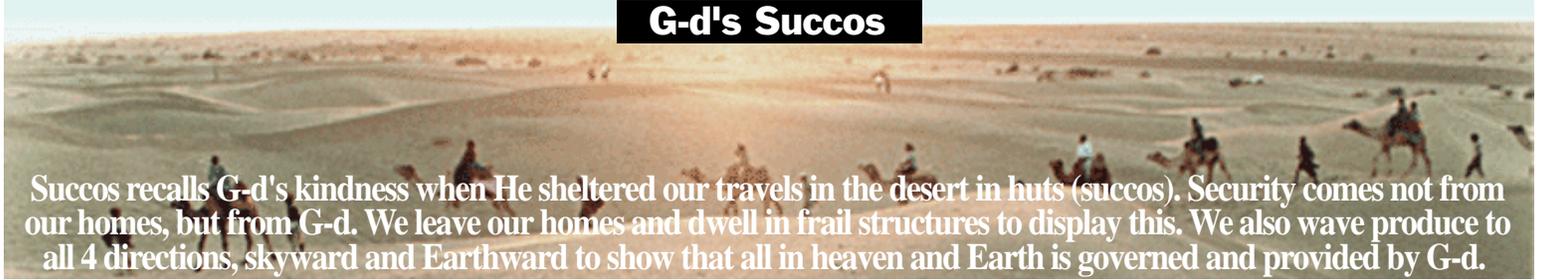


**G-d's Succos**



Succos recalls G-d's kindness when He sheltered our travels in the desert in huts (succos). Security comes not from our homes, but from G-d. We leave our homes and dwell in frail structures to display this. We also wave produce to all 4 directions, skyward and Earthward to show that all in heaven and Earth is governed and provided by G-d.

ESTD 1997

*Dedicated to Scriptural and Rabbinic Verification of Authentic Jewish Beliefs and Practices*

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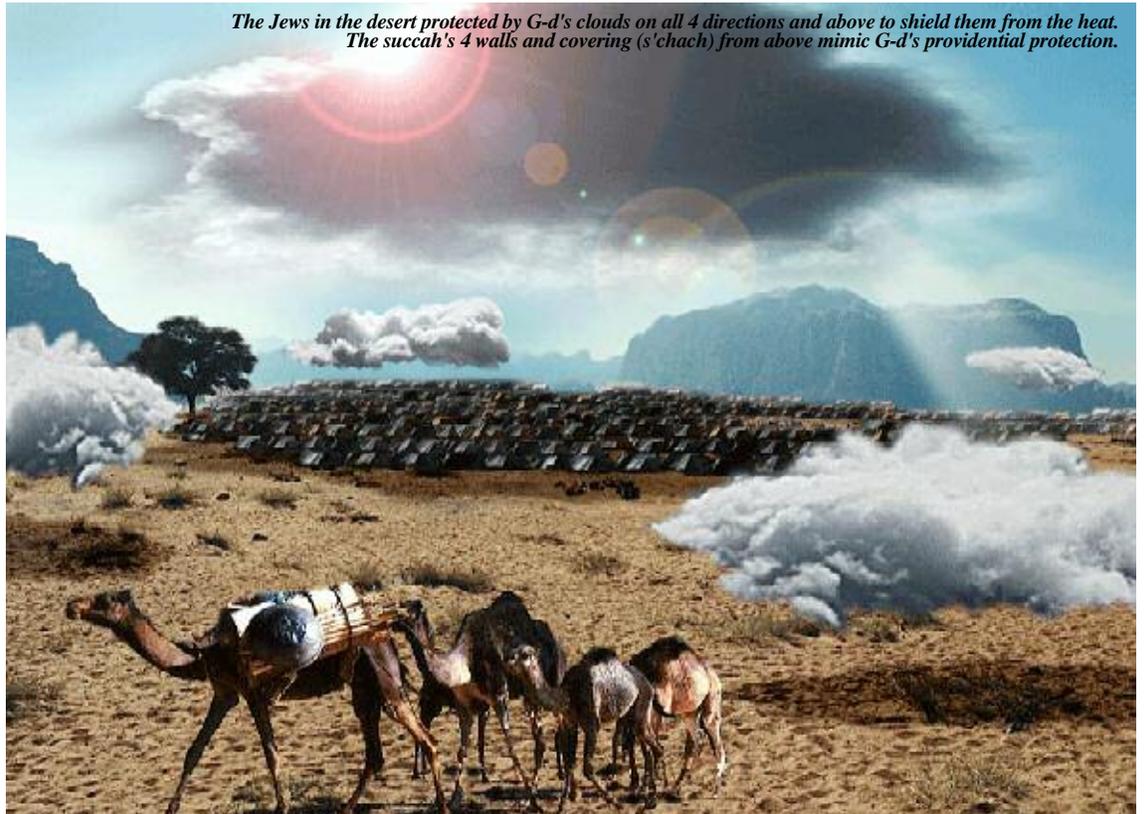
**Holidays**

## Succos

RABBI BERNARD FOX

“On the first day you must take for yourself the fruit of a citron tree, an unopened palm frond, myrtle branches and willows that grow near the brook. And you should rejoice before Hashem your G-d seven days.” (VaYikra 23:40)

(continued on page 3)



*The Jews in the desert protected by G-d's clouds on all 4 directions and above to shield them from the heat. The succah's 4 walls and covering (s'chach) from above mimic G-d's providential protection.*

# SUCCOS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

**Reader:** Can you please explain the relationship of the Lulav and Etrog to Succah. On most holidays, there is usually a relationship between the mitzvot and the holiday like maztah on Pesach, or the succah and Succos. What is the purpose of the Lulav and Etrog? I am finding it very hard to find any information. Of the many I have spoken to, little information is known. The main response I get is "we do it because we are commanded to by G-d". Well this of course is a given, but find it hard to accept as an answer.

**Mesora:** In his book entitled Horeb1, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explained a close relationship between the Succah, and the Etrog and Lulav. I will mention his ideas, followed by my thoughts - stimulated by Rabbi Hirsch.

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# SUCCOS

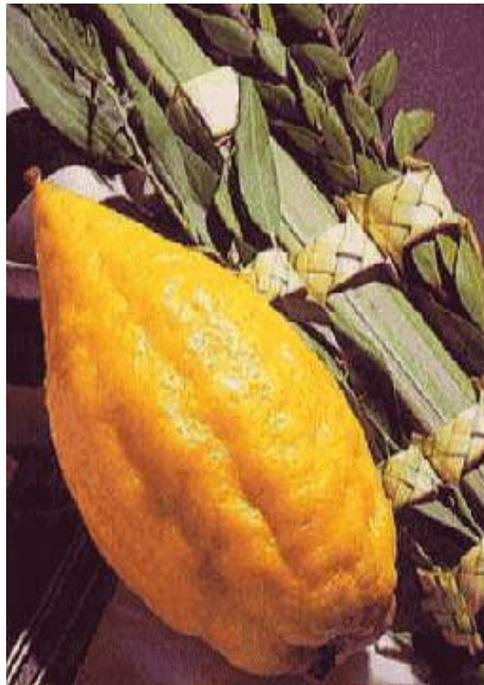
RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

The Succah, a minimalistic structure, is to focus man on a minimizing his material lifestyle. This teaches man that pursuit of the physical world is not the goal of our temporary, Earthly existence. The lulav too embodies the correct attitude towards the source of all physical good. We demonstrate our thanks to G-d for His bountiful harvest. We realize G-d alone has complete dominion over the world.

The Talmud states, (Succah 37b) "Why do we wave the Lulav? R. Yochanan said, we wave out and back (horizontally) to the One who owns all four directions on Earth, and we wave the Lulav up and down to the One Who owns heaven and Earth". Rabbi Yochanan - in my opinion - separated the two acts of waving "in/out" from "up/down" to teach us that there are two areas of G-d's dominion which we need to realize: G-d owning all four directions refers to something other than heaven and Earth. We see this clearly, i.e. that He is the Creator of all. This is why we wave up/down. But if up and down waving covers heaven and Earth, i.e., all creation, what is left to recognize about G-d's greatness? I believe it is to emphasize His dominion over man's actions - that G-d has complete knowledge of our travels on Earth (our actions) as alluded to by the "four directions", which is limited to Earthly activity. This subtle difference points us to the realization that there are two distinct areas in which we must attest to G-d's greatness: 1) G-d is omnipotent, He can do all, as He created heaven and Earth, 2) G-d is omniscient, He knows all, as He is aware of all our travels and actions.

Interestingly, these are the two main themes of the High Holiday prayers, "Malchios" (omnipotence), and "Zichronos" (omniscience). Rabbi Yochanan's view is that our waving of the four species on Succos must demonstrate G-d's dominion in all areas; in His creation, and in His government of man.

Why must the Succah be temporal and frail by design? Succah breaks man away from his insecurities regarding his wealth. Man



continuously and falsely attempts to compensate for physical insecurity by striving for riches. Man must strive to focus on G-d as his Sole Benefactor, instead of relying on the work of his hands. The drive towards the physical as an ends, removes G-d from man's life. Lulav contrasts Succah by emphasizing the use of the physical for the right reasons. We thank G-d - the Source of our bounty - replacing our faulted view of the physical, with this proper thanks to G-d for providing vegetation. All physical objects that we are fortunate to receive should be used in recognition of the 'Supplier' of these fruits, and not to reaffirm our own physical strength.

It also makes sense that Succah - not Lulav - is used to demonstrate man's required break from the physical. Man's home is the one object which embodies Earthly permanence,...not so man's food. Therefore, I believe a frail home - a Succah - is used as opposed to fruits - which are consumed objects, and do not afford man the

satisfaction of permanence. Since man does not attach himself to fruits as he does his home, the home is from where man must make his break.

Perhaps this is why we also read Koheles (Ecclesiastes) on Succos. In this philosophical masterpiece, King Solomon presents the correct philosophy for man, in relation to work, wealth, happiness, sadness, and primarily, in accomplishments. King Solomon states numerous times, "what extra is there for man in all is toil that he toils under the sun?" He even commences his work with his summary, "All is futility of futility...". The Rabbis questioned King Solomon's statement, "How can King Solomon say all is futile, when G-d said in Genesis that the world is very good?" The answer is that Solomon was referring only to the physical as an ends in itself as futile. When G-d said it was good, He meant that as long as it serves only as a 'means' to man's pursuit of wisdom. There is no contradiction between King Solomon and G-d.

In summary, Succah breaks down man's weighty attachment to the physical. Lulav redirects that attachment towards G-d, the source of all our sustenance.

Fulfill the obligations of this Succos holiday. Adhere to the commands of eating, drinking, and certainly sleeping in the succah, even light naps. Make the scach (Succah covering) from detached plant life such as reeds, wood, or bamboo, so you may gaze through the gaps at the stars as you lie on your bed - recognizing your Creator, the Creator of the universe. Wave the lulav and esrog in all four horizontal directions demonstrating G-d's exclusive dominion over all man's affairs. Wave the lulav upwards and downwards, demonstrating G-d's exclusive creation of that which is up and down - heaven and Earth.

