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THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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Weekly Parsha

Ki Tisa

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"And make of it sacred oil for anointing as made by a skilled perfumer. It shall be sacred oil for anointing." (Shemot 30:25)

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Culture

ANTI



SEMITISM

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

What generates anti-Semitism? Is it any different than hatred towards any religion and its people? Is it caused by the Jews' poor actions? Or does anti-Semitism exist regardless of how Jews act? Aside from attacking Jews verbally or physically, is it justifiable? If not, how may it be eliminated?

A Rabbi once explained:

"When Jacob was strategizing how to escape from the clutches of his approaching twin Eisav, he told Eisav, "I have resided with the wicked Lavan and yet have kept the 613 commandments and have not learnt from his wicked

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the GOLDEN CALF

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Transcribed by students



Moses ascended the mountain to have a rendezvous with G-d to learn first hand the teachings of the Torah and then to transmit them to the Jewish people. Instead Moses descended to a nation of idolaters rather than a people committed to accept a moral law based upon their intellectual conviction. The Torah explains the reason for this transformation. In Exodus 32:1, the Torah tells us that the people saw that Moses tarried from coming down the mountain

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and that this precipitated their desire to build a golden calf. Rashi explains that the nation miscalculated the day of Moses's descent. Moses advised the people that he would return in forty days. Moses was not counting his departure as day one. He meant forty complete days, thus his return would be on the forty first day, which is the seventeenth of Tammuz. Therefore their calculations were erroneous by one day. Rashi teaches us that as a result of this miscalculation, on the sixteenth of Tammuz, Satan came and brought confusion to the world, and showed the Israelites a vision of thick darkness. This caused them to say, "Moses is definitely dead", and it ignited their desire to serve other gods.

Upon analyzing this Rashi, two basic questions must be asked: What compels Rashi to utilize Satan as the vehicle for their confusion? Their mistake in determining Moses's return was based upon their erroneous calculations. This alone should have been sufficient justification for their concluding that Moses was dead and was not returning. Furthermore, Aaron devises different schemes to hinder their attempts to serve different G-d's. Why didn't he simply advise them of their mistaken calculation? Aaron certainly was aware of the proper count or at the very least recognized their mistake.

We must appreciate that the Israelites had recently been liberated from Egypt. In Egypt they were exposed to, and influenced by, the pagan practices of that society. Therefore, they still had an attraction to the primitive, and were still subject to the insecurities of the instinctual part of their personalities. The entire event of Moses ascending the mountain to speak to G-d was to them, a mystical phenomenon. They were in great awe of this unique experience. Thus, when they saw the thick darkness, rather than attributing it to bad weather conditions, their emotions overwhelmed them. They had visions of Moses' failed mission which image was bolstered by their miscalculation. The Satan, as Maimonides teaches us, is the same as the yetser harah, man's evil inclinations. Their emotions, which were fostered by their insecurities and primitive proclivities, caused them to conjure these fantastic, ominous visions. Chazal (the Rabbis) teach us that they saw an image of Moses in a coffin. This manifests that they were regressing into the depths of their imagination. They were so overwhelmed by the mystical, that Chazal felt compelled to point out this image, to demonstrate that their total perception of reality was distorted.

Upon their concluding that Moses had died, the Israelites expressed their desire to make many gods that would lead them. Their need for a god was simply a need for security to fill the void that Moses' ostensible departure created.

Rashi notes that they desired many gods. This again reflects the primitive emotion they possessed. They had desires for different gods, to cater to each of their diverse needs. Their basic insecurities and trepidation's were expressed by their desire for different gods, that would satisfy all their personal whims and grant them a sense of security.

The insight the Torah affords us in delineating the story of the Golden Calf is extremely relevant. Modern man might think that these are paganistic emotions to which he is not susceptible. However, one need only observe Christianity to recognize the strong hold the emotion for idol worship has, even today. They idolize a physical statue which represents a human being whom they view as G-d. Objectively, it may seem absurd, but yet its appeal attests to mans primitive desire for the security of the physical.

Chazal appreciated the strength of these emotions. Rabbi Akiva did not want to learn that the "Et" of "Et Hashem Elokecha teerah" ("also" G-d you shall fear"), as including Talmidei Chachamim (Torah scholars) because of this emotion. The deification of man is idol worship. Rabbi Yishmael argues and states that it includes the Talmid Chacham. The respect the Torah envisions for a scholar, is not for the individual per se, but rather the wisdom which he acquired. He is the embodiment of an individual who utilized his intellect for its true objective.

It would seem that Aaron also underestimated the strength of these emotions. Aaron recognized their clamor to create new gods as reflective of their primitive

emotions. He recognized the futility in trying to demonstrate the error of their calculations. The nation was no longer operating under their intellectual faculty. The primitive behavioral patterns to which they were subject in Egypt, were exerting their influence over the nation. The mixed multitude whom departed Egypt with them, provoked much of their regression. Rashi advises us that the Mixed Multitude (not descendants of Abraham) used their 'magic'(1) to create the calf. In fact, they initiated this entire service and the Israelites followed. The Mixed Multitude had a greater yearning for the security of the physical as a means to relate to G-d. They therefore utilized the magic they learned in Egypt. Magic is not some supernatural force. It too requires a discipline, where one learns to switch the apparent relationship between cause and effect to which we are accustomed. It therefore is fascinating because it distracts the observer who is amazed since it does not function in accordance with standard causal relationships.

Aaron took an active role in the making of the Golden Calf. However, the role Aaron played was really a result of careful analysis. In reality he did not try to facilitate its construction but rather attempted to hinder its completion. He analyzed the behavior of the Israelites and tried to deal with them based upon their state of mind. He recognized a step by step regression in their rational faculty as they became under the grip of this overwhelming emotion. Aaron's observations are expressed in a Midrash quoted by Rashi. Aaron observed several things. He saw the Israelites kill his nephew Chur, who tried to rebuke them. He observed and concluded that it would be better if the Israelites transgression was ascribed to him rather than to them. He also concluded that if they built the alter on their own, it would be finished immediately. He therefore undertook its construction hoping to tarry in his work, in order to delay them until Moses arrived. Aaron had recognized that their behavior



patterns reflected the powerful sway of their emotions. The first thing the Israelites sought was a substitute leader. This reflected their need for the security of the physical. He requested their ornaments in an effort to appeal to their greed. This was essentially a delay tactic. He assumed that they would be reluctant because he thought that their greed would deter their actions. However, the Torah teaches us "Vayitparku" they readily removed all their jewelry. He thereby recognized and appreciated the overwhelming and dominating effect of these emotions as evidenced by the alacrity with which they responded to his request for their valuables. Thereafter, he observed that they

killed Hur. This represented that they were no longer functioning with even a scintilla of rationality. They could not tolerate Hur's rebuke and their murderous actions evidenced their total identification with the calf. He thus observed and concluded that at best, he could only slow their progress. Any attempt by him to have halted the construction of the calf would have been futile, and surely would have caused them to regress to the depth of their primitivism.

