

JewishTimes

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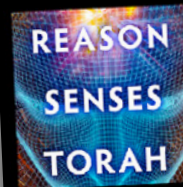
MISSION
God's Revelation at Mt. Sinai: One Plan for Mankind
 The greatest event ever witnessed forces one conclusion

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 major 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
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PERFECTION

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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 Ache' (Isa' 54:17). Birth doesn't define us, but how

JewishTimes

THE JOURNAL ON ORTHODOX JEWISH THOUGHT

| Please send letters and questions to: Comments@Mesora.org |

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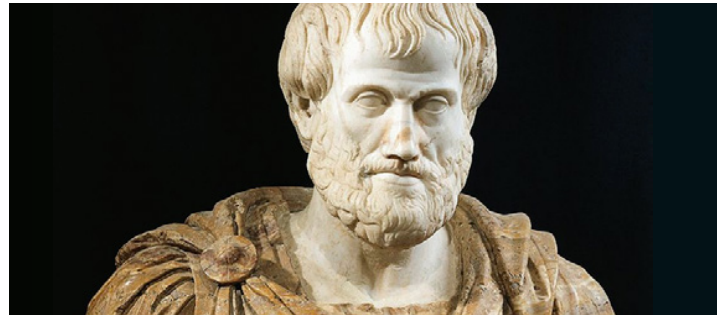
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**"The roots of education are bitter,
but the fruit is sweet."**

ARISTOTLE

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Religion: Knowledge vs. Faith

READER: You should consider that advancing arguments that are inherently weak could engender skepticism, not belief. The divinity of the Torah as proved by the mass revelation at Mount Sinai is an argument that convinces only current believers. As a believing Jew, and one who accepts the traditions handed down to me, I accept this. A skeptic can raise numerous logical flaws, e.g., the event never happened but was circulated among a group who promulgated the tale of its occurrence; or the people were primitive and witnessed a natural event that they interpreted as revelation.

One can provide archeological confirmation of events in the Torah, provide literary theories to support a unitary text by a single author, but ultimately, we cannot prove God or revelation. For those not raised in a Torah home or who have doubts, must in the end take a leap of faith and live a life of Torah and mitzvot. When they do so, they will find the meaning they seek as their faith is strengthened. Logically flawed arguments may decrease faith not increase it.

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RABBI: You have not advanced any theory explaining what is lacking in the proof of Sinai; you simply assert an opinion, which is meaningless alone. Furthermore, you must now reject all world history on the same grounds that you reject Revelation at Sinai. But I am sure you would not reject this. So you must now investigate what compels you to lodge a rejection against Sinai—"they were primitive ; it was a natural event [only] interpreted as revelation"—but you don't reject other histories using this argument. If you are reluctant to consider that one can accept miracles or Torah obligation because of their unnatural quality that you've never seen, or due to their restrictive qualities, these are no grounds for rejection. Any history that passes the test of mass witnesses and clear phenomena, validates it.

Maimonides finds complete proof of God and Torah in Revelation at Sinai:

Wherein, then, did they believe in Moses? In Revelation at Mount Sinai; for our own eyes saw and not through a stranger's, and our own ears heard and not that of another; the flame, the thunder and lightning, and he drew near the thick cloud and the Voice speaking unto him, which we heard saying, "Moses, Moses, go and tell them thus and such," for so he also said: "The Lord spoke with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of fire" [Deut. 5:4] (Maimonides, Laws of Torah Fundamentals 8:1).

Maimonides says, "our" eyes and "our" ears witnessed this event. Of course neither he nor we were there. But he means that subsequent to that great event, mankind has no less proof than those who stood at the foot of Sinai 3333 years ago. History is history. Whether it was miraculous or if the event threw upon us great responsibility, these considerations in no way discredit events witnessed by masses.

