

Dvar Torah Outline — Derech Hashem (Ramchal), Chelek II Perek 2: Hashgachah as Preparation for Olam HaBa; Two “Axes” of Divine Providence; Paying Out Majority vs. Minority

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman outlines the Ramchal’s framework for understanding השגחה: since humanity’s purpose is to earn עולם הבא in דבקות בה', the entire arrangement of עולם הזה is designed as preparation for that ultimate end. Rabbi Shulman explains that this preparation operates on two parallel “axes”—an individual axis (האישי) and a general, species-wide axis (הכללי)—and focuses here on the general axis: a דין-and-accounting system that ensures every deed is repaid, with “majority” defining one’s eternal destiny and “minority” being settled in this world through success or suffering.

I. The fundamental purpose: Olam HaBa and דבקות

A. The “ultimate good” of human creation

- Ramchal’s premise: the purpose of creating humanity is **“לשיזכה ויגיע לטוב האמיתי...”** **“שהוא ההידבקות בו יתברך לעולם הבא”** (to merit and reach the true good—cleaving to Hashem in the World to Come).
- Rabbi Shulman notes the endpoint of all human “journeys” is: **“ונמצא שסוף כל גלגוליו: הנה הוא המנוחה לעולם הבא”** (after all developments, the final destination is rest in Olam HaBa).

B. Why we begin in Olam HaZeh

- that man should first be placed in this (Divine wisdom decreed) **“גזרה החכמה העליונה”** world:
 - Bound by nature and physicality: **“ונקשר וניגבל בחוקות הטבע”**

- As the essential preparation: **“שזה תהיה ההכנה האמיתית והראויה להגיע אל התכלית הנרצה”**

- Rabbi Shulman emphasizes: this is not primarily a novel claim of the Ramchal, but a foundational Jewish principle that Ramchal organizes with clarity.

C. Hashgachah follows the purpose

- Rabbi Shulman frames the coming discussion: everything in this world’s organization is geared toward enabling that preparation:
 - **“סדר כל ענייני זה העולם... להיות הכנה והזמנה”** for Olam HaBa.
- Hashgachah = Hashem sustaining and positioning creatures so they can fulfill their תכלית (purpose).

D. Clarification: “גלגוליו” here

- Rabbi Shulman notes “גלגוליו” in this context means life’s “twists and turns” / unfolding processes—not necessarily reincarnation.

II. Two “axes” of hashgachah: individual and general (7:00)

A. “ההכנה הזאת... על שני קטבים”

- Rabbi Shulman explains Ramchal’s model: preparation for Olam HaBa revolves around **two simultaneous axes** (like rotation and orbit).

B. Defining the two קטבים

- **האישי**: the individual path of perfection
 - **“האישי הוא עניין כניסת האדם אל שלמותו במעשיו”** (a person’s entry into wholeness through his actions).
- **הכללי**: humanity’s collective preparation
 - **“והשני כללי... התכונן המין האנושי בכללו לעולם הבא”** (the human species as a whole becoming ready for Olam HaBa).

C. Roadmap of the chapter

- Rabbi Shulman notes Ramchal will:
 1. introduce both,
 2. focus this chapter on **כללי**,
 3. return later to expand **אישי**.

III. The “general axis” as bookkeeping: reward/punishment must balance (9:00)

A. Rabbi Shulman’s analogy: accounting

- The general axis functions like a strict ledger:
 - “creates a “debt/invoice עבירה
 - “creates an owed “payout מצוה
 - The system must “balance” with perfect justice—no errors, no missing entries.

B. “Blind” equality of דין in the general system

- Under the general axis, the accounting is uniform:
 - every deed matters
 - no one’s “entries” can be ignored
 - Rabbi Shulman contrasts this with the individual axis (later), where people’s missions and circumstances differ.
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IV. The “individual axis” preview: uniqueness of פנים and דעת (12:00)

A. Different faces, different minds, different missions

- Rabbi Shulman cites the חז”ל idea:
 - “כשם שאין פרצופיהם שוות, אין דעתם שוות” (just as faces differ, minds differ).
- He explains: external פנים expresses פנימיות; differing פנים reflects differing inner makeup.