A precursory review of his actions would indicate that he was helping them, however a more scrupulous investigation as articulated, reveals his true intentions. He desired that their guilt be ascribed to him in order to assuage the guilty feelings they would experience upon Moses' return. If the Israelites felt absolute culpability because of their actions, their feelings of guilt would render them incapable of doing Teshuva.

G-d still finds fault with Aaron's action. Exodus 32:23 states, "And when Moses saw that the people were broken loose for Aaron had let them loose for a division among their enemies." This criticism is lodged against Aaron for one can not make compromises with idol worship. The emotion is so powerful that if one allows it to be expressed in his behavioral patterns, it will ultimately dominate his actions and destroy him. Moses upon his return took extremely drastic measures. He openly expressed outrage and threw the tablets to the ground and shattered them. He thereby gathered to his side the Levites, who killed three thousand men. Moses' extreme actions were purposeful to demonstrate that one can not compromise nor tolerate with the emotion for idolatry. The basic philosophy of Judaism is antithetical to these type of emotions. ■

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deeds." What does Eisav, the wicked, and the rejecter of Torah values, care if Jacob kept the 613 commandments while he lived with Lavan? Furthermore, it seems this message could only antagonize Eisav.

Chazal (the Rabbis) say, quoting the Rambam in his *Igeret Teyman*, that the reason the mountain from which the Torah was given was called Sinai, was because from this same mountain came down sinah (hatred) to the other nations of the world. Meaning to say that the very source of the hatred that the other nations harbor toward the Jews - is the Torah itself. What then did Jacob intend to accomplish by implying to Eisav that he kept the Torah, when this very Torah was the source of Eisav's hatred for Yaakov?"

The Rabbi also expounded:

"The Talmud (*Pesachim 49b*) tells us that the hatred of an ignorant Jew toward the Torah scholar is greater than the hatred the idolaters have for the Jewish nation."

In both instances the cause is the same: Eisav resented his twin Jacob for the blessings Isaac their father gave to Jacob exclusively. And the Talmud teaches that Gentiles hate the Jew for their reception of the Torah at Sinai. Both Eisav and the Gentiles are resentful of G-d's favoritism for the Jew. (Jacob's blessing from Isaac were bestowed with G-d's will.) When the Talmud compares the ignorant Jew's hatred of the Torah scholar exceeds the Gentiles' hatred of the Jews, our idea finds additional support: the ignorant Jew is more aware of the Torah than the Gentile. As such, he senses more accurately what he lacks, and acts out this disdain for his own shortcomings, by hating he that has the good, i.e., the Torah. However, since a gentile is less informed about the Torah truths than a typical Jew, his disdain is on a lesser level.

We come to understand the root of anti-Semitism as jealousy over religion. One, who is anti-Semitic, is so as he is deeply disturbed by his knowledge that he is not favored by G-d. This is an area where man's emotions are most aroused. Man's primary barometer of self-estimation is tied to what he knows truthfully is the "self", i.e., his values and religious beliefs. It is therefore no surprise that it is religion that is the root of so many wars throughout history.

When other nations are confronted with the

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SEMITISM

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

indisputable truth of G-d's Sinai selection of the Jew as His emissaries to the world, there is a sibling rivalry of sorts. But the Jew is at fault if he boasts this role, while simultaneously abandoning his observance of the Torah. Even the Torah observer too cannot boast that which was bestowed on "Abraham's descendants", and not due to his own merit. Personal merit is not why we are the chosen people. This is a denial of G-d's own words:

Deuteronomy, 10:15:

"Only in your fathers did God desire and did He love them, and He chose their seed after them from all other peoples, as this day."

Jews are selected due to their descent from Abraham, and Abraham was selected based on his absolute, undiluted adherence to truth. All peoples should take a lesson from G-d's word. G-d "chooses" only those who adhere to truth, as exemplified by Abraham. One who adheres to truth must come to the realization that "multiple religions" must contradict each other by definition. All must be false - except one. The goal is to arrive at an honest acceptance of what reality determines is the true, G-d-given religion. But until such a time

when religions will embrace truth, in place of the current "defend-at-all-cost" approach, anti-Semitism will be alive and well, seeking opportunities to attack G-d's chosen, as a means of self justification.

The Rabbi who I quoted earlier taught that Jacob's response to Eisav was for good reason. We might think that telling a wicked Eisav that he has not veered from the Torah has no meaning to him. But in fact, it does. Jacob understood that in order for one to hate the Jew, he must have justifiable cause to vent his aggression. The cause in Jacob's case would be Jacob's abandonment of the monotheistic system received from Isaac, and learned on his own. Only in this case would Eisav feel justified in killing Jacob. The Rabbi said:

"There is an amazing Rashi in support of this idea in Toldos regarding the blessing Yitzchak gave to Eisav. Toldos 27:38-40: "Yitzchak, his [Eisav's] father replied and said to him... you shall live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother. When you have cause to be grieved, you will throw off his yoke from your neck." And on the words "when you have caused to be grieved," Rashi writes, "... meaning to say, when the Israelites will transgress the Torah and you will have justification to grieve over the blessings which he took, [then] you will throw off his yoke."

With no fault, Eisav could not harm Jacob. For this reason, Jacob told Eisav that he did not veer from the Torah. A person requires justification for all his actions, unconditionally. The Rabbi also quoted the Koran, where it penalizes the Jew for veering from his laws, and thus, deserving of attack by the Koran. We see the same principle at work.

In contrast, when the Jews uphold G-d's Torah, they are admired, as the Torah says:

"And you shall watch them and keep them as they (the commands) are your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these statutes and declare 'what a wise and understanding people is this great nation. Because what great nation has God close to them like God, whenever (they) call to Him? And what great nation has statutes and laws as righteous as this entire Torah'..." (Deuteronomy 4:6-8)

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One example of when this took place, was during King Solomon's reign, when Queen Sheba came to hear his wisdom, bringing his lavish gifts:

Kings I, 10:1-10:

"And Queen Sheba heard the tidings of Solomon in the name of G-d, and she came to test him with riddles. And she came to Jerusalem with an exceedingly great entourage, camels carrying spices, and very much gold, and fine stones, and she came to Solomon and spoke to him, all that she had on her heart. And Solomon told her all her words, there was no matter hidden from the king that he did not tell (respond) to her. And Queen Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house (Temple) that he built. And the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the standing of his officers, and their clothing and their drinks, and his sacrifices that he brought up to the house of G-d, and she had no spirit left in her. And she said to the king, "The matter that I heard in my land was true regarding your matters and your wisdom. And I did not believe the matters until I came, and my eyes saw, and not even half the matter was told to me, there is more wisdom and good than the matter I heard. It should be that G-d is blessed, in that he desired you, to place you onto the throne of Israel in G-d's eternal love for Israel, and He has placed you as king to do justice and righteousness." And she gave to the king 120 kifar of gold, and very much spices, and fine stones, there never came again the quantity of spices that Queen Sheba gave to King Solomon."

