

Introduction

1. Job 13:15

הן יקטלני <לא> לו אֶחָל...

Though He will kill me, yet I will trust in Him...

2. Job 27:2

חַי־קַל הַסִּיר מִשְׁפָּטֵי וְשָׂקֵי הַמֵּר בְּפִשִּׁי:

As Gd lives, who has warped my justice, and Shakkai, who has embittered my soul.

Humanity on Trial

3. Job 1:6

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל־ד' וַיָּבֹאוּ גַם־הַשָּׁטָן בְּתוֹכָם:

The day came when the "sons of Gd" came to stand before Gd, and the Satan also arrived among them.

4. Rambam, Moreh haNevuchim 3:22

לא אמר "ויבאו בני האלקים והשטן להתיצב על ד'", שאז היה נראה שמציאות הכל על יחס אחד ועל ערך אחד, אבל אמר "ויבאו בני האלקים להתיצב על ד' ויבא גם השטן בתוכם." וכיוצא בזה המאמר לא נאמר אלא במי שבא בלתי מכוון ולא מבוקש לעצמו, אבל כאשר באו מי שכיון בואם בא זה בתוך הבאים.

It did not say, "And the *bnei ha'Elokim* and the Satan came to stand before Gd," which would have indicated that all were in one relationship, as equals. Rather, it said, "And the *bnei ha'Elokim* came to stand before Gd, and the Satan was also among them." Language like this is stated only regarding someone who was not intended or invited personally. When the intended parties came, he mixed into the group as well.

5. Job 1:8-12

וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן הַשְׂמֵת לְבָבְךָ עַל־עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כָּמוֹהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אִישׁ תָּם וְיֹשֵׁר יֵרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע: וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת־ד' וַיֹּאמֶר הֲחִנָּם יֵרָא אִיּוֹב אֱלֹהִים: הֲלֹא־אֲתָה שָׂכַתָּ בְּעֵדוֹ וּבְעֵד־בְּיִתּוֹ וּבְעֵד כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ מִסָּבִיב מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו בִּרְכָתָּ וּמְקֹנְהוּ פֶרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ: וְאִוִּלָּם שָׁלַח־נָא יָדְךָ וְגַע בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אִם־לֹא עַל־פְּנֵיךָ יִבְרַכְךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן הִנֵּה כָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ בְּיָדְךָ רַק אֵלָיו אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ וַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׁטָן מֵעַם פְּנֵי ד':

And Gd said to the Satan: Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him in the land, an unblemished and upright man, one who reveres Gd and turns away from evil! And the Satan answered Gd, saying: Does Job fear Gd for nothing? Have You not protected him and his house, and all that he has everywhere? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his property has spread in the land. But send forth Your hand, and touch all that he has, and he will "bless" You to Your face. And Gd said to the Satan: Behold, all that he owns is in your hand, but do not send forth your hand against him. And the Satan departed from before Gd.

Gd ends up on trial

6. Job 16:19-21

גַּם־עַתָּה הִנֵּה־בְּשָׂמַיִם עֵדִי וְשָׁהַדִּי בְּמַרְוָמַיִם: מְלִיצֵי רַעֲי אֶל־אֱלֹהִים דִּלְפָּה עֵינָי: וַיֹּכַח לְגִבּוֹר עַם־אֱלֹהִים וּבְנֵי־אָדָם לְרַעְהוּ:

Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my testimony is in elevated spaces. My friends scorn me, but my eye pours out tears to Gd. I wish a man might prove his case with Gd, as the son of man does with his fellow!

Chapter 28 responds

7. Job 28:20-28

וְהַחֲכָמָה מֵאֵין תְּבוֹא וְאֵי זֶה מְקוֹם בִּינָה: וְנִעְלָמָה מֵעֵינָי כָּל־חַי וּמַעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נִסְתָּרָה: אַבְדוֹן וּמָוֶת אָמְרוּ בְּאָזְנֵינוּ שְׁמַעְנוּ שְׁמַעְהוּ:

אֱלֹהִים הִבִּין דְּרָכָה וְהוּא יָדַע אֶת־מְקוֹמָהּ: כִּי־הוּא לְקַצוֹת־הָאָרֶץ יָבִיט תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם יִרְאֶה: לַעֲשׂוֹת לְרוּחַ מִשְׁקָל וּמִים תִּכּוֹן בְּמַדָּה: בַּעֲשׂוֹתוֹ לְמַטֵּר חֶק וְדֶרֶךְ לַחֲזִיוֹ קְלוּת: אִזּוֹ רָאָה וַיִּסְפְּרָה הַכִּינָה וְגַם־תִּקְרָהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָדָם הֵן יִרְאֵת ד' הִיא חֲכָמָה וְסוּר מִרַע בִּינָה:

Where does wisdom come from, and where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the sky. Avaddon and death say, "We have heard of it with our ears."

