

JewishTimes

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**GOD, FAMILY, MYSTICISM,
POLITICS, SCIENCE,
PHILOSOPHY,
PSYCHOLOGY...**

**BIBLE HAS ALL
THE ANSWERS**

AVOS 5:22

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How exactly is "all" found in Torah? Rabbi Chait explains this enigmatic statement from Pirkei Avos.



"And everyone that is called by my name I have created for my Glory" (Isaiah 43:7). Radak comments: "Israel, who believes in Me, I have created for my Honor, so that they spread My Glory to all the people." Radak is saying that God's compassion and kindness is not limited to the nation of Israel, but includes all mankind. It is incumbent upon Israel to be concerned also about all humanity and to teach all mankind the true ideas of Torah. This is stated in Isaiah 2:2,3 and elsewhere throughout the Prophets. It is God's will that all mankind should have the opportunity to live according to the Torah way of life.

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Rejecting Jesus

READER: Having read the last Jewishtimes, the question that came forth is this: Is Judaism an anti-Christ religion? There are a lot of religions in the world, but Mesora never tries to demolish them; it is only Jesus and the resurrection [that you address]. Is Christianity a threat to Mesora and Rabbinic Judaism? I have been studying Judaism with Mesora independently for the past 10 years and I really enjoy the various articles each week from the organization. I respect Rabbinic Judaism and the rational explanation of the Torah. But what bothers me is while Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other major religions and various cult like the new age religions have damaging doctrines, Mesora never singles them out to point to the errors of their ways. While not defending Jesus and Christianity, Rabbi David

Gottlieb in his book Living up to the truth says that while Judaism had the greatest probability of truth as regard mass witness, Christianity also had the nearest evidence to this, as most of Jesus miracles were performed before thousands of witnesses. The central point of the Paul analysis is that if Jesus was not resurrected, then the Christian faith is in vein, but the account of resurrection in Mathew testify that the resurrection is not a private affair: Jewish guards were aware of it, some dead people came back to life, he appears to several of his disciples. The Catholic Church for many years keep a Turin cloth. Jesus over the past 2000 years had been appearing to different people, Muslim, saints and others, all these were well documented.

—Nora Esom

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RABBI: Mesora has addressed the fallacies of Islam, Christianity and even Jews spreading falsehood in the name of Judaism. The reason Christianity has been recently addressed is due to conversations and emails to Mesora that focus on Christianity. Jesus and the resurrection pose no threat as the claims lack validation. None of Christianity's claims are validated as historical fact, which requires mass witnesses, not simply stories about events. History is validated only when there exists unanimous transmission, like Caesar's rule, Alexander the great, and other universally transmitted events by masses.

You quote Rabbi David Gottlieb, "Christianity also had the nearest evidence to this, as most of Jesus miracles were performed before thousands of witnesses." Not so. You must distinguish between "stories of claims" of witnesses (Christianity), and between "transmission" by eye witnesses (Judaism), i.e., verbal communication originating at the event, not later. Christianity's stories were written later, but were not transmitted en masse from the purported event, as was Revelation at Sinai, explaining the delay from Christianity's record of purported events. For Christianity could not escape condemnation, had it stated an event occurred to some people at present. No one would accept or transmit a lie about where they were that day. Therefore, Christianity scripted false events that "took place decades earlier."

Furthermore, Judaism does not rely on a text, as that is circular reasoning, to prove a text from the text. No, Judaism relies on an unbroken chain of transmission where all Jews—and even Christians and Muslims—affirm an identical historical event of 2.5 million Jews witnessing Revelation at Sinai. For 3333 years, Jews and others have reiterated Moses' words that we must not forget what our eyes saw. In contrast, Paul found a previously written creed of resurrection, which he did not witness. There are no mass witnesses for Jesus' rise from the dead. There are no mass witnesses for any other religion's claims of divine origin. Additionally, the claim of witnesses at Jesus resurrection are vague, whereas Torah records Jewish tribal names, family names, princes, census, dates, and locations of the Jews who left Egypt and witnessed Revelation.

The matters you cite regarding 1000s who saw Jesus' resurrection or Jesus appearing to them have never stood the test of validation, as I just wrote. It is similar to someone showing you a story about some culture 50 years ago, which had a leader who was resurrected, or

like people claiming UFO sightings. One must be quite doubtful about UFOs and claims of Jesus' resurrection. They are all sketchy claims. Why don't these claims meet the level of credibility we find for Caesar or Alexander the Great? Those histories are not doubted. But stories of Jesus and UFOs are. This should enlighten the intelligent person. Mere stories do not validate history. And the shroud of Turin has been discredited. Finally, your claim that "Jewish guards were aware of it, some dead people came back to life, Jesus appears to several of his disciples, Jesus over the past 2000 years had been appearing to different people, Muslim, saints and others" are not validated by witnesses. ■

