

# JewishTimes

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Why Not in Egypt?

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Today Israel lost a Torah trailblazer. Rabbi Rosenthal loved Torah ideals, and sharing Torah was his life's work. Rabbi Rosenthal was undaunted in starting many Jewish high schools across the country. His determination and joyful spirit resulted in 1000s of Jews who now benefit from a Torah lifestyle. All his daily discussions concerned Torah. His love for every person made us love him, from peers to students and young children, we were all drawn to his personality. I knew him personally for decades, and never once saw him without a smile and an excitement to talk Torah. He greeted everyone with such warmth and genuine interest in our personal lives. As his son Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal shared, his father viewed Torah as did King David: "a delight." Rabbi Daniel Rosenthal is an unparalleled example of one who loved God and man. *—Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim*

**PARSHA****DANI ROTH**

## Why not Kill Egypt in Egypt?

In the beginning of Parshas Beshalach, God wipes out the Egyptians in the Yam Suf. Why did God wait until this point to wipe out the Egyptians? He could have wiped out the entire nation during Makas Bechoros, instead of wiping

out only the firstborns. Or He could have made an 11th plague that wiped out all of the Egyptians. If you want to say that the Egyptians didn't deserve death until this point, what changed that made them deserving of death after chasing the

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Jews at Yam Suf? Alternatively you could say that the Egyptians deserved to be wiped out beforehand, but God waited until this point to execute justice. If that is the case, why was it necessary for them to be wiped out at this later time?

If we examine how the Jews related to the Egyptians, it helps us understand why the timing of the events at Yam Suf was important in the development of the nation. After the Jews left Egypt, the Egyptians soon regretted granting their freedom and chased after them. When the Jews saw the pursuing Egyptian army in the distance, they became frightened and said to Moshe, “Were there not enough graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt?” (Shemos 14:11). Although the Jews had left Egypt physically, they were still very tied to Egypt and felt drawn to return to Egypt.

We see this attachment to Egypt earlier in the Parsha: “When God took the Jews out, He didn't take them by way of the Philistines which was closer, lest they see war and return to Egypt” (Shemos 13:17).

Why would the Jews want to return to Egypt?! There are many other directions to travel. Why would they want to go back to the place where they had been enslaved?

This shows us that despite having left Egypt, the Jews continued to feel an attachment to Egypt and an acceptance of Egyptian authority. They even preferred this authority over freedom. Egypt was where they had been living for 210 years, and they felt a certain security there. However, it was important for the Jews to fully dissociate from Egyptian authority before they could accept God's authority at Sinai, which is the reason they were taken out.

This answers our original question: The Egyptians deserved to be punished due to their crimes of persecuting the Jews during 210 years of bondage. The ideal time to exact this punishment was after the Jews had openly expressed their continued subservience to Egypt.

Witnessing the events at Yam Suf helped break the attachment of the Jews to Egypt as an authority, and start on the path of becoming a nation who recognizes that their only authority is God. ■

BIBLE'S CORE MESSAGE

# Bible's 3 Signs

## What They Are & Why They're Vital

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

**T**orah (Bible) are God's precise words. God's teaches man not only through unambiguous statements, but deeper...by way of metaphor, repetition, and rare terminology which we discuss now. Only three Torah matters are called "signs." What is a sign? What's their significance over the 610 other commands? This is vital...

### Circumcision

"[God said to Abraham] walk in My ways and be perfect. I will establish My covenant between Me and you" (Gen. 17:1). "You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you" (Gen. 17:11).

### Tefillin

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

"And so it shall be as a sign upon your hand and as containers on your forehead that with a mighty hand God freed us from Egypt" (Exod. 13:16).

### Sabbath

"Keep My sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout the generations, that you may know that I God have consecrated you (Israel)" (Exod. 31:13). "The Israelite people shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time. It shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days God made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day [God] ceased from work and was refreshed" (Exod. 31:16,17).

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What is a sign? What's their significance over the 610 other commands?

### A Jewish Matter

"Signs" proclaim God's covenant "between God and the Jews," as God says regarding circumcision and sabbath "My covenant between Me and you," and regarding Tefillin "with a mighty hand God freed us from Egypt." God deems it essential that in these 3 matters, the Jew belongs to an exclusive covenant by their performance of certain acts.