And your suggestion that faith must be applied, that too is a mere opinion, and not what Torah and our great rabbis say. Torah asks for, and offers proof, because man can grasp proof, and proof is what God demands in recognizing Him and His will. Belief and faith are alien attitudes adopted from other religions and cultures. Both require no use of the mind, and offer no validation. To "know" something means we are convinced without doubt. This quality of conviction is what God says we can attain, it is what He asks of us, and its is required precisely because God gifted mankind with the unique faculty of intelligence and reason that can arrive at 100% proof:

The foundation of foundations and firmest pillar of all wisdom is, to know that there is a First Being, that He caused all beings to be, and that all beings from heaven and earth, and from between them, could not be, save for the truth of His Own Being. (Maimonides, Laws of Torah Fundamentals 1:1).

Know, therefore, that only the LORD your God is God, the steadfast God who keeps His covenant faithfully to the thousandth generation of those who love Him and keep His commandments (Deut. 7:9).

Know therefore this day and keep in mind that the LORD alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other (Deut. 4:39). ■

Conquering Our Drives

READER: It seems that you identify the yetzer harah (evil inclination) with emotions and yetzer tov (intellect/reason). My question is whether using one's intellect over emotion is really the effective way to defeat the evil inclination. How do you understand the gemara in Berachos that the first way of defeating the yetzer harah is "be brazen and do not sin." Is that a case of using intellect over emotion? Thanks.

RABBI: You quote Psalms 4:5, "So tremble, and sin no more; ponder it on your bed, and sigh." Trembling is certainly an emotion. We are to "love God with all or hearts" (Deut. 6:5). Rashi says this refers to loving God with both of our inclinations: with our instincts and with our minds. At times it is proper that one agitates himself emotionally to avert himself from sin. In a greater measure than daytime, nighttime lends itself to catering to the instincts. On one's bed at night, undistracted from human interaction, is a prized moment to focus on God. Pirkei Avos 3:4 states:

Rabbi Chananya ben Chakhinai says: "One who is awake at night, and one who travels on a road alone, and one who turns his heart to idleness (entertainment), such a one is liable for [forfeiture of] his life."

Rabbeinu Yona comments:

Since they are desirable times, he should only think during them about things that are desirable before God, may He be blessed. And those [things] are words of Torah. How grand and desirable are these times for thinking about Torah, since he has no work to do and does not hear the voices of [other] people. And one who turns his heart to idleness, such a one is liable for [forfeiture of] his life: As he wastes time in which he could have clear and correct thought, and diverts it from thoughts of Torah.

Rabbi Israel Chait comments:

Maimonides also discusses the benefits of learning at night (Hilchos Talmud Torah 3:13). Nighttime is a psychological phenomenon: "To proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak, Your faithfulness each night" (Psalms 92:3). At night, there is a state of mind of being alone, which should be used to remove oneself from psychological [social] reality and to engage in absolute reality: God and Torah. For at night, psychological reality is not prevalent [and this offers the added benefit that one can more readily advance his mindset into absolute reality.] As Rabbeinu Yona says, "One does not hear the voices of others." Night is when one is most removed from psychological reality. If one forfeits using this precious time properly, he is liable with his life. This is because he violates his very purpose: to be in that state of absolute reality [relating to reality/God]. At night, when God offers man the opportunity to step right into absolute reality, and instead, he engages in fantasy and entertainment, he forfeits his entire purpose as a tzelem Elohim, an intellectual being.

Although at times, and with some people, emotions help one's battle against sin, the perfected person does not engage fear (emotions) to fight sin. For he has attached himself to Torah wisdom and God through love. His attachment is positive, what we call "lishma," for the sake of the Torah itself. He is drawn to Torah wisdom for no ulterior motive, and wishes to relate to its Source, and he is not tempted by sin. Sin is the farthest notion from the perfected man. ■

Chauvinism in Torah?

Reader: What is the reason/idea behind a woman not being able to give testimony and serve as a witness? Many, even observant Jews, claim that the chachamim (sages) upheld the patriarchy. I find it hard to maintain such an idea that they were chauvinists. Thank you.

RABBI: Rabbi Reuven Mann offered this answer:

Rabbi Israel Chait said that women are exempt from time-bound laws. Offering testimony too is time-bound (being summoned to appear on a set date) explaining why they are exempt from being witnesses. The reasoning for this exemption in general is, for if they are summoned to court, they must drop everything, thereby interfering with their ability to care for their children. I would add that there is another reason. Witnesses must be subject to tough cross examination (drisha v'chakira) and men are afraid to be too tough in questioning women. As we see lawyers must go very easy in challenging women for fear of coming across as too harsh. But a witness is not valid if they are not subjected to drisha v'chakira so women cannot serve as witnesses.

