

# JewishTimes

VOL. XXIII NO. 2 — NOV. 1, 2024

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Created not just for Light

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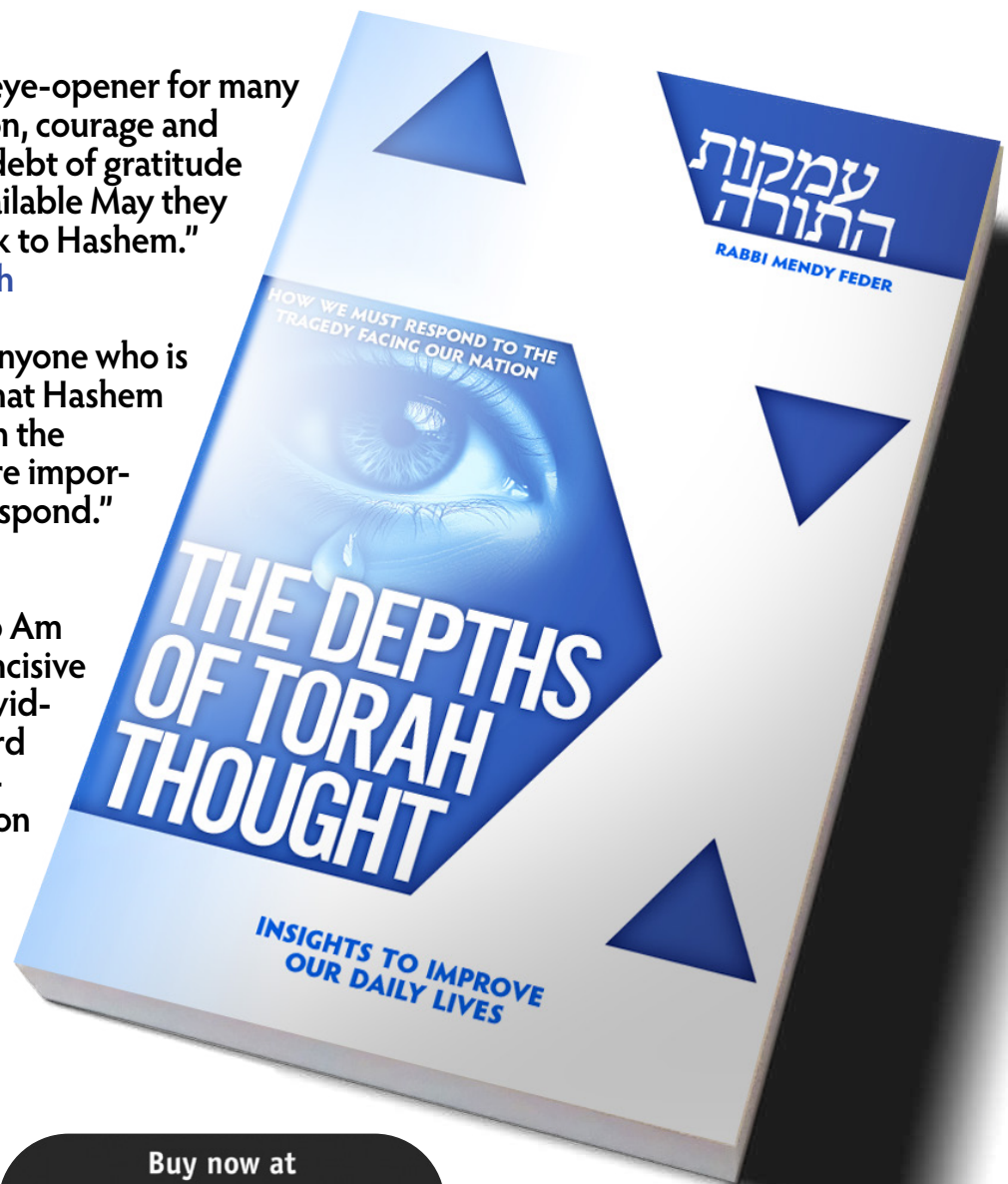
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## FOR GOOD OR FOR BAD

One is obligated to recite a blessing for the bad that befalls him just as he recites a blessing for the good that befalls him, as it is stated: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5).

"With all your heart" means with your two inclinations, with your good inclination and your evil inclination, both of which must be subjugated to the love of God. "With all your soul" means even if God takes your soul. "And with all your might" means with all your money. Alternatively, it may be explained that "with all your might" means with every measure that God metes out to you; whether it is good or troublesome, we must thank Him.

## LETTERS

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

## Noah and the Raven

**AVI: HI.** How are you? Just thought today on the Rashi about the raven not leaving [the ark] because of suspicion of Noah and the raven's mate? What is the idea?

**RABBI:** Noah was disturbed with his travails; anyone would be when the world is flooded. He was bothered by the extermination of life requiring its regeneration, embodied in the species' procreation, the area in which he expressed some aggression. He didn't have issues with the species that had seven of a kind onboard, because killing one dove would not make extinct that

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species. So he expressed it in the species that only had two birds aboard the Ark, the Raven. By sending one away, he would make extinct the Raven, with only the male Raven left. The point is that the renewal of the species was the focus of the Flood and it was in this area that Noach expressed some unconscious aggression by terminating a species. Rabbi Israel Chait taught that Moses acted similarly when he made the mistake about circumcising his son (Exod. 4:24). This error was due to Moses' resistance to the mission: a mission of God's covenant with the Jews, expressed circumcision (Gen. 17:10, Exod. 12:43-48). So it was in this specific area that Moses expressed resistance.

## Tzedaka

**OMPHILE TSHIPPA:** Can you please explain what tzedaka is. I have been under the impression that tzedaka is "rightness" (doing what is right). However in Rabbi Chait's work "Avos 5-6," he quotes this verse:

*For I have selected him, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is tzedaka and justice" (Gen. 18:19)*

By citing both, tzedaka and justice, Hashem seems to be differentiating between the two.

**RABBI:** Maimonides distinguishes tzedaka from mishpat and chessed (Guide, book iii, chap. liii):

*We have explained the expression chessed as denoting an excess [in some moral quality]. It is especially used of extraordinary kindness. Loving-kindness is practiced in two ways: first, we show kindness to those who have no claim whatever upon us; secondly, we are kind to those to whom it is due, in a greater measure than is due to them.*

*The term tzedaka is derived from tzedek, "righteousness," it denotes the act of giving every one his due, and of showing kindness to every being according as it deserves. In Scripture, however, the expression tzedaka is not used in the first sense, and does not apply to the payment of what we owe to others. When we therefore give the hired laborer*

*his wages, or pay a debt, we do not perform an act of tzedaka. But we do perform an act of tzedaka when we fulfill those duties towards our fellow men which our moral conscience imposes upon us: e.g., when we heal the wound of the sufferer. Thus Scripture says, in reference to the returning of the pledge [to the poor debtor]: "And it shall be tzedaka (righteousness) unto thee" (Deut. xxiv. 11). When we walk in the way of virtue we act righteously towards our intellectual faculty, and pay what is due unto it; and because every virtue is thus tzedaka, Scripture applies the term to the virtue of faith in God. Comp. "And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him as righteousness" (Gen. xv. 6), "And it shall be our righteousness" (Deut. vi. 25).*

