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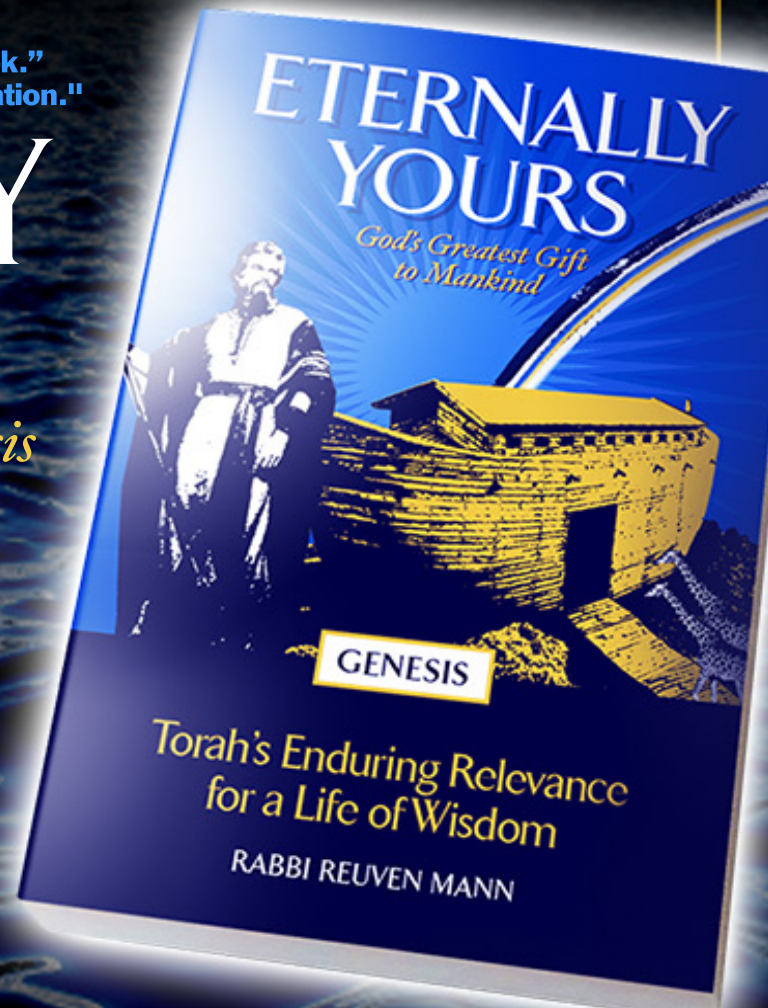
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LETTERS

GUY TSADIK

The Intelligent Life

In "An Insight into Motzei Yom Kippur" (Rabbi Yair Hoffman, 5TJT-Sep 14 2018) Rabbi Hoffman writes that the story is told in Abir HaRoyim #365 (Vol. II p.77) by Rabbi Moshe Yehudah Leib Yaakov about the Sochochover:

"...He had the custom for many years to purchase an Esrog on Motzei Yom Kippur, when he would return from Shul — even before he recited Havdalah. He never glanced at all at the Esrog. Rather, he purchased one from the esrogim that were still covered in a sealed box. He would leave it in the box and would only open it on the day of Sukkot. Time after time, and consistently, his Esrog was beautiful and perfect — more so than any other Esrog in town. There was one wealthy individual in town that would pay fifty rubles for a choice Esrog each year. Even still, my grandfather's sealed esrog was more beautiful than his. Afterward, however, a few years before he passed away, he changed from his practice. He began to select an esrog in the same manner that everyone else does. When I was a young child I requested of him to tell me his reason and his intent. Originally, what did he think? And now, afterward, why was his rationale? Also, was not the mitzvah in a state of danger? Perhaps it would not turn out to be a kosher esrog! Perhaps he would be unable to recite a bracha on it! He did not wish to respond to my questions at all. However, after many requests and demands he responded that it was obvious. Hashem created man honest and straight. If so, if there is something good and something

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bad, how could it be that a person would end up taking something bad? However, sins ruin the limbs of man. Therefore, the hand begins to touch that which is bad. However, on Motzei Yom Kippur, where our sins have already been forgiven, it is a certainty that man will reach and achieve the good once again and not touch the bad. But toward the end of his life, he was afraid to do this. For in one's latter years it is impossible that the forgiveness of sins be entirely complete. For if this is not the case, how would it be possible for anyone to pass on and leave this world? Since the forgiveness is not entirely complete, it is possible for a person to touch an Esrog that is not kosher or beautiful. There is a concern that the Mitzvah be endangered. Furthermore, until one's very last days a person must serve Hashem with Torah and Avodah. If he would then find out through his not having selected a nice esrog that he would pass away that year, his service of Hashem will not be ideal and proper. Therefore he stopped this practice. When I told over these things once to my uncle, the Rogetzchover he responded, "This Cheshbon Hanefesh is past for the Baal Shem Tov!"