I would suggest a read of this important essay by Rabbi Chait on gender equality in Judaism: <http://www.mesora.org/GenderEquality.html> ■

RABBI: "I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God" (Gen. 17:7,8).

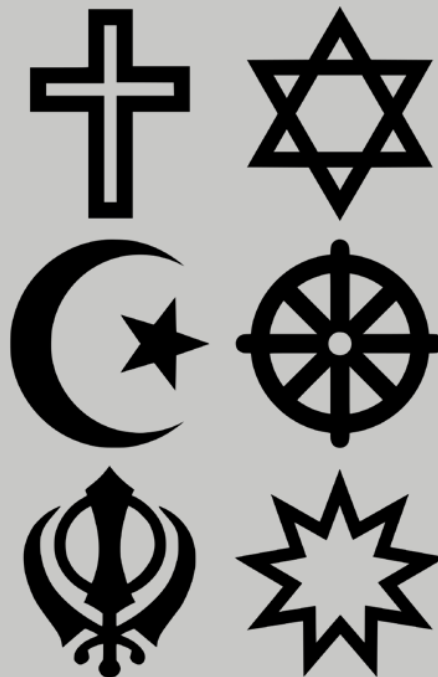
God's covenant with Abraham is with him and his seed. Seed is defined by the mother, as we know from whom a baby exits, but not from whom the seed entered the woman; the father cannot be observed. Thus, the mother certainly defines lineage. If the mother becomes idolatrous, she no longer shares in the Jewish nation due to her sin, but her children who have not sinned are fully Jewish. The father's religion is irrelevant. ■

but cannot leave Christianity because of their imaginary relationship with Jesus. How does one deal with such people and make them understand? I also warn most people [truth seekers] about Islam, even though we know that its foundation is false. Most people seeking truth and monotheism, unaware about Judaism's proofs, tend to seek Islam because of its monotheism, widespread nature and biblical figures. How does one fight this? At a very young age around 13-14, I was first looking into Islam before knowing about Judaism. Thank God I studied more carefully and was only convinced 100% when I came across Judaism. What does one answer to people who consider Judaism and Islam similar religions, or rabbis who say it is okay to pray in a mosque, and to those who say Christianity and Islam can be considered a Noahide faith, i.e., acceptable to God? Thank you.

RABBI: Sometimes a person's emotions blind him/her to reality. Those emotions must be undone, in addition—and perhaps prior—to presenting truths. We can ask someone why they love Jesus: "What has Jesus done for you?" When they can't cite any certain cases, this is an opening. And if they imagine some fortunate event and attribute it to Jesus, ask them to prove it. Show them how they follow proof when applying for a position, asking for a contract. Ask why religion should demand anything less? Try helping the person recognize that his position is a mere belief, without any support from reality.

Another issue is the masses that love Jesus, causing one to follow based on "conformation." That too must be exposed as a baseless reason to love Jesus. You might say, "Even more masses follow Islam...why don't you follow Mohammed?" Masses also worshipped idols, believe in superstitions, etc.

Concerning praying in Churches or Mosques, both should be avoided. Christianity is certainly idolatry, as they pray to man. I am not certain what Islam preaches today. But if they pray to the Creator, but think the Creator authorized anything heretical in the Koran, this too is a great problem. This would be no different than Jews praying to God, but thinking God is Jesus. One might start with the correct identity of God, but due to associated beliefs, one no longer possesses a correct notion of God, and what he prays to is imagination. ■



Jewish Lineage

READER: What if the mother was only a Jew in name, and an idolater on the inside, who married into a non-Jewish family. How are she and her children still Jewish, as in part of the Jewish nation? The flip-side as well: what if a father was a devout Jew who married a non-Jew, followed normative Jewish Halacha to the letter, and sought to teach his offspring the same. How are their children not Jewish because of him?

Are All Religions Acceptable?

