

JewishTimes

VOL. XX NO. 27 — JULY 8, 2022

LATE EDITION

PARSHA

Judaism
& Death

PAGE 6

Why God
Did That?

PAGE 9

LETTERS

Rabbis vs.
Reason

PAGE 5

Oral Law:
Man Made?

PAGE 4

Purpose
of Tefillin

PAGE 5

Can I Accept ALL RELIGIONS?

LETTERS PAGE 3

PARSHA

Moses & the Rock

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

PAGE 11

SHARE

the

JewishTimes

Just click any  icon in this issue



3 Religious Equality; Oral Law; Tefillin & the Rabbis
RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM
A number of fundamental questions are addressed

6 Death
RABBI REUVEN MANN
Torah's view

9 Why Did God do That?
RABBI RICHARD BORAH
What questions about VGod are appropriate?

11 Moses & the Rock: Sin w/o Action?
RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT
What was Moses' sin?



| AGREEMENT IS UNNECESSARY |

While human dignity demands respect to all people, this does not mean we compromise truth and agree with every person or every religion.

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Can I Accept All Religions?

READER: I respect all religions and am open to accepting any one.

RABBI: You must realize that religions reject each other on fundamental issues. Thus, your acceptance of all religions means you accept contradictions. This in turn means you do not commit to any convictions, so you in fact have no clear positions, or values. You do not affirm anything as true. And when we are in doubt,

we have failed to act as an intelligent being.

Many religions accept intermediaries to relate to God, while Judaism fully rejects this. This rejection is based on the reality that God knows all, and can do all: He is omniscient and omnipotent. Nothing else is required for man to relate to God. Belief in intermediaries also elevates that intermediary to greater capacity than a human: one thinks the intermediary can reach

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

Subscriptions are free. To subscribe, send any email to join@mesora.org

We invite feedback at comments@mesora.org

Articles may be reprinted without consent of the JewishTimes or the authors, provided the content is not altered and credits are given.

God where a human cannot, explaining the need for the intermediary and not simply praying to God directly. And in all cases, when one accepts an intermediary that is not human, that person projects intelligence onto either an inanimate idol or natural force, or he projects intelligence onto a fantasy, like one who has a wrong notion of the stars or angels, and prays to them. He may also wrongly pray to the dead or engage in amulets to control his fate.

Most religions do not require reason or proof and applaud those who can accept as true, a notion that has not been proven. They value this “faith” as a grand display of an admirable religious person. In essence, faith means man believes what has not been validated as true. He denies his senses as tools through which God deemed man determine reality. God does not wish man to believe he sees what is not there. He does not wish man to accept unproven notions, like intermediaries existing between man and God. God prohibits idol worship, superstitions, praying to man and all intermediaries.

Accepting all religions means one is not engaging his or her mind. And when the mind is inactive, it is impossible that one knows what is real. Thus, accepting all religions means one knows nothing, which in fact, invalidates the religion you wish to endorse.

We certainly respect all human beings, but we do not confuse respect with intelligent thought: we can respect and disagree with the same person. And we certainly must not allow respect to make us agree with what is false. This removes the opportunity for us to correct another of God’s creations. And we should desire to perform good for all people, which at the highest level means we educate them.

Certainly, all religions cannot be true as they fundamentally oppose each other. The only true religion is the one proven to originate with God. This requires mass witness as validation—as does all history—and Bible alone provides proof of mass attendees at that event on Mt. Sinai 3334 years ago. Yes, there are claims, but there is no other event throughout time with masses witnessing God giving a religion to man. And without proof for a religion’s claim of divine origin, one simply follows unproven notions.

It is irrelevant how ancient a religion is, or how man adherents the religion has. For idolatry is older than all religions, and it had nations of followers. There is only one human design. Just as cancer is treated identically among blacks, whites, Asians and Indians, racial differences also do not change the human psyche, which is identical

across all mankind. We all seek happiness, are hurt when insulted, we miss those who have passed, and we care for children. There is one human being, explaining why God gave only one religion. All religions other than Bible fail to provide proof of divine origin. ■

Who Wrote the Oral Law?

READER: How can we prove the Oral Torah/Talmud is from Sinai? Compared to the written Torah—the 5 books of Moses—which is direct revelation from God, the Talmud seems to be a [human] commentary on the Mishna. How can we prove that the Talmud is of Divine origin and not human invention?

*Thanks,
Tayo Odel, Cameroon*

RABBI REUVEN MANN: We must assume that the Written Law is incomplete (by itself) in terms of its task to serve as a guide to mankind’s actions. This is because it’s too vague and lends itself to many possible explanations. For example the Torah does not specify what Tefillin or Tallit are, yet they are very serious Mitzvot. Thus, alongside the Written Law there had to be an Oral system of interpretation making sense of the Written. The Torah alludes to the authority of Moshe in this area, as well, by saying, “And also in you they will believe forever” (Exod. 19:9). We therefore believe that the Oral Law is a vital component of the Written Revelation and was transmitted by God’s chosen prophet, Moshe Rabbeinu.

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM: Rabbi Israel Chait too shared Rabbi Mann’s reasoning. But there are more considerations that validate the Oral Law as originating from God.