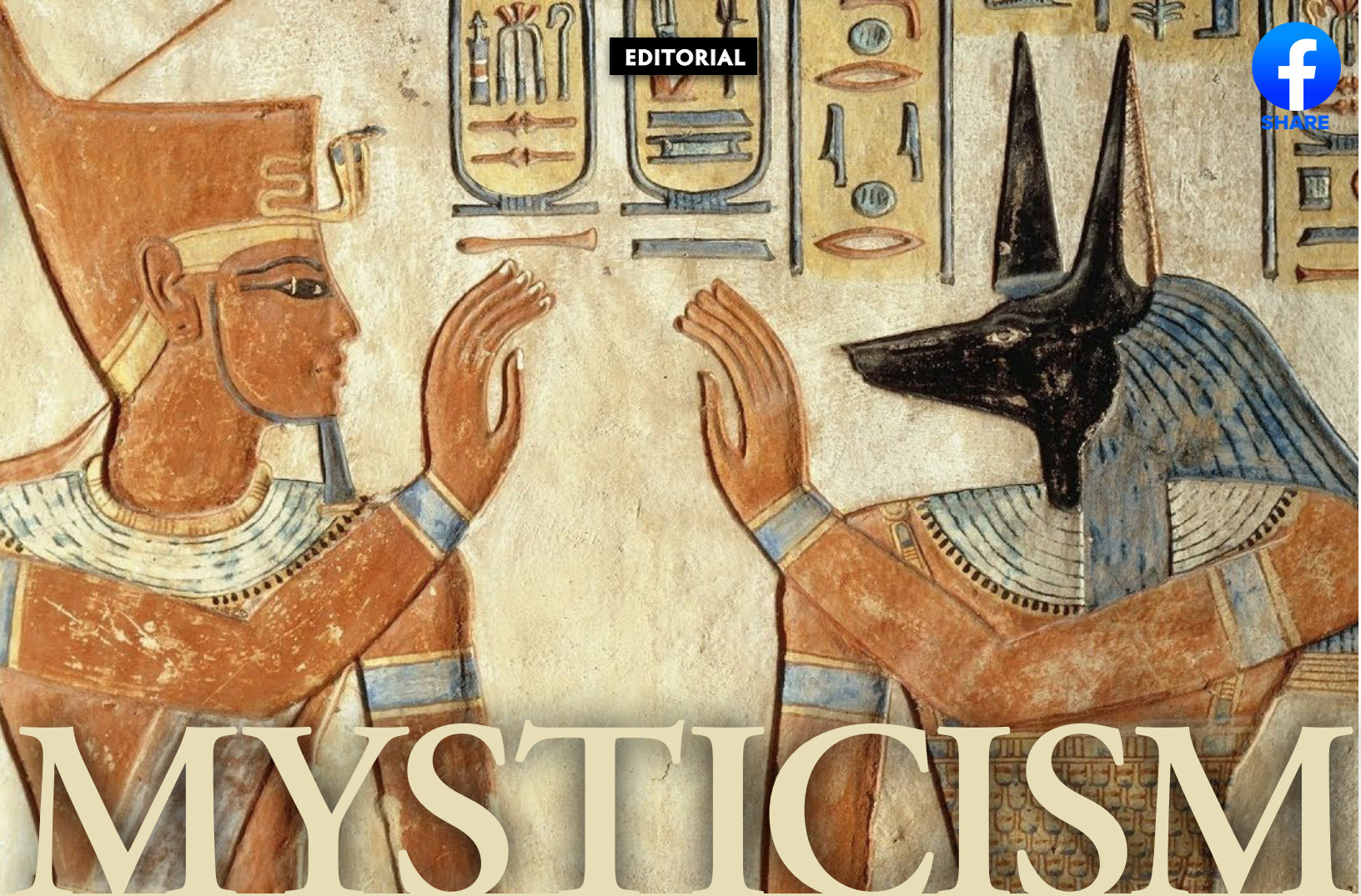
Are we all Jewish?

READER: Hashem created Mankind in his image. Man and woman did he create them. But then He took the man and put him in the garden. From the man's rib he created a woman. Is this man the man he first created? What happened to the women that was initially created "In our image?" Also, if Adam and Eve were the original DNA of the later Hebrews who due to Abraham became the first Jews, this line of evolution must have passed through Noah. Was Noah a DNA Jew, or a Jew "in advance?" If so, then if all the earth's people were destroyed by the flood, the human race that came after had Noah's DNA making all the gentiles biological Jews, or pre-Hebrews. Can you explain?

—Label Goodman

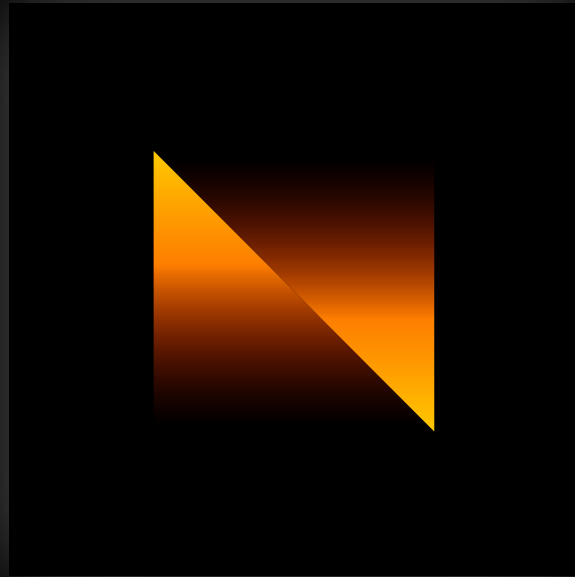
RABBI: Genesis offers a few accounts of the same Adam and Eve to draw out various lessons. Adam was "made from the earth" but the process is not known: Did he evolve (from prehistoric man), or was he created anew? Human remains date back 300,000 years...longer than Adam who is only 5782 years old.

Regarding DNA, all mankind descends from Adam and Eve, through Noah and his family. Jews did not exist yet. The "Jew" is a group of descendants of the 12 Tribes obligated in Torah. But the "Jew" is not a different DNA type. The Jew is a human who has Torah obligations. God created a single human race, and from them, He selected a group of monotheists to receive His Torah to teach mankind. ■



MYSTICISM

One would think that if mysticism, magic, astrology and luck actually existed, that those with the greatest knowledge of the universe—scientists—would have verified these assumed powers. But just the opposite is true: scientists have verified only natural laws and cause and effect. Mystics would retort that it is precisely because mysticism and astrology operate not within the observable world, that scientists have not found evidence. Of course scientists will respond that if this is the case, what forces one to suggest the existence of something which cannot be observed? If we look at the most mystical and astrological societies like ancient Egypt, we wonder why they did not use their astrology or black magic to terminate the 10 plagues.



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CONDÉ NAST





Political Acumen

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

Isaac unstopped the wells which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham and which the Philistines had stopped-up after Abraham's death; and Isaac gave them the same names that his father had given them. And Isaac's servants, digging in the wadi, found there a well of spring water. The herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." He named that well "Contention" because they contended with him. And when they dug another well, they disputed over that one also; so he named it "Hindrance." He moved from there and dug yet another well, and they did not quarrel over it, so he called it "Spaciousness" saying, "Now at last the Lord has granted us ample space to increase in the land. (Gen. 26:18-22)

I understand the idea behind giving a positive name to a location or to a well. For through such naming, a person wishes to spread praise or thanks to God for goodness in his life. He spreads this praise for thanks to God by giving a permanent name to a location which recalls the goodness he received. This explains Abraham naming the well Beer-Sheva, Hagar naming the well

Beer-Lchai-Roi, and Jacob naming that place where God revealed Himself, Bet-El. But why would Isaac name wells after the negative encounters? And why did the shepherds of Gerar ultimately abandon striving with Isaac's servants?