Queen Sheba – who our Rabbis describe as a greatly intelligent person – received answers to every one of her riddles. The verse says she "heard the tidings of Solomon in the name of G-d". This means her inquiries were about true, deep wisdom, G-d's knowledge. She was so impressed by King Solomon's wisdom that she said "It should be that G-d is blessed." What is significant is that her response was praise for G-d. She did not come to King Solomon with any agenda to find fault with him, supporting her culture. Queen Sheba, who searched for truth and found it in abundance in King Solomon, was awed by the Creator – not anti-Semitic towards His chosen ones.



Addressing the Problem

Anti-Semitism can be dealt with. If Jews study Torah and live in accord with the perfect ideas created by G-d, other nations will have an opportunity to see G-d's wisdom. This is our obligation. And when the nations are afforded knowledge of G-d's Torah through contact with learned Jews, they will see a different life. They will be imbued with the perfection of Judaism, and will desire to learn more. They will appreciate the wisdom G-d desires all mankind to possess. The nations will no longer focus on "people", or Jews, but they will focus on G-d. This is exactly what happened with Queen Sheba. She came to King Solomon to verify his knowledge, and she ended with a love for G-d's wisdom, displayed in the king's answers. Her unmatched gifts prove her sincerity. As any scientist is awed by the cosmos, any person will be awed by the wisdom that is encapsulated in the Torah. But if as Jews, we do not study, and perform the Torah's laws, by what means will other nations have a chance at seeing Torah wisdom? By what means will other nations realize the true distinction of the Jew, and abandon anti-Semitism?

Jews continue to act with an ignorant, destructive, and disgusting arrogance, instead

of a learned concern for other nations. This is seen in Yeshivas who scorn Gentiles with the term "Goy", with overly religious parents who won't allow their children to marry converts, and with Jews in general who feel "above" others. Wake up. Didn't G-d create the Gentile nations as well? Doesn't He desire their perfection too?

Jews are not making an effort to conclude whether Judaism is truth, whether Sinai actually proves G-d's existence, and His will that we adhere to the Torah. This is laziness, and it is self-destructive. Would you be astonished to know that the greatest minds found Sinai as a clear proof of G-d's existence? Perhaps you are afraid of the obligations that follow such a realization. How can a person ignore the fact that he or she is "created", and there must be a Creator? How can one ignore clear proof that G-d exists, gave us a Torah, and that it is for our good, and is the most pleasurable life?

Jews attempt to assimilate to a lifestyle not desired by G-d. Inter-marriage and adoption of alien, cultural habits are the primary symptoms of a Jew's corruption. Torah was given to oppose alien lifestyles, and Jews do just the opposite, they gravitate to heathen practices, and anti-Semitic peoples. Jews wish to gain approval in the eyes of those who did not receive the Torah. It is sadly backwards. The Jew is to be a teacher, not a student.

Ironically, the very abandoning of our concern for approval by other nations, and rather, adhering to our heritage, displaying G-d's truth and knowledge through performing His commands, is the very solution to the anti-Semitic problem. Studying and applying Judaism, the only true religion, (plagiarized by others) not only instills truths and appreciation for reality in our minds, but in the hearts and minds of every other nation.

Placating other nations with foolish tactics of freeing homicide bombers, curtailing revenge on murders, and talking peace with assassins and butchers, is the problem, not the solution. These decisions are not the result of studying G-d's wisdom, but are gravely, ignorant errors, and therefore will continue to fail.

G-d knows what creates peace. He commanded us in the Torah for our own good, and for the good of all peoples. Follow G-d's absolute, true ideas, not man's invented politics.

Anti-Semitism will end when the nations see the beauty in G-d's Torah. Until then, Jews show them nothing but desperation, and a people who abandoned their G-d. As Jacob taught us, this justifies their attacks. □

ANTI-SEMITISM: Remarks *from* 2001

UDI OHANA

The poet Tom Paulin wants Jewish settlers shot dead as Nazis.

The French Ambassador in London condemns Israel as "a small shitty country".

The writer A. N. Wilson compares the rather slight damage to the Church of the Nativity to the destruction of the Buddhas at Bamyian.

The Portuguese Nobel laureate Jose Saramago compares events in the Palestinian Territories with Auschwitz.

The Vatican's Osservatore Romano speaks of 'Israel's aggression turning into extermination' (New York Times, 4 August 2002)

Professor Mona Baker, fresh from her own goal in firing two liberal Israelis from her editorial board, describes Israeli operations as 'some kind of holocaust' and 'beyond just war crimes' (Sunday Telegraph, 7 July 2002)

Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Talas made such remarks as: 'I want to stand in one place and kill the Jew standing before me. If every Arab kills a Jew, there won't be any Jews left at all. We will fight like the Hizballah fights against them in South Lebanon. From the Golan Front, of course - from any front where they (the Jews) are situated'.

On 21 March, the director-general of the Syrian News Agency wrote in 'Tishrin-Internet' that the world understands that the Holocaust against the Jews is composed mostly of lies and exaggerated descriptions, in order to conceal the truth regarding Israel's criminal acts against the Arabs.

In a commentary broadcast over 'Radio Damascus' on 7 May, a personal attack was made on Prime Minister Ariel Sharon: 'It is apparent that all signs point to the fact that Sharon has stepped into Hitler's shoes and has begun to commit the ugliest crimes'.

On 7 May, the editor of the 'Tishrin' newspaper dedicated a long detailed editorial to theological support for the hatred of Israel. According to him, from a survey of the laws and the religious laws in Jewish history, he learned that racism in itself became a sacred religious belief and the central component of the Jews' daily, moral and political behavior. The commentator maintains that the aim of the Jews, even from the time of Judah, was to cause bloodshed. This is exactly what the Zionist occupation forces have been implementing against the Palestinian Arab nation, even before the establishment of the thieving entity in 1948, in the form of: unceasing

massacres, killing, shedding of innocent blood, burning and destroying homes, mass expulsion of Arab residents accompanied by bombing and destruction, uprooting trees and slaughtering infants, who are the purest of creation, showing no mercy, no compassion nor any moral or human scruples.

Articles from the Egyptian Press:

On 6 March, 'Al-Gomhouriya' published the following in Kamel Zuheiri's column: 'Like Nazism, Zionism adopted the racist theories that there are both chosen and inferior races in the world'.

