

**Notes on the 3 Questions Explored at the 9/23/03 God Interactive Lunch and Learn**  
*Brought to you by the Tartak Learning Center Staff*

**1. Why does God allow evil?/ Why do bad things happen to good people?**

*Ways of responding*

- God didn't create evil, but created people with the abilities for good & bad/ We have the free will to choose how to act
- Evil is like salt on a margarita-without it we would have no measure for what is good nor would we rise to the occasion to do good
- God is in the heroism during bad times
- Evil challenges my faith in humanity, not my faith in God
- I can answer what I think or we can study this question together

*Other questions that came up during this discussion*

- Why do we have the need to assume that God is only good?
- Why does God "intervene" at some times and not others (Holocaust)?
- Is evil a "punishment"? Does my behavior affect my fate?

**2. I don't believe in God/Can I be Jewish and not believe in God?**

*Ways of responding*

- Tell me more about the God you don't believe in: process to explore
- Give a range of answers & begin a journey to think & study about it
- OK to struggle with the God-Idea; Keep an open mind
- Question is not always about God-ask more questions. Before responding to...Adults: Try to figure out where the question is coming from...Children: Tailor your response to what a child can understand
- God is about understanding others and myself

*Resources to Consider*

- Steve Leder: "God is love" sermon. Love is not irrelevant.
- Limud (British CAJE): Love is relation to God. Great language for teenagers to use. Looks at liturgy, Bible texts, question.
- There is a Season (ARE resource) suggested by Nancy Levin

*Other questions that came up during this discussion*

- If God is powerless at times, why have a God?
- Is there besherit (fate)?

**3. What role does God play in death?**

*Resources to Consider*

Unetane Tokef (High Holidays) Who shall live and who shall die?

*Other questions that came up during this discussion*

Does being good help us avert death?

- We do good things just to do good things
- We do good things for reward in the next world