

Subject: "the face of G-d: thoughts on the Holocaust"

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From: "Tamar Warburg" <twarburg@midreshet-lindenbaum.org>

To: nlamm@attglobal.net

Dear Zeida,

I am writing to in a frenzy of excitement which has resulted from your lecture entitled "The Face of G-d: Thoughts on the Holocaust." The lecture has definitely settled, or rather reformulated, the questions that I, just like everyone else, have regarding Tzaddik V'Ra Lo, and those periods in Jewish history which must fall under the category of Hester Panim. Reading this lecture was the most tiring intellectual exercise I have been involved in since I came back to Israel! Truth be told, I never really thought about the concept of Hester Panim in so much depth and intensity before - probably because I can predict the response before I even ask the questions; "We just don't understand Hashem." While many questions were sparked in mind while reading the article, many of those questions were answered in later paragraphs. However, I would like to ask you a few questions that are fresh in my mind right now. While there is definitely some merit to waiting a while, letting the questions settle in my mind and then thinking about them, and THEN getting back to you with questions that are either abridged or clarified, I know myself too well - I'll never get around to asking the questions.

1a. Regarding the idea of responding to hester panim by "working on oneself" - I would think that in Stage A, which can only happen to humans, that idea is irrelevant and can accomplish nothing. It seems as though that stage is just meaningless meaningfulness. Is "working on oneself" an appropriate response only to hester panim on a national level, i.e. can you only have that as a response if you are at minimum at stage B? I see the concept of improving oneself as definitely worth trying on a national level, because we know that Hashem will always keep His promise that we will not become extinct as a nation. But what about if times are great for the nation, but you personally are suffering? this connects to my next question:

1b. "neither our success nor our failure means anything during THIS stage of hester panim." (i think here you refer to stage B) -- so is working oneself irrelevant in stage B as well? in this stage, does the "meaningful meaningfulness" make it so that it is possible to find some shred of meaning, and therefore one should do a self-examination?

2. Is it possible for a person to fit into category B ("Yado netuya alav")? Does Hashem ever determine that a person will prevail throughout all his trials and tribulations? Or is it that a person's ultimate end is death, and so that is not a viable option - meaning he never was set to always be, because man is not eternal..?

Those are my questions as of now. I plan on rereading the article again sometime this week to clarify things in mind and make sure I understood...

Israel is great - it's so good to be back in school...but I miss you very much! Please send that message on to Grandma....  
Love, Tamar