As an introduction, it is not my intent, to make a Machloket, we need to maintain our unity and love for every Jew. But that does not prevent us from presenting a different point of view. Achdut and ahava does not mean that we accept something simply because we were told it by another Jew...even a great one. On the contrary, we must respect each other's Derech Halimud and Mesora even when it differs from our own. I am not laying claim to the absolute truth here but I think it is important for people to realize that there are different approaches in Yahadut to some of the most profound questions and we must each rely on our Mesora of Rebbeim and our minds in searching for the truth in Torah.

When I read this story I couldn't help but think of various maamrei Chazal and actual stories detailed within Torah itself

that relate to it in a direct way. There are many that come to mind, though one we are all familiar with and specifically stands out to me is in Parshat Vayishlach. After realizing his brother is pursuing him militarily with an army of men, Yaakov Avinu pursues every possible solution as Rashi states; diplomacy, prayer and preparations. We can all agree that Yaakov Avinu achieved a very high level of perfection and can safely also concur his closeness to Hashem was qualitatively superior to all that followed him. Also, keep in mind he knew through prophecy that our great nation was destined to go through him. Yet, he didn't rely on a miracle or just proceed without a logical plan thinking, "Well, things will somehow just work out for me." Absorbing this lesson that Hashem laid out for us in great detail within the Torah itself (of course by design) makes me wonder whether it's appropriate to think, and even more so, say and write the following "...it is a certainty that man will reach and achieve the good once again and not touch the bad" or for a person to feel he or she is untouchable in regards to any activity after Yom Kippur. The message and lesson from the pasuk in Bereishit 32:11 states "I am not worthy of all the lovingkindness, and all the steadfastness, that you have done for me, your servant." This is profound and shocking. We shouldn't employ false realities and place reliance on our own righteousness assuming that things will work out, and actually "must" work out for us because of our level of perfection. If our great forefather Yaakov felt he couldn't rely on things working out for him, all the more so for us.

Now, to be clear, I agree if you had a meaningful Aseret Yamei Teshuva you should feel positive after Yom Kippur as brought down by many and detailed in sifrei Halacha like Aruch Hashulchan though at the same we shouldn't employ false realities, especially right after Yom Kippur. We can't ever assume Hashem will magically just poof things into existence for us!

Finally, from a halachic standpoint, the question asked in the story is completely legitimate "...was not the Mitzvah in a state of danger? Perhaps it would not turn out to be a kosher Esrog! Perhaps he would be unable to recite a bracha on it!.." One should never place himself in a situation where you possibly can't fulfill a mitzvah d'oraita, or any level mitzvah like in the story above, which deals with a Torah level Mitzva of Lulav/Etrog. The Halacha on this is clear and there is no need to quote sources. Too often we are subjected to ideas that are dangerous and we must question our beliefs. We need to be on guard when it comes to introducing foreign concepts in respect to objects which are endowed with the halachic status of Mitzva. In regards to Etrog, we now are being exposed to two extremes; those who unnecessarily take a magnifying glass to an Etrog to check for blemishes not recognized by Halacha, and then this story which would have us believe not to even check if you have the correct fruit in your possession due to your assumed merits!

The story ends with the individual then changing his mind in his later years based on his assessment of the Mishpat Hashem leading him to the conclusion that Yom Kippur becomes less effective the older we get. To this I reply with the Pasuk, "Lo Machevotai Machshevotaichem"! We humans cannot be in the business of predicting Hashem's method of justice, and furthermore, it's not our place to contemplate how Hashem metes out our final judgment. I understand man naturally wants to feel as if he can control things that are out of his control. As uncomfortable as that is, we must abandon the temptation. The Torah demands that from each and every one of us. In this important time we should follow the system of Chochma and Halacha consistently in all stages of our life as we grow and fulfill what the pasuk states in Parshat Shoftim (Deut. 18:13), "Tamim Tihyeh Im Hashem Elokecha." ■

Guy Tsadik, Lawrence, NY



HUMAN EQUALITY

A GENTILE'S Proper Query

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

An intelligent gentile and I have been in touch for a number of months; she asks pertinent questions to determine which religion is God's religion. I share our discourse to help others.

