

LEARNING TO ENJOY THIS WORLD

Background

In the *Aseres Hadibros*, we are being taught that HASHEM pays back wickedness for four generations and goodness for 2000 generations.

The *Siftei Chachamim* asks: we know that this world was created to last for 6,000 years. Assuming that a generation is 25 years, then from the moment of Creation till the end of this world, there are only 240 generations. So why is the *posuk* saying that HASHEM pays back for 2000 generations when the world will never last that long?

The *Siftei Chachamim* answers that it is true that 2000 generations will never occur, but the *posuk* was written to teach us the ratio that HASHEM created this world with a measure of goodness outweighing the bad by 500:1. So in theory, if a person does good, that good is worthy of being repaid for 2000 generations. Even though the world will never last that long, the *posuk* is teaching us one of the underlying principles with which HASHEM created the world.

Questions

It is clear from the *Siftei Chachamim*'s question and answer that he learns that the entire concept of **"HASHEM created this world with the ratio of 500 good to 1 bad"** refers to this world.

This seems inconsistent with life as we know it. Granted life is good, but can anyone say that the pleasures that he experiences in this world outweigh the pain by a ratio of 500 to 1? 500 to 1 means that I enjoy this world so much that the pain and hardships are almost hard to see, so overshadowed are they by the enormity of good. The problem is that this doesn't seem to mesh with reality as we know it.

ספר שמות פרק כ

(ו) וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים
לְאֱהִבֵי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

[HASHEM] does kindness for two thousand generations: for ones who are beloved to Me and to ones that guard my mitzvos.

רש"י על שמות פרק כ פסוק ו

(ו) ועושה חסד - שאדם עושה לשלם שכר עד לאלפים דור נמצאת מדה טובה יתירה על מדת פורעניות אחת על חמש מאות שזו לארבעה דורות וזו לאלפים (סוטה יא)

If a man acts righteously, he is paid back for 2000 generations. The good therefore outweighs the bad by a ratio of 500:1. When it comes to paying back evil, HASHEM only pays back for four generations, yet when it comes to paying back good deeds, HASHEM rewards for 2000 generations. The ratio of 4:2000 is 1:500.