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Rabbi Israel Chait

Ideas
on the
Holidays

Rabbi Reuven Mann

Saving
the
World



Happening Now in

HEAVEN

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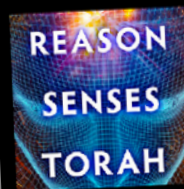
MISSION
God's Revelation at Mt. Sinai: One Plan for Mankind
The greatest event ever witnessed forces one conclusion

MESORA
Summer 2020

EVIDENCE EXISTS for only one event of God revealing His religion to man. All other religions claim divine origin, yet provide no validation. This explains their requirement of "blind faith," which is absent in Judaism: a religion offering proof. 3332 years ago upon Mt. Sinai, God gave us His Bible: the only time God communicated a religion to man. Masses witnessed 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 couple; all humans are equals. Jews boasting "Jewish Superiority" and those who discriminate against any race violate the Bible and reason. Nearing a quarter century, Mesora helps others realize God's will for us all, sharing the beauty of Biblical wisdom. Search our 1000s of original essays, publications and audio, and write us with your questions. God determined the Jew's role is to share Torah's history, wisdom, laws and moral code with all mankind. As God created all mankind, He loves each person equally. As science has defined laws, God's will for man also has defined laws and principles, and they delight the soul. The 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 Moses, Kings David and Solomon, Maimonides, Aristotle, Newton and Einstein who taught that a life of wisdom is the most fulfilling life. We too can partake of this pleasurable existence.

THOUGHT
FUNDAMENTALS

"WHAT IS UNDETECTED BY THE SENSES, REASON OR TORAH, MUST NOT BE ACCEPTED AS TRUTH." MAIMONIDES



FEATURED
CONTENT



CHARACTER
PERFECTION

"PERFECTION" REFERS TO ONE WHOSE VALUES AND ACTIONS COMPLY WITH TORAH PERSONALITIES AND LAWS: THE MOST PLEASANT LIFE.



KINDNESS

As equals, all humans must fully treat others as we wish to be treated. Charity, kindness and justice demand we rise above personal or selfish emotions and recognize that God made others as He made ourselves. Doing so creates harmony, and earns His kindness to us.



RACISM: A LIE

Mankind descends from Adam. Black and white twins unveil the lie of racism. Bible denounces it: Moses' wife was black, our kings married Egyptians and Messiah descends from a Moabite. "Better is the day of birth" (Isaiah 44:27). Birth doesn't define us, but how

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Our actions are not inconsequential...we literally can save the world.



“Against your will you were created, and against your will you were born, and against your will you live, and against your will you die, and against your will you are destined to give account and reckoning before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.”

PIRKEI AVOS 4:22

IDEAS ON THE HOLIDAYS

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

WRITTEN BY A STUDENT

“Nothing Compares to You”

Why is the concluding statement “Nothing Compares to You” found only in connection with the Shofaros prayers?

Exodus 15:3 records Moses’ description of God as “a man of war,” but not that God is a man, as Rashi says, (Ibid.) it is similar to “the man of Naomi,” the man related to Naomi. [God too is related to war.] Shir Hakavod (the poem recited on Shabbos after musaf) says: (CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

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I shall allegorize You, I will describe You, though I don't know You.

They allegorized You, but not according to Your reality, and they portrayed You according to Your deeds.

You are one, containing all the allegories.

They saw You as old and as young.

And the hair of Your head was [both] hoary and jet black.

On the phrase, “and they portrayed You according to Your deeds,” Eitz Yosef comments:

They gave You a nickname of a warrior. Also, a roaring lion, a bereaved bear, a leopard...the mightiest of animals.

Isaiah 40:18 says,

To what will you equate Me, and to what form will you arrange to Me?

All these sources teach that God permitted man to have an idea of His presence. It is only in God's revelation of His presence—Shofaros—that such visions take place. This explains why the phrase “*Nothing Compares to You*” is said only in connection with Shofaros, the prayer discussing God's revelation. Such visions are concessions to man. [Isaiah's words “To what will you equate Me?” intend to clarify that such physical descriptions of God are only metaphors.]

