

JewishTimes

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NEW YEAR

Purpose of Shofar

LETTERS

Gentiles and Rosh Hashana

Rabbi Israel Chait

DISCOVERY

God's Clues to Happiness

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

PARSHA

Are there
Non-Jewish
Souls?

Metaphysical
Dimension

Rabbi Reuven Mann

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3 Jewish Souls?

LETTERS

As all mankind including Jews descend from Adam and Eve, all mankind share the identical soul. Only Jewish arrogance says otherwise.

4 God's Clues

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

An enigmatic law about shatnez reveals God's great insight into psychology and our happiness.

7 Gentiles & New Years

RABBI ISREAL CHAIT

Rabbi Chait elaborates on the gentile's unique role on Rosh Hashana.

9 Metaphysical Dimension

RABBI REUVEN MANN

Rabbi Mann explains this week's parsha: our reality is metaphysical.

11 Shofar

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Its philosophical lessons.

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

"The Noachide should know that he too is judged on Rosh Hashanna by God just as the Jew and the rest of mankind. He therefore should pray all the prayers that the Jew prays, as he too is loved by God and through his repentance and prayer will be received by God and inscribed for a good year.



Indeed, the whole theme of Rosh Hashanna is that there is one Creator of the universe and all God's creatures should recognize Him. What then can be more correct before God than to have the Ben Noach recognize Him and pray to Him on this day?"

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

The First Jewish Souls

READER: When did the Orthodox Jews first distinguish the Jewish soul from the non-Jew?

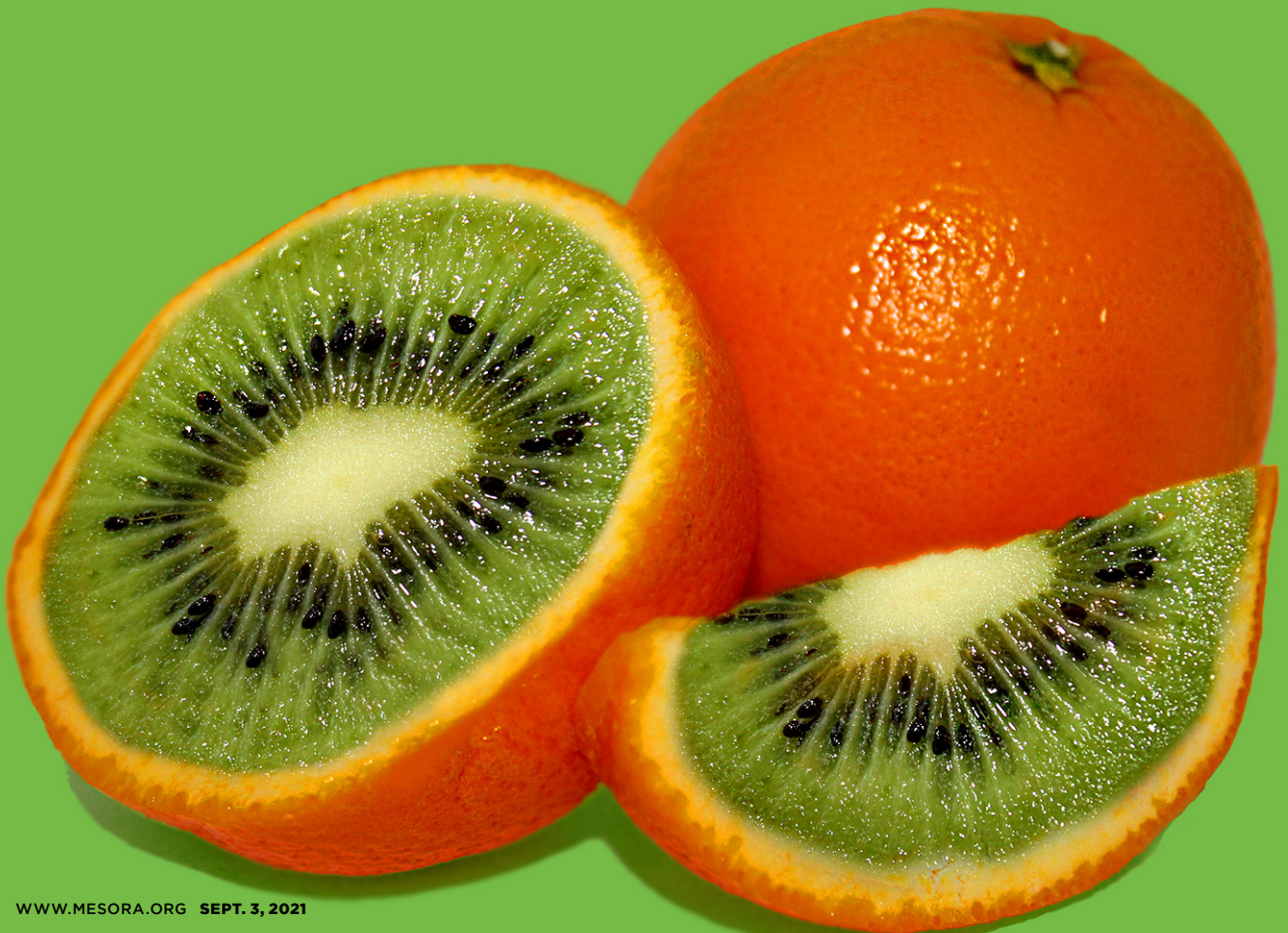
RABBI: There is no distinction between souls. We all descend from Adam and Eve...all mankind are identical, heart and soul. Those claiming otherwise have no basis other than their arrogance. Abraham was a Noachide gentile, as were all mankind. Yet, due to his brilliance and character, God created the Jewish people from him....without changing his soul. Abraham's perfected soul existed "before" the Jewish nation, as a gentile. Thus, God selects great people not because they were Jews, but because they were perfected humans. ■

