

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman explains the Ramchal's view that יסורים are not merely "payment" demanded by strict דין, but a rehabilitative process that repairs the damage created by עבירות. He develops how actions concretely reshape a person's גוף and נפש—good deeds build זוהר and שלמות, while sins embed עכירות and חיסרון that block דבקות. Rabbi Shulman then clarifies why some cleansing can occur through suffering in this world while deeper stains require "spiritual" (גהנום) יסורים, and concludes with a foundational principle: the exact level of one's עולם הבא is self-chosen, leaving no room for complaint against others.

I. From "paying dues" to a deeper model: יסורים (Ramchal) as repair

A. Context: "outstanding debts" before ultimate דבקות

- Rabbi Shulman frames the larger discussion: before full closeness to Hashem in עולם הבא, a person must have remaining spiritual "debts" cleared.
- These are cleared through:
 - יסורים in עולם הזה, or
 - post-world יסורים—primarily גיהנום (with other intermediate mechanisms alluded to).

B. The chiddush: not only משפט ודין, but "based on reality"

- Rabbi Shulman reads the Ramchal: even though יסורים follow judgment, they are also they respond to what the person—"מיוסד... על פי המציאות הנברא"—has become.
 - Core shift:
 - Not just "you did wrong, now pay,"
 - but "something broke/was damaged; it must be repaired."
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II. How actions reshape the self: good creates שלמות; sin creates עכירות (2:00)

A. מעשים טובים create internal perfection

- Rabbi Shulman: good deeds don't remain external "credits"; they form מציאות שלמות "in a person's body and soul" ומעלה.

- This perfection is what enables eventual דבקות, echoing earlier יסודות in the Ramchal (חלק א פרק ב-ג).

B. embed darkness and lack מעשים רעים

- Sins create “מציאות עכירות וחסרון” within a person.
- Rabbi Shulman explains “עכירות” as an inner opacity that blocks divine revelation/connection.

C. Exact correspondence: measure-for-measure formation

- The internal effects are “בשיעור מדוקדק... לא פחות ולא יותר.”
- Rabbi Shulman’s analogy:
 - Like training specific muscles at the gym produces specific growth,
 - spiritual choices produce specific שינוי (for good or for damage) in corresponding areas of the self.

III. יסורים Even a צדיק needs cleansing: why צירוף “(5:00)” are

A. The mixed state: much light with a little darkness

- Rabbi Shulman describes the Ramchal’s case:
 - A צדיק may have “שיעור גדול מן הזוהר והמעלה,”
 - yet still a minority of failures that add a “תערובת קצת חושך ועכירות.”

B. The obstacle to דבקות

- As long as that admixture remains, the person is “איננו מוכן והגון לדבק בבורא.”

C. “גזר החסד העליון”: suffering as a חסד-based purification system

- Rabbi Shulman emphasizes: Hashem’s “חסד עליון” decrees a path of purification rather than leaving the person stuck.
- “והוא כלל היסורים” — suffering is the general mechanism of refining/cleansing.

D. The “סגולה” of יסורים: removal embedded in the word

- Rabbi Shulman highlights the linguistic point:
 - יסורים function “להסיר” (to remove) the עכירות.

- Result:
 - the person becomes clear/pure, ready for the ultimate good at the—“וּשְׂאֵר זֶךְ וּבְהִיר” proper time.
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IV. How does suffering purify? Two complementary explanations (8:30)

A. Maharal: יסורים detach the person from over-identification with the physical (9:00)

- Rabbi Shulman (citing Maharal, נתיב היסורים):
 - Affliction creates distance between “me” and my body/physical circumstance.
- Practical effect:
 - When the body/world becomes an obstacle, a person stops seeing physical success/pleasure as identity.
 - This loosens entanglement of נשמה with physicality and reorients toward what life is for—recognizing Hashem.

B. Ramchal in דעת תבונות: living through false values until they collapse (13:30)

- Rabbi Shulman (citing מ'דעת תבונות סימן מ):
 - When one chooses vanity or false powers, Hashem may give the person the “opportunity” to experience the emptiness of that choice.
- Simplified illustration he gives:
 - Choosing a forbidden indulgence, then suffering consequences that teach: “life isn’t about that; it’s about doing the right thing.”

C. Unifying idea

- “pull the person back and “recalibrate יסורים; immerses a person in physicality עבירה
 - Therefore, יסורים are not a mere “patch” on the record; they actively fix what the עבירה did to the self.
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V. Free will vs. destiny of Kiddush Hashem: the revelation will happen either way (16:01)

A. Rabbi Shulman's question to the group

- If each person has a unique mission to reveal Hashem's מלכות/oneness, how can free will allow someone to miss it?

B. Answer developed: either proactive or through consequences

- If a person chooses wrong (e.g., fails a test of restraint), the "revelation" can still be produced through:
 - תשובה (choosing to return and repair) or ,
 - יסורים (consequences that teach the truth and expose emptiness).