By living in these frail huts, may we strip ourselves of our own false security, and may our waving of the lulav and esrog redirect our security towards the One who provides a bountiful life - realizing that our ultimate protection and security comes from G-d. ▣

Our passage describes one of the fundamental commandments of the festival of Succot. We are instructed to perform the mitzvah of the Arba'ah Minim – the Four Species. This commandment is performed by grasping the four species enumerated in the pasuk. These species are the etrog, lulav, hadasim and aravot. The etrog is a citron fruit. The lulav is an unopened palm frond. The hadasim are myrtle branches. The aravot are willow branches. The lulav, hadasim and aravot are grasped in one hand. The etrog is held in the other hand. The two hands are brought together. The species are shaken in a manner outlined by halacha.

The translation provided above of our pasuk is not literal. The pasuk only mentions two of the species by name. The aravot are unequivocally identified. The lulav is referred to as the branch of the date palm. The hadasim and the etrog are not named. They are described.

The pasuk provides a very vague description of the citron. It refers to the citron as pree eytz hadar – the fruit of a beautiful tree. This raises an important question. How do we know that the fruit required by the pasuk, in fact, is a citron?

There is an amazing discussion in the Talmud that seems relevant to this issue. In this discussion, the Talmud asks our question. How do we know that the term pree eytz hadar actually refers to the citron? In the course of this discussion in the Talmud, the Sages suggest that the phrase could be construed as a description of other fruits. The Talmud even suggests that the phrase could describe the pepper grain! Ultimately, the Talmud concludes that a careful analysis of this phrase indicates its meaning. Based on this analysis, the phrase is shown to refer to the etrog.[1]

Superficially, the Talmud seems to be in doubt as to the meaning of the phrase pree eytz hadar. The Talmud struggles with the issues and finally concludes that the phrase refers to the citron. This leads to an amazing question? Prior to successfully unraveling the mystery of the pasuk, how was the commandment of the four species performed? How did the Sages interpret the phrase pree eytz hadar? As noted, in one point in the discussion the Talmud suggests that the phrase can be interpreted as a reference to pepper grains. Are we to assume that before reaching the final interpretation of the phrase the identity of the cryptic pree eytz hadar was in doubt? Were pepper grains ever used as one of the four species?

Maimonides responds to this question. In order to understand his answer, some background information must be reviewed. The Torah includes the Written Law and the Oral Law. The Written Law is contained in the five books of the Chumash. The Oral Torah was communicated by the Almighty to Moshe. Moshe was not permitted

to create a written record of this Oral Law. Instead, it was to be transmitted orally from scholar to student. These two Laws are not independent of one another. The Oral Law interprets and explains the Written Law. In other words, the meaning of the Written Law is revealed in the Oral Law.

Maimonides explains that the Sages of the Talmud never doubted that the phrase pree eytz hadar is a reference to the citron. This information was provided to Moshe at Sinai. Moshe received the Torah from Hashem at Sinai. The term pree eytz hadar is found in the Written Torah. The meaning of this phrase is part of the Oral Law. Moshe received interpretation of the phrase pree eytz hadar as part of the Oral Law. From the time of Moshe the identity of the cryptic pree eytz hadar was known. This description refers to the etrog. No other fruit was ever used in the performance of the mitzvah.

This leads to a new question. According to Maimonides, the meaning of the phrase pree eytz hadar was never in doubt. If this is true, what is the purpose of the discussion in the Talmud? The Talmud seems to struggle with the interpretation of this phrase. Yet, Maimonides insists that the meaning of the phrase was never in doubt!

Maimonides, answers this question. He explains that although the Sages never doubted the actual meaning of the phrase, there is still reason for a discussion. The objective of this discussion is not to discover the meaning of the phrase. The meaning is known from Sinai. The discussion serves a different purpose. The Sages are attempting to demonstrate the manner in which the phrase pree eytz hadar alludes to the etrog.[2]

An illustration will help explain Maimonides' insight. An author writes a murder mystery. In the opening five chapters of the book the author describes the crime. In these chapters, all the hints that our hero – the capable Detective Reuven – will use to solve the hideous crime are provided. In the twenty-fifth chapter of the novel the fearless detective solves the mystery. What happens in chapters 6 through 24? Obviously, these are the exciting part of the book. In these chapters, the author describes the process used by Detective Reuven to solve the mystery. If we read the first five chapters and then impatiently skip to chapter 25, we have missed the essence of the novel!

This novel provides an analogy to Maimonides' understanding of the Talmud's discussion of pree eytz hadar. The Written Torah uses the phrase pree eytz hadar. This phrase is the first five chapters of the mystery novel. This phrase contains the clues needed to identify the mystery species. The Oral Torah provides the final chapter – the solution to the mystery. The phrase refers to the etrog. The citron is the mystery species. The Talmud is analogous to middle chapters of our novel. It

unravels the clues and shows the means by which the mystery is solved.

**“A stolen succah is fit for the mitzvah. What is the case? If a person overpowers another, forces the owner from his succah, and then dwells in it, he fulfills the commandment. This is because land is not subject to theft.” (Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 637:2)**

This law is based upon a discussion in the Talmud. In order to understand this halacha, we need a brief introduction.

A person steals a lulav and uses it to fulfill the obligation of the four species. Does the person fulfill the mitzvah with this stolen lulav? The Talmud explains that the mitzvah is not fulfilled. This is because of the principle of ein mitzvah ba'ah b'aveirah – a mitzvah cannot be fulfilled through the commitment of a sin or crime. This person acquired the lulav through a sin. It was stolen. This disqualifies the lulav for use in performance of the mitzvah.[3]

Consider a case in which a person steals a succah. This does not mean that the person picks up the structure and moves it to his or her own property. Instead, the interloper forces the owner out of the succah. The thief then takes possession of the succah. Shulchan Aruch explains that in this case the thief can fulfill the mitzvah through dwelling in the stolen succah.

Why does the principle of ein mitzvah ba'ah b'aveirah apply? A sin has been committed! How can the interloper fulfill the mitzvah with the stolen succah?

The Talmud responds to this issue and Shulchan Aruch quotes this explanation. Land is not subject to theft.[4] What is the meaning of this principle? The succah is considered real property. Real property always remains the property of the proper owner. Land or buildings may be occupied illegally. However, the land remains the property of the rightful owner. In contrast, chattel or moveable objects can be acquired by the thief. In these cases the thief can, under specific circumstances, acquire the object. In place of the object, the thief makes restitution to the owner.

The Talmud's explanation is difficult to understand. In both the case of the stolen lulav and the case of the stolen succah the thief fulfilled the mitzvah through the commitment of a crime! The Talmud distinguishes between the two cases. Real property always remains the property of the rightful owner. This is a clear distinction. However, how is this distinction relevant to the issue? Given this distinction, we are still confronted with the original question. Why is the lulav unfit for the mitzvah but the succah remains fit?

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Rav Chaim Soloveitchik Ztl offers an important insight, which resolves this issue. His insight is based upon two basic foundations. First, Rav Chaim explains the distinction of the Talmud between the succah and the lulav. He explains that the effect of seizing real property is very different from the legal impact of stealing chattel. In both cases the thief has seized property illegally. However, in stealing real property the stolen property is not affected. No legal change is brought upon the property. The seized real property does not belong to the thief. When we call this real property "stolen" we are describing an event in which the property was involved. We are not defining a legal status in the property. In short, we cannot define the property as a stolen object in a meaningful legal sense.

In contrast, in stealing chattel the actual object is affected. It acquires the legal identity of a stolen object. When we refer to this object as stolen, we are merely describing an event in which the object was involved. We are identifying a legal quality of the object. This is the intention of the Talmud in the comment that real property is not subject to theft. Real property is not redefined by the theft. Chattel is legally reclassified as stolen property.

Rav Chaim's second premise is the key to understanding the distinction between succah and lulav. He explains that we must understand the principle of ein mitzvah ba'ah b'aveirah. What specifically is the meaning of this rule? Rav Chaim explains that this principle can be understood in two ways. One option is that the principle dictates that a mitzvah enabled through the commitment of a sin is invalid. If we assume this interpretation of the principle, it is impossible to distinguish between a stolen lulav and a stolen succah. In both cases the mitzvah was performed through the commitment of a crime!

However, Rav Chaim explains that there is a second approach to understanding the principle of ein mitzvah ba'ah b'aveirah. According to this interpretation, an object identified with a sin is rendered unfit for the performance of a mitzvah. It is this identification with sin that disqualifies the object.

Through adopting this second interpretation of ein mitzvah ba'ah b'aveirah our question is resolved. A lulav is chattel. The theft of the lulav redefines the object. The lulav is legally defined as a stolen object. This identification with sin renders the lulav unfit for performance of a mitzvah. In contrast, the succah is real property. Its identity is not affected through the theft. Real property never becomes defined as a stolen object. Therefore, the succah is not identified with any sin. Because the object does not become identified with the crime, it remains fit for the mitzvah.[5]



**“Eating in the Succah the first night of the festival is an obligation. Even if one eats only an olive’s size of bread, one has fulfilled one’s obligation. From this point onward it is not obligatory. If one wishes to eat a meal, the meal is eaten in the Succah. If one wishes to eat only fruit and parched grain the remainder of the seven days, one may eat outside of the Succah. This is the same as the law concerning eating Matzah on Pesach.” (Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 639:3)**

Shulchan Aruch explains, based upon the Talmud, that eating in the succah the first night of Succot is obligatory. This obligation requires that at least an olive’s size of bread be eaten in the succah. The obligation created by the mitzvah of succah is different for the remainder of the festival. On the remaining days a person is only obligated to eat meals in the succah. In halacha, the essential ingredient in creating a meal is bread. Therefore, if one elects to eat bread, one must eat in the succah. But if one avoids eating a meal, one is not obligated to eat in the succah. Shulchan Aruch concludes by commenting that this law is analogous to the obligation to eat matzah on Pesach.

This analogy to Pesach needs some explanation. On Pesach we are obligated to eat matzah. However, this obligation is fulfilled through eating an olive’s size of matzah the first night of the festival. The remainder of the holiday one is not obligated to eat matzah.

However, if one wishes to eat bread – and here the term bread includes leavened bread or unleavened matzah – this bread must be in the form of matzah. The analogy is now clear. On both Succot and Pesach a definite obligation exists the first night. For the remainder of the festival the mitzvah becomes elective. One may determine the extent to which one is subjected to the mitzvah.

The Talmud actually explains that the relationship between Succot and Pesach extends beyond this analogy. The obligation of eating matzah on Pesach is a model for the obligation of eating in the succah. In other words, the Torah outlines this unique combination of definite and elective obligations in reference to matzah. The Torah then indicates that this model is duplicated in the mitzvah of succah. [6]

It is interesting that the mitzvot of succah and matzah share this unusual formulation. This common characteristic suggests that the two obligations partake of more than an accidental similarity. To understand the relationship between succah and matzah, we must first appreciate the role of matzah on Pesach.

Pesach is often referred to as Chag HaMatzot – the Celebration of the matzah. This name implies that the obligation of eating matzah is not related to Pesach solely in a temporal manner. Instead, the festival’s very identity is derived from the mitzvah of matzah. This means that the obligation to eat

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matzah is central to the celebration and is its distinguishing quality. However, in order to establish the relationship between matzah and the Pesach celebration the Torah did not obligate us to eat matzah everyday. Instead, the identification of Pesach with matzah is established through the definite obligation to eat matzah the first night. From that point onwards, the identification is retained through the elective obligation.