When we say, “*God is merciful; Ail Rachum*,” we don't mean God has emotions. But Torah says this to offer man a concept that God exists. Malchiyos and Zichronos—the 2 prayers discussing God's omnipotence and omniscience—are not where God relates to man, as is true regarding Shofaros, which is God's particular providence (hashgacha pratyos) of relating to man. Shofar/providence is the substratum, without which there is no Malchiyos or Zichronos, God's kingship over and His remembrance of man.

[Thus, “*Nothing Compares to You*” counters any literal misunderstandings of the visions man has of God during revelation, as on Mt. Sinai and at the Reed Sea. But as Malchiyos or Zichronos are not revelations, there is no need to counter anything.] ■

Yom Kippur and Affliction

Yom Kippur concerns eating the day before the fast. We learn, “One who eats the day before is considered as having fasted for 2 days,” something commendable. Judaism doesn't have the concept of affliction, which other religions value. Suffering on Yom Kippur is not the goal, rather, it is the removal from the instinctual life that Judaism values. By eating the day before, we make the fast easier; it provides the necessary strength to endure the fast in order to focus on the perfections achieved through the 5 privations and the prayers. But to pain the body, Judaism does not endorse. ■

Whom God Doesn't Punish

Talmud Rosh Hashanah 17a says, “One who forgoes his character has his sins overlooked.” This refers to a person who doesn't set boundaries for his friend's behavior. His friend overstepped certain boundaries of friendship and disturbed him, but he remained silent and accepted it. He recognized that his personal boundaries (likes/dislikes) are not real; only God's boundaries are real. [So he didn't act to defend himself.]

With “overlooking his sins,” the Talmud means he is not taken to task. This perfected person breaks down the human desire to “take for himself” (follow his desires), precisely what we recite during Neila, “That we forgo the oppressiveness of our hands.”

Since this person is traveling on a path towards perfection, he is not deterred by receiving punishments for his sins, which could derail his new, proper path and ruin his progress. He is traveling a path to approach God, so his course is not interrupted. This is done so he might break down the human desire for a life of physicality, which stems from the need for others not to violate his boundaries. ■

**JUST AS ONE MUST RETURN
STOLEN OBJECTS**

AND NOT SIMPLY REPENT TO GOD IN HEART ALONE,

**ONE MUST RETURN THE
STOLEN DIGNITY TO ONE
WHOM HE WRONGED.**

**ASKING FORGIVENESS
MENDS THE VICTIM'S HEART.**

WITHOUT SEEKING FORGIVENESS,

WE DO NOT REPAIR OUR HARM.

WE ARE NOT FORGIVEN.



Happening Now in **HEAVEN**

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

What's the surest security to improving your life? It is only God. For He created you and operates with a system of reward and punishment. When God wishes good for you, nothing can prevent that good. You might deny God's involvement in your life, but Torah—the Bible—says otherwise. All the stories of God's intervention with the patriarchs, matriarchs and prophets is an intentional lesson that they are models for us. If we follow their perfected characters, God intervenes on our behalf too.

We are now amidst the most precious few days. During these 10 days between Rosh Hashana (New Year) and Yom Kippur, God decides the fate of every human being for the coming year.

"Repentance, prayer and charity can avert an evil decree" (High Holidays prayers). Acting on these 3 matters, we can quite literally change the course of our future.

"Seek the Lord while He can be found, call to Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6) refers to right now during these 10 days. Typically, only the public is immediately answered. But now, if we repent, God immediately forgives even individuals. Who wouldn't wish to be forgiven for all one's sins? Typically, our focus is on life and not death. But now, our lives hang in the balance. God now inscribes all mankind for life, death, wealth, poverty, peace or conflict. This must not be dismissed. Take a hold of your life and act now to deserve life, health, peace and prosperity. God is offering this option to each one of us. We need only repent with a full heart.