READER: Rabbi Tovia Singer says that the reason the majority of Christians don't want to leave Christianity is because they love Jesus, and no proof [refuting Jesus] matters to them. I agree with him and have met many people who will accept the proof of our only true religion

THE SERPENT, EVE & SATAN

What really happened
in Eden?



A few questions: Why does Torah (Bible) omit any mention of Satan? Genesis 2:7 reads, “God blew into his nostrils the breath of life” which Unkelos defines as God giving man speech. But Genesis then depicts a serpent talking to Eve, even though God granted speech only to Adam and Eve. An animal speaking, and also Eve’s lack of surprise at its speech suggest that this dialogue is metaphoric. Views vary whether the serpent was literal or metaphor. Let’s review God’s words, which are the primary clues:

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?” The woman replied to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: ‘You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.’” And the serpent said to the woman, “You are not going to die, but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and

you will be like divine beings who know good and bad” (Gen. 3:1-5).

Then God asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?” The man said, “The woman you put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done!” The woman replied, “The serpent fooled me, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you did this, more cursed shall you be than all cattle and all the wild beasts of the field: on your belly shall you crawl and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. I will put hatred between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; man shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel” (Ibid. 3:11,15).

As Torah says God warned only Adam, how did the serpent know of the prohibition of the tree of knowledge? As God asked both Adam and Eve why they sinned, why did He not also ask the

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serpent for its own excuse? Furthermore, if the serpent is to be understood literally, what is the understanding of the punishments of becoming a belly-crawler, eating dust, its hatred against man, and the head/heel relationship?

Maimonides was one of Judaism's most brilliant thinkers. He comments:

Another noteworthy Midrashic remark of our Sages is the following: "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." Samael is the name generally applied by our Sages 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 (the binding of Isaac), that Samael came to Abraham and said to him, "What! Have you—being an old man—lost your senses?" This shows that Samael and Satan are identical. There is a meaning in this name Samael, as there is also in the name nachash (serpent). In describing how the serpent came to entice Eve, our sages say, "Samael was riding on it, and God was laughing at both the camel and its rider."

It is especially of importance to notice that the serpent did not approach or address Adam, but all his attempts [approach, speech] were directed against Eve, and it was through her that the serpent caused injury and death to Adam. The greatest hatred exists between the serpent and Eve, and between his seed and her seed; her seed being undoubtedly also the seed of man. 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. This is likewise clear. (Guide for the Perplexed, book II, chap XXX).

"Midrash" is allegory. Maimonides cites the sages who said the serpent had a rider, while Torah does not mention this, and further, that Satan spoke to Abraham and Isaac—again, with no mention in Torah verses. All this indicates that the serpent—who is Satan—is not to be understood literally. Based on Maimonides and Sforno, I interpret the verses as follows.



The Serpent

The serpent refers to Eve's instincts. This is how the serpent knew of the prohibition; as Eve knew, her instincts—being part of her—also knew. Eve's dialogue with the serpent isn't literal, but depicts Eve's struggle with her instinctual drive to violate God's command. She belittles the command at first saying, "Are all trees prohibited? No, only one!" This reduced the significance of the prohibition. "All is permitted; only one fruit is off limits." The serpent telling her "You will be like divine beings who know good and bad" is Eve's justification. She's talking to herself, battling her instincts, depicted as "talking to her serpent." This teaches that man cannot sin until he justifies his sin. Man's reality principle does not allow him to knowingly harm himself (Rabbi Israel Chait). And as soon as Eve eats, the serpent no longer talks, which means that as soon as one caves in to their desires, the desires no longer need to function. Instincts don't need to "talk" you in to violating a sin, after you sinned.

