

JewishTimes

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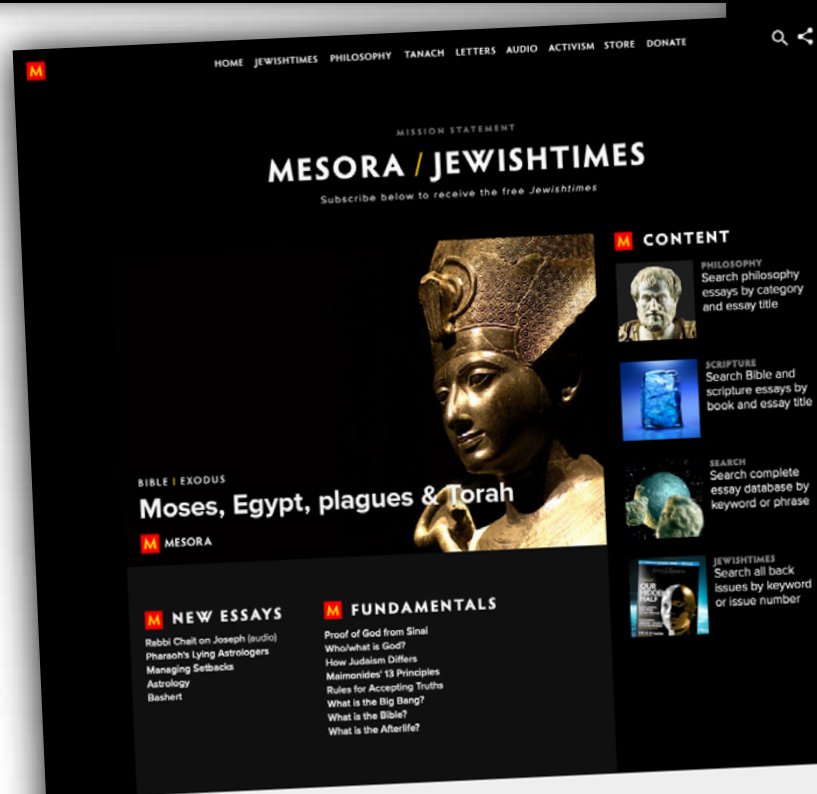
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OUR PURPOSE: WISDOM & MORALITY



God created man to live by truths concerning Him, creation, others and ourselves.

We must study God's instruction about what He is, what is idolatrous or fallacy, we must study nature, psychology, philosophy and morality. This draws us closer to God and He to us, and creates societal harmony which fosters greater Torah for all.

MORE BELOW

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

Racism: A Lie: Man descends from Adam. **Black/white twins** unveil the lie of racism. Bible denounces it: Moses' wife was black, our kings married Egyptians and Messiah descends from Moabites. "Better is the day of death than the day of birth" (Ecc. 7:1). Birth doesn't define us; how we live does.

Insecurity: Man's insecurities can be false, but reality is greater, as it is truth. Man seeks security about his future, accepting fallacies like astrology, amulets, omens, horoscopes and others. God prohibited such practices precisely because they are false. God is more powerful than false notions. Rely on Him alone.

Happiness: Many think wealth and success secure happiness. But Torah teaches happiness stems from study. When pursuing wisdom, one is most happy as Torah offers childlike amazement at every turn. Study offers the daily novelty necessary to retain interest and the depth that offers amazement.

Pleasing Others: Don't seek approval over truth. Torah says, "What can man do to me?" (Psalms 56:5), "Don't fear man" (Deut. 1:7). "Desist from man whose soul is in his nostrils, for what is he considered?" (Isaiah 2:22). Mortal attention is irrelevant. Following God earns all goodness.

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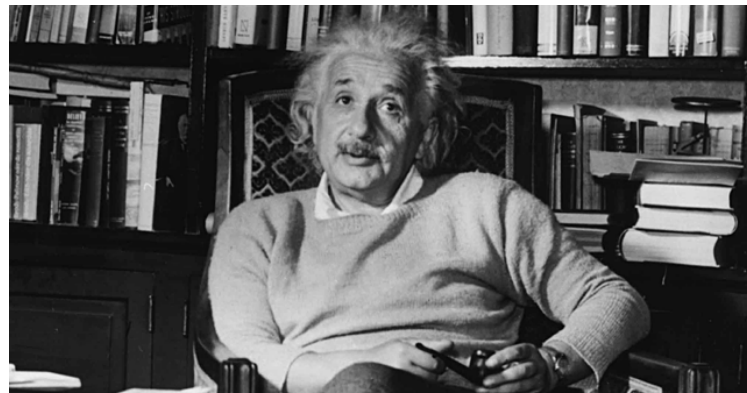
RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Torah contains astonishing clues, when unraveled, reveal God's brilliant lessons. Clues concerning the significance of bread and chametz unveil a totally different Passover.

