

## PART 10: CHAPTER 1, VERSES 21 - 22

by Rabbi Yitzchak Schwartz

21. *"And said, 'Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return there. G-d gave and G-d has taken away. Blessed is G-d's name.'"*

22. *"During all this Job did not sin and he did not denounce G-d."*

### Commentary

Iyov blesses G-d using the Hebrew name that describes G-d's attribute of mercy. We would expect that Iyov would attribute his difficulties to G-d's attribute of strict judgment - Elokim, rather than His mercy. Instead Iyov confirms his unwavering faith in a merciful G-d. Only G-d in his the omniscience knows what is truly beneficial for us. The limitations of human wisdom and our fickle nature confirm this. In Iyov views G-d's taking away all of his children and worldly possessions as an act of mercy despite his inability to understand the reason.

### Chapter 2, verse 1

1. *"Again there was a day when the children of G-d, came to present themselves before the G-d, and the 'adversary' came also among them to present himself before the G-d."*

This verse is almost identical to verse 6 of chapter 1. Apparently this second hearing of the divine tribunal was also on Rosh Hashana. Accordingly, by this time at least one year had lapse since the beginning of Iyov's suffering. There is however, a significant difference between these verses. In verse 6 chapter 1 the 'adversary' comes to stand together with the other children of G-d. He does not make his own stand in front of the heavenly court. In this verse the 'adversary' stands on his own. Let us examine this.

In our previous lesson we reviewed the three different categories of destruction that Maimonides describes:

1. Natural disasters, including freak violent manifestations of natural forces.
2. Harm inflicted by human beings upon each other, e.g., negligence, crime, war, etc.
3. Harm which we bring upon ourselves through unhealthy or perilous life styles. This harm comes when a person pursues lusts, folly, vice, etc.

In terms of the expected or normal course of events it is clear that righteousness alone does not secure protection from the first two harm. Neither the laws of nature nor the wicked bow in deference to righteousness. Nevertheless we might expect G-d to intervene to prevent any harm from coming to the pious. This type of intervention is known as divine providence. The watchful protection of G-d is the only effective protection from these two forms of harm and damage.

The wickedness of Sheva and the Casdeem (category 1), and the violent eruption of natural forces (category 2) causes the loss of Iyov's children and possessions. Iyov's righteousness would likely have secured for him G-d's watchful protection, had it not been for the 'adversary'. The 'adversary' persuades G-d not to grant Iyov the divine protection that the righteous deserve. The result, Iyov is victim to the first two categories of harm and destruction.

Iyov's new test involves the third category. Iyov is totally righteous and certainly does not get involved in any precarious life style. Medical problems are frequently the result of dangerous life styles. Statistics show that seventy to eighty percent of life threatening diseases and accidents are caused by dangerous habits and activities. Consider the following: lung cancer, liver disease, heart disease, obesity, substance abuse, reckless driving, sexuality transmitted diseases. The list goes on and on.

It is obvious that Iyov would not be involved in any of these types of activities. There is certainly no clear self-induced cause that would have made him vulnerable to the types of disease from which he suffers. Since no natural cause is present he does not need G-d's special intervention to protect him. If the 'adversary' would ask G-d only not to remove his divine protection as he did before that would not be sufficient to bring on the third category of harm. The 'adversary' does not make a separate stand in front of G-d in chapter 1 because for his request then it was not necessary. To inflict category-1 and category-2 forms of harm all he needed was a non-intervention agreement from G-d.

This time non-intervention would not be enough. In order for Iyov to become deathly ill with a disease of the type with which he was afflicted it would require an alteration of his constitution. That was no small thing to request. For this a special appeal was necessary..... " the 'adversary' came also among them....." in order "..... to present himself before the G-d."

According to Maimonides this phrase indicates that the children of G-d and the 'adversary' can do nothing on their own volition. They must first receive permission from G-d. This means that nothing in this world occurs without at least passive consent from G-d.

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