In his introduction to his Mishneh Torah, Maimonides writes:

All of the commandments which were given to Moses on Sinai were given together with their oral explanation for, it is said: “And I will give thee the tables of stone, and the Torah and the commandment” (Exod. 24.12); “Torah” is the written text; and “commandment” is its oral explanation. Moreover, He commanded us to observe the Torah by the word of the commandment; thus it is this commandment which is called Oral Torah.

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

Exod. 24:12:

God said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the teachings and commandments..."

Ibn Ezra quotes Saadia Gaon:

The meaning of the "teaching" is the Written Law and "commandments" is the Oral Law, as all the commandments were given to Moses on Sinai during the days that Moses was on the mountain.

Thus far, we refer to authoritative sources endorsing the Oral Law as originating with God. No Torah authority says it was suddenly introduced at some point after Sinai. The unanimous agreement among the sages and rabbis leaves no doubt that God gave Moses the Oral Law.

Furthermore, we cannot seek miraculous displays in connection with the transmission of the Oral Law as was the case regarding Revelation of the physical 10 Commandments, the Written Law. As the Oral Law was communicated through prophecy, a metaphysical phenomenon, and as miracles are physical, the 2 cannot coexist.

While Talmud is the sages' discussions, what they discuss is Mishna, the Oral Law received at Sinai. ■

Tefillin's Purpose is?

FRIEND: What are Tefillin for?

RABBI: *"For that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every [male] first-born in the land of Egypt, both human and beast; and I will mete out punishments to all the gods of Egypt, I am God" (Exod. 12:12).*

Only in connection with the death of firstborns does God "punish all the gods of Egypt." No other plague was accompanied with God punishing Egypt's gods. Why?

After the firstborn deaths, God speaks: *"God spoke further to Moses, saying, 'Consecrate to Me every*

male firstborn; human and beast, the first [male] issue of every womb among the Israelites is Mine." And Moses said to the people, *"Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how God freed you from it with a mighty hand: no leavened bread shall be eaten'."* (Exod. 13:2,3)

"And this shall serve you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, in order that the Teaching of God may be in your mouth—that with a mighty hand God freed you from Egypt." (Exod. 13:9)

Subsequent to the firstborn deaths, God commands the Jews in Passover, sanctifying firstborn animals and males, and Tefillin. Passover is a yearly celebration commemorating the Exodus. But a yearly recall of our redemption from slavery is insufficient in God's eyes. That we remain ever-thankful to God for redeeming us from slavery and bringing us to Sinai to receive a new life of Torah, additional more frequent commands are required. In addition to Passover's once-yearly Seder, sanctifying firstborns now engages us in the very object God spared on that night in Egypt. And even though this sanctification occurs more frequently than Passover, this is still insufficient...

A sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, in order that the Teaching of God may be in your mouth

The Exodus history, Passover, and the commands of sanctifying firstborns are to become our regular conversations, "that the Teaching of God may be in your mouth." Tefillin contain texts of all these topics, and we are to wear them throughout the day. The repetition in the Torah text of "With a mighty hand God took you out of Egypt" is significant. For it was with the firstborn deaths—not other plagues—that the Jews were freed. This freedom expressed that God is unopposed, He alone has a "mighty hand" as all Egypt's gods were dead silent. This is the meaning of God "judging Egypt's gods"...He exposed them as lies. Egyptian deities were static, lifeless, and

