

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Theft or Gift?

The Greek hero Prometheus steals fire from the gods, for which he is chained to a rock and tortured endlessly. In Jewish lore, on the other hand, Adam is afraid when the first night arrives and God instructs him on how to create a fire. When the blaze ignites, Adam says gratefully, "Blessed be the creator of fire."

In one story people steal and are punished; in the other God gives us fire as a gift and a comfort.

One can observe the same dichotomy of views about technology and innovation today. To many, each technological advance seems as if it is stolen from the gods and we will be punished for it. But I believe Judaism's view is wiser and deeper. Our

minds and ability to manipulate the world are gifts of God. Fire and its offspring, technology, can spread out of control and do great damage. But with wisdom, both can give us warmth and food and light.

All progress has a cost and every blessing exacts its price. But like Adam in the garden we are given a great gift; the chance to take a darkened world and make it shine.

[Politics Is One Big Monty Python Sketch](#)

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Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.