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Based on Rabbi Israel Chait's lectures, we discover greater insight into God's plan and structure of man to direct him to happiness.



"The human mind, no matter how highly trained, cannot grasp the universe. We are in the position of a little child, entering a huge library whose walls are covered to the ceiling with books in many different tongues. The child knows that someone must have written those books. It does not know who or how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child notes a definite plan in the arrangement of the books, a mysterious order, which it does not comprehend, but only dimly suspects. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of the human mind, even the greatest and most cultured, toward God. We see a universe marvelously arranged, obeying certain laws, but we understand the laws only dimly. Our limited minds cannot grasp the mysterious force that sways the constellations."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Success: Is it Ours?

READER: Maimonides holds that only perfected people earn God's providence. And this is reasonable, as God will assist only he or she who selects a righteous path. God then assists them to perfect themselves even further. How then can it be said, "All that happens to man is God's will?" This should really read "all that happens to a 'perfected' man": not that "all" men are under God's providence.

RABBI: All that exists is due to God's will. Although an imperfect person is not righteous enough to deserve God's providence, a lowly person's success cannot be attributed to himself. Primarily, he did not create himself, so right off the bat, "his" success is due to God creating him,

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so as to experience success! Furthermore, he did not create the laws of nature and human interaction, all of which contribute to his success: he succeeds at real estate for example, because others need buildings, because he was fortunate to be hired by the firm from which the buyer sought buildings, because he was not sick the day this purchase occurred, and a string of other factors contributing to his success. Even his cunning that results in success, is designed by God.

Thus, one person who is righteous earns God's direct providence, while the average person not under divine providence is still operating within the universe's natural laws: the system God created. In this manner, every man's success is the result of God's will.

Torah addresses all matters:

Beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget the Lord your God—who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage; who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its seraph serpents and scorpions, a parched land with no water in it, who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers had never known, in order to test you by hardships only to benefit you in the end—and you say to yourselves, “My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me.” Remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to get wealth, in fulfillment of the covenant that He made on oath with your fathers, as is still the case (Deut. 8:14-18).

Torah teaches that man cannot attribute success to himself.

However, Maimonides also says that most troubles are self-inflicted, which seems to contradict what we just said: harm is attributed solely to man.

The answer is based on the distinction between God's laws and man's free will. Man's success depends upon God's laws, so man cannot attribute success solely to himself. But man can choose to abandon the harmonious operation of God's laws that can lead to success, and instead, harm himself by following a path contrary to God and nature. When man does so, he conflicts with the success the universe is designed to deliver.

In summary, righteous people always earn God's providence, while imperfect people might succeed without providence, but God's laws cause that success too. And man can also ignore the world's operation which will cause him harm. But the most definite fate is when we follow God's will, which benefits us in all ways and at all times. Even this knowledge of God's promises benefits man by providing him peace of mind. ■

Is Eliyahu Alive?

READER: In regards to Eliyahu Hanavi, how do we explain his existence...according to the philosophy of Rambam? We hold a seat for him at a bris, an additional cup for him on Passover etc. Is he now an angel? A wandering spirit? The whole idea of how Judaism approaches his being around doesn't add up.

RABBI: Rambam holds that angels exist only in man's visions, meaning, not on earth. And “wandering spirits” are not a reality. I don't know how Rambam would answer this. But everyone dies. Such sayings intend to convey some praise of Eliyahu. About Jacob, Chazal said he didn't die. But Torah says he was embalmed. Evidently Chazal's meaning is not literal. The rabbis say, “never dying” means there was minimal difference between one's life and death. Highly perfected people experience minimal change between life and death, it is as slight as a kiss, which is the term Chazal use about Moses' and Aaron's deaths: they both died “with a kiss.” Miriam did as well, but it isn't appropriate to talk about God kissing a woman (Rashi). It is notable that the 3 most perfected people were siblings. Talmud also says their father Amram was 1 of 4 people who never sinned. ■

A “Holy” Language?

