

The *Gemara* tells us that they asked Shlomo *Hamelech*, the wisest of all man, they asked him “*eizehu ben olam haba*” who is it who’s guaranteed, who do we know for certain will be there in the world to come? Answers Shlomo “*kol shekuneget zkenav kavod*” whoever is given honor in this world for his *Torah* learning, who’s ever given accord because he’s become a *Torah* scholar, that is the person that we know in the world to come will be well, well positioned.

And then the *Gemara* goes on to tell us an example of this, Yosef the son of Reb Yehoshua, became ill. And at a certain point he lost consciousness and it was clear that he had a near death experience. When he came back, his father Reb Yehoshua asked him “*my chazis*” what did you see? It was clear that he was in the other world, it was clear that he had a chance to see what happens there and Reb Yehoshua asked his son what did you see there?

Says his son Yosef, what I saw there was “*elyonim lumata*” those people who in our world are treated with great, great respect because of their wealth, because of their position, those honorable people in our world, in the world to come are lowly, they’re on the bottom.

“*vutachtonim lumalah*” and those people who in our world are treated with disdain who are given no *kavod*, given no honor, they’re poor, they’re not amongst the first row people in this world, in the world to come they’re treated with great honor, they’re above.

Says Reb Yehoshua to his son, you did not see an upside down world, “*olam bara ra’isa*” you saw the world as it accurately is. What you saw in the world to come is the true assessment, is the true value system and that’s accurate, that’s where people are going to be and then Reb Yehoshua asked his son “*va’anan*” what about the *talmidei chachomim*, what about the *bnei Torah*, what did you see in regards to us in the world to come?

Yosef answers his father by saying “*ki heichi duchshvinin hacha*” exactly the amount of honor that you're given here for the *Torah* study, for the *Torah* accomplishments that you have, you're given there. Here in this world, *Torah* study, the honor you're given for that and that alone is equal to the world to come.

And that's the *Gemara*. And I once discussed this in a Shmuz but I'd like to focus on a different angle of this and let's begin with the very obvious question, there are many attributes given to man. Some people are granted great wisdom, some people aren't. some people are granted great charisma, some people are not. Some people have great intelligence, some people don't.

Some people are given the gift of gab, some people aren't. Some people are socially brilliant and some aren't.

There's a vast array of talent and abilities that are given out in this world and it's rather obvious that your position in the world to come is not dependent on what role you played in this world. When you leave this earth they don't ask you were you tall, oh you were tall, you go in right to *Gan Eden*, right to the front row. Oh you were very, very talented, you're going right there. Oh you sang beautifully, you get a good spot.

Our position in this world is our position, we're much like actors on the stage of life, we're given different roles to play. One person's role to play might be the butler, the next person might be the CO, the only question they ask isn't what your role was, it's how well you played your role.

So here's the obvious question, if you told me that the world to come, how much money you have in this world isn't relevant in the next world, I get it. If you tell me how much honor you're given in this world, doesn't matter in the world to come, I get that, I understand it, but that's not what the *Gemara*'s saying, the *Gemara*'s saying there's an inverse correlation, an exactness, it's

those people in this world who are treated with honor, with accordance, because they're wealthy or honorable whatever that reason is, anything other than true value, other than *Torah* study, any honor that you're given here, that means in the world to come you're lowly and the opposite, anyone here who in our world is below, is lowly, he might be impoverished, he might be poor and therefore he's not treated with *kavod*, automatically in the world to come he's up, he's above.

And the question is why is there this inverse correlation? If you told me it didn't matter, if you told me the amount of honor you're given here, it's just a stage setting, it's just a role you play and the question is how well you did, I get it, then honor in this world is not relevant to the world to come. But that's not what Yosef saw, and that wasn't Reb Yehoshua's comment, Reb Yehoshua said you saw an accurate world, those people in this world who were given great honor, he's the wealthy guy and because of that he's given *kavod*, in the world to come it's guaranteed he's below, he's on the lower rung and those people who don't have things in this world and therefore suffer embarrassment, automatically the inverse, they're going to be on top in the world to come.

The question is why is there a direct reverse correlation, between honor in this world and position in the world to come?