I believe these two matters are related, which also reveals Isaac's political acumen. Isaac sought to be relieved of the robbery of his wells. His strategy was to publicize the wrongdoing of Gerar's shepherds. After the shepherds' 2nd robbery, they saw Isaac repeatedly publicizing their negative behavior through naming the wells after their behavior; they did not desire this bad reputation. Therefore they desisted from their crooked ways. This is why we learn that the 3rd well experienced no contention, to tell us that Isaac's strategy was successful. Isaac knew that as societies are built upon cooperation, and that their growth is due to exports, a bad reputation will deter commerce abroad. Appealing directly to their goal of enriching themselves (robbing the wells), Isaac proclaimed their evil ways through naming the wells, thereby forcing the shepherds to abandon robbery, and maintaining good relations with others, for their own greed. ■



seemed to like him a few days, because of his love for her.” In other words, this felt like a small price to pay, for a woman of such superlative qualities. We learn from this, that if one has an opportunity for a great Shiduch, but obtaining it will require an enormous amount of capital, he should not be deterred. That is what money was made for!

But, in spite of Yaakov’s best efforts, things did not go as planned. The time came for the wedding, and Lavan made all the arrangements. Yaakov entered the Chuppah (wedding canopy), believing he was marrying Rachel; but, “When morning came behold it was Leah.” The darkness of the tent, and the extreme modesty practiced by these righteous individuals, prevented this crucial discovery from being made, until the light of day.

Yaakov, expressed his severe disappointment to Lavan, saying, “Was it not for Rachel that I worked for you? Why have you deceived me?” Lavan, didn’t skip a beat and had a ready retort; “It is not done that way in this place, to give the younger before the older. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other one too, for the work which you will perform for me, yet another seven years.”

With great smoothness and deception, Lavan had been able to achieve his objectives. He secured a great husband for his older daughter, and obtained fourteen years of honest labor, from his trusted nephew; in exchange for his younger child. Of course, this entailed the blatant cheating of Yaakov, with whom he had made a clear-cut agreement. But Lavan, could comfort himself with the assurance that he really had no choice; because, “that is not done in this place...” After all, one must respect the Minhag HaMakom (“custom of the place”).

It should be noted that Yaakov only voiced his anger to Lavan. One wonders, why he said nothing to Leah. After all, it was she who directly participated in the deception, by pretending to be Rachel. This would certainly seem to be valid grounds for divorce. Yet Yaakov, neither divorced nor rebuked Leah. He simply adjusted to the new reality, and moved on. The matter never came up again.

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Deception

This week’s Parsha, VaYetzei, describes the stormy odyssey of our third and final Patriarch, Yaakov. His life was saved by his mother, Rivka, who divined with her prophetic spirit that her older son had decided to wait for the death of Yitzchak, and then execute his younger sibling.

However, she chose not to inform Yitzchak of Eisav’s plans. She very shrewdly, utilized the need of Yaakov, to find an appropriate Shiduch (match) as the basis for the idea, that he should travel to the house of her brother, Lavan, and seek a wife from among his daughters. Yitzchak acceded to this initiative, and sent Yaakov—with blessings—to the house of Lavan.

Initially, things went well for Yaakov, in his encounter with Lavan, who provided hospitality to his nephew. When Lavan informed him that he wanted to compensate him—for the work of shepherding his animals—Yaakov, saw an opportunity to secure a marriage with the woman he loved, Rachel.

Yaakov was extremely generous in his offer. Being as precise as he could, he said, “I will work for you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.” And Lavan was equally explicit in his response. “It is better for me to give her to you, than to give her to another man. Stay with me.”

It seems that seven years of wages is a long time and a high price to pay for a marriage. But Yaakov didn’t look at it that way. “Yaakov worked seven years for Rachel, and they

Rabbi Reuven Mann

Yaakov remained married to Leah, but could not masquerade the fact that it was Rachel who he loved. Once Leah began having children, it became clearer to Yaakov that she would be a partner in his mission to establish the “Shivtei Kah” (Tribes of the A-mighty); and he acted accordingly.

Yaakov recognized that what he had regarded as a deception, was actually a good thing. For, it was through Leah, the unwanted wife, that most of his children were born. In remaining married to her, he relinquished his personal preferences in the area of family life, and embraced the plan of Hashem.

And, it is interesting to note, that he never rebuked Leah—for willingly going along—with the cheating scheme of Lavan. In my opinion, it is because he didn’t blame Leah for what she did. Yaakov believed that she acted in innocence—because she (as well as Rachel)—was never informed about the agreement between Lavan and Yaakov; whereby Rachel would be given to Yaakov, in exchange for seven years of work. When the time for the nuptials arrived, Lavan informed Leah that he had arranged for her, to be the bride of Yaakov.

This explains the great pain Leah felt, when she sensed that Yaakov loved Rachel more than her; and why she hoped and prayed, that the children she was having, would effectuate a change in Yaakov’s feelings toward her.

The most compelling piece of evidence, to support my contention, is to be found in Leah’s angry response to Rachel’s request for the Dudaim; which Reuven had found. Leah said; “Was your taking my husband a small thing? And now you even take my son’s Dudaim?” How could Leah have said such a thing, if in fact, it was she, who had stolen the husband; whom Rachel was designated to marry?

I believe that Yaakov never told Rachel and Leah about his original agreement with Lavan; which had been betrayed. He realized that it would serve no purpose, and only increase strife in the family. And we should learn an important lesson from our forefather. Very often, we reveal things and share information, which serves no useful purpose, and in fact, causes pain. Especially, when we feel aggrieved, we must be careful about blurting out things which will come back to bite us. Shemirat HaLashon (guarding one’s speech), is a great value in Judaism. Let us strive to emulate the behaviors of our great forefathers.

Shabbat Shalom. ■

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WHY KILL ISAAC



**RABBI
MOSHE
BEN-CHAIM**

Sanhedrin 89b:

“And it came to pass after these matters that God tried Abraham” (Gen. 22:1). The Gemara asks: “After which matters?” How does the binding of Isaac relate to the preceding events?