Sharon: I am uncomfortable needing to learn the 7 Noahide laws from Jews because:

1. Gentiles are portrayed as incapable of knowing God's will on their own, it contradicts how Abraham came to realize what is true.
2. It frames any good that a Gentile does as not performed "in reverence to God" [since the gentile is not "following" any divine laws, but acting based on subjective thought].
3. The ability of Jews to teach gentiles the 7 laws is unfathomable. Based on the sheer magnitude, and the ratio of billions of gentiles to millions of Jews, how can so few Jews teach all gentiles?

Rabbi: 1. We must distinguish between what man (Abraham) can self-discover, and what he cannot. Abraham studied the universe and discovered reasoned proofs for a Creator and a Governor. Any person can. But without communication (prophecy) he could not determine what are God's "commands."

Thus, you, I, and anyone cannot determine God's commands without prophecy. This is no shortcoming; we can't read God's mind. Therefore, as the Jew—and no other nation—possesses divine communication, a Jew and gentile equally require Biblical study from knowledgeable Jews to learn of God's commands. But anyone can study the universe to realize that its highly intelligent design requires a Creator, as was God's plan in permeating the universe with His wisdom in every square inch.

2. True, without knowing that God commanded a specific law—such as charity—one's charitable act cannot be said to be "following God." This applies to Jew and gentile alike.

3. Despite relatively small numbers of Jews, Internet and other mediums allow few people to reach innumerable masses. Additionally, God assists any human being in his/her pursuit of truth, so He can override natural considerations to make truth reach such perfected gentiles as yourself.

Sharon: Jews I encountered online (except you) see themselves fulfilling a mainly priestly role and see the teaching of Torah truths to humanity as secondary,

or not of much importance. These truths are revealed to counter missionary propaganda, not to teach truth-seeking Gentile like myself.

Rabbi: We must not judge Judaism based on Jews. Jews' corrupt acts contradict why God elaborated on Abraham's life: he epitomized the perfect human; one who reaches out to all people to teach and benefit them. It is due to Abraham's concern for all others that God said He would not keep disclosed from Abraham His plan to annihilate Sodom (Gen. 18:17) as God desired Abraham to teach His justice to others: "For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right..." (Gen. 18:19). Another splendid lesson is that with these words, God interrupted the vision Abraham was now perceiving: the vision in which Abraham energetically served the three wayfarers. Abraham hosted an elaborate meal for total strangers, so he might share his teachings with them. This perfection, this concern for all other people, was underlined by God by His immediate interruption of this vision with His forecast of Sodom's destruction. God aligned the revelation of His justice with Abraham's acts of kindness precisely to teach that Abraham's concern for all mankind earned him God's favor. There is a relationship between Abraham's kindness and concern for others, and God revealing His plan, which He desired Abraham to share with mankind. God's Judaism differs from man's Judaism. God's Judaism is concerned about all individuals. God did not breathe souls into people as a futile act. Corrupt Jews boast a sinfully disgraceful superiority over the gentile. But of course, they cannot defend their position, based on this verse and the actions of our leaders Moses and Joshua: both married converts. Our greatest kings David and Solomon descend from Ruth the convert, as will the messiah. Clearly, gentile and Jew are equals. From the story of Jonah, whom God sent to warn the gentile city of Nineveh to repent, again we witness God's concern for mankind; the Jew is not His only people. And when God threatened to destroy the Jews for their Gold Calf sin, Moses expressed concern that this would ruin God's fame in Egypt's

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eyes. Even though Egypt enslaved us, Moses still cared that all mankind obtain a just opinion of God. And Moses again cared for Yisro, and spent much time teaching him about God. I am happy to share that my community treats gentiles as equals, and teaches them freely with love and respect. I am sorry that other Jews are not following God's lessons.

Sharon: What is the role of the Jewish people? To show the world that God exists?

Please explain these verses:

"And you will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation..." (Exod. 19:6)

Rabbi: God gave the Torah to the Jews to teach the world. A priest is one who ministers, and our ministering is to teach the world God's will so all mankind follows His will.

Sharon: *"But when they came to those nations, they caused My holy name to be profaned, in that it was said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, yet they had to leave His land.' Therefore I am concerned for My holy name, which the House of Israel have caused to be profaned among the nations to which they have come. Say to the House of Israel: 'Thus said the Lord God: 'Not for your sake will I act, O House of Israel, but for My holy name, which you have caused to be profaned among the nations to which you have come. I will sanctify My great name which has been profaned among the nations—among whom you have caused it to be profaned. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord'—declares the Lord God—when I manifest My holiness before their eyes through you." (Ezek. 36:20-23)*

Rabbi: God is concerned that the Jews profaned God's name through their coerced exile [God's promise of Israel was not fulfilled in the Jews' exile from the land] so God will correct this error so the world nations will respect God and benefit from His truth.