An analogy will help clarify this concept. If I wish to impress my name upon a new acquaintance, I will need an initial memorable introduction. In order for my identity to remain established, in my new friend's mind, this introduction will not need to be constantly repeated. In the future, a subtle reminder will suffice. In a similar manner, the definite obligation to eat matzah the first night creates an identification between the matzah and the celebration. During the remainder of the festival this definite obligation is not required in order to maintain this identity. The elective obligation is sufficient.

At this point it is not difficult to understand the connection between the mitzvot of matzah and succah. The mitzvah of succah also is more than temporally related to the festival. Succot is the celebration of the succah. The festival draws its identity from this mitzvah. The model for relating the mitzvah of succah to the festival is derived from matzah and Pesach. The identification is established through the definite obligation to eat in the succah the first night. The identification is maintained, after that point, by the elective obligation.

It is important to note that it is not the individual's performance of the mitzvah the

first night that creates the identification. It is the legal obligation. The Torah, by declaring the existence of this definite obligation, establishes the link.

**“He should take the bundled species in his right hand – their tops turned upward and their bottoms downward – and the etrog in the left.” (Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 651:2)**

One of the mitzvot of the festival of Succot is the shaking of the four species. These species are the lulav – the palm branch, the hadas – the myrtle branch, the aravah – the willow branch and the etrog – the citron. The branches are bound together, creating a bundle. In order to fulfill the commandment, all four species must be taken simultaneously. The Shulchan Aruch explains that the bundle of branches is taken in the right hand. The etrog is taken in the left.

Why is the bundle of branches taken in the right hand? The reason generally offered is that placement in the right hand is indicative of preference. The bundle includes three of the four species required to perform the mitzvah. Therefore, it is appropriate to give preference to the bundle.[7] However, two questions remained unanswered. Why is the right hand indicative of preference? Why should we show a preference for the bundle that includes four of the species?

Gershonides explains that this law is an example of a general principle. The Torah often commands us to fulfill a mitzvah without providing the details of the performance. These details are provided by the Oral Law. The interpretations of the Oral

Law are consistent with the Written Torah. One element of this consistency is that the details provided by the Oral Law describe the perfect means of fulfilling the Torah command. An example will illustrate this principle. The Written Torah only tells us to place the tefillin between our eyes and on our hand. The Oral Law indicates this to mean that one tefilah (singular for tefillin) should be placed between our eyes, above our brain. The other tefilah is placed on the arm, opposite the heart. This interpretation is consistent with the Written Torah's description of the mitzvah. The commandment is designed to remind us to direct our minds and hearts towards the fulfillment of the mitzvot. Therefore, this placement represents the most perfect expression of the mitzvah.

Gershonides comments that this principle also explains the role of the right hand. Many mitzvot require the use of a hand. In most people the right hand is dominant. We apply the principle that the Torah intends the mitzvah to be performed in the most perfect manner. The use of the dominate hand is a more perfect execution of the commandment.[8]

Let us apply Gershonides' principle to our case. In the case of the mitzvah of the four species both hands are used. How is the mitzvah performed in the most perfect manner? The bundle is placed in the right hand. In this manner most of the mitzvah is executed with the dominant hand. This is the most perfect performance. ■

[1] Mesechet Succah 35:a.

[2] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides)

Commentary on the Mishne, Introduction.

[3] Mesechet Succah 30a.

[4] Mesechet Succah 31a.

[5] Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Reshimat Shuirim, Succah, pp. 5-6.

[6] Mesechet Succah 27a.

[7] Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan, Mishne Berurah, 651:2.

[8] Rabbaynu Levi ben Gershon (Ralbag / Gershonides), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit, (Mosad HaRav Kook, 1994), Introduction.





# KOHELES

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

The book of Koheles (Ecclesiastes) was authored by King Solomon, who was "wiser than all men..." (Kings I, 5:11). He wrote this book with Divine Inspiration. In it, he analyzes which is the best philosophy for man to follow. The Rabbis intended on hiding his book. They were concerned, lest the masses misconstrue King Solomon's intent, and his words be gravely understood in a contradictory or heretical sense. However, the very fact that King Solomon wrote in such a fashion should draw our intrigue. As he could have written in a clear fashion, his purposeful, cryptic and seemingly contradictory style must carry its own lesson, aside from the underlying content.

Why did King Solomon write this way, and in this book only? (In contrast to Proverbs, for example.) Perhaps, when presenting a work on the correct philosophy, King Solomon wished to expose the false philosophies. To do so, he verbalizes the popular and "natural" base emotions. On the surface, it appears as though such verbalization is an endorsement. It may sound as though the King is vocalizing his own views. But in fact, he is not. He verbalizes false views so they may be exposed. Fallacy is not left unanswered, with no correction. King Solomon enunciates folly, and exposes the errors contained in these falsehoods, finally teaching the true philosophy.

Why did the Rabbis say they wished to store away this book of Koheles? Was it simply an expression of concern? Or, perhaps, this was an intentionally publicized sentiment. That is, the Rabbis wished to express this very concept; Koheles is in fact a series of statements which only 'sound' like support for heresy. By making such a statement, the Rabbis meant to teach that one must understand that portions of this book must be read as articulations of false ideas, not a support of them, and solely for the purpose of exposing their fallacy.

Pay careful attention to King Solomon's commencing words, with them, he sets the stage for the rest of his work. If King Solomon instructs us on a correct philosophy, he imparts basic ideas on psychology. By doing so, he enables us to determine if a philosophy suits our design. Without knowledge of human psychology, we have no means to judge a philosophy as deviating or conforming to man's design.

## KOHELES

**1:1) "The words of Koheles, son of David, king in Jerusalem."**

King Solomon wished to inform us of his qualifications to expose truths herein. "Koheles" is

a derivative from the root "kahal", meaning, a group. He grouped, or gathered much knowledge. He was the son of a wise man, King David. As "king", King Solomon had all at his disposal to gather to himself the wise of his generation. His ideas were tested against the best minds, hence, his conclusions deserve earnest attention. "Jerusalem" was the seat of wisdom. (Sforno)

We are informed of the King's outstanding circumstances to study Torah and life, and impart his refined findings.

**1:2) "Futility of futilities, says Koheles, futility of futilities, all is futile."**

If we count the referred number of "futilities", we derive the number "7". How? Each word "futile" in the singular indicates 1, and each in the plural, 2. So the phrase, "futility of futilities" contains 3 references. Seven "futilities" are derived by adding all instances in this verse. 7 is indicative of the 6 days of Creation plus G-d's rest on the seventh day. King Solomon associates futility with the Creation! The Rabbis asked, "How can Solomon deny what G-d said, "and G-d saw all that He made, and behold it (Creation) was very good?" (Gen. 1:31) But King Solomon did not suggest Creation is futile. His intent is that when Creation is not used properly, only then it is futile. But when used properly, G-d is correct, "it is very good."

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So we must ask, "when is Creation not used properly, and when is it used properly? Additionally, aside from numerics, this verse must make sense in its plain reading. What is disturbing, is what King Solomon means by "futility of futilities". I understand what a 'futility' is; if someone seeks something vain, or improper, we would call this a futility. But what is the additional futility to which King Solomon refers to as "futility of futilities"? What can be futile about a futility?

A Rabbi once answered this question with novel insight; King Solomon's second "futility" is referring to "fantasy". Not only is the pursuit of money (for itself) a futile endeavor, but one's fantasy about his plan - before he acts - is an additional futility. "Fantasizing" about any material pleasure is what King Solomon refers to. Not only is the acquisition a futility, but one's energies being used for fantasy prior to the acquisition is an additional futility. King Solomon teaches that man doesn't simply follow a emotional attraction, while his thoughts are blank. No. Man acts out his emotion as the last step in a series. Man's first step is his arousal, he then conjures up a picture-perfect fantasy. He imagines the abundant wealth and possessions he will soon acquire. But this is all fantasy. It is a futile use of his energies, which could have been used to study what true happiness comes from. This is valuable time lost. Fantasizing is a futility, in addition to the actual amassing of wealth.

Our first question is "when is the physical an evil or a good?" It is a good, provided one uses it as a means for a life of wisdom. All was created for the sake of man's search for truth. If man uses any part of Creation without this goal in mind, then the object forfeits its goal, and so does man. Of course, man has emotions, and they must be satisfied on some level. But satisfaction is so man is content enough to live a life as a philosopher. Overindulgence is not prohibited by Torah, but it also is not praised. "Kedoshim tihiyu", "Sanctified shall you be" teaches that even with what is permissible, man should curb his indulgence.

### **1:3) "What additional (gain) is there to man, in all his labor that he labors under the sun?"**

What is King Solomon referring to here? Rashi explains this to mean "earnings plus extra". What "extra" is Rashi referring to? Is King Solomon criticizing one who labors to eat? This cannot be. But we do notice that he does not say "gain", but "additional gain". What is additional, over and above the earnings man receives for his labor? We must also ask a more primary question: what is so important about this question, that the King started his book with it?

One may view King Solomon's verse as his own

question. But you may also read it as the King's verbalization of other peoples' question. Meaning, King Solomon is merely reiterating the futile thoughts on man's mind, not his own. King Solomon was exceedingly wise, let us not make the error of assuming his thoughts matched ours. In this verse, King Solomon points to an emotional need in man. This need is the "extra" which man seeks out, in addition to his earnings. What is this "extra"? It may be a feeling of honor one desires, so he works hard for decades to rise above others for this attention. He may wish to be viewed as a sophisticate, so he dons certain clothing and dines at exclusive locations. But all these needs, emotional projections, or self images, are of no use to one seeking the correct life. King Solomon correctly states, "what extra is there?" King Solomon teaches that man should be anchored in reality, and not strive to concoct a plan for achieving imagined goals. Honor is in one's mind, as is one's self image of a sophisticate. Living in fantasy is futile. Only what is real, is worthwhile. Don't seek the "extra", the imagined self images.

A Rabbi once taught that King Solomon is exposing our base drive, underlying all others; the need for "accomplishment". Man is seeking to accomplish much in his life. Why? After one's needs are met, it appears that further accomplishment serves man's desire to remove insecurity from himself. Too often though, a realistic security grows into an abundance of wealth, which is never spent. This too is yet another emotion, but it is the primary, propelling force in man leading him to other imagined goals. This need to "accomplish" takes on many faces.

"Under the sun": The fantasy of immortality is essential, if one is to create his other fantasies. If we knew we were dying, we could not invest our energies into amassing wealth. We would admit our time is ending. The reality of our mortality would be too stark, and it would suck the air from our sails. For this reason, King Solomon ends this verse with "under the sun." He thereby teaches that the remedy to a life of fantasy is to contemplate that we have a 'term'. "Under the sun" means, on Earth, a place which is temporal. This dose of reality helps one to temper his energies, and accept his mortality. With this reality factor, man will not so quickly indulge his fantasies. He will be safeguarded to keep his attention to what is truly real - G-d's wisdom is eternal. In truth, man should be attached to what is eternal - G-d and His wisdom.

Sforno writes on this verse, (1:3) "And he (King Solomon) said this on man's work under the sun in matters which are transient. For what use is this, that it is fitting for an intelligent being to strive at all to achieve (these matters)?" Sforno teaches that regarding matters which are transient and

temporal, man must not invest any time into them. It is a waste.