*The noun "mishpat; judgment," denotes the act of deciding upon a certain action in accordance with justice which may demand either mercy or punishment.*

*We have thus shown that chessed denotes pure charity; tzedakah is kindness, prompted by a certain moral conscience in man, and being a means of attaining perfection for his soul, whilst mishpat may in some cases find expression in revenge, in other cases in mercy.*

Rabbi Israel Chait elaborated:

*Tzedaka means righteousness, Mishpat means justice. Justice means that each person is treated in the same way: if a poor man works for an hour, he gets the same wage as the rich man, and vice versa. When we take it upon ourselves to make sure that this is so, that is righteousness. We may even have to put our lives on the line; we must do everything we can to ensure that justice is carried out in our society. In doing so, we are righteous.*

*This is all on a private plane. On a higher level, if we see that certain people do not receive what they deserve, in other words they are impoverished, we even the score and provide them with what they need to remove their poverty. In other words, we correct what nature has done, or failed to do. This is righteousness on a higher plane, we call this Tzedaka. ■*



# Noah & the Flood

## Why Destroy Your Creation?

RABBI REUVEN MANN

### GENESIS

#### The Divine Reaction to Sinfulness

This week's Parsha describes one of the most inexplicable and cataclysmic events in history, the Great Flood, which eradicated humankind—except for Noach, who “found favor in G-d's eyes.” The Deluge was not a natural event but was brought about by the Creator as a response to humanity's pervasive sinfulness.

It is challenging to understand why Hashem reacted so severely to humanity's rebelliousness. After all, God did not create man in a way that rendered him immune to transgression. It is true that, in his original state, man functioned at a high level and was primarily occupied with studying and understanding Creation, as can be seen from his naming of the animals.

#### Man's Capacity to Transgress and Repent

However, even at the outset, man was endowed with a Yetzer HaRa (evil inclination), which enabled Eve to yield to the Serpent's seduction and eat from the forbidden fruit. Adam became a partner in sin when he “listened to the voice of his wife” and partook of the banned substance. Virtually within hours of their creation, both humans demonstrated their capacity to transgress. Yet, this did not prompt God to “regret” that He had created them or terminate their existence.

Instead, He confronted them, seeking to elicit a confession about what they had done. Initially, all the parties were evasive, attempting to deny or deflect their culpability. Hashem's purpose in the cases of Adam and Chava, as well as Kayin and Hevel, was to bring about Teshuva (repentance) in the sinners. As the Prophet Yechezkel states, “... I do not desire the death of the sinner, declares Hashem Elokim; repent and live!” (Yechezkel 18:32). We must face the fact that man's propensity to sin stems from his very nature. It is, therefore, inevitable that violations will occur. As King Solomon said, “There is no man who only does good and does not sin” (Kohelet 7:20). (CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)



## A Generation Beyond Redemption

If this is the case, the story of the Flood requires clarification. Why did Hashem, due to the prevalence of corruption in the world, now “regret” that He had created man and proceed to uproot His creation? Why did He not address this as He had in previous cases of human transgression? Why didn’t He craft punishments that would cause people to regret and overcome their immoral ways? Why was the complete destruction of humankind seen as the only viable solution?

The verses describe the particular moral deterioration of the Dor HaMabul (Generation of the Flood) as follows: “Now the earth had become corrupt before G-d; and the earth was filled with Chamas (robbery). (Bereishit 6:11)” The people of that time engaged in various forms of sexual immorality, including rape and the forceful seizing of women as wives, not to mention the widespread practice of extreme deviant behavior, including bestiality. At the same time, there was a pervasive outbreak of robbery, along with many forms of violence, as the strong exploited the weak. Rampant sexual misconduct and oppression of the weak were the defining characteristics of the society in which Noach lived.

## Hashem’s Reason for Total Destruction

The great commentator, Ramban, addresses this issue, and his words provide insight into why extreme measures had to be taken against this particular civilization.

*“Violence, that is, robbery and oppression. Now G-d gave Noach the explanation [that the Flood was due to the fact that ‘the earth was filled with] violence’ and did not mention the ‘corruption of the way’ [recorded in the previous verse] because violence is a sin that is known and widely publicized. Our Rabbis have said, in Tractate Sanhedrin 108a, that it was on account of the sin of violence that their fate was sealed. The reason for it is that the prohibition against violence is a rational commandment, there being no need for a prophet to admonish them against it. Besides, it is evil committed against both Heaven and mankind. Thus, He informed Noach of the sin for ‘which the end is come’—the doom is reached” (Ramban Commentary on Chumash Bereishit 6:13).*

According to this explanation, we can understand why Hashem did not merely rebuke the sinners of this corrupt generation as He had done in previous cases. Humanity had reached a point where it could no longer maintain a functioning society. The ability to organize and sustain a workable social entity is the most fundamental expression of human rationality. Yet, human reason had become subverted by instinctual forces, and people indulged their desires without considering the destructive consequences.

## Lessons from the Mabul

Hashem had created man to be a unique creature with an instinctual makeup yet endowed with the Tzelem Elokim (Divine Image). The rational faculty was intended to govern instinctual forces and guide human behavior. However, humanity allowed its reason to become subverted by emotional desires, pursuing them regardless of the harm they caused.

Consequently, the light of the Neshama (soul) was completely extinguished, and the being God had created no longer functioned as a humane creature. He had essentially ceased to be the being Hashem had created, becoming merely another (albeit more advanced) animal. This extreme deterioration of human existence served no purpose and, therefore, had to be terminated. Fortunately, Noach remained righteous, and Hashem saved the world because of him, establishing conditions that would make it much more difficult for humanity to reach such a level of corruption that would necessitate destruction.

