**Suffering and Evil**

עם הרב כרמי שליט''א

ט' אלול תשע''ד-

We were speaking about פשט in קהלת. We looked at the גמ' שבת דף נה. רב אמי spoke about death and יסורין. The גמ' asked about אדם הראשון and his sin. Then it tries to prove from משה ואהרן that people die even without sin. It quotes the פסוק in קהלת.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף נה עמוד ב

אמרו לו: והלא משה ואהרן שקיימו כל התורה כולה ומתו! אמר להם: +קהלת ט+ מקרה אחד לצדיק ולרשע לטוב וגו'! - הוא דאמר - כי האי תנא, דתניא, רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר: אף משה ואהרן בחטאם מתו, שנאמר +במדבר כ+ יען לא האמנתם בי הא האמנתם בי - עדיין לא הגיע זמנכם ליפטר מן העולם.

קהלת פרק ט פסוק ב

הכל כאשר לכל מקרה אחד לצדיק ולרשע לטוב ולטהור ולטמא ולזבח ולאשר איננו זבח כטוב כחטא הנשבע כאשר שבועה ירא:

We end up rejecting רב אמי. תוס' noted that the גמ' is drawing from מיתה to עון. This is not necessarily פשוט.

The **רמב''ן** in שער הגמול after תורת האדם is important here. This essay discusses שכר ועונש. He quotes the גמ' ר''ה דף טז discussing צדיקים גמורים and רשעים גמורים. The רמב''ן explains that the גמ' doesn’t really mean צדיק ורשע in the moral sense but rather צדיק ורשע\_בדינו. צדיק in תנ''ך doesn’t always mean righteous. Rather, it means someone who came out well. והצדיקו הצדיק והרשיעו הרשע. It is impossible to say that צדיק means an actually righteous person for the רמב''ן since we know of too many people who are צדיקים and die.

תורת האדם שער הגמול

זה שאמרו חכמים בצדיקים גמורים שנכתבים לחיים ורשעים שנכתבין למיתה, לא צדיקים שאין להם עונות, ולא רשעים שאין להם זכיות, שכמה צדיקים מתים לאלתר וכמה רשעים מאריכין ימים בשלוה, והכתוב צווח (קהלת ח') אשר יש צדיקים שמגיע אליהם כמעשה הרשעים, ויש רשעים שמגיע אליהם כמעשה הצדיקים, וכבר אמרו רבותינו (אבות פ"ד) אין בידינו שלות הרשעים אף לא יסורי הצדיקים, אלא כך היא המדה, יש עונות שדינו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ומשפטיו הצדיקים ליפרע עליהם בעולם הזה ויש מהם שהדין ליפרע בעוה"ב, וכן הזכיות יש מהן שבעל הגמול יתברך משלם שכרן בעוה"ז ויש שמשלם שכרן בעולם הבא, וכשאדם חוטא כל השנה ומתלכלך בעונות ומתטנף בחטאים ומתגלגל בפשעים ועושה גם כן צדקות ומעשים טובים, ובאין מעשיו לפני אדון הכל, הוא יתברך שמו שוקל אותן מעשים אלו כנגד אלו, והצדיק שהוא צדיק גמור ממש זוכה לחיים, וכן הרשע שדינו נותן לשלם לו שכר טוב בעוה"ז על מעשה הטוב שעשה נכתב ונחתם לאלתר בר"ה לחיים, כלומר שפוסקין לו חיים ושלוה ועושר ונכסים וכבוד, נמצא זה צדיק גמור בדינו, והרשע שהוא רשע גמור מכל צד נחתם לאלתר למיתה.

רב כרמי is bothered by the fact that the רמב''ן is quoting the פסוק in קהלת פרק ח' instead of פרק ט'.

קהלת פרק ח פסוק יד

יש הבל אשר נעשה על הארץ אשר יש צדיקים אשר מגיע אלהם כמעשה הרשעים ויש רשעים שמגיע אלהם כמעשה הצדיקים אמרתי שגם זה הבל:

He knows the פסוק. Why only quote the פסוק in פרק ח'? The גמ' הוריות says אשריהם לצדיקים שמגיע להם:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת הוריות דף י עמוד ב

דרש רב נחמן בר רב חסדא, מאי דכתיב: +קהלת ח+ יש הבל אשר נעשה על הארץ וגו'? אשריהם לצדיקים שמגיע אליהם כמעשה הרשעים של עולם הבא בעולם הזה, אוי להם לרשעים שמגיע אליהם כמעשה הצדיקים של עולם הבא בעולם הזה.

The גמ' gives a positive spin to this פסוק. Praiseworthy is the צדיק who has all of his sins erased while he is עולם הזה by receiving punishment like a רשע. The גמ' is taking the word אשר and changing it into אשרי. In terms of content, the גמ' is telling us not to read this פסוק as cynical but rather as a statement. In general, קהלת is read as a very skeptical and cynical book. פרק after פרק is cynical but there is a positive lesson at the very end of the book. רב כרמי believes this is not at all what the ספר is getting at. Many times, after you experience a great deal and not everything seems to fit and things seem hopeless and dull, there is a perspective of יראת שמים that puts things in the proper context. Everything falls into place. This is not the way very frum people read it. They need more immediate positive reinforcement. חז''ל are very often willing to provide this perspective.[[1]](#footnote-1) פשוטו של מקרא is that you better sit through this entire ספר. The רמב''ן says that this entire ספר is written from the perspective of מדת הדין in contrast to שיר השירים which is all about אהבה. The רמב''ן may have not read the מהר''ל but he certainly understood these ספרים in the same way. So you can’t just rush to the happy ending. You need to go through the perspective of the מדת הדין and finally get to the מסקנה. Kierkegaard would say that the only difference between life and math is that in life there are no answers in the end of the book. חז''ל paint two truths. One is a more long term read. The other is more immediate. They are more indulgent in giving you a happy ending form of read, with immediate payoff. It may be that חז''ל are consistently doing this in קהלת. רש''י sometimes is immediately resolving problems by quoting חז''ל. In קהלת, the פסוק says הכל הבל תחת השמים. רש''י explains that this is only תחת השמים, but בשמים, there is something. This is not פשט. But it is incorporating the end of the ספר into account and interpreting the rest of the ספר through this lens.

רש''י clearly recognizes that פשט in ח:יד is different from what חז''ל say:

רש"י קהלת פרק ח פסוק יד

אשר יש צדיקים - שמגיע אליהם רעה כמעשה הרשעים ויש רשעים שמגיע אליהם טובה כמעשה הצדיקים אמרתי שגם זה אחד מן ההבלים הנוהגים בעולם **ורבותינו דרשו לצד אחר** במסכת הוריות **ואינו מיושב לי** על שיטות דבור שסיים החכם לומר שגם זה הבל:

The fact that שלמה finishes off with אמרתי שגם זה הבל indicates to רש''י that the גמ'’s פשט is slightly untenable. You can make a living by making דיוקים like these in the רמב''ן.[[2]](#footnote-2) It isn’t that bad that the רמב''ן is clearly arguing on the גמ'. But it is strange that he would also ignore the גמ' שבת.

(It is interesting that ויקרא רבה is topical in discussion. It doesn’t go topic by topic. קהלת רבה however goes פסוק by פסוק.)

The מדרש opens up with ט:ב. But the פסוק is slightly strange. The structure is a little off. There is לטוב וטהור in contrast to טמא. And there is a long list. This opens up a lot for דרוש:

ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשת אחרי מות פרשה כ

אחרי מות שני בני אהרן ר' שמעון פתח (קהלת ט) הכל כאשר לכל מקרה אחד לצדיק ולרשע, לצדיק זה נח שנאמר בו (בראשית ו) איש צדיק אמר ר' יוחנן בשם רבי אליעזר בנו של רבי יוסי הגלילי נח כשיצא מן התיבה הכישו הארי ושברו ולא היה כשר להקריב והקריב שם בנו תחתיו, ולרשע זה פרעה נכה כיון שביקש לישב על הכסא של שלמה לא היה יודע מנהגיו הכישו ארי ושברו זה מת צולע וזה מת צולע היינו דכתי' מקרה אחד לצדיק ולרשע לטוב ולטהור ולטמא לטוב זה משה שנא' (שמות ב) ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא ר' מאיר אומר שנולד מהול ולטהור זה אהרן שהיה עוסק בטהרתן של ישראל שנאמר (מלאכי ב) בשלום ובמישור הלך אתי ורבים השיב מעון ולטמא אלו מרגלים אלו אמרו שבחה של ארץ ישראל ואלו אמרו גנאי אלו לא נכנסו ואלו לא נכנסו היינו דכתי' לטוב ולטהור ולטמא לזובח זה יאשיה שנאמר (ד"ה =דברי הימים= ב לה) וירם יאשיהו לבני העם צאן כבשים ובני עזים ולאשר איננו זובח זה אחאב שביטל קרבנות הה"ד (שם /דברי הימים ב'/ יח) ויזבח לו אחאב צאן ובקר לרוב זבח לו זבח ולא קרבנות זה מת בחצים וזה מת בחצים היינו דכתי' לזובח ולאשר איננו זובח...ד"א מקרה אחד אלו בני אהרן דכתיב בהון (מלאכי ב) בשלום ובמישור, לרשע זה עדת קרח דכתיב בהון (במדבר טז) סורו נא וגו' אלו נכנסו להקריב במחלוקת ויצאו שרופין ואלו נכנסו להקריב שלא במחלוקת ויצאו שרופין.

If you would ask someone from the bible department, they would tell you that פרעה נכה’s name was actually נכה. This is an Egyptian name. But חז''ל are דורש that both him and נח were trampled by an ארי and made פסול. The דרשה begins with the פסוק in קהלת and ends up in the פסוק of אחרי מות when it begins talking about how נדב ואביהו had the same fate as קרח ועדתו. They died while doing the עבודה. This is the style of מדרש in many cases.

Robert Shurer, a professor of economics quote the פסוק of מקרה אחד. He said that this verse was clarified to him when he spoke to רב כרמי about it. The word מקרה gives the sense of things happening for no apparent reason. משפט implies judgment. But מקרה indicates that this is a world where things just happen. This is the יסוד of Franz Kafka’s works. If you read his Trial, a person is arrested and it isn’t clear what for. At the end of the book he is killed like a dog. What makes this book funny is that it makes sense.

If you start making a theodicy argument that God is God and he is good. Then saying that things just happen makes God unjust. Existentially, there is still a difference between this and saying that he acts unjust. משל למה הדבר דומה, for people who are obsessed with grades. The grade you seem to get has no correspondence whatsoever with what you deserve. The grades are certainly not random. **In פרק ח', the focus is on justice. In פרק ט', the question is whether there is any meaning to the whole thing.** There is definitely a difference, even if God is responsible.

This is why the רמב''ן quotes פרק ח'. He is upset, הפסוק צוח. It is crying out at injustice. Why are צדיקים being treated like רשעים and vice versa. The גמ' שבת isn’t at all concerned with people being treated like רשעים or צדיקים. It is concerned with people being treated the same. Eventually, everyone will suffer similar fates. Even משה ואהרן die. This means that the entire discussion in שבת is really concerned with death. There is nothing in there about suffering at all, just death.

The מדרש in קהלת רבה are not all about suffering but rather about deprivation. There is an important philosophical distinction here. (On Blindness-authored by two philosophers, Mckee and Mulligan, one of which was blind almost from birth. Even though Mulligan, the blind philosopher, was Hegellian, beggars can’t be choosers.) Mulligan argued that deprivation is not suffering. Blindness is therefore not suffering. Mulligan explains that he is not happy in the morning because of his relationships and his work. He doesn’t feel upset about his lack of sight. So being blind is not per say evil. This is despite the fact that people would pick something like hay fever (which is evil) over blindness.

