

Theories of God

Omnipotent God – God is all-powerful and all-knowing, always present and always active.

Provoking questions:

1. Do personal decisions matter if God is all-knowing?
2. Does the fact that God is omnipotent mean that there is an assigned path or intended fate for each of us that we cannot avoid?
3. If everything in the world is designed by God, how can we live with the extreme pain, evil and suffering taking place in the world?

Challenges against the theory:

1. How can an omnipotent God exist while there is so much suffering and wrongdoing in the world around?
2. Jewish history is filled with hatred and persecution of the Jews, where was God then?
3. Free will is a concept biblically guaranteed to mankind, what free will does man have if God knows all decisions and all actions before they are made?

Points supporting the theory:

1. God's master plan is too grand for mankind to understand.
2. The Torah (תורה) is a rulebook, and is thus meant to be followed not interpreted.
3. An omnipotent God requires true faith – God is all knowing, and man must believe that.

Connection to Israel:

1. Israel is part of God's master plan, since the very beginning of Judaism God has promise כנען (modern day Israel) to the Jews.
2. ישראל literally means to "wrestle with God," having ownership of The Land of Israel is not meant to be easy and using the constant struggle for the land as an excuse of God's absence is contradictory to The State's purpose.
3. Israel was given to the Jews by God as a haven for all Jews.

God as an Observer – God created the world and then let it be, only observing it rather than actively taking part.

Provoking questions:

1. Does the fact that bad things happen to good people validate the *God as an Observer* theory?
2. Why would God allow for terrible things to happen to the world? Does God not care about his own creations?

Challenges against the theory:

1. Throughout the entire תנ"ך God plays an active role in people's lives, he is thus not only observing. This leaves the question, so why has God abandoned us and not them?

Points supporting the theory:

1. This theory, *God as an Observer*, makes it easy to balance free will and God's greatness.
2. Man is created in the image of God, having an inherent ability to make decisions – If God is only observer we are given the right to make our own choices as we were created to do.

Connection to Israel:

1. The Israel we live in today is not the Israel promised to בני ישראל in the תורה, God did not actively give Jews the land they were promised, rather Jews rightfully gained ownership of the land themselves.
2. Israel is attacked by other people, not God – God does not actively take part in any of the struggles Israel experiences.

A Theoretical God – We use God as a crutch to strengthen our community, God is the glue that helps the members of a given [Jewish] community stay united and devoted to one another.

Provoking questions:

4. What role does faith play in this type of God?
5. Is the concept of God strong enough to really bind a community together? Or does God always mean something more?
6. If God is only a crutch and does not necessarily exist, who created the world? How does one contrast the Jewish tradition of creation with evolution and science?

Challenges against the theory:

1. Jewish tradition is very detailed about God being active and present in day to day life, how can a community simply discard that and use God only as a tool to create a community?
2. For thousands of years Jews have believed in God as an active participant in their lives, God was seen and must still be seen as more than just a communal binder, but rather as a being of its own, whether active or passive.

Points supporting the theory:

1. There are many Jews in the world today who would not call themselves observant and claim not to believe in God, yet they are part of a larger Jewish community.
2. Judaism is more about justice and truth than about God, thus Jewish communities must also be centralized in matters of Justice and truth.

Connection to Israel:

1. Israel is more a community of Jews than a group of Jewish believers.
2. Israel is a land intended for Jews, not for God.