Sharon: Please explain these verses:

"This is My servant, whom I uphold, My chosen one, in whom I delight. I have put My spirit upon him, He shall teach the true way to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1).

"I created you, and appointed you. A covenant people, a light of nations" (Isaiah 42:6).

"All the nations assemble as one, the peoples gather. Who among them declared this, foretold to us the things that have happened? Let them produce their witnesses and be vindicated, that men, hearing them, may say, 'It is true!' My witnesses are you—declares the Lord—My servant, whom I have chosen. To the end that you may take thought, and believe in Me, and understand that I

"Jews I encountered, except for you, see themselves fulfilling a mainly priestly role and see the teaching of Torah truths to humanity as secondary, or not of much importance. These truths are revealed to counter missionary propaganda, not to teach truth-seeking Gentiles like myself."



am He: Before Me no god was formed, And after Me none shall exist" (Isaiah 43:9,10).

"For He has said: 'It is too little that you should be My servant in that I raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the survivors of Israel: I will also make you a light of nations, that My salvation may reach the ends of the earth'" (Isaiah 49:6).

"Behold! Darkness shall cover the earth, and thick clouds the peoples; But upon you the LORD will shine, and His Presence be seen over you. And nations shall walk by your light, kings, by your shining radiance" (Isaiah 60:2,3).

Rabbi: These verses share the one lesson, that God selected the Jews to bear His Torah and teach the world. We are not superior in design; only in our mission are we different from other nations. Mankind—gentile and Jew—all descend from the same couple; the Jews' capacity is equal—not superior—to all mankind. But our "duty" differs: to share God's Torah with the world. This is our "light unto the nations." This also explains the many Biblical occurrences of "One Torah for the Jew and the convert" (See Exod. 12:49, Num. 9:14, Num. 15:15,16, Num. 15:29). If the gentile were inferior to the Jew, he could not obey the same system. But God says otherwise, that the convert observes the Torah just as the Jew. Thus, we are equals.

Sharon: Where does one start to learn the 7 Noahide laws?

Rabbi: You are doing so in our conversations. As questions arise we will discover what the Talmud prohibits and why: The 7 Noahide laws are idolatry, adultery, murder, stealing, eating the limb of a living beast, establishing courts and not cursing His name. The Rabbis teach that subsumed under the Noahide prohibition of idolatry, are all forms of superstitions, witchcraft and the like. We thereby learn there are far more than 7 Noahide laws. You can locate many essays on Noahide law and philosophy under Mesora.org/Philosophy and Mesora.org/Audio

Sharon: Finally, what of the Muslim and Christian claims that the Jews lost the transmission, or their role as God's chosen?

Rabbi: We ask shoemakers and not plumbers how to make shoes. Reason demands that we inquire from those, who alone received God's communication, to learn what is God's will, than to ask strangers and impostors to whom God never spoke, and therefore, cannot possess His word. ■

HOLOCAUST

A RABBI'S Flawed Answer

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

A well-known Rabbi recently stated that asking why the Holocaust occurred is a complaint; it must not be a search for an answer. For if it were, and one found an answer—a justification for the Holocaust—such an understanding would "render one a Nazi by justifying the Holocaust."

However, dismissing this question as the Rabbi suggested, rejects the idea that God is just, and that there was justice in our tremendous tragedy. Torah describes horrific punishments for abandoning the Torah. The Jews suffered through God's corrective punishments throughout time, and it was always due to our sins. This Rabbi said that Elie Wiesel knew why the Holocaust occurred, but he preferred that people remain ignorant, lest they "become Nazis" through accepting the Jews were blameworthy, thereby justifying the Holocaust. This reasoning makes Wiesel a Nazi. And as God too knew the answer, that makes God a Nazi too. In truth, all God does is just, so the fear of searching for a justification for the Holocaust contradicts God. God does not punish the nation without some sin: "Rav Ami said: 'There is no death without sin and there is no suffering without iniquity'" (Sabbath 55a).



