

Torah Secrets As To Why Bad Things Happen

by Ariel Bar Tzadok

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Let me be blunt! Don't fuss about my word choice. Some words just add flavor, and an emotional emphasis that other words do not.

Ask Job! S**t happens! It is ordained by God Himself to be this way! Don't deny it, and don't rationalize it away. S**t is s**t. It is one s**ty reality, but it is what God has made. "I am the Lord and there is no other. Who forms light and **creates darkness**, Who makes peace and **creates evil**, I am the Lord, **Who makes all these**." (Isaiah 45:6b-7).

In the Torah (Job 1), there is no independent Devil fighting it out with God for control of your soul. No! The word "Satan," means adversary. The Satan is an angel. Satan is not his name, it is his title. He is a created being, and servant, just like all the other angels, only it is the Satan's job to serve as the prosecutor, to tempt, and to test humanity. Satan does only what God tells him to do, no more and no less. All this is learned clearly from the first chapters of the Book of Job.

As such, we cannot blame bad things that happen on evil devils or demons. Nothing can happen to us, be it good or bad, other than that ordained by God in Heaven above. Bad things happen to us from On High. As for evil, that is another story! We human beings choose evil all for ourselves. The Satan does not make us choose it, but he does watch us choose it, and then gives full report to God in Heaven, as Divinely ordained.

Maybe, this is why God sends bad things down upon us, to test us and to teach us. Then again, maybe not. Too this day, and most likely forever, no mortal man, will ever be able to read the Mind of God, to ascertain why Heaven acts as Heaven acts.

As we know, s**t happens. Yet, s**t can never happen, unless God allows it to happen. As for God's motives, who can say? "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts [higher] than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8,9)

Sudden, unexpected, and most undesirable, changes of plans are always on par for the course. Screw-ups are a common part of everyday life. Try as we will to get everything straight and right, and still, as Robert Burns says, "the best laid plans of mice and men oft go awry."

The Kabbalah of the Ari'zal grants us a beautiful metaphor to help us understand why things are the way that they are. The Kabbalah teaches us that our world, this physical dimension (Olam HaAsiyah), is disproportionately under the dominion of the forces which we call Dinim, severity. All the Kabbalah mumbo-jumbo language aside, what this practically means for us is that life in this world is always a constant challenge, and even under the best of circumstances, life can still stink, no matter how righteous, pious and holy can may be.

Unfortunately, there are far too many religious individuals who always seem to embrace spiritual fantasies, such as, "if I am good and righteous, then I will be rewarded with a good and prosperous life." Yet, anyone honest enough to admit it, knows full well, that this is not always the truth.

Many will challenge me, and contradict this, by quoting numerous scriptural verses that seem to promise good things for good people. Yet, I will ask all those who quote scripture to look into their own lives, and the lives of all those around them, and ask, are these implied scriptural promises really coming true everywhere where we suppose that that they should? Of course not!

In order to justify this, we say that certain people must not be worthy of the Divine blessing, or that they have hidden sins! Job's companions used those same arguments to describe his sufferings, and properly provoked Divine wrath for doing so!

We do not understand God! We do not understand Divine reasoning! And, try as we will to solicit Divine favor, many times, that favor does not come in the form that we ourselves desire.

Bad things happen to good people all the time, and granted, we may rationalize away the bad, and call it either good or a blessing in disguise, nevertheless, ***regardless of our rationalizations, the honest minded will honestly conclude that life can indeed stink, and that s**t really does happen, and it happens a lot!*** Just ask Job! This is, after all, just like the Kabbalah says, we live in a world of Dinim, and in the world of Din (severity) s**t happens, because that is what is natural for this place, as Divinely ordained by God.

I know a lot of fundamentalist religious folk will get themselves all in a tizzy over this, but, hey, let the truth be told. I have always found it bad, and sometimes, somewhat dangerous when certain types of religious folks cannot handle the harsh realities of everyday life. I see all the time, those who run away from reality using all kinds of excuses about positive thinking, and how mental and emotional outlooks can mold the world.

Well again, let the truth be told! Positive mental and emotional states do help us a lot when the proverbial s**t hits the fan, but **a positive outlook alone cannot prevent the s**t from flying in the first place!** This is, after all, the way God made it to be. There is no denying it, so, I say, there is no use in fighting it, either!

Accepting harsh reality can break the spirits of many, but that is not what is supposed to happen! Remember Job! Job suffered due to no fault of his own. Nevertheless, he recognized and knew that he was not at fault. He was not going to accuse God of abuse, nor accept a lie that he was being punished for some make-believe sins that did not exist. Job knew that God alone was behind his fate. He did not understand it, he had no choice but to accept it, and still, he never blamed Heaven for being unfair. Job knew the above words of Isaiah, long before Isaiah ever penned them.

Like the old saying says, “when the goings gets tough, the tough get going.” Sitting around and waiting for God to lead does not seem to be the Biblical message. Are we really supposed to be following after God? Funny, but that is not how I read it in the Bible. God might call us His servants, and impose upon us His commandments, but, nevertheless, it seems that God wants from us a whole lot more than to just blindly follow orders.

Judging from the examples set in numerous Biblical stories, it seems that God wants us to take the lead, and to walk forward in human righteousness. Once we do the right thing first, only then does God say that He will intervene to bless those who have already taken the initiative and acted first, without waiting for God to lead.

We live in a harsh world. We are ever so close to our natural animalistic tendencies. Yet, that which makes us human and separates us from the animal kingdom is that we can rise above our animalistic tendencies. We can choose to behave humanly and humanely. We might share genes with the apes, but that does not mean that we are apes! And certainly, there is no justification to act like an ape. As human beings, we are better than this! Just ask Job!

There are no promises for a charmed life. While we firmly believe that there is universal justice to reward the righteous and to punish the wicked, we do not always live to see it. Somehow, somewhere in the great cosmic scheme of things, reality is far different from that which we experience here in our mortal existence on planet Earth.

We do not see, nor can we know the “big” picture. No one can see “the face of God” and remain alive. This is because the human mind is far too frail to handle all the information of the big picture. Receiving such knowledge would cause our minds to crash like an overloaded hard-drive. Therefore, we do what we can, with what we have, and that is that!

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We do not, and maybe never will, understand the big picture, even though, through science we are learning more and more about it. **We cannot stop all the bad things that happen in the universe. All we can do is refine our responses to them.** We chose whether to respond to bad times either like an animal, with animalistic behavior, or like a human being with humane, divine-like qualities. This is only possible because we are beings created in the “Divine Image.”

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We have what it takes to be great. But step one begins by looking out at the world in its truthful form, and only then to make the best out of what we've got! Yes, s**t happens, and God allows it! God allows it, and watches us to see whether or not we will act like monkeys and throw the s**t around, or like humans, to clean it up, removing the mess.

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God is behind it all! We all are being watched! It is our humanity that is being tested! We may or may not like the system, but it too, is what it is. Properly dealing with it, as human beings, is the first step in transforming our jungle back into a garden.

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