

Gentile or Jew?

WE CAN'T TELL EITHER



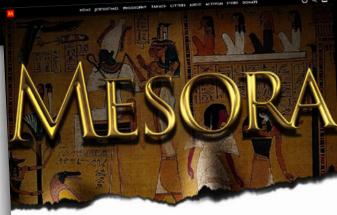
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## God's Revelation at Mt. Sinai: One Plan for Mankind

The greatest event ever witnessed forces one conclusion

MESORA

EVIDENCE EXISTS for only one event of God revealing His religion to man. All other religions claim origin, yet provide no validation. This explains their requirement of "blind faim," which is absent in Audit religion to man. proof. 3332 years ago upon Mt. Sinal, God gave us His Blaic: the only time God comm religion to man. Masses witnessed this, which is the only validation of any historical claim, and why the religions acroant the Blinke.

religion to man. Masses with esset this, which is the only validation of any historical claim, and why the major religions accept the Bible. Mesora's mission is to share God's Biblical religion with all who seek it. As every human descends from that first Mesora's mission is to share God's Biblical religion with all who seek it. As every human descends from that first couple; all humans are equals. Jews boasting "Jewish Superiority" and those who discriminate against any race violate the Bible and reason.

Search our TOOOs of original essays, publications and edudio, and write us with your questions. God determined be Jew's role is to share Torath's history, wisdom, laws and moral code with all mankind. As God created all the Jew's role is to share Torath's history, wisdom, laws and moral code with all mankind. As God created all and principles, and they delight the soot. The greatest minds spent their lives studying God through Torah and and principles, and they delight the soot are greatest minds spent their lives studying God through Torah and science, as they found nothing that compared to its enjoyment. Let us humble ourselves before Mosies, Kings David and Solomon, Malimorides, Arlisotie, Newton and Einstein who taught that a life of wisdom is the most furtiling life. We too can partake of this pleasurable existence.

## **FUNDAMENTALS**







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## PERFECTION







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"I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over the self."



#### YOSE BEN YOCHANAN, MAN OF JERUSALEM SAYS, "MAY YOUR HOME BE OPEN WIDE" (Avos 1:5)

Rashi comments: "Open on four sides to invite [to enter] travelers." Rashi quotes the gemara, "And he [Yoav] established his house in the desert." But was he truly in the desert? (Yoav was King David's captain; he was not poor that he should live this way.) The Gemara clarifies, "His house was 'like' a desert," open on all four sides. Avraham too kept his tent open on all four sides. True charity is where the owner or donor (ba'al) is removed; one gives without seeking the appreciation of the recipient. He forgoes that ego satisfaction, giving purely to address the poor man's needs. A one-door home forces the poor man to confront the owner, whereby, the owner enjoys feelings of benevolence, and the poor man is humbled. In contrast, in a house opened in all four directions the owner properly forfeits ego satisfaction, also allowing the poor man to enter without confrontation, where the poor man retains a higher level of dignity.

("Pirkei Avos" — Rabbi Israel Chait)

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#### **KINDNESS**

Rabbi Chait explained that man is to express sensitivity towards others by dignifying them. However, people wrongly characterize and render total summations of others based on an isolated matter. This is man's ego at its relentless work. Man feels that as John owes him, he may rightly express dominance over John in all areas, walking into his home to collect collateral or a debt. Torah disagrees:

When you make a loan of any sort to your countryman, you must not enter his house to seize his pledge. You must remain outside, while the man to whom you made the loan brings the pledge out to you. (Deut. 24:10,11)

Torah corrects man's egotism. Man tends to satisfy ego in many permutations. Here, one reduces the debtor as undeserving of equality. One does not barge into his neighbor's home. Rather, he knocks and awaits an invitation inside. But here, man views the debtor as undeserving. Thus, Torah warn us not to express this false superiority. There is no change in human status due to a loan. We also learn that one must treat his servant better than himself. The monetary relationship is confined to monetary matters alone and does not spill over into other areas, or reduce the slave in terms of his dignity.