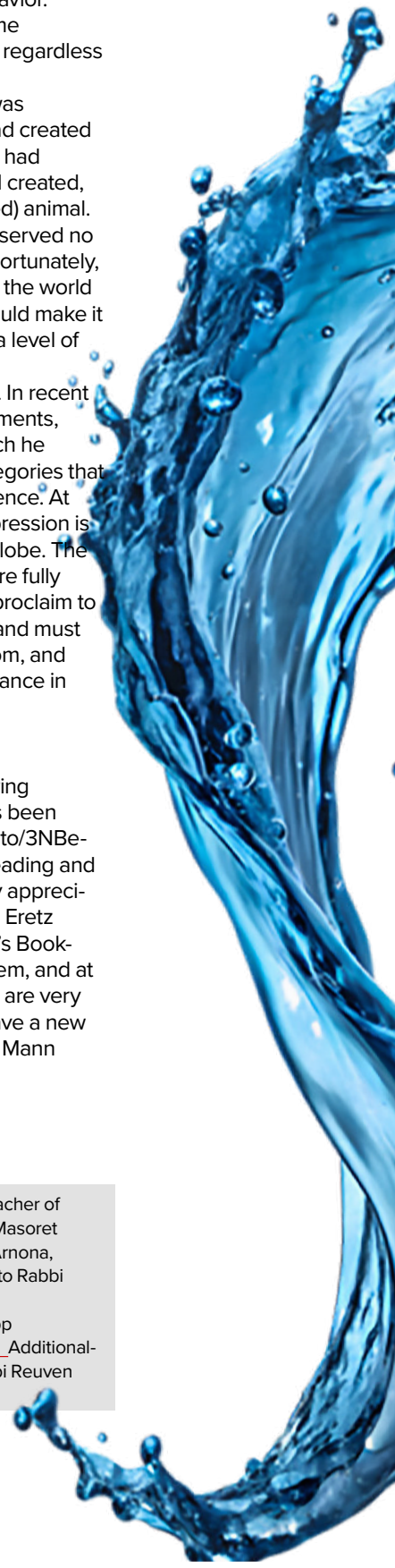
We must heed the lessons of the Mabul (Flood). In recent years, due to his prolific technological advancements, man has developed an arrogant posture in which he denies God and seeks to create new moral categories that reflect his own yearning for unrestricted indulgence. At the same time, a great deal of violence and oppression is perpetrated by tyrannical dictators across the globe. The twin sinful manifestations of the Dor HaMabul are fully visible in our times. It is our national mission to proclaim to the world that “man was created in His Image” and must live a moral life based on sexual restraint, wisdom, and compassion. May we be worthy of Divine assistance in pursuing this noble endeavor. Shabbat Shalom.

Dear Friends,

My newest book, *Eternally Yours: Torah’s Enduring Relevance for a Life of Wisdom on Devarim*, has been published, and is now available at: <https://amzn.to/3NBe-wg7> I hope that my essays will enhance your reading and study of the Book of Devarim and would greatly appreciate a brief review on Amazon.com. For those in Eretz Yisrael, my books are available at David Linden’s Bookstore located at Emek Refaim Street 21, Jerusalem, and at Pomeranz Bookstore, Be’eri 5, Jerusalem. They are very nice stores to visit and browse. Additionally, I have a new series of YouTube videos called “Rabbi Reuven Mann Torah Thoughts”: <https://bit.ly/49N8hyX>

—Rabbi Reuven Mann

Rabbi Reuven Mann has been a pulpit Rabbi and a teacher of Torah for over fifty years. He is currently the Dean of Masoret Institute of Judaic Studies for Women and resides in Arnona, Jerusalem. **Questions/Comments:** Please reach out to Rabbi Mann on WhatsApp 050-709-2372 or by email at: [rebmann21@aol.com](mailto:rebmann21@aol.com) or to Mitch Rosner on WhatsApp 054-426-3419 or by email at: [mitchrosner@gmail.com](mailto:mitchrosner@gmail.com) Additionally, I have a new series of YouTube videos called “Rabbi Reuven Mann Torah Thoughts”: <https://bit.ly/49N8hyX>





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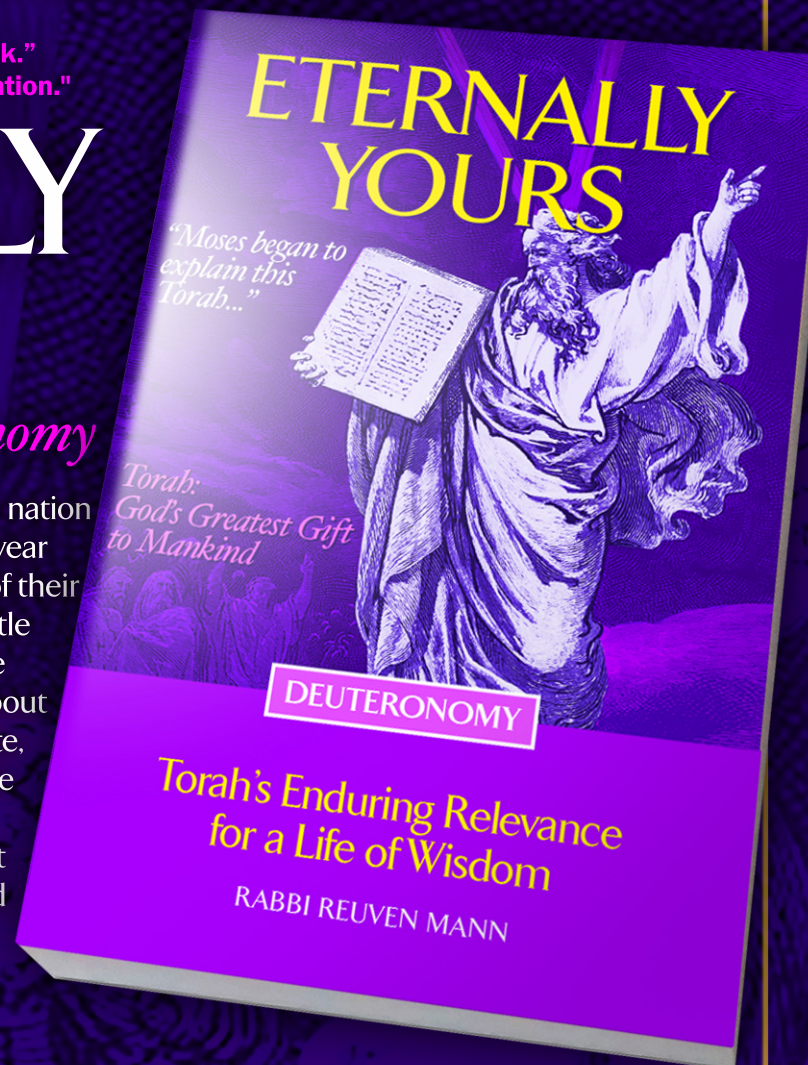
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GENESIS

# Day/Night

## Created not just for Light

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Genesis is God's first communications with mankind. But by no means does Genesis cite a complete history. Thus, God must deem these selected events and communications more crucial than all others. What are their vital lessons?

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## 6 “Days” of Creation

As the sun was not set in place until “day” 4, we are forced to interpret 6 “days” not as 24-hour periods. Rather, “day” refers to this: a “significant phase in Creation.” Significance is given to heaven and earth, light, firmament, land and oceans, luminaries, vegetation, animal life and finally, humans. With these, God highlights creations of utmost importance. What is the significance of each?