יד' אלול-

Why are we punished? In general philosophy, there is the formulation of **rehabilitation**.[[3]](#footnote-3) This means that punishment will make someone a better person. Today, most philosophers don’t appeal to this. However, even though this is not לכתחילה the purpose of punishment, you ought to בדיעבד make it positive also. So if he is going to be sitting in prison, may as well make it educational and rehabilitating. רב כרמי’s father said that this was פשט behind עבד עברי. This is a rehabilitative punishment. He doesn’t rot in jail. In יהדות, prison doesn’t play a role. Prison isn’t rehabilitative but rather just depressing. Also, a foster home would be more positive for this גנב. (Historically, Jews did have prison systems. Some suggest that Jewish punishment got more intense in late-medieval ספרד because there was a threat that the non-Jews would take over if they didn’t take control of their community.) (Charles Kohlson[[4]](#footnote-4) said, “anyone who has ever been in a prison never wants to be back there even to visit. Once you live with that smell, you do anything to not go back to that smell.” In his case, he actually became a different person.)

There is also **deterrence**. The threat of punishment will deter the behavior or other people from doing so.

**כפרה** is another possibility in the Jewish framework. It is unclear how this works. The fact that I get מלקות gives me atonement for eating חזר. I can understand why this would be a deterrence.

Another very important word in the theory of punishment is **retribution**. You deserve this punishment. In a cosmic sense, a Jew eating חזר is a bad thing. A Jew getting flogged is also bad. But somehow, a flogging after a חזר eating isn’t as bad. You are correcting some kind of imbalance. This is an interesting concept that relates to כפרה as well. Lines like, “I have done my time,” or “I have paid my debt to society” are sometimes heard. There is this concept of retribution in secular society, even without תשובה. The person is exactly the same in terms of רע and טוב, but they have a clean slate. This is what חז''ל say about צדיקים receiving punishment. They get extra punishment so that when they come to עולם הבא, they have all of their מצות and no עבירות. It seems that somehow punishment corrects some kind of cosmic imbalance.

There is another theory, **expressive theory**, which incorporates more of a טעם המצוה. A society shows what we think by condemning in action certain transgressions. משל למה הדבר דומה, the NFL permanently suspending an athlete that beats his wife.

All of this becomes sharper when we talk about יסורין של אהבה.

(The רמב''ם disparages the Hallam Philosophers. From their point of view, every piece of suffering has to be balanced in some way. רס''ג also believed that it had to balance out. Even an animal that suffers would have to be repaid in reward. The IOUs have to be cashed in. One who suffers is repaid in turn. The רמב''ם was less interested in this. He claims that this entire view came in to Judaism through Hallam and wasn’t actually a Jewish idea. One problem with the רמב''ם is that he had a big megaphone. So when he says no one really holds by this position, people tend to not hold to it. But we don’t really know whether people were really saying this before him. It could have been that they had a different פשט in a certain גמ'. It may be that the רמב''ם is ignoring certain גמ's. He can’t handle the concept of someone being totally innocent and cashing in their chips that they got from undeserved punishment.)

It may be that if a person doesn’t interpret suffering as punishment, then it doesn’t help. But if you believe that suffering inherently is dignifying and facilitates spiritual growth, then it may have a role even for those who are perfect. It takes you out of the rut of עולם הזה and makes you into a less physical person. The דרשות הר''ן and the מהר''ל have approaches such as this.

Warning, רמב''ם הלכות תענית.

The **גמ' ברכות דף ה** is essential for this discussion. אגדה-discussions many times come from א''י. רבא doesn’t speak about יסורין של אהבה.

אמר רבא אמר רב סחורה אמר רב הונא: כל שהקדוש ברוך הוא חפץ בו - מדכאו ביסורין, שנאמר: +ישעיהו נ"ג+ וה' חפץ דכאו החלי; יכול אפילו לא קבלם מאהבה - תלמוד לומר +ישעיהו נ"ג+ אם תשים אשם נפשו, מה אשם לדעת - אף יסורין לדעת. ואם קבלם מה שכרו - +ישעיהו נ"ג+ יראה זרע יאריך ימים; ולא עוד אלא שתלמודו מתקיים בידו, שנאמר: +ישעיהו נ"ג+ וחפץ ה' בידו יצלח.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ה עמוד א

Notice, that רבא doesn’t mention יסורין של אהבה but rather simply says that this shows the רבונו של עולם’s favor for the person.

פליגי בה רבי יעקב בר אידי ורבי אחא בר חנינא, חד אמר: אלו הם יסורין של אהבה - כל שאין בהן בטול תורה, שנאמר: אשרי הגבר אשר תיסרנו יה ומתורתך תלמדנו; וחד אמר: אלו הן יסורין של אהבה - כל שאין בהן בטול תפלה, שנאמר: +תהלים ס"ו+ ברוך אלהים אשר לא הסיר תפלתי וחסדו מאתי.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ה עמוד א

There may be two reasons behind this בר פלוגתא. One is, if יסורין של אהבה are meant to give me more עולם הבא, then it doesn’t make sense to prevent me from getting more עולם הבא through יסורין. Alternatively, we could suggest that if this is all about אהבה, then it wouldn’t make sense to prevent things like תורה and תפילה which are expressions of אהבה and דביקות through יסורין. This is a תרתי דסתרי.

אמר להו רבי אבא בריה דרבי חייא בר אבא, הכי אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן: אלו ואלו יסורין של אהבה הן, שנאמר: כי את אשר יאהב ה' יוכיח; אלא מה תלמוד לומר ומתורתך תלמדנו? - אל תקרי תלמדנו אלא תלמדנו; דבר זה מתורתך תלמדנו; קל וחומר משן ועין: מה שן ועין שהן אחד מאבריו של אדם - עבד יוצא בהן לחרות, יסורין שממרקין כל גופו של אדם - על אחת כמה וכמה, והיינו דרבי שמעון בן לקיש, דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: נאמר ברית במלח ונאמר ברית ביסורין; נאמר ברית במלח, דכתיב +ויקרא ב'+ ולא תשבית מלח ברית, ונאמר ברית ביסורין, דכתיב: +דברים כ"ח+ אלה דברי הברית. מה ברית - האמור במלח - מלח ממתקת את הבשר, אף ברית האמור ביסורין - יסורין ממרקין כל עונותיו של אדם.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ה עמוד א

רב קוק wrote עין איה in his 30s. עין יעקב was the anthology of אגדה so he named it עין איה (a פסוק in איוב and also stands for אברהם יצחק הכהן). In the 80s, they eventually published it. In אות לא' here, he speaks about this מחלוקת concerning יסורין של אהבה. For רב קוק, יסורין של אהבה aid people in reaching certain levels of spirituality that they could not attain otherwise. This could explain why even those who are perfect could still experience יסורין של אהבה. This doesn’t require a magical explanation of wiping slates clean or giving זכויות. Rather, יסורין bring people to higher states. How יסורין do that brings us to our discussion from before. This explains why prevention of תפילה and תורה can’t be יסורין של אהבה. תפילה is what raises the הרגש and תורה the שכל. Preventing these things is counterintuitive.

He then explains the final דעה in the גמ' that even יסורין that prevent תורה ותפילה are יסורין של אהבה. This is because they present something that even תורה ותפילה could not. יסורין can remove a person’s connection to his תאוות, like an עבד who’s שן is knocked out and become free. The יסורין here “free” a person from תאווה. This is not about supernatural mechanisms. This is about people and their psychology. It seems that making the physical marginal is something spiritually uplifting.

By the way, the fact that רבי חייא בר אבא is given the last word by the editor of the גמ' is important. רבי יוחנן is the source here. This may just be because he is a prominent figure.

Rabbi Yechiel Weinberg, the שרידי אש, was a product of Slobodka. He ended up in Germany and survived the שואה. He has a book on various different topics which is called לפרקים. He quotes a question in the name of the הפלאה. There is a גמ' גיטין as to whether it is good for an עבד to be freed. The נ''מ להלכה would be whether there is זכין לאדם שלא בפניו. The חכמים say that it is a זכות and ר''מ says that it isn’t necessarily a זכות. רב כרמי notes that ר''מ isn’t per say saying that every slave wants to remain a slave like the הפלאה’s question implies, but rather that there are enough slaves who want to stay in servitude that we cannot assume without any other information otherwise. The הפלאה wonders why the עבד should suffer even more after losing his eye by making him go free and fend for himself. רב כרמי again notes that this isn’t per say a good question because there are still many עבדים even for ר''מ who want to go free. The שרידי אש answers that even a slavish personality who is beaten and maimed wants to be free. Even this עבד will have a desire for freedom.

יז' אלול-

We were dealing with the גמ' ברכות דף ה.

אמר רבי יוחנן: נגעים ובנים אינן יסורין של אהבה. ונגעים לא? והתניא: כל מי שיש בו אחד מארבעה מראות נגעים הללו - אינן אלא מזבח כפרה! - מזבח כפרה הוו, יסורין של אהבה לא הוו. ואי בעית אימא: הא לן והא להו. ואי בעית אימא: הא בצנעא, הא בפרהסיא, ובנים לא? היכי דמי? אילימא דהוו להו ומתו - והא אמר רבי יוחנן: דין גרמא דעשיראה ביר. אלא: הא - דלא הוו ליה כלל, והא - דהוו ליה ומתו.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ה עמוד ב

It isn’t always clear what the גמ' is referring to when it says נגעים. (In the middle ages, people who developed skin lesions or became lepers created שאילות. Could their spouses demand divorce? It is interesting that in this context, רש''י says that you cannot treat your wife this way. He isn’t talking about the letter of the law but menchlecheit.) The גמ' has some questions about this statement. The גמ' at first seems to assume that כפרה is the definition of יסורין של אהבה. But the גמ' rejects this premise. Just because it is מכפר does not mean that it is יסורין של אהבה. The second תירוץ is that if he lives in א''י, צרעת involves social isolation because he must be sent from the מחנה. This isn’t יסורין של אהבה. The third answer of the גמ' is that it depends on whether it is בצנעא or בפרהסיא. If it is in public, this is too much embarrassment. But בצנעא it is just between you and the רבונו של עולם.

רב קוק notes on this גמ':he again reiterates that יסורין של אהבה is not atonement per say. Rather, it is raising a person to a higher level that he otherwise would be incapable of attaining. Before seeing רב קוק, I could have argued that punishment’s value is irrelevant of how the person reacts to his or her punishment. You could say that suffering does the job even when people are not entertaining it.[[5]](#footnote-5) For רב קוק however, whatever you say about כפרה and punishment, יסורין של אהבה has to have a personal response. You have to be willing to grow from the experience of suffering. There is submission to ה' that is proportional to the quality of suffering that one experiences.[[6]](#footnote-6) [[7]](#footnote-7)

What kind of consciousness is required here?[[8]](#footnote-8) It isn’t exactly clear. It could be that this was always considered יסורין של אהבה and the person just doesn’t realize it. Or, it may be that it only becomes יסורין של אהבה when the realization actually occurs.

For רב קוק, the only punishment which can be יסורין של אהבה are those which have subjective appropriation. If the הפסד of the עונש is the עיקר, then it cannot be יסורין של אהבה. Only יסורין which have הרגש are יסורין של אהבה. This is why losing children that were alive are considered יסורין של אהבה.