On 14 March, the philosopher Mahmud Amin Al-Aalem granted an interview to the 'Al-Ahali' newspaper in which he said that 'we confront a new Nazism which seriously threatens humanity. It is therefore our task at this critical moment to destroy the Zionist plan and the Zionist attitude based on legend, since this is the mentality that rejects the other person, accuses the other person of heresy and has disdain for all humane and cultural values'. The whole world must unite against this Nazi orientation and all over the world groups must rise against the Zionist movement and new Nazism.

'Al-Akbar Internet' published a Holocaust denial article on 13 April in which the author denounced the 'insane ceremonies' held in Israel to mark what it called 'Holocaust Day'. The author emphasized that 'in preparation for the ceremonies held to celebrate this day, the Israeli teacher tells his pupils fictitious stories about the murder of Jews in crematoria and the Israeli media gives detailed descriptions of these crematoria'. According to the author, 'the Zionists invented the matter of the crematoria in order to extort the world, especially Germany'... 'even though the Holocaust is only a myth and historians throughout the world have refuted Israeli claims in this regard and have proven that it is a fabricated story and that the Nazi crematoria were actually used to burn the bodies of soldiers'.

On 27 April, 'Akbar Asaa' published an article entitled, 'The New Nazism and Sharon's Concept of Absolute Power'. It maintained that there were no essential differences between Sharon and Hitler, that 'there were also no essential differences between Nazism and the great harm it caused and the massacres perpetrated by Zionism'.

The opposition newspaper 'Al-Arabi', which opposes the Peace Process, gave a disgusting reception for Foreign Minister Shimon Peres when he visited Cairo in late April, when it published a huge picture of him in Nazi uniform with a swastika armband on the front page. The headline read in large red letters, 'The Nazi - the Butcher from Kafir Kana.

In the 5 May edition of 'Al-Gomhouriya Internet', Kamel Zuheiri complains that 'Zionist propaganda denies the connection between Hitler and the Zionist movement. It even hides the connection between Hitler and the emigration of Jews from Germany to Palestine', and that 'historical facts prove the existence of ties between Nazism and Zionism. Israel denies these facts, however, because it understandably prefers to forget them'.

In 'Al-Ahram' in February, 2001 Anis Mansour, one of the prominent publicists in the Egyptian establishment press and member of the Shura Council and the Supreme Council for the Press, published that 'in the future it will become clear to the world that there was justification for what happened to the Jews of Germany, Poland and Russia. It is not true that all the Jews are peaceful people. There is among them a group of suicidal persons who do not want to live and arouse the hatred and antagonism of people. As a result people turn against them. Despite the very many clever people among them, they use their wisdom to generate new types of hatred and groupings against them everywhere. The feeling of superiority prevails among the Jewish people and they do not bend their heads so that they may live ... they rather prefer to appear behind the 'wheels' of the U.S. and Europe, while continuing to arouse sympathy'. ■

See the entire Flash presentation of Udi Ohana at this link: http://www.conceptwizard.com/pipeline_of_hatred.html

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Weekly Parsha

Ki Tisa

RABBI BERNARD FOX



The Mishcan, its utensils, Ahron and the other Kohanim were anointed with special oil. The anointing was a component of the process by which each was sanctified.

The Shemen HaMishcha – the Oil of Anointing – was created using two ingredients. These were olive oil and various fragrant spices. Maimonides explains that the spices were not added directly to the oil. Instead the spices were soaked

in water. The water absorbed the fragrance of the spices. The oil was then added to the fragrant water. The water was boiled away leaving only the pure oil. However in the process of boiling off the water, the oil absorbed the fragrant odor of the spices.[1]

Why were the spices not ground and added directly to the oil? This would have been a simpler procedure! Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Ztl explained that the Torah is very specific in its terminology. In this case, the Torah requires that Oil of Anointing be created. This implies that the substance used for anointing be an oil. It must consist of this single ingredient. It may not be composed of various ingredients joined in a compound. However the Torah also requires that fragrant spices be used in creating the oil. How can these two opposing laws be fulfilled? The unique production process met both requirements. The Oil of Anointing was composed solely of the oil. The fragrance was added without adding an additional substance.[2]

“Between Me and Bnai Yisrael it is an eternal sign that in six days Hashem made the heavens and the earth. And on the seventh day he ceased and rested.” (Shemot 31:17)

Hashem commands Bnai Yisrael to observe Shabbat. Even the construction of the Mishcan cannot take place on Shabbat. Shabbat represents the creation of the universe in six days and the cessation of that process with the entry of the seventh day. This symbol of the creation was entrusted to the Jewish people.

The Talmud explains it is prohibited for a non-Jew to observe the Shabbat.[3] This prohibition seems odd. Shabbat represents one of the most important truths. It would seem reasonable for the non-Jew to be encouraged to observe Shabbat. Through observance the non-Jew would confirm that the Almighty created the universe! What is the reason for this prohibition?

Rashi offers an interesting explanation. Through our labors we contribute to society. An idle person does not support or cultivate the world. Idleness should be avoided and constructive endeavors should be pursued. The non-Jew is not commanded to observe Shabbat. Therefore, the moral obligation

to occupy oneself in constructive activities applies throughout the week.[4] This does not mean that it is immoral to enjoy an occasional vacation or period of relaxation. The prohibition is to set aside a specific day of the week which is regularly excluded from useful endeavor.

A different explanation is suggested by the Shabbat liturgy. The section of Chumash that includes our pasuk is included in the Shabbat morning Amidah. This section is followed by an explanatory paragraph. “And Hashem our God did not give it to the peoples of the land. And our King did not bequeath it to those worshipping idols. In addition, the uncircumcised may not take part in our day of rest. Rather to Israel, His nation, He gave it, with love.” What is the message of this paragraph?

Shabbat was created as a constant reminder of creation. However, the responsibility of observing Shabbat and demonstrating the truth of creation was not placed upon all of humanity. The Almighty chose Bnai Yisrael. The Jewish people was given the Torah and the duty of Shabbat observance. We are to teach humanity through our actions and observances. This selection of the Jewish people is the essence of our covenant with Hashem. This is a special relationship with Hashem that does not extend to the other peoples of the world.

Viewed from this perspective, Shabbat does not only represent creation. It is symbolic of the covenant between Hashem and Bnai Yisrael. This seems to be the message of the Amidah.

Now let us return to our original question. Why can the non-Jew not observe Shabbat? The Amidah suggests an important consideration. Observance of Shabbat is an expression of the unique relationship between Bnai Yisrael and Hashem. This association does not extend to the non-Jew. The non-Jew observing Shabbat is assuming a responsibility assigned to the Jewish people and denying the distinct role of the Jewish nation.

