

Job, Week 39: Chapter 23-24

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1. Outline of Chapters 23-24

- 23:1-2 Introduction: I am still miserable
- 23:3-9 I long to summon Gd to a trial
- 23:10-12 Gd knows that I am good
- 23:13-17 But there is no arguing with Gd, and this is why I fear Him
- 24:1-17 Why doesn't Gd punish the wicked?
- 24:18-24 *Huh?*
- 24:25 Can you prove me wrong?

2. Eliphaz vs. Job

Eliphaz's First Speech (4-5)	Job's Reply (6-7)
	I never asked for your help
People deserve their suffering	Gd has smashed me, or allowed me to be smashed
Outrage is foolish	Gd has forced my outrage
Turn to Gd for help	There is no hopeful narrative; I turn to Gd in defiance

Eliphaz's Second Speech (15)	Job's Reply (16-17)
Job, you wickedly deny the value of goodness!	Stop judging me!
Job, you are arrogant!	
The wicked suffer psychologically and lack a future	-
	Gd has become my enemy; I suffer greatly; I demand justice from Gd

Eliphaz's Third Speech (22)	Job's Reply (23-24)
Gd will not debate you, but I will	I still want the trial; Gd knows I am good, and He is ducking me
You have sinned horribly against people, saying that Gd would not notice	The wicked thrive, despite your narrative
Gd sees all, and punishes the wicked	24:18-24 – I agree?
Recant, repent, and Gd will take you back	

23:1-2 Introduction: I am still miserable

3. Dr. N. H. Tur-Sinai, The Book of Job, 23:2

Even today: These words, as has been felt by others, seem to indicate that the debate between Job and his friends lasts for many days... This would account for the fact that a new response, marked by the words: "Then Job (or one of the friends) answered and said", may begin even where there is no opening of a speech, but a sequel to what has been said previously. Thus Elihu's speech is divided into four responses.

23:3-9 I long to summon Gd to a trial, but Gd is hiding!

4. Metzudat David to 23:5

יודע הייתי מה ישיב לי כי אבין אמריו על הכל אחזור ואשיב לו:

I would know what He would answer me, for I would know His statements, and to all of it I could respond.

5. Metzudat David to 23:6

וכי יריב עמדי ברב כח בזולת שמירת המשפט? הלא בודאי לא! אך הוא ישים בי כפי הראוי בשמירת המשפט.

Would He battle me with His great force, without justice? Certainly not! He would place upon me as is justly appropriate.

23:13-17 There is no arguing with Gd, and so I fear Gd

6. Metzudat David to 23:15

בראותי שאינו חוזר מחוק גזרתו, אבהל מפניו, וכאשר אתבונן מעשיו אפחד ממנו. והוא כפל ענין במילים שונות.

When I see that He does not recant from His decree, I am frightened before Him, and when I contemplate His deeds I fear Him. This is repetition in different words.

7. Daat Mikra to 23:15

מוסב על כל האמור לעיל (ה-יד): משום שהוא מסתתר ממני נבהל אני, לפי שזהו סימן שבדעתו להכותני עוד.

This refers to the earlier 23:5-14: Because He hides from me, I am frightened, because this is a sign that He intends to strike me again.

24:1-17 Where is Divine Justice? The wicked thrive!

8. Ralbag (Summary of the Chapter)

אין התנצלות לד' במה שאמר אליפז... וזה שאנחנו נראה מהרשעים רבי ההצלחה שהם עושים חמסים גדולים גורמים להמית האנשים בסבת העירום והרעב והצמא... ולמה יאריך ד' לכמו אלו? הלא היה ראוי שיכלה אותם תכף כדי שלא ימיתו שאר האנשים... ועוד שאנחנו נראה בכמו אלו הרשעים שלא יגיעם עונש כלל בחייהם ובמותם ימותו מיתה קלה...

There is no excuse for Gd in Eliphaz's statement... As we see that wicked people who are very successful and who perform great crimes, killing people with a lack of clothing, hunger and thirst... And why should G-d delay for such people? It would be appropriate to destroy them immediately, so that they will not kill other people.. Further, we see such wicked people who are not punished at all in their lifetimes, and in their death they die swiftly...

9. Rashi to 24:6

וכרמים של אחרים, הרשעים האלו נוטלים פריים

The vineyards of others, these wicked people take their fruit.

10. Metzudat David to 24:6

בכל שדה אשר ימצאו קוצרים יבולו, ואם אינה שלהם. אבל כרמו של רשע, עם כי נח יותר לתלוש ענפי כרם מלקצור יבול שדה, מ"מ יאחרו מלקחת מה ממנו עד אשר לא ימצאו ממקום אחר, כי אוהבים הם את הרשע ולא ימהרו לקחת את שלו:

They harvest the produce of any field they find, even though it is not theirs. But the vineyard of a wicked person – even though it is easier to pluck the branches of a vineyard than to harvest the produce of a field – they still delay taking anything from there until they don't find elsewhere. They love the wicked person, and do not rush to take that which is his.

11. Daat Mikra to 24:6

וכרם רשעים ילקשו העניים המשועבדים לרשעים.

The vineyard of the wicked will be harvested by the paupers who are enslaved to the wicked.

12. Rashi to 24:13

הרשעים האלה הם דור המבול שמרדו באור, בשביל המטר שהיה עולה מן הארץ ולא היו צריכים לכלום:

These wicked people are the generation of the flood, who rebelled against the Light, because of the rain which ascended from the ground such that they needed nothing.

13. Metzudat David to 24:13

והם האנשים אשר יתגבר בהם חולי השחורה אשר ימאסו לשבת במקום האור כ"א בחשך ישבו

These are the people whose black illness grows in them, who hate to sit in illuminated places, but will only sit in the dark.