And to understand this, I'd like to focus on a concept that the *Derech Hashem* explains to us and it's really more than anything a complete understanding of the human being. And the *Derech Hashem* explains that when Hashem created us, Hashem put us on this world for one reason, that's to grow, to accomplish and Hashem put us in a world that's perfectly created, exactly for that role.

This world is the gym, in the gym here there are many, many opportunities, many challenges, many situations, all of them custom designed, handmade for us to exercise our freewill, to become the great human being we can become and when we're done our job here we enter in the world to come.

But explains the *Derech Hashem*, *bechirah*, freewill is a little bit of a risky situation. You see freewill means man has freewill, he really, really can choose whether he'll be great or diminutive, a *tzaddik* or a *rasha* and freewill is a little risky. Why?

Because if in fact a man chooses badly, then he chose badly. If he chooses great, fantastic, but if he choose badly, explains the *Derech Hashem*, the only reason Hashem made the world is for *Olam haba* and the only reason Hashem put us here is for opportunity and he explains that there might well be people, as a matter of fact many people, maybe even most human beings on a planet who don't make it to the world to come.

Explains the *Derech Hashem*, the first thing that happens is a person is judged. If a person is a *rasha*, a person is wicked, then his soul is obliterated, there's nothing left of him. If he's a *tzaddik*, he goes right to *Gan Eden* and a human being can choose either extreme.

A person can be wicked to the extent that he wiped out everything, there is nothing left and when he leaves this earth, poof, he evaporates, no longer there, he might become a complete *tzaddik* and he goes right into *olam haba*.

But those people on the extreme aren't that common. What's a lot more common is sort of a mixed bag, you might have a person who's a *rasha* but that doesn't mean a wicked man, doesn't mean an evil person, that means a man who you judge, not you and I, but Hashem judges and

sees that this person didn't accomplish, didn't grow, didn't become what they should have been and therefore isn't worthy of the world to come.

But the problem might be that he did some things in this world that's worthy of reward. It might be that you have a person that's leaning to the side of wicked, meaning to say when Hashem judges him, the totality of that person isn't worthy of being kept in the world to come, nevertheless what if he did things during his lifetime that are worthy of reward. What if he did some good things, he helped people, he did *chessed*, he did things that were worthy of *olam haba*?

Explains the *Derech Hashem* that what Hashem does in that situation is Hashem pays that person back in this world. That person's given great accord, he's given wealth, he's given luxuries. He's given a beautiful world here, why? Because that's the payment for what he did right. He's not worthy of the world to come, when he leaves this earth, he disintegrates, he's no longer there, but Hashem wants to pay him back for what he did good, therefore Hashem pays him back in this world and he might well have a beautiful world, he might have honor, luxuries, accord, he might have a very good *olam hazeh*.

But I want you to understand one point very, very clearly. The *shuras hadin*, the real, real justice doesn't demand that he gets anything. You see one of the almost ironic parts of judgment is that we human beings, deserve nothing. And let me make this very, very clear. One of the questions that the *Chovos Halevavos* asks is, before you were born, what did you do to be worthy of being created?

Right, before you were created, what did you do that made it worthy of Hashem saying ah, this is the kind of person who's worthy to be created, I'm going to create him or her?

Explains the *Chovos Halevavos*, obviously nothing. Because before you were created, you weren't created, and before you were created there was nothing that you did that made it worthy of Hashem creating you because you didn't exist. But you see that's the point.

When you dwell on that one simple observation, what you realize is that Hashem created me for one reason and one reason only, not because I'm deservant, not because it's coming to me, but because Hashem is the *metiv*, Hashem wants to give and Hashem afforded us the opportunity to become and enjoy for eternity being close to Hashem, enjoying eternal bliss.

But here's really the observation, I didn't deserve to be created, and I exist in Hashem's world, I didn't make my body, I didn't make my arms, my head, my legs, my brain, I don't run the economy. Before I was born, Hashem set certain things into place decided there should be government, decided there should be law and order and Hashem orchestrates this world. I was put into a fully formed world.

Born into a situation where I will be cared for as a young person, brought up, schooled, educated, allowed to earn a living, allowed to be in many, many opportune situations and all of them were really not my choosing and certainly not my creation.

And explains the *Chovos Halevavos*, if a human being were ever to enter to judgment with Hashem and say Hashem You owe me, You owe me. Let's make a calculation, let's calculate what You've done for me versus what I've done for You, explains the *Chovos Halevavos*, it's laughable.

