

Reward and Punishment

Posted by AnsheiZusha - 29 Apr 2020 22:51

Hi, Chevra.

I hope you're doing well.

I kinda have a philosophical question, and I'm curious to get everyone's thoughts. Basically, I've been struggling with shmiras ainayim and shmiras habris for 11 years now, and I have so many different struggles in my life. Baruch Hashem, I'm blessed with a lot of great things, but there's also so much difficulty that I have to deal with.

I don't really complain, though, because I believe that a lot of it is because of my sins in this matter. Of course, it's impossible to know Hashem's plans, but I'm really really curious to see what the chevra thinks about Reward and Punishment.

Basically, if I continue in this sin, will Hashem continue to punish me with these difficulties?

Or if I improve, will Hashem bless me with good things (finding a wife, an improvement on my health, less stress) and take away the difficulties?

Thank you so much in advance, chevra.

Looking forward to discussing with you!

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Re: Reward and Punishment

Posted by Singularity - 30 Apr 2020 06:52

Welcome!

I think for one, Hashem isn't an idiot. Like, things aren't tit for tat. I mean look, He's closed all shuls and learning and the only way to learn is to use the internet. It's completely backward to everything we've known. So I believe we'll never know. And if I did know, what good would it make me? Like, ok so I sin and then bad things happen. Ok but if I don't bad things might still happen.

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Re: Reward and Punishment

Posted by the.guard - 30 Apr 2020 07:13

Good question. I addressed it in today's chizuk email: bit.ly/2WeRfoL

Here's a link also to the

article: <https://guardyoureyes.com/articles/questions-and-answers/item/reward-and-punishment>

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Re: Reward and Punishment

Posted by AnonyJew - 30 Apr 2020 13:55

Hey Zusha,

I also believed that for a very long time and I think I still do to a certain extent.

I think that while Hashem may withhold certain blessings from your life because of different things you may have done He doesn't do so as a punishment but as a way of sending you a message to wake up. If you approach those issues with a mindset of these problems were sent to me by Hashem as a message to empower me with the knowledge of what to work on they don't cripple you.

If you're viewing your problems coming as a result of your mistakes and that is crippling you then it is obvious that it's from a dark place and not Hashem's intent. If it is empowering you to fight then it is what Hashem intended and you are giving it meaning.

Just my \$0.02

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Re: Reward and Punishment

Posted by DavidT - 01 May 2020 02:36

The whole system of aveiros and punishment was created out of love for us and for our best, even if we don't understand how. Hashem doesn't hate us for sinning or punish us angrily because He lost His cool, chas veshalom. It would be perverse and insane (and heretical) to claim Hashem really lost control and

became enraged. Rather, whenever He relates to us in a way that resembles anger, He does so only because He loves us and relating to us that way is best for us at that moment. He has not left us, even though He is making it hard for us to see Him for whatever reason. When we understand that Hashem still yearns

for us, we won't feel repelled and will continue to try to connect with Him.

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Re: Reward and Punishment

Posted by ColinColin - 01 May 2020 02:58

In my life, if I sin, I believe there is often a noticeable element of reward and punishment.

But it's deep, because if I sin, do I intentionally self-sabotage myself as form of self-punishment/atonement?

Not possible for me to say for sure, but it's very possible.

This needs

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Re: Reward and Punishment

Posted by Captain - 07 May 2020 01:05

I think it's just the opposite: The fact that you are trying means Hashem is looking to help you. Haba litaher misaye'in oso (Shabbos 104a).

Don't view challenges as Hashem trying to stop you because of your sins. Instead, Hashem is helping you reach greatness! You just have to know how to look.

From the Battle of the Generation, Chapter 1 (download here: guardyoureyes.com/ebooks/item/the-battle-of-the-generation?category_id=149):

There is a little secret the yetzer hara doesn't want you to know. It's the secret that spells his doom. And it's the secret that will change your destiny.

Our generation faces challenges never encountered before by mankind. Society teaches that there is nothing wrong with immorality, and it portrays the most despicable acts as glamorous. Promiscuity is made to seem exhilarating. We are taught that chasing desire is cool, and that those who don't are losers who are missing out on life. Sin is readily available, and there is little to hold us back.

Society also trains us to think we are incapable of controlling ourselves. We see everyone around us giving in to crazy temptations, and we think it is impossible to win. We might even hear people openly express how impossible a fight it is, which discourages us from even trying. With all that's going on, our generation seems to be at a huge disadvantage. It seems that we were born in perhaps the worst situation in the history of our nation, at least from a spiritual perspective.

But that's only if you ignore the yetzer hara's secret. . . .

In Pirkei Avos (5:26), Ben Hei Hei teaches us that Heavenly reward is meted out in accordance with how much a person exerts himself. Our Sages teach us that this is a major principle in the calculation of reward and greatness. How hard a person works to accomplish something is one of the primary determining factors in how great the accomplishment is. When a person faces overwhelming challenges and overcomes them, he performs acts that are truly great.

Overcoming difficulty is so basic to true accomplishment in life that it is the reason Hashem places man into a life so full of challenges (Mesillas Yescharim, Chapter 1). Hashem wants to provide man with the opportunity to win his battles and truly accomplish. Challenges are only there to make us great! Succeeding despite the difficulty is the point of life! The harder it is, the greater it makes us.

If Hashem hadn't created us with the urge to do wrong, and all we wanted to do was to learn Torah and do mitzvos, acting properly or even reaching lofty levels would be no big deal. Our successes are impressive only because the yetzer hara challenges us from every direction, trying to confuse and derail us. When we hang in there and try to succeed despite how much we want to give in, we are performing monumental acts of greatness. . . .

When we feel overwhelmed, we must realize that this gives us an opportunity to attain unprecedented merit. The more challenges we face — whether they were given to us entirely by Hashem or whether we brought them upon ourselves — the greater our opportunity for achievement. The lower a person's spiritual level, the greater he can become. The deeper he has sunk, the higher he can reach. Granted, it is not so easy to change our lives and to overcome strong desires, but if we do, we become men of phenomenal accomplishments. We will reach astounding heights and score victories that others, even many great tzaddikim, did not attain because they never faced such challenges. Our challenges, while difficult and humbling, are also opportunities for us to reach unprecedented greatness!

We hear over and over how terrible our generation is and how much decadence lurks around us. Everyone seems to either look down on us or feel bad for us for having been born now. But if we are here at this time, that means that Hashem put us here, and it wasn't by accident! Why did He give us these challenges? Why were we born in this generation?

By now, the answer should be obvious: Hashem put us here to give us the opportunity to accomplish something that was never done before. By succeeding despite the challenges that bombard us daily, we reach monumental greatness. Of course, we will have to work harder to succeed than any prior generation, but it is worthwhile because we will be great forever. It is not supposed to be easy. Life is meant to be challenging! That enables us to attain accomplishments that are truly impressive. Accomplishments that aren't achieved in the face of difficulty, even if they look good on paper and are lauded by society, pale in comparison with these real accomplishments.

Our challenges are our opportunity to reach phenomenal heights! Reaching greatness through fighting valiantly in this difficult battle is the destiny Hashem has chosen for us! This is why Hashem gave us such difficult challenges.

We must realize that these challenges mean we can do what has never been done before in history. These are challenges and opportunities that Hashem has trusted only our generation with. If we can succeed despite what lures us to do wrong, we will achieve unmatched success.

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