

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Choice, Fate, and Faith

The great Greek playwright Aeschylus tells us that Prometheus gave the world two gifts — fire and ignorance of our own fate. In other words, an uncertain future, and the power to shape it; both light and darkness.

What makes the uncertainties and vicissitudes of life bearable is the sense that we can nudge the course of our destinies, that we are not helpless before events. The challenge is that our power is vast but limited; time and chance, as Ecclesiastes teaches, happen to us all. Life is a constant balancing act between acceptance of fate and resolve to change it.

Toward the end of the book of Job there is a vast poetic tour of creation reminding Job that the world is infinitely greater than his personal

struggles; a single human being is puny beside the incomprehensibility of the universe. Yet alongside that reality is the startling fact that this speech is from God. The two gifts are intertwined — in the midst of darkness there is light, and standing in the center of uncertainty, there is faith.

[Book Review: Honor Thy Fathers.](#)