Why? Because number one I don't deserve to be created, Hashem gave that to me as a gift. Number two everything in the world is Hashem's. I used Hashem's tools, Hashem's bed I slept in, Hashem's world, Hashem's air I breathe, anything that's credit to me, I owe Hashem ten

thousand, ten thousand times more and realistically speaking if you were and I were on that *beis din* and we looked at that *rasha*, we'd say get rid of him, dump him, the guy's not worthy of the world to come.

Why does Hashem feel this need to pay him back in this world, the guy is not meritorious, he doesn't make it, cut him out. But the answer is that Hashem has far more sense of *mishpat* that you and I do, and when Hashem created the human being, Hashem put us in a situation where we are held accountable. If I grow, if I accomplish, if I do good things, they accredit it to me. Even though it might be true I accomplished very little, even though it's Hashem's world and Hashem orchestrated and Hashem put me in that position, nevertheless, anything that I accomplish is credited to me. And it's considered as if I did it. I'm the one who did it.

But that accountability has two sides to it, reward in the sense I'm held responsible. Look what I've done, wow. But accountable on the other side as well, that means to say, punished as well. In the case of the *rasha* it's true, if you judged him on the totality of him, he's not worthy of the world to come, nevertheless he did some things that were appropriate that were good, that were proper and if it could be, Hashem in the ultimate sense of *mishpat*, of justice feels he has to be paid back even though of course Hashem owes him nothing, nevertheless the *mishpat* is such that Hashem pays him back and you could see a man with the most beautiful world, here, a man who lives in luxuries, a man who has everything going for him and you could well be looking at a person who's snuffed out, nothing left of him whatsoever in the world to come.

And as on the mix side of the *reshaim*, so too on the mix side of a *tzaddik*. You could very well have a *tzaddik* who really is righteous and Hashem looks at him and says "Yes, he's going into *Gan Eden*, no question about it." But the problem is that he did many things during his lifetime

that he shouldn't have done, and he did many things during his lifetime to deserve being punished, not being rewarded and he messed up many times and he did many things that were clearly damaging, to himself, to others and the problem is that the *tzaddik* might also have some things that he needs to be paid back on, but here's the problem:

The problem is two-fold, number one, Hashem is just and if the *tzaddik* is going to be rewarded, meaning to say he's accountable, responsible for what he did good, then what he did bad he also has to answer for. But it's even worse than that, explains the *Derech Hashem*, he muddied his soul. Any decision that I make that's against the *Torah*, any time that I didn't use this world as I'm supposed to, what I did was I blackened, I muddied, I clouded up my *neshamah* and therefore if you have a mixed *tzaddik* with some things that were wrong that weren't appropriate, not right, that person can't go into *Gan Eden*, why?

Because he doesn't fit. He doesn't belong, he can't be *dovek* to the *shechinah*, he can't be close to Hashem. And therefore explains the *Derech Hashem*, Hashem has mercy and Hashem will pay back the *tzaddik* in this world.

And many, many times a very good person, a very righteous person will suffer pain, affliction, illness, poverty, many, many situations in this world and no one understands that when he goes through it, it's one of the greatest things that are happening to him.

Why? Because once he's done, he's clean, he goes right into *Gan Eden*, cleaned up, no longer muddied, no longer sullied, the *averah* is gone and he marches right into *Gan Eden* for eternity.

And explains the *Derech Hashem* that there's sort of a minimum level, a minimum level that you have to be at to get into *Gan Eden*.

Once you've hit that minimum level, then you're in. There's no question you're in. But the question is can you really get in, meaning to say if a person keeps basic *Torah, mitzvahs*, let's use the parameters, if a person keeps *Shabbos, kosher, taharas hamishpachah*, you could rest assured he has a *chelek* in the world to come, he'll make it in the world to come.

But the problem is that he may have a lot of baggage, some of it can be paid back here, very simply, you suffer pain, you go through travails, tribulations etc. you could have a *tzaddik* who did things that were wrong and just going through alone cleans him up, he goes to the world to come and everything is well, fine and good.

