

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman continues developing the idea of **השגחה אישית** as Hashem's individualized guidance, framing a person's life circumstances as tailored tests aligned with their unique spiritual mission ("מזל" in a higher sense). He contrasts this with the Gemara's "אין מזל לישראל," explaining that Jews can transcend astrological determinism, while still having a divinely assigned role that shapes their challenges. Rabbi Shulman then introduces a second axis beyond mission: **דין וגמול**—how a person's deeds generate increased assistance, more opportunities for mitzvot, and even protection from while misdeeds can create escalating obstacles that (paradoxically) can later become a **עבירות**, source of greater **תיקון**.

I. Review: Hashgachah pratis and the higher concept of "mazel"

A. Hashgachah pratis as individualized guidance

- Rabbi Shulman explains that Hashem guides each person in a uniquely tailored way.
- The world contains a vast "plan" of **עבודת השם** meant to produce profound **דביקות** and **גילוי אלוקות**, culminating in a future **קיבוץ השלמים** (the gathering of perfected Jews).

B. Each person receives a distinct **חלק** in **עבודת השם**

- Roles/tasks are "apportioned" to individuals; therefore people are fundamentally different.
- "Different face" implies "different mind," leading to a unique mode of recognizing and relating to Hashem.
- The implication: each person's **עבודת השם** is not interchangeable with another's.

C. The **תיקונים** below corresponds to **תיקון** above

- Rabbi Shulman notes (introducing **אות ג**) that our challenges and **עבודת השם** below correspond to "misalignments/breakages" in higher realms.
- Human **תיקון** repairs what is lacking in the world's perfection.

D. Reading and explaining **אות ג**: success and suffering as tailored tests

- Quoted idea (paraphrase of the text): successes and troubles in this world are arranged to test a person in the specific **ניסיונות** suited to them.
 - "מזל" here means the divinely assigned package of life-tests aligned with one's **תיקון**.
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II. Clarifying “אין מזל לישראל” and two kinds of mazal (4:30)

A. The Gemara’s statement and its nuance

- Rabbi Shulman explains: **אין מזל לישראל** does **not** mean Jews have no mazal at all.
- Rather, it means Jews are **not bound** by mazal; זכות and מצוות can transcend it (e.g., Avraham being “lifted above the stars”).

B. “Grade A” vs. “Grade B” mazal

- **Lower mazal:** astrological/horoscope-like influences that can affect tendencies; can be overridden by זכות.
- **Higher mazal:** Hashem’s plan for what aspect of divine revelation a person is meant to bring into the world—this shapes who the person is.

C. Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa as an example of higher mazal

- Rabbi Shulman cites the Gemara where Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa was told that changing his poverty would require “recreating the world.”
- Meaning: his poverty was part of his assigned role in עבודת השם, not merely “bad luck.”

D. Why envy of someone else’s “portion” doesn’t make sense

- Wanting a different חלק in עבודת השם would require becoming a different person (different “mind/face”).
- Rabbi Shulman illustrates with a “brain transplant” analogy: no one wants it because it would no longer be “you.”
- Therefore: valuing oneself should include valuing one’s unique עבודת השם.

III. Transition to דאית: A second reason for differing life circumstances—din and recompense (11:00)

A. Setting up the question

- Rabbi Shulman frames why two people (e.g., “Yaakov” and “Shimon”) can experience very different outcomes.
- Beyond differing missions (role assignments), there is another factor: **דרכי המשפט והגמול**.

B. The new axis: deeds generate Hashem's assistance

- Rabbi Shulman introduces the principle: a person's actions can cause Hashem to help them achieve spiritual perfection more easily.
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IV. Mitzvah leads to mitzvah: added opportunities and eased pathways (12:44)

A. מצוה גוררת מצוה as real-life “opportunity engineering”

- Rabbi Shulman explains that doing mitzvot can change circumstances so future mitzvot become easier.
- Example: opportunities for תוסת depend on being “in the right place at the right time,” unlike צדקה which can be done whenever one has money.

B. Practical illustrations

- One person goes long stretches without a תוסת opportunity.
- Another is “handed” one תוסת after another in rapid succession—suggesting Hashem is opening doors due to prior merits.

C. חסד about balancing responsibility and שאלות

- Rabbi Shulman affirms one should use דעת; specific cases require תורה דעת.
 - He emphasizes the concept is true, but application must be responsible.
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V. Protection from stumbling: “רגלי חסידיו ישמור” (15:30)

A. A striking claim: mitzvot can protect from עבירות

- Rabbi Shulman highlights the “mind-boggling” idea: doing good can lead to Hashem saving a person from מכשולים (stumbling blocks).
- He gives a modern illustration: a person tries to access something harmful; the internet/Wi-Fi “mysteriously” fails repeatedly, forcing a better choice.

