

*The program is sponsored by Sarena and David Koschitzky, in memory of Riva Koschitzky z"l*

*This session is dedicated by Rikki Blitt in honour of the wonderful learning with Rabbi Torczyner*

*This session is dedicated by Eddie and Lisa Jesin  
in honour of the recent birth of their grandson Isaac Leo (Yitzchak Levi)*

*This session is dedicated by Neville and Lyn Richter in memory of their parents z"l*

Classes on the book of Iyov, beginning to end <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=4575>

### Is Iyov a work of fiction?

#### 1. Talmud, Bava Batra 15a-b

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

- Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmeni 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?

#### 2. Rambam, Guide of the Perplexed 3:22

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...

#### 3. "Mashal" Devarim 28:37; Shemuel I 24:13; Melachim I 5:12

#### 4. Midrash, Pesikta Rabti 26

Jeremiah said: When I ascended to Jerusalem I lifted my eyes and saw a woman seated atop the mountain... Jeremiah said to her: Your blows resemble those 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 Isaiah 52:2 says, "Shake yourself from the dust, arise, return to Jerusalem"...

#### 5. Simon N. Kramer, *Sumerian Wisdom Text: A Sumerian Variation of the "Job" Motif*

First comes a brief introductory exhortation that man should praise and exalt his god and soothe him with lamentations. The poet then introduces the unnamed individual who, upon being smitten with sickness and misfortune, addresses his god with tears and prayers. There follows the sufferer's petition which constitutes the major part of the poem. It begins with a description of the ill treatment accorded him by his fellow men, friend and foe alike; continues with a lament against his bitter fate, including a rhetorical request to his kin and to the professional singers to do likewise; and concludes with a confession of guilt and a direct plea for relief and deliverance. Finally comes the "happy ending," in which the poet informs us that the man's prayer did not go unheeded, and that his god accepted the entreaties and delivered him from his afflictions. All this leads, of course, to a further glorification of his god.

### Why does this matter?

#### 6. Professor Yaakov Klein, *Olam haTanach: Iyov* pg. 16

Opposite this, one could argue that if the author of the book lived after the destruction, he would not deal with the problem of the fate of an individual and personal reward, but with the problem of the fate of the nation, and it is not

possible that he would fail to mention the destruction and the national tragedy in his book. Likewise, against the backdrop of the Edomite joy at the fall of Judea and the destruction of Jerusalem and the great antagonism between them and the Jews, it is not logical that a Jewish sage would choose a figure of Edomite descent as the representative of the righteous person who suffers and the hero of his book.

#### 7. Midrash, Avot d'Rabbi Natan 7:1b

Gd replied to Iyov: Iyov! You did not reach even half of Abraham'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. Abraham 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 Abraham's house, as it is written, 'And he planted an eshel in Beer Sheva.'

#### 8. Rashi to Iyov 38:2

Iyov replied, "Who is this who conceals counsel" – Had I known Your counsel, I would not have increased my words. To which Gd replied, "Avraham did not know, and he withstood ten [tests]!"

#### So was Iyov Jewish?

#### 9. Deuteronomy 32:39, Iyov 10:7

I kill and I create life; I strike and I heal; and none can save from My Hand!  
You know that I have not sinned, but none can save from Your Hand.

#### 10. Psalms 107:40, Iyov 12:21

He pours shame upon princes; He makes them wander in desolation, without a path.  
He pours shame upon princes; He loosens the belt of the mighty.

#### 11. Yechezkel 14:13-14

Son of man! When the land sins against Me, to trespass, and I will stretch out My hand upon it and break its staff of bread, and I will send famine against it, and I will eradicate from there man and beast. And there will be these three men in its midst: Noach, Danel and Iyov – they, in their righteousness, will save themselves...

#### 12. Talmud, Bava Batra 15a-b

And some say Iyov was in Yaakov's time, and he married Dinah, daughter of Yaakov. Iyov 2:10 says, 'You speak like of the *nevalot*,' and Bereishit 34:7 said, 'A *nevalah* was done in Israel.'" All of those sages believed that Iyov was Jewish, other than the "some say" author, for if Iyov was not Jewish, was the Shechinah manifest upon idolaters after Moshe's death? Have we not learned, "Moshe requested that the Shechinah not be manifest upon idolaters, as in Shemot 33:16, 'And I and Your nation shall be set apart!'"

#### 13. Talmud, Sanhedrin 106a

Three were in the plot [to throw baby boys into the river in Egypt]: Bilam, Iyov and Yitro.

#### Review Questions

- 1> Why would we view the book of Iyov as a parable?
- 2> Why would Iyov's Jewish or non-Jewish identity matter?
- 3> What indicates that Iyov is Jewish?
- 4> What indicates that Iyov is not Jewish?