Dvar Torah Outline

Derech Hashem (Chelek II, Ot Heh, Perek 3): Yisurim as Wake-Up Calls, Punishment, and the "Boundary" Set for Resha'im

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman continues learning Derech Hashem and clarifies two fundamentally different kinds of ייסורים*: punitive suffering that cleanses sin, and "*ייסורים של התעוררות*," afflictions meant to awaken a person to* תשובה *before punishment becomes necessary. He then outlines the escalation model: ideally a person doesn't sin; if he does, he should do* תשובה*; if he refuses, Heaven may send wake-up suffering; and only then come true punishments. In the latter part, Rabbi Shulman turns to* רשעים *and explains the idea of a divinely set "limit" to how long a person may persist in destructive evil before being removed—what Chazal call "*מילוי הסאה*."*

I

Where the sugya is in Derech Hashem, and what's been established

A. *Location in the sefer*

- *Derech Hashem*, **Chelek II, Ot Heh, Perek 3**.

B. *Recap: "*נקודה פרטית*" of* השגחה

- Rabbi Shulman reviews the principle of **השגחה פרטית**: Hashem treats different people differently.
- A person's actions can shape their lived experience:
  - Righteousness can bring **סייעתא דשמיא** and easing of life's path.
  - Sin can generate **increased difficulty and challenge**.

C. *Transition: "another branch" emerging from the same root*

- Rabbi Shulman reads: **"ואולם מן השורש הזה יצא עוד ענף אחד"**
  - From the same root (actions affecting outcomes) emerges a new topic: **afflictions (ייסורים)**.

II

Two kinds of יסורים: general "bookkeeping" vs personal "wake-up calls"

2:00

A. *Why* יסורים *already appeared earlier (*"נקודה הכללית"*)*

- Rabbi Shulman: earlier, יסורים were discussed under **נקודה הכללית** because of the "bookkeeping" system:
  - A person with "debt" of sin must have it addressed.
  - Those יסורים are **עונש** (punishment) that "sets the record straight," even **rectifying** damage spiritually.

B. *Why it appears again: a different category in* "נקודה האישית"

- In **נקודה האישית**, the focus is different:
  - Not punishment/cleanup per se, but **motivation and awakening**.

C. *Defining* "יסורים של התעוררות"

- Rabbi Shulman introduces: **יסורים של התעוררות**
  - From the idea of "wake up" (עורו ישנים).
  - Goal: **to arouse the heart toward תשובה**.

III

Reading the Ramchal: when Hashem sends arousal-afflictions

3:30

A. *The target population*

- Rabbi Shulman reads Ramchal's cases:
  - A person can be a **צדיק** yet still have some חטאים.
  - Or a **בינוני** with mixed merits and faults.
- Clarification: "שקול" doesn't mean exactly 50/50; it means a **balanced profile**.

B. *The purpose statement*

- Hashem may decree: **"שיעוררוהו לתשובה"**
  - Heaven afflicts him **"כדי שישים אל לבו ויפשפש במעשיו"**
  - Purpose: attention → introspection → תשובה.

C. *Not the earlier kind of suffering*

- Rabbi Shulman emphasizes Ramchal's distinction:
  - Not **יסורי הכפרה** meant "למרק העונות."
  - Rather: **"יסורי הארה… להעיר הלב בתשובה"** (afflictions of illumination/awakening).

IV

Why does Hashem use יסורים to send messages?

6:00

A. *The question*

· Rabbi Shulman asks: If the goal is simply to communicate a message, why not send non-painful signals (coincidences, hints, "billboards")?

B. *The answer: people don't listen without some pressure*

· Rabbi Shulman: without a "whiff" of consequence, people often ignore the message.

· He notes, however:

– Sometimes people do receive positive "nudges" and hints—those fall under **סייעתא דשמיא** discussed earlier.

C. *Placing "positive nudges" in the earlier framework*

· Example: a person wants to improve davening and suddenly gets practical help (ride to shul, a חברותא, meeting a rabbi).