READER: Is there anything intrinsically holy about Hebrew as a spoken and written language? I recall reading once that certain rishonim—possibly Rambam included—did not think so.

RABBI: The Rabbis call Hebrew “Lashon HaKodesh” as Hebrew has no exclusive words relating to intercourse and reproductive organs. Through refraining speech about sexuality, we sanctify ourselves, we make ourselves holy, kodesh. For speech is the vehicle through which man sublimates his lusts (Rabbi Israel Chait). By refraining from discussing sexual matters, we train our emotions to not satisfy our fantasies, and thereby, we perfect ourselves. We become holy. Just as vessels of the Temple are considered holy, as they have a designation for drawing close to God, we could say Hebrew shares that designation. ■

PASSOVER & BIBLE'S CLUES

Hidden Lessons of Bread, Matzah & Chametz

Bible's Cryptic Verses
of Great Importance

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

When studying Passover (Exod. 12), we note its distinction from the other holidays: Passover was celebrated in Egypt. That is, commands existed even prior to the Torah. Today, we reenact those commands in the form of the shank bone, the matza, the bitter herbs, and other laws. Succos and Shavuos are commemorations of God's kindness to us. Passover is as well, but it differs from the other holidays with our pre-Torah Passover observance in Egypt. Additionally, our adherence to God's commands in Egypt contributed to the holiday's structure: there is only one Succos holiday and one Shavuos. But there are two Passovers: the Passover of Egypt, and all subsequent Passovers. What may we learn from its distinction from the other two holidays? What differences exist between the Passover of Egypt, and our Passover?

Reading the Haggadah, we note a conflict in the identity of the matza. The Haggadah commences by describing the matza as "lachma anya"—poor man's bread. The Jews were fed this bread during their Egyptian bondage. However, later on, the Haggadah, quoting the Talmud Pesachim 116b states that matza is commanded in memory of the dough which did not rise due to the Egyptians' swift, panic-stricken oust of the Jews. (After the Death of Firstborns, the Egyptians panicked, "We are all dead!") We are obligated by Torah law to recall God's swift salvation by eating the matza. The Jews were driven out from the Egyptian city Raamses, and arrived at Succot. When the Jews arrived, they were able to bake that dough only into matza—not bread—for the hastened exodus retarded the leavening process. The matza serves as a barometer of the speed by which God freed the Jews. Was this matza part of God's orchestrated events? Did God desire this barometer in the form of matza?

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We should note at this point that the Jews in Egypt observed only one day of Passover (R. Yossi HaGalili, Jer. Talmud 14a). The Torah laws describing those Jews' obligation also appear to exclude any restriction of eating leaven. Certainly on the morrow of the Egyptian Passover, the Jews were permitted to eat leaven. Rabbeinu Nissim comments that it was only due to the rush of the Egyptians that their loaves were retarded in their leavening process. Had the Egyptians not rushed them, the Jews would have created bread for there was no prohibition on bread at that point.

But for which reason are we "commanded" in matza? The Haggada text clearly states it is based on the dough which did not rise during the Exodus. Thus, matza demonstrates salvation, the focus of the Passover holiday, posing this serious problem: not only do later generations have the command of eating matza, but the Jews in Egypt were also commanded in eating the Lamb with matza, (and maror). Now, if while still in Egypt, when there was yet no "swift salvation", why were those Jews commanded in this matza? How can Jews in Egypt, not yet redeemed, commemorate a Redemption, which did not yet happen?! It is true: the Jews ate matza while slaves. However, the Haggada says the "command" of eating matza was only due to the speedy salvation. This implies that the Jews in Egypt who also had the command of matza, were obligated for the same reason, which is incomprehensible.

The Torah spends much time discussing the dough, and oddly, also refers to it in the singular, "And the people lifted up (carried) HIS loaf from the kneading troughs before it had risen, rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders (Exod. 12:34)." "And they baked THE loaf (Exod. 12:39)..." Why this singular reference to numerous loaves? Why so much discussion about the loaf? And why did the Jews "roll up the loaf in their garments, placing on their shoulders"? This is significant, as God records this.