### **1:4) "A generation comes, and a generation goes, and the land eternally stands."**

What is the relevance of a "generation", and why do I need to know that one comes and goes? As we read through the book of Koheles, we must determine whether a given verse is King Solomon's advice, or is it his voicing of the ignorant opinions of others. The verses will be either King Solomon's proper instruction, or his exposure of man's destructive emotional counsel. Be sensitive to the issues, and be mindful that this book was written by our wisest sage, and only after he analyzed man's behavior. Remember; he was King David's son, he was king, he had all the sages at his disposal to discuss and arrive at decisive, intelligent, and true concepts.

Clearly, with this verse, King Solomon attacks the core of the immortality fantasy, i.e., not only do individuals expire, but so do generations! Individual man is dwarfed by a generation. The insignificance of the self is undeniably admitted in the face of "mankind". And in turn, mankind's expiration dwarfs one's individual, immortality fantasy. King Solomon wishes man to undermine this destructive fantasy of immortality. By doing so, man will not find the backdrop necessary for painting elaborate fairy tales for himself. He will be forced to confront reality, and will then be guided only by truth.

"...and the land eternally stands." If man is to truly accept his own mortality, there must be that which he recognizes "outlives" him. For if all would expire with one's own death, the immortality fantasy would be replaced with yet another destructive phantasm; the ego. If one was unsure whether the world continued when he was gone, he would thereby feed his ego. Therefore, King Solomon aligns man's expiration with the realization that the world continues - even without us. The knowledge that the universe continues without us, is the necessary measuring rod for our mortality. There must be something, to which we may contrast our lifespan, and that is the universe, which "eternally stands". Contrasting the eternity of the universe to one's own few decades, man is helped to confront his mortality.

### **1:5) "And the sun shines, and the sun sets, and unto its place it yearns (to) shine there."**

This is a prime example of the universe's unrelenting nature. This sentiment substantiates the previous comment that only the world endures. It draws on an example of the most prominent, celestial sphere. We also learn that a

created entity, undiluted with extraneous agendas, i.e., the sun, performs perfectly when it functions precisely in line with its nature, designed by G-d. Man would be wise to take this lesson to heart.

But what strikes us is the term "yearns" being applied to an inanimate object. How can the sun "yearn"?

More than others, there is one element that is essential to our understanding of human psychology: the unconscious. This is the ever-functioning but hidden part of our emotional make up. We have many desires, fears, loves, hates, and numerous other emotions, that are completely hidden from our consciousness. We are truly blind to them. These emotions, wishes and fears are manifest in our dreams, they cause our "slips of the tongue", and continually - from 'behind the curtain' - motivate us. If we do not analyze our dreams, and examine our actions and feelings, we lose out greatly. We forfeit our perfection, as we allow these unconscious forces to control us, and not the reverse. Perfection requires one to be in as much control of his actions and opinions as possible. Although many emotions are elusive and remain undetected, simply not reflecting on ourselves is unacceptable.

What is it that "yearns" to shine? What is "shining"? Perhaps King Solomon alludes to this unconscious, which does both; it "rises" and "sets". It "rises", as it pushes forth its force into what is in daylight (rising), i.e., consciousness. It also "sets", as it recedes back into its hidden realm, the unconscious. It "yearns to shine," means that the unconscious always seek to affect man, who is functioning in a waking state. "Yearning" to shine means that the unconscious forces are relentless in their "desire" to control our actions.

"And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the coming of dawn". (Gen. 32:25) The verse says that Jacob was alone, yet he wrestled with someone - a contradiction. A Rabbi resolved this contradiction by explaining that Jacob was in fact alone, but was really wrestling with himself; Jacob was the "man". Jacob was wrestling with his unconscious. "until the coming of dawn", means that which could not exist in daylight, in consciousness. We see daylight referring to man's consciousness, and night referring to the unconscious. Jacob was fighting with some internal, unconscious element in his personality, indicated by the struggle ending at daybreak.

I find King Solomon's selected metaphor revealing; he uses the sun (shemesh) for this lesson. "Shemesh" also means a servant, a "shamashe." Perhaps this is fitting, as the unconscious should serve us, not control us.

**1:6) "It travels to the South, and circles to the North, circling, circling, travels the wind, and on its circuit does the wind return."**

If I remember correctly, a Rabbi once explained this verse to mean that man continually sets his sights on new ventures. Traveling to the "South or North" means "making plans to accomplish new goals". He wishes to "get somewhere" in life. But such a path is not favorable. Perhaps we learn that in truth, one only imagines that he is "progressing" when he meets his own, subjective goals. His desire to progress, is only progress in his own terms, and not true progress according to Torah perfection. Man wishes to build empires, but in G-d's eyes, they are meaningless, and in fact, man regresses with such activity. How does King Solomon indicate that such a desire is fruitless? "Circling, circling" describes a repeating pattern. One does not actually change his location, he circles on the same parcel of ground, not moving forward. This rotating activity is akin to one who does not see true progress in his life. Man imagines he progresses with his material successes and plans, but in truth, he keeps going in "circles".

Here too King Solomon utilizes an appropriate metaphor; the "wind". We too refer to man's strength as his wind; "he knocked the wind out of me", "he lost the wind from his sails", "he popped your balloon". King Solomon teaches that man directs his energies towards goals to give us a sense of worth. The underlying need for accomplishment has gone unchecked, and propels him to the "South and the North." Instead, man should contemplate that his energies are better used in search of truth, instead of reacting to the unconscious, pushing him to make himself great through empire building, fame and riches. Such actions are the result of the imagination, and not a thought-out philosophy which exposes such vanity.

**1:7) "All the rivers go to the sea, but the sea is not full, to the place where the rivers go, there they return to go."**

"Water" is the perfect object to embody this verse's lesson, taught by a Rabbi. This verse is a metaphor for man's libido; his energies. This great psychological, reservoir of energy is the cause for the previous verse's teaching; that man has a great drive to accomplish.

Man's energies are always "flowing", and they seek to become "full". "But the sea is not full", that is, man does not become fully satisfied. As man's emotions are satisfied, he again and seeks a new emotional satisfaction. Satisfaction, therefore, is temporary. Where man's emotions flow, "there they return to go", i.e., it is an endless process.

"All the rivers go to the sea" indicates that all man's energies have one focus for that period. Man is usually pulled in one direction, conveyed here by "sea", one destination. It is interesting that "rivers" are also mentioned in Genesis, also in the commencing chapters. Is there a relationship?

**1:8) "All matters are wearying, man is unable to describe them, the eye does not become satisfied in seeing, the ear does not become full from hearing."**

Why are the eye and ear unable to behold their complete sensations? Is King Solomon describing the ineptitude of these organs? Or, perhaps he means to point us towards understanding that element in man which seeks to "behold all." The latter would indicate that man has a desire to have complete knowledge in a given field - but he cannot. This desire stems from another need; security. Man wishes to have a complete grasp on matters, otherwise, he feels inept. This wearied state, King Solomon says is due to man's attempt to secure complete knowledge. Man desires to be secure that he has all the answers. Man is better advised to accept his limited scope of apprehension, than to deny his feeble nature and strive for the impossible. Seeing and hearing are the two major senses used in learning. Being "unable to describe them", teaches that man wishes to behold wisdom, so much that he can competently discourse on matters - he wishes self sufficiency, the removal of insecurity.

**1:9) "That what was, it will be, and what was done, will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun."**

What human attitude is King Solomon responding to here? Note that he addresses both the "what", (things), and "events" (what was "done".) This encompasses all of man's experiences on Earth: man relates either to objects, or to events, categorized as "space and time".

King Solomon teaches that man seeks out "novelty", looking for that which is new in objects, or in events. Why? What satisfaction does man imagine he will experience with something new, or a new event? Rashi correctly writes that in the universe, all has been created during Creation. Nothing afterwards can be created anew. In contrast, new ideas are in fact new to us, and afford enlightenment, and the invigoration that the soul is designed to seek.

"Novelty" is not an ends in itself, but a sought after 'cure' for man's stagnation. Man inescapably seeks enlightenment, but he seeks it in the physical realm, "under the sun", the arena which

King Solomon critiques. Man will only find the rejuvenating pleasure of novelty in the area of wisdom. All Earthly attempts to fulfill this need will result in dissatisfaction.

Novelty has a funny way of vanishing immediately. Something is "new", as long as it goes unexperienced. It is a "Catch-22." Before we attain something, or go somewhere, it is new, but we have yet to enjoy our imagined pleasure. And once we attain it, or get there, it is no longer truly new. How many times have we anticipated arriving at a new destination, only to be disappointed that when we arrive, the novel and alluring element of our vacation, i.e., being "there", goes unrealized. We are not "there", because once we get "there", it is now "here".

**1:10) "There is a thing that you will say, 'Look at this, it is new', (but) it was already in history, that was before us."**

This verse seems repetitive. Also, what is the specific "thing" to which King Solomon refers?

A Rabbi taught that this verse discusses the emotion of "modernity". Man wishes to feel that he lives in THE generation. We hear people ridicule ancient societies as backwards. We have electronics, we have something new. We live on the final frontier. We are different than all other generations.

Why do we wish to feel we are the most advanced generation? I believe such an emotion of modernity, attempts to deny mortality. If we live in the most advanced generation, this means, ipso facto, that no other generation may pass us: we will never die.

The cure for the imagined sense of modernity, is to realize that others before us experienced what we do. Contemplating that other people have expired with history, forces us to recognize that what we experience as new, will also meet with the same fate. We must identify with other generations - they have come and gone. We are no different. We too will go the way of the world. This realization, that all mankind faces the same fate, enables man to apply this truth to himself. King Solomon describes the problems and offers correct solutions. He desired the good for all mankind. This good, means knowledge of what is truth, and a dismissal of fallacy.

King Solomon describes so many of man's pitfalls. Did G-d design man with destructive elements? No, He did not, "and behold it is very good." He designed us with attitudes and emotions which are to be studied, and directed towards living an extremely happy existence. "Ki yetzer lave ha-adom ra m'na-urav", "Mans'

inclinations are evil from youth" (Gen. 8:21) means that only our "inclinations", not our faculties, are not steered by intelligence initially. They drive towards what is evil and harmful. But with devoted study and self application of our knowledge, we are well equipped to direct our energies, emotions and attitudes towards the good. Man's mind is more powerful and convincing than his emotions. With intelligence and proofs, we are fully capable of attaching ourselves to the life outlined in the Torah.

By nature, man wishes to follow what he sees as true and good. This is our inherent design. As we study more and more, we abandon what is false, and naturally follow what is proven as good. Once we see a new idea clearly, we will naturally follow it. All that is required, is to devote many hours daily to study, and endure our research and analysis, until we arrive at decisively, clear and proven opinions.

Man's drives are only evil from youth. By nature, the emotions have a head-start on intelligence. This does not spell inevitable catastrophe. Our continual Torah study will refine our thoughts, to the point, that we see with ultimate clarity, how to use our energies to attain a truly enjoyable and beneficial existence.

