

*If there were times when God was
angry enough, upset enough, livid
enough to override the results of
free will, didn't the horrors of the
Holocaust warrant the same kind of
response?*

~ Benjamin Blech, *If God is good why is the world so bad*, p. 205

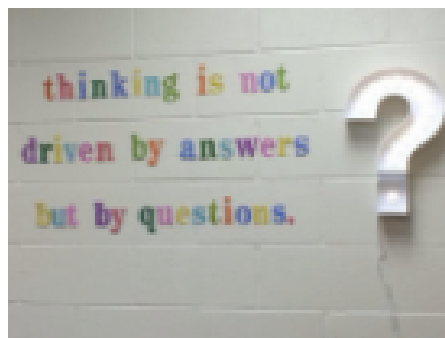
Once I met Abba Kovner, the famous poet and the leader of the Vilna Ghetto Revolt. He asked me, "As a believing Jew, how do you deal with what you lived through in the Holocaust?" I answered him, in typical Jewish fashion, "How do *you* deal with it? I believe in God, Whom I don't pretend to understand. But you believe in man – can you still believe in man after the Shoah?" He didn't speak, as Elie Wiesel does, about the "Cain" in man. He believed in the goodness of man. So I added, "Your problem is greater than mine. For me, the ways of God are hidden." "Well, then," Abba Kovner replied, "Each of us has a problem."

~ Rabbi Yehuda Amital Z"L

*The faith affirmed in the
Holocaust was superhuman;
the loss of faith- in the
circumstances- human*

~ Eliezer Berkovitz

One writer on the Holocaust records that in his researches he met a rabbi who had been through the camps and who miraculously seemed unscarred. He could still laugh. 'How,' he asked him, 'could you see what you saw and still have faith? Did you have no questions?' The rabbi replied, 'Of course I had questions. But I said to myself: if you ever ask those questions, they are such powerful questions that God will send you a personal invitation to Heaven to give you the answers. And I preferred to be here on earth with the questions than in Heaven with the answers.'¹³



Cited in *Crisis and Covenant*, p. 41

It was Yom Kippur Eve. As the cantor pronounced the blessing, 'Who has kept us alive, and sustained us and brought us to this time', a pious Jew began to cry, 'Lies, lies, it's all lies.' A lapsed Jew, former yeshiva student who had become an atheist, stood up and replied, 'Jews, you know that I was a blasphemer, a mocker of Israel, a lost soul. And I tell you, yes, there is a God in Heaven. Here we have seen fulfilled the words of the prophets and their curses, all of which have fallen on us.' He opened the Torah and read: 'And it shall come to pass if you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, to take care to fulfil all His commandment and His statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come up you and overtake you'.⁴

Cited in *Crisis and Covenant*, p. 30

God is a caring God--a God not remote and detached and self-contained but involved with what He cares for. Humanity is in a partnership with God seeking to be agents of morality. God has to let free will reign

~ Hans Jonas, *Out of the whirlwind*, p. 106

On 29 October 1941, 30,000 Jews assembled from the Kovno ghetto to face selection for death. One of those present, Reb Elya, posed a question to a rabbi among the crowd, Rabbi Ephraim Oshry. What is the correct form of blessing to be said on going to one's death for the sanctification of God? The rabbi considered two possible textual variants and gave his ruling. Reb Elya then went through the crowd teaching others the correct form of the blessing over martyrdom. In the presence of the Gestapo two Jews, disciple and teacher, were able to stand discussing the Talmud, concerned that the moment of death be dedicated to Heaven by the precise words of blessing'

~ Irving Rosenbaum, *Holocaust and Halakha*, p. 61

