

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

Divrei Emet

LUBLIN · BERESHIT, DIVREI EMET

Even when Yisrael's suffering may be deserved as a matter of strict divine justice, the Holy One, blessed be He, ultimately prefers and favors the deeds of the tzaddikim (righteous ones), who seek only chesed (kindness) and good for Yisrael, over the stern judgment represented by the deeds of the wicked — just as He revealed to Moshe Rabbeinu that His chaninah (favor) and rachamanut (mercy) are drawn toward those identified with kindness rather than toward strict retribution. AI SUMMARY

In the midrash: At the beginning of the creation of the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw the deeds of the wicked and the deeds of the righteous. "And the earth was tohu (formless void)" — this refers to the deeds of the wicked. "And G-d said, let there be light" — these are the deeds of the righteous. But I do not know which He finds more desirable (tov), until He says "And G-d saw the light, that it was good" — meaning He desires the deeds of the righteous, etc.

This is very astonishing — how could it have entered His mind to desire the deeds of the wicked? It appears, with the help of the Blessed One, as follows: We have explained elsewhere regarding the verse "Show me now Your ways," etc., "and He said, I will cause all My goodness to pass before you, and I will favor (chanoti) whom I will favor, and I will have mercy (richanti) upon whom I will have mercy," etc. We explained, with the help of the Blessed One, that Noach did not pray for his generation, because it appeared to him that, for the sake of the honor of the Blessed One, since they had transgressed His will, they deserved this [punishment], and this itself constituted His honor and His will. Similarly, it is possible that Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, [thought likewise] — until the Blessed One hinted to him "let Me alone," as is known. This is the meaning of his request to be shown His way — what is His will, whether it is in [strict] service of Him, or in the good of Yisrael, even if they are not deserving. And the Blessed One answers him: "I will favor," etc. — even though one is

not deserving, etc. And likewise "I will have mercy." The doubled language — "whom I will favor," "whom I will have mercy" — according to its plain sense [teaches] that the Blessed One desires the existence of the world; although He is one who desires chesed (kindness), nevertheless He does not grant chesed to the wicked who wish to destroy the world, for that would not be chaninah (favor) nor rachamanut (mercy) — to give chesed or mercy, G-d forbid, to one who stands against the multitude of the people of Yisrael, or against the tzaddikim (righteous ones) who shield Yisrael, or against those who pray for them. Rather, He does chesed to one who is [truly] called chesed. This is the meaning of "I will favor whom I will favor" — that is, one who is [worthy of being] called chaninah; and likewise "I will have mercy," etc.

This, too, may be said here: Chazal (our Sages, may their memory be blessed) explained regarding the verse (Yirmeyahu 4:23), "I beheld the earth, and behold, it was tohu vavohu (formless and void)," that it refers to the destruction [of the Temple]. So too here it may be said: the deeds of the wicked are those enemies of Yisrael who afflict them and wish to finish them off and punish them. And although certainly there is no suffering without sin, nevertheless the deeds [of the righteous] are "let there be light" — this is chesed, that only good should come to Yisrael. "But I do not know which He desires" — meaning, which is more desired by the Blessed One: whether to punish the sinners, which is His honor, or [to favor] the deeds of the righteous,

who wish to annul the decrees and the deeds of the wicked. This parallels the question of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, as above. When it says

"And He saw... that it was good" — this teaches that He desires the deeds of the righteous more, as above, [parallel to] His answer "I will favor," etc.

This too was so at the very beginning of the creation of the world.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)