“And Hashem passed before him and He proclaimed, ‘Hashem, Hashem Omnipotent, merciful and kind. He is slow to anger and is abundant in kindness and truth.’ (Shemot 34:6)

Our pasuk introduces one of the most profound prophecies revealed to Moshe. In this prophecy, Hashem reveals to Moshe His thirteen midot – attributes. Among these attributes is that Hashem is merciful and slow to anger.

This pasuk presents an apparent problem. One of the fundamental principles of the Torah is that Hashem is an absolute unity. Every day we declare our acceptance of this principle in the Shema. We say that Hashem is one. This does not merely mean that there is only one G-d. This statement means that Hashem is an absolute unity. He has no parts.

It is inadequate to merely enunciate this principle. This is a basic principle of our Torah. We cannot claim affinity to this truth without understanding its meaning. We must appreciate the meaning of Hashem’s absolute unity.

Maimonides discusses the meaning of this unity in his commentary on the Mishnah. He explains that Hashem’s unity is unique. There is no other example of absolute unity. He cannot be compared to a single entity that is a compound. A compound has components or elements that join to create the whole. He cannot be compared to an elemental unit. This unit has

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dimensions or aspects. Imagine a block of pure metal. The block has a back and front.[5] In his Mishne Torah, Maimonides adds that this concept of unity precludes attribution of any characteristic to the Almighty. The attribution of any characteristic compromises the absolute unity of Hashem. This is because Hashem would possess the characteristic. By definition, a distinction would exist between Hashem and the characteristic He possesses. This is impossible.[6]

An example will help illustrate the problem. Let us assume that a certain individual – Reuven – is merciful. This means that Reuven possesses the characteristic of mercy. Reuven is not mercy. Mercy is a characteristic that Reuven possesses. Reuven and the characteristic are separate. In the same sense, it seems impossible to ascribe the characteristic of mercy to Hashem and simultaneously declare His absolute unity!

We can now identify the problem presented by our passage and the thirteen midot. The term midot is translated as characteristics. How can the Torah attribute characteristics to the Almighty? How can the Torah describe Hashem as merciful or slow to anger? This contradicts the assertion that the Almighty is an absolute unity.

Our Sages provide a solution to this problem. Maimonides, in his Moreh Nevuchim, discusses the solution thoroughly. He explains that it is not the Torah's intent to ascribe actual attributes or characteristics to the Almighty. Hashem is an absolute unity. He does not possess attributes or characteristics. Instead, the Torah is describing the various patterns of behavior that we observe.[7] A simple example will illustrate this concept. Imagine a flame. A chip of ice is passed before the flame and it melts. A piece of thin paper is passed before the flame and it ignites. A hand hovers over the flame and it senses heat or even pain. These various outcomes are not the consequence of different characteristics of the flame. Instead, the effect of the single flame varies. The material that is passed before the flame determines the effect. In a similar sense, the Almighty is a single absolute unity. However, under various circumstances, different patterns of action emerge from this entity.[8] The Torah is describing these patterns of behavior. In other words, the Torah is describing our perceptions. The Torah is not defining the nature of Hashem.

It is important to note that there is an alternative approach to resolving the contradiction between absolute unity and characteristics. One might be tempted to resolve this problem through asserting that Hashem is an absolute unity but, in some unfathomable manner, He possesses attributes. Nachmanides deals with this issue. He explains that this approach is fundamentally flawed. It is not acceptable. We are required to do more than pronounce Hashem's unity. We must adopt this conviction. It is impossible for a person to actually accept the concept of absolute unity and simultaneously assert that Hashem has characteristics. Such a paradoxical set of convictions is meaningless. The concept of unity is reduced to a meaningless phrase. Instead, we must understand the concept of unity and dismiss any attribution of characteristics as alien to this concept. Nachmanides succinctly states that one cannot affirm that which is not understood![9] □

[1] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Klai Mikdash 1:2.

[2] Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Lectures on Mesechet Keritut.

[3] Mesechet Sanhedrin 58b.

[4] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on the Talmud, Mesechet Sanhedrin 58b.

[5] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Commentary on the Mishne, Mesechet Sanhedrin, 10:1.

[6] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Yesodai HaTorah 1:7.

[7] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Moreh Nevuchim, volume 1, chapter 54.

[8] Illustration provided by Rav Yisroel Chait.

[9] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Vikuach / Milchamot Hashem, chapters 105-107.

SENTIMENTS *on the* SABBATH

RIVKAH NACHMIAS

Each and every week, after lighting the Sabbath lights and saying my prayers in joyful devotion, I say this out loud to anyone who is near enough to hear me! I usually do not get an answer because no one truly understands exactly what I mean! It is just too profound. It is said more in wonderment as a statement than a question to be answered. Why would anyone not accept this magnificent gift!?!?! Sabbath is worth far more than wealth and jewels.... the gift of tranquility and renewal of body and soul.

Life is not easy.... no one said it was supposed to be easy. I work hard all week just to earn the right to have my Sabbath. I learned that six days we should labor and the seventh day is the Sabbath for the LORD. This is what I follow.

When I know that the Sabbath is approaching there is a great sense of relief that sweeps over me. Of course, I am not talking about the preparation, I am talking of that feeling of gratitude. I know that I have the "permission", if you will, to stop whatever is still not completed and just walk away into "another dimension of being", almost as if I were entering another time zone.... another world. No one can condemn me for shirking responsibility. No one can be insulted if I apologetically excuse myself because I must light my Sabbath lights and pray.

When Friday arrives, and Sabbath is not far away I spend the day finalizing the last preparations for the magnificent gift that is soon to arrive. Yes, the Sabbath is our gift, if we would only accept it, but some do not accept this gift, and I must say that I am unable to understand why. People must make choices in life....correct or incorrect, as they may be, but they make their own choices, and live with them. All I know is that I have chosen what I feel to be the correct way and I want to share it with everyone. I want everyone to feel what I feel. How can I explain it simply....?

After all is done on Friday, I light my Sabbath lights, close my eyes, thank HASHEM, pray for all my family and friends and those in need, take a deep life giving sigh with boundless gratitude, and open my eyes to see the Sabbath lights dancing joyfully in front of me as if to say, "you made it through to another Sabbath, enjoy the gift of another Sabbath and let your soul dance joyfully too". □

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THE TORAH'S DIVINE ORIGIN

& Why Moses' Face Shone

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: Is it not possible for the Jews to have produced the Torah over the course of the Exodus? Couldn't the Torah have been written in parts over a period of time?