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SHATNEZ



DISCOVERY

God's Clues to Happiness

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

Bible's prohibition of wearing wool and linen—shatnez—presents three very strong problems. It first appears in Leviticus 19:19:

You shall observe My laws. You shall not let your cattle mate with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; and a mixed garment of shatnez you shall not raise upon yourself.

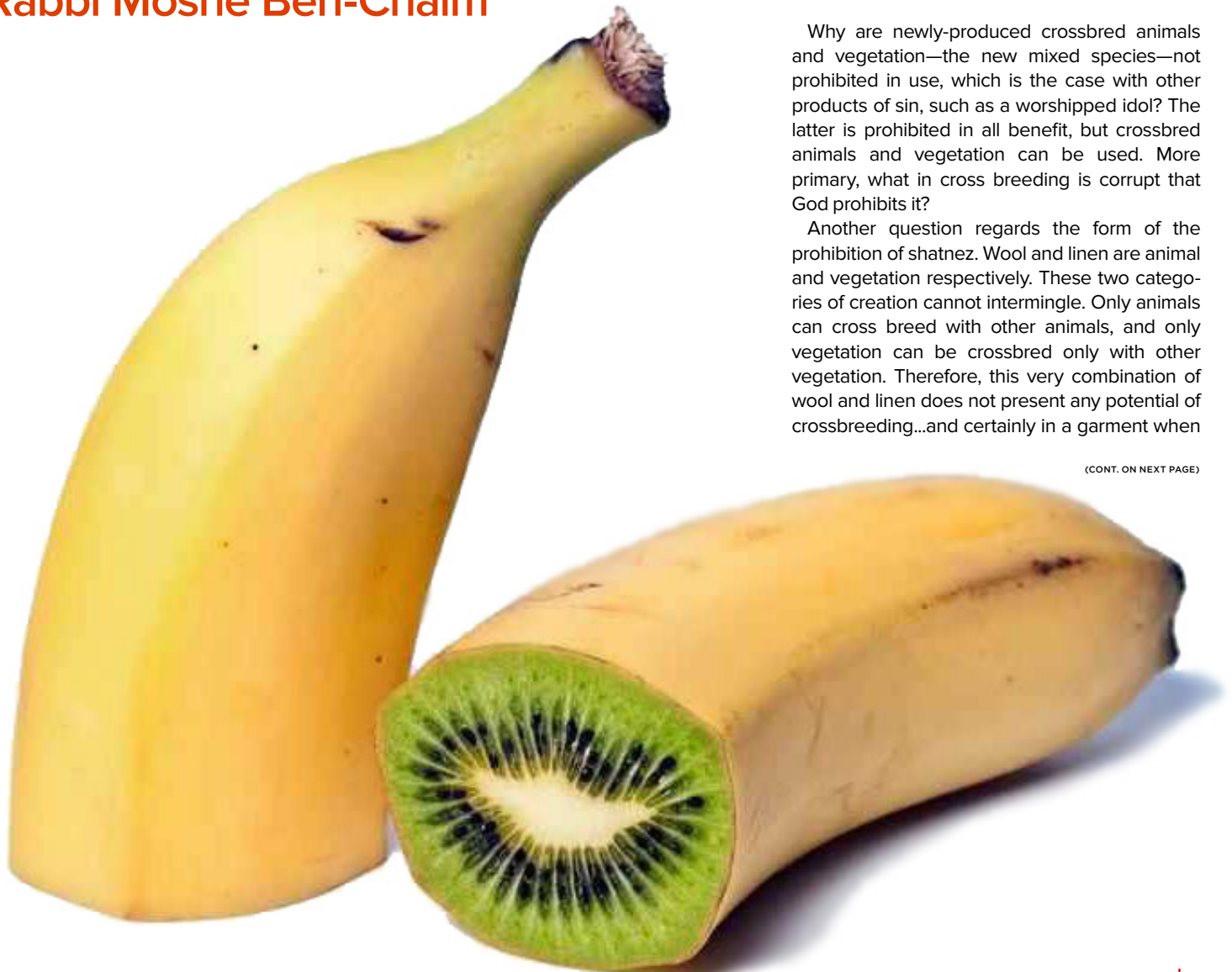
And a few weeks back we read Deuteronomy 22:9-11:

You shall not sow your vineyard with a second kind of seed, unless the crop become prohibited from the seed you have sown with the yield of the vineyard. You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together. You shall not wear shatnez combining wool and linen.

Why are newly-produced crossbred animals and vegetation—the new mixed species—not prohibited in use, which is the case with other products of sin, such as a worshipped idol? The latter is prohibited in all benefit, but crossbred animals and vegetation can be used. More primary, what in cross breeding is corrupt that God prohibits it?