### "Signs": Three Core Commands

A sign is a frequent, visual reminder of matters of great significance:

Sabbath—Creation: God Exists

Tefillin—Providence: God relates to man

Circumcision—Human Perfection:  
Instinctual control

God wishes all mankind to benefit equally, explaining why He designed all mankind equally. God wishes man to direct his life towards the greatest good, which is appreciating God's wisdom through his Bible, Torah. But man's emotions lead him astray towards fame, fortune, and instinctual gratification. Once a person follows this path, it can be difficult to return to God's will. Therefore God set up one group of people who bear three regular reminders.

The Jew is singled out as an example for all mankind to follow. By abstaining from work on the same day that God rested from creation, Maimonides says [1] through sabbath, "We confirm thereby the principle of Creation which will spread in the world". Observing sabbath causes the other nations to question our deviation, to which we can respond that there is a God—a sole creator—who rested on the seventh day, and we are following His command to imitate Him. In this manner, we teach the world of monotheism and reject all forms of

idolatry, mysticism and superstition.

The Jew again is singled out to wear a black boxes on our bodies. This too attracts attention, and we can teach others that Tefillin contains stories of the Exodus and God's unopposed singular control of the universal laws. Now we share not the concept of God's existence, but of His relationship to man: He did not create the universe and abandon it, but saved the Jews from Egypt. Regarding tefillin, Torah says "And all the peoples of Earth shall see that God's name is called upon you and they will fear you" (Deut. 28:10). Rebbe Eliezer Hagadol, said this refers to the tefillin of the head [2]. All nations will see God's name appearing on tefillin...a sign for the world to see.

Through sabbath and tefillin, the Jew teaches God's creation and His providence. But for what ultimate goal? Here we come to the third sign—circumcision—where God informed Abraham that, although he perfected himself in all other areas of his

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personality and values, there's one more area which requires refinement, and that is the restriction of instinctual gratification. For if one follows his lusts, his limited energies are no longer following his mind, and he will forfeit appreciating God's wisdom. In order to temper man's emotions to enable the mind freedom to pursue thought, circumcision reduces sexual gratification for both genders [3]. Now that man is freed from chasing physical gratification, he can redirect those limited energies to explore God's wisdom, which is man's greatest joy. The greatest minds found the greatest satisfaction in the greatest pursuit, which is wisdom. If we are wise, we will follow the greatest minds, and not follow the masses chasing instinctual drives of fame, fortune, and lusts.

Thus, these three commands intend to teach the world of the three most important principles, and therefore they require regular visual lessons which we call "signs":

- 1) The world must know a Creator exists (Sabbath),
- 2) that He relates to man (Tefillin/Exodus), and
- 3) that Earth's goal of human perfection is attainable (circumcision).

As Rashi says [4], Torah is the purpose of Earth's existence. And if Israel does not follow God—i.e., if man does not attain perfection—God will return the Earth to its pre-genesis chaotic state. Israel is needed to teach mankind. Addition ally, the essentiality of tefillin—Exodus—and circumcision are embellished through loss of the afterlife by failure to sacrifice the Paschal lamb—Exodus—and circumcise oneself.

### Covenant

By our Torah adherence, God promises His covenant with us. A covenant is a reciprocal relationship where God does something due to the Jews' fulfillment of God's commands. What will God do as His part of the

covenant? God will secure Israel for Abraham's descendants and help us in all ways. As seen in the days of King Solomon, no nation compared to Israel. And this is not for Jews alone. This is so there is an identifiable people in an identifiable country that can teach the world of the great goodness God bestows on mankind when man follows God...for his own good.

However, the world today is steeped in gratifying ego, power, the desire for wealth, and lusts. Today, wisdom does not appeal to people following instincts. Perhaps we must wait until the messianic age when the wise Messiah will return people to following God and wisdom. Rabbi Reuven Mann taught that the 13 Principles include the messianic era. The other 12 principles refer to perfections of God, so we wonder how the age of the Messiah forms part of this list of 13 Principles. Rabbi Mann said that in the messianic era, man will finally attain perfection. This reflects on God, that He did not create a being incapable of such perfection. Human perfection will be attained, and man will then view God as having created man who can perfect himself. This reflects on God's perfect creation, rendering God perfect in man's eyes, warranting its inclusion of the 13 Principles. And when God favors those following him as in King Solomon's time, the world learns that God protects and raises His followers.

