

The Inner Commentary Game

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“Everything God does is for the best”! – What would happen if we steered it in the direction of Emunah and positivity?

Last week, an amazing idea came to me from something I read in Rav Motta Frank’s book, HaSod HaGalui. Rabbi Frank brings the Ben Ish Chai’s commentary in his sefer Ben Yehoyada, on Brachos 70, which discusses the story of Rabbi Akiva. In this story, Rabbi Akiva says “Everything God does is for the best,” after he is turned away from finding a place to sleep, his lamp blows out, his rooster gets eaten up by a fox and his donkey gets devoured by a lion.

Sure enough, in the end, it turns out that all of these events saved Rabbi Akiva from being hurt or killed by bandits who had

attacked the city where he was looking for a place to sleep, and then proceeded to travel right past where he was sleeping outdoors.

The Ben Ish Chai asks why Rabbi Akiva, once these events had already transpired, repeated to his students, "I was correct in stating that everything that God does is for the best." The Ben Ish Chai explains that in repeating this matter to his students, Rabbi Akiva is teaching us a tremendous principle in how Divine Providence works. When a person speaks for the good – even if a negative decree has been decided, the decree can be nullified, and the matter can work out for the good.

Rabbi Akivah's statements for the good, actually caused the situation to turn out for the best. Rabbi Akivah was trying to teach his students to get in the habit of always saying "everything God does is for the best" since this statement has the power to actually shift a situation for the good.

"Everything God does is for the best"! Rabbi Akiva is teaching us a tremendous principle in how Divine Providence works!

I found this commentary to be tremendously practical and useful since we have the opportunity to actually put it into action ALL day long. Our inner commentary on life is always running – have you noticed? You're already having a running peanut gallery in your head about what is going on in your life all day long. What would happen if you steered it in the direction of Emunah and positivity? The Ben Ish Chai confirms that this would in fact sway Divine Providence and even change decrees.

We know that Emunah in Hashem is at the core of everything. That is what the Shema prayer is all about, and of course there are numerous other sources for this. If that is the case, then when we think, look at and talk about things within the framework of Emunah in Hashem and that everything He does is

for the best, things are bound to shift. They may shift slowly or quickly, but they will shift. And certainly, our mood can improve instantaneously when we talk to ourselves in a manner that is aligned with the principle that everything Hashem does is for the best.

Could it be that we are actually denying ourselves better outcomes by talking in our head in a way that is negative and lacks Emunah?

Become aware of your inner commentary and steer it in the direction of Emunah and positivity. Whatever it is. Slowly but surely. You don't have to be in as precarious a situation as Rabbi Akiva was. You can do it starting with smaller situations and build it up.

Shift "I'm never going to get a parking spot, look at how crowded the shopping center is"

to "I can get a parking spot, someone could be leaving at any moment. It is definitely possible; I'm ready for it."

Shift "I'm so slow and lazy in the morning. It's hard to start my day right and be on time"

to "I am getting in the habit of going to sleep earlier, writing a to do list for the next day, and then jumping out of bed on time and getting to it!"

Shift "Will I ever get married? No good prospects are on the horizon"

to "I am happy with my current life and my relationship with Hashem, knowing that at any moment the right one can come my way. Thank you, Hashem, for this possibility that can materialize at any moment!"

And so on and so forth.

I'm going to try this for the next week. I'm sure I can find

at least a few situations in my life that I could use putting a more Emunah and positivity-oriented spin on. I'm excited to see where Divine Providence takes me. I hope you try it as well and I'll keep you posted!