



JewishTimes

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**MIND**

**GOD'S DESIGN  
OF HAPPINESS**

**AMAZING CLUES IN  
GENESIS & KOHELES**



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

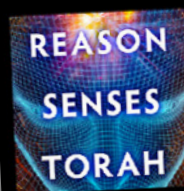
The greatest event ever witnessed forces one conclusion

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 Achei (אחי) (Isaiah 54:1), (Isaiah 66:7-9). Birth doesn't define us, but how

# JewishTimes

**THE JOURNAL ON JEWISH THOUGHT**

| Authors may not have been advised of reprints of their essays |

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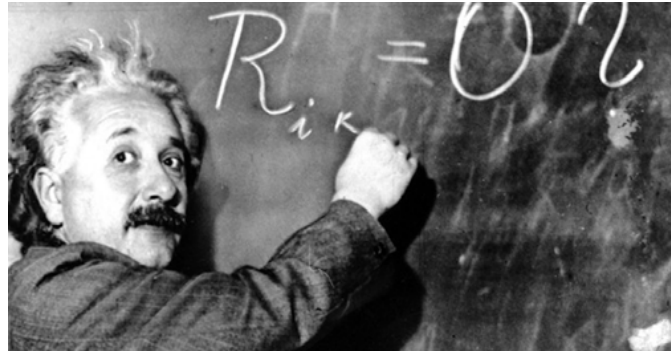
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**"He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed."**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

## TORAH'S INFLUENCE

**RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT**  
WRITTEN BY A STUDENT

### Saving Earth

Rav Shimon bar Yochai said, "If I [my Torah] were weighed against the entire world [of sinners], I would save the world from its decree of destruction from the day of my birth." This means that one whose Torah is so great, can have a positive influence on his generation, eliminating the need for world destruction. His own merits and learning could save the world...but only from his birth until the present.

Rav Shimon bar Yochai added, "If my son were added [to the scale], we would save the world's decree of destruction from the time of Creation." Thus, one person who learns merits others, but only of his time. Furthermore, Rav Shimon's afflictions for those 12 years living in the cave also offered introspection, which increased his perfection, thereby tilting the scales to save the world since his birth. (CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

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But when two people produce Torah, it's not merely quantitative, but it grows the influence of Torah exponentially. The Gemara says, "When many learn Torah, Torah is fruitful and multiplies." That is why Rav Shimon bar Yochai learning together his son would save the decree of destruction "from Creation": a far greater duration. Rav Shimon bar Yochai learning with his son created an exponentially greater Torah that could influence all Earth's generations from Creation. Why a longer duration? Torah insights compliment each other, creating not only a quantitatively greater sum of Torah, but multiple insights further grow new insights from each other. It's not simply a sum.

Rav Shimon bar Yochai added, "If Yasom was added to the scale, we would save the world from Creation to the end of time." Yasom was a great anav, a very humble person. He judged cases and attributed his ideas to others. Rav Shimon bar Yochai meant that when humility is added to Torah, the Torah produced excels to an even greater level. Yasom's humility adds another layer of impact which their Torah would have, as humility advances one's learning: ego is removed and there is no longer any barrier to perceiving truths. Torah thereby reaches new heights.

In summary, we learn that a great person can affect others around him. A number of great people exponentially grow Torah's influence. And when humility is added, Torah excels even further, producing wisdom that can influence the world forever. Even though the current generation's sins may not be corrected, the world can be spared due to the influence their Torah will have on future generations. ■

# Wherever He Leads

RABBI REUVEN MANN

**S**uccot is one of the most intriguing Holidays on the Jewish calendar. There is no doubt that the purpose of Passover is to commemorate the story of the Exodus from Egypt. It is unanimously agreed that we celebrate Shavuot because of the Revelation that took place before the entire Jewish People on Sinai.

However things are not that simple when it comes to the Chag of Succot. What is the rationale for dwelling in the flimsy huts which Jews retire to on the first part of this Holiday?