This law also protects the debtor's "space." Humility is typically felt when borrowing from others. The borrower senses an inadequacy as he could not self-provide, and needed to rely on another. He needs space away from the loaner to regain his dignity. This law preserves his safe haven. Dignity is so prized, that charity is not fulfilled with money alone, but we are commanded to commiserate with the poor person. We don't only negate the flexing of our egos, but we positively elevate the poor person by demonstrating they are worth

Focusing on God as our superior reminds us that others are equal creations. Torah corrects our natural drives; it is necessary. God created the human design but also advised us on proper and improper behavior. As one cannot properly use a

complex machine with any success unless he studies it and gains knowledge of its functioning from its maker, we are no different, and will fail if we treat others as our emotions and whims desire.

If he is a needy man, you shall not go to sleep in his pledge; you must return the pledge to him at sundown, that he may sleep in his cloth and bless you; and it will be to your merit before the Lord your God. (Deut. 24:12,13)

Torah then warns of another sensitivity. Man feels rightful to retain collateral. After all, that's what collateral is: a possession that leverages payment. But God teaches that other considerations outweigh one's security. One might feel returning the collateral risks repayment. But that's only a risk, whereas the poor man's shivering at night is a definite. There is also a passive aggression expressed by one not returning the night garment. We must counter this aggression as it stems from viewing a debtor negatively, when he has done nothing wrong. We entered into a loan agreement, and the payment date has not yet arrived. The debtor is innocent and must not be viewed negatively, and certainly must not bear the brunt of our aggressive superiority complex. His debt does not earn him a lesser status.

You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the communities of your land. You must pay him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets, for he is needy and urgently depends on it; else he will cry to the Lord against you and you will incur guilt. (Deut. 24:14,15)

Man expresses another insensitivity or aggression by delaying pay to his worker. One feels superior to others who labor for him. Compliance to the worker is a type of subservience, which is distasteful to one viewing himself as superior, regardless of the obligation. Again, Torah outlines where ego expresses itself and where man can perfect himself.

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# **JewishTimes**



# Who's Who: Gentile or Jew?

## WE CAN'T TELL EITHER



#### **RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

**EADER:** Based on Ramchal, a Noachide organization and a Rabbi are teaching that Jews and non-Jews are two different species of humanity: "God has removed the ability of the non Jew to do Tikkun (rectification), which can only be done by the Jew," so they claim. They suggest that the soul (neshama) of the non-Jew is on a lower level.

RABBI: More than once I have heard this arrogant Jewish view of "Jewish superiority." Jews have egos like every human, but it should never be expressed by any person (Pirkei Avos 4:4). Humility is the trait for which God praised Moses (Num. 12:3) and Sarah (Rashi on Gen. 18:9). But some Jews wrongfully boast an imagined superiority: a sinful and destructive act. These Jews are not thinking. God never created 2 types of souls. God never invented a "new human": all mankind descend from the same first couple. To claim that certain descendants are superior is to contradict God. Abraham was a non-Jew and he attained the highest level of man through perfecting his ideas and character. He had the same genetics as the rest of the world. God sent Jonah to Ninveh and Moses to Pharaoh that they repent. This shows God's plan of human equality; He wants the good for all His identically designed humans. If gentiles were inferior, why did God select Ruth the Moabite (gentile) to be the grandmother of kings David and Solomon? Ruth is also the great grandmother of the Jewish Messiah, may he soon arrive. And the Messiah will attain the greatest human perfection next to Moses. Yet, he descends from a gentile. Many times Torah says, "One law for the gentile convert and the born Jew" (Num. 9:14, 15:16, 15:29, Exod. 12:49). This means

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all mankind have the identical capacity for following Torah. God is clear: Judaism's view is that all men and women are created equal. Jewish ethics are derived from Torah, the Bible: a book of laws, truths and morals. God records Abraham "running" to serve gentile strangers a lavish meal. This is a lesson for all mankind on how to treat others:

Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, bowing to the ground, he said, "My lords, if it please you, do not go on past your servant. Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree. And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on—seeing that you have come your servant's way." They replied, "Do as you have said." Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quick, three measures of choice flour...knead and make cakes." Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it. He took curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them; and he waited on them under the tree as they ate. (Gen. 18:2-8).