Another question regards the form of the prohibition of shatnez. Wool and linen are animal and vegetation respectively. These two categories of creation cannot intermingle. Only animals can cross breed with other animals, and only vegetation can be crossbred only with other vegetation. Therefore, this very combination of wool and linen does not present any potential of crossbreeding...and certainly in a garment when

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)



both species are detached from their life source!

Which brings us to the fourth question as to why this prohibition is expressed in wearing garments. What does “wearing” per se of two species have to do with the core prohibition of course breeding? Meaning, instead, why doesn’t Torah prohibit using crossbred vegetation in dyes, or feeding new crossbred fruit species to animals, or other uses? Why is the prohibition “wearing”?

Garments

What is the nature or purpose of a garment? Man relates to garments as they are adornments of the self, as the saying goes, “The suit makes the man.” The Temple’s vessels had both skin coverings and garments of beautiful colors (Num. chap. 4). “Coverings” of heavy skin protected the vessels from the desert’s elements, while “garments” of varied color embellish the vessels’ importance, now clothed by the garment, just as a king is adorned by his crown.

Ego

The prohibition to “wear” shatnez points to the underlying corruption of crossbreeding: man’s attempt to make his mark on nature...a type of self-glorification achieved through “success”: controlling natural law to the degree of generating a new species. God hints to this underlying corrupt egoistical motivation with a prohibition to “wear” garments made of mixed species. Adorning oneself with garments that are mixed (even uncorrupted wool and linen) subtly carries the message that man must not adorn himself through disturbing God’s perfect creation. There are plenty of fruits, vegetable, grains and animals for man’s life; even if he lived 1000 years...he needs no more. But man has a tendency to manipulate nature, to compete with God, to be a creator like Him. The snake tricked Eve into eating the forbidden fruit by saying, “You will be like divine beings,” which Rashi interprets as “creators of worlds” (Gen. 3:5). Rashi reveals a human desire to be a creator. Why does man desire creation? Man unconsciously knows he is a mere creation. But if he can manipulate and create on his own, man can shed his insecurity, mostly tied to his mortality. By creating new species, man feels he is now “in control.” Therefore, God warns us not to shed our dependent, mortal natures; we cannot play God and create new species. What God made was and remains perfect, and our manipulation would deny that, and also seeks to shed our feeble mortal nature.

Although wool and linen cannot interbreed in life, and certainly in detached states, adorning (clothing) ourselves with anything mixed is a

corrupt expression of priding ourselves by mixing creations, an attempt at controlling the universe. Wool and linen—animal and vegetable—are the only species that can interbreed. Minerals cannot. Thus, shatnez contains only animal and vegetable.

Rabbi Reuven Mann asked why man is allowed to harness nature and create satellites for example. Is this not also a sinful expression of manipulation and controlling nature? But Rabbi Mann also answered that no new species is created when harnessing nature’s elements and using them in their natural states. Just as God created clothing from animal skins for Adam and Eve, and He instructed Noah to create an ark from trees, man too can follow His lead and utilize Earth’s natural resources. For God said, “fill the earth and master it” (Gen. 1:28).

Once again, Torah is astonishing in its design. Through prohibiting a seemingly unrelated act of wearing shatnez as a defense against cross breeding, God reveals our psychological nature so we may learn what are destructive inclinations and ambitions. We learn that we are to accept our mortality and our status as creations, and reserve the greatness of creation for God alone. With this mindset, we don’t fight creation, we don’t inflate our egos, but we properly accept creation, admire it and study the world to draw closer to God by understanding greater truths.

In this way, in discovery, we enjoy life completely, as God designed us to do. ■

“By creating new species, man feels he is now “in control.” Therefore, God warns us not to shed our dependent, mortal natures; we cannot play God and create new species. Shatnez prevents man from adorning himself with such species to credit himself. God must retain focus.”



NOAHIDES and Rosh Hashanna

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT



READER: What is appropriate behavior for Noahides on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. I want to be very careful not to transgress by doing more than is permitted, not creating festivals for myself. But it seems to me--please let me know if I am mistaken--that at least Rosh Hashana is relevant to the whole world and perhaps I should mark it in some way.

And finally, I would like to know if there are particular prayers from the Siddur that are permissible for the Noahide to pray.

Thank you,
Omphile Tshipa

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT: The Noahide should know that he too is judged on Rosh Hashanna by God just as the Jew and the rest of mankind. He therefore should pray all the prayers that the Jew prays, as he too is loved by God and through his repentance and prayer will be received by God and inscribed for a good year. Of course he must make some minor adjustments so that the prayer makes sense. For instance, instead of saying "our God and the God of our fathers", he can say "our God and the God of our Patriarchs" since he is not a direct descendant of the Patriarchs. But such obvious points are minor although they do require some awareness of what one is saying. But other than that technical

point, all of the prayers even the piyut (additional prayers) are applicable and beneficial to the Noahide as it is to the Jew. Indeed, the whole theme of Rosh Hashanna is that there is one Creator of the universe and all God's creatures should recognize Him. What then can be more correct before God than to have the Ben Noach recognize Him and pray to Him on this day? Indeed the Ben Noach is in a very special position to do an act that has a special value, a dimension which his unique position allows him to accomplish, which the Jew cannot. As it says in the prayers, "Let all those who dwell on the Earth recognize and know that [only] to You shall every knee bow down...and all shall accept the yoke of Thy kingdom...and God shall be the king of the entire Earth and He and His name shall be one."