It is also strange that this Yom Tov culminates with Shmini Atzeret which is considered a separate holiday in its own right and yet is connected to Succot. On this day we abandon the Succah and return to living in our ordinary homes. If the basic theme of Succot is to take up residence in minimal dwellings why is an extra day added in which we resume residence in our regular abodes?

To add to the complexity there is disagreement in the Talmud as to the underlying purpose of the Succah. One Rabbi maintains that it commemorates the physical huts in which Hashem "housed" the children of Israel when "He liberated them from the land of Egypt."

However another Talmudic Sage disagrees. He says that we must understand the Succah in a symbolic sense. It represents the "clouds of glory" with which Hashem enveloped the Jews during their extended trek in the wilderness. This refers to the special Divine Providence which was extended to the Jews in their desert sojourn. This is a most tantalizing Rabbinic dispute which requires elucidation.

At first glance, it seems easier to understand the second position. The purpose of the three pilgrimage Festivals is to remember and celebrate the major miracles which Hashem performed for His chosen nation. First, He freed us from an oppressive and hopeless enslavement. Then He provided for all our needs and kept us totally safe when we traversed through a treacherous place in which there was no sustenance. Finally the purpose of the Exodus was realized when He gathered the entire Nation on Mt. Sinai and revealed His Torah.

The theory that the Succah represents the "Clouds of Glory" is fully commensurate with the themes of the other Pilgrimage Festivals. However, we need to understand the view of the Rabbi who held that the Succah signifies the actual huts in which the Jews dwelled on their journey to the Promised Land. Why is this particular fact of our history so important? What are the great lessons that are imparted by reliving this aspect of our past?

I believe the answer can be found in a passage from Scripture. The Prophet invokes Hashem as saying, "I remember the kindness of your youth the love of your marriage ties, following after Me in the Wilderness in a land not sown."

According to this the journey of the Jews in the desert is not only testament to Hashem's miracles but to their spirit of absolute faith and courage. The willingness to follow Hashem wherever He leads,

no matter how fearful, uncomfortable and contrary to our need for the basic amenities is central to our religion.

Thus Hashem's first command to Avraham was to take leave of his land, his birthplace and the "house of your father" and travel to the "Land which I will show you." Avraham had no sense of where he was headed and how he would be sustained on this treacherous journey. He put himself completely in the Hands of the Creator. He "surrendered to the A-mighty" just as he did when he embarked on the lonesome journey with Yizchak to the Akeda on Mt. Moriah.

The Jews, as a nation, had to duplicate the courage and absolute faith of their forefathers. They were prepared to relinquish all of life's pleasures and comforts and ordinary means of security in order to assume the mission to be a Holy Nation.

Thus the willingness of the Jews to enter into the wilderness represents a glorious moment in the history of our People.

We must be on guard not to become corrupted by enslavement to excessive pleasures and comforts. We can't become addicted to the superficial Divine service which always accompanies a life of ease and material indulgence.

We must never lose sight of the Divine challenge to rise to the occasion and be willing to sacrifice everything when we are called upon to follow Hashem "into the wilderness."

We can now understand the reason for Shmini Atzeret. Hashem does not want us to embrace a life of deprivation. We should be comfortable and happy and make use of the life enhancing inventions that can further our service of Hashem.

The moments of "Lech Lecha," of uprooting ourselves from our normal habitations are rare and temporary, not permanent existential states. But our level of faith and inner fortitude must be such that we are always ready to abandon everything and find refuge in the Succah of Hashem.

There are very practical benefits associated with relinquishing our ordinary comforts and reliving the Spartan existence of our ancestors. The Rambam says, "The moral lesson derived from these feats is this: man ought to remember his evil days in his times of prosperity. He will thereby be induced to thank G-D repeatedly, to lead a modest and humble life. We eat, therefore, unleavened bread and bitter herbs on Passover in memory of what has happened unto us, and leave (on Succot) our houses in order to dwell in tabernacles, as inhabitants of deserts do that are in want of comfort. We shall thereby remember that this has once been our condition as it says, "I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths".