Gd understands its way, and He knows its place. For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees everything under the whole heaven. He makes a weight for the winds, and He sets measures for the waters. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the clouds of the thunder, then He saw it, and declared it; He established it, and searched it out. And to Man He said: Behold, the reverence of Gd is wisdom, and to move away from evil is understanding.

8. Ibn Ezra to 42:17

ד' יעשה רצונו יענה רשע גם צדיק, גם יש צדיקים גם רשעים שיתן להם כל טוב שיתאו... ולדעת זאת החכמה למה זה נשגבה מדעת האדם. והנה הטעם כאשר לא ידעו בני אדם מחשבות ד' וגזירותיו שהם עמוקות, אולי אלה הגזירות שגזר עלי הוא ידע למה גזרם ואינם בעבור שחטאתי לפניו.

Gd performs His will, oppressing wicked and righteous alike. There are also righteous and wicked people to whom Gd gives every benefit they desire... And to know this wisdom, why this happens, is elevated beyond human ken. The message is that just as people do not know Gd's deep thoughts and decrees, perhaps these decrees He ordered against me, He knows why He decreed them and it is not because I sinned before Him.

9. Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, page 179

Perhaps the dialogic engagement between the wisdom poem and what precedes, however, is better taken not so much as an attempt to interpret and respond to the particular participants as to the genre of the wisdom dialogue itself... The placement of the wisdom poem suggests that the poem views the wisdom dialogue as a type of futile and misguided quest for wisdom. But the dialogic relationship between the genres might be more subtle than that. The wisdom dialogue, as a genre, is itself something of an exposé of the limits of the human capacity to know, since it does not end in a single solution or insight into the problem it addresses. Its participants do not finally find wisdom or the place of understanding. In that regard the wisdom poem might be seen as simply drawing a conclusion implicit in the wisdom dialogue as a generic form...

10. Rashi to 28:23

נסתכל בה וברא את העולם, באותיותי כסדרם ומשקלן יצר כל היצורים כאשר כתוב בסוד ספר יצירה

He looked in her and created the universe; with her letters, according to their order and weight, He created all creatures, as recorded in *Sefer Yetzirah*.

11. Rashi to 28:27

ספר אותיותיה כפולו' ופשוטות. ראשונה ואמצעית ואחרונה היא אמת חותמו של הקב"ה וכן בשאר סדרים ברא כל דבר ודבר באותיות הללו והכל מפורש בסוד ספר יצירה:

He counted her letters, the doubled and straight [final] letters. The first, middle and last are אמת [truth], the sign of Gd. And so, too, with the other orders He created everything with these letters. All is explained in the secret of *Sefer Yetzirah*.

12. Rashi to 28:28

יראת ד' היא חכמה - זו צריכה לזו, ואין חכמה יפה בלא יראה:

"Reverence for Gd is wisdom" – This needs that, and wisdom is not good without reverence.

13. Daat Mikra to 28:28

בשבילך האדם, יראת ד' היא חכמה, אבל החכמה שנזכרה למעלה, אותה החכמה, שבה האלקים מנהיג את עולמו, לא גלה אלקים לאדם. For you, Man, reverence for Gd is wisdom. But the wisdom mentioned above, that wisdom with which Gd runs His world, Gd has not revealed to Man.

14. Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, pp. 180-181

Wisdom, after all, is not in some place beyond place but in the wind, waters, rain, and thunderstorms, that is, in all the aspects of creation. But it is not "in" them as an object but in their construction and interrelationship, in their presence and limits ("weight," "measure," "limit," "way") with respect to other aspects of the created world. Thus, one realizes that the poem is in no sense saying that humans have no access to wisdom. They will not find it if they look for it as an object (even an intellectual object) but only if they also know it through a comparable mode of being, a way of acting. The disposition of piety and the moral habit of turning from evil are the way in which one will know wisdom and understanding... The prose tale did not claim to be a story about wisdom and understanding. It was a story that explored a conundrum in religious ideology (can true piety coexist with divine blessing?) and provided a role model for the exercise of disinterested piety. The wisdom poem is claiming, in effect, "Yes, yes, but you are saying more than you know. For what your little didactic tale also does is to provide a brilliant narrative of what it means to know wisdom and to have understanding. They can be embodied, but such embodiment is always done in ignorance of what takes place in the heavens, not by apprehension of the transcendent wisdom of the cosmos."