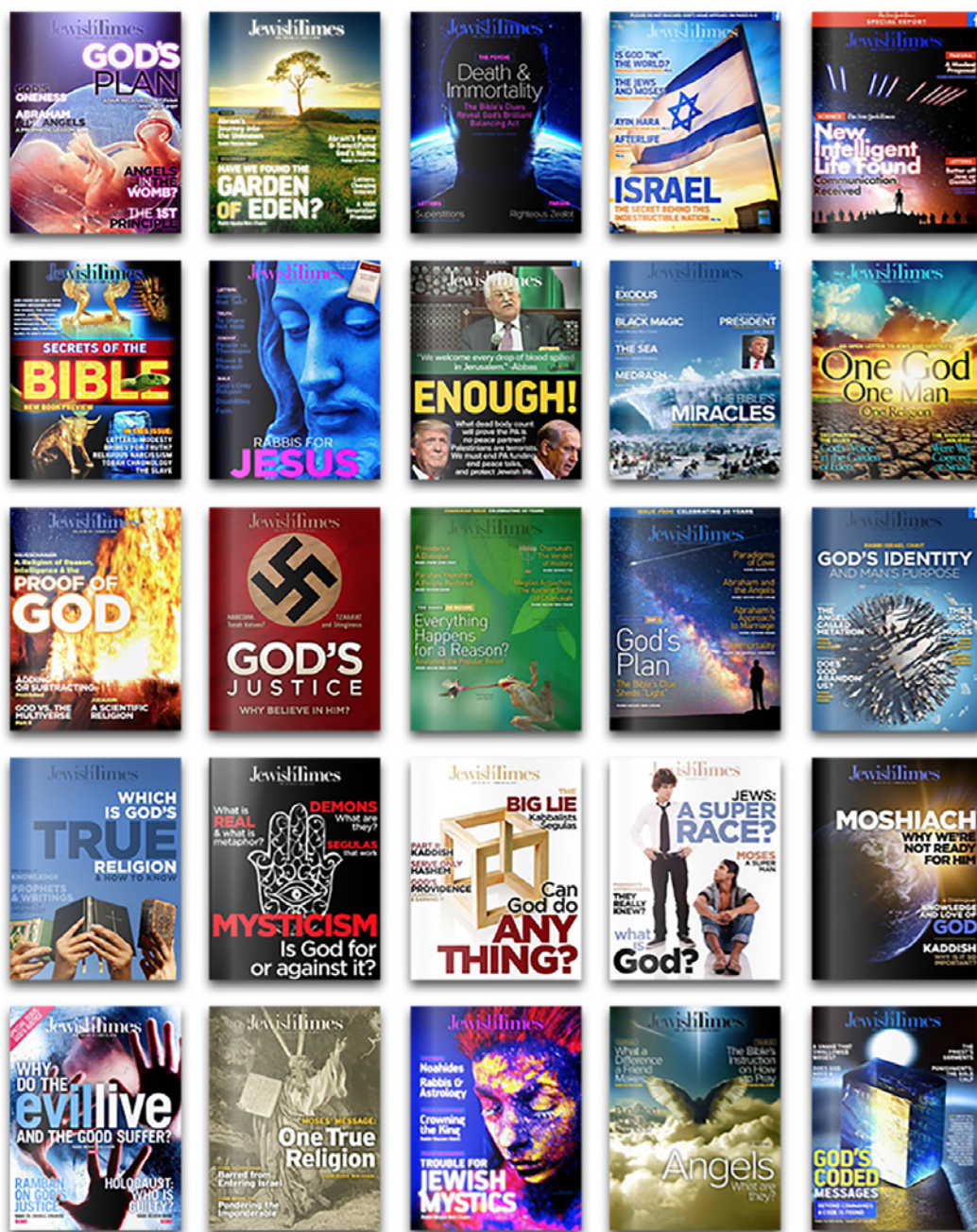
This Rabbi's view is a tragic failure to search for truth. Torah says, "Let us search and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord" (Eicha 3:40). Thus, when tragedy hits, we are not to ignore it, but to delve into ourselves to discover our sins. One should grasp that as God created justice, that God is just, and that there must have been some great flaw in the nation, to which the Holocaust was a response. We explore Jewish history and find that our sins precipitated all our catastrophes. The Rabbis teach, the Temples' destructions were caused by idolatry and baseless hatred towards others. Our 210 years of Egyptian bondage were caused by our idolatry. And our 40 years in the desert were caused by disbelief in God. Either we study history and learn the sin to remedy our failures, or we admit our ignorance. But to claim the question can lead to Nazism and must not be asked, equates to ignoring Torah's lessons and abandoning honest inquiry.

The Rabbis ask why the righteous were killed first during the Temple's destruction. They give 2 very pleasing answers. "Pleasing," in that both answers complied with justice and sensibility: to spare them from seeing the destruction, or to punish them for not doing more; as leaders, they were responsible to attempt to deter the Jews from sin. The Rabbis teach us not to cower to even the greatest question. And as God is perfect and just, answers can be found, but only when we are honest and seek Torah knowledge.

