



*Sponsored in loving memory of Ben Blutstein z"l  
by his family who misses him dearly*

## **When Bad Things Happen to Good Biblical Characters: The Opposing Cases of Abraham and Job**

### **1. The Akeda, Genesis 22**

וַיֹּאמֶר קַח נָא אֶת בְּנֶךְךָ אֶת יְחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר אֹהֲבָתְךָ אֶת יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ לְךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ מֹרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה...  
...לעלה...

God said: "Take please your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac and go to the land of Moriah and bring him up as an offering...

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל נְעָרָיו שָׁבוּ לְכֶם פֹּה עִם הַחֲמוֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּעֱר גֵּלְכָה...  
...לעלה...

Abraham said to his lads: "Stay here with the donkey, the lad and I will go..."

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת עֵצֵי הָעֹלָה וַיְשֶׂם עַל יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת הַמַּאֲכָלִת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יְרָאָה לּוֹ הַשָּׁה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:  
...לעלה...

Abraham took the wood for his burnt offering and placed it on Isaac his son and he took the firestone and the knife; and the two of them went together. And Abraham said, "God will provide the lamb for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went together.

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים מִלְּאָהַר יְדוּד מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל הַנֶּעֱר וְאַל תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי עֲתָה יִדְעֵתִי כִּי יְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּךָ וְלֹא חִשְׁבָתְךָ אֶת בְּנֶךְךָ אֶת יְחִידְךָ מִמִּנִּי:  
...לעלה...

An angel of the Lord called out to him... "Do not cast your hand upon the lad or do anything to him. For now I know that you are **God fearing**, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."



וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם אֶל נְעָרָיו וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם בְּבֵּאֵר שֶׁבַע:

And Abraham returned to his lads, and they arose and went together to Be'er Sheva; and Abraham dwelled in Be'er Sheva.

## 2. Epilogue to the Akeda, Genesis 22

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּגַּד לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה יֵלְדָה מִלְכָּה גַם הוּא בְּנִים לְנַחֲוֹר אַחִירָה: אֵת עוֹץ בְּלָרוּ וְאֵת בּוּז אַחִיו וְאֵת קְמוּאֵל אָבִי אָרָם: וְאֵת כְּסֵד...

After these things, it was told to Abraham saying, "Behold Milcah too has borne children to you brother Nahor: **Uz** the first born, and **Buz**... and **Cesed**...

## 3. Job 1

אִישׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ עוֹץ אִיּוֹב שְׁמוֹ וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא תָם וַיִּשֶׁר וַיִּירָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מֵרָע: וַיִּוָּלְדוּ לוֹ שִׁבְעָה בָנִים וְשְׁלוֹשׁ בָּנוֹת: וַיְהִי מִקְנֵהוּ שִׁבְעַת אֲלָפֵי צֹאן וְשִׁלְשַׁת אֲלָפֵי גְמָלִים וְחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת צֶמֶד בָּקָר וְחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת אֲתוֹנוֹת וְעַבְדָּה רַבָּה מְאֹד וַיְהִי הָאִישׁ הַהוּא גְדוֹל מְכֹל בְּנֵי קְדָם: וְהָלְכוּ בָנָיו וַעֲשׂוּ מִשְׁתָּה בֵּית אִישׁ יוֹמוֹ וְשָׁלְחוּ וַקְרָאוּ לְשִׁלְשַׁת אַחֵי־תֵיחָם לְאָכַל וּלְשִׁתּוֹת עִמָּהֶם ... וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל הַשָּׁטָן הַשְׁמַת לְבָרָךְ עַל עַבְדֵי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כְּמֹהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אִישׁ תָם וַיִּשֶׁר יִירָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מֵרָע: וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַחֲנָם יִירָא אִיּוֹב אֱלֹהִים הֲלֹא־אֵתָּה שָׁכַת בַּעֲדוֹ ... וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו בְּרִכְתָּ... וְאוֹלַם שָׁלַח־נָא יָדְךָ וְגַע בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אִם־לֹא עַל־פְּנֵיךָ יִבְרָכְךָ:

עוֹד זֶה מְדַבֵּר זֶה בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר כְּשֵׁדִים שְׁמוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה רֵאשִׁים וַיִּפְּשְׁטוּ עַל הַגְּמָלִים וַיִּקְחוּם וְאֵת הַנְּעָרִים הַכּוּ לְפִי חָרַב וְאִמְלָטָה רַק אֲנִי לְבַדִּי לְהַגִּיד לָךְ: עַד זֶה מְדַבֵּר זֶה בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנֵיךָ וּבְנוֹתֶיךָ אֲכָלִים וְשִׁתִּים יַיִן בְּבֵית אַחֵיהֶם הַבְּכוֹר: וְהִנֵּה רוּחַ גְּדוּלָה בָּאָה מֵעֵבֶר הַמְּדָבֵר וַיִּגַּע בְּאַרְבַּע פְּנוֹת הַבַּיִת וַיִּפֹּל עַל הַנְּעָרִים וַיָּמוּתוּ ... וַיִּקָּם אִיּוֹב וַיִּקְרַע אֶת מְעָלוֹ ... וַיֹּאמֶר עָרָם יָצִיתִי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי וְעָרָם אָשׁוּב: שְׁמָה יְהוָה נָתַן וַיְהוֶה לְקַח יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ: בְּכֹל זֹאת לֹא חָטָא אִיּוֹב וְלֹא נָתַן תְּפִלָּה לְאֱלֹהִים:

There was a man in the land of **Uz** whose name was Job; the man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. Seven sons and



three daughters were born to him. His possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses... It was the custom of his sons to hold feast, each on his set day in his own home. They would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them... The Lord said to Satan, "Have you noticed My servant Job? There is none like him on earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and shuns evil!" Satan responded... "You have blessed his efforts... but lay Your hand upon all that he has and he will surely blaspheme you..."

This one was still speaking when another came and said, "A Chaldean (**Casdim**) formation...made a raid on the camels...I alone have escaped to tell you... This one was still speaking when another came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine... and a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house so that it collapsed upon the young people and they died..." Job arose and tore his clothing... and said, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return there. The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. For all that, Job did not sin nor did he cast reproach upon God.

## Job 32

וַיִּחַר אֶף אֶלְיָהוּא בֶן בְּרַכְאֵל הַבּוּזִי מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת רָם בְּאִיזָב...

Then Elihu son of Barachel the **Buzite** from the family of Ram...was angry at Job...

## 4. Job 2

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל הַשָּׁטָן הַשְּׂמֵת לְבָרֶךְ אֶל עַבְדִּי אִיזָב ... אִישׁ תָּם וְיָשָׁר יֵרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרַע וְעַדְנֹו  
מִחֲזִיק בְּתַמְתּוֹ וְתִסִּיתֵנִי בּוֹ לְבַלְעֹ חֲנָם: וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן... וְגַע אֶל עַצְמוֹ וְאֶל בְּשָׂרוֹ אִם לֹא אֶל פְּנֵיךְ  
יִבְרַכְךָ: בְּכָל זֹאת לֹא חָטָא אִיזָב בְּשַׁפְתָּיו ...

אַחֲרֵי כֵן פָּתַח אִיזָב אֶת פִּיהוּ וַיִּקְלַל אֶת יְהוָה:



The Lord said to Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job... a blameless and upright man who fears God and shuns evil. He still keeps his blamelessness and you have incited me against him to destroy him for no good reason." Satan responded, "...lay a hand on his bones and his flesh and he will surely blaspheme you to your face..." For all that, Job did not sin with his lips...