As God instructed man to dominate Earth (Gen. 1:28), we understand why Rashi explained (Ethics 2:8) that if mankind would abandon knowledge (Torah), God would revert the world to primordial chaos. Man is the only earthly creature that can perceive the Creator, and he is thereby the goal in the creation of Earth. Just as a rock or a plant does not exist for itself as they are inanimate, animals too which possess no soul, exist only for man, just like all else on Earth. The only earthly creation existing for itself is man. This is because the purpose in creation is the recognition of the Creator; on Earth only man can perform this. God needs nothing, so His creations must be for something outside Himself. Purpose exists only in a being that can perceive God’s wisdom. This expresses God’s kindness in creating man (and angels). Why is it that only that which perceives God has purpose, while inanimate and soulless creations do not have a purpose of themselves? We ask this as we already understand that God is behind all creation, and all which God does reflects great wisdom and purpose. Therefore, God intentionally embedded His wisdom into all creation, but not for naught. The wisdom permeated in all creation must be made observable with His intent for a being to observe, and appreciate it. Those beings are only man and angels. As we cannot conceive of any purpose in a flower’s existence—if that was the only thing that God created—we would call this purposeless and not something which God would perform. Therefore a flower must exist for another creation’s purpose. Even an inanimate entity like a rock must have a purpose. The wisdom embedded in minerals, botany, zoology and all sciences cannot be perceived by rocks, plants or animals. And as God does not perform futile actions, God

expressed His wisdom for intelligent beings to observe and appreciate. Earth exists for man to discover God’s wisdom.

## Day & Night

In addition to the wisdom found in nature (creation), far greater wisdom is derived from God’s communications, His Torah. On Psalms 19:8, Ibn Ezra quoted Saadia Gaon: “The sun said Torah is perfect.” This means the natural world is not as perfect as Torah; nature (sun) “admits” to its inferiority to Torah. This is because Torah is God’s articulations, which are perfect. In contrast, man’s deductions and derivations from nature—“science”—are man’s flawed formulations. According to Saadia Gaon, King David said Torah is greater than creation.

Genesis teaches that God renames of 5 phenomena. On day 1, God called light “day,” and darkness He called “night.” On day 2 He called the firmament “heavens” and on day 3 He called the dry Earth “land,” and the collection of waters He called “seas.” However, God does not rename mountains, the sun, moon, stars, animals, vegetation or any other creation. Interestingly, these five names relate again to heaven (day, night, heavens) and Earth (land and seas), His first creations: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and Earth” (Gen. 1:1). Furthermore, these 5 are prioritized, addressed first before all other creations. Also, what is the concept of “renaming” one thing and not another: is the renamed thing thereby highlighted as more significant, and if so, in what manner?

“And it was evening and it was morning, day X,” is repeated 6 times. Why this emphasis of night transitioning into day? Primarily, what is the purpose of day and night? What in man’s path towards perfection demands this regulated transition between light and darkness? Why must night exist? These phenomena of light and darkness and day and night are highlighted by the Shema’s blessings:

*Blessed are you God, King of the world, forming light and creating darkness...*

*Blessed are you God, King of the world, with His word He sunsets the evenings...with understanding He changes times, and exchanges the moments...creating day and night, You expire day and bring night, and divide between day and night...*

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**The core idea: With “day,” “night,” “heavens,” “land” and “seas” which God renamed, His purpose in renaming them is to focus man on the plan of creation, and our purpose in life.**

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Constraining our ambitions (through darkness) and our geographical dwellings to land—not water or heaven—constrains our involvement in a purely physical life—restricting our time and space—and steering us towards the higher pursuit of Torah and perfection, matters of the soul. The physical serves only to enable the perfection of our souls. “Day and night” differ from “light and dark”, in that day and night are “human measurements of times of activity and passivity,” not mere animalistic sensations of light and darkness.

On Genesis 1:8 Ibn Ezra says, “To five things God gave names because man did not yet exist.” That’s significant: man did not yet exist to change their names...so God renamed them. Ibn Ezra means that these new names refer only to man. Whereas animals detect light and darkness, man alone relates to “day” and “night”: distinct periods of activity, and passivity. God renames light and dark as “day and night” to assign “day” as a time for accomplishment, and “night” as a time for withdrawal. The goal is to prevent man’s life spent solely on physical pursuits. Not only due to lack of light, but night also affects us psychologically, when we become more calm and can recoil from accomplishing. Maimonides says that whomever desires to attain the crown of Torah should not let his nights go without Torah study. This is because with fewer distractions at night, we have greater focus on knowledge and gain so much more

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## Book Reviews

Rabbi Reuven Mann — *Rabbi of Young Israel of Phoenix*

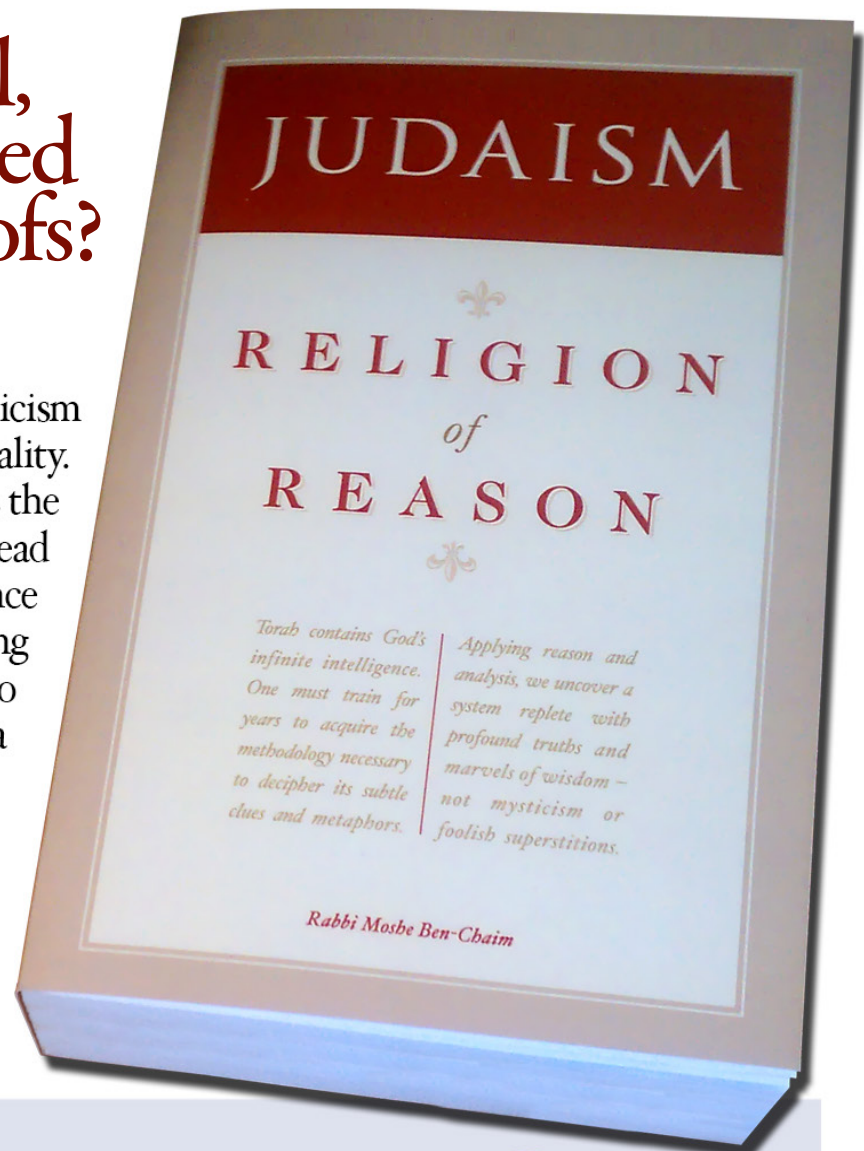
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wisdom during these hours. Thus, God organized creation to restrict man from overindulging worldly pursuits and travel, thereby directing him towards greater wisdom. The core message I wish to share is worth repeating: With “day,” “night,” “heavens,” “land” and “seas” which God renamed, His purpose in renaming them is to focus man on the plan of creation, and our purpose in life. Constraining our ambitions (through darkness: time) and our geographical habitation to land, intends to constrain our involvement in a purely physical life—time and space—and steer us towards the higher pursuit of Torah and perfection, matters of the soul. To emphasize this distinction, when God finally created the sun and moon, God again repeats the distinction: “to dominate by day and by night, and to separate light from darkness” (Gen. 1:18). Notice that “dominate” is relegated to “day/night,” not to light and darkness. Again, God emphasized that man must be constrained in terms of “day and night,” not light/darkness.