Our rabbis wrote:

Against your will you were created, and against your will you were born, and against your will you live, and against your will you die, and against your will you are destined to give account and reckoning before the king of kings, the holy one, blessed be he (Ethics 4:22).

Immortality is an illusion, an emotional conviction that life never ends. This prevents many from seriously accepting our own deaths. But reality tells us no one lives forever. We are amidst days where reality must be faced. We know God's words and the rabbis are true. Other religions are mere blind faith, but millions witnessed Revelation at Sinai 3333 years ago. Torah was undeniably given by God.

What's happening in heaven right now is a literal decree on your fate, but it is within your control to improve that decree. If you wronged someone, slandered, stole, cheated, lied, twisted truths,

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weren't 100% upfront in business, sinned sexually, ate forbidden foods, violated God by accepting any other power or person or any other sin...face it, admit the wrong, make amends with others, return what was taken, ask forgiveness, and commit to God to never repeat such an action.

Moreover, if the wicked one repents of all the sins that he committed and keeps all My laws and does what is just and right, he shall live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions he committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness he has practiced, he shall live. (Ezekiel 18:21,22)

Ezekiel quotes God. Repentance erases our sins, and punishments. The rabbis too teach the power of teshuva, repentance; nothing is stronger: "It is like a shield against punishments" (Ethics 4:11). For the sake of your life, and to improve this year's fate, don't delay; own up to your wrongs.

But one shouldn't follow Torah only to escape punishment. We bless God daily for the mitzvah of Torah study. The blessing refers to studying "lishma," for learning itself, with no ulterior purpose (like a reward) but learning purely for the enjoyment of the ideas. In this hedonistic world bent on fame, fortune and lusts, it is quite difficult to extricate oneself from what the world values, and follow what ancient rabbis say is more enjoyable. For most people seek societal approval and won't risk losing it. Further, the lure of exotic cars, respected positions, pleasures and luxurious living seem more convincing than the prospect of sitting in a yeshiva and studying, with no one applauding. But, will we follow the masses, and live to please others? Or, will we live for ourselves and consider the brilliance of great minds who found a quiet life of study to outweigh all else in terms of true happiness? We trust doctors and no one else with our bodies. Shouldn't we trust the most brilliant rabbis, sages and philosophers with our happiness? Kings David and Solomon viewed Torah study as their greatest delight. Aren't you curious what exactly they experienced?

Repent and avert an unnecessary harsh decree. Then find a wise rabbi or learned individual. Pose to him your questions about living a Torah life; share your concerns. Trust the wiser person. He follows God and must have answers that will make sense to you. You live once. Follow what God says will be the most fulfilling life, even if right now you aren't convinced. Trust God and His wise followers, and you will eventually find Torah study and observant life to be a pleasure and a blessing, and then you will receive God's physical blessings too. Don't delay. ■