### Addendum

The reason tefillin are not worn on shabbos is because that would obscure the sign of Shabbos. People would be more focused on the black boxes than on the physical rest of the Jews. ■

[1] Guide for the Perplexed, book ii, chap. xxxi

[2] Menachos 35b

[3] Guide for the Perplexed, book iii, chap. xlix

[4] Avos 2:8

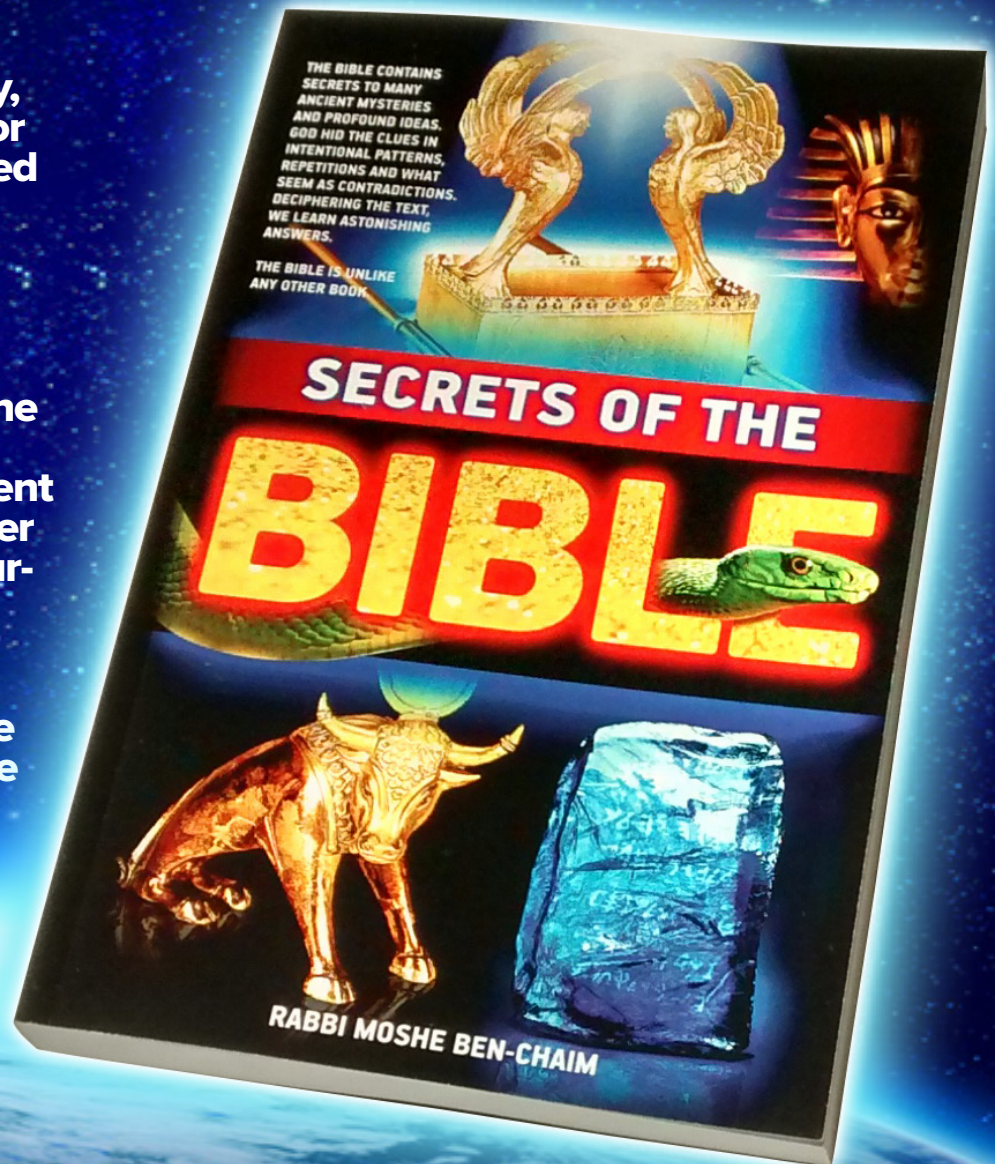
# CODES FOUND IN THE BIBLE

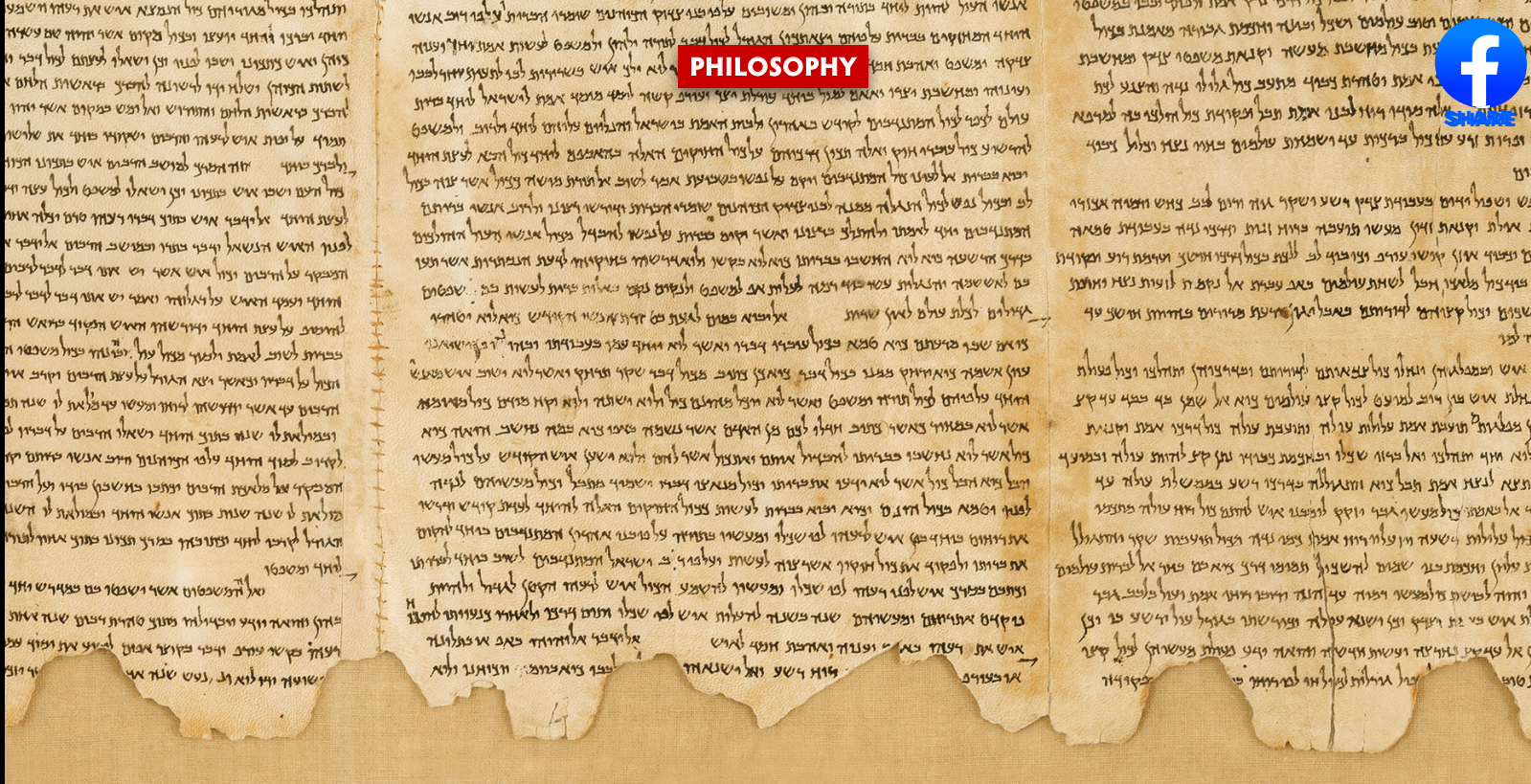
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# Why God Made Man & Bible

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

Many people think following God and His Bible are optional, and therefore don't follow all His laws, or only follow what's easy. This is equal to refusing life-saving surgery. Man forfeits his life by selecting what is easier and more pleasurable. Man forgets that he only has one life and that some choices have permanent damage.