כא' אלול-

We were speaking about רב קוק and his approach to יסורין של אהבה. The יסורין must be proportional. If you don’t appreciate the suffering properly, then you are wasting the opportunity. [[9]](#footnote-9) He thinks that the same principle applies to losing children. You cannot appreciate what you have missed if you have never yet had children. It is only when you lose children you have already had that you truly appreciate what kind of loss this is. רבי יוחנן lost many of his children. He would go around with a tooth from his youngest son. In the ה''א, the גמ' brings this down as a קשיא. How can רבי יוחנן say that losing children isn’t יסורין של אהבה if he himself experienced the loss of children? The assumption of this גמ' is interesting. It assumes that ר''י must have experienced יסורין של אהבה. **רש''י** has one explanation of this:

ביר - כמו בר, וצר עצם פחות מכשעורה ממנו בסודרו לעגמת נפש, וגברא רבא כרבי יוחנן לא באו לו יסורין שאינן של אהבה.

רש"י מסכת ברכות דף ה עמוד ב

He explains that a גברא רבא such as ר''י could only have experienced יסורין של אהבה.

רב כרמי suggests that if ר''י believed that his story would offer comfort to himself and other people, then it seems obvious that this is יסורין של אהבה. The יסורין של אהבה label must be available for people to be comforted. רב קוק explains that the fact that ר''י was speaking publicly and was being מפרסם how he also got punished for sin, then this would not be comforting.

*Missed some minutes here*

At a certain point, words becomes meaningless. If you go through therapy, you are just parroting words.

The implication of רב קוק is that you can help other people when you can’t even help yourself. He compares this to the story of רבי חנינא בן דוסא. The גמ' תענית explains that a בת קול said that he was responsible for sustaining the world but he only ate carobs. The implication is that a צדיק has certain powers to benefit others. But when he benefits himself, he may have to pay a price that he may be unwilling to pay. He will deplete his זכויות. There is a superficial similarity between רבי יוחנן and רבי חנינא. רב קוק draws an essential difference between them however. The world benefits from the merit of a צדיק. If a צדיק benefits from his merit himself, he depletes his זכויות. This was רבי חנינא בן דוסא. When he tried to benefit from his זכויות, his עולם הבא is detracted from. But there is a second type of צדיק who has power, not just merit. The רבונו של עולם listens to him. The צדיק is a partner in decision making.[[10]](#footnote-10)

כג' אלול-

[[11]](#footnote-11)Regarding רב הוטנר: גזירא and נס are not perhaps opposites that by definition clash with each other. The opposite of נס would be something that is not נס while the opposite of גזירא is usually law, something that the רבונו של עולם “usually does.” Laws apply regularly and at certain times issues an edict. This is the product of the King’s will, not per say his rationality. The way רב גוסטמאן formulates his position, he seems to be making these things exclusive.[[12]](#footnote-12)

רב גוסטמאן once went to be מנחם אבל to Professor Auman after his son died in צה''ל. רב גוסטאמן said that we now have something in common. We both lost sons. But your son lost his life while fighting while my son didn’t have that opportunity. If you have suffering that has no meaning, you have no ability to respond or do anything. This is different from pain in which you can respond is some way. This is the concept of Learned Helplessness. If the electric shock is completely unpredictable, the rat will stop doing anything, even if it can prevent the shocks if the laws have changed.

Even if my suffering has no escape whatsoever, when I can talk to someone about it, this may help. In the Holocaust however, there was a total loss of meaning. This was why everyone felt so helpless. (Hanah Arrendt notes in her book that Totalitarianism destroys meaning. People knew that if they escaped from a concentration camp, nobody would believe them.) This may be what רב גוסטמאן is getting at. He is describing a situation where you don’t even have a place in yourself to go to. You have no power over even your own life. You can’t even commit suicide. This is why people felt so helpless.

[[13]](#footnote-13)גמ' ב''ק דף לח עמוד א-beginning six lines from the bottom of the page:

רב שמואל בר יהודה שכיבא ליה ברתא, אמרו ליה רבנן לעולא: קום ניזל נינחמיה, אמר להו: מאי אית לי גבי נחמתא דבבלאי? דגידופא הוא, דאמרי מאי אפשר למיעבד, הא אפשר למיעבד עבדי. אזל הוא לחודאי גביה, א"ל: +דברים ב'+ ויאמר ה' (אל משה) +מסורת הש"ס: [אלי]+ אל תצר את מואב ואל תתגר בם מלחמה, וכי מה עלה על דעתו של משה לעשות מלחמה שלא ברשות? אלא נשא משה ק"ו בעצמו, אמר: ומה מדינים שלא באו אלא לעזור את מואב, אמרה תורה: +במדבר כ"ה+ צרור את המדינים והכיתם אותם,מואבים עצמן לא כל שכן! אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: לא כשעלתה על דעתך עלתה על דעתי, שתי פרידות טובות יש לי להוציא מהן, רות המואביה ונעמה העמונית; והלא דברים ק"ו: ומה בשביל שתי פרידות טובות חס הקדוש ברוך הוא על ב' אומות גדולות ולא החריבן, בתו של רבי אם כשרה היא וראויה היא לצאת ממנה דבר טוב - על אחת כמה וכמה דהוה חיה

תלמוד בבלי מסכת בבא קמא דף לח עמוד א-עמוד ב

Talk about what you think about this. See if you can figure out editorial perspective. Is there something to be said about this גמ'. One page.

מהר''ל-נצח ישראל פרק ט'-

The מהר''ל quotes the גמ' חגיגה דף ה::

ואם לא תשמעוה במסתרים תבכה נפשי מפני גוה אמר רב שמואל בר איניא משמיה דרב: מקום יש לו להקדוש ברוך הוא ומסתרים שמו. מאי מפני גוה? אמר רב שמואל בר יצחק: מפני גאוותן של ישראל שניטלה מהם ונתנה לנכרים. רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: מפני גאוותה של מלכות שמים. ומי איכא בכיה קמיה הקדוש ברוך הוא? והאמר רב פפא: אין עציבות לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר +דברי הימים א' ט"ז+ הוד והדר לפניו עז וחדוה במקמו! - לא קשיא: הא - בבתי גואי, הא - בבתי בראי.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת חגיגה דף ה עמוד ב

There are two ways to read this last line. Either G-d’s essence cannot be touched by tragedy so he is always “happy”, but he expresses sadness to connect to His creation. This is ר''ח. But I could also say that G-d “has a universe to run,” and therefore cannot express His “inner emotions.” This is רש''י.

ו' תשרי-

We were discussing how to deal with the מהר''ל and his treatment of the גמ' חגיגה. This סוגיא seems to say that ה' is emotionally responsive. The גמ' חגיגה makes distinctions between בבתי גואי and בתי בראי. ר''ח explained that G-d only cries בראי because sadness does not touch his essence. רש''י however says the opposite. We noted Bialek’s poem in which the רבונו של עולם cannot express his pain over what has occurred. There seems to be no response to the suffering of the pogrom. This is a poem which is characterized as “pathetic fallacy,” where nature reacts or acts out. In pathetic fallacy, it rains when someone dies. Nature participates in the אבילות.[[14]](#footnote-14) [[15]](#footnote-15) Back to רש''י. He seems to be less philosophical. His approach is more useful for a 20th century perspective on suffering. How do we deal with the seeming indifference of G-d to the mass suffering of man? How do we understand the callousness of the world to the rape, murder, and suffering of the world? The מהר''ל adopts רש''י’s פשט, but does not want to apply that ה' is miserable. As much as we want to emphasize עמו אנכי בצרה, it also cannot be that ה' is crushed by the world, כביכול. So both בתים reflect our perspective of how ה' acts with this world. But the real G-d is beyond both בתים and our limited perspective.

כח' תשרי-

There is a perspective in חז''ל that avoids strict reward and punishment. There is the מדרשים that discuss עדן ריכתא, a moment where G-d’s wrath is stirred and both צדיק and רשע are punished as one. There is also people receiving עונש here to receive more שכר in עולם הבא. There also may be a difference between בבלי and ירושלמי. The אמוראי בבל, particularly רבא, deal with these issues. A woman who was מזנה and still doesn’t blow up to the מי סוטה is because she has זכות תורה. רבא is interested in these alternative mechanisms which explain why there is not strict divine judgment.

Now, we are going to move on to the **רמב''ם**. The מורה נבוכים has three חלקים. The first חלק is mostly to explain religious language. חלק ב is devoted to creation. חלק ג is devoted to the רבונו של עולם’s dealing with this world. פרק ח and on deal with השגחה and suffering. The rest of the book deals with טעמי המצות.

The רמב''ם claims that he wrote the מורה in a devious manner. He says that there are two contradictions that he will utilize, כלל ופרט. Sometimes, you explain the same idea more than once. When you explain an idea more fully than when you just touched upon it, it may seem like contradicting accounts. But that is just because the shorter account is missing facts. The other mode of contradiction is when you write something to confuse the reader. He says that he engages in these two forms of contradiction.[[16]](#footnote-16)

The רמב''ם usually doesn’t take depictions of G-d literally. He does take צלם אלוקים pretty seriously though. Just like ה' has rationality, man also has rationality. This is in א:א. We will start with א:ב:

הקשה לי איש חכם זה לו שנים קושיא גדולה, צריך להתבונן בקושיא ובתשובותנו בפירוקה.

ספר מורה הנבוכים חלק א פרק ב

When he begins with this form of intro, you know he’s getting to something big. The רמב''ם explains that אלוקים can refer to ה', מלאכים, and even human officials. The man asked, there is no indication that אדם was given rational faculties. Which means, that by sinning, man received rational faculties. So did man become greater because of his sin? The רמב''ם proceeds to absolutely rock this guy. He calls him a promiscuous drunk who reads תנ''ך like he reads a pop-song. He then answers that יודעי טוב ורע is not theoretical knowledge. This was not improved by sin. But practical knowledge can come along with lack of purity. A person can indulge in certain areas of practical knowledge that will take away from purity. Some experiences are מטמא. This is what the רמב''ם is talking about.

ל' תשרי-

We were speaking about יודע טוב ורע in the מו''נ. For some theologians, original sin has completely corrupted man to the point that there is no longer a צלם אלוקים.

For those who hold like the רמב''ן, the חטא permanently has created a different מציאות which no one can return to. You cannot become innocent. By definition, sexual activity is no longer innocent. The world itself has changed irrevocably, for the time being. Kierkegaard formulates things like this. כי השחית כל בשר, humans can drag animals into the corruption as well. This is what Kierkegaard referred to as objective dread.

(רב כרמי speaks about bestiality for a very awkward amount of time.)

For the רמב''ם however, it is possible that this is a representation of צורה and חומר. צורה is incorruptible while חומר can be ruined.[[17]](#footnote-17)

מורה נבוכים חלק ג פרק ח

The רמב''ם’s approach to evil here is united to some extent. The Free Will defense is that you have no opportunity for free will unless man is able to really screw up. This is why evil is made possible. If free will is important enough, then it is worth allowing for the possibility of evil. This defense doesn’t cover everything for the רמב''ם. Some people will say that evil is sometimes a way of preventing negative consequences.

The רמב''ם explains that there is a צורה that exists for every creature even if the חומר doesn’t exist. With the advent of evolution, people started to become less enchanted with concepts like this because the individuality of species comes into question when they come from a common ancestor. What exactly is מחלק between them? What’s the difference between two types of dogs, and two individual dogs? At a certain point, it becomes hard to make these חילוקים. The מחלוקת between realists and nomalists start to play out in this area. For realists (stemming from Plato and Aristotle), there are hardwired natural concepts in the world. There is a human nature that exists and there are generalizations of what it means to be a human being. If you violate that sense of nature, you are doing something terribly wrong. This is why any Catholic would regard homosexual activity as unnatural, not just wrong. This violates the proper order of human relations. If you are a nomalist, it is harder to think in these terms. It took hundreds of years to kick in on the moral level. Nomalists emphasize divine will very strongly. Martin Luther was a nomalist. Occum was a nomalist. Occum’s Razor is a nomalist concept, you cannot prove anything beyond what you have in front of you. Everything is the way it is because G-d simply made it that way.