Both explanations of Succah are relevant. We must develop the inner courage and fortitude to withstand the storms of hatred and condemnation that assail us. And may we thus become worthy of the "Clouds of Glory" which protected and sustained our ancestors from all who sought to consume them.

Shabbat shalom v'Chag sameach. ■





# MIND

# GOD'S DESIGN OF HAPPINESS

## AMAZING CLUES IN GENESIS & KOHELES

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

**T**he brief period of the High Holidays and Succos limit our attention to the most fundamental Torah books: Genesis and Koheles. These books' cryptic passages compound our failure to comprehend the most vital lessons about life. But as God included Genesis in His Torah, and as King Solomon experimented in Koheles with all lifestyles to arrive at the happiest life, both demand our attention. There are astonishing marvels I will share with you in the following paragraphs, so I ask your sustained attention, which I promise will be rewarded.

My inquiry focuses on the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life, the snake, man's sin, God's punishments, and God's plan which will emerge from understanding these phenomena.

To commence, what was God's purpose in giving Adam and Eve a command? God states that man can eat of "all" the trees of the Garden of Eden. But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, man must not eat...the punishment being mortality. This teaches that God permitted all vegetation to man, except one fruit. What was this precise plan? Also, why was the punishment that man would become mortal? God apparently offered Adam to choose between obeying God and retaining his immortality. Or, if he disobeyed through unrestrained physical gratification by eating of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, he would sacrifice his immortality.

Interestingly, there are two accounts of Creation: 1) the Six Days, and 2) Man in the Garden of Eden. We notice that the prohibition on eating of the fruit is found in the second account of creation. How is this account different from the Six days of Creation recorded earlier? What new category of creation is God describing? There are other details, such as the river that exited Eden and became four "heads." Mirroring the beginning of Genesis, King Solomon too, in the beginning of Koheles, also discusses "water flowing." Is King Solomon duplicating God's lessons outlined in Genesis? God places man in the Garden of Eden twice; Gen. 2:8 and 2:15. Why this duplication? In the first instance (2:7,8) man is described as "dust from the Earth" and that God "blew into his nostrils a living

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soul, and man became a living being, and God planted a garden in the east of Eden and He placed there the man whom He formed.” This is a physical description. Whereas in the second placement of man in Eden, God omits any details of man’s form. Why is God placing Adam in Eden twice? Maimonides briefly discusses this: “Another noteworthy saying is this: ‘And the Lord God took the man, i.e., raised him, and placed him in the Garden of Eden,’ i.e., he gave him rest. The words ‘He took him, He gave him’ have no reference to position in space, but they indicate his position in rank among transient beings, and the prominent character of his existence[1].”

The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge are not mentioned in Genesis 1:29, when God first describes the permitted fruit trees. It is only here in this second account of Creation, and Adam’s second placement (omitting a description Adam’s physical form) that God prohibits the Tree of Knowledge. This is significant.

“Eden” sounds similar to “Adam.” Any hint here? And why are these two trees “in the center of Eden” (Gen. 2:9)? What are these two trees, and why must they both exist? God does not prohibit Adam from eating from the Tree of Life...until he ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Why? And if God is concerned that man will eat from the Tree of Life, why did not God simply destroy it? Why does God, instead, create the “cherubim and the flaming spinning sword to guard the path to Tree of Life”? What are these two entities?

What was God’s purpose in creating a snake, an animal “more cunning than all other beasts of the field”? This creature caused the sin. Why was it necessary? And what precisely was Eve’s sin? God tells us how exactly what Eve responds in her thoughts: “the tree was good to eat, it was visually desirable, the tree was enticing for understanding” (Gen. 1:6). We are told of one other thing being “good”: the gold. What is God sharing with us here?