**1:11) "There is no remembrance to the first ones, and also to the later ones that will be, there will be no remembrance to them, with those that will be afterwards."**

Facing mortality, so clearly spelled out in the previous verse, King Solomon now closes the loop by addressing man's final hope for mortality; to be memorialized in death. If man cannot achieve immortality in life, he still attempts to secure a memorial for himself. He wishes to go down in history. This fantasy strives at securing some vestige of his existence. But this will not be. How does King Solomon help man abandon such futility? He asks man to recall previous generations, and man cannot, "There is no remembrance to the first ones". This is an iron clad argument against hoping for memorialization - it does not happen. King Solomon wisely advances man's thoughts to the future, as if to say, "You think YOU will be remembered? let us see if this happens". The King's response: There is no remembrance to the first ones". It does not happen to them, it will not happen to you, nor to any future generation. Reality is the best teacher, and King Solomon places reality between man's eyes.

## KOHELES' VERSES DEFINED:

I. KING SOLOMON'S  
"QUALIFICATIONS" TO ADDRESS  
THIS TOPIC.

2. "FANTASY": THE SUBJECT OF  
KOHELES.

3. "ACCOMPLISHMENT": MAN'S  
PRIMARY FANTASY.

4. "IMMORTALITY": THE BACKDROP  
NECESSARY FOR FANTASY.

5. "THE UNCONSCIOUS": THE  
SOURCE OF MAN'S FANTASY LIFE.

6. "PROGRESS": THE GOAL OF  
ACCOMPLISHMENT.

7. "LIBIDO": MAN'S UNRELENTING  
ENERGIES, SEEKING SATISFACTION,  
AND PROPELLING HIS SEARCH FOR  
HAPPINESS.

8. "INDEPENDENCE": MANS  
ATTEMPT TO REMOVE ALL  
INSECURITIES BY ATTEMPTING TO  
GRASP COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE.

9. "NOVELTY": WHERE IT IS, AND IS  
NOT FOUND; AN INHERENT NEED  
IN MAN.

10. "MODERNITY": STRIVING FOR  
IMMORTALITY IN LIFE.

II. "MEMORIALIZATION":  
STRIVING FOR IMMORTALITY IN  
DEATH.

VERSE I I CONCLUDES THE FIRST  
SECTION OF KOHELES. WITH G-D'S  
HELP, WE WILL CONTINUE. ■

GENESIS:

# Adam's Sin & Punishment

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 RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT
 

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In order to appreciate the entire sequence of events concerning man's creation, we must analyze the appropriate verses.

In Genesis, chapter two, verse seven, it states, "Then the Lord G-d formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This verse depicts man's origin and reflects that man's existence emerged as a living soul, "nefesh chayah". The phrase "living soul" is significant and must be analyzed. Shortly after man's creation, man was charged with a task. Verse 15 states "And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to serve it and to watch it." In the following verses, G-d charged man with his first commandment. Man was allowed to eat from all the trees of the garden except from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. From this Tree of Knowledge man was expressly prohibited from eating. G-d thereby warned man that on the day he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, he would surely perish. It was at this juncture, after G-d gave man this stern warning about the Tree of Knowledge, that He made the following observation (verse 18). "And the Lord G-d said, It is not good that man should be alone, I will make a helpmate for him."

It is puzzling that this verse concerning man's discontent in being alone is placed after the warning about the Tree of Knowledge. It would at first seem that this statement would have more logically been made immediately following man's creation since it reflects the nature of man's existence. Furthermore, the verses following this observation seem incongruous. These subsequent verses discuss the creation of the animals and man's mastery over the animal kingdom. Verses 19 & 20

state "And out of the ground, the Lord G-d formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man would call every living creature, that was to be the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helpmate for him." In addition to the seemingly questionable nexus between the verses, we can pose a few very basic questions. Following the commandment concerning the Tree of Knowledge, God made the statement that it wasn't good for man to be alone. He then proceeded to create the animal kingdom. Why then didn't G-d create woman at the very inception of the creation of man? If it was apparent to God that man was not happy alone, then why didn't he create woman immediately? What was the compelling reason that God refrained from creating woman until after man was placed in charge of the Garden of Eden and prohibited from partaking of the Tree of Knowledge? It is obvious from the sequence of the verses that God chose not to create woman until after He had created the animal kingdom and placed man in its charge. Furthermore, the entire account of G-d's creation of the animal kingdom and man's mastery of the animals is concluded with a repetition of man's dissatisfaction with his solitude.

When God ultimately created woman from man, it is interesting to note that man did not name her at the time of her creation as he did with the animals. Rather, it was only after the incident of the snake (which enticed them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge) that man gave woman a name. Chapter 3, verse 20 states, "And the man called his

wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living."

In order to fully appreciate the order of events regarding creation, we must first make the following observations in reference to man's nature. These insights will help give us a better understanding of the account of creation, and they will also afford us an appreciation of the complexity of the nature of man. With these observations, we can gain a new perspective on man's constant lifelong struggle to achieve perfection as a moral being.

Maimonides posed a famous question regarding the denial of man of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Verses 16 and 17 state, "And the Lord G-d commanded the man saying; of every tree in the garden thou may freely eat, but the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shall not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die." As Maimonides observed, based on these verses alone, it would seem that G-d was withholding from man the ability to discern good from evil. This is rather puzzling, since the pursuit of knowledge is the primary objective of the Talmud Chachum. Was it really G-d's intention to deny knowledge to man? This also contrasts the traditional Judaic belief that G-d's greatest gift to man was his intellectual faculty. An analysis of relevant verses can help us examine man's true nature and determine that quite the contrary is true.

The aforementioned verse 7 states that G-d created man as a living soul, "nefesh chaya". The term "chaya" is precise. It reflects the instinctual component of man, the "yezter hara". This term, "chaya" is also used to reflect the instinctual, as animals are also referred to as "chaya". In his Mishna Torah, in the Laws of Forbidden Foods (Chapter 2, Law 3), Maimonides used this term "chaya" to reflect the instinctual, which is the essential component of an animal's nature. Thus, it is evident that the composition of man's nature includes the instinctual. As previously questioned, it is now significant that man was charged with his first commandment shortly after his creation. This evidences the other component of human nature.

Man was to watch and guard the Garden of Eden and to enjoy the fruit of the trees as his source of nourishment. However, he was prohibited by the word of G-d from partaking of the Tree of Knowledge. This task and divine commandment evidences the other aspect of man's nature. Man was given the gift of intelligence, and thus was capable of observing G-d's commandment. Therefore, it is apparent that G-d created man with a dual nature. Man not only possesses the instinctual drive (akin to the animal kingdom), but he also possesses the intellectual faculty which enables him to discern what is good and to observe the dictates of G-d. This dual aspect of man's nature is the primary message of these verses. However, these perfunctory inferences regarding man's nature are also important tools which enable us to more clearly comprehend the entire sequence of creation. Man possesses a hybrid essence of the intellectual and the instinctual. G-d's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge was an appeal to man's intellect. However, at this point in time man lacked a sense of morality, of what is "tov", good, and what is "ra", evil. God forbade man to eat the fruit in order to ensure that man would function in accordance with his intellectual abilities. However, once man disobeyed this command, he was destined to constantly struggle with the passions of the instinctual, which would always be in conflict with his intellectual nature, his yetzer hara.

By disobeying this command and partaking of the forbidden fruit, man abandoned his intellect for the appeal of the fantasy. From this point on, man was destined to face the eternal struggle of "tov v'ra", good and evil.

In verse 18 after G-d appealed to man's intellect by admonishing him not to eat of the forbidden fruit, G-d then made the observation that it was not good for man to be alone -- man needed a helpmate. G-d was cognizant that man was unable to channel all of his energies to the intellectual. In such a state, man's energies would soon have been frustrated. By His statement in verse 18, God acknowledged that it is not good for man to be alone, for such a state would lead to the frustration of

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man's instinctual energies. This observation is attested to by the subsequent series of verses. Man utilized his innate intellectual abilities to name, classify, dominate and rule the animal kingdom. It was during the performance of this task that man observed that each animal was capable of satisfying its instinctual desires. Man therefore attempted to satisfy his own instinctual needs, but was unable to find a helpmate. Man realized that his dual nature could not be satisfied with an entity whose entire essence was instinctual. Through his cognitive efforts, he became aware of his inability to channel all of his instinctual energies into intellectual gratification. Therefore, the sequence of events leading to the creation of woman is more understandable. Although man was created with both instinctive and intellectual drives, it was only through his own efforts that he came to realize his inability to channel his total instinctual energies into the world of the intellectual. It was only after he made this observation, did G-d then create woman. Verses 21 and 22 state, "And the Lord G-d caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord G-d had taken from the man, made He a woman and brought her unto the man." It is not coincidental that G-d created woman from man's rib. Man was incapable of satisfying his instinctual desires with a being that operated solely in the world of the instinctual. Such a relationship would only be physical, and by definition could not be enduring or fulfilling. When G-d created woman, man was not solely attracted by his instinctual desires, but there was a psychological attraction as well. In verse 23 man comments as follows in reference to his wife, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Man's attraction to woman stemmed from his love of his own self. Man's narcissistic desires fostered the relationship that developed between man and woman. Man is a complex being, and even his instinctual drives are inexorably intermixed with his psychological awareness. This explains the medrash (allegory) that man

originally had two forms from which the woman originated. This basis of man's attraction for woman also serves to shed light on the reason why woman was not created at the time of man's creation. Man's instinctual energies were not capable of fulfillment in a purely instinctual relationship -- a psychological attraction was also required.

It is therefore apparent that the entire creation of man was designed by G-d in a manner which allowed man's nature to play a role in the emerging sequence of events of creation. Man was created with a yetzer hatov, the intellectual faculty whose objective for man is to live a life guided by wisdom and morality. However, man was also bestowed with a yetzer hara, instinctual needs and desires. As a result, man's libido could not be satisfied by directing all of his energies to the intellectual. Because of his hybrid nature, man discovered that he was incapable of satisfying his physical needs and desires in a purely instinctual relationship. His excess energies which were not absorbed by the intellectual were frustrated and could not reach gratification. This gratification required a relationship whereby there was also a psychological attraction. Thus G-d created woman, a blessing from G-d which allowed man and woman to function in a harmonious manner.