(There are realists who will be more appalled by homosexuality because it is a departing from the natural order. The inclination itself is an abomination. This may be why some people in the Catholic Church are more bothered by homosexuality. At the same time, it also may have to do with the בדיעבד nature of sexuality in the Church in general. Saint Paul had said, “I am celibate. As for everyone else, it’s better to marry than to burn.” Protestantism got rid of this בדיעבד a while ago. Somehow, the Church has managed to reform itself and establish marriage as a לכתחילה while still maintain celibacy.)

The רמב''ם goes on to quote משלי. He notes that חומר is compared to an adulterous woman because the חומר is paired with its צורה, but is not loyal to its צורה. He then goes on to speak about how the senses relate to צורה. For the רמב''ם, ראייה and שמיעה are intellectual. Smell is not intellectual because it can only be experienced very close to you. Sight and hearing are dignified because they can capture far away concepts. For most philosophers, hearing is less dignified than sight. But in Jewish philosophy there is an idea that hearing is a higher form of sense. The נזיר (רב דוד כהן) wrote ההגיון העברי השמיעי, where Jewish logic goes back to the ear. The Jew experiences the world through שמיעה.

Here, the רמב''ם denigrates smell and touch. He is basically arguing that חומר brings you down. Man is a material being and therefore falls short in many respects. The more spiritual a person is, the more grand, the easier it is for him to escape from those limitations. Nobody has a purely spiritual life so you must make peace with these flaws. Don’t blame G-d, blame חומר. This is what brings us down.

In פרק ט', he goes on to say that חומר also prevents intellectual insight. Even the most fine חומר imaginable (the חומר of the celestial spheres) is limiting. Anyone who wants to understand the רבונו של עולם must face that barrier.

ד' מרחשון-

There is a prevailing theory in evil called **privation**. Everything is good. Evil is just the absence of good.[[18]](#footnote-18) This really comes from Augustine. Hay fever is the absence of health. Being blind is the absence of sight.

(ו) כי יודע יקוק דרך צדיקים ודרך רשעים תאבד:

תהלים פרק א פסוק ו

It may be that this implies that we really deserve nothing and that anything we receive is already a gift. רב אהרן’s father used to quote the פסוק, מה יתאונן. If you are alive, you have nothing to complain about:

(לט) מה יתאונן אדם חי גבר על חטאו חטאיו:

איכה פרק ג פסוק לט

You shouldn’t be alive so what right do you have to complain. But even without this, you can argue that evil is a privation. This may not solve the problem. This may just be an abstract discussion of metaphysics. Sometimes the discussions you have in philosophy is the hole in the doughnut part of the doughnut. You are discussing absence, shadows and holes. So it is unclear how useful this point of Augustine is. It may not solve the problems of evil.

It is also worth considering the possibility that suffering is a part of being human in the same way that not having wings is a part of being human. Some people have a healthy immune system while some people are vulnerable. This is their חלק and it may be considered foreign to desire the חלק of another.[[19]](#footnote-19)

מו''נ פרק י'-

The רמב''ם seems to think that חומר is really bad. In פרק ח', חומר is what prevents people from reaching higher intellectual levels. He begins by quoting Kalam philosophers:

אלו המדברים כמו שהודעתיך לא ידמו העדר אלא ההעדר הגמור, אמנם העדרי הקניינים כולם לא יחשבו בהם העדרים, ויחשבו שכל העדר וקנין דינם בין שני ההפכים, כעורון והראות, והמות והחיים

ספר מורה הנבוכים חלק ג פרק י

They speak of absolute privation, העדר הגמור. There is a lack of particular qualities is not privation for them. So blindness is a real property. Death and life are both properties, not one being the absence of the other property. So G-d causes these things. This is not absence; it has an agent. So G-d is responsible for death, blindness, and paralysis. The רמב''ם doesn’t like this position at all.

A second possibility could have been that G-d doesn’t create the privation, but that he is responsible for it. Baking to few cookies purposely makes the baker responsible for some people not having cookies. So there could be a primary divine will and a secondary divine will. The primary will is to create good while the secondary will is that there should be evil.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The רמב''ם argues that evil is a privation and that the פסוק uses the לשון of בורא for חשך and רע and not עשייה on purpose. עשייה connotes proactive creation.

ואף על פי שהחשך והעורון העדרים ואינם צריכים לפועל, ולפי זה הפירוש יתבאר מאמר ישעיה יוצר אור ובורא חושך עושה שלום ובורא רע, מפני שהחשך והרע העדרים, והסתכל איך לא אמר עשה חושך ולא עושה רע מפני שאינם דברים נמצאים שתתלה בהם עשייה, ואמנם אמר על שניהם בורא שהיא מלה שיש לה התלות בהעדר בלשון העברי, כמו שאמר בראשית ברא אלהים וגו' שהוא מהעדר

ספר מורה הנבוכים חלק ג פרק י

So this is why the פסוק says כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד. Everything that G-d makes, בלשון של עשייה, is good. If you take this argument in religious terms, and that by definition whatever comes from G-d that is not good must be privation, then there are no problems.[[21]](#footnote-21) Privations that pile up on each other start to look really bad though. This doesn’t prevent a combination of privations that hit you in the stomach really really hard. איוב wasn’t touched by G-d. But it was still pretty bad.

Reverend Henry Ward Beacher

*Missed a Class*

יב' מרחשון-

מורה הנבוכים ג:יב

The רמב''ם makes two arguments regarding natural evil. One, he explains that this is a necessity in a world of חומר. And two, these are very rare. Why does the רמב''ם need two arguments? He is trying to explain why the world is the way it is and why this isn’t such a big problem. There is evil, but not enough to make this world a miserable place. חומר is, again, privation, the absence of good. But the רמב''ם is left with the quantitative levels of evil that may question the perfection of design. He notes that most evils are those we blame people for. He is not giving the free will defense. He isn’t saying that free will is so important that it is worth to create the existence of evil. But the רמב''ם isn’t saying that. He values being. It is better to be than not to be. Once the world exists, חומר and humanity is responsible for evil. The alternative to חומר is a world that is immaterial would mean that humans do not exist. From פרק ח' and on, the רמב''ם is taking for granted that any world must be material. Even for the individual, existence is better than non-existence. He doesn’t even say this for the world as a whole.

Generally speaking, most people prefer existence to non-existence.[[22]](#footnote-22) It may be that there is a חילוק between whether you want to come into existence in the first place or whether you want to leave existence once you have come into existence. (This may be the whole point of the מסקנה of the גמ' עירובין דף טו.) This may be because we are creatures of habit. Or maybe you think that death is an unpleasant experience. But in the end of the day, מה יתעונן אדם חי. Getting back to the רמב''ם, he may be arguing that it is good to be alive, the ultimate argument against suicide. It may be that suicide is irrational, and that pain can drive someone to irrationality. Suicide also could be due to impulses.[[23]](#footnote-23) [[24]](#footnote-24)

Getting back to the רמב''ם: what makes the world valuable for the רמב''ם? For a free will proponent, it is valuable to have free will that beats out evil. Or, you could make an argument that G-d is perfect and therefore the fact that he wants it is good enough. But even still, it would be unclear where the individual falls into the picture. There is a passage in איש ההלכה which tells over a story about גר''ח. He was visiting Vilna with רב שמחה זליג and were sitting in a Lubavitcher’s home. It said that ה' created the world למען טובו למען חסדו. רב חיים said, “fiddlesticks, it is because he willed it to be so.” רב חיים is saying that we don’t need reasons at all. In the footnotes, גרי''ד references the רמב''ם in the מורה in חלק ג'. G-d willed it to be so, and therefore we can accept it. There is a certain point where there are no more questions, it is a “**Brute Fact**.” This means that you can simply no longer argue about this or answer this question. The existence of G-d is a final explanation that doesn’t require any further elaboration. The ultimate explanation stops at the point of ה' willing the creation of the world.

So the רמב''ם lists three types of evils, most of which are our own fault. He explains that many times, we addict ourselves to luxuries that we do not need and then blame G-d when we do not receive a sufficient amount of these things. But in the end, these things are entirely superfluous. As far as the רמב''ם is concerned, you cannot speak of anything in the world as not having a particular purpose. There are artists where the individual parts of a picture are all important. This is how the world is for the רמב''ם. ה' wanted the world the way it is.

יד' מרחשון-

The רמב''ם in חלק ב' talks about the three different opinions regarding creation and the three different opinions regarding נבואה. He will set up people’s views and use this as a spring board for developing his own view. He begins פרק יז' with the five different views regarding השגחה.

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The רמב''ם thinks that all of these views existed in the biblical period. It isn’t a surprise that the רמב''ם attributes different views of השגחה to the various voices in ספר איוב.

The first perspective is that there is no השגחה at all:

הדעת הא' הוא מאמר מי שחשב שאין השגחה כלל בדבר מן הדברים בכל זה המציאות, ושכל מה שבו מן השמים, ומה שבתוכם, נופל במקרה וכאשר יזדמן, ואין שם כלל לא מסדר ולא מנהיג ולא משגיח בדבר, וזה דעת אפיקורוס

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The רמב''ם rejects this immediately, nothing to discuss. The second approach is that G-d is concerned with general laws of nature, the existence of species and natural order. But what happens to the individual is irrelevant. השגחה means order.

The third view is the exact opposite, the perspective of the האשעריה of the ישמעאלים. There are no accidents whatsoever. If you think that there is no השגחה פרטית whatsoever, you have certain intense ramifications. Every single event now becomes a separate act of G-d. In 17th century philosophy, this was referred to as **Occasionalism**. Every event is a separate act of G-d. This position will ultimately take away free will.

*Fell Asleep*

The רמב''ם changes his thirteen principles from negative to positive. It isn’t that if you don’t believe in them you lose your חלק, but rather that if you believe in them you will get your חלק.

For some people, like CS Lewis, גהינום isn’t torture. Rather, G-d is with the person and declares to them that He will allow them to have it their way. You won’t experience Me anymore. Have it your way. The ultimate punishment is knowing what a human being was created for and recognizing that you did not reach that point. There is nothing worse than this knowledge.

The רמב''ם doesn’t think that the world has to be perfect. He doesn’t think that everything fits into the justice of עולם הבא. It isn’t all about balancing the books. People who do not have opportunities to develop themselves in the same way may not receive the same amount of עולם הבא. רב אהרן had said that this is a troublesome issue. Johnson said that we should think about people who have cups. Each one has a full cup even though the size of the glasses is not the same. If you take this משל one step further, different people have different potential and capacities and everyone can fulfill their potential. This is no longer per say injustice. Whether this is injustice will depend on how much envy plays a role. אין אחד נכבד מחברתו may mean that in עולם הבא, there will be no envy. No one will feel hurt by that which his friend has.

יח' מרחשון-

*Missed beginning of class*

Elman used to say that when people are not appreciated for what they do, they will become bitter. If a person believes that the life you are leading is not what the רבש''ע wants from you, you will be miserable. You also may turn envious. It isn’t just if I have enough water for myself, but rather do I have the same amount of water as the other guy.

On a מוסר level, the goal of a person should be to do more, not to match the other guy. זושא used to say that when he would get up to שמים, he wouldn’t be asked “זושא why aren’t you like משה רבינו?” but rather, “זושא, why aren’t you like זושא?”