To ignore inquiry into the Jewish nation's deservance of a Holocaust, to claim that such an answer renders a Jew a Nazi, is grossly antithetical to God's justice, and spits at honesty. It is flagrantly wrong and commits the Jews to an ignorance that can precipitate another Holocaust, God forbid. ■

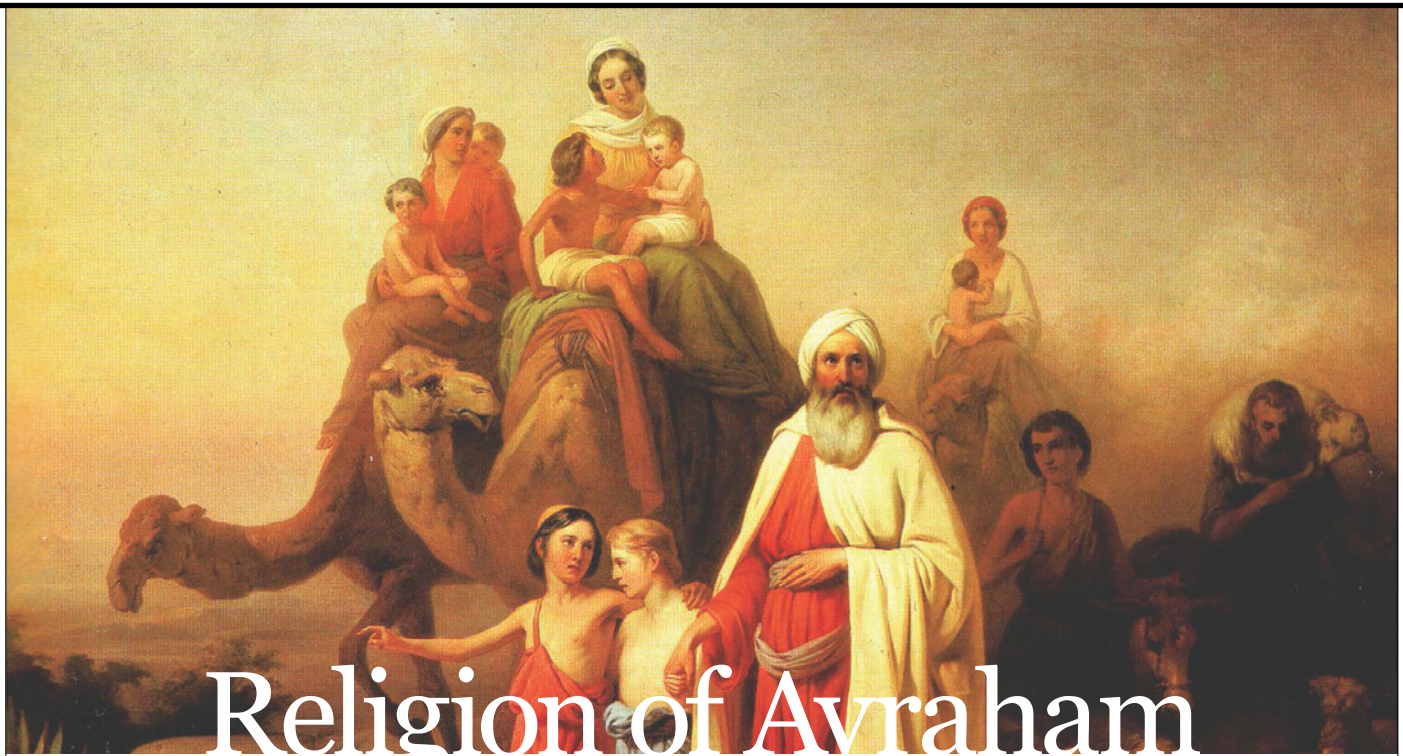
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Religion of Avraham

Rabbi Reuven Mann

This week's parsha, Lech Lecha, initiates the story of Avraham, the first patriarch of the Jewish people. Hashem appeared to him and told him to leave his family and homeland and journey "to the land I will show you."

Our forefather complied with Hashem's instruction and finally arrived in the land of Canaan. At that point, G-d again spoke to Avraham and told him that He would give this land to his descendants. The patriarch then traversed the land, building altars and "calling out in the name of Hashem."

This activity was most central to his religious mission, which was to be the teacher of mankind, weaning them away from idol worship and initiating them in the service of the true G-d of reality.

Then something strange and altogether unexpected happened. A famine afflicted the land, causing Avraham to uproot his family and seek sustenance in Egypt until conditions became livable once again in Canaan.