Rebecca too "ran" to serve the gentile Eliezer, a stranger at a well. She labored to even water his camel herd:

Eliezer said, "Please, let me sip a little water from your jar." "Drink, my lord," she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink. When she had let him drink his fill, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking." Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. (Gen. 24:17-20)

Why did both Abraham and Rebecca "run" when they served strangers? Was it not enough that they surpassed most people by treating a stranger as an equal? But Abraham and Rebecca were not only of perfected character, but were also of perfected wisdom. They both knew the recipients of their kindness would be overjoyed by their kindness alone. But Abraham and Rebecca wished not only to address the strangers' physical needs, but also their psychological needs. They both knew that people are humbled and even embarrassed when receiving a free gift. As they didn't wish to humble the stranger, they ran. Running to serve another instills dignity. They prevented the strangers' humility and loss of dignity as they were in need of food and water. Running

to help another person displays a genuine concern. One can respond to another person's need for water and then walk away. But that leaves the recipient feeling humbled; depending on kindness makes one feel that they bothered the donor. To avert the recipient's loss of dignity, Abraham and Rebecca both ran to meet the needs of others, maintaining their dignity. Judaism teaches to treat others equally, as we are equals. It is today's foolish and sinful Jew who rejects God's words, and acts arrogantly and speaks of baseless "Jewish superiority." Abraham and Rebecca knew all people exist as God's will, and therefore they treated all others with utmost respect and care. God recorded their kindness as a lesson for mankind.

**READER:** I am a gentile. So should I believe what Ramchal—a great Jewish commentator—says about non-Jews, that God took away our ability to do Tikkun after choosing Abraham?

**RABBI:** Even Moses erred. It doesn't matter who the author is, it matters whether you can validate the concept, and this concept of Jewish superiority contradicts God's Torah. And those Jews who think they are superior, are in fact inferior. God never marginalized the gentiles' spiritual or intellectual capacity. That would be unjust.



Yet from His great goodness and kindness, may He be blessed. He made room even for the branches of other nations to uproot themselves from their roots, by their choice and their actions, and to include themselves in the branches of our father Abraham, peace be upon him, if they [so] desired ... However, if they do not make efforts about this, they will stay within their root trees, according to their natural situation.

Ramchal speaks of "roots and branches," referring to humans as varied species of plant life. He speaks in metaphor about descendants—"branches"—following the philosophies of their ancestors—"roots." Other nations who "uproot themselves from their roots" are gentiles who disavow their inherited idolatry and convert to monotheism. No change has been made to their souls when they abandon fallacy and follow truth. In fact, the moment when the intelligent gentile rejects his inherited idolatrous religion before he converts, he a gentile who is following intelligence. This means gentiles possess no less intelligence than a Jew. "However, if they do not make efforts about this, they will stay within their root trees" refers to a gentile who remains following idolatry. All mankind possess free will and can choose to blindly follow their parents, or use their minds to question what is true and then follow truth. Judaism must not be assessed by corrupt or arrogant Jews, but based only on God's words. Just as we don't judge a book based upon opinions of those who never read it, we don't judge Judaism based on those who don't follow it. If one does, they expose their foolishness. Judaism should be assessed based on fine people like Abraham, Rebecca, Ruth, Moses and King David. The more we study Torah, the more we find that Judaism validates racial equality. Moses married a black woman. Joseph and King Solomon married Egyptians. They were the most perfect people as God highlights them in His Torah as model human beings. These great people did not view gentiles as inferior, but as equals. This explains why Jacob blessed Joseph's Egyptian children before this death (Ge. 48:20). Jacob did not view Joseph's Egyptian wife and Egyptian children as inferior. Jacob placed Joseph's Egyptian sons on equal status with Jacob's own 12 sons. Jacob was correct. This must be every person's view, as it is God's view. Talmud Avodah Zara 2b says that God initially offered the Torah to the gentiles but they rejected it. This means that they have the same capacity for perfection as a Jew.