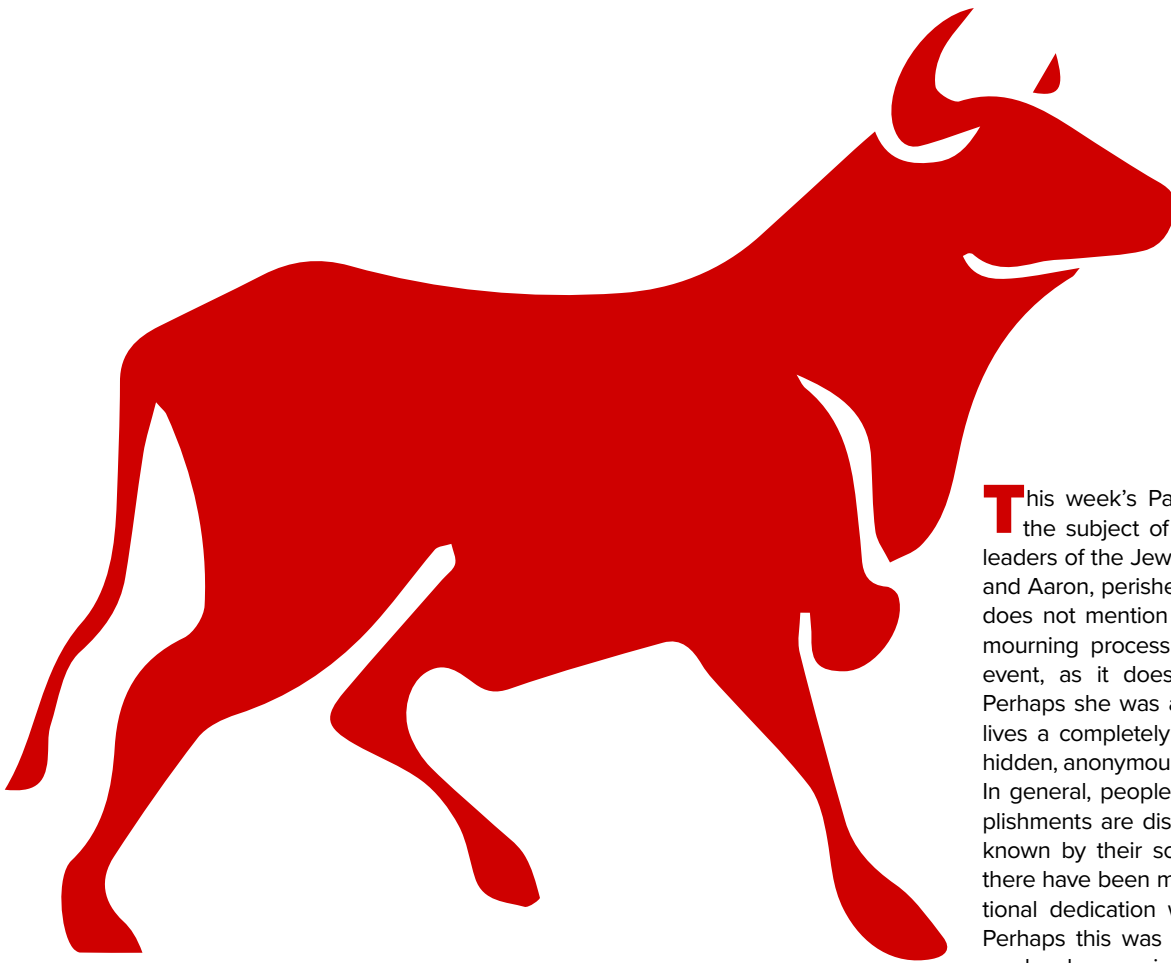
unresponsive to all the plagues. God demands the Jews recall this most primary principle, that God is one: there are no other forces. This must become our regular daily speech, and Tefillin provide this conversational piece. Moses later added 2 more Torah texts to Tefillin, the 2 first paragraphs of Shema Yisrael. These paragraphs too refer to God's unity.

Tefillin serve to engage us in frequent discussions of God's unity. We require this frequent reminder, as our instincts constantly seek to derail us and cave us to instinctual pleasures, emotions, and evil conversation. God deemed it essential that we wear on our bodies reminders of the most fundamental truths. We subjugate both parts of our makeup: our hearts (emotions) and our minds by wearing Tefillin near our hearts and on our heads. ■

Trusting Rabbis vs. Seeking Proof

FRIEND: When to trust rabbis, and when to use reason and proof?

RABBI: Rabbi Bachyai ben Joseph—author of Duties of the Heart—states that we seek the rabbis' guidance as God authorized them: for limited matters not subject to reason, but for guidance in statutes like blood purity, courts, skin impurities, and legal disputes (Deut. 17:8). These matters require authoritative Torah transmission and halachic rulings. The author then cites another verse, "Know therefore this day and place it on your heart that God alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other" (Deut. 4:39). He says this means to first learn God's unity, but not to stop there, but to then to "place it on your heart"—to use reason and proof so you know the matter with full clarity and full conviction without doubt. This matter must be based on self-conviction, not trust in the rabbis alone. The author continues that not in God's unity alone, but any matter in which reason and proof can be used, is one bound to engage his or her mind to arrive at proof. ■



This week's Parsha, Chukat, deals with the subject of death. One of the great leaders of the Jews, Miriam, sister of Moshe and Aaron, perishes at this point. The Torah does not mention any elaborate funeral or mourning process in conjunction with this event, as it does by Moshe and Aaron. Perhaps she was a Nisteret, someone who lives a completely righteous existence in a hidden, anonymous manner.

In general, people of great spiritual accomplishments are discovered and come to be known by their society. But in our history, there have been men and women of exceptional dedication who remained unknown. Perhaps this was the case with Miriam; or maybe she was simply overshadowed by her exemplary and famous brothers?

Rather, the Torah pays tribute to her by connecting her death to the sudden absence of water. "And the People settled in Kadeish; Miriam died there and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation; and they gathered against Moshe and Aaron" (BaMidbar 20:1-2).

The Rabbis deduce that this loss of their water supply was associated with the death of Miriam. They assert that the miraculous presence of ample water in the wilderness was due to the merit of Miriam's righteousness. Her very presence among them placed the Jews on a higher spiritual plane, in which they were deserving of miracles. But with her passing, the level of the nation slipped.

A major theme of this Parsha is the subject of death and its religious consequences. Contact with a human corpse or even being in the same room with a dead body places one into a state of "ritual impurity" know as Tumaah. Today all Jews are in this state with no way of removing it.

Our Parsha describes the manner in which one could purify himself from a state of ritual

Judaism & the Fear of Death

Rabbi Reuven Mann

impurity. A special Red Heifer was slaughtered and burned. Its ashes were mixed with spring water, which was then sprinkled on the impure person. The amount of time needed to transition from an impure to a pure state was seven days. He would be sprinkled on the third and seventh days and then immerse himself in a Mikvah; when the sun went down on the seventh day, he would be completely Tahor (pure).