Man deludes himself, feeling that as he can make free will choices, that he is capable of choosing what is best for him. Man fools himself that God does not know better. Man brings calamity upon himself for trusting doctors advice, but not God's advice.

Why did God create man? Why did He create a Bible?

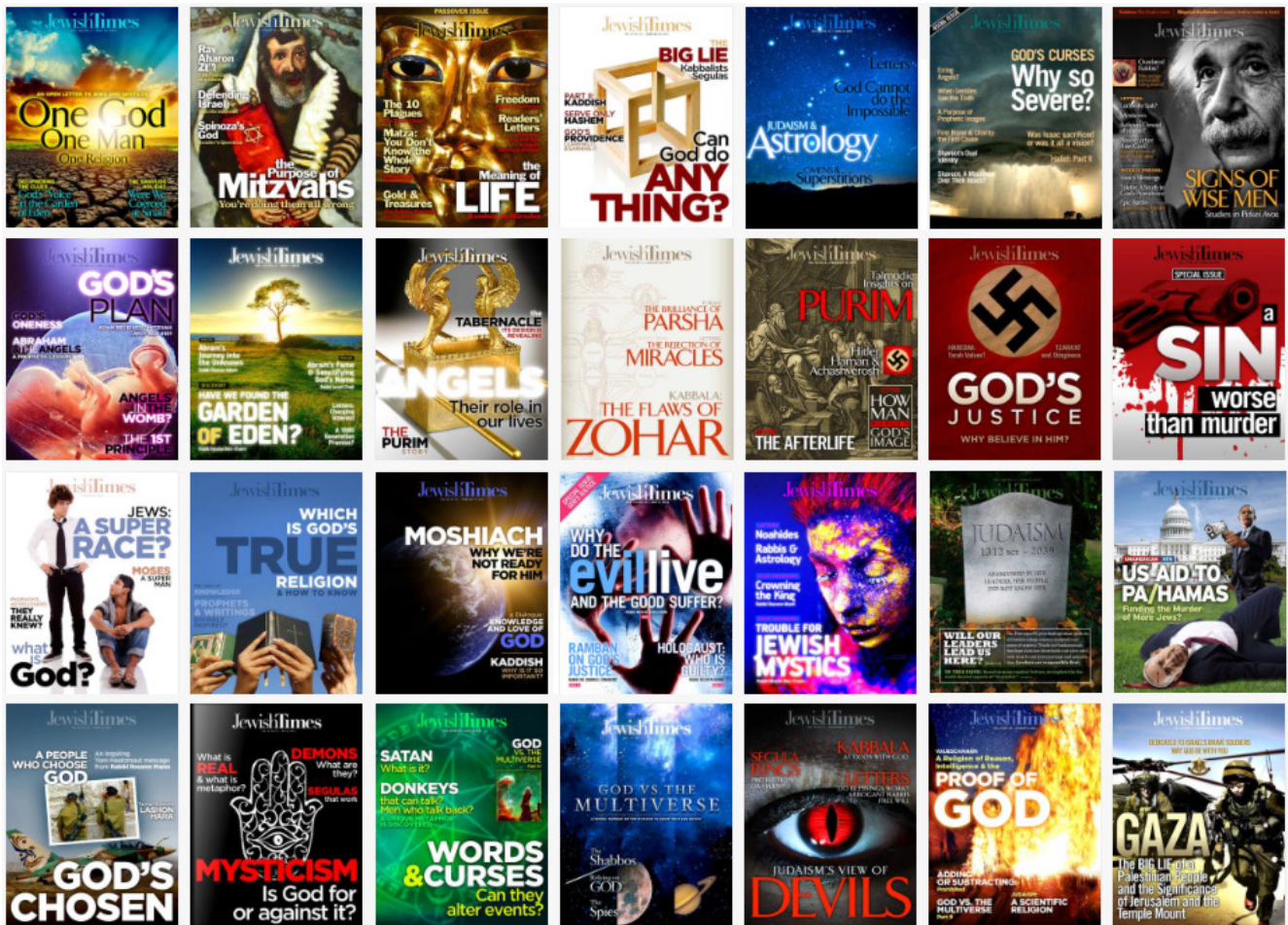
God did not create man to live without self-direction, which applies only to animals which act as robots with

limited instinctual drives, and which cannot deviate from their specific drives. But God made man with intellect and reason where he can perceive what is beneficial, and what path will lead him to the best existence. God also instructed mankind only once in a religion. Bible is the only religion God ever gave mankind. Like a trusted doctor, God outlines what we should do, and what to avoid, for our own good. God did not create man to live without direction. If we spend time studying His Bible—which King Solomon taught is the greatest command—we will grow in wisdom, coming to understand that following God's will is the best life, and also guarantees eternal life. Or we can remain ignorant and delusional that we know more than God.

