

## PART 8: CHAPTER 1, VERSES 9-12

by Rabbi Yitzchak Schwartz

*Verse 9. "Then Satan answered the Lord saying, 'Does Job fear G-d for nothing?'"*

*Verse 10. "Haven't you rewarded him, his household and everyone around him? You've blessed everything he does, along with his growing flocks."*

*Verse 11 "But if you'd even touch his possessions, he'd curse you to your face."*

*Verse 12. "Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Everything he owns is now in your control. Just do not harm Job.' Then Satan went out from G-d's presence."*

### Commentary

#### Verse 9

The *Satan* argues that *Iyov* is not the spiritually exalted human being that G-d thinks he is. In fact he is devoted more to the physical than the spiritual. The motivation behind his passionate service of G-d is selfish.

*Iyov* chose the path of holiness and virtue to insure his physical pleasures and needs. His service is not wholehearted. It is based on selfish ulterior motives.

#### Verse 10

The *Satan* now attempts to back up his contention. He argues that G-d protected *Iyov*, his family and his material possessions from all forms of harm and destruction. This argument refutes G-d's claim that *Iyov* transcended the physical and elevated himself to a spiritual level beyond the jurisdiction of the *Satan*.

Furthermore, *Iyov* was blessed with extraordinary wealth. He was the wealthiest man on earth. Certainly this must have influenced his eager commitment to G-d.

## Verse 11

Now comes the time to test the validity of the *Satan's* allegations. If G-d would remove his divine protection and the blessings of phenomenal wealth the true face of *Iyov* would emerge. Not only will he abstain from serving his Creator, he will curse G-d directly to his face. Obviously the 'face of G-d' is a metaphor.

*Iyov* assumed that he was entitled to the worldly blessings that he enjoyed. After all, it seemed only fair that the loyal servant of G-d should experience no pain or discomfort in this world. Therefore, the *Satan* proposed to put *Iyov* to the test.

Remove all material blessings and physical comfort and he [*Iyov*] will deduce that G-d does not exercise fair judgment. The incongruous notion of a just G-d and an unjust world will certainly provoke *Iyov* to deny the existence of divine providence.

G-d agrees to put *Iyov* to the test. *Iyov's* physical existence was now vulnerable to the destructive force of the *Satan*, that is everything but his body. It is absolutely clear that G-d and the *Satan* agreed that *Iyov* was totally righteous in his deeds and conduct. The severe suffering inflicted upon *Iyov* was not Divine retribution. This is a fundamental point in the book of *Iyov*.

The misfortunes of life cannot always be attributed to the concept of punishment for sin. There are times when G-d removes his divine watchful eye to test the loyalty of his subjects.

The *Ramban* explains that the tests of the righteous are always for their own benefit. G-d certainly knows that they will succeed, nevertheless he tests them to allow them to actualize their own potential. The reward for good intent is not nearly as great as the reward for good deed. The purpose of man is to bring sanctity from his inner being into the physical world. This requires him to translate intent into deed.

In the next lesson we will discuss this verse in more detail.

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The author is the Rosh Hayeshiva (Dean) of Orchos Chaim Yeshiva in Jerusalem.