Rashi points out that this famine was not widespread, but restricted to the land of Canaan, precisely the place to which Hashem had directed Avraham. Rashi says that this was intended as a "test" to see whether Avraham would wonder about the

"ways" of G-d, who had removed him from his homeland to bring him here, only to be forced to pick up and leave.

We should try to understand the nature of this test. It wasn't to see if Avraham would complain, but only to discern if he would entertain these thoughts, even if unexpressed.

It seems natural, when unanticipated setbacks occur, to speculate about Hashem's purposes. What would have been so terrible if, for a brief moment, such thoughts passed through the mind of our forefather?

In my opinion, such musings would not be so egregious for the ordinary religious person. That is because for most people there is a very firm connection between their service of G-d and anticipation of reward. Therefore, when they are engaged in altruistic behaviors, they unconsciously assume that nothing negative will befall them. And, if it does, they will automatically wonder, why is G-d doing this?

Such an attitude had no place in the religion of Avraham. He did not believe his deeds would effectuate changes that would redound to his benefit. His religious activity was referred to as the Service of Love.

This means that he regarded his actions as ends in themselves, not the means by which

he might obtain practical benefits. The expectation that, by following the will of Hashem, everything would go smoothly for him was not part of his consciousness.

That is why the test came precisely at that moment: would Avraham be upset about the unusual famine? It was only to see whether he would, however briefly, make the mental connection between the service he had just performed and the situation he now confronted.

Avraham passed the test, and he should serve as our religious role model. We should strive to reach the level where we serve Hashem out of love, as an end in itself, without any concern about practical consequences.

P.S. The long Shabbat nights of winter are upon us. They call out for engaging, gripping readings of insight and inspiration. I would put "Eternally Yours: Genesis" on my reading list and make it available to my family and friends as well. Oneg Shabbat is a great thing to share with those for whom you care. Click on <http://bit.ly/EY-Genesis> to get your copy.

Shabbat shalom. ■

The Moon & Perfection

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim
and Howard Salamon

This article will describe the concepts found within the Kiddush HaChodesh: the blessing upon the New Moon. Let us familiarize ourselves with the text:

“Blessed are you God, our God, King of the world, that with Your statement (You) created the heavens, and with the breath of Your mouth all the hosts thereof. A statute and time did You give them that they should not deviate their purposes. Happy and joyous (are the heavenly spheres) to do the will of their Creator. Worker of truth Whose works are truth, and unto the moon You declared that it should renew (itself); a crown of splendor to those (mankind) carried in the stomach, as they (mankind) will eventually renew themselves as the moon, and to exalt their Creator for the name of the glory His kingdom. Blessed are You God, Who renews the months.”

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"With Your statements (You) created the heavens, and with the breath of Your mouth, all the hosts thereof."

This first praise deals with the heavens (space) and their contents (stars, planets, galaxies). God does not "speak" (He has no mouth) and of course prior to man's creation, speech would be futile as there are no beings existing who can hear. Therefore the concept of "statements" and "breath" teach us something else in connection with God. Speech is a very simple activity, and when applied to God, it denotes that His mere will alone suffices to create the most awesome, physical bodies. Additionally, it is a general principle that one cannot offer partial praise in connection with God. The Talmud teaches that if one visits a place where one of the miracles wrought on his behalf took place, it is not sufficient if he praises God for that miracle alone, but he must also bless God for other miracles which were wrought elsewhere on his behalf. Daniel also followed this principle when God had revealed to him, both, Nevuchadnezzar's dream content, and interpretation. Upon Daniel's receipt of an answer to his request from God for this information, Daniel praised God for His greater measures, His ability to set up and dethrone kings, and for His ability to reveal knowledge to wise men in general. Only subsequent to this praise, did Daniel praise God for the specific information revealed to him in response to his request. He too offered the fullest praise to God, as limiting praise of God for his own benefit alone suggests God's praises are limited. Such a praise would dwarf the true, immense scope of God's omniscience and omnipotence. To praise God as accurately as humanly possible, man must speak fully, of God's might and knowledge in the most broad and all-inclusive sense. True, full praise of God therefore must describe universal phenomena, not subjective, individual events. Therefore, we first praise God in general terms: we exalt Him for the works of the heavens as a whole independent of man, prior to exalting Him on account of the moon.

"A statute and time did You give them, that they should not deviate their purposes."