Finally, Rashi praises the Jews for not taking any provisions when they left: "And they baked the loaf they took out of Egypt into cakes of matza, because it

did not leaven, because they were driven from Egypt, and they could not tarry, and also provisions they did not make for themselves" (Exod. 12:39). Rashi says the fact they did not take provisions demonstrated their trust that God would provide. If so, why in the very same verse, did the Jews bake the dough? This implies the exact opposite of Rashi's intent, that the Jews did in fact distrust God! It is startling that a contradiction to Rashi is derived from the very same verse. In order to answer these questions, it is essential to gain some background.

The Egyptians originated bread. The Egyptian taskmasters ate their bread, as their Jewish slaves gaped enviously, breaking their teeth on dry matza, or "poor man's bread"—a relative term: "poor" is in comparison to something richer. "Poor man's bread" teaches that there was a "richer bread" in Egypt: soft bread, which the Egyptians enjoyed while feeding their Jewish slaves matza.

Let us now understand Rashi's comment. He said the Jews were praiseworthy as they did not take food with them upon their exodus. Thereby, they displayed a trust in God's ability to provide food. But we noted that in the very same verse where Rashi derives praise for the Jews, whom Rashi said took no food, it clearly states they in fact took the loaves! Rashi's source seems internally contradictory. I would suggest that a new attitude prevailed among the Jews.

The Significance of Bread

The Jews did not take that loaf from Egypt for the purpose of consumption. This is Rashi's point. The Jews took the loaf because of what it represented: freedom. They were fed matza for the duration of their 210-year bondage. They were now free. They cherished this freedom and longed to express it. Baking bread instead of dry, poor man's matza was this expression of freedom. They now wished to be like their previous taskmasters: "bread eaters." A free people. Baking and eating bread was the very distinction between slave and master in Egypt. The Jews wished to shed their identity as slaves and display their freedom. Baking and

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eating bread would achieve this. To further prove that the Jews valued such identification with the Egyptians, Rashi comments that when the Jews despoiled the Egyptians at Moses' command, "they valued the Egyptian clothing more than the silver and gold" (Exodus 12:35).

The Jews' attachment to bread is made clear in two glaring details:

And the people lifted up (carried) his loaf from the kneading troughs before it had risen, rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders (Exod. 12:34).

The Torah records a strange act: the Jews carried this loaf in their garments, not in a bag or a sack. Additionally, they placed it on their shoulders. "The suit makes the man." In other words, as clothing is man's expression of his identity, the Jews placed in their clothes the dough intended to become free man's bread. They expressed this link between clothing (identity) and the dough. Furthermore, they carried it on their shoulders, as a badge of sorts. They did not pack the dough away. It was a prized entity they wished to display, forming part of their dress.

Torah records these details as they are significant of the problem God was addressing. "Rolled up in their garments, placed on their shoulders" are intentionally recorded in the Torah to reveal the Jew's value of bread as a medallion of freedom.

Freedom is Not Inherently Good

However, the Jews had the wrong idea. Their newfound freedom was not intended by God to be unrestricted as they wished to express. They were freed, but for a new purpose: following God. Had they been allowed to indulge freedom unrestrained, expressed by eating leavened bread, this would corrupt God's plan that they serve Him. Freedom and servitude to God are mutually exclusive. Therefore, God did not allow the dough to rise. They trusted God, they saw all the miracles. They needed no food for their journey, as God would provide. But they took the dough in hopes of making that "free man's food": leavened bread. The dough was not taken for subsistence, but to symbolize their freedom. They hoped upon reaching their destination, to bake bread, expressing their own idea of freedom. But the verse says the dough only became matza, not their intended leavened end-product. Matza was a mere result of a hurried exodus. Matza was so significant, that the Torah recorded this "event" of their failed bread making. They planned to bake bread, but it ended up matza. Torah teaches that matza was not the Jews' plan. It points out through inference that they desired leavened bread. It also teaches that bread was not desired so much for subsistence, as they verse ends, "and provisions they made not for themselves" (Exod. 12:39). They did not prepare food, as they relied on God. This is Rashi's point. The dough they

took was not for provisions; it was to express unrestricted freedom. This unrestricted freedom is a direct contradiction to God's plan that they serve Him.

The Jews were now excited at the prospect of complete freedom. God's plan could not tolerate the Jews' wish. God desired the Jews to go from Egyptian servitude, to another servitude: adherence to God. He did not wish the Jews' to experience or express unrestricted freedom, as the Jews wished. To demonstrate this, God retarded the dough from leavening. The matza they baked at Succot was not an accident, but God's purposeful plan, that any expression of unrestricted freedom be thwarted.