Satan

The serpent/Satan refers to human instincts. The Hebrew definition of "satan" is "turn aside." Maimonides said the serpent had a rider. As Sforno teaches, this means

there are at least two faculties functioning: man's instinctual drives (serpent/Satan), and the "rider." What is this rider? It is the imagination. We can place our instincts in the service of either good or evil. God desires man possesses the instincts and harnesses them to perform His will, with a drive. Our psychic energy, imagination and plans can "ride" (guide) our instincts to do good, or evil. The instincts themselves are not inherently evil; if they were, God would not have given them man. Man's fantasies towards sin are the evil...they are the "rider." But with increased knowledge, man does not fantasize about evil, but uses his imagination to explore God's world and His Torah. Man can place his instincts in the service of God, as Torah says, "And you shall love Hashem your God, with all your heart, all your soul and all your might" (Deut. 6:5). Rashi comments, "Love Him with your two inclinations: your instincts for evil and your instincts to do good" (Ibid.).

This now explains that Satan wished to stop Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, and to stop Isaac too from surrendering his life. Both Abraham and Isaac endured the greatest duress, expressed as Satan trying to stop them. Against the Christian view of a living Satanic being, Torah/Bible teaches that Satan is human instinct.

Metaphor: Bible vs. Other Books

In His Torah, God does not openly discuss Satan. As it is not a physical reality but a psychological one, God does not wish man to entertain a physical understanding of that which isn't physical. In later works like Job, Satan is mentioned. But such works, although divine, are of a different character than Torah. Torah is the core guide for mankind and has the utmost restriction on presenting information: all must be understood literally, unless impossible to do so (Rabbi Israel Chait). Later books do not adhere to this restriction, as when Saul spoke with Samuel who had already died (Saul was hallucinating). Here, Prophets describes Samuel as living, in a metaphor, but does so to express just how real was this hallucination of Samuel was in Saul's mind, who was desperate to speak to him. Rabbi David Kimchi (Radak) elaborates on this hallucination in Samuel I 28:25.

Nachash and Samael

Maimonides wrote, "Samael and Satan are identical. There is a meaning in this name Samael, as there is also in the name nachash (serpent)." Samael is a compound noun of "sama"—blind, and "el"—God. That is, Samael blinds one from God.

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Nachash is the Hebrew term for serpent. But it also refers to sorcery, *nichush*: imagining what is not real. The serpent was not a real serpent, and it assisted in Eve's imagining what is not real, i.e., that the fruit was good.

Maimonides stresses "It is especially of importance to notice that the serpent did not approach or address Adam." He means that Eve's instincts only communicated with her, just as is true regarding all people: my instincts have no effect on you. The importance Maimonides stresses is because this proves that the serpent was not a beast, but part of Eve's internal makeup.

The Serpent's "Punishments"

God doesn't ask the serpent "Why have you done this?" as he asked Adam and Eve. Obviously, the serpent had no other option than to drive Eve towards her fantasies, and therefore it was not accused of veering from a more proper path...the serpent had only one path to follow. The serpent—instincts—drive man towards his desires. They cannot do anything else, just as the heart cannot do anything but pump blood, and the lungs to oxygenate blood. Thus, God did not "ask the serpent" means God does not hold the instincts accountable: they were functioning according to their design. What then is the punishment of the serpent?

God allowed Adam and Eve to sin to demonstrate that they could not exist in the most perfect form; their instinctual energies must be tamed. The serpent now crawling on its belly means God slowed the process of following our instincts. Eve was too quick to veer from God's words. God also decreased the satisfaction of instinctual attainment, referred to as "the serpent eating dust." Our instinctual attainments no longer provide the same "good taste" as before the sin. These two deter us from future sin.

God also created hatred between the serpent's seed and man's seed. Why is "seed" the theme here? To further prevent man from sin, God distanced the relationship between man and his instincts, referred to as "hatred" between man and the serpent. The relationship "continuing through their seed" means their seed is identical: a genetic phenomenon may allude to that which resides in a single being. Offspring and parents are of the same seed, and as the serpent too relates to Eve's seed, perhaps Torah tells us that the serpent is part of Eve. The serpent and the woman are one and the same being. That is, the serpent is part of the woman, as we said, it represents human instincts.

Maimonides wrote: "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." Torah's phrase "He will crush your head" doesn't make sense. It should say, "crush your head." But head—rosh—also means first. "He will crush you first" does in fact make sense: man will crush his desires at the beginning (head) of the battle. But if man senses an instinctual urge and does not fight it, the instincts will conquer man at the "heel" of the battle. Instincts have a property of swelling and generating greater force when they go unchallenged.