The Ben Noach prayer has a very special place before God as part of the fulfillment of His words. May the one who asked the question be blessed with all of God's blessings for a wonderful and a spiritually fulfilling year. There is one last point. In order not to violate making a holiday for himself since he is not commanded, the Ben Noach should not treat the day as a holiday by making it festive or imposing any prohibitions on himself. ■

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Metaphysical Dimension

RABBI REUVEN MANN

This week's Parsha, Nitzavim, which is read on the Shabbat immediately prior to the High Holidays, foretells the time when the Jewish people will return unto Hashem and observe the commandments. This dovetails with the High Holiday season whose theme is that of repentance both on an individual and national level.

Every one of Hashem's creatures comes before Him for judgement at this time. This applies not only to Jews but to all mankind. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate for gentiles to recognize Rosh Hashanah as the time when their fate is being determined and to pray and behave appropriately.

But the Jews bear a special responsibility in this matter. We have been chosen by Hashem to live up to the high standards of moral and ethical behavior which is encapsulated in the commandments. Our long history of exile and persecution testify to the fact that we are, as yet, far from being in compliance with the elevated level of action expected of us.

The Jews have taken many steps to improve their practical condition. They have established a modern democratic state which in a short time has achieved much in the scientific and technological realms. But the hope that this would effectively terminate Anti-Semitic hatred and violence has proved to be illusive. No group is more despised and vilified than the Jews.

The protection of Jews both within Israel and outside should be a matter of primary concern for leaders of the major Jewish organizations. Of course they must consider all the pragmatic steps that can be taken to increase security and diminish danger. But these measures can only go so far.

We must acknowledge that there is a metaphysical dimension to the crises that confront us. The Rambam says that when troubles afflict the Jews they must declare a fast and engage in heartfelt introspection. They must seek to discover the sins that might be the causal factor of their setbacks for ultimately it is only their favorable spiritual condition that can afford a true sense of security.

Our Parsha is very relevant to the theological task at hand. It speaks about what will befall the Jews at the "end of days". It predicts that after we have experienced the "blessing and the curse" we will return to Hashem and "listen to His voice". This means that there will be a national realization of our true mission as a People who have been chosen by Hashem to be a "light unto the nations".

And Hashem will respond to this dramatic development. He will terminate our "captivity", gather us in from the nations among whom we are dispersed and bring us to the land that are fathers inherited and "do good unto you and increase you more than your fathers".

Perhaps we can view the reference to the "curse and blessing" as referring to our epoch. We have successfully established a viable state and defended it against all its attackers. And that is most certainly a blessing. But the curse of Jew hatred persists and manifests itself in unrelenting plots to undo the state of Israel.

Our security cannot be based only on the "works of our hands". We cannot ignore the metaphysical dimension of Jewish existence. We need wise and dedicated leaders who will unite the Jewish people and infuse them with a love of Torah and a desire to fulfill their spiritual destiny. May our hearts be inspired to an exalted love of Torah and of our fellow Jews and all mankind.

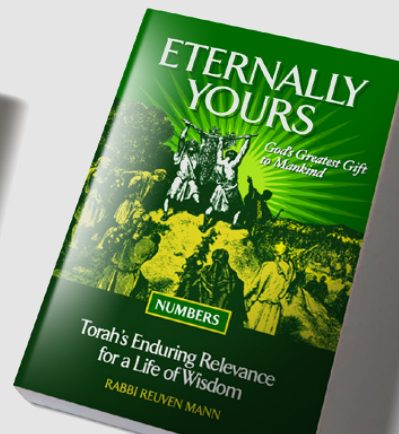
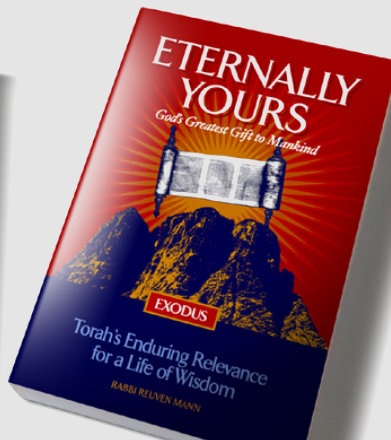
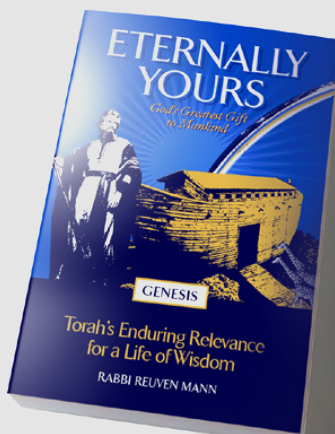
Shabbat Shalom and Ketiva V'Chatima tova. ■