B. Consequence: individualized assignments and treatments

- Because each person has a distinct הנשמה שורש, each has different tasks, challenges, and assistance.
 - Rabbi Shulman emphasizes: this is “fair but different” (separate but equal), though its full development belongs to the next chapter.
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V. The core problem: free will yields good/evil mixtures that must be handled (13:00)

A. Human design guarantees moral distribution

- Since man is created with **יצר טוב**, **יצר הרע**, and **בחירה**:
 - **“לא ימנע אפשרות... להיות מהם טובים ומהם רעים”** (it’s inevitable that some will be good and some bad).

B. The “end of the process” demands separation

- Rabbi Shulman explains Ramchal’s end-goal picture:
 - **“שידחו הרעים”** (the wicked are rejected)
 - **“ויקובצו הטובים... כלל אחד”** (the righteous are gathered into a unified collective fit for Olam HaBa).

C. A deeper inevitability: each person can be mixed

- Not only are people distributed across good/bad; each person can be internally mixed:
 - **“להיות קצתם טובים וקצתם רעים”**
 - Rabbi Shulman: the hardest case is not the pure **צדיק** or pure **רשע**, but the “blend.”
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VI. Justice requires repayment for every act—so “majority vs. minority” is decisive (17:30)

A. Why ignoring the minority is unjust

- Rabbi Shulman articulates Ramchal’s **דין** logic:
 - You can’t ignore evil in a mostly-good person
 - You can’t ignore good in a mostly-evil person
- Ramchal’s claim:
 - **“כי שורת הדין נותנת שכל המעשים יוגמלו... הן גדולים הן קטנים... הן הרבה הן מעט”**
 - (the letter of the law requires all deeds—big/small, many/few—to be repaid)

B. Conceptual conflict: mixed people can't simply "enter" Olam HaBa

- Rabbi Shulman frames it sharply:
 - evil is not just "taint"—it is antithetical to דבקות בה'
 - but good cannot be erased either
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VII. The solution: divide payment into two times and two places (21:00)

A. Ramchal's decree: split reward/punishment

- "על כן גזר החכמה העליונה לחלק הגמול... בשני זמנים ובשני מקומות"
- Rabbi Shulman explains the mechanism:
 - The "minority" part gets settled in **Olam HaZeh**
 - The "defining majority" is reserved for **Olam HaBa**

B. Two classic outcomes

- Mostly צדיק + some רע:
 - the רע is punished/expunged in this world (often through יסורים)
 - the person's essential self receives דבקות in Olam HaBa
- Mostly רשע + some good:
 - the good is paid out in this world (success, comforts)
 - the person forfeits Olam HaBa (having already received payment)

C. Rabbi Shulman's מוסר point: tiny margins matter

- He highlights how a small tilt (e.g., 50.1 vs. 49.9) has massive consequences.
 - He connects this to the spiritual work of עשרת ימי תשובה: pushing the balance even slightly is crucial.
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VIII. Rosh Hashanah, “life/death,” and the Leshem’s explanation (23:00)

A. The famous question on the Gemara’s categories

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara’s idea (in paraphrase):
 - are written immediately for life צדיקים
 - for death רשעים
 - בינונים remain pending until יום כיפור
- The classic difficulty raised by ראשונים:
 - we see righteous people die and wicked people live—so what “life/death” means needs interpretation.

B. Rabbeinu Tam: “life/death” refers to Olam HaBa

- Rabbi Shulman presents Rabbeinu Tam’s approach:
 - the annual judgment is about being a “בן עולם הבא” or not.