Mesora: If you ask when the Torah was written, Rashi answers your question. He says that Moses received the Torah, commencing with "Genesis", and concluding with the very event of Moses' acceptance of the Ten Commandments, and the Written Law together with the Oral Laws. This makes sense. If you are of the opinion that Moses received the entire Five Books, this would pose great difficulties: The Five Books included all events yet to transpire, including the sins of the Jews, and Moses' responses to G-d on the Jews' behalf. What type of honest plea could Moses present, knowing years in advance what his plea and G-d's response would be? Knowing the exact outcome of his prayers, Moses would not really be praying. Many similar difficulties arise for both the people and Moses, had they learned all future events. Certainly they would be on guard so their foretold disasters would be avoided. In that case, the Torah would be false if they indeed avoided what G-d said would in fact happen. If they could not avoid the Torah's predictions, then what type of free will did they have? Certainly not one deserving of punishment. We have an impossible series of events.

In truth, Moses received the Torah up to the event at Mount Sinai. As time went on, Moses wrote down more of the Torah in accordance with G-d's exact enunciations.

But, if you ask, "Could the Torah be man made?" I reply as follows: The people all attested to the miraculous event of Sinai. There was not one person that doubted it. Moses said later, (Deut. 4:9) "Guard yourselves and guard your souls exceedingly, lest you forget the things your eyes saw...", (Deut. 4:34) "all the signs and wonders which G-d has performed for you in



Egypt as your eyes have seen", (Deut. 4:35) "You have been demonstrated to know that G-d is Elokim, there is no other besides Him", (Deut. 4:36) "From the heavens He made heard His voice to prove you, and on land He showed you His great fire and His words you heard from amidst the fire". If anyone doubted what Moses said, the Torah would not have been accepted. However, we see that the nation unanimously accepted all of these statements. They taught them to their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. In turn, these descendants used this reason of unanimous acceptance of an event, as 100% proof of the event. Unlike all other religions, the Jews were not asked to accept "beliefs", or to "believe" fabrications, but Moses

repeatedly confirmed that they all saw a demonstration of G-d's existence and selection of Moses as His prophet.

The only question is how we know that Moses' written Torah was in fact from G-d. This was not performed in front of millions as was Sinai. I believe this is where Moses' "beams of light" comes into the picture. We read in Exodus 34:29-35, "And it was when Moses descended from Mount Sinai, and the two Tablets of Testimony were in the hand of Moses when he descended from the mountain, and Moses did not know(1) of the light beaming from his face with His talking to him. Aaron and all the Children of Israel saw Moses, and behold his faced beamed with light, and they feared to draw close to him. Moses

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THE TORAH'S DIVINE ORIGIN

& Why Moses' Face Shone

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

called to them and then returned to him Aaron and all the princes in the congregation, and Moses spoke to them. And afterwards, all the Children of Israel drew close and he commanded them all that G-d spoke on Mount Sinai. And he finished from speaking with them, and he placed a veil on his face. And when Moses came before G-d to speak with Him, he removed the veil until he exited, and he went out and spoke with the Children of Israel what was commanded. And the Children of Israel saw Moses' face, that Moses face beamed light, and Moses replaced the veil on his face until he came to speak with Him." What is the necessity for G-d to make Moses' face shine beams of light?

I believe this ongoing miracle was enacted to address the very point you question. Again it says, "And the Children of Israel saw Moses' face, that Moses face beamed light, and Moses replaced the veil on his face until he came to speak with Him." Even after Moses departed from G-d's presence, Moses was commanded by G-d not to replace the veil until the Jews saw the light beams on his face. This happened each time Moses spoke with G-d until he died. (Ibn Ezra, Exod., 34:35) This was to demonstrate G-d's continual endorsement of all Moses' words to the Jews, and that all his writings form G-d's Torah - not his own. A continuous miracle on Moses' behalf means G-d approves of Moses' actions. Had Moses deviated from G-d's intended words of Torah, G-d would certainly not sanction Moses with any miracle, allowing Moses to lead the people astray. G-d understood the people might suspect a leader of forming his own system. This notion was dispelled through such an overt, divine endorsement of Moses. We see the people feared to draw close to Moses, teaching that this phenomena was not natural, and could only be the product of the Creator. Only He could suspend laws of nature, creating such a miracle. Thereby, all the Jews knew that Moses was completely in line with G-d's will. Moses wrote only that which G-d instructed him to write. The entire Torah is divine. This very fact that Moses

was to stay unveiled, displaying his face lit while communicating G-d's commands to the Jews, proves that the light was for the express purpose of endorsing all of Moses' words as reflecting G-d's commands.

Perhaps light is the form of this endorsement, for the reason that light - in this case - is merely a reflection. It is not originating in Moses. Someone's face has no ability to emanate light beams. So too Moses' teachings are reflecting G-d's word exactly - they are not his own thoughts.

The miracles' structure also teaches us of G-d's wish that man respect the Rabbis - the Jews were certain of Moses' relationship with G-d. From the very outset, G-d desired the system of Torah embody a teacher/student relationship. Moses received the Torah from G-d - his Teacher - and passed it to Joshua - his student. From Joshua, the Torah was transmitted to the elders, and then to the prophets and then to the men of the Great Assembly, as stated in the commencement of "Ethics of the Fathers". This relationship teaches that we must always return to Sinai to verify what authentic Torah is. Without Rabbinic tradition and unbroken lineage, we do not have Torah. For this reason, today, we discount anyone's claim to the authentic Kabbala - "accepted traditions". No one today can trace Kabbala's origin - student to teacher - all the way back to Moses.

All is not written down - all cannot be written down. Words alone cannot embody G-d's infinite wisdom. Perhaps this is one reason we also have an Oral Law. Torah is a system of "derivation". Through various principles, our Rabbis learned and continue to derive keen insights, philosophies, and structures of Halacha - Jewish law. These principles are indispensable tools required to lead us down the endless path of wisdom where each step of the journey becomes more exciting. It is a system unknown to one alien to Talmudic study. It is a science where only intelligence rules, where solid, unshaken principles lay the foundation for future insights - where halachik formulations and

axioms are more real than the physical world.

The Talmudic scholar is not a skeptic, where he finds multiple possibilities as acceptable ends to his studies. No, the Talmudist earnestly digs, searching for principles and explanations for Torah law which are impregnable, definitive and exclusive solutions to a given problem. Only upon discovering the "single answer" is he satisfied. If he does not find this stability in his results, he is dissatisfied and continues his search until he does. He is aware that G-d's Torah is not based on "maybes", but it is built on very definite truths. This is why G-d is termed our "Rock." He is that Source of all knowledge which is the unification of all ideas, where all knowledge is harmonious and complimentary. All natural sciences too are G-d-made, reflecting on each other, and providing greater understanding of our world - also working with definitive rules. This is what the Torah scholar seeks - definite, absolute principles explaining G-d's creation, His Torah laws, and His justice. The Talmudist knows it exists. His entire being is compelled to come closer to this truth. This is how G-d designed man.

