

Questions for readers of *The Tzaddik*

- 1) What is Divine Providence? What is the evidence of Divine Providence in Prince's life? Is Divine Providence the same as destiny? How does Divine Providence interact with free choice in Prince's life? Do we have free choice as human beings in our lives?
- 2) Thinking back on specific events in your own life, what do you see in your life as Divine Providence? How has Divine Providence interacted with your own life choices?
- 3) How does Divine Providence interact with Prince's mission in his life? What makes his mission unique? What abilities was he specifically given to accomplish that mission? Now, contemplating this issue, what do you see as the mission in your own life? What makes you unique and what specific abilities were given to you as a unique individual to accomplish your mission?
- 4) Why does Prince, who appears so gifted—and knows of his unusual talents—run away from his mission? Why does each of us at some point in our lives seem to run away? Why do we fear our own missions, even though we are gifted? What other tzaddiks in the *Bible* or in modern times have tried to run away from their missions? Why?
- 5) What does it mean to be a tzaddik? How do we define a tzaddik? Why does there have to be a physical transformation as well as a spiritual one for a person to become a tzaddik? Why is a tzaddik so humble? Though rare, why are they so important to human existence?
- 6) Why does Prince have so much fear before he evolves into a tzaddik—when he is actually avoiding his mission—and why is he so fearless after he becomes a tzaddik—even as he accepts his extremely difficult mission?
- 7) Thinking about the dreams that Prince experiences, what dreams have significance in your own life? Think about the particular symbols, associations, and colors in your dreams. Whether or not you remember your sleeping dreams, decide if you wish to create a “dream” from your waking life. Examine your recent daily activities and choose what you feel to be a meaningful or significant recent experience. Perhaps that experience contains a “coincidence” or synchronism. Organize that experience so that it has transcendence and meaning to you, by structuring and considering it as a “dream”. Journaling is a good way to explore both sleeping and waking dreams. Once you have done this, think about how you specifically create your own dreams in your life, by not just being a passive observer, but an active participant. What dreams do the characters experience and how do they become active participants in their own dreams? Why is “dreaming” so important in our lives? Why does it precede action? Can

we use it to connect and communicate with loved ones who have departed this world?

- 8) Why if G-d ordains good, do we struggle so much in our lives? Why is there “evil” in this world? What is “evil”? How does it exist in the novel? How do we defeat it?
- 9) Is the Creation finished or is it still developing? How are the characters co-creators with G-d? How are we co-creators with G-d in our lives?
- 10) What is the reason we come to this world?
- 11) What does it mean to be created in the image of G-d? How are we a microcosm of the creation and how do we affect the creation by changing ourselves?
- 12) What characters in your own life do you know that resemble the character Daniel Kahn in some way? Why is Kahn struggling so much? Examining your own life, what characteristics do you see that might resemble the struggles of Kahn? What character traits or issues might have preceded your birth in your life? Why is it sometimes easier to go on struggling with those issues, even tremendously complicating your life—as Kahn did—than to admit that you need to make changes that make your life, and perhaps the lives of those around you, easier and freer? Why do we get stuck on certain issues?
- 13) What is reality? How do the press and historians, who tend to approach it with more perspective, reflect that reality? Do you accept their versions of reality? What is history and how relevant is it, if it is written by the victor or filtered through the subjective consciousness of the historian? How do we allow the world to organize time for us? Why do many of us perceive reality as primarily something we can physically see or touch? Why do we often treat the “hidden” world as if it doesn’t exist? Why do we often think that reality is this presence that we cannot affect? Why do so many of us persist in representing ourselves as something we are not? How do Prince and Judy perceive reality and time? What if we understood these factors in the same way? How would that affect our lives?
- 14) Referring to the story that Prince tells to Kahn concerning the traveler between different worlds, what do you think transferred from your prior existence to your life in this world? What legacy would you like to leave this world and what do you think that you can take with you? If you believe that this world is just a temporary abode for your soul, and that your soul is a part of G-d and is therefore eternal, how does this change your perception of your life and your subsequent actions? Realizing that we are all spiritual beings who come as strangers to this material world, what does this mean to you? Understanding our existence from that perspective, how can we now understand Prince’s initial rejection of the world and his attempt, as Judy says, to act as a “stranger” even in the midst of his closest friends?

- 15) Is the concept of a Messiah a realistic one? If such a Messiah existed, would we recognize that person? How would we treat that person? What is a Messianic World? Why does Prince have such powers in our current world? What does this “charm” mean anyway? How can he persuade others to follow his example? What “hold” does he have over them? Is that aspect good?
- 16) Considering the characters’ relationships, what are the significant relationships in your own life? How do they support your life’s mission? What mission(s) do you share with each other? How do you recognize when someone is a significant person in your life? What actions should you take when you recognize that significant person? Considering that these relationships may be sacred and pre-ordained in some sense, who have been the teachers in your life and who have been your students? What relationships have you experienced where you were both the teacher and the student? What did you learn from those relationships and how did those relationships heal the world in some sense? Carrying this further, and realizing that you have specific gifts to offer this world, how do you become a “healer” in this world?
- 17) Why is kavanah or intention so important in our actions? Why is it not just good enough to do the actions? Why is thought so important and why does it precede speech and action? Why does lashon hara or “evil speech” cause so much distress if we don’t act upon it?
- 18) How does G-d marry the infinite and finite within human beings? How do we strive for the infinite when we cannot conceive of it in our physical existence?
- 19) How are the four worlds through which our existence was created, Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, reflected in the human body and energy? How do the sefirot reflect our Divine inheritance by being both vessels and lights?
- 20) How does your name or the names ascribed to others refer to an inner energy? How does naming someone contain a certain energy?
- 21) What does it mean to “know” something? Do we really understand a concept when we only “know” it intellectually? How do understanding and experiencing a concept in a broader sense relate to the reason for our being in this world?
- 22) How do we know that our actions are “good” if we are subjective beings?