Explains the *Derech Hashem* though that you'll have many, many people who won't be able to just be cleaned up in this world. You see that's fine if a person's basically a *tzaddik* with a few things he did wrong. But for the vast majority of people, that's not quite the reality.

And explains the *Derech Hashem*, that to allow for *hatzalah*, to allow to save many, many more *neshamos*, Hashem introduced another system, it's not enough to be paid back in this world, it's not enough to suffer pains here, rather when a person leaves this earth they have to go through spiritual afflictions, explains the *Derech Hashem*, the most commonly known of which is *gehinnom* and a person spends a certain amount of time there and then he's clean and then he goes to *olam haba*.

Suffering in this world is often a cure, it's often something that's brought directly by Hashem to allow a person to be cleaned up and be done, but many, many times it's not sufficient and when it's not sufficient, you have a person who could make it into *Gan Eden*, Hashem judges the person and *al pi rov*, by the majority, if person's good and they kept the *Torah*, they kept *mitzvahs* and they belong in *Gan Eden* but the problem is there's just too much muddiness, just

too much stuff that clings to them. And therefore Hashem with great mercy created something called *gehinnom* and other spiritual purification processes, those allow a person to be cleaned up and then when they're done, finished. They go into *Gan Eden* and they're complete.

But explains the *Derech Hashem*, not everybody in the world to come is going to be on the same level. You're going to have some individuals who are towering, towering brilliant stars that shine forever and some people who are diminutive, very, very small. And you're going to have many, many, many levels in between, people who are great, people who are ordinary, people who are phenomenally astoundingly brilliant, and people who are just very, very small.

And you'll have various different sorts of people, many, many levels, many, many *dargos* but explains the *Derech Hashem*, exactly as you used your time here, exactly what you accomplished. You see pains in this world are good in the sense that they clean up things that are done wrong. *Gehinnom* in a sense is a spiritual purification is a great *chessed*, in a sense that it also removes some of that dirt, the muck, the mire. But when it's all done, I am what I shape myself into.

And when it's all done, whatever I've accomplished, whatever I've done, that's all I am for eternity. And while *Gehinnom* has a very short period to it, it doesn't make me into what I'm not. It allows the dirt, the cloudiness to come off, pains in this world do the same, but at the end of the day what I made myself into is what I am, no more, no less, and explains the *Derech Hashem* there'll be vast differences in the world to come.

And then he explains something that's very, very frightening, he says you might have a person in this world who really does great things. He's a person who accomplished, he did and in a certain sense he deserves to be in the upper echelons of the world to come, he deserves to be on the top

tier. But Hashem feels that for whatever the reason, this person isn't worthy. Maybe he had various things he did that were really, really wrong, whatever the *cheshon* that Hashem has, Hashem feels this person doesn't belong in the upper tier.

Yes the person will go to *Gan Eden*, yes they'll be there, but he doesn't deserve to be amongst the truly greats, and explains the *Derech Hashem*, for that person also there's a system. And he explains that for that person, Hashem will pay that person back in this world. Meaning to say if this person would have otherwise been in the greats of the greats, but really doesn't belong there, he might have done great things, he might have accomplished worlds, but he himself isn't really worthy of it, Hashem might well pay him back for those great things he did in this world, he'll have wealth, he'll have *ashirus*, he'll have honor, he'll have luxuries, it'll be a beautiful, beautiful life, and he's eating up his *olam haba*, he'll be there in the world to come but those great merits that he did, those great acts that he did are eaten up, paid back to him in this world.

And when you see someone who has a great situation in this world, you don't know. But I believe that that's *pshat* in this *Gemara* if you want to understand categorically why as a rule if you have it very good in this world, why is it that it's most likely that in the world to come you're very below?

Number one it could be that a person's not going to make it all. You could see a person who in this world has it phenomenally great, and it could well be that Hashem feels that he's not worthy of the world to come and it could well be that he dies and poof, he's eating up everything in this world.

It could also be that that person's a great *tzaddik* and they have just a little bit that they've done wrong, certain things, certain areas that they didn't work on, certain areas they've done

incorrectly and Hashem is paying them back with pain, with travails, with a rough situation here, it could also be that a person in this world will have a phenomenal, phenomenal life of luxury and it could well be that they have *Gan Eden*, he keeps *Torah*, he keeps *Mitzvahs*, he's a *frum* Jew, I get it, but I see that he really doesn't have what we'd call such good *middos*, he really is a pretty self-centered bombastic lousy individual.