With the destruction of the Temple, we lack the means to effectuate purification from the state of ritual impurity. However, that does not create any particular challenges to our religious observance. The main consequence of Tumah is that it prevents the Kohanim from performing the service in the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple). Since we do not have the Temple at present, there is no need for the Kohanim to be in a pure state. When the Temple Service is restored in the Messianic Era, the Ashes of the Red Heifer will again be prepared, the Kohanim will be purified and the Temple Service will resume.

However, the question arises, why is it that contact with a corpse prevents a Kohen from performing the Temple Service? In fact, it is considered a great Mitzvah to provide for the needs of the deceased, such as preparation of the body for burial and the actual interment. Demonstrating respect for the corpse is regarded as a very significant act of compassion. It therefore appears strange that the immediate effect of such action is to disqualify someone from ministering in the Beit HaMikdash.

In my opinion, death plays a significant role in man's religious disposition. Man recoils from the notion that his life will be terminated and harbors within himself a desire for immortality. Very often he turns to religion in the hope that it can solve his dilemma concerning death.

Virtually every religion has a doctrine concerning life after death or what it refers to as "heaven" or "hell". Most non-religious people will attend Synagogue in order to recite Kaddish, and on those occasions when memorial prayers for the deceased are uttered. They are convinced that, one way or another, these actions have an effect on enabling one to overcome death.

Judaism asserts that man's existence is not concluded with death. It maintains that the soul of man is not physical and survives the body, and if the person has been righteous, enters a state of bliss which is beyond our current comprehension to describe.

However, Judaism does not want our service of Hashem to be based on our fear of death. We should keep the Torah because of our realization that this is the life that Hashem has intended for us to live. It, therefore, is the best way of life and brings us perfection in this world, while at the same time rendering us fit to inherit the world to come.

It is, in my opinion, because of this that the Kohen cannot perform the Service when he has been in contact with death. The true service of Hashem should not be tainted with any appearance of being a reaction to human demise. It should rather be performed out of a sense of optimism and joy and valued as an end in itself, not a means to ward off that which man fears the most. May we merit to be as those who, like Miriam, serve Hashem out of love.

Shabbat Shalom

Dear Friends,

My newest book, Eternally Yours: G-d's Greatest Gift To Mankind on VaYikra was recently published, and is now available at: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09SHRXS3Q>

I hope that my essays will enhance your reading and study of the Book of VaYikra and would greatly appreciate a brief review on Amazon.com.

—Rabbi Reuven Mann ■



TORAHTUTORS

Study any Torah topic 1-on-1 by phone or video chat. TorahTutors trains you to Lain Parsha or Haftorah, provides study partners for you, your child or parent, or helps you find answers to your Torah questions. **All ages, all topics, anytime.**

TORAHTUTORS

- Bar Mitzvah lessons
- 1-on-1 Learning
- All Torah subjects
- Summer/camp sessions
- By phone or Zoom
- All ages. Anytime.

Learn More Here





NEW

Leviticus is one of the most challenging books in the Torah. Its primary subject appears to be the extensive animal sacrifices which constituted the bulk of the Temple Service, which was in effect thousands of years ago and seems outdated to the modern reader.

"A masterpiece cloaked in a modest, easy to read book."

"Life lessons that can be applied to one's personal situation."

ETERNALLY YOURS

Rabbi Reuven Mann — On Leviticus

In the current volume of his Eternally Yours series, Rabbi Reuven Mann demonstrates that the true theme of Leviticus is the cultivation of holiness, which is manifested in a life of wisdom, righteous behavior, and concern for one's fellow man. He elucidates, in clear and riveting prose, how the themes of animal sacrifice and personal holiness are intertwined, providing a new understanding of the Torah's approach to the issue of human moral perfection.

Titles Include:

- The Evil Inclination, Redeemed
- Why Sacrifice Makes Sense
- Purging Vessels And Souls
- A Righteous Parent
- Jewish Exceptionalism
- Judaism And Capitalism

Rabbi Mann specializes in making difficult abstract concepts clear and accessible for all readers.