## Eden & Human Nature

Once we have Earth, man and all creations, what need is there for the Garden of Eden? This question is compounded by the discussion of a river which exited the Garden of Eden and then separated into four streams, with great detail of their names and where they traversed. We never again hear about these rivers in the rest of Bible (Torah). Therefore they must be germane to Adam who was placed in the Garden of Eden. In a separate essay “Have We found Eden?” I suggest the meaning of these rivers and their names. But briefly, these rivers allude to the human mind, for it is only with this knowledge that we can truly understand our psyches, manage our personalities, fulfill our purpose, avoid fantasy and attain happiness. What is a marvelous parallel, we see that King Solomon too commenced his book about attaining happiness (Kohes) with the discussion of “rivers.” Man’s energies flow like rivers. King Solomon also refers to the sun shining and then setting, i.e., as Rabbi Israel Chait explained, paralleling man’s search for happiness, chasing one fantasy after the next:

*King Solomon continues his illustration of man’s psyche, now engaging metaphor. The metaphor of the sun describes man’s search for lusts. Man obtains the object of his desires, “the sun rises.” But then the experience passes, “the sun sets.” Man then chases the desire again, “and hastens to its place where it rises again.”*

## Adam, Eve, the Snake, Sword and Cherubs

God then teaches us about our subservient role to Him, expressed in his command that Adam and Eve abstain from that one tree’s fruits. We are taught that initially, Adam and Eve did not possess a conscience, explaining why nudity was not a concern. God did not wish man to be distracted by morality: thoughts only possible with a conscience. He wished that man be solely involved in higher knowledge, of truths and rejecting falsehoods (not morality: good vs. evil). God’s desire that man pursue scientific and philosophical knowledge is expressed in God bringing the animals to Adam for him to study and classify: naming the animals. It was only due to man’s inability to control his desires that

the conscience was created and placed in man’s mind, generating feelings of guilt, to avert man’s self-destruction through sin. After this we see nudity became a concern which is an expression of morality and guilt. God’s concession to man of granting him a conscience intends to help man continue life; guilt helps one refrain from what he deems as evil. And with the punishment of mortality for man’s violation and man’s immediate desire for the Tree of Life, we see the dominant role that the fantasy of immortality plays. This fantasy again is addressed by King Solomon in his great work Kohes. As Rabbi Chait explained, all human fantasy is appealing only due to man feeling immortal, that his fantasies could be endless.

The story of the snake is also a metaphor. Maimonides states that the snake never spoke to Adam:

*It is especially of importance to notice that the serpent did not approach or address Adam, but all his attempts were directed against Eve (Guide, book iii, chap. xxx).*

This indicates that the snake was not a physical creature. For if it was, it could address Adam too. The snake is in fact,

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)



Eve's instincts, explaining why her "snake" cannot appeal/talk to Adam; our instincts entice only ourselves.

Sforno follows this metaphor explaining man's "crushing of the snake's head" to mean that man conquers his instincts at the "head" of the battle. But if man allows his instincts to go unopposed, they eventually swell and overcome man drawing him to sin, the meaning of the snake "biting man's heel" — i.e., at the "heel" of the battle, the instincts overcome man.

The spinning flaming sword is an allusion to the threat of mortality. The childlike cherubs give man a sense of immortality. This means that man senses both immortality and mortality, thereby creating a balance to keep man equidistant from both damaging poles: death threatens man's immortality fantasy, and with a sense of immortality—cherubs—man will not feel morbid that he's dying tomorrow. This balance between immortality and certain death enables some tranquility, and the ability to live normally.

### Cain and Able

Now we learn of religion and competition. Cain was jealous that God favored his brother's sacrifice. Thereby, we learn that man seeks validation for his religiosity, and that he is intolerant towards those whom God favors; Cain murdered Abel...the seeds of anti-Semitism. From God's punishment of Cain, we derive that no prohibition against murder was needed: morality and the evil of murder can be derived from God's creation of a species. As God made many men, His will is disregarded when we treat others worse than ourselves. A species means God desires multiple beings to exist. Therefore we cannot mistreat others. Although not commanded in sacrifice, Cain and Abel recognized man is subservient to God and that it is proper to embody this in sacrifice: the giving of our efforts to God, Who gave us the fruits of our efforts. God responding to their sacrifices teaches that it is necessary for man's dignity that God validates man's proper actions. Similarly we read "Fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar. And all the people saw,

and shouted, and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:24). Here too, God endorsed man's upright acts.

Additionally God's response to Cain that he can overcome his sinful nature rides on the coattails of Adam's sin, teaching that sin is not something coerced or inevitable.

As we progress in our Torah studies, we must be sensitive that all stories and laws target vital lessons. We must not dismiss a story or a single detail. Maimonides taught that in some Torah accounts, each item teaches something new, while in other cases, many particulars may be providing context, without new lessons for each word or phrase. We must discern when to apply each rule, but recognize that all that is written in Torah is for a great purpose. ■



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Eve is silent regarding Hevel's name selection. Hevel means "nothing." Ramban comments:

*She named one son in the name of "acquisition" (Kayin) and the second she named "nothing" (Hevel) because man's acquisitions are equal to nothing. And she did not want to clarify this. Therefore, the reason behind Hevel's name is not written.*

The matter is that between the names of both children, Eve conveyed the futility of man's acquisitions in the physical world. Eve had a problem with her attachment to the physical world. Her eating from the tree of wisdom reveals Eve's over-attachment to the physical. A certain amount of attachment is proper according to reason. But an extreme attachment which causes sin, is wrong. As Eve could have eaten from any other tree, eating from this one revealed her over-attachment. The forbidden quality drove Eve to desire the tree of wisdom.

Therefore, Eve needed a constant reminder of this flaw to help her restrict her over-attachment. [Acquisition and futility of that acquisition is what Kayin and Hevel meant: "Kayin" means acquisition and "Hevel" means futility.]