One Act: Two Goals

Matza does not only recall God's swift salvation, but it also represents Egyptian servitude. In the precise activity that the Jews wished to express unrestricted freedom (baking bread), God stepped in with one action serving two major objectives. Causing a swift ousting of the Jews, God did not allow the dough to rise. God did not allow the Jews to enjoy leavened bread, which would embody unrestricted freedom. But even more amazing is that with one action of a speedy redemption, God not only restricted the dough's process, but God became the Jews' savior. He replaced the Jews' intended, unrestricted freedom with the correct purpose of their salvation: to be indebted to God.

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The one act—God’s swift Exodus—prevented the wrong idea of freedom from being realized, and also instilled in the Jews the right idea: they were now indebted to God, their Savior. They were not left to unrestricted freedom, but were now bound to God by His new act of kindness. An astonishing point.

Gratitude

We return to the command to eat matza in Egypt. Obviously, this command could not commemorate an event, which did not yet happen. God commanded them to eat the matza for what it did represent: servitude. While in Egypt, why did God wish the Jews to be mindful of servitude? Here I feel we arrive at another basic theme of the Passover holiday: contrast between servitude and freedom. In Pesachim 116a, the Talmud records a mishna, which states that our transmission of the Haggadah must commence with our degradation, and conclude with praise. We therefore discuss our servitude or our ancestor’s idolatrous practices, and conclude with our salvation and praise for God. We do this, as such a contrast engenders a true appreciation for God’s salvation. Perhaps also the two Passover holidays—in Egypt and today—embody this concept of our salvation. A central goal of Passover is to arrive at an appreciation for God’s redemption. A contrast between our Egyptian Passover and today’s Passover best engender such appreciation. It compares our previous bondage to our current freedom. Perhaps for this reason we are also commanded to view ourselves as if we left Egypt.

So, in Egypt, we ate matza representing Egyptian servitude. Today we eat it as the Haggadah says, to recall the swift salvation, which retarded the leavening process, creating matza. We end up with a comparison between Passover of Egypt, and today’s Passover: servitude versus salvation. The emergence of the Jewish people was on Passover. We have two Passovers, displaying the concept of a transition, a before and an after.

An interesting and subtle point is that God mimicked the matza of servitude. He orchestrated the salvation around matza. Why? Perhaps as matza in its original form in Egypt embodied servitude, God wished that servitude be the continued theme of Passover. He therefore centered the salvation on the dough, which eventuated in matza; thereby teaching that we are to be slaves to God: “You are my slaves” (Lev. 25:55). Torah clearly views man’s relationship to God as a servant.

With this understanding of the significance of leavened bread, we understand why the Torah refers to all the Jews’ loaves in the singular. The Jews shared one common desire: to express their freedom by eating what their oppressors ate. However, contrary to human feelings, “unrestricted freedom” is an evil...odd as it sounds. God’s plan in creating man was to direct us all in understanding and delighting in the truth of God, His role as the exclusive Creator, the One who manages man’s affairs, and Who is omnipotent (Ramban, Exod. 13:16). God had a purpose in creating man, and it is not to be free and live as we wish. Our purpose is to engage the one faculty granted to us and no other creation: our intellect. And the primary use of the intellect is forfeited when we do not recognize God, as the Egyptians displayed. Therefore, God freed us so we may enter a new servitude according: serving Him. But this service of God should not be viewed as a negative, as in serving man. Serving God is achieved by studying Him, His Torah and creation: a truly happy and beautiful life. We could equate the enjoyment and benefit in serving God to serving a human master who gives us gold if we simply look for it. So too is the service of God. If we merely learn and seek new ideas, He will open new vaults of wisdom. We are so fortunate.

Finally, what is the significance of chametz, leaven? Once leavened bread took on the role of freedom with no connection to God, leaven thereby took on a character that opposes the very salvation, demonstrated by the matza. This explains that leaven was not mentioned in connection with the instructions pertaining to the original Egyptian Paschal lamb. The Jews had not yet displayed any attachment to bread. Only subsequent to the first Passover celebration do we see the Jews’ problematic tie to leavened bread. Therefore, only afterwards is there any prohibition on bread. ■



Encounter with the Creator



Rabbi Reuven Mann

This week's Parsha initiates the third Book of the Torah, Vayikra. It's major subject is the laws pertaining to the various sacrifices that were offered in the Mishkan and later in the Holy Temple. Jews have not brought animal sacrifices for the few thousand years that we have been in exile and without the Beit Hamikdosh. Yet, we continue to study the extensive halachot pertaining to them and pray for their restoration. What is the purpose and goal of this unique religious service?

