



Iyov's Mishpat

R' Akiva listed five things that lasted for twelve months (2:10). Importantly, the common theme between these five events is that they were all *mishpat* – "judgements" in which punishments were exacted. Previously (4(33)) we discuss one of these – the plagues in Egypt. In this article we will look at the one listed just prior – the judgement of *Iyov*.

Given the common theme, the *Mishnah* implies that *Iyov's* suffering was a punishment. From a simple reading of *Iyov* however, it is not clear. *Iyov* is described as righteous; his friends are criticised from telling *Iyov* his suffering was a result of sin (*Berachot* 58b) and when *Hashem* appears to *Iyov*, it appears that that *Hashem* delivers a message demanding humility, given the inability of the human intellect to comprehend all the workings of the universe.

Support for *Iyov* being punished is however found in the *Gemara Sotah* (11a):

R' Chiya the son of *R' Abba* said in the name of *R' Simai*, three [people] were involved in the council [with *Paro* concerned how to deal with the Jewish people]: *Bilam*, *Iyov* and *Yitro*. *Bilam* advised that they be killed, so he was killed by the sword. *Iyov* was silent, so he was judged with suffering. *Yitro* fled and merited to have his descendants sit in the *lishchat ha'gazit* (the *Sanhedrin*).

Note that the *Gemara* also refers to *Iyov's* suffering as a judgement. Indeed, the *Mishnah's* listing the punishments of *Iyov* and the Egyptians together, along with their durations being the same, supports the notion that they are connected.¹

Before continuing, since the book of *Iyov* is perceived to deal with the question of why bad things happen to good people, this article is not to be understood as answering that all bad things are as a result of sin. While it is true that the *Gemara* (*Berachot* 5a) writes that one's initial response to difficulties is *teshuva* (repentance), it continues that sin it is not the only

reason. Once again, the lesson from *Iyov* is one of humility in not understanding the reason why everything occurs. In any case, to paraphrase *Rav Soleveitchik*, the lesson of *Iyov* is not to answer the why of suffering, but how one responds to it. The focus of this article is to understand why the *Gemara* maintains that punishment for his silence was suffering.

The *Aruch LaNer* (*Sanhedrin* 106a) explains that the punishment was proportional – *midah keneged midah*. Since *Iyov* held back from giving the correct advice, he was put in a situation where he could not help but call out.

In a similar vein is the *Brisker Rav's* well known explanation. *Iyov's* defence would have been that his protesting would not have helped. He therefore endured suffering where he shouted despite it not providing any relief. The message was, that when one truly feels pain, the cry out no matter what. In other words, if *Iyov* would be bothered by the ill fate of the Jewish people, he would have cried out.

Returning to the *Aruch LaNer*, we see a treatment of *Iyov's* potential defence from a different angle. He cites the *Midrash* that when *Iyov* complained about his situation, he was shown a *sukkah* of three walls. *Iyov's* defence could have been that he was concerned about the consequences of protesting against *Paro's* position – he could have been killed. That however is not a defence, for ultimately one is accountable in the next world. In truth, *Iyov* could have fled like *Yitro*. Returning the three-walled *Sukkah*, the position that a such a *sukkah* is valid is if one views the *sukkah* as a temporary dwelling. The vision of a *sukkah* was to correct his view that this world is not permanent - it should not have been his primary concern - but rather the ultimate judgement in the next.

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¹ See the *Rashash* (*Bereishit Raba* 57:4) however who maintains that the *Gemara* is referring to a second time *Iyov* suffered and not the twelve-month period referred to in our *Mishnah*.

Revision Questions

עדייות א': י"ד – ג': ג'

- What does it mean that a *kli cheres* is *matzil*? (א': י"ד)
- Explain the debate regarding the scope of this law. (א': י"ד)
- What did *R' Channinah Segan Ha'Kohanim* testify that *kodshim* that became *tameh* by contact with *ve'lad ha'tumah* could be burnt with? (ב': א')
- Regarding the previous question, what does *R' Akiva* add? (ב': א')
- What did *R' Channinah* testify about, regarding the hides of *korbanot*? (ב': ב')
- Can a woman write her own *get*? (ג': ב')
- If a *tum'ah* needle is found inside a slaughtered *korban* what is the status of the meat and the knife used for slaughter? (ג': ב')
- Can *Shichecha* also apply to standing wheat? (ד': ב')
- About what three things did *R' Yishmael* testify? (ד': ב')
- When is one exempt for "hunting" a snake on *Shabbat*? (ה': ב')
- What three things were debated between *R' Yishmael* and *R' Akiva*? (ו': ב')
- Regarding the three things that were said before *R' Akiva*: (ז': ב')
 - What can a woman go out into *reshut ha'rabim* wearing?
 - What invalidates a person from acting as a witness?
 - Regarding which *safek tum'ah* is the ruling that it is *tahor*?
 - Which of the cases were said in the name of *R' Yishmael* and which in the name of *R' Yehoshua*?
- Which of the *halachot* that *R' Akiva* presented were accepted by the *Chachamim* and how many were rejected? (ח': ב')
- What attributes does a son usually inherit from his father? (ט': ב')
- According to *R' Akiva* which five things took twelve months? (י': ב')
- Explain the debate between *R' Dosa ben Harkinas* and the *Chachamim* about whether/how two half *kezeitim* of a corpse can combine to be a source of *tum'ah*. (יא': ג')
- How does *R' Meir* expand the debate between *R' Dosa ben Harkinas* and the *Chachamim*? (א': ג')
- What are the opinions of *R' Dosa ben Harkinas* and *Chachamim* regarding:
 - Pieces of food combining to become a source of *tum'ah*?
 - Redeeming *ma'aser sheni* with and *asimon*? (What is an *asimon*?)
 - Purifying hands that have become *tameh* for handling *mei chatat*? (ב': ג')
 - The status of *kenivat yarak trumah*?
 - The minimum measure of *reishit ha'gez*? (ג': ג')

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Eduyot 3:4-5	Eduyot 3:6-7	Eduyot 3:8-9	Eduyot 3:10-11	Eduyot 3:12-4:1	Eduyot 4:2-3	Eduyot 4:4-5