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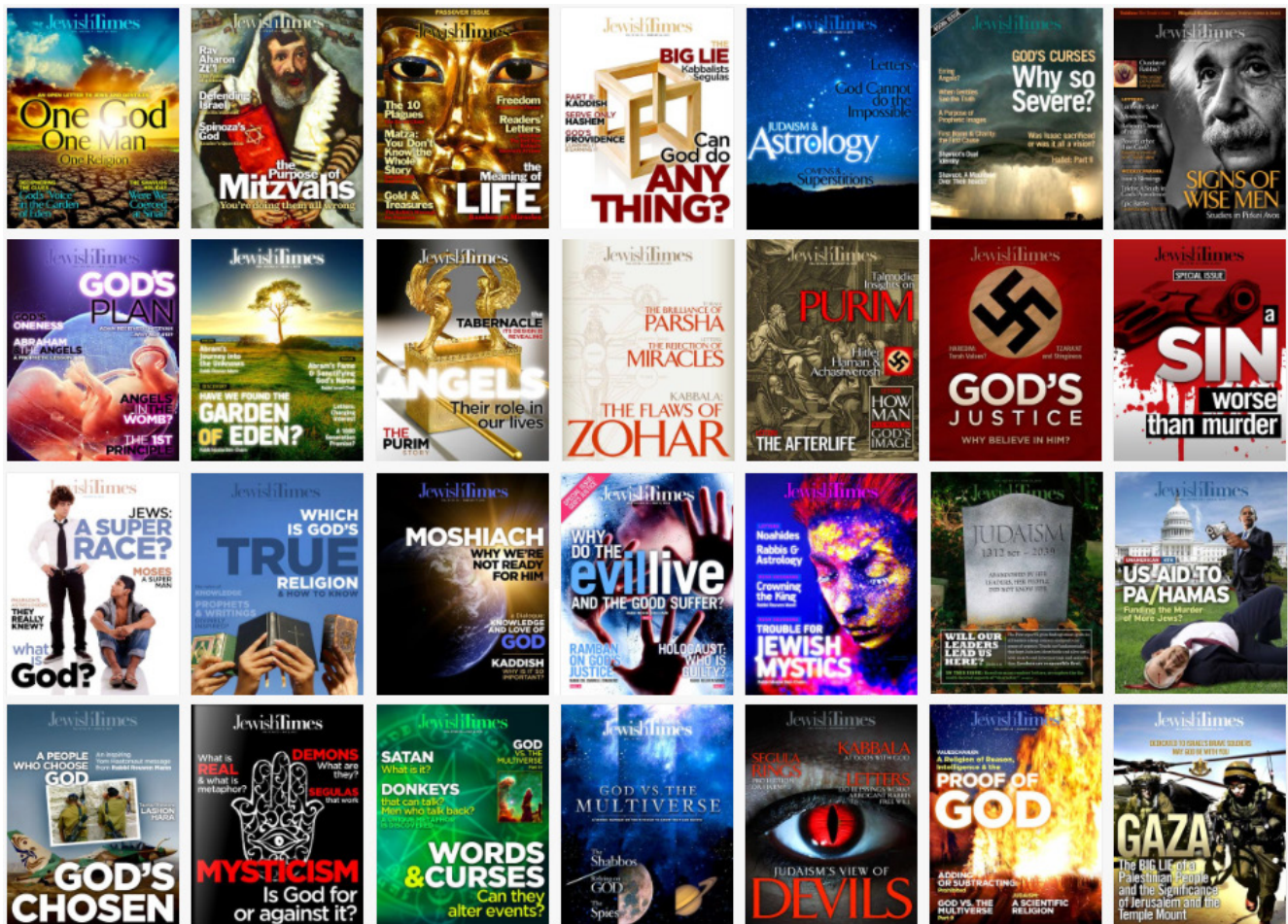
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Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

SHOFAR

es 5). Sisra delayed in returning. Sisra's mother assumed he was dividing great booty, so this must have taken time. But later, her assumption of good slowly turned towards reality, and she realized he must have perished at war. Her sobbing was a response to recognizing reality. The shofar blasts are to make us associate to Sisra's mother's sobbings: her return to reality. We too must return to reality, that is, returning to a life of Torah. This is enforced by Rosh Hashanna, a day when we direct our attention to God's exclusive role as King, Who knows all our thoughts and actions and Who rules the entire world. During our last prayer on Yom Kippur—Neila—we say, "so that we may disengage from the oppression of our hands." Our daily activities of work, family and other pursuits distract us from what our true focus must be: the study and application of God's Torah system.

Talmud Rosh Hashanna 26b teaches that a shofar used for Rosh Hashanna must be bent, not straight. This is to resemble man's "bent" state of mind: he is bent over in humility. This presents a contrast: God is King, but we are His creations. Our undistorted recognition of God's role as our Creator and King, results in our sense of humility.

The Torah command cannot simply be to hear a horn blowing. Torah is intent on perfecting us as it is God's tremendous wisdom, so a mere sound alone cannot possibly improve us. There must be far more to shofar. What are we to think about when hearing the shofar blasts, that perfects us?

What is the significance of the shofar? Its primary focus is its blasts blown during our prayers on Rosh Hashanna. We also have the custom to blow it each morning during the month of Elul. This month precedes the month of Tishrei, the first day of which is Rosh Hashanna. During this month of Elul, the shofar is to act as a wake-up call; "Uru yshanim mi'shinaschem; awaken you slumberers from your sleep." At this crucial time when we are soon to be judged for life, prosperity, and health, the shofar alerts us to our impending judgment. We are to arouse ourselves, waking up from our routine activities and backsliding during this past year. We are to examine ourselves, search out our flaws, and respond with a renewed strengthening of Torah values and actions. But why use a shofar? What is its significance?

