

## Introduction

1. Link for an in-depth series on Iyov <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=4575>

2. Talmud, Bava Batra 15a

יתב ההוא מרבנן קמיה דר' שמואל בר נחמני, ויתיב וקאמר איוב לא היה ולא נברא אלא משל היה.

- א"ל, עליך אמר קרא, "איש היה בארץ עוץ איוב שמו."
- אלא מעתה, "ולרש אין כל כי אם כבשה אחת קטנה אשר קנה ויחיה וגו', " מי הוה? אלא משל בעלמא, הכא נמי משל בעלמא.
- א"כ, שמו ושם עירו למה?

A sage before Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmani said: Iyov did not exist and was not created; he was a parable.

- Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmani said: To you it says, "There was a man in the land of Utz, and his name was Iyov!"
- But then Shemuel II 12:3, "The pauper had naught but one small lamb he had bought, and he nurtured her, etc." – was there such a person? He was a parable, and so too here!
- But then why tell his name and city?

3. Rambam, Guide of the Perplexed 3:22

ענין איוב הנפלא הוא מכת מה שאנחנו בו, ר"ל שהוא משל לבאר דיעות בני אדם בהשגחה, וכבר ידעת באורם ומאמר קצתם "איוב לא היה ולא נברא אלא משל היה", ואשר חשבו שהיה ונברא ושהוא ענין שאירע, לא ידעו לו לא זמן ולא מקום... וזה ממה שיחזק מאמר מי שאמר לא היה ולא נברא...

The incredible matter of Iyov is of the type we have been discussing, a parable to explain human views regarding Divine supervision. You already know their explanation, and how some have said, "Iyov did not exist and was not created; he was a parable," and how those who thought he existed and was created and his story is about a real event knew neither his time nor his location... This strengthens the view that he did not exist and was not created...

## Background on the story of Iyov

4. Rambam, Guide of the Perplexed 3:22

לא אמר "ויבאו בני האלקים והשטן להתיב על ד", שאז הי' נראה שמציאות הכל על יחס א' ועל ערך א', אבל אמר "ויבאו בני האלקים להתיב על ד' ויבא גם השטן בתוכם." וכיו' בזה המאמר לא נאמר אלא במי שבא בלתי מכוון ולא מבוקש לעצמו, אבל כאשר באו מי שכיון בואם בא זה בתוך הבאים.

It did not say, "And the *bnei ha'Elokim* and the Satan came to stand upon Gd," which would have indicated that all were in one relationship, as equals. Rather, it said, "And the *bnei ha'Elokim* came to stand upon Gd, and the Satan was also among them." Language like this is stated only regarding someone who was not intended or invited personally. When the intended parties came, he mixed into the group as well.

## How could Hashem do this to Iyov?

5. Midrash, Pesikta Rabti 26

אמר ירמיהו כשהייתי עולה לירושלים נטלתי עיני וראיתי אשה אחת יושבת בראש ההר... אמר לה ירמיה דומה מכתך למכתו של איוב, מאיוב נטלו בניו ובנותיו, וממך נטלו בנייך ובנותייך, מאיוב נטלתי כספו וזהבו, וממך נטלתי כספך וזהבך, לאיוב השלכתי לתוך האשפה, וליך עשיתי אשפה של זבל, וכשם שחזרתי ונחמתי את איוב כך אני עתיד לחזור ולנחמך, לאיוב כפלתי בניו ובנותיו וליך אני עתיד לכפול בנייך ובנותייך, לאיוב כפלתי כספו וזהבו וליך אני עתיד לעשות כן, לאיוב נערת מן אשפה ועליך הוא אומר התנערי מעפר קומי שבי ירושלים (ישעיה נ"ב ב')...

Yirmiyahu said: When I ascended to Jerusalem I lifted my eyes and saw a woman seated atop the mountain... Yirmiyah said to her: Your blows resemble the blows of Iyov. Iyov's sons and daughters were taken from him, and your sons and daughters were taken from you. I took Iyov's silver and gold, and I took your silver and gold. I cast Iyov into the heap, and I made you a heap of manure. And just as I returned and comforted Iyov, so I will return and comfort you. I doubled Iyov's sons and daughters, and I will double your sons and daughters. I doubled Iyov's silver and gold, and I will do so for you. I moved Iyov from the heap, and regarding you (in Yeshayah 52:2) it says, "Shake yourself from the dust, arise, return to Jerusalem"...

## Face 1: Iyov was flawed from before this story began

6. Mishnah Sotah 5:1 (Sotah 27b)

בו ביום דרש ר' יהושע בן הורקנוס לא עבד איוב את הקב"ה אלא מאהבה שנא' "הן יקטלני לו אייחל". ועדיין הדבר שקול - לו אני מצפה או איני מצפה? ת"ל "עד אגוע לא אסיר תומתי ממני", מלמד שמאהבה עשה. אמר רבי יהושע: מי יגלה עפר מעיניך רבן יוחנן בן זכאי, שהיית דורש כל ימך שלא עבד איוב את המקום אלא מיראה, שנאמר "איש תם וישר ירא אלקים וסר מרע", והלא יהושע תלמיד תלמידך למד שמאהבה עשה!