**Max Scheler**, an important German philosopher that the גרי''ד used to quote, points out that envy is very common among academics because there is no measuring. To quote רב אהרן, if a carpenter makes a table and it is shaky, you realize it’s wrong. But it isn’t as obvious when a person is a teacher where things go wrong. It is harder for a person to accept failure when it isn’t as easy to see where the failure occurs.[[25]](#footnote-25) People will find it difficult recognizing their failures.

Anyway, the רמב''ם gives a fifth reason of the חכמי תורתנו, which you would assume at first is his own position. In this reason, the רמב''ם argues that animals don’t have השגחה but human beings do.[[26]](#footnote-26) So humans get the השגחה that they make for themselves. You get whatever you make:

וכן מכלל פנת תורת מרע"ה שהוא יתעלה לא יתכן עליו העול בשום צד מן הצדדין, ושכל מה שיבא לאדם מן הרעות והמכות או ישיגם מן הטובות לאיש אחד או לקהל, הכל הוא על צד הדין, והיותו ראוי במשפט הישר אשר אין עול בו כלל, ואפילו אם נכנס קוץ ביד אדם והוציאו מיד לא היה רק על צד העונש לו, ואלו השיג למעט הנאה היה גמול לו, וכל זה בדין, והוא אמרו עליו יתעלה כי כל דרכיו משפט, אלא שאנחנו נסכל אופני הדין ההוא.

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But this isn’t quite the רמב''ם’s own view. The concept of species is an intellectual concept. When you expand this, the שפע האלוקי that connects itself to man is more a product of intellectual achievement. This is the way the רמב''ם works. He isn’t expanding upon פרק יז in the continuation of the פרק. Rather, he is qualifying. Human beings may have השגחה פרטית but only to the degree that they have intellectual achievement. If they have no intellectual achievement, good bye השקפה.[[27]](#footnote-27) So the רמב''ם is basically talking about philosopher השקפה.

גרי''ד says in איש ההלכה (the second half) that there is general השגחה on all of humanity. This at first looks like Aristotle. However, there is a צוי דינים in a human being. There is the איש המין, the species man. From this point of view, a particular human being isn’t per say different than an individual dog. But then there is also a man who stands out as an individual, and therefore is made into a species of one. If Socrates is unique, then there is a species whose only member is Socrates. An individual can deserve to be treated as an individual as he or she lifts his or herself up and beyond a lower state. This is the איש האלוקים. Each human being can be considered to be an identity within himself. The רב is placing a lot of emphasis on individualism, on being unique. You can argue against this by simply saying that sometimes being a member of a group is also a spiritually important thing. Part of who someone can be religiously is being a member of a כלל.[[28]](#footnote-28) This is how the רמב''ן explains the second פרשה of קריאת שמע. A person of a high spiritual order would ask to be judged alongside the rest of עם ישראל. This is how רב קוק understands אדם ובהמה תושיע ה'. The גמ' חולין says that the people of highest level, אדם, place themselves among the animals. רב קוק says that this refers to people who really deserve השגחה פרטית, but say that their place is with the people.

כ' מרחשון-

We spoke about the position of the רמב''ם regarding השגחה. If you read פרק נא at the end of the ספר, the רמב''ם sounds very frum. He speaks about how צדיקים can walk through fire unscathed. There is a very supernatural description of השגחה there. Iben Tibon caught this when translating the מורה. He wrote the רמב''ם a letter noting this seeming distinction between פרק יז and פרק נא. The רמב''ם never answered the letter, which may indicate that he didn’t think very highly of his handpicked translator.

One option is that the רמב''ם adopted this gung-ho view of השגחה for only extreme צדיקים with total דביקות. It is also possible that he was using poetic language in פרק נא.

Next, we will be looking at פרק טז, which we skipped. This opens up the question of divine foreknowledge. The issue of foreknowledge is a prevalent one in the Middle Ages.

How do you square divine foreknowledge with freewill? One extreme form is that if G-d is all powerful, my actions are caused by G-d’s knowledge. So the real issue with this position is that G-d’s knowledge is causing me to do something.

There is another position that the רבונו של עולם has seen everything already. Just because I know the way a movie is going to happen because I have already seen it does not mean that I am causing people to act in a certain way. This is what רס''ג says. Knowing what someone will do doesn’t remove their בחירה.

Assuming that you like רס''ג, there is one thing that he doesn’t help with. If G-d knows what is going to happen, shouldn’t he stop it? This gets to the evil question.

(Rav Carmy quotes “Rich Girl”)

Plantiga asks whether there is a possible world in which people have freewill and yet still people only exercise those powers of freewill for good. G-d can give people freewill and still avoid evil. He argues that such a world would be impossible.

Getting back to רס''ג: you could adopt the Freewill Defense or you could similarly argue like Plantiga that it is impossible to have a world where freewill does not lead to evil.

Getting back to the רמב''ם: he says that ידיעה with regard to G-d means something completely different. This is part of the רמב''ם’s שיטה in general that ה' cannot be described in human terms. You also cannot ask G-d where he is coming from because he is not limited to mortal knowledge.[[29]](#footnote-29) For the רמב''ם, G-d knows everything. He doesn’t limit divine foreknowledge in anyway. Theoretically, you can adopt the same perspective on divine foreknowledge as the רמב''ם did for השגחה. The better a person is, the more ability for בחירה he gets.

The רלב''ג writes essays on divine foreknowledge. And the רלב''ג may be taking the afore mentioned position. For the רלב''ג, there is השגחה כללית and he limits השגחה פרטית. He also limits divine foreknowledge. The רבש''ע doesn’t intervene because he doesn’t always know. This is certainly a marginal position. If you use an Architect Model, that the architect constructs everything but is not particularly concerned with every tiny detail, than it may be that G-d isn’t even concerned with everything that is happening after the fact. The אברבנל however says that the רלב''ג is just limiting divine foreknowledge, not knowledge in general.

כו' מרחשון-

Last time, we started the approach of the רלב''ג to divine foreknowledge. The רמב''ם thinks that the רבש''ע has absolute divine foreknowledge. Limited השגחה doesn’t connect to foreknowledge for the רמב''ם.

For the אברבנל, the רלב''ג is conducting a tradeoff between human freedom and divine foreknowledge. But רב כרמי doesn’t think this is what the רלב''ג was concerned with. The אור שמח became upset by arguments such as the אברבנל’s because either way you are limiting divine power. You are claiming that the רשב''ע is unable to create humans who have בחירה.[[30]](#footnote-30)

The ראב''ד in הלכות תשובה ה:ה seems to think something similar to רס''ג. Just because the רבש''ע knows what is happening doesn’t mean that this takes away בחירה. The רלב''ג may have been bothered with G-d even knowing what is going to happen which is why he limits divine foreknowledge. The רלב''ג has many other arguments on this issue however. One is the “architect argument.” Another point is that the only way you can know contingent events is through sensory experience. The architect can understand the plans even though he has no sensory knowledge of what it is like. But to know the details, you would require the sense of the structure. The רלב''ג would say,

(ד) העיני בשר לך אם כראות אנוש תראה:

איוב פרק י פסוק ד

In fact, the רלב''ג interprets this פסוק as saying that the רשב''ע does not have sensory experience.

The רלב''ג gets close to saying explicitly that when dealing with צדיקים, things break out of the realm of general knowledge. What גרי''ד said about the רמב''ם is what רב קוק said about the רלב''ג. People who don’t reach a certain level are ignored.

In general philosophy, there is a concept of “middle knowledge,” that was developed by early modern Catholic philosophers. This is to try to have the best of both worlds. G-d doesn’t know contingent events, however G-d knows all the logical connections between contingent events. Even without “seeing” anything, logic can derive certain truths.[[31]](#footnote-31) Some people suggested that this is what the רלב''ג thinks. This belongs to the Architect’s Blueprint. But this doesn’t really work since you do require some knowledge of what is going on before you can start making logical connections.

דוד asks the אורים וטומים whether the people of קאילה will give him in to שאול. This may be an example of Middle Knowledge. You can even say that if you have a traditional approach to the foreknowledge of the רבונו של עולם, you can still say that the אורים וטומים is limited to middle knowledge. Real נבואה is personal, and the אורים וטומים is not. In fact, it could be viewed like a computer. The רמב''ן in תצוה may be hinting to this. The תורה תמימה has a ספר called תוספת ברכה on חומש. He also has an interesting discussion on the אורים וטומים. [[32]](#footnote-32)

There is another issue to raise.[[33]](#footnote-33)

כח' מרחשון-

We were speaking about why a skeptic would ask “does your G-d know about these things.” It may be that this is a אליהו question, אולי יקץ, when he is mocking the נביאי הבעל. It is also possible that he is asking what good could your G-d possibly be bringing out of this horrible situation. Meaning, he has power, but if he knows about it, then what possible could purpose could there be from this.

It could also be that the skeptic is trying to highlight the fact that G-d simply doesn’t care. He isn’t questioning the power of G-d. If anything, the fact that he is all powerful makes him a coldhearted G-d ח''ו.[[34]](#footnote-34)

There may be a difference between G-d doing something himself and therefore having knowledge of what is happening and allowing someone else to do it and therefore not “knowing” about it.[[35]](#footnote-35)

We have a concept of עמו אנכי בצרה, that the רבש''ע is with us in times of suffering. רב אהרן once heard a pseudo-intellectual ask a Holocaust survivor where G-d was while he was in Auschwitz. He looked her straight in the eye and answered her in Yiddish, “he was with us.”[[36]](#footnote-36) To some extent, it may be that you have no right to put your two cents in unless you are a survivor and have put in your two cents. It may be that you don’t even understand properly the issues when you haven’t suffered like a survivor. חז''ל also highlight the etiquette issue of not trying to calm a person when he is still angry. You shouldn’t be איוב’s friends who criticize and philosophize while their friend is in suffering.

רב אהרן pointed out, regarding divine sympathy, that this seems to be a מחלוקת between חז''ל and the רמב''ם. The רמב''ם wants to avoid treating G-d anthrimorphically and therefore will not speak of G-d as experiencing sympathy with our suffering. Heschel thought that for the רמב''ם, G-d doesn’t have an emotional connection to man. The גרי''ד thought this was absolutely incorrect. However, the רמב''ם certainly does distance himself from these types of לשונות. So רב אהרן thought that you can’t dismiss the רמב''ם entirely. He came to the conclusion that in truth, the language that we use with regard to G-d is really inadequate. As such, you cannot only choose one option. We must be willing to see that every description is inadequate but still use the language when describing divine sympathy. So we “pasken” like חז''ל with the recognition that the רמב''ם was right that we aren’t doing justice.

ג' כסלו-

Lovejoy invented the study of History of Ideas. You treat a concept like it is a person and develop a biography about it. People will criticize this because it treats something as if it is entirely independent from other ideas.

Lovejoy starts with Greece. Large parts of his book are devoted to textual discussion. But he says something interesting. If you look at the Greek world, there is a strong opposition between the Greek way of looking at G-d and the Judeo-Christian way of looking at G-d. In particular, for the Greeks, G-d does not create. For Aristotle, there was no creation. There was always something in existence. For Plato, there was creation יש מיש. If G-d does not create the world like Aristotle, G-d also does not care about the world. G-d is an eternal being who is unconcerned with the world. You could also argue that love implies a deficiency in the lover. Some have claimed that if you view the world in selfish ways, then the love a mother has for her child becomes very interesting. In particular, it is interesting that the mother does not want to engulf the child even though the child was somewhat a part of her body. You can claim that love for a child is really selfish. You want someone to take care of in your old age, someone through which you can live vicariously. There could also be a need emotionally for children.