· Rabbi Shulman identifies this as the dynamic of **Ot Dalet**:

– When one initiates growth, Hashem may **make the path easier**.

D. *Distinguishing "obstacles" from "יסורים"*

· Rabbi Shulman notes a nuance:

– Prior discussion included **barriers** that make mitzvot harder after wrongdoing.

– Those are not always called "יסורים"—they can be **increased difficulty**, not necessarily suffering.

V

The escalation model: no sin → תשובה → wake-up יסורים → punishment

9:30

A. *Why wake-up יסורים are needed*

· Rabbi Shulman: people generally already know what they should work on (the "inner voice").

· The problem: we **turn a deaf ear**, so something must "wake" us.

B. *Function: prevent the harsher outcome*

· These wake-up pains help a person choose **self-correction** through תשובה

· Alternative is harsher "cleanup suffering" that forcibly expunges the רע.

C. *Rabbi Shulman reads the Ramchal's ordering*

· Rabbi Shulman highlights the Ramchal's hierarchy:

– Hashem prefers that a person **not sin**.

- If he sins, Hashem wants that he **return** (ישוב).
- If he doesn't return, then (so he won't be spiritually "lost"), he will require **עונש**.

D. *Why punishments exist at all*

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Ramchal's framing:
  - Punishments are "created" **only in the absence of תשובה**.

VI

Clarifying language: "להצטרף" as purify and as combine

13:00

A. *The question*

- A student asks whether "להצטרף" means "combine" or "purify."

B. *Rabbi Shulman's explanation*

- Rabbi Shulman explains the overlap via a metaphor:
  - Removing impurities allows elements to **fit/attach properly** (like clean Legos clicking together).
- Therefore, in לשון הקודש:
  - purification and combinability share a conceptual root.

VII

How can a person tell: wake-up "יסורים" vs punishment?

14:30

A. *Rabbi Shulman's pivot to the diagnostic question*

- Rabbi Shulman explicitly turns to this: distinguishing "suffering as message" from "suffering as punishment."

B. *Gemara Berachot 5a: what to do when one sees* יסורים

- Rabbi Shulman: the Gemara discusses what a person should do if he sees יסורים "coming upon him."
- Rashi: מדובר בייסורים "unusual," ones that **catch your attention**.

C. *Example: repeated "toe attacks"*

- Rabbi Shulman gives a Rashi-style scenario:
  - Painfully steps on a toe; later a cart rolls over the same toe; later drops something on that toe.
- The repetition signals: this is likely a **wake-up pattern**.

D. *Analogy: waking someone from sleep*

- Just calling once may be absorbed into the dream.
- Repetition from multiple angles penetrates and wakes the person.

- So too, "ייסורים של התעוררות" are typically:
  - not maximal in intensity,
  - but **patterned/unusual enough** to trigger reflection.

E. *The "message" is personalized*

- Rabbi Shulman: Hashem is a skilled communicator; different people receive different messages from similar events.
- He uses an encryption metaphor:
  - A rabbi might offer "public-key" style general guidance.
  - The person's own נשמה is the "private key" that truly decrypts what resonates and what must change.

F. *Contrasting illustration of "punishment"*

- Rabbi Shulman suggests punishment is far more severe (e.g., catastrophic suffering).
- He returns to the toe metaphor:
  - wake-up suffering: a sore toe repeatedly "flagged"
  - punishment: something like a broken leg that forces change (and "expunges" the behavior).

VIII

The Gemara's additional tiers: פשפוש במעשיו → ביטול תורה → יסורים של אהבה

23:30

A. *Step 1: examine actions*

- If one sees ייסורים: **ממשמש ומפשפש במעשיו**.

B. *Step 2: if nothing aligns, assume* ביטול תורה

- Rabbi Shulman: the Gemara says if you find no sin that fits, suspect **ביטול תורה**.
- Practical meaning: time meant for learning that is wasted.

C. *Step 3: if no* ביטול תורה*, assume "*יסורים של אהבה*"*

- Rabbi Shulman flags "יסורים של אהבה" as the next topic (not yet explained here, but coming up in the sefer).