It is only after we observe the emergence of human nature through the events of creation that we can properly analyze the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Prior to the sin, man's energies were primarily directed to intellectual endeavors. Man took charge of his surroundings and used his intellectual abilities to master the environment. However, the excess instinctive energy which could not be satisfied by intellectual endeavors was channeled into a healthy relationship with Eve. Man's energies were directed towards phenomena that were physically present. By commanding man not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, G-d was disciplining man's instinctual drives and demonstrating that the instinctual must always be subordinated and controlled by the intellectual. Our mesora (oral



tradition) tells us that the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge were not unique. Its appeal was solely based on the prohibition to indulge in them. It appealed to man's yetzer hara, his desires. Verse 6 states, "And the woman saw that the food was good to eat and that it was a delight for the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise. She took of the fruit and ate it, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat it." Maimonides noted that this verse evidences the breadth of man's desires. The tree was an ordinary tree, yet the appeal of the fantasy was overwhelming. The tree was appealing to the eye, though common, and was good to eat, though never tasted. Thus, by partaking of the tree, man succumbed to the allurements of the fantasy. Before the sin, man's energies were directed to the physical phenomena that were in his presence. Our rabbis teach us that prior to the sin, man's evil inclination was controllable,

but after the sin, there was a qualitative change. Man's instinctual desires were internal and external. Before the sin, man's libido naturally was attracted to wisdom, and his energies were automatically drawn to thought. Subsequent to the sin, man's energies naturally flowed to the physical. By indulging the fantasy, man incorporated into his personality the vehicle by which the energies of man are drawn to the physical. The enticements of the tree and the entrapment of man's imagination allowed man's energies to become fixated on the physical. This sin shaped the human personality for the millennium. Man was doomed, for at the moment his energies became fixated on the physical, it became a constant source of man's attention. His energies became attached to the physical and naturally flowed to it. Man's sin molded his soul. Mankind was destined to be ensnared by fantasy,

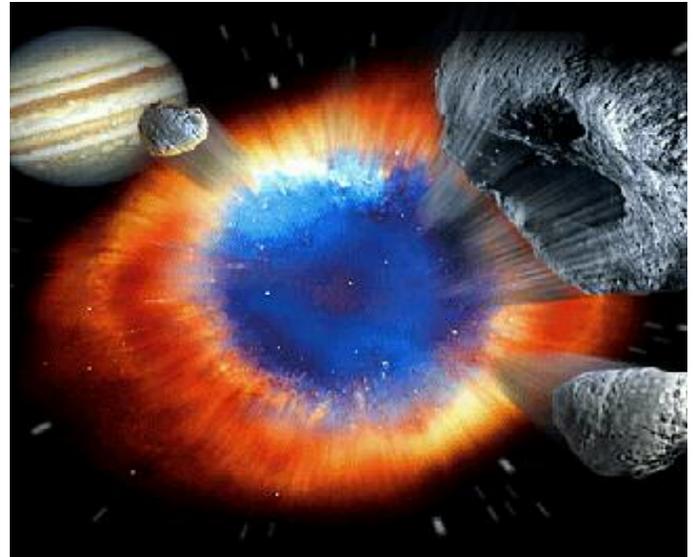
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and his energies would from then on be guided by the imagination. It would seek its initial gratification from the world of the physical. Thus, down through the generations to our present time, whenever man sins and is overwhelmed by the desires of the instinctual, he too molds his soul. He becomes drawn to and affected by the trappings of physical pleasures, his imagination overwhelms him, and as a result, distances himself from G-d. After the sin, man's only hope for salvation is to rechannel his energies. A wise man is one whose thought process is not influenced or corrupted by the instinctual. However, the ordinary individual who cannot properly channel his energies away from the instinctual, his emotions cloud his intellect and the physical corrupts his thinking process.

In any event, man has the free will to withdraw the energies which are now naturally attracted to the physical by the power of fantasy, and can re-direct them towards the intellectual. By choosing such a path, man also molds his soul, directs his energies and becomes attached to and leads the life of a chacham (wise man) and becomes close to God. A task such as this is monumental, and requires great conviction. Battling instinctual drives requires great fortitude, intellect, and inner strength. The appellation of a "gibor", a strong person, is reserved for one who conquers the evil inclination. However, G-d, in punishing man for the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, has armed man with the ability, if he exercises his free will wisely, to be victorious in this battle.

G-d's punishment is different from that of man. A punishment from G-d is given to help benefit man. An analysis of the verses subsequent to the sin can help us to understand the punishment and its ramifications with respect to the human personality. In chapter 3, verse 7 states, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths." Prior to the sin, the Torah explicitly tells us that they were not ashamed of their nakedness. The Torah is teaching us by contrasting these fact, that prior to the sin, man did not experience embarrassment. Shame is a

function of man's conscience. Before man sinned, man's energies were naturally directed to chachma, to intellectual pursuits. After the sin, man fell prey to the instinctual. The intellectual was overpowered by the instinctual. However, man now had an additional ally to help combat the forces of the physical . . . his conscience. The conscience of man helps him to determine good from evil. The yetzer hatov, man's good inclination, helps man to withdraw his energies from the world of the physical and re-direct it to the world of chachma, wisdom. However, before man sinned, he did not possess the ability to discern good from evil. His mind was naturally drawn to the intellectual. After the sin man's energies flow first to the physical, which is capable of paralyzing him. G-d thereby instilled in man a conscience to help him progress into the world of the ideational and not stagnate in the world of the physical. It is only with the aid of the yetzer hatov, the ability to discern good, that man can use his free will and channel his energies to the acquisition of wisdom. It is therefore no coincidence that immediately after G-d pronounced His punishment for the sin (and man was endowed with both good and evil inclinations), man began to utilize his conscience to channel his energies properly. First, he experienced shame and covered his nakedness. Then, as chapter 3, verse 20 relates, "And the man called his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living." It seems incongruous that this occurs immediately after the pronouncement of man's punishment. However, the reason is now readily apparent. This manifests that man was using the yetzer hatov to help direct his energies towards wisdom. He exercised his intelligence to classify and name his wife. It was a definitional exercise that required his intellectual abilities. From this we can ascertain that a punishment from G-d is unique, as it is executed for the benefit of man. This particular event bestowed man with good and evil inclinations. It is only with the aid of the yetzer hatov that man can overcome the pratfalls of sin and can withdraw his energies away from the physical and utilize his intellect to live a life based on wisdom. ■



# Creation G-d Hovering *and the* Cherubim

RABBI BERNARD FOX

**"In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth." (Beresheit 1:1)**

The Torah begins with an account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Rashi asks an important question. The Torah is a work of law. It presents a system of six hundred thirteen mitzvot. It would seem appropriate for the Torah to concentrate on the objective of teaching us the commandments. Why does the Torah begin with an account of creation? Rashi provides a response. He explains that Hashem promised the land of Israel to Bnai Yisrael. However, the Jewish people would not occupy an empty region. They would dispossess other nations. The Torah teaches justice. How can we justify the seizure of the land of Israel from these nations? The account of creation provides the

response. The Almighty created the universe. Therefore, He has the right to apportion the earth to various nations. He also has the authority to command the dispossession of these nations.

Rashi's answer is difficult to understand. The nations, which Bnai Yisrael would expel, were idol worshippers. They did not accept the authenticity of the Torah. Certainly, they would question the assertion that the Creator had promised the land of Israel to Jewish people. They would not agree that the Almighty - the true owner - had confiscated the land from them. We encounter this very situation today. The nations of the world are familiar with the Torah, its account of creation, and its record of the Almighty's promises to the Jewish people. Yet, these nations do not recognize the Jewish people's Divine

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right to the land! Are we to assume that the Almighty did not fully understand the nature of his creatures? Did He think the entire world would accept the message of the Torah?

Rav Yisrael Meir Lau explains that we must carefully consider Rashi's comments. Rashi does not say that the nations of the world will be convinced of the Torah's argument. It seems that Rashi did not maintain that the message is addressed to these nations. Instead, the Torah is speaking to Bnai Yisrael! According to Rashi, Hashem recognized that the morality of the Jewish people would be challenged by the nations. He also realized that Bnai Yisrael would be sensitive to this reproach. We need to know that, despite all accusations, we have a Divine right to the land of Israel. Therefore, the Torah teaches us the basis of our claim. This lesson is important today. The world does not recognize our right to the land of Israel. We must work to overcome this obstacle. We must also strive to live in peace in the land. This may require accommodation and compromise. But we should not abandon our assertion of the justice of our claim. We need to know that the Creator promised us the land of Israel. No other nation's occupation of the land supercedes this Divine right.

**"And the earth was without form and in confusion with darkness on the face of the depths. And the spirit of the Lord hovered on the waters' surface." (Bereshit 1:2)**

The meaning of this pasuk can best be understood in conjunction with the previous pasuk. The Torah begins with the statement that Hashem created the heavens and earth. The terms heaven and earth are proceeded with the article *et*. This article generally implies some inclusion. Our Sages explain that, in this case, the term *et* is intended to include all derivatives. In other words, the pasuk should be understood as stating that creation began with the forming of the heavens and the earth and all of their derivatives. The derivatives are the stars, plants and other elements that came forth on the subsequent days. Now this seems very confusing. The first pasuk asserts that

the heavens and earth, with all of their elements, were formed on the first day. The subsequent pesukim assert that these various elements emerged during the full course of the six days of creation. Our pasuk resolves this difficulty. The initial creation contained all that emerged on the subsequent days. However, these elements existed only in potential. This is the meaning of the earth's formless and confused form. The darkness also represents this concept. In darkness, individual forms cannot be discerned. These terms describe the initial creation. The various elements had not yet emerged into their actual form. The Divine influence was required in order to transform the potential to the actual.

Based on this interpretation of creation, Rabaynu Avraham ben HaRambam explains the "hovering" mentioned in the pasuk. The term used for hovering is associated with the bird hovering over its nest. Why is this term used to describe the Divine influence? A bird hovers over its nest in order to protect and cultivate its eggs. The eggs contain a living entity - in potential. Through the efforts of the mother hovering over the eggs, the potential of the eggs emerges in the form of offspring. In a similar manner, the earth included its eventual elements in potential. G-d's "hovering" represents His influence in converting potential to actual.

It is interesting to note the correspondence between this understanding of creation and the modern scientific view. Science maintains that the building blocks for all that now exists were formed during the initial creation. Over time, the universe we now see eventually emerged. This occurred through the organization of these primitive elements. However, science is faced with the challenge of explaining the emergence of design and organization from chaos. The Chumash provides the resolution of this riddle. G-d's influence caused the normal pattern of the physical universe to be reversed, and organization emerged from chaos.

**"And He chased out the man. And He stationed at the east of Gan Eydan the cherubs and the revolving**

**sword blade to guard the path to the Tree of Life." (Bereshit 3:24)**

Hashem places Adam and his wife Chava in Gan Eydan. Adam and Chava sin and are driven from the Gan - the garden. Hashem places cherubs - angels - at the entrance of the Gan. These angels are accompanied by a revolving sword blade. Together, they guard the approach to the Gan and the Tree of Life. Early explorers understood the account of humanity's experience in Gan Eydan and the eventual banishment in the literal sense. Ancient maps suggest probable locations for the Gan. These explorers believed that a complete exploration of the globe would result in locating the Gan. However, this literal interpretation does not provide a full understanding of these incidents. These events communicate a deeper message. This message can be appreciated through looking beyond the literal meaning of the passages.

An exploration of the full meaning of the experience of Gan Eydan requires a lengthy analysis. We will limit our discussion to the meaning of the cherubs and the sword that guard the Gan. We must begin our analysis by understanding the significance of the Gan and the Tree of Life. Adam and Chava lived a life of leisure in Gan Eydan. This life is very different from our existence in today's world. Most must toil to secure daily sustenance. Even those that are more economically established must deal with the aggravations of everyday existence. Life is uncertain and economic success cannot insulate us from the frustrations and tragedies that occur in everyday life. Gan Eydan represented an idyllic existence immune from the problems we experience in today's world. Humanity's banishment from the Gan introduced into our lives these difficulties. The Tree of Life epitomized the perfect existence. The exact nature of this tree is debated by the commentaries. Nonetheless, it seems to represent the potential to achieve longevity and happiness.

According to this interpretation, banishment from the Gan is much more than exile from a geographic location. Banishment represents a change in humanity's environment.

With banishment, humanity is confronted with a new, more difficult reality.