In a Platonic framework of יש מיש, the power that brought the world into its being could possibly be dependent upon the world. But the more you emphasize perfection, the less likely G-d will need anything.

However, Divine love could be a kind of overflowing. G-d doesn’t need anything to overflow into. He doesn’t need the world. But because he is so full of goodness, he just automatically overflows. If you read Plato’s Symposium, various speakers speak about the nature of love. For Greeks, the idea of being dependent upon another wasn’t exactly that great. If you are already perfect however, you don’t need somebody to love (Queen Reference).

Why would G-d need to create the world? אשר מלך בטרם כל יציר נברא. The point is to have G-d recognized by willful beings.

גר''ח said that “G-d created the world because he wanted to.” This isn’t asking the Divine will to be submissive to calculations of what is good and what is not. From a philosophical point of view however, you want good reasons for why this world exists over some other world. If G-d could have done better in creating a world and doesn’t, then you have to ask why?[[37]](#footnote-37) [[38]](#footnote-38)

There is also a Principle of Plentitude. That we have to appreciate the fullness of creation. If there is something that could exist that G-d doesn’t create, this would mean that there is something missing. Everything is beautiful in some way, which is why you need so much variety. Everything that has potential of existing actually has to exist now. This is a rich world and everything is needed for its contribution to the fullness of being. The second step would be to establish hierarchical levels. Even evil can contribute to this variety. The רמב''ם would not be “bothered” by evil. This world is a good place, period. This is a very different mentality from someone who asks why his toe was stubbed. Theodicy (created by Leibnitz) is a justification for G-d but before it was created, people didn’t theorize in the same way. The opening paragraph of Paradise Lost is to justify G-d’s ways to man. This sounds like theodicy. There is a problem with evil that will be somewhat alleviated if you read my book. He is particularly preoccupied with man’s first disobedience and whether G-d was responsible for it.[[39]](#footnote-39)

*Missed a Class*

יג' כסלו-

Alexander Pope wrote a poem called Essay on Man. Pope represented the mentality of people in the 19th century with regard to these issues. Jenin argues that we are not aware of what the universe is really all about. So we really aren’t capable of understanding whether there could be any existence better than our own. Pope argues that we have no idea what one little change would lead to. This is an appeal to ignorance. Johnson is logically מודה to this point. With our ignorance, this could be the best possible world. But that doesn’t really help anyway. “It will not calm discontent or silence curiosity.” What Jenin is saying can justify G-d’s actions כביכול. We “let G-d off” מספק. But this will not enable people to live their lives. How can you be absolutely sure is not a question that will satisfy a person in suffering.

If our goal is to defend G-d when studying theodicy, then Jenin’s פשט is valid. But if I am trying to provide people with meaning and more clarity, then Johnson may be right. Johnson isn’t even concerned with the issue of agnosticism. You could have reacted to Jenin’s מהלך by saying, maybe it is, maybe it isn’t. But Johnson is more concerned because this סברא will not aid anyone navigate these issues. It doesn’t appear in an obvious way that Jenin is right.[[40]](#footnote-40)

So Johnson’s focus is that this may be a bad argument for this particular purpose. In the early modern world of philosophy, philosophers were trying to be certain about things. But in the modern context, philosophy seems to have become a more pragmatic logical mechanism where you don’t per say have to reach certainty. Rather, we need to reach something that is rational to belief.

C.S. Lewis was fond of saying that the question of evil would be a serious problem if not for a belief and conception of G-d from so many other areas. Now that we have such a perspective on G-d, we are willing to give דוחק answers. This is just plugging a leak, not filling in a gaping hole. An argument such as this would make an answer like Jenin’s viable.

Jenin continues to argue that the universe is a perfect system and therefore we are incapable of understanding our particular role in it. The cockroach cannot ask why it is isn’t a cat. This would be illogical if the cockroach’s role is unclear to it.

“The only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it;”-Johnson

So there is a shift in the question here. How do these issues relate to real people? What does it mean for an argument to be a good argument?

טז' כסלו-

Dostoyevsky was born in 1821. He was educated in Moscow and devoted himself to literature in 1842. He was an immediate success. In his late 20s, he was arrested for revolutionary activities. In the world of Czar Nicholas, it was easy to fall into something like this. He was sentenced to death. They lined him up and blindfolded him. They even shot, but the Czar sent a last minute message to spare him. Very few novelists and even philosophers had such an experience. Instead of death, he was sent to Siberia. If Dostoyevsky had not gone to Siberia, we may have not been reading him today. The person he became after this experience was very different. Even physically, he started having attacks of epilepsy after the fake execution. Very often, the epileptic will have visual and auditory hallucinations. In many of his novels, characters have epilepsy.[[41]](#footnote-41) There was a perception of supernatural importance to the auras before the epilepsy.

So after Siberia, he was a great writer. He produced famous novels, The Idiot, The Possessed, and Crime and Punishment. Politically, he became right wing in a populous kind of way. He was also very frum. He was a strong Russian nationalist, believing that Russians had unique spiritual insight. An authentic religion for him has a strong Slavic flavoring to it. He also has a view of human nature that emphasizes irrationality. People just don’t work rationally or consistently. This is not unrealistic. Many people are histrionic in this way. He would find sanctity in the people who are dejected and crushed. In Crime and Punishment, the heroin is a prostitute trying to support her family.

Sometimes, you’ll notice that people care more about ישקה then G-d. They relate to the victim and forgiver, not G-d. Dostoyevsky’s first wife died. He married his secretary. But he was not a good provider. He was a gambler. He even wrote a novel called The Gambler. At one point, he engaged in the greatest gamble of his career. The publisher gave him money on condition that he finish a novel at a certain deadline. If he lost, he would lose all of the royalties to his books. He won this bet. But he was very appreciative to his second wife for providing him with stability to counteract these destructive impulses.

Bakhtin probably provided the most influential literary critique of Dostoyevsky. He provides a sense of literature where you don’t hear the voice of the author or individual characters. Rather, you hear a noisy argument going on inside a framework. All the views belong to the entire חברה, not to particular people. This is how Dostoyevsky sometimes works.

In Russian spirituality, there is a concept called the Holy Fool, a character found in Dostoyevsky. The Holy Fool is capable of extreme behavior, insulting you one minute and bowing down to you the next. Yosef Chaim Brenner, a Hebrew writer, was very anti-religious. But רב קוק was fascinated by him. His prose is characterized by this Holy Fool paradigm.

Brother’s

Old man Karazavo is a rotten rotten being. He drives his first wife to her death. He has three sons, Dmitri, Ivan, and Elyosha. Dmitri is very much like the old man, vulgar kind of person who likes money. Ivan is an intellectual. Elyosha is studying in a seminary. He is like his mother. A fourth illegitimate son is named Yaakov. Elyosha’s monk is father Zasima. He had an interesting life before entering the Monastery. Eventually, the old man is murdered. Dmitri is arrested. At a certain level, all of the sons feel guilty in some way. Freudians love this novel. Yaakov is the real one who killed him though.

Before the murder, everyone discusses the passage where Elyosha speaks to Ivan. Ivan has written essays advocating control of the state by the Church. Father Zasima is not pleased with this. He has a strong perspective of the Church being the ultimate bastion of forgiveness. You go there when you have nowhere else to go. This kind of Russian spirituality is intense. Ivan is going to become the face of the 20th century.

Chapter 4-

Liberals can love everyone except they can’t stand individuals. Ivan is like this. He says, “as soon as he shows his face, love is gone.” Emanuel Levinas, a Jewish French philosopher, believed that the core of ethics is the face of the other. He has an extreme demand on selflessness. This is an intense moral demand vis a vi the other. Levinas may have been very rooted in Dostoyevsky in certain respects. Ivan is saying the exact opposite. As soon as the person has shown his face, you cannot love him.

Ivan says that a person can never appreciate the suffering of another person.[[42]](#footnote-42)

“I think that if the Devil doesn’t exist, man has created him. He has created the Devil in his own image.”

Ivan provides Elyosha with awful stories about the torture of children. Ivan claims that he understands there will be a time of ultimate harmony and recognition of צידוק הדין, צדיק אתה ה'. The evil will be recognized as justified ביום ההוא. Everyone will recognize the correct theodicy. The mother will embrace the fiend who threw her child to the dogs. The mother will forgive. But Ivan claims that he cannot accept such a moment. He doesn’t want to accept this higher harmony. The tears of the child must be atoned for and avenged. He isn’t rejecting G-d. He recognizes that everything will work out in the end. But he most respectfully declines the ticket of entrance given to him in this world. Elyosha tries to defend himself with the ישקה argument. But Ivan tells him over his fictional story, The Inquisitor. In the story, Jesus comes back in the 15th century. The Inquisition arrests him.

יט' כסלו-

There is such a thing as a philosophy of hope. You may therefore want to make the world seem more hospitable than non-hospitable.

כד' כסלו-

Rowe, the problem of evil and some varieties of atheism, American Philosophical Quarterly, volume 16, pages 33-41.

Stephen J Wykstra, The human obstacle to evidential arguments from suffering: on Avoiding the evils of Appearance. International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 1984 pp. 73-93.

We were speaking about Dostoyevsky. Ivan had promised to tell him the story about the Grand Inquisitor. Jesus appears in Spain during the Inquisition. Everyone welcomes Jesus with joy and recognizes him. He is מחייה מתים. The Grand Inquisitor walks by. He bids his guards to arrest Jesus. The guards lead the prisoner away to the prison of the Inquisition. Elyosha wonders what Ivan’s point is. The old man argues that the Christian message is one of responsibility and freedom which is the opposite of happiness. The Inquisition turns in freedom to give people happiness.

The Inquisitor says that we have accepted power over Jesus. He is lonely because he knows this. Elyosha responds that that is only the Catholic Church, but we are Roman Orthodox. In Ivan’s story, the cardinal has a difficult job; to suppress true Christianity because it is too dangerous. That is what he is doing. The prisoner eventually kisses the old man on the cheek. The old man adjures him to leave and shows him the door. In the end, Elyosha kisses Ivan on the forehead and Ivan protests that this is plagiarism.

Book six is usually not read. When Dostoyevsky was writing, a priest wrote to him that he is making atheists look too good. Dostoyevsky wrote back, don’t worry, when you get to book six, I’ll take care of it. Father Zasyma, Elyosha’s rebbe, dies. The חסידים expected that Zasyma would smell good after dying but he starts rotting faster than a regular corpse. The חסידים declare him as a phony.

Zasyma has three stories. The first is about his brother who was at first a wild kid but became a צדיק before he died when he asked forgiveness from the birds. The second story is that Zasyma was first a soldier who struck his attendant in anger. This is what convinced him to become a monk. The third story is where a murderer comes to him and explains that he can’t live with himself. In the end of the story, the guy confesses. These are the stories. The question becomes how these stories do a better job of everything that Ivan said last week. How exactly do these stories successfully combat Ivan from last week? Many people in the street would say that Dostoyevsky failed. The bad side gets better writing than the good side. Evil is more attractive. Satan is a more interesting character in Paradise Lost. But there is another possible reaction to this.

On an ideological level, Dostoyevsky is not refuting Ivan. You cannot defeat Ivan with theological argument. You cannot answer a child’s suffering. What works? You can only be converted by looking at an experience in life. Taking Father Zasyma’s life is capable of helping people understand religious perspective. These are a window into the life of the religious person. You experience what it means to live as a religious person.

