

**A Taste of Judaism**  
**Michael Lotker**  
**God: Some Selected Texts**

**Is God All Knowing?**

**Genesis 6:5-7 (Just before the Flood and Noah Story)**

The Lord saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time. And the Lord regretted that He had made man on earth, and His heart was saddened.

**Can One See God?**

**Exodus 33:17, 20 (just after God spares Israel after Golden Calf).** And the Lord said to Moses, I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for you have found grace in my sight, and I know you by name. And he said, You can not see my face; for no man shall see me and live.

**Exodus 24:9-11 (just after delivery of the 10 Commandments and other laws).** Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet a kind of paved work of a sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And upon the nobles of the people of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and ate and drank.

**Does God Play Fair?**

**Exodus 7:2-5 (before God sends Moses to Pharaoh)**

You shall repeat all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that I may multiply My signs and marvels in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay My hand upon Egypt and deliver My ranks, My people the Israelites from the land of Egypt with extraordinary chastisements. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch out My hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from their midst.

**Can You Argue With God?**

**Genesis 18: 16-32 (just after God's covenant with Abraham)**

Now the Lord had said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right, in order that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him." Then the Lord said, "The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me; if not, I will take note."

The men went on from there to Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Abraham came forward and said, "Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty? What if there should be fifty innocent within the city; will you then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so

that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" And the Lord answered, "If I find within the city of Sodom fifty innocent ones, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." Abraham spoke up, saying, "Here I venture to speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes: What if the fifty innocent should lack five? Will you destroy the whole city for want of the five?" And He answered, "I will not destroy if I find forty-five there." But he spoke to Him again, and said, "What if forty should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not do it, for the sake of the forty ." And he said, "Let not the Lord be angry if I go on: What if thirty should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." And he said, "I venture again to speak to my Lord: What if twenty should be found there?" And He Answered, "I will not destroy, for the sake of the twenty." And he said, "Let not the Lord be angry if I speak but this last time: What is ten should be found there?" And He answered, "I will not destroy, for the sake of the ten."

### **Can You Argue With God and Win?**

#### **Exodus 32:11-14 (just after Israel's sin with Golden Calf)**

But Moses implored the Lord his God, saying, "Let not Your anger, O Lord, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. Let not the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.' Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever. " And the Lord renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon His people.

### **Is It OK to Struggle With God?**

#### **Genesis 32:23-33 (Jacob is about to be reunited with his brother, Esau)**

That same night he arose, and taking his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children, he crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After taking them across the stream, he sent across all his possessions. Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Jacob's hip at its socket, so that the socket of his hip was strained as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking." But he answered, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." Said the other, "What is your name?" He replied, "Jacob." Said he, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed." Jacob asked, "Pray tell me your name." But he said, "You must not ask my name!" And he took leave of him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning, I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved. The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping on his hip. That is why the children of Israel to this day do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the socket of hip, since Jacob's hip socket was wrenched at the thigh muscle.