

Faith, not Fear

by Ariel Bar Tzadok

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Look at all those S.O.B.'s out there! If anyone deserves to be struck down by Heaven, they certainly do! Yet, they continue amongst us everyday. If God doesn't strike down those who deserve it, why would we, who most certainly do not deserve it, walk in fear every day that God is going to get us?

The righteous live by faith, not fear! The righteous walk with God, together, hand in hand, not in fear that The Hand is forever poised to strike us!

Without even realizing it, so many religious folks have turned God into a make-believe scary monster! So many have created the fantasy, the illusion, the lie, that God is some kind of angry super-big, super-human up there in some place called Heaven, looking down upon us, waiting for the opportunity when we screw things up, so that then He can "kick our asses."

Well, sorry to pop your fantasy bubble, but there is no such God as that described. The Real God, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, is no human being. He is not even remotely human. Although we are created in His Image as the Bible says, what exactly that means has been subject to debate, discussion and commentary for thousands of years! No one can say for sure, what this means, especially those who so adamantly demand that they know the truth!

One thing we can pretty much take for granted is that the louder one shouts that they know the truth, the more certain it must be that their truths are actually lies. The truth does not have to be shouted from the mountain-tops. No! The truth is something that is known inside us, inside the heart. Its voice speaks to us from within. It is a voice of silence and conviction. The inner voice of truth teaches you nothing new, but rather reminds you of that which you already know, but may have temporarily forgotten.

God is not some little old-man sitting on some cloud up there, nor does He sit on some actual throne, nor does He act in the manner of human kings. Although religious leaders of the past have always used metaphors like these to describe God's activities, these same leaders, are the first to state that all such descriptions are totally symbolic and metaphorical. They used human concepts and terms to help us humans understand moral points and lessons about righteous character. It is a slap in the face to these religious leaders of old to understand their symbols and metaphors in any other way than how they were originally meant.

So, let us stop thinking about God in some super-human fashion and start recognizing that we are dealing here with a reality unlike anything we can imagine or at any time actually understand. God is just one of those mysteries that we are going to have to live with.

Understanding God and understanding the Divine Way has never been in the grasp of any human being, no matter how spiritual that individual may have become or how close to God one may get. No one knows the whole truth, no one gets the entire mystery. This is just the way it is and to pursue that which cannot be attained is a waste of time. Not for naught did the Sages of old warn us not to waste our time seeking that which was beyond the above or beneath the below. Some things are just beyond human grasp and that's just the way things are.

I cannot tell you why deserving S.O.B.'s are not struck down and made to suffer for all the suffering they cause others. I only wish it were so. I only wish that God would do to them as we see them do to others. Yet, God doesn't do things our way. He does not see with the same limited scope as do we. God knows all and sees all and judges accordingly, something we are most incapable of doing.

Does this mean then that the S.O.B.'s so deserving of God's wrath maybe are not so bad? I cannot say that! In my eyes, their evil is pretty bad! Yet, what God sees, I cannot say. I cannot see what God sees and I can only see what He so ordains. While I might be granted some spiritual insights, this does not mean that I, or anyone else knows all or sees all. Sorry, that is the domain of God alone.

I cannot tell you why good things happen to bad people and why bad things happen to good people. We all know that this is the way of the world. It has always been this way and for whatever reasons known in Heaven, God tolerates this. None of us can control what happens to us, yet we are in absolute control of how we respond to what happens to us. While much is not in our hands, much, much more still is!

Knowing these things, the righteous chose to live by their faith. Faith is not something you believe, faith is something that you do. Faith is how we lead our lives and make our daily decisions. Faith is how we chose to do what is right and decide not to do what is wrong. Faith is how we treat other human beings, fairly, properly, with care and compassion. Faith is not looking over one's shoulder for the lighting bolt of judgment and punishment. Rather, faith looks straight ahead at the present and into the future seeking the right path, the right way, at the right time. Faith is optimistic, never pessimistic. Faith recognizes truth and does not seek to cloud it over with lies, fantasies or make-believe stories.

Atoning for one's sins also has to be viewed in the light of reality and not fantasy. All the crying and wailing does nothing but serve as a big show. Real remorse for poor choices and bad behavior is internal. Real repentance is the inner commitment not to repeat the follies of the past. There are no slip-ups or back-slides. One who is disgusted about a thing, feels no desire to embrace that thing. On the contrary, one who embraces a thing, must not really be disgusted with it. This is the truth and the reality of things. So, if you say you are going "to repent" of something and then, even after a while, repeat the behavior, you never repented in the first place, and to believe so is just another one of the many lies we tell ourselves everyday. God looks down upon this and is not pleased. For one thing God desires above most anything else alongside of righteousness is truth!

Truth is that we cannot understand God. Truth is that we can understand ourselves. Truth is that we do know right from wrong. Truth is that we are responsible for the choices that we make and for the company we chose to keep. Truth is that we can walk in righteousness and live our lives in faith. Truth is that while we cannot tell what God will do next, we can sure pick and chose what it is that we will do. We can chose to live by faith and righteousness and not by fear and superstition. Truth is that this is what real atonement is all about. We don't think about it for one day and then forget. No! Rather, we live it and thus remember it every day. This is our faith in action. This is our righteousness in deed.

As for the S.O.B.'s that we despise so, they'll get theirs, as God so ordains. As for us, we already have ours, now we must embrace it in faith and live by it with righteousness. In this God is pleased, and this is how we solicit Divine Favor.

May we all be so blessed.