Further, Maimonides teaches that it was not the snake, but its “rider” that enticed Eve[1]. What is this rider? Maimonides states this rider was Samael. In Hebrew, Samael means blind from seeing God (sama-el). Maimonides further states that just as Samael has a meaning, the Hebrew term for snake, “nachash” has a meaning. What is Maimonides’ message?

Why does God record Adam’s blame of Eve, and her blame of the snake? What is this lesson God sees so essential for us to learn?

What is meant by God’s punishing the snake? And what is the justice in God’s punishments to Adam and Eve?

## Detecting the Clues

Let’s focus on a few of our observations, and elucidate them.

- 1) Maimonides said the snake has a “rider”...but the Torah text does not mention any rider.
- 2) Maimonides calls this rider “Samael” and then says Samael and the instincts are the same being: “The serpent had a rider, the rider was as big as a camel, and it was the rider that enticed Eve: this rider was Samael.” Our Sages generally state that Samael refers to Satan. Thus, they say in several places that Satan desired to entice Abraham to sin, and to abstain from binding Isaac, and he desired also to persuade Isaac not to obey his father. At the same time they also say, in reference to the same subject, viz., the Akedah (binding of Isaac), that Samael came to Abraham and said to him, “What! Hast thou, being an old man, lost thy senses?” etc. This shows that Samael and

Satan are identical[1].”

3) God places man in the Garden twice. How can that be? And only the first placing refers to physical location. What does this say about the second placing?

4) There are two accounts of creation, the second is introduced as, “These are the products of the heavens and earth” (Gen. 2:4). This section goes on to explain the behaviors or laws of vegetation, and then discusses man...as if saying, man too is discussed in his own productions, or natural behaviors.

5) A river is described that flows out of Eden and divides into four “heads.” Since when is a river called a head? One river called Pishon encompassed all of the land of Chavila, where there was “good” gold. Of what concern is this, and why state this here? After concluding the account of the rivers, God places man a second time in Eden. As if to say, only now can we address man...but the man with no reference to his physical form. Which “man” is this?

6) There must be deeper meaning behind a literal spinning, flaming sword, and cherubim...and also why God didn’t simply destroy the two trees.

## Two Accounts of Creation

Creation had two parts: 1) creation of physical entities from nothingness, and 2) creation of their natural laws. When commencing Koheles, King Solomon says, “All the rivers go to the sea, but the sea is not full, to the place where the rivers go, there they return to go” (1:7). Rabbi Israel Chait explained that the king was first educating us on how man’s psyche works: man’s energy “flows” towards goals. But man is rarely satisfied, or “full.” Man seeks accomplishments, novelty, happiness, success, and desires other matters too.

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**God and King Solomon commenced both—Genesis and Koheles—with lessons on human nature. For if we are to appreciate God’s Torah guide to human nature, and King Solomon’s studies into happiness, we must first know the subject of these books, that being man’s internal makeup. Only once we recognize human nature can we appreciate the rest of His Torah and how each law benefits us. Torah is not to perfect our mortal bodies, but our immortal souls and our psyches.**

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Just as God commenced the second account of Creation with a description of how plants behave, and in that same account refers to man, God hints that He describing man’s behaviors as well. This is supported by the record of man’s sin and God’s second placing of man, which does not make sense literally since man is already in Eden. Furthermore, in the second account of man being “placed in Eden,” God omits man’s physical description. This leaves only Adam’s non-physical components to somehow be termed as “placed.” As Maimonides stated, “This has no reference to position in space, but indicate his position in rank among transient beings, and the prominent character of man’s existence.” So, this account is not discussing a location of man, but man’s internal design. God does place the physical Adam in Eden: “And [God] blew into his nostrils a living soul, and man became a living being. And God planted a garden in the east of Eden and He placed there the

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man whom He formed” (2:7,8). But then in 2:15 God “placed” man in Eden again. Here, it is not the physical man placed into a location, but God is “placing man in a certain state of being,” for no reference is made to man’s physical form.