Purpose of the Blasts

We learn that the blasts of the shofar are meant to resemble the weeping and sobbing of Sisra's mother. This is why we have long and short blasts, as weeping takes on different types of cries. Sisra's mother awaited her son's return from battle.(Judg-

The Shofar at Mount Sinai

We find the shofar associated with many events. The shofar waxed increasingly louder at Sinai when God gave us His Torah: "And it was that the sound of the shofar went and grew increasingly loud... (Exod. 19:19)." Why was shofar integral to Sinai? Sinai was also much earlier than Sisra. Does Sinai's shofar convey a different idea than sobbing? It would seem sobbing is unrelated to Sinai. What is Sinai's shofar to teach us? Rashi states that it is the custom of man that when he blows for a long period, the sound gets increasingly weaker and more faint. But at Sinai, the sound grew increasingly louder. Rashi clearly indicates the lesson of shofar is to teach that man did not orchestrate this event. Shofar is to reflect the Creator's presence. Why was this lesson required at Sinai? Perhaps the very act of accepting the Torah is synonymous with our recognition that this Torah is God's ideas. Only such an appreciation will drive our studies towards answers, which resonate with absolute truth. God's knowledge is the only absolute truth. Truth is the purpose of Torah study. Torah was therefore given with the sound of the shofar, embodying this idea. Rashi also mentioned that the sound of the shofar on Sinai "breaks the ears." This means it carries great impact. Why was this quality of "sound" necessary? The miracles alone proved God's existence!

There is one difference between a sound and a visual: sound is perceived unavoidably. You cannot "hide" your ears. Turning away from a visual

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removes its sight, but this is inapplicable to sound, certainly a loud sound. It would appear that besides the grand spectacle of Sinai ablaze, when receiving the Torah, the Jews required uninterrupted attention. The shofar blast kept them attentive to the divine nature of this event.

Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac

Talmud Rosh Hashanna 16a: "Rabbi Abahu said, 'God says blow before Me with a ram's horn, so that I may recall for you the binding of Isaac, son of Abraham, and I will consider it upon you as if you bound yourselves before Me.'" Since the ram is what Abraham offered in place of Isaac, our blasts of the ram's horn are to recall this event before God. It is clear from this Talmudic statement that Rosh Hashanna demands a complete devotion to God: we must render ourselves as if bound on the altar, like Isaac. We accomplish this via our shofar blasts. This act attests to our commitment to Abraham's sacrifice. We gain life in God's eyes by confirming Abraham's perfection. We follow his ways. This merit grants us life. The lesson of Abraham is not to end when Rosh Hashanna ends. This holiday is to redirect our focus from the mundane, to a lasting cognizance of God's presence and role as Creator. He is to occupy our thoughts throughout the year: "Bichol diracheha, da-ayhu, vihu yiyashare orchosecha; In all your ways, know Him, and he will make straight your paths (Proverbs, 3:6)."

But let us ask: why is the binding of Isaac central to the theme of Rosh Hashanna? There were many instances where great people sacrificed themselves in the name of God? Let us take a closer look at that event.

When Abraham was instructed to sacrifice his son Isaac, and was subsequently commanded not to do so, he found a ram caught in the bushes: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and behold, he saw a ram, after it was caught in the thicket by its horns, and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a completely burned sacrifice in place of his son" (Gen. 22:13). Why did Abraham feel he was to offer the ram "in place" of Isaac? This was not requested of him. Sforno suggests that Abraham understood the presence of the ram as an indication that it was to be sacrificed: a replacement for Isaac. It appears from Sforno, that God wished Abraham to "replace" his initial sacrifice of Isaac. It also appears from Sforno that Abraham wished to fulfill the perfect act of sacrifice, although subsequently he had been instructed not to kill Isaac. Yet, Abraham wished to express the perfection of adherence to God's command. Therefore, God prepared this ram. Ethics of the Fathers 5:6 teaches that this ram was one of the ten miracles created at sunset on the sixth day of creation. This clearly teaches that God intended this ram to be offered. Why was it so essential that Abraham offer this ram?

My close friend Shaye Mann suggested the following, insightful answer: Abraham was not "relieved" when subsequently, he was commanded not to slaughter his precious Isaac. The sacrifice of the ram displays a subtle, yet important lesson about Abraham. Abraham did not remove his attention from God, once he had his son back. Only someone on a lesser level of perfection would suddenly be overcome with joy that his son would remain alive with him, and then indulge that emotion with no attention to anything else. But Abraham's perfection didn't allow such a diversion from the entire purpose of the binding of Isaac. Although commanded not to kill Isaac, Abraham's attention and love was still completely bound up with God. This is where Abraham's energies were before the sacrifice, and afterwards, when his only son was spared. Offering the ram teaches us that Abraham never removed his thoughts from God, even at such a moment when others would certainly indulge in such joy. Abraham did not rejoice in Isaac's life, more than he rejoiced in obeying God. The ram teaches us this. Abraham remained steadfast with God. Abraham's perfection was twofold: 1) he was not reluctant to obey God, at any cost, and 2) nothing surpassed his attachment to God.