D. *Maharal: Torah as a protective "force field"*

- Rabbi Shulman presents a Maharal:
  - Torah protects a person like a "shield."
  - If ייסורים that are *needed for one's* טוב must occur, they can "penetrate" that shield.
  - If one has Torah protection and doesn't "need" חסרון, yet suffering still gets through → that may be "יסורים של אהבה."

E. *Question about women and* ביטול תורה

- Rabbi Shulman references the Gemara's "במה נשים זכות":
  - Women merit through enabling/supporting Torah:
    - allowing husbands to learn,
    - bringing sons to learn,
    - awaiting husbands' return and valuing the Torah brought home.
- He notes Chazal's phrase **"נשים שאננות"**—women can be "assured" in this merit-framework.

IX

Transition to the next topic: the "boundary" set for resha'im

29:30

A. *Back to* רשעים *and apparent success*

- Rabbi Shulman recalls earlier learning:
  - Sometimes a rasha's "success" is itself a Divine strategy that **distracts** and prevents meaningful change.

B. *Core claim: Hashem sets a limit to how much evil is allowed*

- Rabbi Shulman reads: Hashem sets a **גבול**—a boundary:
  - How long can a person persist in evil through his bad הבחירה?

C. *Why not "just remove him" immediately?*

- Rabbi Shulman: sometimes a rasha serves a purpose:
  - providing challenges to צדיקים,
  - creating opportunities for growth,
  - functioning in the larger system of reward and choice.

D. *When the boundary is reached: removal*

- Once he reaches that "limit" (paid out for good deeds; no constructive role; no lessons being learned):
  - **"לא ימתינו לו כלל... וישמד מעל פני האדמה"**
  - He is destroyed/removed from the earth.

E. *Chazal's term: "*מילוי הסאה*"*

- Rabbi Shulman identifies the concept:
  - **מילוי הסאה**—when the "measure" fills up.

F. *A pasuk alluded to (quoted in the transcript)*

- Rabbi Shulman quotes:
  - **"בִּמְלֹאת שְׂפָקוֹ יֵצֶר לוֹ"** (When his sufficiency is filled, it will become distressing for him)

G. "הבא ליטמא פותחין לו"

- Rabbi Shulman cites Chazal:
  - One who comes to defile himself—i.e., actively seeks evil—**is opened the door**.
- Key distinction Rabbi Shulman stresses:
  - Not merely someone who fails while trying to be good,
  - but someone who becomes morally inverted—seeking רע as טוב.

H. *Final endpoint: fury and catastrophe*

- Rabbi Shulman reads the severe language:
  - **"ויחרה אף ה'... ותפול עליו שואה"**
  - culminating in destruction.

I. *Brief Q&A clarifications*

- Is it physical death, or "soul destruction"?
  - Rabbi Shulman: at least removal from this world; as a rasha, he lacks עולם הבא, and may face further דין (e.g., גיהנום).
- Is this only for Jews?
  - Rabbi Shulman: this is discussing Jews, but "קל וחומר" for non-Jews (with more to come later about hashgachah for goyim).
- Student notes parallel to Canaanites' "measure filling"
  - Rabbi Shulman agrees: the "filling up" model is a known Chazal pattern.
  - He adds a contrast: with Israel, Hashem may "spill" periodically so the "measure" doesn't fully fill in the same way.

X

In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman distinguishes between punitive ייסורים that cleanse sin and **ייסורים של התעוררות** that function as a personalized wake-up call toward תשובה.
- He presents a moral-spiritual escalation: don't sin; if you sin, do תשובה; if you refuse, Heaven may awaken you via unusual repeated troubles; only afterward comes full punishment.
- Using Berachot 5a, Rabbi Shulman frames unusual, repeated patterns of suffering as "attention-grabbing" prompts for introspection—decoded most deeply by the person's own נשמה.
- Rabbi Shulman then explains the doctrine of **מילוי הסאה**: Hashem grants resha'im limited runway; once their boundary is reached, they are removed, and "הבא ליטמא פותחין לו" describes the spiritual danger of actively pursuing evil.