This question arose [in class]: "If all Torah law were suspended for one day, what would you do?" Practically everyone said they would eat something forbidden; food was the greatest drive. Although they could have those foods within Torah guidelines, they displayed their intolerance of restrictions. It is not the object of the restriction, since the person who wanted to eat at a non-kosher burger restaurant could make burgers even better than those. The emotion was to be relieved of the restriction of that restaurant. So only eating there would be a release of the restriction. If it was the act per se [eating a delicious burger], if all laws were suspended, there would be no difference to what you could do now. Today, people name children after

relatives or great people. But in Torah's times, child naming, like the tribes, was based on how the mother viewed the situation and how she related to the situation through God. The lesson is to create a certain atmosphere in our homes. Some people go to Israel to learn as the atmosphere helps them. The matriarchs naming their children in this manner teaches us to create a certain home atmosphere which will better raise the children. Most people focus on the child's needs, forgetting about their own needs. Eve could not have told her children, "I do all this for you and this is how you act towards me?" This is because she did not do it for them but for herself. That atmosphere helps the child. Eve set up an atmosphere that she felt important and that she needed for herself. But if one only acts for the child, the child senses it's not vital for you. We see that Kayin was attached to the physical because he could not give the best of his crops to God, but Hevel did give his best. Kayin sensed Eve's unconscious and her attachment to the physical, and he adopted her emotion, although expressed differently. While Hevel sensed the atmosphere of the ideas and a total relationship to God, and his sacrifice was accepted. Although not a perfect system because we are humans with weaknesses, however, as best we can, that which we need for ourselves we should set up as a protective shield in our own homes. That is the best we can do for our children, besides the active part of educating and raising them. It cannot be that Eve named her children for their sake. For then, she would have named them each for a different idea. By naming one child "acquisition" and the other child "nothing," only both names together make sense. Thus, she named her children for her own benefit. God accepted Hevel's sacrifice and not Kayin's, and Kayin became depressed. God said to Kayin, "Why are you so angry and depressed? If you do good, you will be uplifted. And if you don't do good, to the doorway your sin will lurk; unto you it will be a desire, and you can rule over it." Ramban comments:

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

# Eve Names Her Sons

Rabbi Morton Moskowitz

Transcribed by a student

"And man the new eve his wife and she conceived and bore Kayin. And she said, "I have acquired a man child for the Lord." Then she bore his brother Hevel (Abel).

Gen. 4:1,2:

*You have a superiority: you can be raised to a higher level than your brother because you are the eldest. And what made you angry was your embarrassment from your brother: he was successful and you were not. Therefore you are depressed. (And in his jealousy, Kayin killed Hevel.) There is no reason for you to be angry against your brother or to be depressed. Because if you do good, you will have more benefit than your brother. And if you don't do good you won't only harm him, but in the doorway of your house your sin will lurk and it will cause you to stumble in all your ways.*

Ramban means there are two reasons for depression. One is rational, a true calamity occurred. But sometimes depression is a result of an incorrect emotion, a fantasy, like in this case, namely jealousy. God tells Kayin:

*This depression indicates something wrong with how are you view life. You can either correct it and in your particular case you'll be in a better situation and you'll have the rights of the firstborn. Learn to deal with your jealousy and you'll do well. Or if you do not, that emotion will constantly lurk in you and cause you to do greater damage and then you will really be in trouble.*

Ramban says that is why later on Kayin killed Hevel. Since Kayin did not deal with his jealousy, his emotion swelled and he killed his brother. Depression is difficult to escape. If one is trained to think and his depression is generated from problems with the physical world, one can work out a plan. For example, Abraham faced a problem: remain in a famine-stricken land, or travel to a land of evil people. The famine meant certain death, whereas traveling to Egypt could be strategized to escape harm. But if depression is generated from your emotions, you must deal with them. [In external matters like Abraham, a best case strategy must be thought into and

executed. In internal matters, one must examine himself and bring his emotions in line with reality. Both cases have solutions to eliminate depression.] If the depression cripples you, you must seek help from others.

The verse about Kayin cites anger and depression: 2 sides of one coin. First, Kayin was depressed; that's when his energies were turned inward. And since he was in so much pain, that evoked anger against his brother, even though Kayin himself was the cause of his predicament. To deny that he was the cause, Kayin turned against his brother. Anger and depression are two sides of the same coin, as we said. There are two types of anger: "Those who love God hate evil" (Psalms 97:10). Getting angry at an evil person is in line with reality. But then there is a hatred which is the result of your conflicts and your ego, which is a wrong hatred. Kayin's ego was hurt and he became depressed. To escape his depression and thinking about his faults and problem, he expressed anger and killed Hevel. Kayin felt, "All my problems are due to Hevel and by killing him, my problems are solved." It is difficult to deal with one's emotions while in the grips of the emotion. But King David was able to deal with his emotions even while under the influence. The prophet Nathan told king David the following:

*And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said, "There were two men in the same city, one rich and one poor. The rich man had very large flocks and herds, but the poor man had only one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He tended it and it grew up together with him and his children: it used to share his morsel of bread, drink from his cup, and nestle in his bosom; it was like a daughter to him. One day, a traveler came to the rich man, but he was loath to take anything from his own flocks or herds to prepare a meal for the guest who had come to him; so he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had*

*come to him." David flew into a rage against the man, and said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He shall pay for the lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and showed no pity." And Nathan said to David, "That man is you!" (Sam. II, 12:1-7)*

King David admitted his sin. I think we can reach such a level or close to it, but it takes development. But when first starting out, one can't fight the emotion while in its grips. Kayin too was able to overcome his emotions like King David, otherwise God would not have spoken to him.

**QUESTION:** Let's say while in the grips of an emotion you harm someone. Are you responsible?

**RABBI MOSKOWITZ:** The answer is that you see Kayin was held responsible. We are not responsible for our personalities or if we get depressed. But Kayin should have dealt with his depression and anger and controlled himself. Furthermore, God helped him with his depression and explained matters to him. Even after he murdered his brother Hevel, God helped Kayin and made him an everlasting wanderer to have time to deal with his emotions and repent.

**QUESTION:** What lesson is learned from Hevel who was righteous, and yet did not get to live out his life?

**RABBI MOSKOWITZ:** We are responsible to protect ourselves, including protecting ourselves from those jealous of us. Wealthy people can choose to flaunt their wealth. But they then need to protect themselves from jealous people. Whether Hevel could have protected himself from Kayin, I do not know. The best I can say is one must protect himself against other people's emotions that can harm oneself. One must be careful not to become evil, and once wise, one must protect oneself from evil people. You must know your own emotions and once you understand how they work, you must protect yourself from others. ■