Afterward, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

## 5. Job 19

הן אֶצְעֵק חֲמִס וְלֹא אֶעֱנֶה אֲשׁוּעַ וְאִין מִשְׁפָּט

I cry, "**Violence!**" but I am not answered; I shout, but can get **no justice**.

## 6. Job 4

הֲלֹא יִרְאַתְךָ כִּסְלִתְךָ תִּקְוַתְךָ וְתִם דְּרָכֶיךָ: זָכַר נָא מִי הוּא נְקִי אֶבֶד וְאִיפֹה יִשְׂרָיִם נִכְחָדוּ:

Is not your **fear** (of God) your confidence, your **blamelessness** your hope? Think now, what innocent man ever perished? Where have the upright been destroyed?

## 7. Job 38

וַיַּעַן יְהוָה אֶת אֵיזֹב מִן הַסְּעָרָה וַיֹּאמֶר: מִי זֶה מְחַשֵּׂיךָ עֲצָה בְּמַלְיָן בְּלִי דַעַת: אִיפֹה הָיִיתָ בְּיַסְדֵי אָרֶץ הַגָּד אִם יָדַעְתָּ בִּינֶה: הַמִּימִיךְ צִוִּיתָ בִּקְרִי יַדְעַת הַשַּׁחַר מִקוֹמוֹ

The Lord answered Job from the tempest and said, "Who is this who darkens counsel, speaking without knowledge?... Where were you when I laid the earth's



foundations? Speak if you have understanding... have you ever commanded the day to break, assigned the dawn its place...

## Job 42

וַיַּעַן אֵיזֹב אֶת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר... עַל כֵּן אָמַס וְנִחַמְתִּי עַל עֵפֶר וְאַפֵּר:

Job responded to the Lord saying... “therefore I **recant and relent**, being but **dust and ashes**.

## 8. Job 42

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל אֱלִיפַז הַתֵּימָנִי חֲרָה אַפִּי בְךָ וּבִשְׁנֵי רֵעֶיךָ כִּי לֹא דִבַּרְתֶּם אֵלַי נְכוֹנָה כְּעַבְדִּי אֵיזֹב:  
וַעֲתָה קָחוּ לָכֶם שִׁבְעָה פָּרִים וְשִׁבְעָה אֵילִים וּלְכוּ אֶל עַבְדִּי אֵיזֹב וְהַעֲלִיתֶם עֹלָה בְּעֵדְכֶם וְאֵיזֹב עַבְדִּי  
יִתְפַּלֵּל עֲלֵיכֶם... כִּי לֹא דִבַּרְתֶּם אֵלַי נְכוֹנָה כְּעַבְדִּי אֵיזֹב: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵלָיו כָּל אֶחָיו וְכָל אֶחְיָיו... וַיִּנְחָמוּ  
אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיא יְהוָה עָלָיו: וַיְהִי בְרַךְ אֶת אַחֲרֵית אֵיזֹב מֵרֵאשִׁיתוֹ... וַיְהִי לוֹ שִׁבְעָנָה  
בָּנִים וְשְׁלוֹשׁ בָּנוֹת: וַיָּמָת אֵיזֹב זָקֵן וְשָׁבַע יָמָיו:

The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am incensed at you and your two friends, for you have not spoken correctly as has My servant Job. Now take seven bulls... and go to My servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourself. And let Job, My servant, pray for you... because you have not spoken correctly as has My servant, Job. And all his brothers and sisters and former friends... **comforted** him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. The Lord blessed the latter years of Job more than the former.... And Job died **old and contented**.

## Genesis 25

וַיָּגַע וַיָּמָת אַבְרָהָם בְּשִׁיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשָׁבַע וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל עַמּוּיוֹ:

And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, **old and contented**...



## 9. Job 31

תַּמְתַּ חִטָּה יֵצָא חוֹם וְתַמְתַּ שְׁעָרָה בְּאִשָּׁה תַּמְנוּ דְבַרִי אִיֹּב:

...the words of Job are at an end