Maimonides on the Binding of Isaac

Maimonides discusses the significance of Abraham's binding of Isaac. I will record his first principle:

The account of Abraham our father binding his son, includes two great ideas or principles of our faith. First, it shows us the extent and limit of the fear of God. Abraham is commanded to perform a certain act, which is not equaled by any surrender of property or by any sacrifice of life, for it surpasses everything that can be done, and belongs to the class of actions, which are believed to be contrary to human feelings. He had been without child, and had been longing for a child; he had great riches, and was expecting that a nation should spring from his seed. After all hope of a son had already been given up, a son was born unto him. How great must have been his delight in the child! How intensely must he have loved him! And yet because he feared God, and loved to do what God commanded, he thought little of that beloved child, and set aside all his hopes concerning him, and consented to kill him after a journey of three days. If the act by which he showed his readiness to kill his son had taken place immediately when he received the commandment, it might have been the result of confusion and not of consideration. But the fact that he performed it three days after he had received the commandment proves the presence of thought, proper consideration,

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and careful examination of what is due to the Divine command and what is in accordance with the love and fear of God. There is no necessity to look for the presence of any other idea or of anything that might have affected his emotions. For Abraham did not hasten to kill Isaac out of fear that God might slay him or make him poor, but solely because it is man's duty to love and to fear God, even without hope of reward or fear of punishment. We have repeatedly explained this. The angel, therefore, says to him, "For now I know," etc. that is, from this action, for which you deserve to be truly called a God-fearing man, all people shall learn how far we must go in the fear of God. This idea is confirmed in Scripture: it is distinctly stated that one sole thing, fear of God, is the object of the whole Law with its affirmative and negative precepts, its promises and its historical examples, for it is said, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this Law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God," etc. (Deut. xxviii. 58). This is one of the two purposes of the 'akedah' (sacrifice or binding of Isaac).



Maimonides teaches that the binding of Isaac, represented by the ram's horn, displays man's height of perfection, where he sacrifices what he loves most, his only son, for the command of God. Shofar, the ram's horn, thereby conveys the idea of the most devoted relationship to God.

We see why Rosh Hashanna focuses on the shofar as a central command. It is on Rosh Hashanna that we focus not on God's miracles, salvation, or laws. Rather, we focus on God alone. This means, a true recognition of His place in our minds, as King. He is our Creator, Who gave us existence, the greatest gift. Abraham's sacrifice is the ultimate expression of man apprehending the idea of God, and loving God. Not the idea of God Who saves, heals, or performs miracles, but more primary, as Creator.

Shofar and the Jubilee

Another area requires shofar, the Jubilee year. This is the 50th year in the Hebrew calendar. After the shofar is blown, all slaves are set free, and all lands returns to their original inheritors apportioned to Joshua upon his initial conquest of Israel. What is the role of shofar here? Additionally, the shofar on Rosh Hashanna is derived from the Jubilee shofar. We are to use the same shofar on Rosh Hashanna as we use on the Jubilee. It would seem counter intuitive. Doesn't the day of Rosh Hashanna have more significance than a day, which occurs only once every 50 years? Why is the shofar of Rosh Hashanna derived from some area, which on the surface seems less significant? Maimonides

states that once the shofar is blown, there is a pause until ten days later, Yom Kippur. Although free, slaves remain in the domain of their masters on those 10 days. Why do they not go free immediately upon the shofar blast?

The Jubilee year teaches us yet another facet in recognizing God as Creator: man's "ownership" (slaves and land) is a mere fabrication. In truth, God owns everything. He created everything. Our ownership during our stay here is not absolute. We learn from the release of slaves and land, that ownership follows God's guidelines. It is a means by which we again come to the realization of God's role as our Master.

Perhaps Rosh Hashanna is derived from the Jubilee for good reason. The Jubilee attests to a more primary concept: God as Creator. Rosh Hashanna teaches us that God judges man, but this is based on the primary concept that God is Creator. Our recognition of God's judgment must be preceded by our knowledge of His role as Creator. Therefore, Rosh Hashanah's shofar is derived from the Jubilee's shofar.

Why don't slaves go free immediately upon the

shofar blast? If slaves would be freed, their freedom during the entire ten-day period would eclipse their repentance. The law is perfect: masters cannot work these slaves anymore for fear of their preoccupation with ownership, and slaves cannot leave their masters homes, for fear that they would be self-absorbed in their new found freedom. Both, master and slave must focus on God's role as King during these ten Days of Repentance.

Summary

In all our cases, we learn that shofar has one common theme: the recognition of God as our Creator. This recognition was essential for the Jews' acceptance of Torah, for our acceptance of God as the true Judge, and for us to view God as the absolute "Owner." Abraham expressed the zenith of man's love of God, so this event of the binding of Isaac is remembered, and reenacted via our shofar blasts. As a Rabbi once said, God created everything, so there must be great knowledge in all we see. I refer to our command of Shofar. ■

REPENTANCE *for* LIFE

Review by, Rabbi Eliezer Barany

During this season, repentance is on many minds. How can one make an impact on their High Holiday season? If you are looking for a course on repentance, Rabbi Steven Pruzansky's "Repentance for Life," is the textbook to use.

This six-hundred page sefer is heavy in breadth while retaining its depth of scholarly acumen. Readers of Rabbi Pruzansky have been privy to his erudite scholarship in which he provides a profound understanding of Tanach. In this book he similarly plumbs the depths of the Mishneh Torah, navigates the sea of the Talmud, and provides a vast array of midrashic literature and rabbinic commentators. He presents many difficult Rambams, positing glaring issues found in the text, and then weaves a narrative through the abounded complexities. Topics covered include repentance and free will, humility, suffering, fear of sin, and more.