Rabbi Chait said, “Man lives in his mind.” As is true in Koheles, the river in Genesis too indicates man’s energies that flow toward various lifestyles, or “four heads.” A primary drive is success. Man’s energies first flow to Pishon, which encompassed a land called Chavila, which audibly means bundles. This land contained gold that was “good.” But gold cannot be good, that is a moral value: gold is either pure or impure. However, God is teaching that man’s primary drive, what he values as “good,” is wealth—bundles. Eve too said the tree was “good to eat.” Man “encompasses” this bundling of wealth; he is quite attached to it. We are thereby taught that for man to pursue anything, he must value it as a “good.” Eve too had to justify her violation, calling the fruit “good.” We are also taught that bundling, or heaping up wealth, is a fundamental attraction of wealth. Thus, King Solomon teaches, “One who loves wealth will not be satisfied with wealth” (Koheles 5:9). This is because the drive is not to attain a fixed amount; rather, it is the process of “amassing” or “bundling” that one yearns for. We witness many wealthy people who cannot stop piling up more and more, despite their inability to spend even a fraction of what they have attained.

Other people are driven by desires, to satiate their senses and fill their bellies. Gichone was the second river, and it means belly. It encompasses the land of Cush, and chush means the senses. The third river flows toward Ashur, which means happiness: other people long to simply be carefree and happy without conflicts; wealth and lusts are not their objective. They prefer instead a simplified easy life. The energies of Adam flow towards 4 core lifestyles.

### **Eden: A Blueprint of Man**

“Adam and Eve were both naked and they weren’t embarrassed” (Gen. 2:25). It appears God wishes mankind to know why we were not initially created with a conscience: we are incapable of following God’s commands without it. Had God created Adam and Eve at the outset, including a conscience (the cause of man’s shame of his nakedness) we would question its necessity. As God’s wish for man is to engage our intellect—the one gift man possesses over all other creatures—we could engage our intellects and ponder the marvels of creation to a far greater degree, if not burdened with concerns for moral choices, i.e., without a conscience. We would declare it unjust to be burdened with this extra faculty. However, now that God recorded the account of man’s sin, we appreciate that the conscience was actually a much needed gift. Adam was without a conscience; he viewed his nakedness no different than a stone or a leaf. It was simply a fact, with no moral value attached to it. He was initially enabled to have his mind 100% free to explore creation and uncover God’s beautiful laws. He had no concerns about moral issues to cloud scientific inquiry. But God gave him one command. The command was so slight. He could enjoy literally all trees of the garden, except one. But Eve became fixated on satisfying her drives, instead of retaining immortal life in the Garden. Adam too succumbed to this desire. Both man and woman demonstrated their inability to abide by even the most minute limitation. This is the lesson for mankind: man seeks unbridled gratification, even at the cost of his mortality. This is how powerful our instincts

are. By gifting man and woman with a new faculty of the conscience, we now have an additional chance to abstain from sin. We now feel new emotion of guilt when about to sin, and also afterwards. Adam and Eve hid once they ate, feeling ashamed of their nakedness. This shame can be applied to any wrongdoing, assisting us in refraining from self-destructive actions. So we appreciate that God initially created man without morality, which diverts our energies from worldly scientific study, towards internal conflicts. But this diversion was necessary, if we are to abstain from sin, and earn continued life.

God also converted man from immortal to mortal. Man’s attachment to physical gratification was now severely curbed due to our recognition of our limited time on this planet. Mortality is the perfect response to a being seeking unlimited earthly gratification. We are thereby diverted somewhat back towards Adam’s state prior to the sin: a being focusing less on gratification and more on God’s wisdom.