B. דוד המלך ובת שבע as an extreme case-study (and its limits)

- Rabbi Shulman references the Gemara's statement: one who says דוד sinned is “mistaken,” meaning the situation was arranged so it was not a technical עבירה in the legal sense.

- He notes:
 - There were halachic mechanisms involved (e.g., a pre-written טג; complex sugya).
 - so this is not “permission to—תשובה still suffered serious consequences and did intense דוד sin.”

C. The pasuk Rabbi Shulman quotes

- “רַגְלֵי חֲסִידָיו יִשְׁמֹר” (He guards the feet of His pious ones.)
- Rabbi Shulman explains: Hashem may “seatbelt” a spiritually instrumental person—protecting them and, by extension, what they contribute to the world.

D. Levels within this protection

- Rabbi Shulman stresses “מדרגות מדרגות”:
 - Some merit only a little assistance.
 - Others merit far more; their path to שלמות becomes significantly easier.

VI. Rosh Hashanah and “job-assignment” changes through judgment and merit (22:33)

A. Rosh Hashanah as a major example of דין affecting assistance

- Rabbi Shulman connects the discussion back to Rosh Hashanah:
 - A person’s preparation (Elul, tefillah, sincerity) can yield increased סייעתא דשמיא afterward.
- He gives examples of life circumstances that can “open up”:
 - promotion, childcare help, etc.—enabling more mitzvot.

B. Reconciling reward in this world with “שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא” (25:02)

- Rabbi Shulman brings the second paragraph of שמע: mitzvah observance leading to rain/harvest.
 - He cites the Rambam:
 - Since true reward for mitzvot is not in this world, these material “rewards” are better understood as facilitation—Hashem providing resources so one can do more mitzvot.
 - Investment analogy:
 - If someone uses spiritual “capital” well, Hashem “reinvests” by giving more means/opportunities.
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VII. The reverse: fewer merits can mean fewer helps and more obstacles (26:30)

A. Different negative outcomes based on דין

- Rabbi Shulman outlines a spectrum:
 1. A person might receive **no extra help**, but also no extra difficulty—“פרווה.”
 2. Another might receive **many עיכובים**: obstacles in health, parnasah, housing, etc.

B. Concrete obstacles and “act of God” examples

- Rabbi Shulman discusses real-life disruptions (storm damage, car totaled) and the immense “headaches” even when insurance exists.
- He contrasts:
 - a branch falling near a car but not damaging it (suggesting protection / סייעתא דשמיא)
 - vs. cases where damage lands directly and creates major impediments.

C. “עמל רב” to reach the same spiritual goals

- Rabbi Shulman illustrates how one person reaches learning with ease (comfort and convenience), while another must strain greatly to do the same.
- Example of extreme effort: long multi-leg public transport commute before dawn just to make it to learning.

VIII. The educational question: why make it harder for someone already doing wrong? (31:00)

A. The apparent contradiction

- Rabbi Shulman raises the מוסר question:
 - If someone fails, wouldn't a good parent make success easier, not harder?
 - Why does Hashem increase difficulty for someone who is already slipping?

B. The Alter of Slabodka's framework (32:00)

- Rabbi Shulman attributes to the Alter (Ohr Tzafun):
 - Repeated עבירות build momentum and habit; turning around becomes harder.
 - If the person nevertheless does תשובה and reverses course, the struggle itself becomes a powerful תיקון.

- Key idea: overcoming the heightened difficulty can retroactively repair earlier wrongdoing—turning past failures into a source of זכות (in the sense that they created the resistance now overcome).

C. A second מוסר framing: living through רע to grasp its truth (34:30)

- Rabbi Shulman adds another explanation (attributed broadly to דעת תורה):
 - Choosing רע forces a person to experience its consequences, awakening clarity that mitzvot aren't to be “passed on.”
 - The added difficulty corrects the original mistaken mindset.

D. “Winding system” and future discussion of wake-up suffering

- Rabbi Shulman explains the system “winds itself up”:
 - wrong choices → harder path
 - overcoming anyway → deeper תיקון and added זכות
 - He notes a related category to be addressed later: יסורים של התעוררות (sufferings that awaken a person).
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IX. Stopping point: approaching the case of “רשע גמור” (36:30)

- Rabbi Shulman closes by noting they are about to continue into the next section: what Hashem sets up for a רשע גמור.
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X. In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman defines השגחה אישית as a personalized system of tests and guidance aligned with each individual's unique חלק in השם.
- He distinguishes between **astrological mazal** (which Jews can transcend) and a **higher “mazal”** (one's divinely assigned mission that shapes identity and life circumstances).
- Beyond mission, **דין וגמול** influences a person's life: mitzvot can generate more opportunities, more assistance, and even protection from spiritual stumbling.
- can create escalating obstacles—but those obstacles can become the very arena through עבירות תיקון which תשובה gains greater depth and retroactive.