Rabbi Yo anan said in the name of Rabbi Yosei ben Zimra: “This means after the statement of Satan, as it is written: “And the child grew, and was weaned, and Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned” (Genesis 21:8). Satan [immediately thereafter] said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: “Master of the Universe, this old man, you favored him with a child, at 100 years of age. But from the entire feast that he prepared, did he not have even one dove or one pigeon to sacrifice before You as a thanks-offering?” God said to Satan: “Did Abraham truly prepare the feast only for his son? If I say to him: “Sacrifice your son before Me” he would immediately slaughter him!” Immediately, after these matters, the verse states, “And God tried Abraham.” The Torah continues: “And He said: Take, please your son” (Genesis 22:2). Rabbi Shimon bar Abba says: “Why did God plead—rather than command—that Abraham take his son? The Gemara cites a parable of a king who confronted many wars. And he had one warrior fighting for

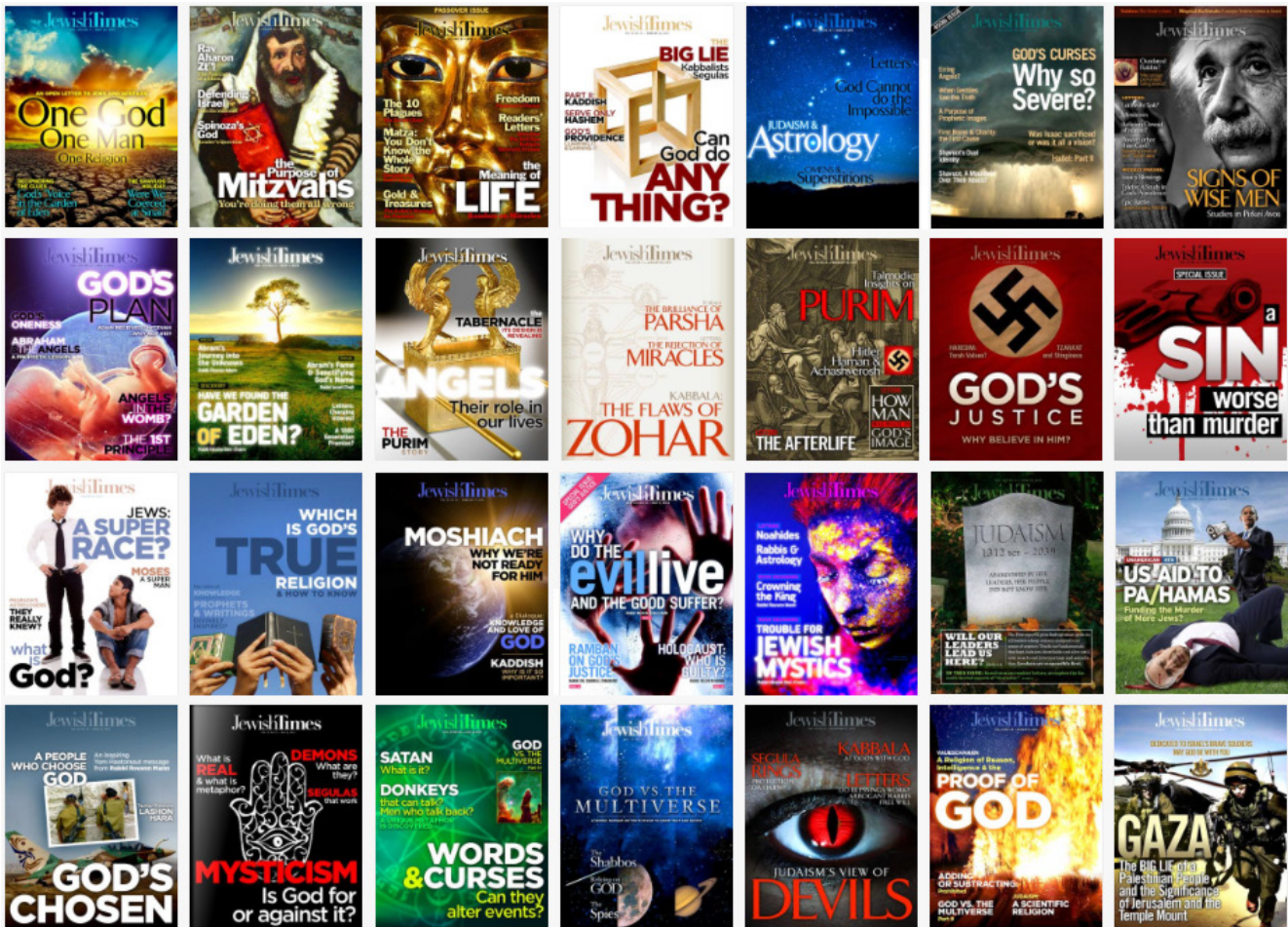
him, and he overcame his enemies. Over time, there was a fierce war confronting him. The king said to his warrior: “I plead with you, stand firm for me in this war, so that others will not say there is no substance in the first victories, and you are not a true warrior.” Likewise, the Holy One, Blessed be He, also said to Abraham: “I have tried you with several ordeals, and you have withstood them all. Now, stand firm in this ordeal for Me, so that others will not say there is no substance in the first ordeals. God said to Abraham: “Please take your son, your only, whom you love, Isaac” (Gen. 22:2).

Here, Satan refers to Abraham's detractors. Once the world saw Abraham had a son at 100 years old, they assumed his previous righteousness was only a means of earning a child. Now that Isaac was born, they felt Abraham would no longer be subservient to God. Therefore the rabbis scripted this allegory to offer us insight into God's purpose in commanding Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Here, the Rabbi's teach us that Isaac's birth brought about a problem. God wishes all mankind to appreciate that man has the capacity to reach a great level of perfection. And since the world now projected onto Abraham their own weaknesses, and they felt his previous 9 trials were just for a son—not due to his devotion to God—Isaac's sacrifice was necessary. Through Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac,

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the world would not dismiss Abraham's previous trials, feeling they were selfishly performed to gain a son. For the very act of killing that son would remove this wrong assumption. Thus, the meaning of "after these matters God tried Abraham" refers to after Isaac's birth: after this matter of Isaac's birth, God tried Abraham and told him to sacrifice Isaac.

