

Two Approaches to *Yesurim shel Ahava*

בבא מציעא פה

אמר רבי, חביבין יסורין

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to himself: Afflictions are evidently precious.

תהילים צ"ד: י"ב

”אשרי | הגבר אשר יסורנו -ה ומתורתך תלמדנו:

Happy is the man whom You discipline, O LORD,
the man You instruct in Your teaching,

ירמיהו י': כ"ד

סורני יהוה אדבמשפט אלבאפך פרתמעטני:

O Lord, correct me, but in due measure, not in Thy anger, lest Thou bring me to
.nothing

Therefore, **Lord, chastise me** and instruct me, **but** do so **with justice**, taking into account my frailties and limitations; do **not** do so **in Your wrath lest** I will be unable to withstand it and **You diminish me**.

Berakhot 5a: 9-10

Previously, the Gemara discussed suffering that results from one's transgressions. The Gemara shifts the focus and discusses suffering that does not result from one's transgressions and the suffering of the righteous. **Rava, and some say Rav Hisda, said: If a person sees that suffering has befallen him, he should examine his actions.** Generally, suffering comes about as punishment for one's transgressions, **as it is stated: “We will search and examine our ways, and return to God”** (Lamentations 3: 40). **If he examined** his ways and **found no** transgression for which that suffering is appropriate, **he may attribute** his suffering **to dereliction** in the study of **Torah**. God punishes an individual for dereliction in the study of Torah in order to emphasize the gravity of the issue, **as it is stated: “Happy is the man whom You punish, Lord, and teach out of Your law”** (Psalms 94: 12). This verse teaches us that his suffering will cause him to return to Your law. **And if he did attribute** his suffering to dereliction in the study of Torah, **and did not find** this to be so, **he may be confident that these are afflictions of love, as it is stated: “For whom the Lord .(loves, He rebukes,** as does a father the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 3: 12

Additionally, **it was taught** in a *baraita* with regard to affliction: **Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, gave Israel three precious gifts, all of which were given only by means of suffering,** which purified Israel so that they may

merit to receive them. These gifts are: **Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and the World-to-Come.**

The Gemara continues to address the issue of suffering and affliction: Rabbi Yohanan's student, **Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba, fell ill.** Rabbi Yohanan **entered to visit him, and said to him: Is your suffering dear to you?** Do you desire to be ill and afflicted? Rabbi Ḥiyya **said to him: I welcome neither this suffering nor its reward,**

משנה אבות ד' ט"ו

רבי ינאי אומר, אין בְּיַדֵּינוּ לֹא מְשַׁלֵּת הַרְשָׁעִים וְאֵף לֹא מִיִּסּוּרֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים.

Rabbi Yannai said: it is not in our hands [to explain the reason] either of the security of the wicked, or even of the afflictions of the righteous.

Bartenura

"We do not have in our hands": Like (Yevamot 105a), "it was not in his hand;" meaning to say this matter is not known to us, why the way of the wicked is successful and for what reason the righteous are suffering with afflictions. Another explanation: During the time of the exile, we do not have any of the tranquility and quiet that the Holy One, blessed be He, is accustomed to give to the wicked in order to drive them out of the world to come; and not even any of the afflictions that are designated for the righteous, which are the 'afflictions of love,' which do not entail the squandering of Torah [study]. This is to say, we have left the category of the wicked, as we do not have the tranquility that the wicked have; but we have not reached the category of the righteous, as our afflictions are not ['afflictions] of love,' like the afflictions of the righteous.

Bereshit Rabbah 92: 1

!There is no man who goes through life without afflictions

ברכות נ"ט א ד'

בשעה שהקב"ה זוכר את בניו ששרויים בצער בין אומות העולם מוריד שתי דמעות לים הגדול וקולו נשמע מסוף העולם ועד סופו והיינו גוהא

Berakhot 59a: 4

When the Holy Blessed One, remembers their children who are suffering among the nations of the world, God sheds two tears into the great sea. The sound is heard from .one end of the earth to the other. And that is an earthquake