God’s plan was that man invest all his energies into pursuing wisdom as this will offer him the greatest satisfaction. To redirect man back to this lofty goal, God created the conscience, to slow us down before violating His will, and He also made us mortal, so we are less attached to this physical world. Coming to terms with our limited stay here, we are better equipped to focus on what is truly eternal, and that is God and His wisdom. The greatest good was not taken from Adam and Eve. They could have lived eternally in Eden, had they remained on the path of naming the animals and other pursuits of wisdom. But now as mortals, this eternal attachment to wisdom will occur only in the afterlife.

Regarding man’s other punishments, man sought unbridled gratification, and therefore God cursed man with thorns and thistles, and farming his daily bread. Meaning, man would no longer find complete satisfaction when seeking physical gratification: food takes toil to attain, things rot, metal rusts, and we find aggravation in our daily tasks. Man is preoccupied with farming or work, and less energies are available to sin. All this is a blessing, to redirect our energies away from physical gratification and towards the world of wisdom.

Eve dominated Adam in her act of causing his sin, and was therefore made subservient to man to a degree to correct this. She was made to be absorbed emotionally with birth pangs, difficult pregnancy and child rearing. This too disengages her from dominating man.

When confronted by God after they sinned, both man and woman shifted blame from themselves. Although a “great intellect”[2] Adam did not readily accept responsibility for his sin. Maimonides states there is meaning in the word nachash—snake. Nichush means superstition: a false imagined reality which man wrongly accepts as equal to what his senses detect. Eve created her own reality. But despite the snake’s deception, it was Eve—not the snake—that caused her sin: “the tree was good to eat, it was visually desirous, the tree was enticing for understanding” (Gen. 3:6). Eve’s powerful emotions and imagination, termed by Maimonides as the “rider on the snake” are to blame. “Rider” means that there was something other than the snake that caused her sin. This something, was Eve’s imagination. The snake deceives Eve, and Eve is blinded by her own fantasies, what Maimonides stated earlier is identical with Samael, that which “blinds one from God.” Eve’s imagination blinded her. Her imagination was the rider on the snake. Meaning, the snake alone—the emotions—must be directed by man towards good or

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evil objectives. Emotions are the drive, but to act, man with his fantasies steers his emotions towards a goal. Here, Eve's fantasies steered her emotions towards violating God's command.

Now, as the snake was closely tied to Eve's sin, although a real creature, Sferno suggests it also embodies the working of the instincts. God curses the real snake, but simultaneously teaches us the modifications He now makes in man's instincts: the instincts will now "go on their belly and eat dust" (Gen. 3:14). Meaning, God slowed the movement of our instinctual drives and also made our attainment of our lusts as distasteful as eating dust. These two measures minimize gratification in the attainment of physical desires, helping us again to redirect our energies towards wisdom. But God curses the snake further, "Man will crush your head, and you will bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). This occurs literally, but there is an additional lesson as Maimonides states, "More remarkable still is the way in which the serpent is joined to Eve, or rather his seed to her seed; the head of the one touches the heel of the other. Eve defeats the serpent by crushing its head, whilst the serpent defeats her by wounding her heel [1]." Man defeats his instincts by crushing it at the "head" of the battle. Only if we thwart our emotional urges upon their very onset, do we succeed over them. But if we allow our emotions to swell, they eventually become too powerful to defeat, and the instincts defeat us in the "heel" of the battle.

Man still shifted the blame after the sin, and did not confess he caved to his instincts. God records both Adam and Eve shifting the blame, to teach us that they were less in touch with their internal words, despite God's efforts in creating a snake that they could use as a model of their instincts, to apply to themselves.