This first reasoning for the sacrifice of Isaac was to correct the world, to show Abraham's perfection. And God desired his perfection to be on display because it is God's plan for mankind that each member should recognize man's capacity: to be fully devoted to God. And this full devotion is only for man's good, because in following God's will, we attain a life where we are awestruck by the brilliance found in Torah and nature. King Solomon told us that there is no greater command than Torah study (Moade Katan 9b, Proverbs 8:1) for this is where man finds the greatest satisfaction and benefit.

Sanhedrin 89b continued:

Rabbi Levi says, "And it came to pass after these matters that God tried Abraham" means after the statement of Ishmael to Isaac. Ishmael said to Isaac: "I am greater than you in the fulfillment of mitzvot, as you were circumcised at the age of eight days, while I was circumcised at the age of thirteen years." Isaac said to Ishmael: "And do you provoke me with one organ? If the Holy One, Blessed be He, were to say to me "Sacrifice yourself before Me," I would sacrifice myself." Immediately, God tried Abraham and told him to sacrifice Isaac.

Just as the previous talmudic portion is an allegorical script, this too was not a literal conversation. Rabbi Levi's scripted

conversation between Ishmael and Isaac teaches an alternative necessity for Isaac's sacrifice. Ishmael talking to Isaac refers to world opinion. In other words, the world will think that Ishmael is greater than Isaac since he underwent circumcision at 13 years old—when he could have protested—unlike Isaac who was only eight days old at circumcision. And again, as God wishes the truth to spread, He does not wish a false notion to be accepted. Isaac possessed the perfections he learned from his father Abraham, that being complete devotion to God, even at the loss of his own life. This is the level of dedication to God which God wishes man to appreciate he can attain. "And you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). Had there been no sacrifice of Isaac, people would be left with a lesser impression of man, that being of Ishmael who conceded to circumcision at 13 years old. But this is not man's true capacity. To demonstrate man's greater capacity, God instructed Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to show the world that self-sacrifice far surpasses conceding to circumcision.

But according to either talmudic portion, with these allegories the Rabbi's teach that the sacrifice of Isaac was a response to man's incorrect measure of human perfection. The first talmudic portion corrects mankind's opinion of Abraham's ability to overcome the love of a child and instead, follow love of God, due to his correct concept of God. The second portion teaches how Isaac had the capacity to sacrifice his life when he had the correct ideas of God. Neither portion suggests that killing Isaac was for Abraham's perfection. As Rabbi Israel Chait said, Abraham already possessed that perfection to sacrifice Isaac. For how else could he have followed God's command, if that perfection was not already within him. The same applies to Isaac. Therefore we learn that the sacrifice of Isaac was to teach mankind. ■

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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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BIBLE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

BEN BAG BAG SAID, “TURN IT OVER, AND [AGAIN] TURN IT OVER, FOR ALL IS THEREIN. AND LOOK INTO IT; AND BECOME GRAY AND AGED THEREIN; AND DO NOT MOVE AWAY FROM IT, FOR YOU HAVE NO BETTER PORTION THAN IT.” (Avos 5:22)

The next mishnah is authored by Ben Hay Hay. He was a convert. He called himself the son of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham received an additional letter ה [God changed his name from Abram to Abraham: אַבְרָם-אַבְרָהָם], as did Sarah [God changed her name from Sarai to Sarah: שָׂרָי-שָׂרָה]. Therefore, he calls himself a direct descendant of these 2 people: their intellectual descendant. Ben Bag Bag means the same thing, as Bag is composed of the letters גב which equal 5, the numerical amount of ה. Ben Hay Hay said to constantly turn over Torah, digging beneath the surface, investigating and pondering it. This is because he said everything is in Torah. Is that true? If I wish to know astronomy, should I study Torah? You might say like Maimonides, that we had our own astronomy: “T he children of Issachar, knowing understanding of times” (I Chron. 12:33). They knew astronomy before the Greeks. But even so, is there nothing more to study than “their” astronomy? Was every astronomical discovery that was ever to be made, known through their astronomy? I don’t agree. What about biology and other areas? Besides the major headings and the particulars, the [scientific] subjects are almost infinite. So, what is meant by “Everything is in Torah?” Maimonides acquired his knowledge in all fields by studying the field and not studying Torah. You cannot

learn biology by studying Chumash. That makes no sense.

If someone would study Torah and nothing else, he would achieve total perfection. Maimonides says love of God is tied to knowledge of the universe. But in his Sefer Hamitzvos he cites Torah wisdom [too] as a means towards loving God. Thus, if one studies Torah alone and learns proper ethics and philosophical ideas, Torah is a complete system. That is not a bad explanation of “All is in Torah.” [But there is another explanation.]

Every area of knowledge is based on certain philosophical premises. “Turn it over” means that all the underlying philosophical premises of every science are in Torah. There’s no such thing as a science with philosophical conclusions that oppose the philosophical conclusions of Torah. If a science’s philosophical conclusions oppose Torah’s philosophical conclusions, that science’s ideas are wrong. The question in modern physics of materialism versus mentalism is definitely one that Judaism can resolve. That is, the underlying entities of the universe are mental: ideas [expressed in laws]. The physical is only an aberration, an illusion. Scientists stated this through the centuries and it is clear from Judaism. Torah’s analytic approach and methodology are all metaphysical and corroborates that conclusion. These exist not only metaphysically, but they reach down deep into the world of human thought.