Rabbi Pruzansky sheds light on deeper understandings of what Tzedakah truly is, how the root of the word speaks of justice, not charity. He allows the reader to improve their service of God through Ahavah, and presents deep psychological insights of man, including man's animal nature, the role of arrogance in sin, and appeasement in place of forgiveness. One grasps the enjoyment of learning through this text and helps promote the vision of serving the creator out of love, enabling more to turn this idea into a reality.

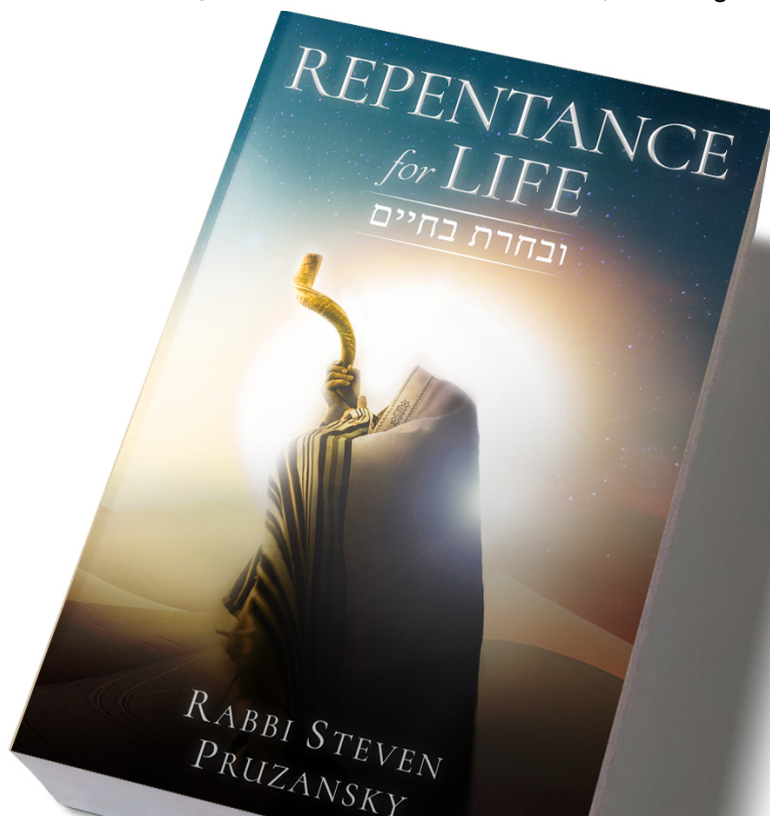
Rabbi Pruzansky approaches the Torah, Mishneh Torah, Gemara, midrashim, and rabbinic texts with hopes of understanding perplexing issues, and like a bolt of lightning in the nighttime, gives people a clear view of the entire area. Rabbi Pruzansky shares his oft unique views on current issues such as the role of chumras, the overvaluing of uniform dress, and reliance on others. Although rooted in sources and echoing the approaches of the commentators, he is not afraid to represent the Torah in an accurate manner.

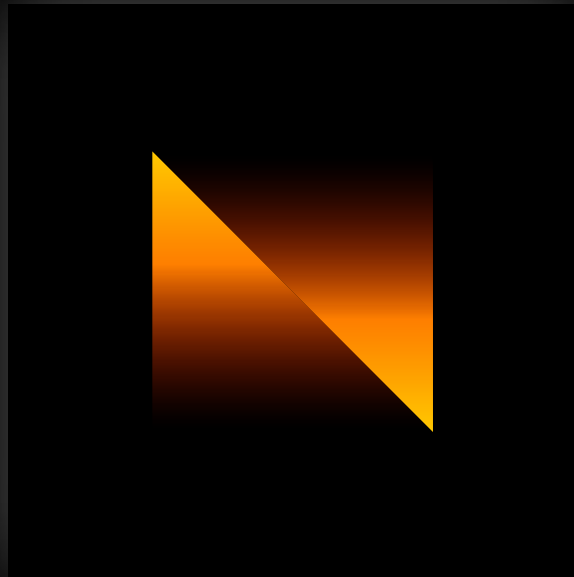
Rabbi Pruzansky is notorious for promoting the facing of adversity, learning from it, and enhancing your life. It is a view that seems to be based on the words of the sages and is a theme found throughout the book. It is no wonder that he wrote a book on repentance, something which a person has in their power to try and improve, and with sincerity and the assistance of God, can merit its attainment. We may not be in control, but we can help control our response, repentance, and desires.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik had the practice to read the ten chapters of the Laws of repentance of the Rambam during the aseret yemei teshuvah. Reading this monumental work during this time is sure to transform your experience of ten days of repentance from a possibly stagnate time to a meaningful experience.

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OUR PURPOSE: WISDOM & MORALITY



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

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

MORE BELOW

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

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

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

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

Pleasing Others: Don't seek approval over truth. Torah says, "What can man do to me?" (Psalms 56:5). "Don't fear man" (Deut. 1:17). "Desist from man whose soul is in his nostrils, for what is he considered?" (Isaiah 2:22). Mortal attention is irrelevant. Following God earns all goodness.

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