responsibility because just like with our dog, the repercussions of the bee sting don't end just because the bee is removed and the immediate pain has ended. We need to continue to observe them because just as a bee sting injects poison into the one stung, sin also injects poison into its victims. Sometimes the poison acts immediately. Other times it attacks later on when the person is alone and vulnerable.

If the poison's effects are delayed, please remember that a person, like our dog having his seizure, is disoriented, being violently attacked, and is acting outside of their normal character and nature. They may growl, snap and act as if they are angry at you. But the truth is that they are angry at the attack. They are angry at the loss of control; they are angry at themselves for getting close enough to the "bee" to get stung.

So, learn to back away at a distance and pray for them. They aren't attacking you. Once they come to their senses again, they will be free from the poison and probably won't even remember their actions.

Here is the biggest lesson of this article: You need not allow their actions to become a bee stuck on *your* face. {eoa}

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