We must note, without tutelage of a mentor trained in Talmudic thought and analysis, one has little or no chance of truly understanding the vast difference between a book,...and the unique Torah system. □

Footnotes

1) "Moses did not know of the light beaming from his face with His talking to him" teaches that this miracle was not for Moses, but for the Jews. They were in need of proof of G-d's sustained endorsement of Moses. Moses had no need for this light.

(2) The point in time when G-d enacted this miracle of Moses' beams of light, supports our theory. This miracle was initiated upon Moses' receipt of the Torah, thereby teaching that the light was to support Moses' mission of successfully transmitting a Divine system.

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

"I read your critique of Mel Gibson's movie with interest. While there are many negative things to say about the movie (and fortunately, many people are speaking out strongly against this disgusting, anti-Semitic movie), the argument that you put forward in this circumstance does not hold water.

As you say, Torah would never condone barbaric treatment and torture of any human being, even an apostate. Kavod Habriot should always be uppermost on the mind of a truly observant Jew. But that is really the key to this argument - a truly observant Jew. While Torah would never sanction this type of treatment, one has to remember historically what this period of time was like. These were the last few decades before Churban Bayit Sheini, when evil rulers like Herod showed little care about the value of human life. The Kehuna Gedolah was not much better, with people buying the position and ending up dying on Yom Kippur when entering the Kodesh Kodashim. This was the period of time when Sinas Chinam was rampant and led to the destruction of the Bait Hamikdash and Galus of the Jewish people. So, in the absence of Torah leadership in power, it is very possible that the Jewish leadership could have perpetrated this kind of evil. For this reason we have to depend more on the historical record (including Josephus and others), and even the Christian records which do not support Gibson's warped views and calumnies."

Efraim Weinblatt
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"Shalom. I and my husband are Polish Christians. We are in very good relationships with Jewish community in our town. We have been for several years working in aid of peaceful and friendly relationship between Christians and Jews - not believing in Jesus. We try to fight anti-Semitism, try to change Christians' point of view about Jews and Judaism, show how anti-Semitic interpreters foolishly distorted the Gospel, and this is why we started some times ago with our page www.hatikvah.pl. And after "The Passion" by Mel Gibson (in Polish cinema since Friday) we felt as if somebody decided to squander our efforts, and not only ours, but also our friends' efforts here in Poland.

Before watching the film I thought two things:

1. Well, I am Christian, so despite the macabre, will I find anything in the film moving me?

2. Jews had very difficult history, full of persecutions organized by Christians, so perhaps their protest against this film stems from their oversensitive nature.

But even it is true, we-Christians- never should treat this touchiness as a "next Jewish sin". We are responsible for this kind of reaction. But really this protest can be only partly - if at all - explained as "Jewish oversensitiveness".

There is simple principle among people: if I harmed anybody and then want to reconcile, I avoid any behaviors, which could renew the conflict between us. Mel Gibson didn't show this minimum of tact and decency for Jews. There are several scenes in the film

neither from Gospels nor historical, which places Jews in very bad light.

The whole community of those times, Jews and Romans, were uncivilized, bordering on parody. Romans like in the cartoon about Asterix and Obelix: idiots with a smile of fool on their faces. In this film, Jews are not only uncivilized but also demonized. I had an impression that the film was based on the medieval idea about Jews - as demonic beings. The film doesn't show Jesus' death as the redemption but rather as an act of murder, committed by demonic Jews and barbaric Romans. Among the Jewish community we see only bad priests with their eyes narrowed hatefully to little gaps, or someone mentally ill or crazy. Jesus is plundered of his Jewish identity. We see him in several scenes according to not biblical but Gibson's idea for example as a carpenter who invented modern kitchen table, but we do not see him even once in the Temple, reading Torah.

I think that film is also anti-Christian. Imagine that some man was convicted to death by torture but his friend decided to die instead of him. The man hangs on the wall in his flat, the pictures showing his friend's body deformed by torture; he sculpts details of fleshy and bloody wounds. It is not normal. It is rather a miserable, mental distortion. And something like this horrifies me in the film.

Gospel means joyful message, not macabre! If this macabre film was to be "a label" of Christianity I think every Jew has right to go out from the cinema proud he is not Christian.

I think it is possible that the discussion about Jesus, if he is Messiah or not, about his Deity (even Christians are not agreeable in this point) between Jews and Christians can take place in the atmosphere of peace and love. We experience such a discussion here. But it should be casual, free, unconstrained theological conversation during which everyone has a right to his own conclusion and opinion. But through my coreligionists' fault (Christians generally, Protestants and Catholics from past and present times), through my Christian ancestors' fault this "conversation" stopped being free and unconstrained long time ago. Evangelizing missions taken in the name of falsely understood Gospel make that Jews are still "under the fire" in this "conversation".

"The Passion" is an attempt making a step back in the process of regaining mutual respect and confidence. I enjoy that there are people on both sides whose good will is too strong to be broken by such a schematic way of thinking without respect for historical context and Jewish point of view.

I think this film can be "fine" only for someone who has never tried to make peace and for "Christians" without minimum of self-criticism, still wanting to pull out the mote from Jewish eye instead of pulling out the beam from their own eye. This kind of film doesn't allow Christians to do their basic duty of Christian faith: the penance for sins of murdering not one but thousands innocent lives. Best wishes."

Ewa & Darek Sidor
Via email from Poland

Parsha

the Anointing Oil

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: My question is simple: "What do the five elements of the Holy Anointing Oil represent?" (Exodus 30:22-33) I have asked this question to various Rabbis and have received answers uniformly along the lines of (well,...um?),"it smells

right." Bearing in mind that this unique mixture was used in the anointing of not only the Tabernacle, but all of the furniture of the Tabernacle, all of the utensils of the Tabernacle, Aaron and his sons, and the Kings. Without this unique anointing being applied, all mentioned were unqualified to be of use in the service of God. As such, it can easily be said that the Holy Anointing Oil is higher/greater/of more import than the Tabernacle, all of it's contents, and the priesthood because IT was applied to THEM. I don't mean to sound flippant, I am just a bit frustrated. One might think that since the time of the Tabernacle someone would have discerned the meaning of this most significant if not forgotten item. I have done my own study to be sure, yet before I go shooting off my mouth I'd like a confirming or negating word a bit more studied than, "I dunno". - Ramirez

Mesora: There are a few main questions we can ask regarding the nature of the anointing oil (Exod. 30:22-33); 1) What is the necessity to anoint the Tabernacle and the vessels? What is lacking if they are not anointed? The structure of these objects do not change subsequent to the anointing. They can function equally well without the oil. Why then is there a need for anointing? 2) The passage (Exod. 30:22-23) reads, "God said to Moses saying: "YOU take (such and such spices...)". What is the nature of the oil that Moses was instructed himself to create this oil? Why is such urgency placed on Moshe here, but not in other cases? Additionally, the medrash says that the oil which Moshe made had numerous miracles performed throughout. It actually endured more usage than its volume should have realized. Again this pays homage to Moshe's exclusive involvement, but what is the idea behind these miracles? 3) Why does the passage need to mention "to minister to Me (God)"? Who else would Aaron and his sons minister before in God's Temple?