C. The Leshem’s answer: the annual judgment shapes the year’s hashgachah payout

- Rabbi Shulman quotes the Leshem’s conceptual resolution:
 - If judged not to receive Olam HaBa, the person is “paid out” in that year for mitzvot—receiving transient benefits instead of eternity.
 - Even if later he does תשובה and becomes worthy, what he already “cashed out” is gone:
 - Rabbi Shulman frames it as losing not only “interest,” but the קרן (principal).

IX. A critical caution: don’t read outcomes simplistically—remember the second axis (28:00)

A. The question: does suffering mean good and success mean bad?

- Rabbi Shulman addresses the natural conclusion students draw:
 - If success can be “cash-out,” is success always bad?
 - If יסורים can expunge עבירות, are יסורים always good?

B. Rabbi Shulman's answer: two axes operate simultaneously

- He emphasizes this chapter only describes the **bookkeeping axis**.
 - Many positive/negative life events may come from the **individual axis** (האישי) for reasons unrelated to "cash-out accounting."
 - Practical takeaway:
 - You generally cannot know which axis is driving a given life event; the framework is theoretical, not a tool for judging people.
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X. Text summary inside: "majority vs. minority" and the clean Olam HaBa end-state (31:00)

A. Majority defines the person; minority is settled separately

- "כלל המעשים יתחלק לרוב ולמיעוט"
- Majority is judged in its proper time/place:
 - "וידון הרוב לבדו במקומו ובזמנו הראוי לו"
- Minority is judged separately:
 - "והמיעוט לבדו במקומו ובזמנו הראוי לו"
- Rabbi Shulman notes majority is not merely quantitative; weight/quality matters too.

B. The "true" reward and punishment are in Olam HaBa

- Reward:
 - "ישאר האדם הזוכה נצחי... להדבקות בו יתברך לנצח"
- Punishment:
 - "יונדה מהטוב האמיתי ויאבד"
- Rabbi Shulman briefly distinguishes between:
 - a "cleansing" גיהנום for those ultimately entering Olam HaBa, and
 - a more absolute destruction for those who are entirely lost.

C. How Olam HaZeh functions for minority deeds

- Minority good of the רשע:
 - "יקבל הרשע גמול מיעוט הזכות... בהצלחתו"

- Minority bad of the צדיק:
 - “והצדיק עונש עונותיו ביסורים”
 - Result: perfect justice and a purified final world:
 - “שישארו הצדיקים לבדם בלי תערובות רעים ביניהם... והרשעים ידחו ויאבדו בלי שישאר להם טענה כלל”
 - Rabbi Shulman restates the conceptual symmetry:
 - transient actions → transient payout in this world
 - essential identity → eternal placement in the “world of truth”
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XI. Q&A: how the “yearly calculation” works without redoing the whole lifetime (38:00)

A. Question: is Olam HaBa status recalculated annually, and how does it aggregate?

- Rabbi Shulman answers that the system is continuously updated:
 - each year adds “delta” rather than requiring a full recomputation from scratch.
- He uses a “compiling/optimization” analogy:
 - the process is cumulative; each step builds on the prior accounting.

B. Conceptual takeaway

- The yearly דין is not only about an “end-of-life” moment—it shapes the ongoing process of החיים under hashgachah.
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In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman explains Ramchal’s premise that humanity’s purpose is דבקות בה' in עולם הבא, and עולם הזה is the necessary earning-ground and preparation.
- Hashgachah operates on two simultaneous axes: **כללי** (general דין/accounting) and **אישי** (individual mission), with this chapter focused on the general axis.
- Because free will yields mixed people (good and bad within the same person), justice requires that **every act** be repaid—so reward/punishment is split across **two times and two places**.
- The **majority** of a person defines eternal destiny (Olam HaBa), while the **minority** is paid out in this world through success (for a mostly-rasha’s good deeds) or suffering (for a mostly-tzaddik’s sins), ensuring a purified Olam HaBa reality.