God made us. God knows what is best. It is foolish to deviate from His Bible. ■

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# Armed & Ready

Rabbi Reuven Mann

**T**his week's Parsha, BeShalach, describes the great Exodus from Egypt. What a sight to behold, that had to have been! Can you imagine an entire nation, men women and children including all their livestock exiting a country in an orderly fashion at the same time? This would seem to testify to the organizational powers of Moshe, Aaron and the Elders who were able to unify the Jews for this miraculous event. In describing it, the Torah nonchalantly makes the point that "...the Children of Israel were armed when they left Egypt" (Shemot 13:18). What is the teaching behind this bit of information?

One also wonders, from whence did these armaments come? There is no conversation between Moshe and Pharaoh in which the request for weapons is made. Nor does the Torah tell us that the Jews raided the

Egyptian armories to obtain the needed tools of warfare. So how was this hardware obtained? At the time of the Jew's departure, it might have been thought that they planned to return, as Moshe had only requested a work furlough of about a week, so the People could worship Hashem in the wilderness. So why would they need implements of war?

To answer this question, we need to have a clearer picture of what took place at the time of the liberation from Egypt. The question arises; when Pharaoh released the Jews on the night of Makkat Bechorot (Slaying of First Born), was the intent for them to go off into the wilderness, offer Sacrifices to Hashem and then return to Mitzrayim to resume their service to the State, or was their entire relationship to Egypt to be terminated? Many have asked whether Moshe was guilty of deception in pressing Pharaoh for permission to go and worship Hashem and implying that the people would then return, which, in fact, they never did. Did the Jews resort to trickery and deceit in securing their freedom from the Egyptian tyrant?

The pertinent verse states: "And G-d said to Moshe: 'I will bring yet one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that, he will send you away from here; when he does send you away, he will drive you away completely, with force' (Shemot 11:1). If Pharaoh was only granting the right of a short vacation, then what is the meaning of, "He will drive you out completely?"

Rabbi Samson R. Hirsch explains it as follows; "The words, 'Pharaoh will send you away from here' does not mean 'will let you go to serve your G-d' but rather means 'will send you away from here never to return.'"

Rabbi Hirsch's interpretation is

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reinforced by what takes place after the Jews had left Egypt. “It was told to the King of Egypt that the people had fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned regarding the people, and they said, ‘What is this that we have done that we have sent away Israel from serving us?’” (Shemot 14:5)

After the terror of the “Night of the Firstborn” had abated somewhat and Pharaoh and his advisers realized that the Jews were not returning, they regretted that they had given them their freedom and now wanted them back. But on that panic-filled night, they practically begged them to leave their country.

The Torah does not mention any transfer of weaponry to the Jews, but we have to assume that it took place, for the verse attests that they were armed. I would venture the guess that once Pharaoh evicted the Jews from Egypt he was agreeable that they should take whatever they needed to defend themselves for they would not be entitled to the protection of the Egyptian army. From this point on, they would have to fend for themselves and always be ready for battle.

This contains an important lesson for us. The idea of fighting back against our enemies is not fully accepted among all segments of religious Jews. Some assert that faith in G-d along with Mitzvot, especially Torah study, suffices to secure our protection and safety.

It must be emphasized that such a view constitutes a dangerous distortion of the Torah philosophy and places our people in grave

danger. True faith in Hashem does not permit one to be passive and expect Divine intervention to solve his problems. All of the classic Jewish heroes such as the Patriarchs, Moshe, King David, the Maccabees, Queen Esther etc. prayed to G-d for assistance but acted in the most rational and courageous manner imaginable. They utilized diplomacy when that was the only feasible option, and bravely went to war when the situation demanded it. They never claimed that their learning of Torah exempted them from practical action, including combat. The notion that one can be pacifistic and rely on his religious piety to protect him from danger constitutes a serious distortion of Torah.