It's not my place to judge, it's not your place to judge and explains the Ramchal with all of his wisdom that we don't know and he says I can't know, and coming from him, that is a major statement, but the point is we human beings don't know but this we can assume. Any pleasure that you have in this world if a person has it great, don't automatically assume that's such a good sign, it might be, it might also be that that person's eating up their world to come completely and totally.

It might be that they should have been in the upper echelons and that's not what they're going to get in the world to come, and the opposite, if a person here is suffering pain, poverty, it could well be that they're a *tzaddik* and everything that they need to fix up is just being cured here and it could be they'll be right there.

Explains the Chafetz Chaim in *Shem Olam* that's what this *Gemara* means. Most likely when you see a person who has it very, very good here, most likely he's eating up some of his world to come. To have it good here may seem like a tremendous *brachah* and in a sense it is, but if it's too easy, too good and a person really has all the luxuries, the life O' Reiley what you're looking at is a person most likely in the world to come is not going to be that great. He's either eating up all of his reward here, some of his reward, and the opposite.

When you see a person who's suffering, when you see a person who has it very rough, you have to look at that person and say wait a minute, I don't know who that person is. It might well be that person's a tremendous *tzaddik* and his world to come is going to be phenomenal, he's just going to step out, it might be they're getting some pay back in this world and they may have to go to *gehinnom* as well, but the point being you and I don't know.

And I'd like to share with you that I believe that this understanding of the *Gemara* is profound. You see we human beings are very judgmental and I know what's doing by *yennam*, I know where he's at, I know if he's good or bad. If he's a *tzaddik* or a *rasha*, and the truth is we don't have a clue.

Number one I can't tell where your starting point was. I don't know your temperament, I don't know your nature, I don't know your upbringing, I certainly don't know your intentions. So number one I am poorly equipped to judge anyone, I probably can't even judge myself.

But number two, we look at things with a backwards eye. When we see a person who has it great in this world, oh wow, if only I could have his situation. If only I could have his lot in life, wow. And everybody who says, yeah but you know it's not always so great, yeah give me a chance I'll try it, I'll try it.

And what this *Gemara* shares with us is don't be so quick to assume that that situation is so good. I don't know. I certainly don't know what that person's at and I certainly don't know what's a reward, what's a punishment, and I don't know what's a life setting.

Before each person is born Hashem decrees for that person a certain life setting. That's the stage setting, that's the role they have to play, one person is destined to be an *ashir*, the *ashir* is a man who is tested. He's tested with one of the most difficult tests imaginable, he's tested with the

opportunity of being magnanimous, generous and humble, or the exact opposite, becoming bombastic, self-centered, I am the center of the universe.

There are certain *nisyonos* that are not that difficult to withstand. There are certain ones that are very, very difficult *ashirus* is probably one of the most difficult ones. When you're wealthy, but I mean phenomenally wealthy, when you can buy and sell the city, there's a sense of independence, a sense of I don't need anyone, I don't need my wife, I don't need my kids, I don't, I don't need G-D, I could buy the city, I could buy the world and that sense of power, that sense of independence, is a very, very difficult *nisoyon*.

And quite the opposite, as much as no one wishes for *aniyus*, no one wishes for poverty, the bottom line is when you need, you turn to your Creator and the *Gemara* in *Brachas* explains something to us, that is discussing life settings, that's if a person lives a life of poverty, a life of wealth, but what if you're going about business as usual and something happens, *rachmana litzlan*, you lose your business, you break your leg, something happens. That's not a life setting and as a matter of fact the *Gemara* says the first thing you're supposed to do when that happens, when *yissurim* come upon you, when travails, when pains, when these things happen, the first thing you're supposed to say is what message is Hashem delivering to me?

It's not by happenstance, it's not by accident, there's a message, what message is Hashem delivering to me? And explains the *Gemara*, the first thing a person has to do is "*yufashfesh bumasov*" look at your actions, look at your ways. And most likely you'll see a correlation, most likely you'll see a certain message that Hashem is delivering and if in fact you don't, let's in fact you say you look through your days, your weeks, your actions, your relationships, you looked yourself over and you said, nope it can't be uh uh, explains the *Gemara*, "*yitleh bubitul torah*"

then you could know and understand that it's because of *bitul Torah*, and I don't mean to be funny, but most likely if you can't find things that you've done wrong, then with all due respect, you're not a *Torah* scholar.