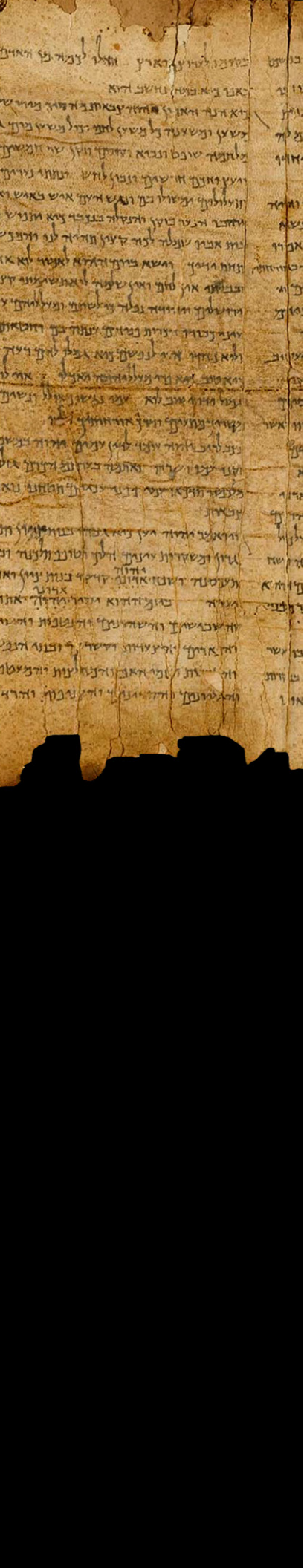
There is a current argument among the scientists: “How should knowledge of man proceed: Should we follow the beauty of arguments? Or should we concentrate more on practical experiments and forget about the appreciation of ideas, [for] is that really part of the mind?” The greatest scientists in the

world debate this. Judaism casts its vote for the appreciation of ideas. If there is no beauty to an idea, you might as well abandon it; it’s worthless. Judaism definitely tells us which approach is correct. It is true, today most scientists go in the other direction. And 50 to 60 years ago they leaned the other way, our way. And before that, again and they leaned away from ideas and favored experimentation. Judaism might not discuss the atom, but it provides the idea for the correct approach in human thought. “Turn it over, turn it over for all is therein” does not refer to details but to general principles. Judaism’s principles are correct and if one wants to know where to go, if he is lacking intuition, Judaism can point the direction.

The same is true regarding psychology, there are many views. But the question is whether the behavioristic approach is the correct one, or is the conceptual approach correct? Again, most favor the behavioristic approach; there’s always a draw away from the ideas [and towards what’s tangible]. Judaism says this too is incorrect. Man, from youth, believes that what is sensual is real. Man finds it difficult to break away from this belief; he is very partial to it. But Judaism maintains this is wrong: investigations into animal behavior bear no insight into human behavior. This is nonsensical and it is heretical. “And He blew into his nostrils a soul of life” (Gen. 2:7) says that man has a different element than animal; human intelligence is different. It is a waste of time to investigate animals intending to correlate them to man. The attempt to recognize the uniqueness of the human mind, to find out what it is, would be time better spent.

Judaism’s principles affect every area, even epistemology. It is nothing short of amazing that when one studies Torah and sees that these ideas existed in Chazal’s time, one recognizes how advanced was their method of thinking. The Rav says that when you study the most advanced methods of science today, they are not nearly as advanced as our methods of gemara analysis. The great [scientific] minds don’t even approach Chazal’s and the Rishonim’s perfection of thought; the former are almost shallow. Our methodology and approach surpass even today’s scientific approach, let alone the dark ages.

Aristotle’s big mistake was thinking that the world was simpler than it is; it’s called



“naïve realism.” One example is that one assumes a table is in reality what a person senses. This was rejected as false. The world is more complex and deeper and even surface phenomena that we experience are not real, in this sense that our minds tell us that it is real. [A solid table actually has more space than matter; there is greater space between atoms and molecules than there are atoms and molecules.] Aristotle assumed that God’s wisdom is simpler than it is. Humility demands human experimentation. We must be humble and not assume but learn through experimentation. Once we uncover truths through our findings, then we can theorize. But the question is, where does the quest end? Am I at the end [of intellectual query] when I see a beautiful idea, or when I can simply summarize a phenomenon, regardless of its beauty?

Every science is based on principles, and those principles are found in Torah. There is a tremendous value in checking for the principles, for by checking and learning the principles, you gain insight into how to further yourself in other areas. Thus, Torah study is significantly related to every area of investigation.

How great are Your works? You made all of them with wisdom; the world is full of Your acquisitions... Almighty, blessed, great is Your wisdom, You prepared and made the sun’s light ...

This forms part of our morning prayers. God’s endless wisdom in forming light was recognized by the Anshei Kinesess Hagadola (The Men of the Great Assembly) and this is what scientists have focused on. In light lies tremendous wisdom. The Anshei Kinesess Hagadola predated the scientists and recognized God’s wisdom in light. God created all man’s necessities. Even drugs are derived from natural sources. We don’t know the way most of them work. And the ones that we do understand, we arrived at that understanding only after years of unraveling [their properties]. But anyone who tells you what science will be able to do [in the future] is daydreaming. A matter that [at first] seems most simple can [ultimately] be the most difficult task. One does not know what he will encounter. It is like studying a sugya; one can’t say he will understand it tomorrow. Scientists who say, “We are about to do X,” are

arrogant people. You must differentiate between science and a scientist. A scientist has the same emotions as everyone else. Therefore, when he’s talking with his emotions [making grandiose predictions of discoveries] there is no reality to his words. When I was a teenager, they said it doesn’t pay to quit smoking because by the time you get cancer, a cure will have already been discovered. Everyone was convinced that cancer would be obliterated in 5 years. They said this because they had just cured a series of diseases; they were very successful. All infectious diseases were falling one after the other. Man gets very arrogant and feels that he will cure every disease. To say, “We are about to make a breakthrough” is nonsense. You don’t know about a breakthrough until you discover it.

Knowing how the mind works itself is a tricky endeavor. This is because what you are using to discover the mind’s mechanics, is the mind itself. So already you are in trouble. The main thing is to know what the mind is. For if you don’t know what the mind is [assuming it is the right tool to explore, when maybe it is not] you might be using the wrong faculty to begin with [to explore the mind]. In such a case, you can’t possibly get any further than where you started from. [It is essential to learning that one knows how to explore, question, reason and deduce. Otherwise, one is stuck and cannot advance his knowledge.]

Torah has very significant information regarding what the mind is. If people had greater knowledge of Torah’s basic principles, they would advance quicker. This is because they would know which areas to approach, instead of waiting for centuries for one person who happens to find an opening due to his good intuition. Science has no rules. If you can show predictability and make discoveries, people will listen to you [you will be accepted by the scientific world]. There is no specific formula of how to think in science. If you can explain your idea and people understand you, then you are in the realm of science. But what kind of thought should be applied concerns none, other than Judaism.