Over the course of history, an attitude of passive submission to persecution took hold of the Jewish people and caused great damage. With the Zionist movement and the advent of the State of Israel, the Jews recognized that they needed to fight back in the most skillful and courageous manner in order to survive.

Indeed, the exploits of the IDF show how effective Jews can be in taking up arms against their manifold enemies. However, there still remain traces of pacifism in the depths of the Jewish soul. This can be seen whenever some purported friends seek to entice Israel to accept terms of new “peace arrangements” which entail sacrifices of territory and other concessions that endanger the state.

When Hashem took the Jews out of Egypt, He saw to it that they should be “Armed and Ready” in order to deal properly with those antagonists

who would arise to destroy us. In the wake of the worst atrocity ever committed against Israel since its inception, the entire world now vilifies us and seeks to impose a cease-fire followed by the establishment of a Palestinian State.

**In other words, the terrorists should be rewarded for their butchery and be permitted to continue it from an even more effective vantage point.**

**Israel must categorically reject that program and instead emulate what the U.S. did at the conclusion of WWII. It dismantled the structure of the Nazi government apparatus in Germany and that of the militarist system in Imperial Japan. These Fascist Empires were replaced by Western Democratic societal models and the teaching of the ideology of aggression and genocidal eradication was outlawed.**

That is the approach that is most needed and appropriate for Gaza and the territories, from which Muslim terrorists seek to pursue their goal of annihilation against Israel. Our people must be strong and our leaders courageous. We must always be armed and ready with the battle cry “Praise Hashem and pass the ammunition” on our lips as our brave soldiers do battle with the enemies of the Jews and their G-d.

Shabbat Shalom. ■

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*Rabbi Reuven Mann – Deuteronomy*

