



## REVISITING BRUCE ALMIGHTY

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I revisited (read: watched again) the movie *Bruce Almighty*, starring great comedian Jim Carrey, Brad Pitt's erstwhile wife Jennifer Aniston, and versatile actor Morgan Freeman. The movie has never ceased to make me laugh despite the fact that I have watched it more than thrice already. What has constantly struck me as wondrous is when the main character, played by Jim, finally comes into the realization of how selfish he had been. He had never thought that his fiancée, played by Jennifer, had always been praying for him.

Despite the apparently comedic orientation, the film touches on several religious and ethical concepts such as Does God exist? What is free will? Is man really free to do as he chooses? How does a Supreme Being control prayer? How does a Supreme God empower man? You know, lots of stuff like that. But the most significant topic tackled in the movie is how man becomes so enamored with power and influence that he forgets other more important things such as love, loyalty and respect.

It's not easy to live in the modern world. One's values and principles can easily be swayed by worldlier considerations that easily take precedence. Constantly theorizing, however, will not solve all of the world's problems. We have to take a decisive yet sensible approach to everything, one that has respect for all other approaches yet still manages to assert itself when the need comes, or when push comes to shove. When we commit mistakes, we have to make sure that those mistakes do not worsen into errors. A mistake is just a miscue, easily rectifiable and therefore correctable. But an error entails wrong judgment, not so easily excusable and therefore graver. Repeated mistakes can prove to be errors of judgment and escalate into conscious wrongs.

In Bruce's case, he granted everyone's wishes because he'd grown too tired of having to answer too many prayers (actually emails), making many, many people satisfied but "confused". Because he had not used wise and sensible judgment, there was no check-and-balance framework that could control the world's affairs. In the end, he had to concede that only a Supremely Intelligent Being could manage to run the world and keep it under control. He had to submit to a Higher Power. God is not a punishing god. He merely bides His time till mankind realizes its folly and is ready to accept its inherent weakness.

We often question our freedom and think that we either have too much or too little of it. Little do we realize that everything that happens in this world does so for a reason. Perhaps our true calling is to try to find whatever that reason is and live to be better persons for it. Perhaps we have been designed to help each other in this respect, more than any other.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is your purpose in life? Do you believe you have already found it? Why or why not?
2. Do you believe in the writer's concept of God? Why or why not?
3. What is your philosophy on free will? Is man absolutely free? Why or why not?
4. What would you do if you became god for a day?
5. Why can religion not save you?