Summary

Now we understand that Satan is in fact referred to in Bible, but not in a literal manner that man might err and think Satan is a physical being. Satan's existence—our instincts—is vital knowledge for man to know himself, to deal with his inner world, so as to follow God. God not only discusses human instincts in His Bible, but He also offers us insight into the dynamics of the instincts by depicting a fictional conversation between Eve and a serpent. King Solomon too commenced his work Ecclesiastes with a depiction of the human mind. He too wished to enlighten us to our nature. God fiction ally depicts the instincts as a real being to teach us of their very real nature. ■

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Love and Marriage: Which Comes First?

RABBI REUVEN MANN

There is no institution which is more significant for the preservation of civilization than the family. The well-being of society, and the ideal of human progress, is dependent on a firm and stable family unit. Judaism revolves around the sanctity of the mishpacha (family) as it is absolutely vital to the proper raising of children and perpetuation of the Torah way of life.

No relationship is more important in this regard than that of marriage. Happy marriages produce thriving families. Unhappy ones create misery for the parties involved and for those who are closest to them. Thus the subject of choosing a spouse should be a matter of great concern.

The contemporary approach does not seem to rely too heavily on the use of rationality. People believe that it's all about falling in love. They date until they meet that "certain someone" who makes their heart flutter. They are convinced that the one they are madly in love with is the right person to marry. But the elevated divorce rate indicates that there is a problem. Love is extremely important, but is it enough?

Parshat Chayei Sarah is almost entirely devoted to the search for a suitable mate for Isaac, the second Patriarch. Abraham appointed his loyal servant Eliezer to journey to the land of Abraham's birth, to find a woman who would be a suitable match for his son. He supplied him with 10 camels bearing impressive gifts, as no expense would be spared in this most crucial endeavor.

However, the modern reader may find it difficult to relate to the method of



match-making used by Abraham. How can someone else pick a wife for you? Shouldn't the principals be directly and personally involved in the search for one's "intended?"

There is much that we can learn from the perspective of the patriarchs. Their main concern in marriage was not the pursuit of romance, which is the only thing that matters to most people in the contemporary world. Modern man fails to understand that true love is based on an appreciation of the virtue and character of an individual.

Modern man is consumed by the pursuit of self-gratification. In a sense he is incapable of true love. His idea of love is sensual and superficial and only lasts as long as it provides him with a "thrill." When the romantic feeling wears off, as it inevitably must, he moves on emotionally, because he has not developed an attachment to the genuine qualities of the other person.

Contrast this to the approach of the Patriarchs. Eliezer did not "arrange" the marriage of Isaac to Rebecca. He recognized the high level that Isaac was on, and what type of spiritual qualities a man like him would be attracted to. Moreover, Isaac was not searching for romance, but for a suitable

helpmate who shared his values and would be a full partner in achieving the exalted goals of his life. The choice of Rebecca was made with great wisdom and deep insight into her ethical and moral makeup. She was the appropriate match for Isaac.

When Isaac learned from Eliezer about her wonderful deeds, he realized that she was a true disciple of his mother Sarah. He was attracted to her not only on the ordinary emotional plane but on the deeper spiritual aspect as well. The verse says "she became a wife to him and he loved her" (Genesis 24:67). One may ask: "Shouldn't love precede marriage?"

The answer is that romantic love comes before marriage, but often doesn't survive it. True love comes later. Only by her being a wife to him and his being a husband to her, with the two of them working together as a team, facing the challenges of life and growing together, serving Hashem and fulfilling their unique spiritual mission, was true love attained.