The subject of sacrifice is a major aspect of the dialogue between Moshe and Paraoh which is recorded in Shemot. As the blows brought upon Egypt become harsher the Egyptian King seemed to be softening and growing more agreeable. The plague of Barad (Hail) was too much to take and Paraoh begged Moshe to end it. But once the pain was removed his stubbornness returned and he did not send forth the Jews.

However, the devastation wrought by the Makkah of Arbeh (locust) caused Paraoh to reconsider. He was now willing to grant the Jews their request but once the locust were removed he again failed to follow through. This led to the 9th and deadliest blow so far, choshech (darkness). For three days every Egyptian was paralyzed, unable to see or to move. The extreme fear engendered by the absolute isolation produced results. For the first time Paraoh summoned Moshe after the plague was removed. Apparently, he had reached his tipping point.

Paraoh then yielded to Moshe saying that the Jews could take everyone including the children and infants on their religious journey. He only had one condition, that they leave behind their livestock. Paraoh suspected that the real intention of Moshe was to leave Egypt on the pretext of needing to serve Hashem in the Wilderness, and never return. He therefore demanded that Moshe

leave the animals behind as a security which would be forfeited if the slaves did not return to resume their labors.

But if they did not bring along their animals how could the people offer sacrifices to Hashem? Paraoh was not altogether unreasonable. His point was that Moshe should estimate how many of the creatures he would probably need and leave the rest behind. Why was it necessary to exit Egypt with all their livestock unless they intended to never return?

Moshe replied; "Even you will place in our hands feast-offerings and elevation-offerings and we shall offer them to Hashem, our G-d. And our livestock, as well, will go with us— not a hoof will be left—for from it we shall take to serve Hashem, our G-d; and we will not know with what we are to serve Hashem until our arrival there."

At first glance Paraoh's position seems sensible. Why must all their animals be taken? Why not take what you think you will need and leave the rest behind? Rabbi Israel Chait explained that Moshe was making a significant point here. He was telling Paraoh that we serve Hashem whose nature is inscrutable. We therefore refrain from projecting our calculations or wishes onto Him. For us to determine what He will require of us in our sacrificial service would be the height of arrogance implying that we have some way of anticipating His Will. (CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

This negotiation did not end well as Paraoh became angry and summarily dismissed Moshe threatening to kill him if he ever sought to return. The effort to persuade Paraoh to recognize the Creator and submit to His command regarding the Jews was now over. What remained was the plague of the firstborn which would bring Paraoh and all Egypt to their knees compelling them to beg Moshe to lead his people out of the country immediately.

The saga of Paraoh is very tragic. Hashem provided him with every opportunity to change his course. The period of the plagues was one of Divine Revelation. Hashem provided the Egyptian ruler with Moshe and Aaron two of the greatest prophets in human history to instruct and guide him. Paraoh was not a stupid individual and he had his moments of clarity but ultimately he could not overcome his resistances and make the necessary changes. Why was he unable to grasp the lessons of the Divine Revelation which unfolded before his very eyes and was obvious to everyone?

Every individual has areas of psychological irrationality which impede him from perceiving the truth even when the evidence is very compelling. Paraoh was not emotionally disposed to accept the message of Moshe. The manifestations of Divine Providence in the form of the plagues were so convincing that even Paraoh could not ignore them. At one point he said to Moshe; "This time I have sinned; Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones." But when it came to acting in accordance with this knowledge his resistances dominated him.

We must all learn from the story of Paraoh and discover the hidden pockets of irrationality that reside within us and work to overcome them. The goal is to improve ourselves so that we can obey the Will of Hashem even though it may be contrary to what we would prefer to do.

Perhaps we can now appreciate the benefits of the offerings that were brought in the Temple. A major objective of sacrifices is to enable us to come before Hashem and acknowledge that He is the source of all existence. In this encounter we become cognizant of our smallness in relation to the infinite and indescribable greatness of the Creator. This impels us to look deeply into our souls, identify our flaws and resolve to rectify them. It is only when we stand before G-d that we can summon the honesty, humbleness and courage necessary to change our direction in life.

