

# Recalling Job

*H*is friends sought to defend God and to justify Job's disaster. "Surely", they said, "God is all powerful, all wise, all good. How then rail against His judgment? Why shake your small clenched fist against the open skies?"

The friends of Job offered pious logic: If you suffer, its cause is not capricious. If you have sustained loss, the verdict from above is not arbitrary. All God's will. All God's judgment.

Job heard the friends, but was neither convinced nor confident. He could not join the argument of his friends, whose counsel was so distant from his anguish and grief.

Job thought to himself, then spoke to his friends and then finally to God: "I am innocent, I am not deserving of such pain, neither I nor my family." Alone, sick of heart and of body, Job reviewed the fragments of his life: "Eyes was I to the blind and feet to the lame, father to the needy, shield to the stranger. Did I not make the widow's heart to sing? Am I deserving of such a fate?"

Job and his friends now awaited God's response. Elohim rose and turned His face to His defenders, the friends of Job: "You have sought to justify Me, protect Me from Job's outbursts. Do you think that I rejoice in the pain and suffering of My children? Do you believe that his torn flesh is my decree? Do you believe that every calamity that falls upon the children of Adam and Eve are acts of God?"

God then turned to Job and instructed, "Bring sacrifice, Job, before God. Not for your challenge of me, but sacrifice to atone for the callous comfort of your purported friends. Bring sacrifice to atone for your friends who counsel you by sprinkling bitter salt forced into bleeding wounds. Their justification of me embarrasses me. Spare me from such friends!"

A great lesson here for those of us who would be better allies of God and truer friends of Job. Make our counsel thoughtful and kind. May it not leave in its wake shame, blame and incrimination.



Job is not guilty. Accept the ways of the world, the course of nature and do not turn them into moral judgment.

Sit with Job during “shiva” without accusation and without falsely defending My dignity. Do you not know that My dignity is not in throwing down decrees from heaven, but in raising up My fallen children?

Stay with Job. Give him wine to drink and bread to eat. And, at the end of the “shiva”, take him by the arm, out of his mourning place, into the marketplace and into the synagogue so that he can rejoin his people and recreate his life.

Surround him with love so that he will in time overcome brooding, sulking, flailing. The true friends of God side with Job, chanting from the Book of Psalms, their loving arms draped around his shoulders. Job needs friends, not critics. His Maker needs not defenses, only co-workers.

“God comfort you together with all the mourners of Zion and Israel and the world.”