We constantly attempt to return to Gan Eydan. We have abandoned our search for its geographical location. Instead, we attempt to transform our world into the Gan. We strive, through the application of science and technology, to improve our lives. We endeavor to make our world more perfect. We seem to believe that we can eliminate suffering and our personal frustrations. However, we never really succeed. We created automobiles to transport us. We are plagued with the pollution they generate. We released the power of the atom, and now we are confronted with the dilemma of disposing of nuclear waste. We invented vaccines and antibiotics only to be plagued by new diseases and antibiotic resistant infections. It seems that every advance is associated with a new problem or challenge. How do we react to this phenomenon?

We assume that these new problems can be solved. More science and better technology will solve the problems created by our latest technological breakthrough. We have absolute faith in the ultimate triumph of human knowledge. Yet, a question must be asked. Can we ever succeed in our quest? Can we recreate Gan Eydan? Perhaps, this is the message of the cherubs and the sword that guard entrance to the Gan. Perhaps, the Torah is telling us that the Almighty has blocked the road to success. Hashem banished humanity from the Gan. He decided that humanity is better nurtured in a less perfect world. He does not want us to return to the Gan. The failures and frustrations we encounter in our endeavors to recreate the Gan are not a result of inadequate knowledge. Our objective is unrealistic. We can work towards improving life. However, a certain level of toil and frustration is built into nature. We can never overcome the inherent limitations of our material existence. ■

Rabaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Bereshit 1:1.

Rav Yisrael Meir Lau, Why Does the World Contest Our Right to Eretz Yisrael?

# Adam's Longevity

and the Purpose Learning

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Since youth we have read stories from Genesis, many times with much amazement. Of the personalities mentioned in Genesis, what is striking is their longevity. Adam lived to the age of 930, and others lived until 1000 years. Currently, most of us do not exceed 100 years of age, so 1000 years seems unreal. These ages were real, however there are discussions among our Rabbis as to who lived that long aside from those named.

Ramban' argues on Maimonides, recorded by the Ramban in Genesis 5:4. The Ramban's reason for Adam's longevity is due to his being the "Handiwork of the Holy One". He was created in "absolute perfection as regards beauty, strength and might." The Ramban explains that because of man's sin and environmental changes after the flood and the dispersion, did man's lifespan decrease. The Ramban holds that all of mankind shared this longevity, and all mankind suffered a shorter lifespan.

The Ramban criticizes The Maimonides' opinion:

*"Now what the Rabbi has written in the Moreh Nevuchim does not seem right to me, namely that the longevity was only in those individuals mentioned, while the rest of the people in those generations lived lives of ordinary natural length. He further said this exception was due to the mode of living and food of such people or by way of miracle. But these words are without substance. Why should this miracle happen to them since they were neither prophets nor righteous, nor worthy that a miracle be done for them, especially for generation after generation. And how could a proper mode of living and proper food prolong their years to the extent that they are so many times greater than that of the entire generation? It is possible that there were others who observed such a mode of living, in which case all or most of them should have attained similar longevity. And how did it happen that enough of the wisdom concerning this good mode of living did not come down to just one of all the sons of Noah after the flood (to enable him to match the longevity of his ancestors), for there was among them a little wisdom of their ancestors even though it steadily decreased from generation to generation?"*

The Rabbis stated, "The purpose of learning is svara" (definition). Man finds his ultimate goal in study when he "defines" what he perceives as the complete uniqueness of a given phenomena, law or any area of knowledge. Perception of a "new", previously not encountered phenomena means we have perceived something for the first time, and we are closer to understand G-d's wisdom.

Studying the wisdom of the universe was central to Adam's purpose and longevity. Longevity represents the amount of knowledge available to man. Man can live to 1000 years and barely scratch the surface. Perhaps this is one of the reasons man was initially blessed with such a long life.

Maimonides held that only those people mentioned in Scripture enjoyed longevity. The Ramban held all men sustained this duration of life. My understanding of the verses leads me to an additional reason for man's longevity, in accordance with Maimonides' theory that only those men mentioned actually lived that long.

The verses describing the lives of Adam and about ten of his direct descendants repeatedly follow a 3-verse pattern, focusing on a singular idea. An example is this verse pattern found in Genesis 5:6-8:

5:6 And Seth (Adam's son) lived 105 years and bore Enosh. 5:7 And Seth lived after having bore Enosh 807 years and he bore sons and daughters. 5:8 And all the days of Enosh were 912 years and he died.

(This verse series repeats for about ten more men, only their ages change at their first son's birth and total years lived.)

In this example, it is Seth's life that is mentioned due to his involvement in procreation. We read of Seth's age at the birth of his first son, and his years during his many offspring, and finally his age at his death. What is the significance of mentioning the first child, and that it is male? I believe it teaches us that Seth desired offspring and so he procreated. The first child mentioned teaches that Seth's participation in procreation establishes the world. A male child was considered a milestone. Since the male controls life it's significant that it be mentioned. Without male participation in intercourse, there are no offspring. In the second verse with connection to Seth, he lived many years and had

many offspring. Perhaps teaching the connection between lifespan and procreation. As procreation is G-d's will, Seth and others are granted longevity.

This theory would answer Ramban's critique of Maimonides. Maimonides holds that this miracle of longevity was not bestowed on an individual based on his particular merits. Rather, G-d granted long life as He desires world population, and these men procreated. Procreation was their focus and we do not read about anything else in connection with the men listed here. According to Maimonides, all other members of mankind not mentioned during the beginning generations lived until 70 or 80 years.

An interesting insight into miracles is derived: Maimonides holds that G-d alters nature to achieve a goal. Although certain members of mankind benefited from this miracle of longevity, Maimonides holds that personal perfection is not necessarily a consideration when G-d renders miracles. What determined longevity was one's involvement in procreation. Ramban disagrees and says only perfected people could benefit from G-d's miracles. Therefore, the Ramban holds that for mankind to have this longevity is due only to design. (Rashi says that initially, men had two wives, one for procreation and one for sexual intercourse.) This teaches us that there were two distinct institutions then. Man could have selected both or one. This might corroborate Maimonides' theory that not all men merited longevity unless they selected procreation.

It was discussed that longevity contributed to man's self aggrandizement which ultimately drove him to sin against others through robbery and sexual promiscuity. By removing factors contributing to man's downfall is G-d's way of assisting man. Man's lifespan was decreased by G-d to assist man, by removing man's focus on himself. His energies could be redirected towards the world of wisdom.

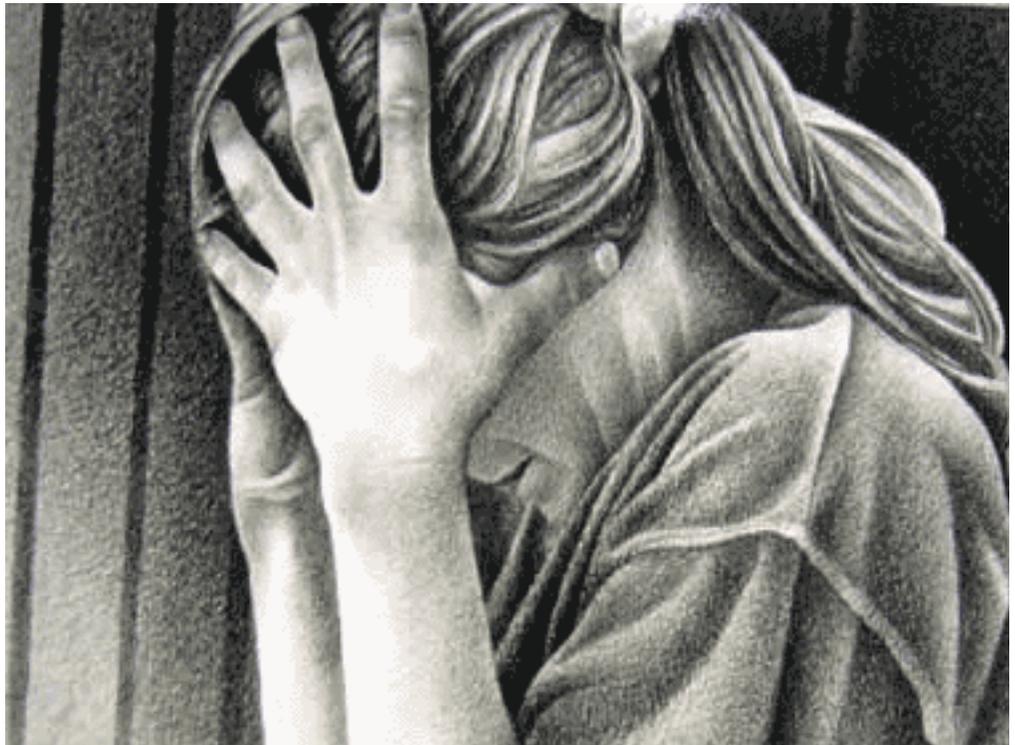
In summary, longevity was initially a blessing given to those who according to Maimonides procreated and according to the Ramban, those who were perfected. This also teaches that man can engage and content himself in study for many years, since the knowledge available to man is endless, even if he lived 1000 years. ■

*Taken from "Getting It Straight" Practical Ideas for a Life of Clarity*

# Grief

DOUG TAYLOR & RABBI MORTON MOSKOWITZ

Two things happened last weekend. At the time, I didn't think they were related. The first occurred when I read a story in the Saturday paper about a guy who was head-over-heels in love with a woman who obviously didn't feel the same way about him. After receiving three turn-downs for dates, he sent her a dozen roses every day... for three full months. She still wouldn't go out with him. Then Sunday, my Mom called to tell me that a childhood friend - my next door neighbor as I was growing up - had died. The memories of playing together on warm, summer days are still clear in my mind. He was only 43. I was stunned. In fact, I couldn't really get much done after that. My mind was numbed by the news and simultaneously spinning with thoughts about how short life is, how we don't appreciate it enough, and what does it all mean, anyway? In desperation, I called my friend, the King of Rational Thought. Not because I had a particular question. I just needed to talk to someone. "I'm really confused," I said, after he had expressed condolences. "I feel so bad, yet I hadn't seen him in years." "A couple of possibilities," he replied. "One is that the death of someone you know reminds you of the temporary nature of life. That can be a sobering thought. But there's another issue here. Do you understand grief?" "Grief? Well, uh, yeah, I think so. Isn't grief when you, uh, miss someone who's not coming back?" "But grief doesn't usually last forever," he said. "You may grieve for someone for awhile, but eventually you move on. What changes?" "I guess you just learn to live with it," I said. "Right," he replied. "More precisely, you come to accept the reality of the loss. When someone experiences a serious loss, there are usually two things that happen. One part of the mind knows that the loss has actually occurred. Yet another part of the mind is unwilling to accept it. In general, grief occurs when one part of you accepts the reality of the



loss while another part doesn't. Once you fully accept reality, grieving stops." "So why do some people mourn for years over the death of a loved one, or for that matter, even a broken-up love affair?" I asked. "Because they are unwilling or unable to accept reality. That's why it's particularly difficult when someone is missing. Friends and relatives don't have the mental certainty of knowing that the person is truly gone. They're caught in a very uncomfortable limbo and sometimes they can't rest until the issue is resolved." A bell started ringing in my mind. "Did you read Saturday's paper?" "No. Why?" I filled him in about the suitor with the unlimited rose budget. Then I asked, "So is he experiencing the same thing? At

one level, he realizes she has turned him down, yet at another level he's refusing to accept it?" "Nice connection," he said. "It's very similar. And in his case, you see how his unwillingness to come to grips with reality is costing him a small fortune." I paused. Finally, I said, "Reality's not a very fun place sometimes, is it?" "No," said the King of Rational Thought quietly. "Sometimes it's not. However, it's the best place to be. Any other place is fantasy, and that will eventually lead to conflict. If your goal is to find real peace, acceptance of reality is the only way." I thanked him for listening. We said our good-byes and hung up. And then I sat and thought about what he'd said, especially the last part, ... .. for a long time. ■

# THE JOY of SUCCOS

RIVKA OLENICK

"So that your generations may know that in the tabernacles did I make the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am God, your Lord." Leviticus 23:43 "And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and Thy maidservant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the Fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Deuteronomy 16:14

Just four days ago on Yom Kippur, we all stood before God; we confessed our sins and pleaded for His forgiveness. We have hopefully fulfilled our requirements on Yom Kippur and with renewed life we now look forward to the festival of Succos. God has granted all of us physical and spiritual survival; so with tremendous joy, together we partake of this beautiful Yom Tov. What is the joy of Succos and what should it mean to us individually as Jews and as a community? All the Yom Tovim and the Sabbath are considered to be as sanctuaries, places of refuge and protection, the true reality that is meant for us as Jews.