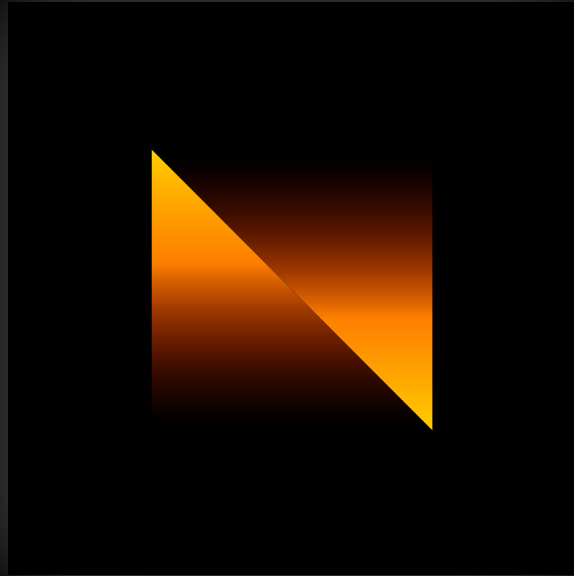
Rabbi S.R. Hirsch explained that the root of the hebrew word Korban (sacrifice) is KRV which means to "draw close." Thus the purpose of the offering is to enable the offerer to get nearer to Hashem. This can be a transformational experience which prompts the individual to put his ego aside and achieve a greater resolve to conform to the Will of G-d. 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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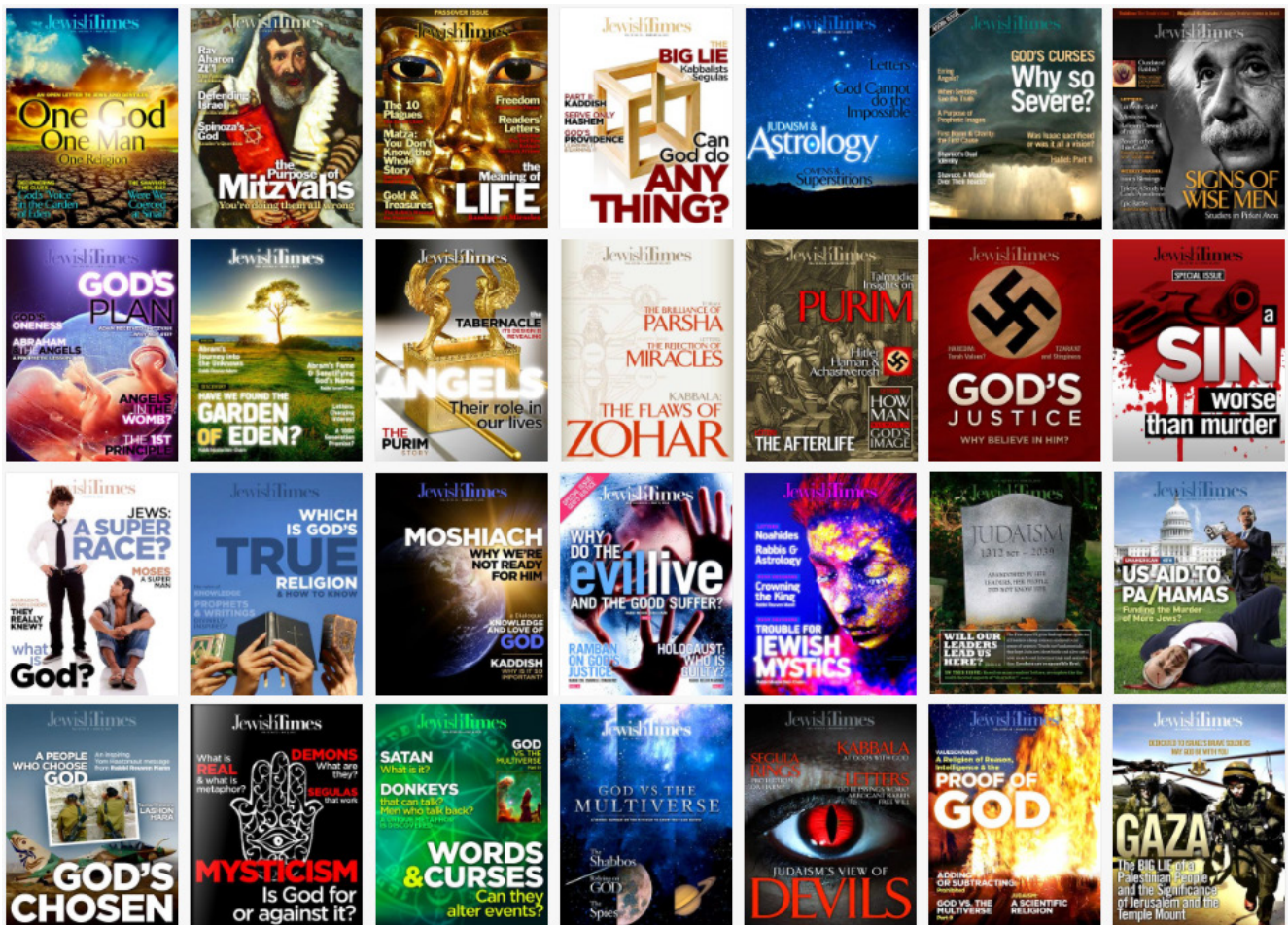
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Happiness & Pleasure