On that day, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hyrcanus taught: Job served Gd [at the start of the book] only out of love, as 13:15 says, "Though He kill me, /o I will hope." But the matter is still hanging – "for Him I hope", or "I do not hope"? 27:5 says, "Until I expire, I will not remove my purity," teaching that he acted out of love.

Rabbi Yehoshua said: Who will remove the dirt from your eyes, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, for you taught all your life that lyov served Gd only out of awe, as it says, "A man without flaw, and righteous, and in awe of Gd, and avoiding evil," and Yehoshua, student of your student, taught that he acted out of love!

7. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, קול דודי דופק, Part 2, Gordon tr. [https://www.sefaria.org/Kol\\_Dodi\\_Dofek%2C\\_Job](https://www.sefaria.org/Kol_Dodi_Dofek%2C_Job)  
You were a sound and just man, Gd-fearing and avoiding of evil. You did not use your power and wealth for ill. You gave much charity ("Righteousness I wore, and it robbed me, my justice was a robe and turban" [Job 29:14]). You did not hesitate to offer assistance and support to others, and you stood by them in their hour of peril and distress ("Did I not deliver the poor that cried out and the orphaned that had none to help him?" [Job 29:12]). However, you were still short of attaining that great trait of loving-kindness in two respects: (a) never did you bear the communal yoke, nor did you participate in the trouble and grief of the community, and (b) you did not feel the pain of [i.e., empathize with] the individual sufferer. As a man blessed with a good heart, you may have momentarily pitied the orphan. You had vast amounts of money and you wanted for nothing, hence you gave a respectable amount of tzedakah [charity]. However, loving-kindness encompasses more than fleeting sentiment and cheap sentimentality. Loving-kindness demands more than a momentary tear and a cold coin. Loving-kindness means empathizing with one's fellow man, identifying with his hurt and feeling responsibility for his fate...

You were a contemporary of Jacob, who wrestled with Laban, Esau, and the angel at the stream of Yabok (Genesis 32:23–32). Did you help Jacob with advice? Who was Jacob? A poor shepherd. And you? You were rich and a man of influence. Had you related to Jacob with appropriate sympathy and with steadfast loving kindness, he would not have had to pass through such a multitude of tribulations...

The Holy One said to the friends of Job, "Now, therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to My servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and My servant Job shall pray for you" (42:8). Behold, I will test Job yet another time. Let him be tested publicly. Does he now know how to pray for others and participate in their travail? Did he learn anything in the hour of retribution and divine anger? Did he adopt for himself a new style of collective prayer that encompasses the community? If he pleads for you, he will bring his salvation and yours; "For to him I will show favor" (42:8). Then you shall know that Job was redeemed from the narrow straits of egotism and entered into the vistas of communal empathy; and that social isolation has ended and communal affiliation has appeared in its stead. A wonderful thing happened. Job suddenly understood the nature of Jewish prayer. He discovered in one moment its plural voice and the attribute of loving-kindness that sweeps man from the private to the public domain. He began to live a communal life, to feel the community's hurts, to mourn its disasters and rejoice in its moments of celebration...

#### 8. Avot d'Rabbi Natan 7:1b ויהיו עניים בני ביתך

ולא בני ביתך ממש אלא שיהיו עניים משיחין מה שאוכלים ושותים בתוך ביתך כדרך שהיו עניים משיחין מה שאוכלין ושותין בתוך ביתו של איוב, וכשנפגשו זה בזה אמר אחד לחבירו "מאין אתה בא?" "מתוך ביתו של איוב." "ולאן אתה הולך?" "לכיתו של איוב." וכשבא עליו ההוא פורענות גדול אמר לפני הקב"ה "רבש"ע! לא הייתי מאכיל רעבים ומשקה צמאים?" שנא 'ואוכל פתי לבדי ולא אכל יתום ממנה' (לא:יז) "ולא הייתי מלביש ערומים?" שנא 'ומגז כבשי יתחמם' (לא:כ). אעפ"כ א"ל הקב"ה לאיוב, "איוב! עדיין לא הגעת לחצי שיעור של אברהם! אתה יושב ושוהה בתוך ביתך ואורחין נכנסים אצלך, את שדרכו לאכול פת חטים האכלתו פת חטים, את שדרכו לאכול בשר האכלתו בשר, את שדרכו לשתות יין השקיתו יין. אבל אברהם לא עשה כן, אלא יוצא ומהדר בעולם וכשימצא אורחין מכניסן בתוך ביתו, את שאין דרכו לאכול פת חטים האכילהו פת חטים, את שאין דרכו לאכול בשר האכילהו בשר, ואת שאין דרכו לשתות יין השקהו יין. ולא עוד אלא עמד ובנה פלטרין גדולים על הדרכים והניח [שם] מאכל ומשקה, וכל הבא ונכנס אכל ושתה וברך לשמים! לפיכך נעשית לו נחת רוח. וכל שהפה שואל מצוי בתוך ביתו של אברהם שנא 'ויטע אשל בבאר שבע' (בר' כא:לג).