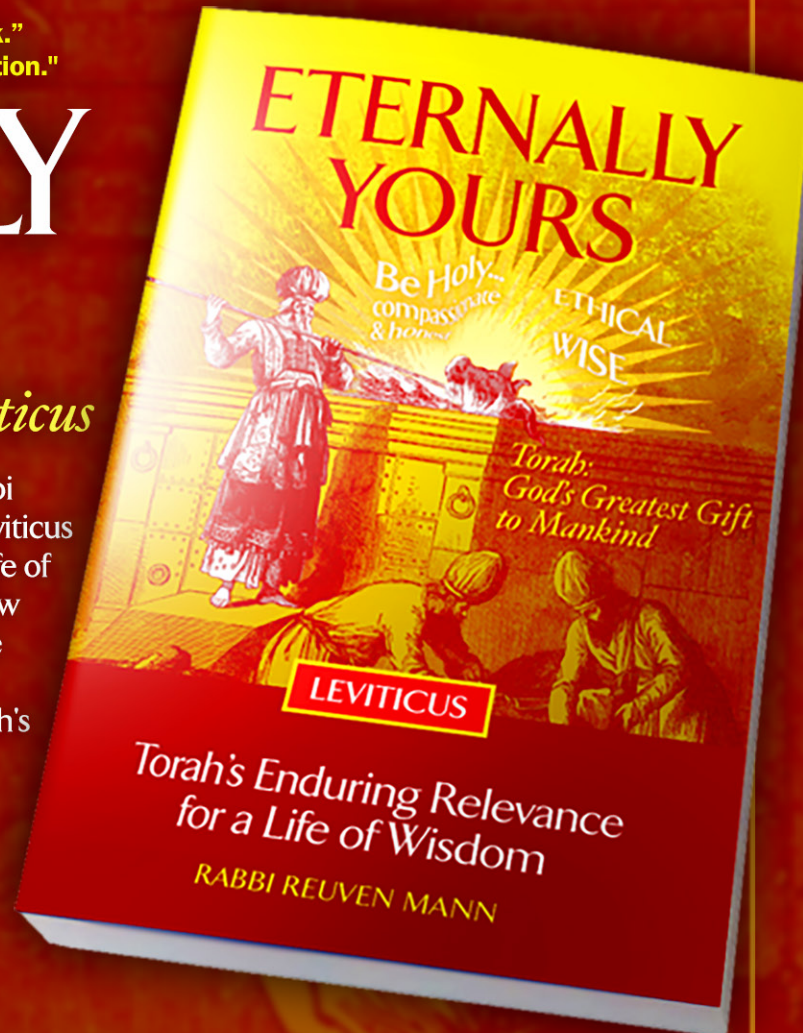
The topics of the essays are tantalizing and pique one's curiosity. Rabbi Mann's engaging style makes this an enlightening and enjoyable foray into the issues contained in Torah's third book.

Available on Amazon

Buy Now

Observant Artist's Circle Publishing

\$12.95/\$6.95



MORE PRAISE for "Eternally Yours"

"Rabbi Mann displays the magical balance of casual-style reading with deep, relevant ideas."

"Will be appreciated by both scholar and student alike."

"His insights into the book of Genesis grip and intrigue."

"Unpretentious & concise: a sensitive and thought-provoking book of wisdom."

"With little effort, you can reap the benefits of Biblical insight into human nature."

"Easy-to-understand Divrei Torah, yet profound and very insightful."

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

Second Guessing God

Rabbi Richard Borah



The parsha of Chukas describes the details of the “para adumah” (the red heifer), whose ashes are required to remove “tumah” (ritual impurity) from a person who has come in contact with a dead body. The Torah states (Bamidbar 19):

A ritually clean person shall gather the cow's ashes and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be as a keepsake for the congregation of the children of Israel for sprinkling water, [used] for cleansing... A ritually clean person shall take the hyssop and dip it into the water and sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, and on the people who were in it, and on anyone who touched the bone, the slain person, the corpse, or the grave.

The red heifer is described in the Talmud as the most enigmatic of the Torah's laws and the only one that Shlomo HaMelech did not fathom. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (“The Rav”), in the 11th chapter of the text “Man of Faith in the Modern World” (compiled by Rabbi

Besdin) describes the laws of the red heifer and utilizes it to explore the idea of understanding the mitzvot. He states: “Our Sages singled out the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer, Num. 19) ritual as the most mystifying of all hukim.” (Earlier in the essay, the Rav defines hukim as “statutes, which are usually defined as incomprehensible and about which our Sages warned that we may be tempted ‘to dismiss as meaningless.’) However, the Rav explains that the warning by the Torah Sages’ that the hukim may be impervious to understanding and the Sages statement that one must accept that “It is My (God’s) decree and you have no right to question it” does not mean that the meaningfulness of the mitzvah should not be explored, only that this exploration is limited in certain ways. The Rav explains:

There are three types of questions we may ask about any phenomenon. “Why” probes motivations to establish why things are the way they are; “how” seeks explanations as to how they function effectively; and “what” looks for interpretations to establish meaningfulness.

The Rav clarifies that we are unable to legitimately ask the questions of “why” and “how” for hukim, such as the parah adumah. The “why” question is absurd to ask of God’s law. He states:

*Asking “why” God issued certain commandments is seeking to comprehend the unfathomable. It is more than simply a matter of being unable to comprehend God’s mind and motivation. It is more profound than that. When we ask “why” in the human context, we are truly asking “What motivated Him?” A correct reply would be that in order to achieve objective B, agent A had to be employed, because otherwise B would remain inaccessible. Obviously, one cannot reason in this manner about God, as though He had to overcome some inability or deficiency by using an intermediary agent. All is readily accessible and realized to Him. The best and only answer to any question about God’s motivation is “He willed it” *gezerah hi milfanei* (Maimonides “Guide for the Perplexed: 3:13). (Man of Faith in the Modern World, Chapter 9: pages 92-93)*

The Rav quotes the section of the “Guide” where Maimonides (“Rambam”) clarifies the different positions on viewing God’s creation the world. He explains that God, being without deficiency, gains no benefit from the creation so to view God as doing something for an intended benefit to Him is incorrect (as is the motivation when man or another living thing does something). There is no benefit to God, who is perfect within Himself. For this reason the “why” question for God’s creation of the world or the mitzvot is untenable. The Rambam states:

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

Even if the universe exists for the sake of man, and the final end of man is, as has been said, to worship God, a question remains to be asked regarding the final end of his worship. For He, may He be exalted, would not acquire greater perfection if He were worshipped by all that He has created and were truly apprehended by them, nor would He be attained by a deficiency if nothing whatever existed except Him. If the answer is given that this is not with a view to His perfection, but to our perfection, for that is the most excellent thing for us—namely, our perfection - the same question follows necessarily: namely, what is the final end of our existence with that perfection? Necessarily and obligatorily the argument must end with the answer being given that the final end is: God has wished it so, or: His wisdom has required this to be so. And this is the correct answer. Accordingly, you will find that the Sages of Israel have inserted into the text of their prayers (Neilah service on Yom Kippur): “Thou hast set man apart from the beginning and acknowledged him that he should stand before Thee. Yet who shall say unto Thee, What dost Thou? And if he be righteous, what boon is this to Thee?” Thus they have explicitly stated that there does not exist a final end, but only the Will alone. (Guide, 3:13)

The Rav continues in the same essay, explaining that the “how” question is also unanswerable for hukim as their manner of impacting people, although assured, is not understandable by the human mind:

Asking “how” for hukim is also nonsensical. How does the sprinkling of watery ashes of the Parah Adumah cleanse the ritually unclean (Num. 19)? How does the goat sent to Azazel bring forgiveness on Yom Kippur (Lev. 16)? ...We willingly and reverently accept the incomprehensible “how” even as we dutifully embraced the unfathomable “why”

In contrast to the illegitimacy of the “why” and “how” question, the “what” question is not only reasonable but necessary to properly perform any mitzvah. The Rav explains:

Remaining is the 3rd question, “what” which inquires about the meaningfulness of particular mitzvot to the individual and to society. This is a legitimate pursuit. Nay, it may even be meritorious to inquire, “How can I integrate and assimilate this mitzvah into my religious consciousness and outlook?” “What thoughts and emotions should I feel when the Parah Adumah chapter is read in the synagogue?” How can it help me achieve devekut, a greater closeness to God?” Such questions reflect the need to be intellectually and emotionally engaged in the performance of a mitzvah, even of hukim. One does not ask, “Why did God legislate Parah Adumah?” or “How does it purify the ritually

defiled?” but “What is its spiritual message to me?” or “How can I, as a thinking and feeling person, assimilate it into my world outlook?”

The Rav holds that each individual, although not able to fathom the absolute truth of a mitzvah’s purpose, should still be cognizant and reflect on the inner experience that the mitzvah motivates in him or her. Although each person has a unique reaction to a mitzvah, reflection on this response is laudable and has halakhic legitimacy in performing the mitzvah in an optimal manner.

This clarification of the superiority of the “what” over the “why” is further explored by the Rav in his essay “Kol Dodi Dofek” in which he posits that it is not useful or meaningful for man to ask why God allowed a Holocaust to occur, but only what is the moral challenge that it poses to us in its aftermath to make it meaningful and to make use of the horror to improve ourselves and the world. The Rav explains in the essay how this was the mistake and the eventual realization of Job in the wake of the personal tragedies that befell him.

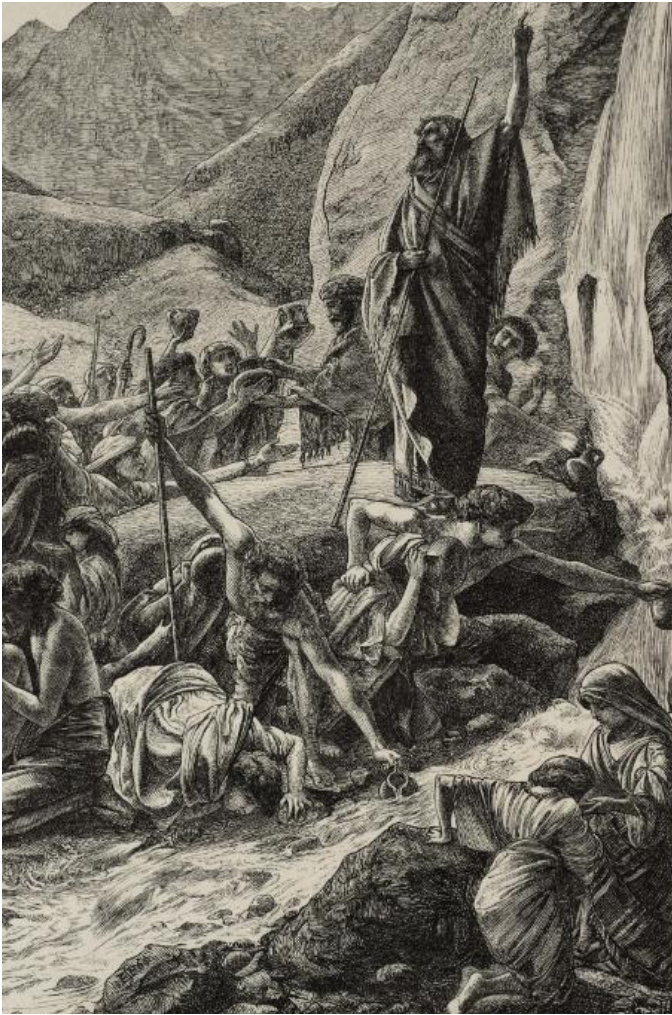
To close, I would like to pose that perhaps this error of second-guessing God is one way of looking of Moshe’s error in hitting the rock, as described in the parsha of Chukas. The Torah states:

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Take the staff and assemble the congregation, you and your brother Aaron, and speak to the rock in their presence so that it will give forth its water. You shall bring forth water for them from the rock and give the congregation and their livestock to drink.” Moses took the staff from before the Lord as He had commanded him. Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock, and he said to them, “Now listen, you rebels, can we draw water for you from this rock?” Moses raised his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, when an abundance of water gushed forth, and the congregation and their livestock drank. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Since you did not have faith in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly to the Land which I have given them.”