**READER:** Did God lower the soul (neshama) of the non-Jew when their ancestors rejected the Torah?

RABBI: Torah says no: "Is it My desire that wicked person shall die?—says the Lord G Rather, I desire that he shall turn back from [evil] ways and live" (Ezekiel 18:23). That means God desires a person to follow Him. Therefore, He certainly would not cripple him by lowering his soul, a notion that has no validation, for it contradicts God, Furthermore. God doesn't punish descendants for their father's sins: "Parents shall not be put to death for children, nor children be put to death for parents: a person shall be put to death only for his own crime" (Deut. 24:16).

**READER:** If a gentile chose not to convert, will he/she remain at a lowly state?

RABBI: Gentiles who don't convert are equal to Jews who does not keep the Torah. Meaning that one's perfection is proportionate to the amount of their true ideas and proper actions, not who their parents are or which religion they follow. And a gentile that accepts Judaism is equal to an observant

**READER:** The Jew who does not keep Torah is still part of Abraham's branch, if we go by Ramchal's analysis. He/she is still at a higher level compared to the non-Jew who keeps Torah but did not convert.

am's teaching. The gentile can follow this life too and be equal to the Jew. As I mentioned above "One Torah for the convert and the born Jew." And the Jew who abandons Torah is no longer viewed as the "branch of Abraham."

"Better is the day of death than the day of birth" (Koheles 7:1). Ibn Ezra comments that at birth, one doesn't know how this infant will turn out. Will he become good or evil? But at death, we can say he lived as a good person. Ibn Ezra applies this to both Jew and gentile. Thus, the Jew at birth has no advantage over gentiles. We must wait until he completes his life to assess if he was good. And this is sound reasoning for the infant has not made choices yet. How then can he be better?

**Below: Twin sisters of** different races definitively refutes racism.



# Come Fly with Me

**RABBI REUVEN MANN** 

t is no simple matter to evaluate the significance of any mitzvah. Our Sedra illustrates this point. In this week's parsha, Ki Tetze, we encounter the commandment of the "Bird's Nest." This stipulates that if one comes upon a nest in which a mother is sitting upon her eggs or chicks, he may not take the offspring in the presence of the parent. Rather, "You shall surely send away the mother and take the young for yourself, so that it will be good for you, and you will lengthen your days."

At first glance, this may not seem like the most earthshaking statute, but the Rabbis regard this verse as alluding to eternal life in Olam Habah (the World to Come). Why is this great reward offered for this seemingly simple mitzvah?

My interest in this matter increased a few weeks ago when I noticed that a dove had built a nest on a window ledge of my Jerusalem dirah (dwelling). It sat upon 2 eggs for some weeks before they hatched. Mommy was very dedicated to her task, sitting there day and night, except for short breaks in which she left to tend to her own needs, which clearly took a back seat to those of the offspring.

Mom's dedication persisted with the advent of the chicks whom she nurtured until they reached the point where they could fly off and be on their own. I was fascinated by this whole process and found myself photographing the nest at various stages and sharing the photos with my students. I have given this matter some thought and believe that there are valuable lessons we can learn from a mother dove.

First and foremost is the absolutely steadfast dedication she displayed to her young. She was on the job 24/7, sitting first on the eggs and later on the chicks. At no point did she appear to be bored by or tired of what she was doing. She seemed totally



content with her assignment and didn't regard it as an infringement on her freedom to do as she pleased. All her time, energy, and focus was dedicated to her offspring's

Fortunate is the creature who is absolutely committed to and joyful with the ability to do what they were created for.

wellbeing.

This recounting of the bird's excellent parenting skills and unwavering dedication may arouse pangs of envy or even guilt in some, but that is not my intention. Inevitably, observing birds will cause us to look within, make comparisons, and come up short. This can be a humbling and ego-deflating

In defense of humans, certain things need to be placed in perspective. It's patently unfair to judge our species by the behavior of animals. They, in general, lead uncomplicated lives. Birds have the luxury of being single-minded. They have no responsibilities aside from tending to their chicks. Mommy can contentedly nest on them endlessly with

no distractions.

But humans are altogether different. We cannot be single-minded. We have many and diverse needs besides the care of offspring (and many wants and desires that clamor to be satisfied). We also have numerous responsibilities to which we must attend and which cannot be put aside.

We humans need to be jugglers to master the art of multitasking. The big challenge we face is to balance our obligations so they do not consume us, but leave us the time and energy to engage in "higher pursuits."