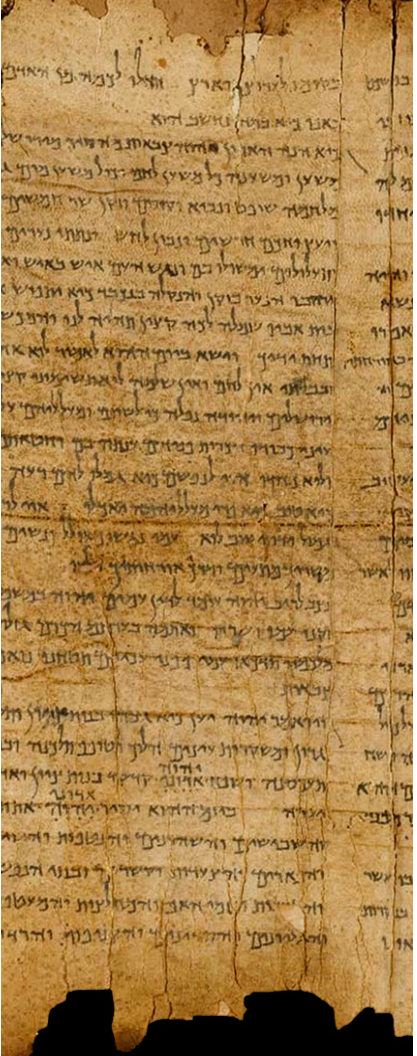
When explaining a Tosfos, I can communicate the explanation and yet I did not fulfill my obligation. This is because I did not say it any certain way. No one thinks this way. But in explaining Tosfos, I must use precision. [In Judaism] we have in our mind a certain formula for

an idea. An idea must properly align with the formula. Once it fits, it clicks in the mind. Then we understand, and not before, even though one communicated and described one’s thoughts [to us]. In Judaism there is an insistence on a type of precise thinking. That is why a talmid chocham can listen to any area and define the concept better than the originator. This is because the talmid chocham knows how to define any matter in concise terms, where it fits in properly and exactly into the categories of the human mind and thought. Here is where Judaism reigns supreme and is far advanced over other methods. Judaism demands more than simple communication: it requires a certain type of thinking.

Torah holds that the mind is an area unto itself. A Torah student recognizes aspects of his internal life. A typical person will vote for a particular politician because of his appeal, although the person does not know why he finds him appealing. The person cannot analyze why; people can’t think beyond a certain point. But when a person studies Torah, he learns that there is an area of mind, which he distinguishes from the rest of his internal life. One must recognize what is mind and what is not. When an idea has appeal, that appeal can be emotional, explaining why the idea is accepted. But with intellect, one applies a sense of reality to phenomena, [a reality] beyond the physical. No animal can do this. An animal cannot conceptualize a principle causing fruit to fall from trees. [Animals are engaged purely in physical interaction; they are unrelated to any metaphysical reality, such as thought and concepts which exist beyond the physical world.] An animal’s instincts drive it towards something. It can even accustom itself to follow a series of actions to obtain its instinctual desires. But it can never think, “There is a reality here.”

The specifics [like this animal example] are not found in Torah. But you also won’t find anything in Torah that opposes the truths and realities of the universe. There is no doubt that the many years of research that ended in dead ends could have been avoided, if these researchers knew Torah.

Throughout time, the way of Torah thinking—in both Torah She’Bicsav and Torah She’Baal Peh—demanded that if an idea was not in line with Torah thinking, the idea must be wrong. One is obligated to then question such an idea,



and not simply bury the question. One must question every aspect of Torah, and if he does not, he is forfeiting his entire right of free will regarding knowledge.

Another example is the psychoanalytic approach in psychology. This approach divides the mind into components: superego, ego and id. I have seen other positions which oppose the psychoanalytic approach because they claim, "When you examine the brain you don't find labels for these 3 parts." Any Torah student knows that such opposition is nonsensical; the person has no concept of what thinking is all about. Thinking means [for example] that if I claim people have emotions, and I can demonstrate that certain emotions share a common root, it is a logical deduction [that a commonality exists between emotions]. My next deduction is that these emotions emanate from a common source. I do not need to open up the brain and find them. One who wished to find them in the brain operates without rules and principles. [People feel they can make any claim] "It doesn't say, 'superego' on the brain" [and feel justified in their claim]. It's a free-for-all in the world of science, and when you get away from the pure sciences the free-for-all is even greater. In areas like sociology and psychology, people's claims get worse.

Judaism teaches one how to think and how to recognize how certain approaches are unrelated to the mind. The nonsense quoted above demonstrates that such people seek something physical and tangible, and that they are not thinking.

In his Guide (book II, chap. xii) Maimonides discusses magnetic fields:

The magnet attracts iron from a distance through a certain force communicated to the air round the iron. The magnet therefore does not act at all distances...

When 2 magnets attract each other, it is not that one magnet attracts the other magnet through space. For how can one object attract or affect another object through space? There must be some connection. That is why they say there exists a field. Field means the space between these 2 magnets is somehow changed. That is why the 2 magnets relate; they relate through the medium of the space. Maimonides said this exactly long before this rather recent theory by physicists. A talmid chocham would

conclude that action at a distance is impossible. His mind would tell him so. But much effort has been spent trying to defend action at a distance.

