

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Self-righteous Justification

An Essay

In many religious circles today the term *justification* is given the worn out definition of “just-as-if-I-had-never-sinned.” While there is an element of truth in this, it is far from being a complete understanding of this complex term. However, this is not the type of justification we want to examine today. The type of justification on our plate today is self-justification. The interesting thing about this type of justification is that the above definition fits it very nicely as well. When one sees this, it begins to show just how treacherous such an act can be towards his overall well-being. Let’s see if we can illustrate this.

For our illustration, let’s have two not-so-fictitious people who we shall call “Bee” and “Cee”. Bee and Cee are friends. However, in the course of their friendship, Bee does something that Cee perceives as hurtful to himself. The sad thing is that Cee does not go to Bee to talk about it. It just festers in his heart and mind. The perception of Cee becomes such that he begins to think that what Bee did was intentional and aimed directly at him in order to take advantage of or to hurt him as well as all sorts of imagined evil attributed to Bee. His thoughts in this matter have taken on a life of their own. They race on unchecked, building and gaining strength in the mind and heart of Cee.

All the while, Bee has no idea what is happening. From Bee’s perspective, everything is normal and okay. He is still very good friends with Cee. Cee no longer shares these feelings of friendship towards Bee. The root of bitterness has crept into his heart. Cee has begun to contemplate, yea, even plan how to get “even” with Bee. Of course, Bee has no idea what is about to happen.

Then an opportunity presents itself to Cee in which he has a chance to exact his revenge. Cee proceeds with complete abandon and does everything he can to get back at his former friend. In fact, as he progresses through doing this deed, he finds great delight in finding ways he had not formerly thought of to get at Bee in even greater ways. Cee has surrendered himself without restraint to exacting all that he thinks is due to him from Bee; actually, even more. Cee

is very pleased with himself and sees nothing wrong in any of his actions. He has completely justified all of his actions in his own mind and heart because of the perceived hurt from Bee.

When Bee finds out what has happened, he will be deeply hurt. He thought he had a true friend in Cee. He cannot understand what has happened that has caused Cee to act this way. Bee is totally clueless as to the actions of Cee because Cee has never gone to Bee and sat down and spoken with him face to face. The incident that happened long ago that has been festering in the mind and heart of Cee is unknown to Bee.

The sad thing about the above scenario is that it is played out all too often in the lives of people. This is doubly tragic when this happens in the lives of those who claim to follow Mashiach Yeshua, but it happens.

However, the real tragedy is yet to come for the one who has extracted his revenge. Let us consider what has happened in the mind and heart of Cee and all those like him. Cee, because of his misperception of what Bee did, believes with all of his heart that he was completely justified in getting back at his former friend. He has not one time given any consideration to the passage of Scripture that teaches us that vengeance is supposed to belong solely to our Creator. Neither has Cee considered the passage that teaches us to forgive seventy times seven. Therefore, in effect, not only has Cee wronged his friend Bee in this manner, but he has also stolen from his Maker by usurping that which is His and claiming it as his own.

Moreover, because of the self-justification entrenched in his mind and heart that enabled him to do this dishonorable deed, Cee will most likely never see the need to repent. In the mind and heart of Cee, he has done nothing wrong. For Cee, it is just-as-if-he-has-never-sinned. This is one of the most evil aspects of self-justification. The very nature of self-justification makes one righteous in one's own eyes and absolutely prevents him from seeing his own sin. Not only is it very unlikely Cee will ever see his sin against Bee, but it is also unlikely he will ever see his sin against his Creator as well in this matter.

This writer cannot say one way or another as to the final outcome of such a person, that is, if it is possible for such a person to inherit eternal life. However, please consider this: would you want to be in Cee's shoes on the Day of Judgment? I know I would not want to be standing in his place.

I hope that you, the reader, are beginning to see the terrible nature of self-righteous justification. It is an absolutely horrible thing, which may well keep one from attaining eternal life. And for what; just to exact something that may or may not actually belong to him in the first place? Is placing eternity in jeopardy worth such actions on our part? I think not!

Do you think that the vengeance you or I could bring to bear is anything compared to what YHWH is capable of bringing to pass? It is not even close!

Let everyone who reads this short essay determine in his own mind that he will not usurp the rightful place of YHWH our Elohim and attempt to stand in the place of the Judge. We are so woefully inadequate to judge our brothers and sisters, simply because we can never know with certainty what is in the mind or heart of another!

Furthermore, before acting upon the actions of another, which we often misunderstand, it is a very good idea to get before our heavenly Father and ask Him to reveal any sin or wrongness in our own hearts. In this way, one can make sure he is not acting in a self-righteous manner and justifying actions that are sin in the eyes of Him with whom we all shall one day give an account!

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