

“WHY HAVE YOU DONE EVIL TO YOUR PEOPLE?”

Some may think this kind of confrontation with God to be a lapse in belief or even blasphemous, but the truth is as Torah itself shows us. Moses, the greatest leader in Jewish History, as well as the foremost champion of true humility, confronts God in person and demands, “Why have You done evil to your people?”

Far be it from Moses to act recklessly with God or certainly blasphemously! His demand was far from disbelief, but the ultimate expression of the highest form of belief in God, and more specifically in God’s control and pure intent in everything that happens on all spheres, spiritual and physical. He implored God, “I know that You are the epitome of Goodness and Justice. I believe unequivocally that no bad has, nor will ever, come forth from before You. But I cannot sit idly and watch my people, those whom You have entrusted into my care, suffer for even the shortest time. And therefore I beg You, dear God, to explain to me how these occurrences are indeed good and just.”

We must speak to G-d, confront Him, ask Him: Why is there evil and suffering in Your world? We may not know enough to ever understand the truth; we must, however, believe and care enough to ask the question.



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5804 BEACON STREET, PITTSBURGH, PA 15217
ON THE WEB AT WWW.ALEPH.US • 412.421.0111

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SHAI TAUB is a rabbi and teacher. He is the author of *G-d of Our Understanding: Jewish Spirituality and Recovery from Addiction* and the director of Conscious Contact, a prayer center for recovering addicts in Pittsburgh.

DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

BY RABBI SHAI TAUB

Why me? You may not be the first person to ask this question, and you certainly will not be the last to walk away without a satisfactory answer. First let’s look at what explanation Torah offers:

The Book of Job, in fact, pretty much focuses on this very issue all throughout its chapters. Several possible solutions to the question are offered. All are negated; leaving us to draw the conclusion that we finite human beings cannot and will not understand the ways of the Infinite God. In God’s own words, “For My thoughts are not yours, and your ways are not Mine.”

WHOSE REALITY ARE YOU ON ANYWAY?

Torah tells us about two very different realities, each of which plays a role in our lives, the “Revealed World” and the “Concealed World.”

The Revealed World refers to our realities, in which everything seems

to be understandable at face value. Victory seems good, while death seems obviously bad. In Gods reality, however, a.k.a. the Concealed World, the truth of each matter is known and may at some point – but very well may never -- come to light in our reality.



Even in cases where the truth beyond our understanding does come forth it may be soon after the incident, yet it may take years or even centuries. For example: In 1553 BCE, while Jacob was bringing his family home to Hebron, his beloved wife Rachel passed away during childbirth and was buried there and then on the side of the road. To her elder son, Joseph, it seemed an injustice that while all of the matriarchs and patriarchs were to be buried in the Cave of Machpeila in Hebron, his mother was left buried alone in a roadside grave. It wasn't until more than a millennium later when, following the destruction of the First Temple in 423 BCE, the Jews would be driven from their homes and forced into the Babylonian exile. As they were marched out of their land with their heads hung low and their hearts even lower they passed this very spot. All the Jews fell before their mother's grave and poured their broken hearts to her, asking her to beseech God on their behalf. This gave the Jews comfort during their long and arduous exile, knowing that she does indeed beseech G-d on their behalf.

Only then did Jacob's actions become clear as not an act of rash decision making and insensitivity, but as an act of profound kindness and compassionate foresight.

On the opposite extreme; an Illinois man, desperately trying to bolster his only daughter's confidence in flying, booked for her a flight to Los Angeles. As they drove to the airport the teenager insisted that she would not be getting on

that flight, while her father brought up every possible consolation he could think of.

Finally, he convinced her. As far as he was concerned, it was a victory on his part as well as for his daughter.

At the same time, another gentleman already at the airport was wildly criticizing and denouncing American Airlines for overbooking, causing him to lose his seat on his reserved flight and threatening to cause him to miss a most important conference in Los Angeles later that evening. He was furious and he didn't keep it a secret. In fact he is quoted as having said, "Thanks to you people, this is the worst day of my life."

On May 25th 1979, flight 191 out of Chicago O'Hare en route to Los Angeles crashed moments after takeoff, killing all 258 passengers and 13 crew members.

How drastically their realization was that what they perceived as "good" or "bad," or even as "the worst day of their lives" just minutes prior, in Gods reality had a very different truth.

Occasionally we get a glimpse of Gods reality, the concealed world. More often we don't.

MATURE UNDERSTANDING

The drastic difference between our intellect and Gods can be compared on a minute scale to the difference between that of a father to his child.

As a toddler, the child's curiosity may compel him to explore the nature of a knife. A father instinctively takes the "toy" away from his child. But the child doesn't understand. He is upset and even hurt. "Why doesn't my father allow me to do what I enjoy to play with the object of my interest?" The best response to a child of limited intellect is, "when you get older, when the gap between my intelligence and yours narrows, then you will understand."

Teenagers hear it all the time, "When you become a Mom, then you'll understand."

We, too, demand from God, "Why?! Why is there evil? Why is there a loss of life in our world? Husbands without wives. Children without a parents. Why?!"

God's response? "When the gap between the level of my understanding and yours of good and evil narrows, then you might understand.... In truth, when you become God, then you will understand."

It's difficult, no doubt. But to believe in the true creator of good and justice, and truly believe in his everlasting kindness takes the brunt of burden and suffering in this world off of our shoulders more than anger and frustration ever will.

Not only is it the virtuous thing to do, it's the healthiest thing to do.

We may, however, attempt to understand....

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