Another question is whether an idea is based on a physical phenomenon in the brain. If you hit a person [hard enough] on his head, you will incapacitate his thinking. It is therefore obvious that the brain's mechanisms are tied to thought. But we maintain that the appreciation of thought and thought itself are not functions of the brain, but they are functions of the soul. As one of the ancients put it:

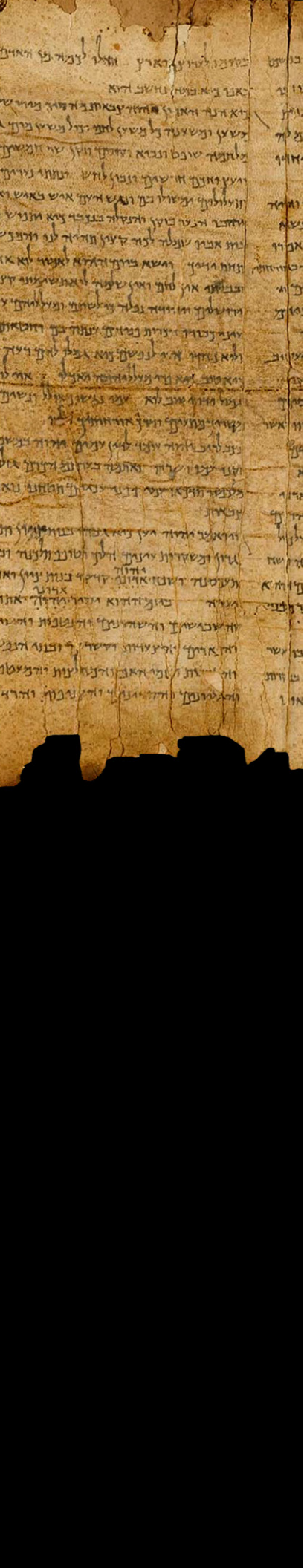
With degeneration of the eye in old age, sight decreases. But if you replaced old eyes with young and healthy eyes, vision would be perfect. This is because the brain upon which vision registers is fine. Now, just as the eye is to the brain, the brain is to the soul; it stands in the same relationship. If one's brain is damaged and he can't think, it is a brain issue and not that the soul is impaired or gone.

The ideas are there but he can't access them in this existence unless the mechanics of the brain operate properly. The brain is a tool like the eye, but the appreciation of wisdom and the ideas themselves exist in the world of the soul.

This last idea is important and is based on the universe. In the universe as well, physical objects are only instances of ideas which are present in some unknown way. Ideas are somehow present and guide all physical phenomena. Every phenomenon is one instance, but the idea [natural law] is an eternal concept. A particular rock which was just destroyed after it fell can no longer fall since it was destroyed. But other rocks can fall because the principle exists. That principle is not a physical phenomenon. It exists, but not as the rock exists. Now, the mind can tune itself into that world beyond the physical. That is the uniqueness of human thought and the human mind. That is why the world of ideas is a world beyond physical. The world of mind is also beyond the physical. But to function in this existence, the brain must be functional.

Maimonides says that there is knowledge that does not require memory. When the mind learns how to think and improves itself and has intuition, that intuition needs no memory. It is like an

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intrinsic improvement in the apparatus of the soul itself, not the brain. It is the same brain this person had 20 years ago; the soul is what has been refined. The existence of the soul and the existence of ideas are interrelated. Just like ideas exist beyond physical phenomena, the soul that can tap into those ideas is also beyond the physical. That is the part of man that is beyond the physical world, the Tzelem Elohim: the uniqueness of human thought, the special gift that God gave man and why we say, “Who gave from Him is wisdom to flesh and blood” (Berachos 58a), the blessing recited upon seeing the wise men of Israel.

AND LOOK INTO IT

Maimonides says this refers to seeing the truth. But what does this add to the previous statement of turning over the Torah from all sides? The next statement in the mishnah is, “Grow old and aged in the Torah and never remove yourself from Torah for there is no portion better than it.” When asked what Judaism is, one philosopher correctly said, “The sum total of human knowledge.” This mishnah says the same.

The secrets of knowledge are all in Torah. Many times, they are staring at you and you cannot see them because they are not on the level, but they are right there. As one grows in knowledge, certain things start “lighting up.” But at first, one cannot see them because one is in the hold of his emotions. As one progresses, he sees the secrets of Torah, as it says in Avos 6:2. The secrets are certain matters that one who is on the [required and advanced] level starts recognizing. He was going in the wrong direction before

[explaining why he didn't see them]—sometimes because of his desires, and sometimes because of his yetzer hatov. Chofetz Chaim said, “Satan gets us from the front and the back.” The front I understand [our instincts attack us face-on]. But what is the back? This means the instincts get behind you and push you in your current direction, from the “back.” For example, a person learns many hours and wants to sleep. But Satan says, “Keep learning all night.” That is Satan pushing in from the back, and this will run him down. Sometimes one's mistakes are not due to desires, but because one does not see reality due to an incorrect self-image that blocks the truth. The answers are all found in Judaism, but you have to be able to see them.

The story of Jonah contains a primary fundamental. But the person operating on an infantile level will be blind to it. In Judaism as one develops, he sees deeper and deeper ideas, different ideas. But he wasn't ready to see such truths beforehand. “And look into it” means if you look with your mind's eye, you will see it.

What is the truth? It is that which is contrary to the emotional conclusion. Truth is based upon wisdom, not emotions. Previous conclusions were emotionally made and false. As you progress, you see true ideas and you are astounded at them. You see your mistakes. “Age in Torah” is the same idea. One gains knowledge in 2 ways: through advancement and through age. Age provides a special kind of progress. Socrates said, “When the eye of the body is weak, the eye of the mind is strong.” As one ages, he uncovers new matters in Torah and new ideas that he could not see as a younger person. To become gray and

aged in Torah, new ideas become part of his life and his makeup; part of his existence and his nature.

AND DO NOT MOVE AWAY FROM IT, FOR YOU HAVE NO BETTER PORTION THAN IT.

In other areas, one advances and there is a hierarchy: once in calculus, one no longer studies algebra. But in Torah it is not that way: one does not advance to another subject. Torah is an unusual subject: one is raised in it, he advances in it, and he never advances out of it. And if you do leave it, you're leaving a trait that is integral to your nature. Rabbi Akiva entered pardase [the study of metaphysics] and exited successfully. Did he stop learning? No. The prophets studied the abstract halachic area of Taharus and could not fully comprehend it. One cannot get away from Torah; everything is in it: metaphysics, Maaseh Mercavah, all the principles are in Torah as we said. And I did not even discuss the principles in metaphysics because they are so far removed from our personal lives. Maaseh Mercavah is the highest metaphysics.

“And do not move away from it” refers to halacha. One should never abandon Torah She'Baal Peh because it fits a person's mind, the method of thinking, the approach. It is akin in a physical sense to one saying that he will abandon exercise. It is impossible because if man stops moving, he dies. So too, the abstract method of halachic thought is a natural environment for one's mind. It is constructed that way, satisfying every component of the intellect: the mathematical component the conceptual component, [all components]. ■



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