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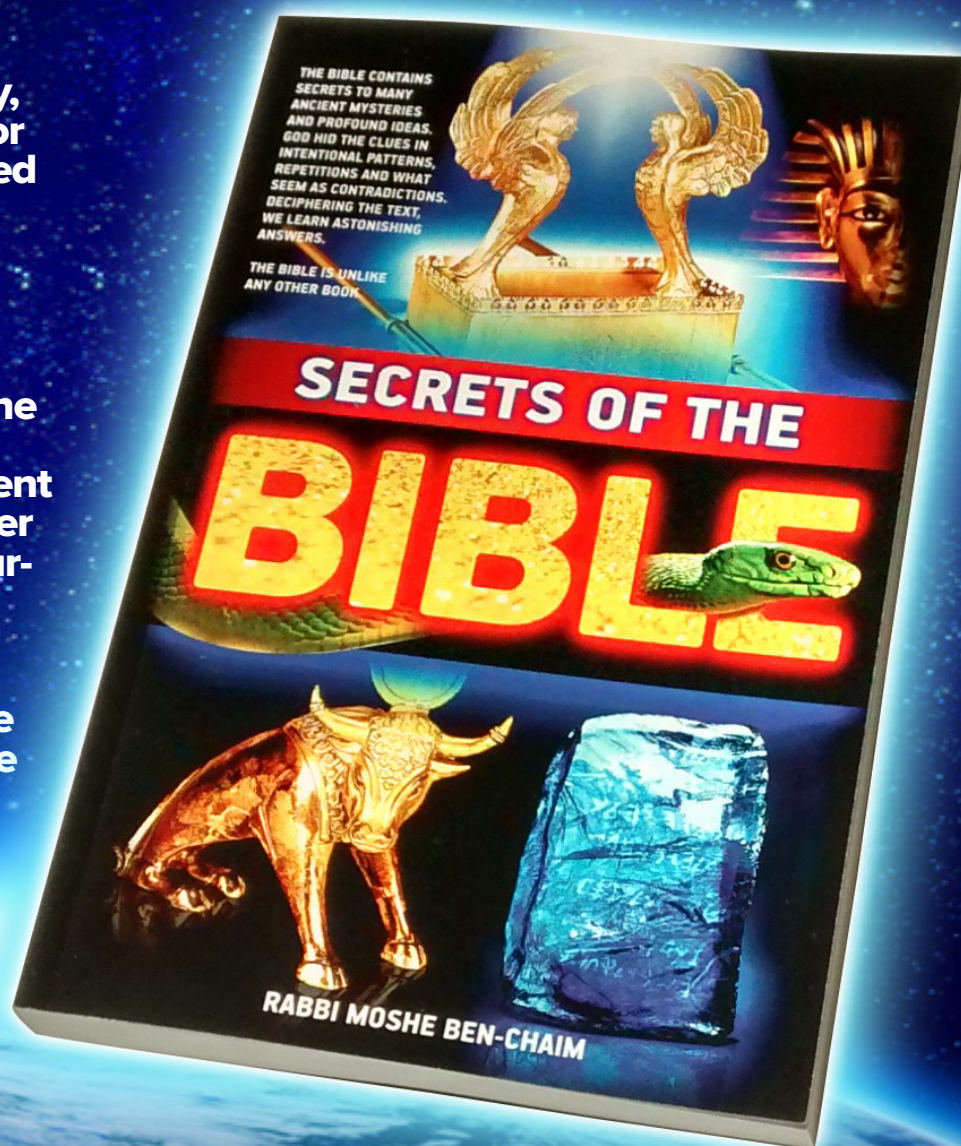
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# BIBLE'S CORE LESSON



## RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

**T**o many people, “Bible” and “religion” connote a distasteful lifestyle. Religion is associated with restriction, pain, and the denial of reason and simple happiness. For millennia, religion also included threats, coercion and scares of eternal damnation. These notions were not limited to one or two religions, but seeped into all cultures. Religion became associated with punishment, pleasing God and not yourself, evolving into the belief in powers and mysticism, asceticism, and forfeiture of pleasure and happiness. However, these misconstrued beliefs are not born from an intelligent and accurate understanding of the original Hebrew Bible. Rather, they stem from fears, poor upbringing, corrupt educators, Bible distortion and ignorance. What then is Bible’s true lesson? Reviewing Bible’s main categories, we find detailed accounts of men and women, their travails and successes, their wisdom and moral character, their strategic interpersonal relationships, God’s providence in their lives, laws and miracles. But we do not find validated mystical beliefs or practices, no validation for superstitions, no flawless saints, no human deification or worship, no fearmongering, and no commands that are bereft of reason. In fact, Bible refutes such beliefs. In other words, God’s Bible—the only system God ever gave mankind—teaches His preferred human traits that we should embody in our every day lives, true ideas versus false ones, and validation of God’s existence and intervention when man follows Him. God purposefully included model individuals as part of his Bible, as a lesson of true human capacity to attain perfection. What is man? He is a creature riddled with fears, with the desire for security, the fear of death and the desire for immortality, strong lusts, aspirations for happiness, great wealth, peer approval, fame, egocentricity, and a need for God’s help. Bible addresses all of man.

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)



Abraham began life as an idolater, but used wisdom to discover a single creator of the universe, and arrived at a perfected system of morality. He, Moses and all prophets were fully convinced in, and astonished by God's existence: a single, powerful cause of all that is. Abraham and Moses embodied the concern for all humanity and freely taught them so they might arrive at what is true and enjoy God's immense wisdom as Abraham did. The lifestyle these prophets taught mankind was reasonable and pleasing.

Real life events of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah also teach proper psychology and philosophy. By their example, God taught how we all should live and enjoy peace and happiness. Even experiencing untoward events, the patriarchs and matriarchs navigated difficulties, and employed wisdom which, both independent and dependent from God's involvement, secured the best life. We also find accounts of corrupt people and cultures, meeting with God's punishments like the Flood and Sodom, which He meted out to maintain a planet where good people could thrive, free of destructive influences. To help mankind further, God selected Abraham and his descendants from Isaac alone (Gen. 17:20,21,) to teach the world (Gen. 8:19) as all mankind are equal, and are people are equally perfected through a single system. God selected Abraham and the Jews, as the rest of the world was steeped in worshipping lifeless stone, metal and wood gods, while Abraham and his descendants followed and taught reality: monotheism. The Jews' philosophy—Bible—was endorsed through God's continuous miraculous intervention to protect them. While no other culture or religion ever received any response from their idols, let alone miracles. Naturally, God's favoritism of the Jews through miracles and granting them His Bible in the only publicly-witnessed divine communication, evoked anti-Semitism throughout the ages. The world's sibling rivalry will eventually turn into admiration and voluntary conversion in the messianic era. God's laws teach us truths, and again teach proper psychology and philosophy and our best relations with others. God desires the good for all people He creates. But morality is only the necessary backdrop to form well functioning societies that focus on God's wisdom. For it is for the study of God's wisdom that man was created, as King Solomon teaches: "Nothing compares to her" (Proverbs 8:11). God designed humans specifically to find the greatest enjoyment in the pursuit of wisdom.

Bible spans the gamut of the human personality and our numerous emotions. We are asked to be charitable to perfect our greed, and to be patient and sensitive towards those less fortunate than ourselves. We quell our insecurities by relying on God, and not fabricating false hopes in inanimate idols and superstitions. We ensure family harmony by respecting parents. We fortify a healthy society with honest business dealings. Again, these are merely the backdrop for our primary pursuit, which is studying Bible's underlying wisdom. What is Bible's message? Bible is the perfect guidebook for human nature that will lead us to the happiest lives, which also earn us God's help. Bible is something we ultimately embrace if we patiently study it under wise teachers and slowly grasp how it is perfectly designed to lead us to happiness.