Because the first that the *Torah* does, is gives you depth understanding and when you understand, you begin to understand life, you begin to understand the potential of a human being, you begin to understand how much a human being can accomplish and therefore you begin to realize that most likely I'm not quite there yet, there are very many things *baruch Hashem* I do that are well, that are good, I'm proud, and happy about them but there are also many things that I do that I'm not so pleased with, many things I do that I wish I didn't do. Many activities, many thoughts, many things I'm involved with that I don't wish to have on my scorecard for eternity.

And the minute something happens to you, the minute there's pain, travails, the minute there's a rough situation the first thing you're supposed to do is look inwards. And the Meiri on that *Gemara* in *Brachos* explains that that's the exact opposite of what we commonly do. The first thing we do is whatever, it's just one of those things, unfortunately I broke my leg, unfortunately I got into a car accident, whatever. Hey, listen things happen.

And, even if we start thinking, then we start getting very, very righteous, why did it happen to me? I mean Hashem I'm a good person, I learn, I *daven*, I give *tzdaka*, Hashem why me? Why me? And all of a sudden, instead of getting the message, I begin turning the message around and I have complaints.

And explains the Meiri that's exactly the first thing a person has to do, open their eyes and ask themselves what message is Hashem delivering to me? What is the lesson I'm supposed to learn?

And I believe what this *Gemara* shares with us is the fantastic understanding of life. Life is supposed to be beautiful, the Rambam explains that if you live a *Torah* life and you're growing and you're accomplishing, Hashem will give you what you need, why? Because that will further allow you to grow, to accomplish. So your life will be very, very good. But that doesn't mean that you're not going to have bumps along the road and it doesn't mean you're not going to have things happen to you and circumstances and events that you're not pleased with and by the way, it doesn't mean you're going to earn your living exactly the way you want.

I would like ten million dollars in the bank, that's what I would like, Hashem that's all I'm asking for. I'm not asking for a lot, just ten million dollars and then I'll be able to without worries, I'll be able to you know, have *parnassah*, please, I'm not asking for much.

And guess what? Not many people are granted that, but it's not because Hashem is short on cash and not because Hashem can't do it, it's because guess what? It wouldn't be that good for you and me, why? Because when a person needs and a person doesn't have, and a person doesn't know how they're going to pay their mortgage or their bills or their tuition or whatever, at that moment they begin to get it, I'm not the Creator of the heavens and the earth, I am but a dependent, small, human being created by Hashem, Hashem runs the world and I say the words help, please and that might very well be one of the greatest growth moments of a person's life.

So even though it's true that if you serve Hashem fully well, and you really use your life properly, in general terms, the Rambam explains you'll have a good life, life will be good and Hashem will provide for you, but that doesn't mean Hashem's going to provide for you in the way that you want, when you want, as you want, without worries, without *dagas*, Hashem just I

want my business to flourish, I want it to just go easy, why does everything have to be so hard?
Why does it have to be with such struggle?

And again, when you see a person doesn't struggle, when you see a person who has it phenomenally well, the first thing you have to ask yourself is, is he eating up his world to come here? I think this *Gemara* shares with us a profound understanding, what the *Derech Hashem* explains is, ultimate wicked people and ultimate righteous people are easy, they go right to where they belong. The *rasha* is destroyed, obliterated, nothing more to hear from him. The *tzaddik* goes right to *Gan Eden*, it's the mixed group that's a lot more difficult.

The *rasha* who did some good in his life, he did some things that are appropriate, Hashem pays him back in this world with luxuries, with wealth, with honor. Of course Hashem doesn't have to pay him back and Hashem created that *rasha* even though he didn't deserve it and it's Hashem's world and anything the *rasha* did was merely using Hashem's world, nevertheless Hashem is a *shofet mishpat*, Hashem judges things with a certain exacting, exacting justice, and even though the world to come isn't deserved, it's earned and you might have a *rasha* who has mostly, mostly wicked, but Hashem feels he did some things right, and Hashem will pay him back in this world.