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

In his book series “Ethics of the Fathers” (Amazon), Rabbi Israel Chait explained human development. As children, we direct 100% of our energies when at play. This energy is fully expended, producing “happiness.” Conversely, “frustration” is the state when one—child or adult—cannot expend all his or her energy. But fully expressed energies produce complete happiness. We witness children fully absorbed in their play and imagination. Their intensity in play is the barometer of their degree of satisfaction.

But God designed man that, as he matures, his energies become frustrated with infantile pleasures. God desires man to redirect his energies towards the world of wisdom, which obviously cannot occur in infancy. But as the mind develops, this becomes possible. Had God allowed man’s energies throughout life to find complete satisfaction in physical pursuits, man would never leave the world of physical enjoyments. He would be as an animal, finding play, rest and eating fully satisfying. He would have no motivation to look past sensual pleasures and discover wisdom. Thus, this planned frustration with sensual pleasures intends to direct man towards the greater experience of pondering God’s wisdom that permeates the human design and condition, the universe, and Torah. Even greater energies can immerse in the world of the mind—as is God’s plan—where man finds the greatest happiness. The great philosophers agree.

But if an adult does not redirect his attention towards the world of wisdom, and instead, continues his pursuit for pleasure in sensual experiences, he remains frustrated. Foolish man constantly seeks the next business deal, the newer car or the larger home to attain happiness...which never arrives, or dwindles quickly. Man was not designed to find happiness in the physical world, but in the world of wisdom. Adam the First spent his time engaged in science, in



zoology. And the greatest minds taught that man is most happy when he pursues wisdom. It is wise that we follow those content thinkers, and not follow lesser unhappy minds chasing fantasy.

It is curious: Can we explain this dynamic of frustration, where man cannot find new “adult” physical pleasures equally enjoyable as infant pleasures?

When pleasure is first experienced, this marks the psyche with “models” of pleasure: man identifies these unique infantile experiences as the raw original definitions of “pleasure.” Man cannot replace these definitions as an adult, nor does he want to, as he truly found complete pleasure in youth. Youthful pleasures are man’s definitions of pleasure. And once the mind defines pleasure, it remains with these models as definitions.

The adult carries these imprinted pleasurable memories, and will seek to return to that state of 100% pleasure. But an adult can no longer achieve pleasure through infantile experiences of playing with toys. He then

seeks pleasure from replacement objects and activities. But replacements, by definition, are not the original, and fall short of infantile pleasure, thereby producing dissatisfaction.

This explains why new models of physical pleasure cannot be created in the physical realm: “pleasure” has already been indelibly defined during youth. Similarly, Sigmund Freud’s oedipal and electra complexes refer to the child’s unconscious sexual desire for the parent of the opposite sex and, and removal of the parent of the same sex. As the child develops, this desire is repressed, but emerges later in teenage, now seeking a partner who somehow resembles the parent. The partner is a replacement. We see that in many areas, sensual satisfaction finds frustration in youth, and later seeks replacements in adulthood.

But man’s ultimate pleasure can only be derived from engaging his intellect. God designed man that in wisdom, one’s energies find complete expenditure which translates to complete happiness. ■

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