I am aware that “second-guessing” the thought process that brought Moshe Rebbenu to hit the rock instead of speaking to it, is foolish. Although implying one knows what God’s greatest prophet was feeling or thinking is less absurd that doing so for God, it is quite absurd nevertheless. That said, I will just conclude that what is useful to me is to look at Moshe’s error in hitting the rock as a mistake of second-guessing what God would have wanted him to do in this case. Moshe was not defying God’s will by hitting the rock instead of speaking to it as instructed. But he made an incorrect assumption, perhaps due to anger, that God would approve of this variation in His instructions in this particular case. For this second-guessing of God and the destructive impact it resulted in for the Jewish people and Moshe himself, Moshe was denied entry into the land of Israel. ■

Rabbi Israel Chait on Parshas Chukas

From the Pirkei Avos Shiurim 1983 (Mishna 2:2)



MOSHE & the ROCK

Transcribed by a student

What was Moshe's sin when he hit the stone? Maimonides said:

“Moshe inclined slightly toward extreme anger. Thereby, God criticized Moshe saying a man like him shouldn't get angry before Israel in a situation where it was inappropriate. This is a profanation of God because people watched Moshe and learned from him, and they hoped, through Moshe, to reach success in this world and in the next world. How is it possible that anger manifested in Moshe Rabbeimu? It emanates from a lower part of human nature. But I will explain what is meant by, ‘You rebelled against My word at the Waters of Contention’ (Num. 20:24). Moshe wasn't speaking to fools or those lacking a high level of philosophical development. For the Gemara says that even the lowest Jew was on the level of Yechezkiel ben Buzzi. And all that Moshe said or did, the people would question him on it. And when they saw Moshe get angry, they said, ‘It can't be due to Moshe's imperfection. If it wasn't that Moshe knew that God was angry with us because we asked for the water and we angered God, Moshe would not be angry.’ But in truth, we do not find that God was angry with the Jews because they asked for the water. And even though we departed from the topic of this area, we answered one of the Torah's major problems: Many people often asked what the sin was. (Shmoneh Perakim, end of Chap. 4)

Every sin has two parts. First, a person must have an imperfection. But an imperfection alone is not a sin. If a person's emotions sway during the day, this is not a sin: “God does not render an evil thought as action” (Kiddushin 39b). Man vacillates daily. It is normal for different thoughts to occur to him throughout the day. For example, anger alone is not a sin unless it results in harming another

person, or in a Torah violation, or in a fixed disposition of character. But without resulting in any of these, it is only an evil thought, and God does not view this as a sin.

Why did Maimonides say that Moshe's anger was a sin? It should not be a sin unless it resulted in action. The answer is that the people didn't think Moshe was unjustified in his anger. They viewed Moshe's anger as an indication that God too was angry at their request for water. Thereby, the people blamed themselves and wrongly viewed the situation as their sin. This prevented them from perfecting themselves and this is how Moshe created a profanation of God (chillul Hashem). Moshe disrupted the psychological mean (equilibrium) necessary in the Jews' pursuit of philosophical perfection. When the Jews felt psychologically off-balance because of their mistaken self-blame, this corrupted their pursuit of philosophical perfection. Thus, Moshe's anger sent the wrong message to the Jews, the guilt of which impeded their perfection.

Moshe was punished because his anger gave the Jews an impression that affected their perfection. What was Moshe's error? One who is charged with a mission will always strive to preserve the path toward that ultimate objective. But the perfected person does not chase the objective. He has the objective in mind, but all of his actions are dictated by reality at every moment. However, at that moment, Moshe feared that the objective for which he strived his whole life might be lost. He focused on the objective. This was his error.

This is why a profanation of God is measured by the person. It occurs when one prevents another from gaining knowledge of God. An average person's actions are not watched, so there is no impact. But as Moshe was watched by everyone, he caused a profanation of God. ■



NYDesign.com

Building loyalty and sales through design strategies
studio@nydesign.com | 516.569.8888

Branding	Dataviz/Charts	Websites	Social Media
UI/App Design	Infographics	Landing Pages	Advtg/Promo
Wires/Prototypes	Iconography	Editorial Design	Animation
App Store Design	Illustration	Presentations	Packaging



CONDÉ NAST



Subscribe to the **FREE** JewishTimes.

Subscribe by emailing: Join@Mesora.org



Original, thought provoking articles
on Torah, Israel, science, politics
and readers' letters.

Enjoy all 618 back issues free: www.Mesora.org

Shop Now:
www.HowardsBarn.com
(516)371-9440

Live healthier
& happier!
Kosher produce & groceries, delivered!
SERVING FAR ROCKAWAY, 5 TOWNS & ATLANTIC BEACH

Click Here

WORRIED? ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR CHILDREN?