Not literally the members of your household; rather, that paupers should speak of what they eat and drink in your home, as paupers would speak of what they ate and drank in lyov's home. When they encountered each other, one would say to another, 'From where did you come?' 'From lyov's home. Where are you going?' 'To lyov's home.' And when lyov experienced the great suffering, he said before Gd: 'Master of the Universe! Did I not feed the hungry and give drinks to the thirsty?' As in lyov 31:16, 'Did I eat my bread alone, without an orphan eating therefrom?' "And did I not clothe the unclothed?" As in lyov 31:20, 'Did he not warm himself with the shearing from my sheep?'

Nonetheless, Gd replied to lyov: lyov! You did not reach even half of Avraham's measure. You sit and wait in your home and guests enter to you. You feed wheat bread to one who normally eats wheat bread. You feed meat to one

who normally eats meat. You give wine to one who normally drinks wine. Avraham did not do this; rather, he went out into the world and circulated, and when he found guests he brought them into his home. He gave wheat bread to those who did not normally eat wheat bread, he gave meat to those who did not normally eat meat. He gave wine to those who did not normally drink wine. Not only that, but he built great halls near the roads, and placed [there] food and drink. Anyone who entered ate and drank and blessed Gd. Therefore, I gave him *nachat ruach*. And anything the mouth requested was found in Avraham's house, as it is written, 'And he planted an eshel in Beer Sheva.'

### Face 2: Iyov was not flawed, but he had something to learn

9. Talmud, Bava Batra 16a

"בכל זאת לא חטא איוב בשפתיו" - אמר רבא: בשפתיו לא חטא, בלבו חטא.

"Job still did not sin with his lips" – Rava said: He did not sin verbally, but he sinned in his heart.

10. Rashi to 38:2

מי זה הוא מחשיך עצה מקלקל במילים וברוב דברים, שכתבתי "איש תם וישר" בתחילת הספר כדי לחול שמי עליו...

Who is this who darkens counsel and corrupts with words and long speeches, for I wrote at the start of the book, "a complete and righteous man", placing My name upon him...

11. Ibn Ezra to 42:7

שהודה ואמר ונחמתי

For he admitted, and said, "I regret it."

### Face 3: The suffering wasn't about Iyov

12. Rashi to 42:7, based on Talmud, Bava Batra 16b

הוא לא פשע בי כי אם על אשר אמר "תם ורשע הוא מכלה", ... ואם הוסיף לדבר מפני קושי יסורין אשר כבדו וחזקו עליו דבר. אבל אתם פשעתם על אשר הרשעתם אותו... והתחזקתם אותו בחזקת רשע ולבסוף הייתם משותקים ומנוצחים לפניו, והיה לכם לנחמו כאשר עשה אליהוא. ולא די לאיוב בצרתו ויסוריו, כי גם הוספתם על חטאתיכם פשע להקניטו.

He did not sin against Me other than by saying, "He destroys complete and wicked"... And if he added words, he spoke because of the harsh suffering which weighed on him and overpowered him. But you sinned when you declared him wicked... And you strengthened him in his wickedness, and in the end you were silenced and defeated before him, and you should have comforted him as Elihu did. And not only did Job experience pain and suffering, but you added iniquity to your sin by angering him.

13. Amos Chacham (20<sup>th</sup> century Israel), Daat Mikra Commentary to Iyov 1:7

ולא קרא השטן בשם מקום מסוים, שממנו בא. ונראה, שכוונתו לומר: לא באתי להודיע על חטא מיוחד שנעשה באחד המקומות, אלא כל הארץ כולה מלאה חטאים, כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ.

Satan did not name a particular place from which he had come. Apparently, he meant to say, "I have not come to inform of a particular sin performed in one place; rather, the whole land is filled with sin, for there are no righteous people on earth."...

14. Ibn Ezra to 42:10

שבות איוב - שהיה נשבה ביד השטן הוציאו מרשותו:

"The captivity of Job" – which was held by the Satan; He now removed it from him.

15. Ibn Ezra to 42:17

ד' יעשה רצונו יענה רשע גם צדיק, גם יש צדיקים גם רשעים שיתן להם כל טוב שיתאו... ולדעת זאת החכמה למה זה נשגבה מדעת האדם. והנה הטעם כאשר לא ידעו בני אדם מחשבות ד' וגזירותיו שהם עמוקות, אולי אלה הגזירות שגזר עלי הוא ידע למה גזרם ואינם בעבור שחטאתי לפניו.

Gd performs His will, oppressing wicked and righteous alike. There are also righteous and wicked people to whom Gd gives every benefit they desire... And to know this wisdom, why this happens, is elevated beyond human ken. The message is that just as people do not know Gd's deep thoughts and decrees, perhaps these decrees He ordered against me, He knows why He decreed them and it is not because I sinned before Him.