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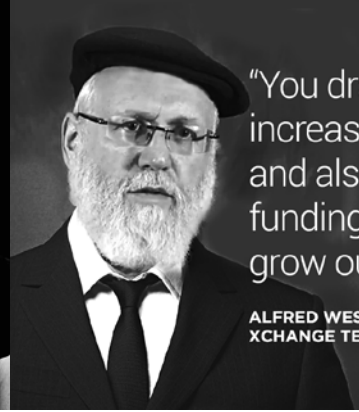
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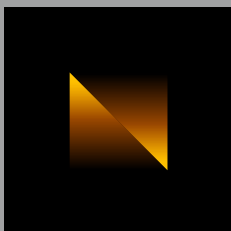
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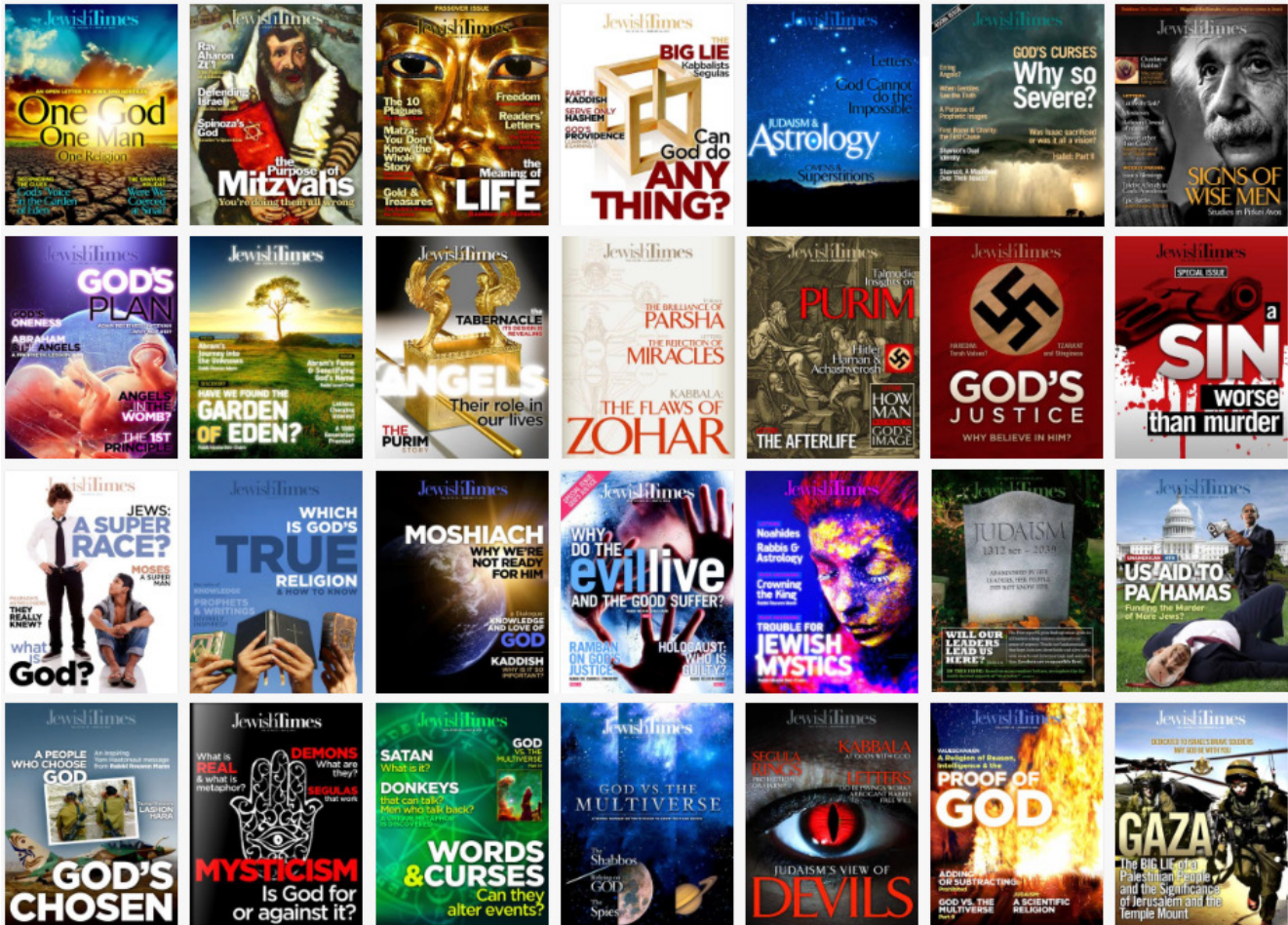
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JewishTimes

Saving the World

RABBI REUVEN MANN

There are many compelling reasons why one should repent at this time. The Rambam explains that we can abandon sin and embark on the righteous path at any time. The mitzva of Teshuva is not time bound but the question arises, are there occasions that are more propitious for this activity.

The Rambam states in Laws of Teshuva (2:7) “Yom Kippur is the time of Teshuva for all, the individual and the many, and it is the culmination of pardon and forgiveness: therefore everyone is obligated to repent and confess on Yom Kippur.”