Here we find the blessing referring not to the physical creation, but to the other half of creation: natural law. All matter was created in a physical state, but that such a state continues following set behaviors is not demanded merely by the body's existence. Matter must also have governing laws so that, i.e., all trees grow and reproduce their own kind, all animals beget their own kind, etc. Laws of gravity, inertia, and all other constants did not come into being simply because matter was created. For we understand that atoms can combine in variations to form different elements. Thus, in creation, God brought into being two distinct things: matter and laws. I believe the second chapter in Genesis alludes to the second category. In application to the heavens, we would be remiss in our praise of God if we did not include praise for God's wisdom manifested through not only the spheres, but their relentless paths in which they travel.

"Happy and joyous (are they) to do the will of their Creator."

This statement on the surface implies awareness on the part of brute creation. However, as animals have no self awareness (they cannot reflect on "me") much less can inanimate objects possess will. How then are we to understand this phrase? I believe "happiness" here denotes the removal of conflict. Meaning, the spheres function with perfect exactitude, as there are no impediments between God's will for the spheres to rotate and revolve, and between their physical performances. That is, God's works are perfect. So there are 3 praises thus far; 1) Praise for the physical heavens, 2) Praise for their governing laws, 3) Praise for harmony, the perfect system of creation, where God willed something, and there is no conflict intervening between God's will and the immediacy of the reality of His will. God's will is all that is real and all that stands; "reality," bringing us to the next statement...

"Worker of truth, Whose works are truth"

This teaches that man's awareness of the heavens must target an appreciation for the Creator. This is the culmination of the study of nature. Study for its own sake, for curiosity or scientific knowledge alone is not our objective. Our role is to be aware of God and respect Him, Who is behind



creation. An atheist scientist—even if he were as great as Einstein—does not know anything, and forfeits his existence as a total waste. He has not recognized the most primary concept of anything, that being a thing's existence, as opposed to its features or behaviour. True knowledge of anything means we know how and why it exists: God created it. Now, when we say, "truth," we mean to say what is real, what is verified by reality. A "true" statement is that which reflects what exists. Without the true statement, reality is still "true." "Worker of truth"—God—means that which God creates, dictates what reality is. We attain this realization through the "works of truth," through creation. Saying something is true—like when we say "I am your God; This is true" (end of the Shema)—means that we recognize its fundamental importance in our lives. We are saying, "This is what's real; this is what matters most."

"And unto the moon You declared that it should renew (itself), a crown of splendor to those carried in the stomach, as they will eventually renew themselves as the moon"

Here we find the distinction which God gave to the moon. The moon is the singular object in the heavens designed by God to pass through phases of waxing and waning. The purpose is that it should be a crown to man. A "crown" means that which marks the elevated distinction of something. Man's elevated distinction is his free will, in specific, the free will that follows the path of a righteous life. Just as the moon grows full and then loses its grandeur, man too goes through cycles of perfection and sin. But God gives man a great gift through the moon, as God placed the moon's phases as a sign to all mankind that man too can once again become great, just as the moon. The moon, then, is a parable to man's constant failures and victories, to remind man that although he stumbles, he can—like the moon—become "full" once again. Teshuvah is well within reach. The lesson: creation is to direct man towards maintaining a relationship with God. Creation does not exist for itself, as it is mostly inanimate substance. The wisdom God embedded throughout the universe intends to enable man (and angels) to marvel at God's wisdom. This teaches us the level of import, which God wished to give to repentance. Nowhere else do we see God creating a unique behavior in creation solely for the purpose of reminding man that repentance is always within his grasp. One more idea contained in these words is the meaning of "those carried in the stomach." I wonder why man is referred to in this peculiar fashion, as opposed to saying "a crown of splendor to man." I think that the idea is to remind man—in his pursuit of repentance—that he is a dependent being. He does not need to exist, represented by his once dependent state in his mother's stomach. This humbling notion of dependence assists man in recognizing God, his Creator, and to return to Him through teshuva. My friend Howard explained well that, "those carried in the stomach" also teaches that just as an infant prior to exiting the womb is free of sin, so are we able to be as pure as we were before birth. The renewal of the moon each month is to remind man that he was created with the ability to exercise his free will, which is what distances him from sin.

"And to exalt their Creator for the sake of the glory His kingdom"

This teaches that repentance is not the final goal, but the goal is to recognize God's greatness. Maimonides teaches that repentance targets a reestablishing of a relationship with God. It is insufficient that man apologize to others for his wrongdoings, if his objective is not to reconnect with God. Teshuva means return, a return to God. This explains why teshuva requires a dialogue with God, vidduy, where man addresses God and confesses his sins. ■

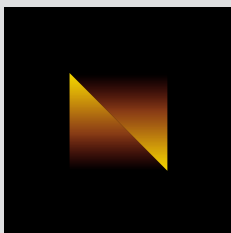
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