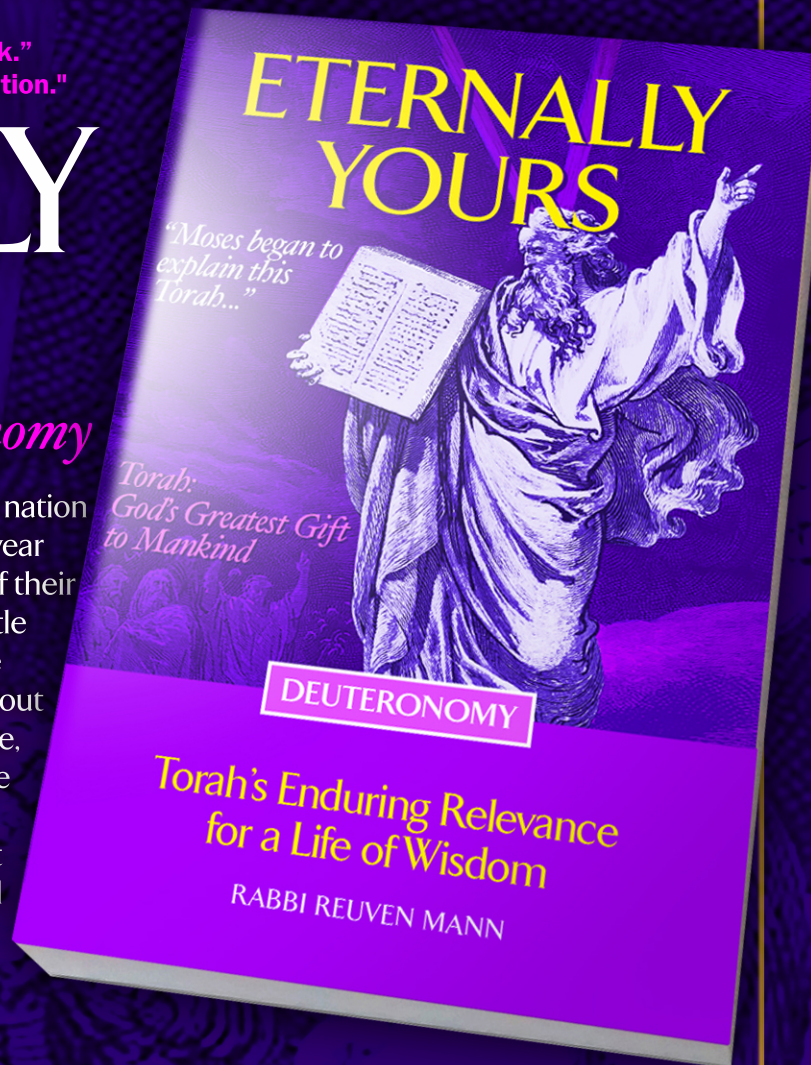
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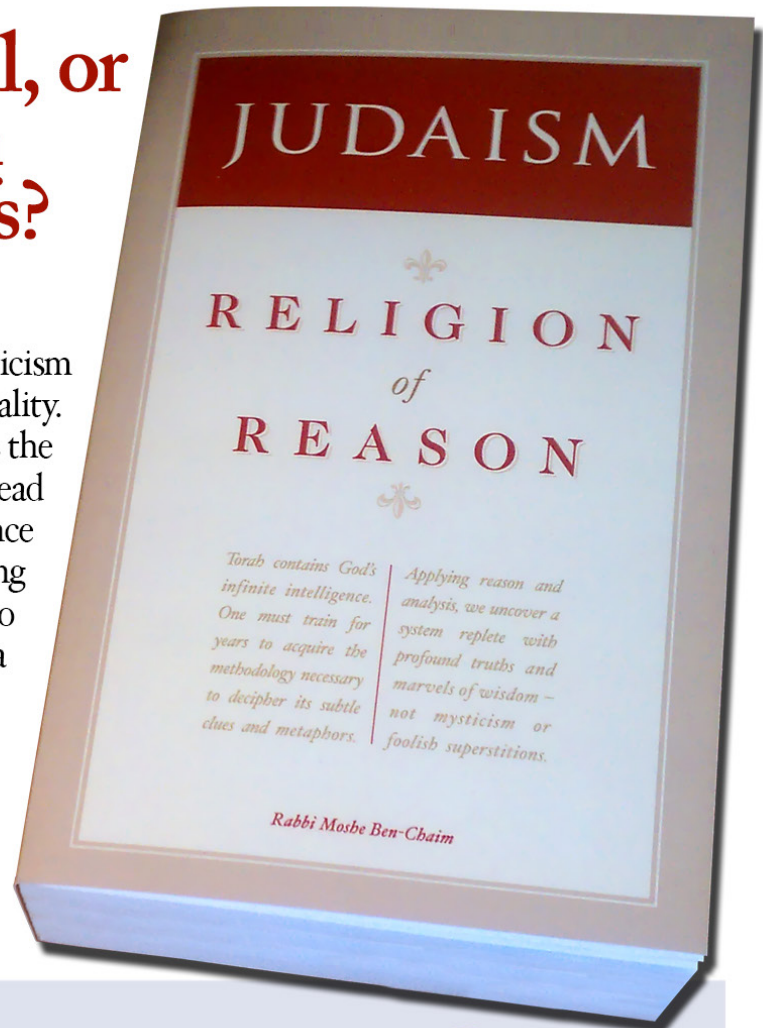
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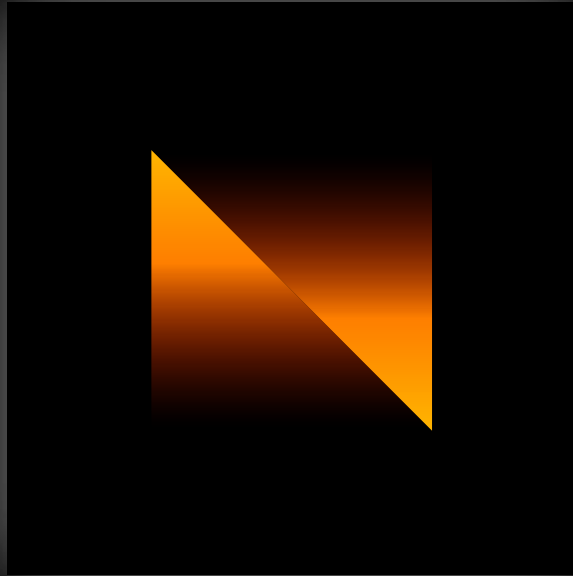
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