You also might have a *tzaddik* who has a few things he did wrong and Hashem will pay him back in this world as well. The pay back then is not the comfortable, nice, luxurious lifetime, it's pain, it's affliction, all for one purpose, to clean that person up so that they leave this earth, go right to *Gan Eden*.

Most people though aren't quite there. Most people are not quite the *tzaddikim* who have just one or two little areas, that need improvement. And explains the *Derech Hashem* to allow for *hatzalah*, to allow for many more *neshamos* to make it, Hashem also created in the world to

come, a certain time period, it's a short time period, *gehinnom*, eleven months, twelve months, whatever the time period is, whatever it means, a person there suffers and that suffering clears up the exclusion.

You could have a *tzaddik* a person spent many years growing, accomplishing, but there's a lot of murkiness there. They'll suffer pains in this world that may get rid of some of it, it's not enough so Hashem instituted another feature, *gehinnom*, various spiritual cleansing, but once a person's done, they're done and then it's *menuchah*, beautiful, bliss for eternity.

But again, the most frightening thing is when you have a person who accomplished great things in this world but he really isn't deserving to be up there in the world to come in the upper, upper, ups. There are many levels in the world to come, there are people who are right there, as close to Hashem as you can imagine and there are people who are way, way back in the bleachers, in the nose bleed seats and you might have a person in this world who did great things, he accomplished worlds but he's really not worthy of being up there, right there in the front row but he did. Look what he accomplished, and if it could be, Hashem feels, Hashem has to pay him back so Hashem will pay that person back in this world.

And you could watch a person who has it great in this world, and you could watch them eating up their world to come. And if you and I don't appreciate it now, for eternity this person to his eternal shame, to his eternal *tzar*, is going to be way, way back there. Diminutive small when he could have been, when he should have been up there, in the front row, but he really didn't deserve it, only Hashem knows the judgment but again it's quite a frightening concept and quite a frightening idea.

And I want to finish with one last observation. That *Gemara* that says when you break your leg, when something bad happens to you, you have *yissurim*, the first thing you're supposed to do is “*yufashfesh bumasav*” look at your ways, look at your actions, it's not a happenstance, it's brought to you for a reason, you're supposed to ask yourself, okay, what am I supposed to improve, what am I supposed to change.

But then the *Gemara* says, but if you can't find anything, then “*yitla bubitul torah*” assume that it's because of *bittul Torah* and how does the *Gemara* know that, the *Gemara* quotes a *passuk*, the *Gemara* says “*Ashrei hagever*” praiseworthy be the young man “*asher tuyasrenu kah*” that Hashem *yissurim*, how lucky, how fortunate is the man who gets *yissurim* “*umitorascha tulamdenu*” and then he turns to *Torah*.

Explains Rashi, that's what you're supposed to learn. If you can't find a direct cause, you assume it's because you're not growing enough. You're not accomplishing enough, it's a message from Hashem you're supposed to turn to more learning, you're supposed to accomplish more and the *passuk* used the word “*ashrei*” praiseworthy be the person, and when you understand that Hashem loves every human being more than we could ever imagine, and when you understand that Hashem created us for one reason, and one reason only for us to grow, for us to accomplish and when you understand that Hashem wishes for nothing more than our success, you understand that every situation that Hashem brings is for our benefit.

Here, I don't see it that way, it looks so cloudy, it looks so painful and I can't stand it, why why why? But when my body's put in the ground, I separate, I'll see my life in a vastly different way and in a flash of brilliant understanding, I'll get it. And I'll look back at those painful moments and I'll say, wow, Hashem thank You, thank You so much.

That allowed me to grow. That allowed me to accomplish. That allowed me to change my direction. Hashem forever I am what I am, because of that, thank You.

And then you understand it was done with love. But could you imagine what it's like if you leave this earth and you revisit your life and you see those painful moments and you realize then why Hashem brought them to you, but you didn't wake up and for eternity you're not who you could have been and not only aren't what you could have been, but brought to you with great love was tremendous *chessed*, painful situations, painful things, so that you should wake up?

You suffered it anyway in this world and you didn't learn the lesson, that's a very, very sad concept.

May Hashem allow us to understand this, to embody this and allow us to accomplish what we were put on the planet to do.