## The Trees

Eden has two primary trees, I say primary, as God placed them in the "center" of the garden. Center denotes prominence. At the center of man's psyche is his feeling of immortality. It is this feeling of permanence that enables us the fortitude to progress in life. If death were viewed as a reality, we would live a morbid existence. King Solomon says, "And also the world [God] planted in man's heart" (Koheles 3:11), meaning that God saw it necessary that man

feels a sense of immortality, as if eternity were planted in his heart. The Tree of Life is appropriately named. As man was immortal before his sin, he had no urge to eat from this Tree; it would do nothing for him. The tree alluded to what is in the core of man's psyche. Only once he was sentenced with mortality did this tree have any appeal, as God says, "So it is, man has become as one of us to know good and evil, and now perhaps he will send his hand and take the Tree of Life and eat and live forever" (Gen.3:22). Meaning, man sinned, and due to his sentence of mortality, man will deny this mortality. It was very disturbing, so he yearned to recapture his immortality. God could not destroy the Tree of Life (a metaphor for man's desire for immortality) as this would mean God is removing man's sense of permanence, making man morbid about his undeniable mortality. But God does not want man to live a morbid existence; He desires man to retain some sense of permanence on Earth. The solution is that man retain some sense of immortality, but also guard him from investing too much of his energies into a temporal Earthly existence. This balance was struck by giving man some realization of his mortality, while also allowing him to feel a sense of youth. This explains the metaphor of God created an unapproachable, spinning flaming sword (mortality) and the childlike cherubim (immortality) that guarded the path to the Tree of Life. That is, at his center, man possesses two faculties or counsels (etz). Man straddles between his immortality fantasy, and his real mortality. The Etz Hachaim and Etz Hadaas, the Trees of Life and Knowledge (moral knowledge) are in the center of the Garden of Eden, as man's immortality fantasy and his morality conflicts are at his center.

## Summary

Man has a multifarious nature that God shared through cryptic passages of Genesis, and to which King Solomon hinted in Koheles. Our psyche contains energies that flow towards many lifestyles. We live without realizing our instinctual urges, to which we succumb after some time of conflict with them. Underlying all our imaginations and plans, are feelings of morality, immortality and a need to accomplish. Many of us ignore or even deny this internal world. Yet, we must know about it, confront it, and manage it, if we are to succeed and live based on reason, and not follow our instincts. The Torah is our guide to navigate this course in life, informing us of values and actions our Creator deems most beneficial, and from what we must steer clear. Ultimately, we must choose between our drives and our intellects. We can. But we must first study our psychological design to know what we are, and what is beneficial based on God's Torah.

The Garden of Eden is on earth. Yet, it was designed to reflect man's psyche. Genesis and Koheles contain fundamentals for understanding what type of creatures we are, and what leads to conflict or happiness. God desires man achieves happiness. Following His lessons will lead us there. ■

## Footnotes

[1] The Guide, book II chap. XXX, p 217 Friedlander paperback

[2] Ibn Ezra describes man as a "chocham gadol" – a great intellect (Gen. 2:16)

