

## The RYS Daily 6/29/07 Musar Enthusiasm XI

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The fear of punishment and the love of reward, however, belong to a lower level. The Rabbis of the Talmud have remarked: "The plagues of the Pharisees (Perushim — "those avoiding sin") bring destruction to the world. What are the plagues of the Pharisees? — Avoiding sin out of love (of reward — Rashi) and out of fear (of punishment — Rashi). These remarks, however, were applicable to earlier generations. In the degenerate state of our generation, however, we have no better means. Would that we were to attain the level of those who observe the Torah out of this love of reward and fear of punishment.

To render the idea concrete and thereby to become emotionally affected, one has to bring it closer to the understanding by easily grasped and vivid descriptions, by giving it "physically perceptible form." The mind and the senses constitute two distinct worlds. Not everything grasped by the mind is absorbed by the senses. Only by concrete description can the gap between the mind and the senses be bridged, and the senses become so affected as to make them feel and become stirred. Prophets and Sages utilized illustrations and analogies so as to clothe their ideas in concrete form. We, too, must employ this means in our study of Musar dicta and in our reiteration of Musar ideas.

This means is the most effective in respect of reward and punishment. Aware as one may be of retribution, it is human nature not to be terrified thereby. "Man is not restrained by his knowledge of them (the punishments), as the Sages have explained: 'The wicked know that their way leads to death'... lest you think that this is on account of forgetfulness, Scripture states: 'And they approve their end with their own mouths.'"  
Only by increasing the stimulation of the spirit will it be restrained — by broadening the idea through concrete illustrations, by stirring the spirit through the feelings of the bodily organs, by infusing in it the things that are known, the punishment of body and spirit, which will not arise for anyone else, but for the person committing the transgression alone."

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