

V'HA-RUAH TASHUV: SO THE SPIRIT RE/TURNS

Commentaries on the Book of Qohelet from *MEREST BREATH*

Day 7: The Quest for Understanding

פרק ח - יז. וְרָאִיתִי אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֵלֹהִים כִּי לֹא יוּכַל הָאָדָם לְמַצּוֹא אֶת-הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשֶׂה תַּחַת-הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשׂוֹל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹל הָאָדָם לְבַקֵּשׁ וְלֹא יִמָּצֵא וְגַם אִם-יֹאמֶר הַחֹכֵם לְדַעַת לֹא יוּכַל לְמַצּוֹא:

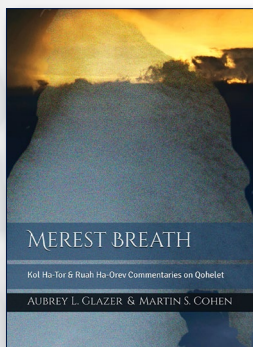
Chapter 8 – 17. And so I came to see all the deeds that God brings to pass, for no one can seize the true meaning of everything that happens under the sun without persistent, focused inquiry. And even if the greatest sage were to say that he wished to understand how things truly are, such a wise individual could still never seize it all without that kind of focused scrutiny.

Kol ha-Tor Commentary by Martin S. Cohen:

The king's lesson—that the correct way to respond even to a tragedy of such previously unimaginable proportions is to redouble one's efforts to seek, not revenge, but wisdom in the world—will appeal to some moderns, but will surely strike others as unsatisfying. But what, the king prompts us to ask, can possibly be the worth of any effort under the sun that leads away from, not towards, a deeper understanding of what it means to be human, of what it means to live in God's world? Surely the quest for understanding is the sole true antidote to horror, the king teaches, and the only true balm for those truly afflicted by what they know of the world and its terrors.

Ruah ha-Orev Commentary by Aubrey L. Glazer:

In the face of that strange zero-sum game between either being righteous or wicked—Qohelet's insight is that showing reverence to the divine is a pragmatic way forward in a world otherwise characterized by an endless whirlwind of injustices making absurd the very idea that human existence can be characterized by justice and virtue. "The unknowable future and the lack of moral retribution are inescapable realities that shatter once and for all grandiose claims concerning the rewards of the righteousness." What a remarkably radical yet sobering message to even consider—never mind include—as an integral part of the sacred canon of the Hebrew Bible.



MEREST BREATH

**Kol ha-Tor & Ruah ha-Orev Commentaries on Qohelet
by Aubrey L. Glazer & Martin S. Cohen**

Available soon on Amazon.com

Discounts available on bulk orders.

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