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Elements in the Problems of God

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THE PROBLEM OF GOD IN JEWISH THOUGHT

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Abstract: The Hebrew Bible contains two quite different divine personae. One is quick to anger and to exact punishment while the other is a compassionate God slow to anger and quick to forgive. One God distant, the other close by. This severe contrast posed a theological challenge for Jewish thought for the ages. This Element follows selected views in rabbinic literature, medieval Jewish philosophy, Jewish mystical thought, the Hasidic movement, modern Jewish theology, response to the Holocaust, and Jewish feminist theology. In the history of Jewish thought there was often a tendency to identify closely with the God of compassion.

Keywords: two divine personae, judgment, compassion, medieval/modern thought, rabbinic literature

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