I would commence by underlining a few points: Oil is a mixture, it must be made with chochma, wisdom. The length at which the passages discuss the ingredients points to this. Moshe - to the exclusion of all others - was instructed to make the oil. What significance does Moshe lend to this oil? We know that Moshe's distinction was his unique level of prophecy and wisdom, never to be approached by any man before or after him. Moshe is synonymous with high intelligence. There is some relationship be placed between the oil and intelligence.

I suggest that the emphasis on wisdom here is to indicate that vessels do not possess inherent value, despite their precise design. Without proper

understanding of the purpose and meaning of the Temple's vessels, there is a danger that the people would project importance onto the physical structure themselves, divorced from their goals. Even after designing the Tabernacle's vessels, proper intent of their usage must exist, otherwise there is a danger that one might feel that there is something unique to these objects in themselves. To counter the notion that physical objects have inherent meaning, and additionally, to teach that all matters pertaining to the Temple and God must be approached with the utmost wisdom, only Moshe was allowed to make this oil - displaying thereby that accurate designation of the purpose of the Temple's vessels can only be made by one with the highest level of knowledge, Moshe. Moshe represents true understanding par excellence, and by association, Moshe lent correct understanding that inauguration of the vessels was not simple, but required to be approached with wisdom. These vessels have no inherent value. However, if designated by Moshe - a wise man - with oil made with care and understanding, then man's relationship to the vessels will be guided by the overtone of Moshe's reputation. Man would understand that these vessels aren't simply entitled to be in the Temple without an understanding of their purpose.

This leads us to a crucial lesson. The very selection of Moshe to anoint these objects demonstrates that we are to approach our commandments not as meaningless, Torah-bound performances, but with understanding. Rashi teaches that fulfillment of commands without understanding are worthless. This does not mean we may abandon commands, the meaning of which we are bereft. It means that God's goal in giving man the Torah is to approach Him, and with no understanding of our commands, there cannot be any possible approaching of God. As Maimonides teaches, "Love of God is in direct proportion to our knowledge."

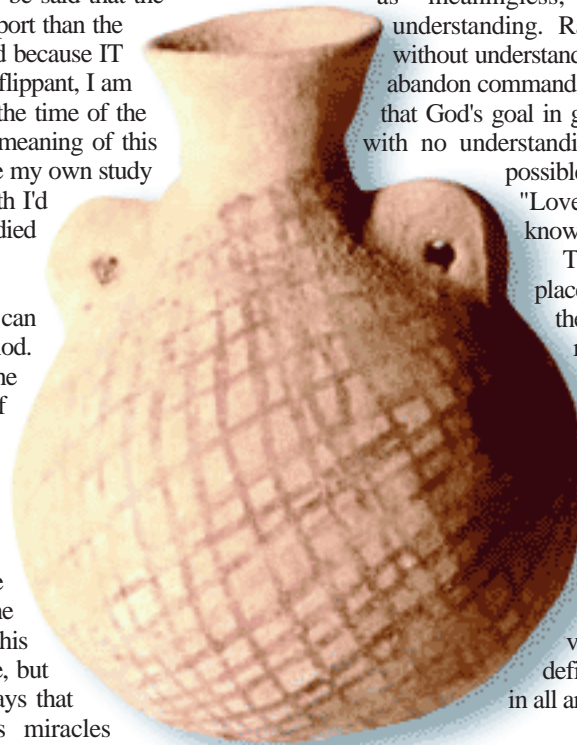
The reason such concern for understanding is placed on Temple related phenomena, is that this is the area in which man's religious emotions can run wild and lead him astray, even though the Temple and Tabernacle are Torah commands. The Talmud states that the evil inclination appeared as a fiery lion exiting the Temple's Holy of Holies. This metaphor teaches that in this area, there exists the most danger - the evil inclination yearns for "holy" things. The true approach to understanding the Temple's vessels is to realize that through them we come to understand God. Since the Temple is a vehicle by which we approach God(1) by definition, we must stress that wisdom be present in all areas, even the initial inauguration. □

Postscript

Perhaps the oil's duration throughout the generations attests to the unique level of designation into which Moshe imbued this oil.

This theory also explains why the Rambam teaches in the Mishne Torah that during the Simcha Bais HaShoavah, only the chachomim - the wise men - were allowed to dance. This is to teach that they are the ones who have the accurate understanding of Torah, and therefore their gladness is the only true gladness which results in dance. To allow others to dance allows others to believe that they have arrived at true Torah knowledge. It also falsely teaches that happiness may be arrived at without perfection in Torah study. Even during the Rambam's time, men thought to be "the wise men of Israel" (2) had corrupt ideas.

When King Solomon brought the ark into the Temple, he too initially invited the elders and princes - those who portray intelligence. (Haftoras Pekuday; Malachim 1, Chap. 8)



Parsha



Melting the Golden Calf

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Reader: If Moses melted the calf, then how did he grind it into fine powder? I wouldn't know where to begin with the Talmud.

Mesora: The physics is not a problem, after Moses melted the calf, it cooled and hardened, now ready to be ground. The question is why Moses did both, melting and grinding. Perhaps this teaches that had Moses simply ground the calf, people would feel they were drinking something of the calf per se, an idolatrous rite. Moses did not want to mislead the people further, so he first removed the form of the calf from the gold through melting it. Now, in the gold's unformed state, Moses ground the gold and made the Jews drink of the gold dust, mixed in water which emanated from the Mountain.

Moses would not institute any practice relating to the worshiped form of "calf". Melting was prior to the grinding to rid the gold of the form of the calf.

Additionally, Moses' act gives us an insight into Jewish Law - "Halacha." One might argue that the gold - be it melted or in the original form of the calf - is still the "substance" that was worshiped and should therefore retain the status of an idol. While the substance is the same, however, the object is not. Halacha is not governed by rules of physics - just the opposite is true. Halacha tells us what the object is. When one steals, if a change occurs in the object, the law to return the stolen object can no longer be fulfilled, as the 'stolen object' no longer exists. Halacha views a substantial change in form as a totally new object. Payment must be made in place of the object's return.

Here too, Moses melted the Calf so the Jews would not relate to it, but to mere gold. Halacha defines our reality. This teaches us that our lives are to be governed by intelligence and wisdom, not by an overestimation of the physical. □



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