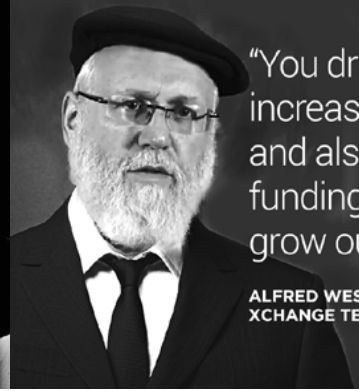
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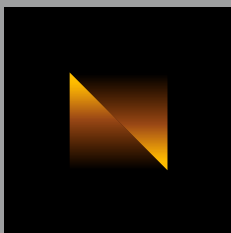
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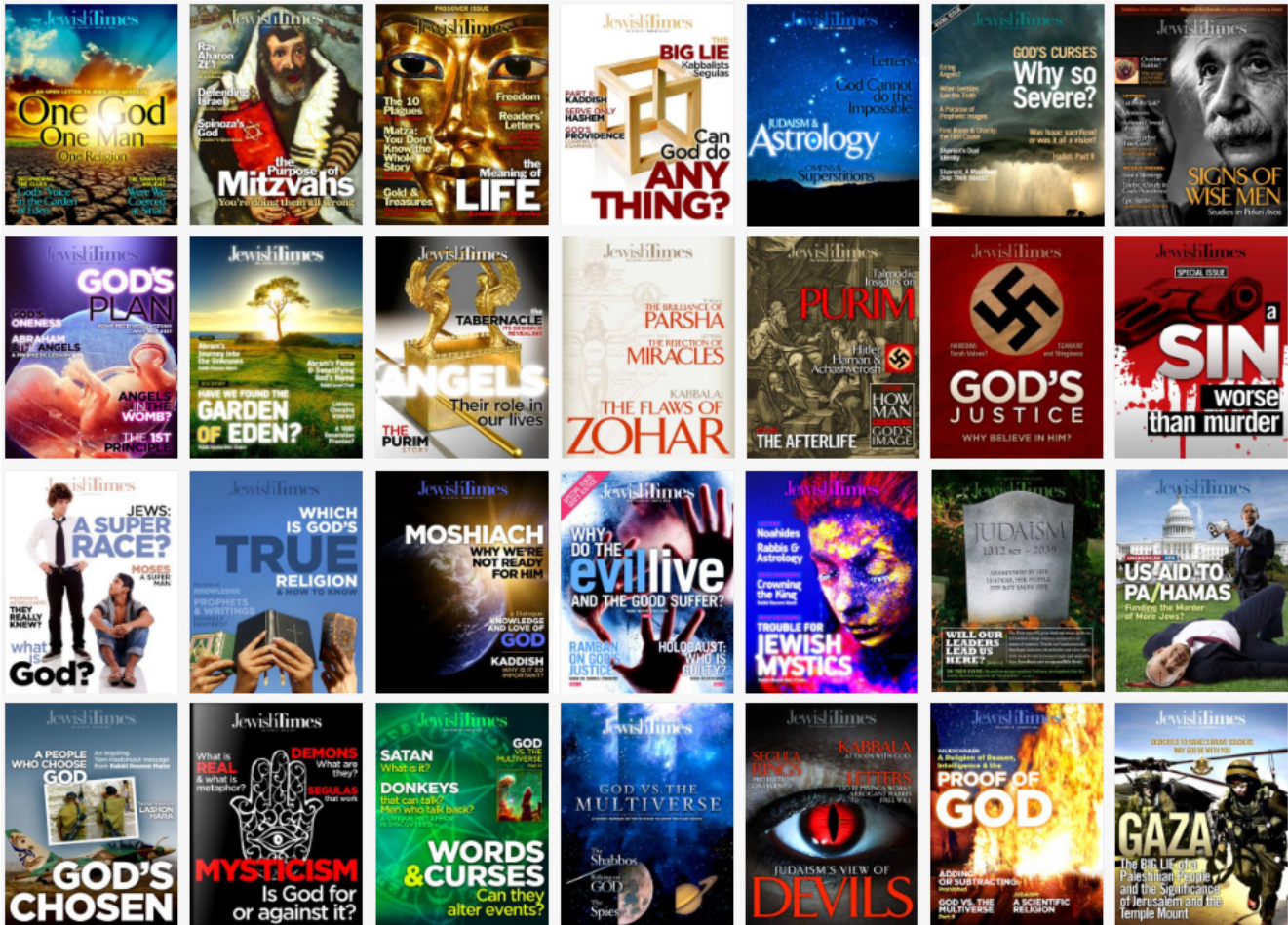
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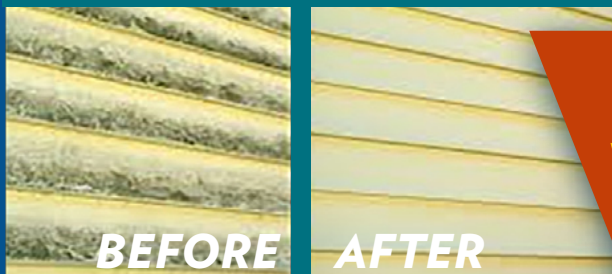
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