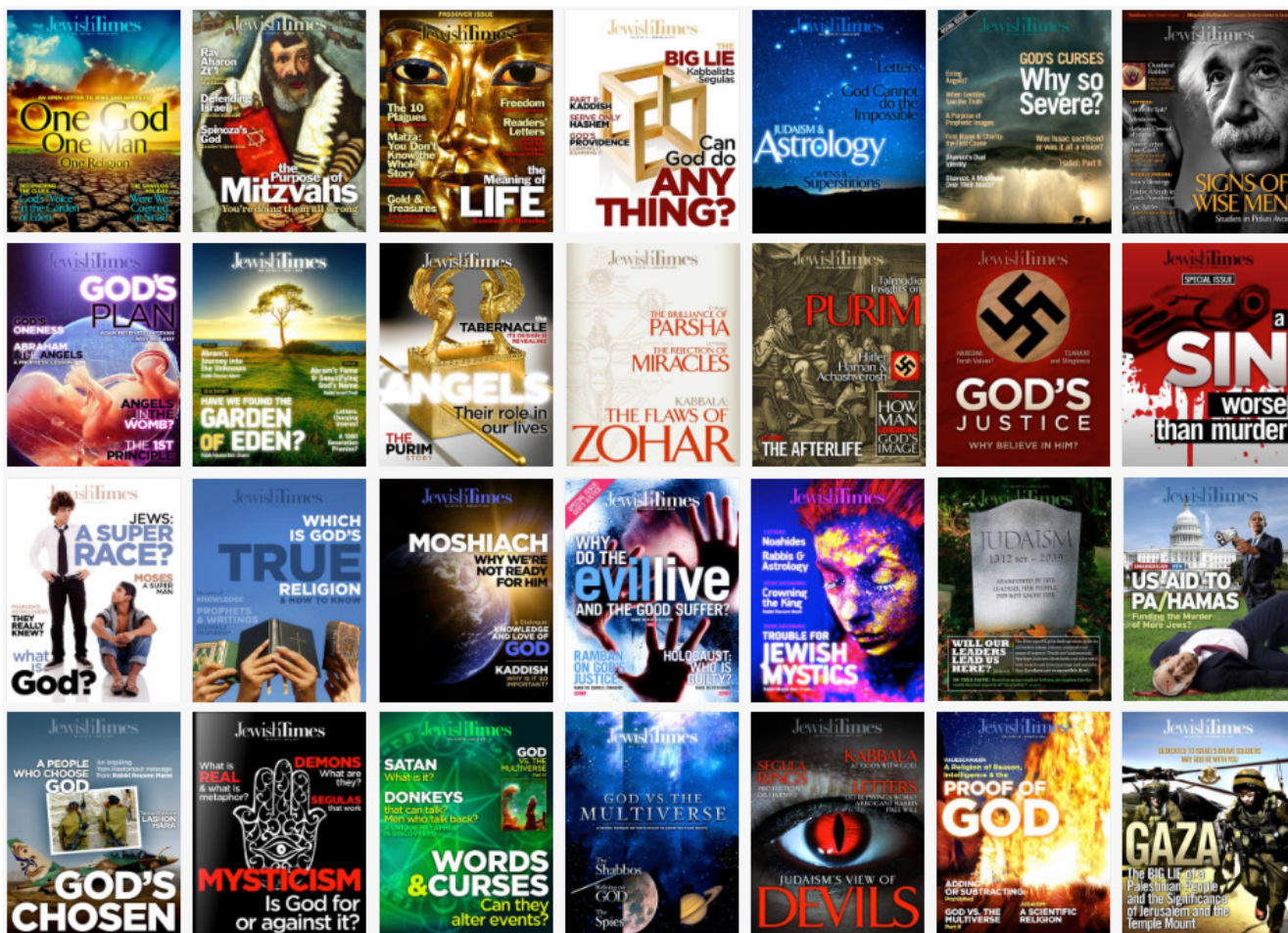
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Shabbat Shalom ■

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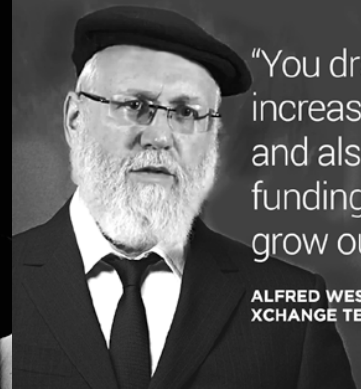
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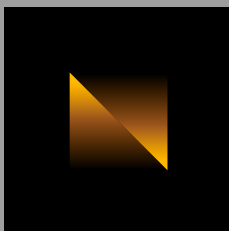
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