C. The "accountant" framework: blessing/curse both serve the system

- Rabbi Shulman connects this to the "ultimate accountant" framing (alluding to the Torah's presentation of alternatives):
 - The good path is preferable ("ובחרת בחיים" choose life),
 - yet both paths still lead to Hashem's outcome of revelation—either as positive model or negative example.
 - Attribution note in Rabbi Shulman's delivery:
 - He distinguishes between the Ramchal and the Leshem as the source of this framing.
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VI. Why גיהנום? Limits of physical יסורים; need for "spiritual" יסורים (20:06)

A. Measure-for-measure purification

- "כפי שיעור העכירות... כך יהיו הייסורים" — suffering is calibrated to the embedded opacity

B. Physical suffering may be insufficient

- Rabbi Shulman explains the Ramchal:
 - "אפשר שלא יהיה בכוח הייסורים הגופניים להסיר העכירות"
 - This leads to a need for "ייסורים נפשיים"—the primary category being גיהנום.

C. Clarifications raised in discussion

- Not everyone necessarily “goes to גיהנום” in the ordinary sense; a brief “pass through” may not affect the person (citing a Gaon’s formulation).
- Rabbi Shulman notes: the Ramchal’s main point here is the need for different kinds of cleansing, not a full map of end-times judgment procedures.

D. Tremendous variety

- “והכלל מפורט לפרטים הרבה... אי אפשר לשכל האדם להקיף על כולם”
 - Rabbi Shulman stresses: just as illnesses/afflictions in this world vary greatly, so too spiritual purification processes vary—matching unique people, acts, and spiritual breakages.
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VII. “As it absorbed, so it expels”: intensity of affects intensity of purification (27:00) עבירה

A. Rabbi Shulman’s כלי-טומאה/כשרות analogy (R. Moshe David Vali)

- He cites the purification of Midianite vessels:
 - absorbed through boiling water → purged through boiling water
 - absorbed through fire → purged through fire
- Principle: “כשם שבולע כך הוא פולט” (the same way it absorbs, so it expels).

B. Application to spiritual life

- “Cool”/less passionate sin may be easier to remove.
- Passionate, excited, deeply internalized sin may require “more fire” to burn out.

C. Open question: character traits (מידות)

- Rabbi Shulman does not lock in a definitive rule about whether ingrained traits automatically map to גיהנום-type cleansing.
 - He emphasizes complexity and “multi-factor” judgment.
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VIII. The “רשעים גמורים”: why their good deeds are rewarded only in this world (29:00)

A. Definition: internalized darkness that destroys fitness for דבקות

- Rabbi Shulman reads:
 - “הרשעים הגמורים... חשך כל כך רב... עד שנשחתו בגופם ונפשם”
- Such a person becomes “בלתי ראויים... להדבק בו יתברך.”

B. Good deeds may exist—but do not tip the person toward “good”

- They may have “קצת מעשים טובים,” but:
 - not in quantity (“לא מצד כמותם”),
 - and not in quality (“ולא מצד איכותם”),
 - such that they do not redefine the person’s spiritual identity.

C. Justice requires compensation anyway

- “כדי שלא תהיה מידת הדין לוקה” — cannot allow good acts to go unpaid דין
 - Therefore:
 - Hashem gives their reward “בעולם הזה,” consuming their limited זכות.
 - Rabbi Shulman’s explanation of the logic:
 - If the mitzvah was trivial to the person (it didn’t transform him), it receives a “trivial” payout—money, honor, worldly pleasure.
 - He illustrates with a stark analogy: like granting a condemned person a “last meal”—momentary enjoyment before loss.
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IX. **עולם הבא is not one level: Hashem set a minimum threshold, and each person chooses their place (35:09)**

A. No uniformity in spiritual attainment

- Rabbi Shulman: the Ramchal rejects the idea that all in **עולם הבא** share “מדרגה אחת... השגה אחת.”
- Instead: diversity exactly commensurate with one’s spiritual accomplishments.

B. The Divine cutoff point: minimal **דביקות** that still “counts”

- Hashem determined the lowest level of **דביקות/ענג** in His perfection that qualifies someone to be included.
- Anyone who reaches at least that threshold is “מן הנשארים לנצחיות להתענג בו.”

C. Those who cannot reach even the minimum are “נדחה לגמרי ואובד”

- Rabbi Shulman notes this aligns with earlier discussion: a person can reach a state of permanent loss.

D. **you own the good you built**: האדם עצמו בעל טובו

- Hashem’s “**עומק עצה**” is that a person should be master of his own good:
 - Not only whether one enters **עולם הבא**,
 - but the precise portion/relationship of revelation one receives—“לא יהיה אלא כפי מעשיו בדקדוק.”

E. Consequence: no complaints against others

- Final principle:
 - “לא יהיה לגובה מעלת האדם... סיבה אחרת אלא הוא עצמו”
 - Therefore “לא יהיה לו תרעומת על אחר כלל”—one sees clearly that his placement is self-chosen.
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X. In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman presents **יסורים** as a **תוסד**-driven repair mechanism, not merely punitive payment demanded by **דין**.

- Actions reshape the self with precision: mitzvot build internal שלמות, while עבירות embed עכירות that blocks דבקות.
- purify by detaching a person from over-immersion in physicality and by forcing יסורים false values to be experienced as empty; deeper stains may require “spiritual” יסורים such as גיהנום.
- Even when a person fails their unique mission, Hashem’s revelation emerges either through תשובה or through consequences—free will determines the route.
- is radically individualized: Hashem set a minimum threshold, and each עולם הבא person’s exact מדרגה is the result of their own choices, eliminating any claim against others.