This means that there is a dimension of “contemplating the appropriate moment” in repentance. One should consider the possibility of eliciting a favorable response.

Hashem has designated this season as the one in which mankind should mend its ways. It is therefore most appropriate for all of us to respond with serious introspection at this moment.

There is another factor which can motivate someone to Teshuva. Specifically a person with a “heroic” frame of mind who wants to “make a difference”. How so?

One of the least appreciated Biblical figures is Noach. Although the Torah attests that he was a “righteous man” it modifies this with a single word, bedorotav, “in his generations”. This has had a negative impact on the reputation of Noach.

The Rabbis, who scrutinized and found meaning in the Torah’s every nuance took this to be limiting the extent

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of Noach's greatness. They said, "In his generation but not in that of Avraham." We thus see that there are different degrees of righteousness.

In what sense was Avraham greater than Noach? The standard answer is that Noach lived in a time of universal moral corruption. He mustered the strength to resist the tide and keep himself and his family on the right path but he was unable to save anyone else.

Avraham reached the level where he could mingle with people and instruct them in the exalted monotheistic religion by which he lived. He won over many adherents who lived by and perpetuated the Abrahamic way of life.

Thus Avraham occupies a higher rung than Noach. Not only was he uncorrupted by the culture of his time but he strove to transform it for the good. Noach however was unable to fight against the immorality of his contemporaries and was therefore inferior to Avraham.

In spite of the fact that Noach did not measure up to the lofty heights of Avraham he has a singular achievement which no human has duplicated; he saved the world. The Torah doesn't mince words: "And Hashem said, 'I will blot out man whom I created from the face of the earth—from man to animal, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky; for I have reconsidered My having made them. But Noach found grace in the eyes of Hashem.'"

What would have happened if there had not been a Noach or if he too had succumbed to evil? The plain and inevitable inference to be drawn is that the entire world would have been destroyed. So it can safely be said that Noach saved the world.

Has such an amazing deed ever been repeated? Can ordinary individuals duplicate that heroism? The Rambam states that Hashem's judgement extends to each individual and to the various countries that inhabit the world. That, however, is not where the matter ends for as he says, "And so too, the entire world: If their sins are greater than their merits—they are immediately destroyed."

It seems that Rambam does not rule out the possibility of a Divine decree of destruction against the world. Just as Hashem brought the great deluge He can obliterate the earth again. But this is problematic. For we read that after the Flood, "Hashem said in

His heart, 'I will not continue to curse again the ground because of man, since the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again continue to smite every living being, as I have done. Continuously, all the days of the earth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.' This declaration would seem to rule out the Rambam's contention that the very existence of mankind could be terminated because of extreme sinfulness.

I believe that Rambam did not interpret Hashem's words as constituting a guarantee of the world's survival. As long as man possesses free will he can behave in an egregious and self-destructive manner.

Perhaps Hashem means that after the Flood He took certain measures which had the effect of weakening man and making him less likely to glorify himself to the point where he disregarded all restraint. From here on in man would not be the supremely powerful being immune to illness and with a life span of almost a thousand years that he had been prior to the Flood. It would be unlikely then that man would attain the extreme hubris which necessitated his destruction. But it could happen. So Hashem continues to bring all of Mankind before Him for judgement.

What significance does this universal reckoning have on the individual Jew? The Rambam says, "Therefore a person must view himself all year long as though he was half innocent and half guilty and so too the world. Thus if he performed one sin he tilted himself and the entire world to the side of guilt and caused destruction for himself. And, if he did one mitzvah he tilted himself and the world to the side of merit and brought about for himself and them rescue and salvation."

Is this just an abstract understanding or is a matter which should have a practical impact? "Because of this", says the Rambam, "the whole House of Israel has the custom of increasing charity and good deeds and to perform Mitzvot from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. And they all have the custom to arise while it is still night on these ten days to pray in the Synagogues with words of petition and contrition until daybreak."

Shabbat Shalom v' G'mar Chatima tova. ■

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