

**EMUNAH - FAITH  
BULLETIN # 26**

**WHO IS WEALTHY? THE ONE WHO  
IS HAPPY WITH HIS PORTION (PIRKE AVOT)**

***THE RAMCHAL EXPLAINS THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMUNAH  
IN HIS SEFER DAAT TEVUNOT***

**FOR THE CREATOR DEvised PERFECT ORDERS FOR THE PERFECTION OF THE CREATION, AS WE EXPLAINED, AND HE ESTABLISHED TWO ORDINANCES: REWARD AND PUNISHMENT, AND MAZAL. AND HE IS THE DECISOR, RESORTING SOMETIMES TO ONE AND SOMETIMES TO THE OTHER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT BETTER FURTHERS THE GOOD OF HIS UNIVERSE. HOWEVER, WHEN HE OPERATES THROUGH REWARD AND PUNISHMENT ALL OF THE RESULTS WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDERS AND LAWS OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT, AND WHEN HE OPERATES THROUGH MAZAL ALL OF THE RESULTS WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDINANCE OF MAZAL AND THE CHARACTER OF THE CREATION, AS WE EXPLAINED.**

•And this, too, will result in greater merit for the righteous. For if the Creator always afflicted only the righteous, this would still be a test for free will, but not a very great one, for they could console themselves in the knowledge that they were unquestionably righteous, in that they were interminably afflicted. And any sensible person would gladly suffer these afflictions, for they would be confirmation of his righteousness, the wicked not being afflicted in this manner. But the Creator desired an area of greater trial, in which men could not clearly understand how the Holy One, Blessed he He, conducted Himself with each man in His world, hut in which, on the surface of things, the ordinance seemed to be (Ecclesiastes 9:2):

“All unto all, one happening to the righteous and to the wicked.” This was explained by our sages in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Kohelet 989): “Solomon looks down the corridor of the generations and sees the same thing happening to the wicked and the righteous alike...” That is, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees that a particular happening which befalls a

wicked person who commits a particular transgress|on (to which that punishment is attributed) befalls righteous men too who are absolutely scrupulous in their shunning of that same transgression. And this truth is incontestably brought out through the examples of Abraham and Nimrod and all of the others mentioned in that midrash And all is ordered in this manner to result in goodly reward for the righteous, who strengthen themselves in their faith, as it is written (Habakkuk 2 4) “And the righteous one will live in his faith “ For ii is impossible for anyone to plumb the depths of what the Holy One,

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Blessed be He, is doing with him For at one time He may be conducting Himself with him through the ordinance of reward and punishment, and, at another, through that of *mazal*; as we explained, and with respect to anything that befalls a man, there is no one who can determine whether it is an aspect of reward and punishment, based on his deeds, or an aspect of *mazal* decreed upon him And in everything there is an aspect of both so that any attempt to reach such a determination can only set one's thoughts into a turmoil. But one who is faithful to the Lord must anchor his pole of faith firmly, unswervingly, in the knowledge that every one of the Lord's deeds whatever form it may take, is unquestionably just and fitting, and not wrong, God forbid He must not be like the wicked, who say "The way of God is not right," but must remain steadfast serving his Creator with a pure service, accepting with equal grace every measure meted out to him If he does so, he will be accounted truly pure. In sum there are two ways the way of reward and punishment and the way of *mazal*, and the Creator utilized them in accordance with His knowledge of what is beneficial for the world.

In the Midrash of R Shimon b Yochai there appears a statement, which, though dealing with the profoundest truths in the mysteries of the heavenly attributes, seems very strange on a superficial level, to one who is unfamiliar with the foregoing prefaces, viz. (Tikkuney Zohar 70) "And when the Lord arises from the throne of justice and from the throne of mercy, there is found neither reward nor punishment," the implication seeming to be that there is no reward or punishment, God forbid. The true meaning, however, is that there is a time in which the Creator does not conduct His world according to the ordinance of reward and punishment, but according to that of *mazal*, as we explained, good and evil manifesting themselves in accordance with the ordinance serving the end of the universal perfection. Certainly reward and punishment will obtain in the world to come, each man receiving the fruits of his ways and deeds, but we are being told that in the straits of the footsteps of the Messiah we should not find it insupportable if the righteous are greatly demeaned and men cry out and are not answered, and all of those other things occur which our sages speak of within the context of (Sota 49b): "In the footsteps of the Messiah audacity will prevail." For all of this arises from the fact that the righteous, in all of their merit, cannot remedy these defects; for the time ushers them in towards the end of the subsequent universal perfection through the revelation of the Blessed One's oneness, as we explained.

***"Everything Hashem does, He does for good." (Berachot 60b)***

**Our sages said (Chulin 7b), "A person does not bruise his finger unless it was decreed in Heaven,"**