12/18/14

Wykstra begins his article by noting that there are times where we take evil to evidence against theism. And, while it is sometimes difficult to formulate this feeling logically, it is just as difficult to dispel it with logic as well. There is something disturbing about suffering that cannot be explained away.

(ואני קרבת אלוקים לי טוב. תהילים עג:כח. This could be what the survivor meant when he responded to the pseudo-intellectual that G-d was with us.

Sometimes the ability to suffer in the same way as someone else enables someone to really understand the suffering of another.)

Wykstra presents Rowe’s argument for atheism. Rowe is a good philosopher which is why the people in our camp actually respond to him. He is worthy of argumentation. He isn’t like some Dawkins preaching to the ignoramuses. Rowe makes three assumptions that support his argument. If there was an omniscient being who is wholly good (aka G-d), he could prevent intense suffering without causing a situation that would be any worse. His second assumption is that G-d who was truly wholly good would only settle for the best possible world that exists. Rowe would argue against the principle of Best Possible Worlds that Exist. He would think that we are limiting G-d by admitting that our world is the best possible world.[[43]](#footnote-43)

You could theoretically argue that certain bad things is really a good thing. A bad thing can create a positive consequence, such as Hayfever leading to תשובה, and a bad thing can also remove a potential negative event, such as Sickle Cell Anemia helping prevent malaria. For human beings, this can be a sufficient justification for evil, despite the fact that from a G-d perspective it doesn’t justify let’s say the existence of malaria.

C.S. Lewis would say that evil would be an excellent argument against theism, providing that you didn’t have very strong evidence for theism. These are קשיאs, but I have too much evidence of the existence of G-d. Generally, people who are set on atheism or religion will not be willing to discuss a broader view. They insist upon having X explained to them and don’t allow you to speak about anything else. If you start winning on X, your adversary will start arguing about Y.

Wykstra brings a second argument. A theist would claim that evil can be the result of the free choices of created beings. The free will defense doesn’t imply that all suffering leads to a greater good, but rather that suffering allows for a greater good. Not allowing this evil would undermine free will which is more important.

The idea that there are great values in the world with indifference to individual situations is not a סתירה with individuals having value in the general world situation. The class may be the same whether or not you are here, but if you are here, you can still create a personal relationship. The same words can be listened to with total indifference or can be used to create תשובה והודאה. This is a way of understanding השגחה פרטית in the prism of השגחה כללית. This also must assume a value judgment, that evil is worth it considering the fact that it can be harnessed for these positive ends. (Obviously, a new-atheist would never appreciate the value of תשובה but nu...) But the fact that individuals can create a reality of גם זו לטובה, re-forging evil into good, doesn’t mean that everyone can. This is an enhanced השגחה defense but won’t necessarily answer Rowe’s argument.

**Confirmation Theory** is the argument that C.S. Lewis is making. Wykstra brings this up next.

ראש חודש טבת-

We were speaking about Wykstra. Roe claims that certain evils do not have any obvious explanation of them that would be compatible with a benevolent G-d. But Roe admits that just because it seems this way does not mean that it is this way.

Wykstra points out that we have no way of determining what the world would look like without something. Regarding G-d, if you listen to a person discussing philosophy but you don’t know anything about philosophy, you can’t argue that he is double talking. Given your state of mind, I can’t argue how things would be different if G-d would or would not exist. This leads to the question of what happens when there is no evidence. In some situations, you can have evidence and you don’t know whether you are interpreting it correctly. In other situations, you don’t have any evidence at all.

Tommy Lapid constantly insists that if you cannot answer questions, if you don’t have evidence, than you cannot make assertions of faith. Rav Lau makes a C.S. Lewis like argument. We know that G-d exists, just look at the beauty of creation and our bodies, so your questions don’t accomplish anything. Rav Lau also attacks Lapid’s devotion to Zionism if he doesn’t believe in הבטחת הבורא לאברהם יצחק ויעקב. This may be an ad-hominem attack.

Rav Lau argues that אמונה is beyond logic. He is trying to claim that there are certain areas in life where we do not rely on logic and rationality. He claims that אין יראת אלוקים will mean that there cannot be actual morality. There are certain moral stances that we take that are not rationally transparent. **John Paul Sartre** was a French philosopher that Lapid probably read. He claimed that morality is a human creation. Sartre was also an anti-rationalist. There is nothing in the world that imposes morality upon us. The only thing left is my decision. Nonetheless, Sartre still admires moral bravery and looks down upon moral cowardice. You could have argued that Nazism is a moral movement from this perspective. Why is one choice better than others? If you wanted to attack Lapid on philosophical grounds, you could say that Sartre doesn’t give you good reason to be a mensch and hero. In fact, a conventional Marxist said that Sartre is more likely to end up on a religious side than a socialist side. If this all becomes a matter of the will and free choice, such a person will end up looking to a G-d above reason rather than to himself and to his friends. Sartre started talking about השגחה at the end of his life, so תקא the guy may have been right.

This is a general question. מורה נבוכים ג:כג, the רמב''ם highlights G-d’s will. The איש ההלכה thinks that the הלכה is an expression of G-d’s will. But why should G-d’s will matter? At some point, if you believe that a person is a good person, then you may want to rely on his will. This is why Sartre is a dangerous ally for Lapid.

1. רב כרמי points out that חז''ל are different than Artscroll. They are not ignoring the problems of קהלת. They aren’t oblivious to the problems either. In the beginning of אבות דרבי נתן, it is obvious that חז''ל were well aware of the problems with קהלת. They are not just placing a smiley face over all of קהלת. They are picking up on undertones in the פסוקים.

   In a piano, hitting a note causes other notes which are harmonious to also vibrate. This is called an undertone in music. Hitting the C note also causes other strings to vibrate harmoniously. חז''ל are playing with the פסוק in order to bring out the meanings that are more evident if you have a more complete perspective. The פסוק is saying that this is the way the world works. חז''ל are providing the undertone of what the world really is. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In the ערוך השולחן’s הקדמה to חשן משפט: someone asks why there is so much מחלוקת. He answers that when you go to a concert, you don’t want all of the instruments to sound exactly the same. Diversity is what creates the beauty of music. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. עיין Shawshank Redemption [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Charles Kohlson said he would run over his grandmother to get Nixon reelected. He went to prison unlike the other aides of Nixon after Watergate. He became a prominent Baptist leader after leaving prison and didn’t enter into politics for 30 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Gram Green, the author of Power and Glory, also wrote a book called the End of the Affair. The epigraph of this book writes, “that there are places in the heart that do not exist. To them suffering enters and makes them a reality.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. With punishment, the essence is there from the very beginning. If we get you ready for מלקות and before the lashes are delivered you manage to get exist. The הלכה is that he gets off the hook, he is יוצא getting מלקות. It may be that there is a sentencing to punishment that is part of its essence. This may be why you get out of מלקות if you escape despite not having actually received the lashes. In secular terms, this may be comparable to parole.

   But יסורין של אהבה’s value may specifically be coming after the actual suffering. The פסק or sentence itself will not per say be a transformative experience. The entire process may be required for a more complete introspection. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Leopold never expressed חרטה. He was willing to sign up for dangerous experiments testing malaria but couldn’t express remorse. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Felix Culpa* is a “positive” form of sin. Without אדם’s sin, ישקה would never have died for Christian sins. This is a form of sin that allows for positive consequences. In a Jewish context, there are times where sin can lead to a good outcome. At a certain level, the more mystical you are, the more likely it becomes that this is possible. The ideas of זדונות נעשה כזכיויות and במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים all indicate that there is an element of *Felix Culpa* here. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Jerome Groopman, a cancer-man at Harvard who writes books and articles, has a book particularly connected to our couse. He’s somewhat frum and has a special Shabbos line to ensure that calls are פיקוח נפש. His first book is called The Measure of Our Days. רב כרמי likes this book a lot. He writes about patients of his and talks about the ones that he dislikes. Some of the patients are very unpleasant. One guy had kidney cancer. (The problem with kidney cancer is that when you radiate cancer, you are also destroying the body, hence radiation poisoning. And the kidney is supposed to be getting rid of these poisons. So the kidney just processes the radiation and throws it away.) This guy was a tough guy and demanded the toughest chemo the doctors could find. Groopman gave him powerful chemo and it starts working. But at a certain point, the patient realizes that he was a rotten person who everyone he ever met hated. He started despairing and the treatment stopped working. Groopman wonders whether he could (or should) have said anything.

   Another case, a teenager contracts AIDS from a blood transfusion. He stops coming to Church. The priest talks to him about יסורין של אהבה but he counters that he never signed up for these יסורין. The point of these two stories is that people aren’t necessarily מקבל their יסורין with אהבה. This can very much influence the outcome of the suffering. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. There was aMadrid Conference in 1991 between Israel and Arab countries. Some meetings went better than others. The Syrians were stiff but the Jordanians were more cordial. With Jordan, they shook hands and drank coffee together. The Syrians did this separately. This is exactly what the גמ' means in ברכות. You can’t shake hands with yourself. The very definition of shaking hands is that there is A and B clasping hands, even though A is not identical to B. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. רב כרמי rants about how people are too particular about food. He will eat most things even though they aren’t prepared perfectly. Story about Babe Ruth and asparagus. Also, the episode of Frasier where the psychologist says, “the food there is to kill.” The response was, “food is to eat.”

    “If you are tired of ק''ש, you are tired of אשרי, then you are tired of life.” This is just like when you are tired of food, you are tired of life. This is how רב כרמי explains never getting bored of Intro to Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Gram Green tried to commit suicide several times in his childhood. He played Russian Roulette and drank Hay Fever Lotion. (He cheated in Russian Roulette which his like cheating in solitaire.) But he obviously wasn’t successful. Many look back at their suicide attempts and realize how foolish they were. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Max Vaber wrote about how the modern world is a world of “disenchantment.” Secularism was inevitable. But becoming secular means living in a world where everything is thematisized. There is nothing valuable behind the physical commodity that is being offered from a business point of view. There is no such thing as sentimental value to something. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Sometimes, סליחות will engage in pathetic fallacy. It happens to be that pathetic fallacy is currently seen as a cheap poetic trick. אדמון was bothered by the fact that Jewish liturgy is sometimes not as good as general poetry. In one of his stories, a medieval פייטן ponders the question as to whether the poetry, or the emotions poured into it, is the most important thing.

    W.H. Auden has a poem from the late 1930s where he begins to shift from secularism to Christianity. The poem is called Musee des Beaux Arts. The poem discusses a painting depicting the story of Icarus. In this poem, the human world is indifferent, not nature of G-d. The human world is indifferent to the tragedy of Icarus’ son plummeting into the sea. Many Dutch masters created very crowded canvases where everything is filled with different stuff. There is one small part that happens to be the focus of the painting. 13 lines don’t have to do with the painting for the most part (other than the children skating). 8 lines are devoted to the painting. This is the basic same ratio of how poetry is customarily divided. Essentially, when suffering happens, people are busy and the world goes on. To apply this to Bialek, this could be the equivalent of someone watching a pogrom and then going inside to peel potatoes.

    For Auden, the world is waiting for the miraculous intervention of G-d, for him represented in the Christian imagery of the “miraculous birth.” People are waiting for a miraculous birth of either a divine figure, or a son or grandson, a little Christian *nachas*. He then brings up martyrdom, which is also Christian imagery. But once again, this could be generic suffering. Someone is always suffering and there are innocent and ignorant bystanders who simply continue with their lives.

    Some suggest that the best way to portray religion in today’s day and age to the secular world is that we care about and are invested in the coming generations. The image of people waiting for the next generation, such as אברהם and יצחק overcoming their barriers, leading to עם ישראל, is something that Judaism has.