We are also moody creatures who get bored, resentful, and need lots of breaks and diversions. It is inevitable that we will fail at times, have bad days, and make faulty decisions. Our matzav (situation) is more complicated than animals' lives.

When it comes to a mother bird, she spends less and less time with the kiddies as they get bigger and stronger. She doesn't stay with them more than she has to. She does not want to keep the chicks dependent

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on her. Her goal is to facilitate their maturation and ultimate independence. Human parents should note this. Do we overly coddle our young ones because we unconsciously seek to keep them dependent on us? That approach can be counterproductive.

The relationship between the mother bird and chicks is limited in time. Once the job is completed, she has no further role to play and retains no connection to her offspring. And she seems none the worse for it. She does not expect any gratitude for what she has done. Nor does she seek any "nachas" from the little ones. Her service is truly one of love. She is happy to do it and serves without expectation of any reward.

As we ponder the wonders of creation, we see that it is embedded with moral principles. Not only do the inanimate constellations of the stars perform the tasks assigned to them, but living creatures do so as well. In the blessing for the new moon, we depict the heavens as "joyous and glad to perform the will of their Owner—the Worker of truth Whose work is truth."

Man is an exception to the rule of "joyous service" found in the universe. We are much more complicated creatures with minds of our own. Our challenge, in the words of Pirkei Avot, is to "cancel our will before His Will."

When we observe the way a bird fulfills her responsibilities, it causes us to pause and and be in awe of the purity of her actions. This realization can lift us to a higher level of divine service. And perhaps this is an additional reason why the great reward of Olam Habah is alluded to here. May we merit to achieve it.

Shabbat shalom.

Dear Friends,

In this time of "social isolation," we should seek ways to avoid boredom by staying occupied with meaningful activity. The world of virtual reality allows us to stay in touch with friends and attend all kinds of classes available online.

But that can only take you so far.
Comes Shabbat and Yom Tov, and you
need books, especially on the parsha. I
personally recommend Eternally
Yours on Genesis
http://bit.ly/EY-Genesis and Exodus

http://bit.ly/EY-Exodus, and my newest one on Numbers http://bit.ly/EY-Numbers2. They are easy to read, interesting, and thought-provoking conversation starters. I am especially interested in your feedback and hope you can write a brief review and

post it on Amazon.

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RABBI REUVEN MANN





# Kiddush Hashem

**BARUCH C. COHEN** 



he recent story of Sol Werdiger and the former South Korean Ambassador to the United Nation, Oh Joon is a case in point. Werdiger, an Orthodox Jew and CEO of Outerstuff, received a phone call from Mr. Oh Joon, asking to meet him for lunch at a kosher restaurant in Manhattan. Although Sol did not know the purpose of the meeting he agreed to meet with Mr. Joon.

When they met, Mr. Joon told him the following, "I have always heard negative stereotypes about Jews and I took it at face value. Then, my daughter took an internship working in your company. Throughout the year, she has been telling me how wonderful it is to work at your company."

Mr. Joon continued, "There are four areas which stood out and impressed my daughter. Every day at 1:30 p.m., no matter what was going on at the office, all the men including those from neighboring offices, retreated into a room to pray with sincerity and calm. Every Friday the office shuts down early in the afternoon in preparation for your holy Sabbath and is

closed on the Sabbath - this includes all workers no matter which faith or religion they maintain. My daughter observed that each petitioner for charity - and there were many - were treated with respect and left with a check in hand. Lastly, my daughter was treated with the utmost respect and dignity."

Because of the amazing experience and lessons the company taught his daughter, Mr. Joon took out his checkbook and was ready to write a check returning all his daughter's earnings. Mr. Werdiger wouldn't hear from it. "Your daughter worked and earned her salary and rightfully deserves her pay, I will not accept any remuneration."

Then the Ambassador relayed the most amazing thing. "As you know, I have voting privileges at the UN. Because of my renewed appreciation of the Jewish people, I abstained from voting on resolutions against Israel on three occasions. At one resolution I was the ninth vote needed to pass the motion and resolution against Israel and because I abstained, it did not pass!"



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