REMOTE MONITOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE OR PC:

- VIEW MULTIPLE LOCATIONS.
- LIVE / RECORDED FOOTAGE.
- AFFORDABLE PEACE OF MIND.
- FROM A LEADER.

FREE DEMO...



WWW.FAPS.COM

800-258-8028

FIRST ALLIANCE PROTECTION SYSTEMS



Azamra Weddings

LESS IS MORE!

Embracing the More Authentic
Post-Pandemic Reality

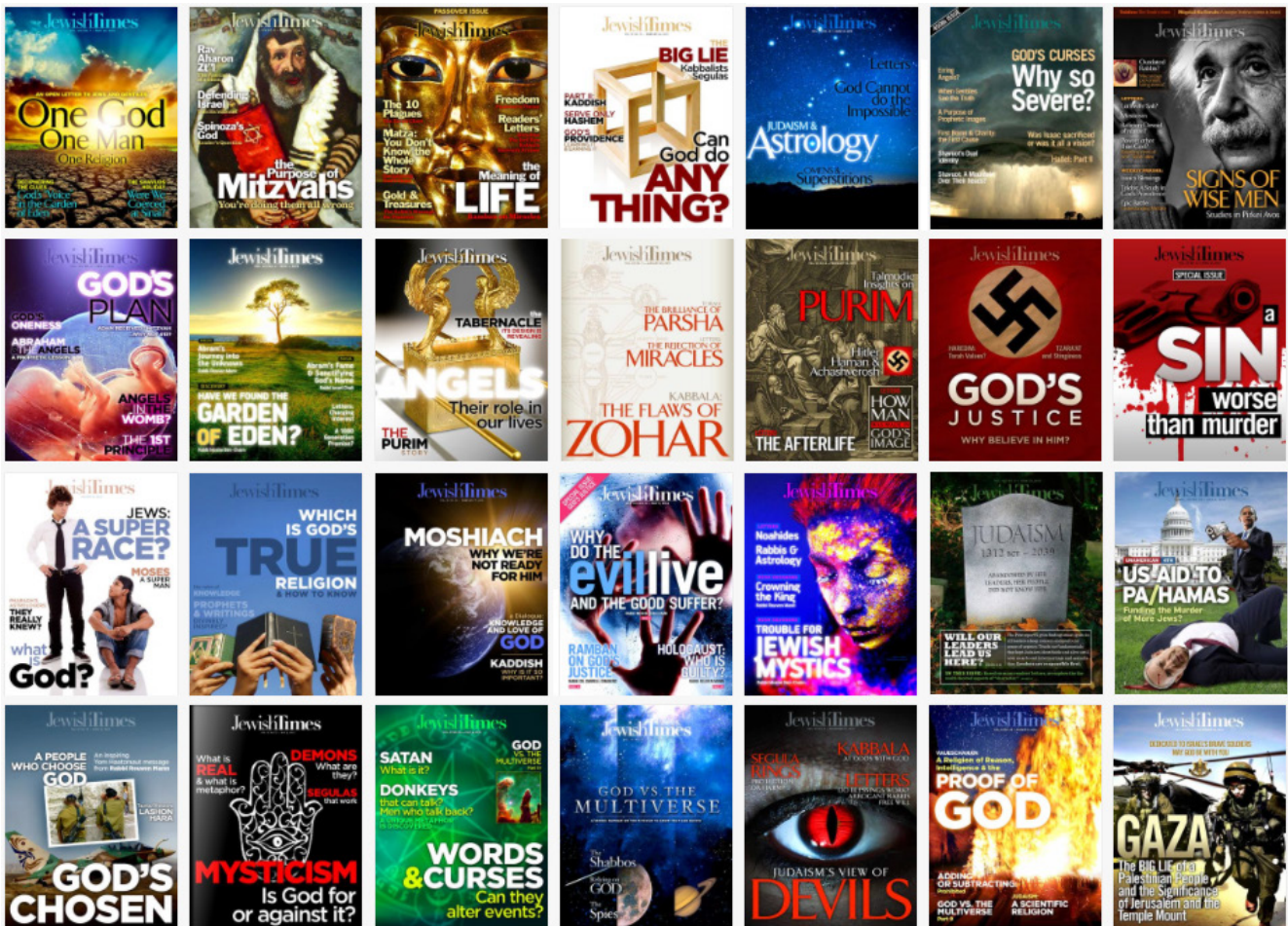
A Real DJ for Real People

JEFF NECKONOFF 516-771-9388 AZAMRADJ.COM



JewishTimes

Share a **FREE** subscription.
Click icon below:



Thought-provoking articles on Torah,
Israel, science, politics and readers' letters.
25 Years. 618 Issues

ALL HOME IMPROVEMENTS

SERVING ORANGE COUNTY, NY

(347)489-2048

www.BBGHandymanServices.com



HOME REPAIR DONE RIGHT!



- *Competitive Prices*
- *Fully Insured*
- *20 Years Experience*
- *Free Estimates*



Special!
Vinyl Siding Powerwashing \$225.00
includes algae, mildew, and mold treatment
(high ranch bi-level homes)

Deck Powerwashing & staining
\$100.00 off total price