    Both T.S. Elliott and Auden have a habit of using the abstract “the” to give the impression that the entity being discussed by the poet should be known to everyone. “The” brings you into their world, “the miraculous birth.” Auden uses the imagery of children to highlight that people are indifferent, not maliciously against.

    The question now becomes, what is the proper response? How should you respond to the tragedy of Icarus? If there is nothing to do to save the boy, should there be any reaction? It is possible that we should be stopping to contemplate. Or it could be that even something aesthetically surprising should not be ignored. Auden is not talking about lack of morality here. This is indifference not callousness.

    It may be that Auden is thinking about the Great War. WWII had even started at this time. With the development of mass media, we have seen plenty of actual murders. Should we be forced to take a stand in reaction to suffering, or should it be something that at least demands your attention? If you are a spectator that can’t actually do anything, perhaps you should stop at least to contemplate.

    Perhaps the person who makes ברכת הנהנין and pays attention to the small pleasures of life will be the same person who will express sensitivity to the suffering of others. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Auden has another poem called The Shield of Achilles. In this poem, Auden contrasts the beautiful engravings in Achilles’ shield (described in The Iliad) with the truth of war. In the world he depicts here, the world of war, there is not only indifference. There is also brutality. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Leo Strauss, who wrote on the רמב''ם, took this contradiction very seriously and say that the רמב''ם was playing a complicated game. He was really a natural philosopher but when he is frum, he is just playing along with the reader. Only the אפיקורסוס is the good view. Rav Twersky זצ''ל pointed out however that there are times where the רמב''ם seems more frum in the מורה than in the יד. This very much weakens the appeal of Strauss’ position.

    Chabad people will take the opposite approach. The רמב''ם will sometimes try to play up to the אפיקורסים. The problem with both of these positions is obvious. If you ascribe to this, it isn’t clear at all what the רמב''ם holds.

    The גרי''ד wondered why the רמב''ם says that we tell a סוטה the story of ראובן, כפשוטו. Isn’t this lying? When someone suggested that we are lying to her to get her to give in, the רב got so upset he refused to continue. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. When it comes to children, there is split in society. Some view children as pure little angels. But you also have Freud’s analysis of the psyche of a child. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Henry Louis Mencken was an American author. He was known as the sage of Baltimore. He was a strange character. He was a fun guy but also had his problem with Jews and certain political crotchets. He was an extremely cynical writer. He would overdo it. But he had great gusto and humor. Anyway, he was an atheist and also had hay fever. So he has a whole argument about how hay fever disproves the existence of G-d. People say evil is really good because you suffer but you end up feeling ok. But by hay fever, it comes back every season. So there is no relief.

    Hay fever won’t always be considered a blight on someone’s life however. Life may still be good. This may solve the problem of evil itself.

    When students came to complain to Dr. Belkin about how hard the גרי''ד’s shiur was, Dr. Belkin yelled at them that they don’t understand how great of a בעל מסביר the רב was. Only a handful of people understood 30% of what גר''ח and גרי''ז said when they were giving shiur on זבחים. The רב is clear so don’t complain, you’re already ahead of the game. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. רב כרמי finds the Twilight Zone Episode where the guy’s glasses break to be one of the most haunting episodes there are. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. רב כרמי claims that if you enjoy ethical philosophical discussions concerning people with hay fever and gout, it justifies G-d creating these diseases. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Tony Hancock was a British comedian whose life went really sour at the end. In 1968, he committed suicide. His suicide note read, “Too many things have gone wrong.” That was it. A British rock band named in “Up the Bracket” is a punch to the neck. This was Hancock’s phrase. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Johnson, who suffered from many diseases his entire life, was so concerned with not wanting to die that he grabbed a knife from his doctor and started draining fluid from himself. Everyone faces death with fear. Johnson had a fear of Hell, but there are other reasons as well. Fear of death could be irrational for Epicurus. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Seinfeld has a standup routine where he wonders why people commit suicide. They may want to commit suicide because they are a failure. But sometimes they fail at committing suicide! That’s more of a reason to do it. But people don’t do that. Once they try it, they don’t do it again.

    Rav Carmy explains that this is because suicide is impulsive. In Washington, there were two bridges, one with a high fence and another with a low fence. By raising the railing of the bridge, they actually lowered the rate of suicide. You can get over impulses when it becomes harder to commit suicide. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. There is a poem written by Dorothy Parker called Resume. It basically says that suicide is always painful so you may as well live. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Sandy Colfax argued that when you go 18-12 for a season, you can’t argue that you really did better. In certain areas, you do what you do and can’t fake it. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Once the רמב''ם came onto the scene, he bullied out any views that animals have free will or השגחה. The statements of חז''ל, where animals such as frogs seem to get שכר, would be interpreted by the רמב''ם as metaphorical. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. In the beginning of the honors program, every student would have to take one required course. But how can you combine humanistic studies with science? רב כרמי suggested Oliver Sacks. Of course, the academics were upset because he writes popular books and doesn’t do research. But Rabbi Lam overrode them. They were planning on combining neurology and philosophy for a course taught by him. Before he became famous, he gave a couple of lectures. A student asked him whether it was incongruous to use humor when describing his most severe patients. He answered that he treats his patients like human beings and that the student is misunderstanding what he does. When his mother operated, Sacks said that she would discuss recipes. Because what they do is so nerve racking, there is a certain kind of humor which can calm a person. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. לע''ד, there is no סתירה between being a part of one living body of עם ישראל and playing an entirely unique role in that body from every other person. I work as a unique cell in a body composed of all of עם ישראל that goes beyond my own personal efforts. I stand unique as a servant of the כלל and recognize that every other member of עם ישראל, whether it be זושא or משה רבינו, plays his or her unique role as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. There is a story about a sage that is dying. He gathers up his last breath and says, “Life is a berry.” His close תלמיד asks him, in what way is it like a berry. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. רב אהרן Soloveitchik had met with Meir Cohen and Meir Cohen said he was impressed with the אור שמח’s approach to freewill. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The Wild Boy of Aveigron was a child that was raised by wolves in France. They tried to civilize him. They eventually were able to make him want to stay inside when it was cold. They also got him to sneeze when sprayed with pepper spray. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Kim Lee is a Korean novelist. He has one novel called The Martyred. The storyline seems to be influenced by Dostoyevsky and Camus. During the Korean War, a couple of Protestant priests are captured by the communists. 10 of 12 have been murdered. One went crazy and one survived. The narrator of the book works for the military police and his job is to find out how this last priest survived. Perhaps he apostatized to communism to get out of the death sentence while the others died.

    In the opening chapter, the surviving priest and narrator come along a messy situation, people who act like animals because they were locked up. When the prisoners get out, the police man asks the priest, “does your G-d know about these things?” Why should the issue be divine contingent knowledge? He doesn’t even question omniscience and power of G-d. John Stuart Mill wasn’t religious, but he would have argued that G-d is good but isn’t as powerful as people make him out to be. In Kushner’s Why Bad Things Happen to Good People, (a book that רב כרמי is not a fan of) a child dies and the parents tell the rabbi that they ate on יו''כ. The concept of confession in יהדות is extremely foreign. Another story is that a man has a wife and his mother gets older. He wanted his mother to live with them but his wife says no. His mother is placed into a home and he feels awful. He chooses to go to the temple on the week of פרשת יתרו. The rabbi says that כיבוד אב ואם is strange; mothers have the energy to take care of six children and yet six children cannot find the energy to take care of one mother. Kushner ends up saying that G-d is good and wonderful, but why doesn’t he do everything we want him to do? Because he has limited power. For Kushner the point of religion is to make people feel good. So of course G-d will be tailored to fit people’s needs. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The גרי''ד was not aware why the רמב''ם was so obsessed with the G-d body problem. But he believed that if other Jewish thinkers were aware of the problems the רמב''ם brings up with the approach, they would have agreed with him. If you look around actually, you’ll see indications in תנ''ך that G-d actually does not have a body.

    Swineburne came to the conclusion that G-d being outside of space unacceptable. Because if you do, you have problems with divine foreknowledge. So to prevent this problem, he claims that G-d is not outside of space. Many people have claimed that science has refuted free will. A serious philosopher would tell you להד''ם, לא היו דברים מעולם. If the world is closed, than there is no possibility of free will. If you don’t think that this world is closed however, there is room for free will and there is no contradiction. Philosophical argument can emancipate people from being enslaved from limited arguments of particular cultures. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. משל למה הדבר דומה-Dean Winchester from Supernatural [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. There is a classic joke, a doctor comes to an accident and says “I can’t operate on this person, he is my son.” But the surgeon isn’t the patient’s father. How is that possible? You realize the answer as soon as you recognize that women can be surgeons. But the point of the joke is that parents may not be able to do something that is necessary. You don’t have the guts and cold-bloodedness to do something yourself and therefore may be condemning your own son to death. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. רב כרמי read about Hallstead (a surgeon) when he was still in pre-med when he was in third grade. Hallstead became addicted to cocaine (when it was used as an anesthetic) and his career went down. The founder of John-Hopkins hospital offered him a job as the chief surgeon as long as he would kick the habit. The legend was that Hallstead kicked the habit. Now, it seems that he weaned himself off of cocaine with heroin. At the end of his life, he may have even been using both. They found out that Osler, the great diagnostician, was able to tell when Hallstead was using.

    Anyway Hallstead was the first to do a gall bladder operation. He did it without anesthesia in a living room (because it was urgent) on his mother. He saved her. He ended up dying years later when he himself was undergoing gall bladder surgery.

    Harry S. Truman, in Mr. Citizen, said that after his gall bladder was removed, he was told not to eat salted peanuts. He said that he once indulged himself and describes his resulting indigestion in detail. This was רב כרמי’s favorite passage of the book. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. There is a book by Saperstein called the Jewish Sermon. There is one sermon in there, Ibn Moosa, 15th century Spanish דרשן, where he says that if G-d is one this consequence follows. A בעל הבית got up and yelled, “What do you mean, “what if?” We give up our lives for things that are true, not ifs!” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Carl Marx said that “religion is the opiate of the masses.”

    Lenin was famous for justifying concentration camps, “to make an omelet you need to break a couple of eggs.” Isaiah Berlin said, “the Marxist omelet has been deferred to the unforeseen future.” [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. נהמא כיסופא is a phrase in the ירושלמי that means “bread of shame.” It is used constantly by the רמח''ל. This is the notion that it is demeaning to human beings to get something for free. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The Counterfeit Holder is a movie about a Swedish גוי who has a best friend Max (who is Jewish). He starts snubbing his friend and sympathizing with the Nazis. But we know that he is really a spy. At the end of the war, he barely escapes from Germany after they catch onto him. Max is waiting for him at the dock in the end of the movie. The גוי apologizes to Max for the way he treated him. Max responds that I never had any doubts. I knew all along. This is a movie but many times in real life things actually work this way. If our perception of such a person is so radiant, you are immune to any evidence to the contrary. This could be a לימוד זכות for Jenin. If we have belief and love for G-d, then we can accept the uncertainty and believe that this is the best possible world. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Dovid Ebmer, teachers in ארץ הצוי, was in America for a שלושים. He told a story of a blind רב that was once at a shabbaton and he told a story of how he had been set up with a woman he had never met before. One of the girls in the audience said, “you mean a blind date?” and then she got worried that she said something insulting. He waited and then burst out laughing. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Rav Carmy tells the story of reactions to his article entitled, “Too Soon.” [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. New Atheists are like אור שמח (the yeshiva) people. They are trying to track down people and sell their agenda with a simplified philosophical argument that is cheap. Rowe isn’t like this. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)