We treat the entire time allotted to Yom Tov and Sabbath differently, not only by refraining from all work, malacha but with regard to our recognition of our Creator. Each time we observe the Sabbath or Yom Tov it should illuminate in our minds a joyous and constant awareness of Who the Creator of the Universe is and what our relationship to our Creator should be. Otherwise, what is the purpose of these observances and what joy should we partake of in recognizing God during these designated holidays? Of course we celebrate with our family and friends, with special food, with wine and with special clothing set aside for our physical enjoyment, the enjoyment that adds to the simcha, of the Yom Tov. We can engage in all of the normal physical enjoyments as well, that are performed with the intention of Divine service.

But what is also the real simcha of Yom Tov, the true happiness we feel in our minds? We are asked not to burden ourselves with thoughts or conversations involving physical matters or anything pertaining to our occupational or weekday activities. We don't read our business documents, our bills or our mail - this is all prohibited for positive reasons, not only for restriction of work. All of the prohibitions of malacha are in place to bring about a different reality for us. The reality of Yom Tov, as mentioned before is to be perceived as a sanctuary a place also in our minds that is a place of protection and a place of peace. We make room in our minds for our own spiritual growth through mental activity - for the ideas related to the service of God, and to Torah since God has once again given us spiritual survival. Since

we have invested most of our energies into the physical preparation of Succos, how do we make use of this "spiritual gift" from God? We are now ready to embrace Succos outdoors, by dwelling in booths. Succos falls during the Autumn, when the strong heat of summer is over. We are used to our comfortable and secure homes, but now we are asked to come out of our homes and immerse ourselves in the beauty and bounty of nature, another gift from God. However, in our minds we should remember that we lived and wandered forty years in the wilderness and then God took us out of Egypt to bring us to Israel. Our lives in the wilderness were deficient, we struggled and were overwhelmed with worry in maintaining our existence, yet we lacked nothing! We were tested by God in every way; with the manna and with little possessions, but we were under God's protection! By our living in the "wilderness", our own prowess and skill were put to the test by God. Our reliance for existence would have to come from God, and not from our own creativity. This was our realization then, right now, and should be the awareness for future generations.

God saw that we were worthy and that we would actually keep the commandments. Our realization is that God did maintain us, and He did shelter and care for us during those forty years just as He still does now. "Thy clothes did not wear out, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." Deuteronomy Chapter 8. We understand from this important truth that it is only God that sustains us, not man. The succah represents the happiness, the joy of living "deficiently" in the wilderness under God's protection, as this is what we are commanded to do! The succah isn't man's mastery of the earth, it is not a building or a strong structure. The succah itself is temporary and "deficient," yet God commands us to live this way now and in the future. This is the way our forefathers "lived" in simple huts with their families and with the happiness in serving God, happiness even before we entered Israel, "the land of milk and honey." Israel, the land God gave us is where we would use all of our human talent and skill to build it successfully and beautifully. We were to build it as our "permanent" home with God as the "foundation" of our existence and nothing else. Everything we had and everything we have now is only because of God. This is the idea of, "that your generations may know."

These are the truths we should understand and internalize. It is these truths that we pass along to our future generations. Even in the "wilderness" we "Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before Him in exultation." Psalms 100:2. Hag Sameach! ■

# NASA

## & the Bible II

**Reader 1:** Shalom and Shana Tova. Thank you for the great job of creating your newsletter.

I received your recent article titled "NASA & the Bible". I am very interested in these sorts of article and information. I have a number of friends and family in the scientific community. Unfortunately, their scientific knowledge has caused them not believe in G-d or divinity of the Torah. Therefore, I am always looking for information and articles that proves the divinity of the Torah and shows the scientific knowledge of the Torah.

Unfortunately it appears that your article titled "NASA & the Bible" is an urban legend or a hoax.

I would appreciate if you can investigate this matter fully and inform me if this information is correct or not. After all, I do not want to present this article to my friends if it is not reliable.

**Reader 2:** Lichvod Harabbanim,

I have seen things that sound somewhat controversial to my religious Jewish upbringings but have decided not to comment since I felt overall the articles are well stated. But, something was brought to my attention that leads me to question a recent article as well as the general research into the Jewish Times articles. In the article "NASA & The Bible" you made some wonderful claims that I repeated a few times. Each time someone asked me how it is possible to do such research and I responded that we do not know as much as the scientists (being the trusting person I am) after a few times I decided to research it and discovered that EVEN NASA claims this is an Urban Legend and can't be done.



Please let me know how such an article can be inserted into the Jewish Times as it does put a major negative mark into the validation of the other articles printed.

Thank you very much and written with all due respect,  
-Avigdor

**Mesora:** After further researching the claim reprinted last week in "NASA & the Bible" that NASA could determine a "missing day" many years ago, we were referred to a NASA-authorized version reprinted from the Goddard Space Flight Center. We thank our readers for this referral:

"We, too, have heard an "urban legend" about scientists at NASA GSFC finding the "missing day" in computer calculations of the motions of the planets. The legend

has been around for longer than NASA itself, but turned into a NASA "event" sometime in the 60's. The story goes that some scientists were doing orbital mechanics calculations to determine the positions of the planets in the future, for use in determining the trajectories of future satellite missions. They realized they were off by a day. A biblical scholar in the lot remembered the passage from Joshua and all was set right. But these events, in fact, never occurred. It is easy to understand why:

The "GSFC finds missing day" urban legend doesn't make sense for the following reason. If we want to know where the planets will be in the future, we use accurate knowledge of their initial positions and orbital speeds (which would be where they are located now), and solve for their positions for some

time in the future. We solve a very well determined set of equations that describe their motions. The major dynamical component of any planet's orbital motion is determined by solving an equation (force is equal to the mass times the acceleration) which is the perhaps the most fundamental in classical physics. The validity and predictive power of this equation are well documented and can be seen every day: a recent example is the lunar eclipse that was visible to much of the world. This calculation would not cover any time before the present, so some missing day many centuries ago, if it had occurred, could not be uncovered with this method."

- Goddard Space Flight Center ◻

<http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/scienceques2002/20030502.htm>

# RELIGION: Faith or Proof?

**Reader:** I thought that Islamic extremists, evangelical Christians and some Catholics are the only people who claim to have cornered the market on truth, wisdom and G-d. I was wrong. You make those same claims on behalf of Judaism, and as a practicing Jew I find it both offensive and unfounded.

Judaism is the only religion that is right for Jews. That does not make it right for everyone else or make other religions wrong for the people who believe in them. Religious beliefs are matters of faith, not of objectively provable fact.

Do not reply to this e-mail. Just remove me from your mailing list.

**Mesora:** You would agree that history is not an article of faith, but based exclusively on fact. You are then confronted with the question as to why you differentiate between historical facts unrelated to religion, and those, which form a religion. If proven history is incontrovertible, reason demands that ALL histories be treated this way.

G-d's historical revelation at Sinai contains the same proof as all events in history. Other religions are based on the words of the few, if not a single person. In His Torah given at that event, G-d discounts ALL other religions, and states that the Torah is eternal, for all mankind. The only difference between Jew and Gentile is the number of laws within the 613 Commandments that each is required to observe.

Therefore, G-d Himself "made it wrong" for any person to follow any other religion.

Think about it: despite variations in skin pigment and hair types, man is man. Eskimos, Asians, Blacks, Whites, etc. share one design physically, psychologically and philosophically. All members of mankind possess a soul, reason, and free will. All members of mankind seek happiness and avoid pain and suffering. All members of mankind agree that justice protects individual rights, and that man should be free to express his rights. Man differs from his friend, only in his decision as to what will achieve these goals.

G-d gave one religion – one Torah system – so that the vast majority of people who require direction can find true happiness, in accord with the single psyche and soul – the single man – that G-d created.

There is only one "man", there can be only one religion. □

# Response: Escape vs Energy



ARON SOTNIKOFF

Dear Mesora,

Despite his well-articulated attempt to dethrone the King of Rational Thought in the recent article "Response to Drugs: Escape vs. Energy," Rabbi Maroof has completely missed the ball. Rabbi Maroof suggests that the King erred in equating coffee with cocaine, reducing the distinction to a merely quantitative difference. He argues, instead, that what should be analyzed is the intention of the user. Whereby the average coffee user needs his morning "buzz" to achieve productive goals, the normal cocaine user needs his fix to further his degenerative lifestyle. This is where Rabbi Maroof has misunderstood the King's point. In fact, rather than being a criticism, Rabbi Maroof is making the King's point for him! The King's entire argument is that American society is incorrect in attaching the stigma to particular drugs. Instead, what should be investigated is the motive of the user. Someone who uses a drug, be it coffee or cocaine, in controlled, moderate quantities, can use the resultant effects for extremely productive purposes. On the other hand, someone who is looking to escape from reality, and would like to use a foreign substance to do so, can be just as successful with coffee as with cocaine. The King's point is that American society and law have mistakenly attributed the problem to the substance, rather than to the underlying psychological and philosophical troubles of the user (or, in such a case, abuser). Rabbi Maroof's error lies in the fact that he has observed society and noticed that people who need a high to do good things tend towards coffee, while degenerate addicts tend towards the "bad" drugs, such as cocaine. The King has rightly pointed out that this is merely a matter of social convention that has developed in our location. It could just as easily have been the other way around! I do not mean any personal disrespect to Rabbi Maroof, but he has fallen into the very flaw that the King was trying to point out and that he himself was trying to criticize. He has incorrectly identified the substance, rather than the person, as the underlying root of the problem. He has been so influenced by common American notions that he cannot imagine a person waking up to a quick snort of cocaine before a good, productive day at work, while the degenerate addict overdoses on a few too many cups of java. Rabbi Maroof should get back to his original path of reasoning and pay closer attention to the motivations of the user, rather than the drug of choice. The human psyche, when determined to escape reality, is extremely resilient in using whatever means are at hand—even coffee, nail polish, or Elmer's glue—to achieve that purpose.

May the King be restored to his throne! □