We must be realistic, and humble enough to admit that our existence is only due to God's will. This must be a sobering, but equally enjoyable recognition. God wants us to exist, in the best manner. But we are creations, just as a building is the creation of an architect and never existed before his plans. The value of our existence is proportionate to our value of God. And God performed the greatest kindness by formulating his Bible, and giving it to mankind. As the wisest men and women found the greatest life following Bible, we should be interested in learning what led them to this conclusion.

Bible's religion differs from all others: it can be summed up as God's perfect system designed around our human natures, which will provide the most fulfilling life. Bible rejects egocentricity, coercion and mysticism, and instead, teaches equality, free will and reason. ■



# SABBATH NEW MOON

commemorate the completion of Creation, but the completion of the circuit of the Moon. How is the Moon's circuit different than Creation? It too was designed by God!

There is a distinction. Creation, celebrated by the Sabbath, addresses God's creation of the universe from nothingness. Sabbath addresses the "material" of creation. The New Moon embodies a different phenomenon: natural laws.

God created two things; material and natural law. On the first Sabbath, although all matter was complete, the laws governing their behavior could not be seen in their completion. For example, the Moon's orbit of the Earth is about 29 days. By definition, on the first Sabbath, the completion of the Moon's cycle had a few more weeks to go. In truth, all of Creation could not be witnessed on the first Sabbath, as many of God's laws would not display their complete cycles of behavior for months, and for the planets and stars, even years.

What happens on the Sabbath/New Moon combination? On this day, both systems coincide, displaying a completion of both; God's physical creation of substances (Sabbath) and the fulfillment or completion of the universe's laws (New Moon). On this special day, it is appropriate to offer this unique praise to God, "You formed Your world from long ago": formation of the world corresponds to the Sabbath, but "long ago" corresponds to a system, which, although enacted at a prior time, only fulfills its mission much later. "Long ago" is a reference to time and laws—not substance. Physical creation can be beheld in a glance, but a system of operation unfolds its design only after a span of time.

Both aspects of Creation are witnessed on this special Sabbath/New Moon: Sabbath recalls physical creation, and the new Moon testifies to God's laws operating in their completion.

## Postscript

While it is true that sunrise or sunset can teach this idea observed in the New Moon, perhaps its frequency and familiarity diminishes its significance in man's eyes. Therefore, the New Moon was selected by the Rabbis as the more impressive phenomenon on which to establish praise to God.

I believe this second aspect of Creation, i.e., its laws, are alluded to in Genesis 2:4. ■

[1] Ethics 5:6

**T**his Sabbath is also the New Moon. On this day, our regular Additional (Musaf) service is altered. Instead of the regular prayer, we recite "Atah yatzarta olamcha m'kedem; You formed Your world from long ago." We must ask: Why was this prayer changed on account of the Sabbath/New Moon coincidence?

Looking at the altered text, we notice the altered concepts: 1) God's creation, and 2) from long ago. The first step in approaching this question is to define the two days of Sabbath and the New Moon, independent of each other. We will then be better equipped to understand what concept their combination highlights. The Sabbath has the unique distinction of God's creation of the universe from nothingness, "creation ex nihilo." All matter was brought into existence and completed, and God refrained from any additional creation from the seventh day and forward. The Rabbis teach<sup>[1]</sup> that the miracles throughout time were "programmed" into Creation. God did not enact new changes "in time," primarily because He is above time, and also because His omniscience allows for His earlier plans. Maimonides teaches that time itself too is a creation. If this is so, that Creation was complete, why then do we recite "You formed Your world from long ago" only on the Sabbath/New Moon coincidence? We should recite it every Sabbath!

What is the New Moon? The New Moon is different from the Sabbath. On it, we do not

**Rabbi Moshe  
Ben-Chaim**





# Noah & the RAVEN

Rabbi Moshe Ben-Chaim

I would like to demonstrate tTorah's brilliance in the story of Noah and the Raven. For one to gain full appreciation of Torah, it is essential to appreciate the depth and design of the Torah's words. As King Solomon wrote in Proverbs, 2:6, "For God gives wisdom, from His mouth (comes) knowledge and understanding." The first part of this passage teaches that God is the source of wisdom, and the latter, "from His mouth," teaches that articulated words are vehicles through which this knowledge is conveyed. Therefore we must be careful to sense the apparent inconsistencies and nuances which are purposefully built in to Torah, to direct us in deriving new concepts. This appreciation will generate in us great awe and respect for the Author's intelligence. Through an understanding of the cryptic and subtle Torah style, we learn new insights, and develop learning proficiency, which later assists our new searches for ideas. There is an interesting series of passages in the story of Noah. Upon the cessation of the rain, Torah states (Genesis, 8:6-8):

(6) Noah opened up the window of the Ark which he made.

(7) And he sent the raven, and it went out to and fro, until the waters dried from upon the Earth.

(8) And he sent the dove from himself to see if the waters had ended from the face of the Earth.

When did God instruct Noah to make a "chalon", a window? Earlier (Gen. 6:16), God instructed Noah to make a "tzohar." Even if one follows the opinion that tzohar means window, we still need to ask why Torah changed the word from "tzohar" to "chalon." We also notice that the passage states "the window which Noah made." Who else could have made it? This seems superfluous. When we see something apparently repetitive, we know there must be a lesson. What was the purpose of sending the raven? Why is it not disclosed, as is done regarding the purpose of the dove in passage 8?

I believe a few proper questions will lead one to the answer.

What is this window's purpose? For when was the window to be used? Prior to the flood, or subsequent? What are the

differences between a raven and a dove? A window can be used to look outside. We can determine that Noah knew what was on the outside as the flood waters began, as he was told by God that all life would be destroyed (Gen. 6:17). Perhaps then, the window would be used subsequent to the flood. But for what? Sending out birds alone?

From the passages above, we can determine Noah's concealed concern. Torah goes out of the way to tell us that it was Noah who made the window. This tells us what? Again, he made the entire ark, which includes this window. "Noah made" indicates without God's instruction. Torah is pointing out that Noah desired a window for some reason. If he knows what is occurring prior to the flood, and also as the flood waters engulfed the Earth, I suggest that he was concerned with the period subsequent to the flood. Meaning, Noah worried about what he would find after the flood was over.

In my opinion, Noah did not want to be faced with seeing the corpses of his society, once the ark landed. This is why, according to a Rabbi, Noah planted wine grapes upon his exit from the ark. He was experiencing depression from solitude as the only members left on Earth, and used drunkenness to escape the depression. This very same worry is what prompted him to create a window, on his own accord. But prior to seeing what was out there, he sent the raven. Again, the Torah is concealing something, as it did not tell us why he sent the raven, but it did tell us why he sent the dove.

What is the difference between the two birds? The raven is flesh eating. I believe that Noah was not yet interested in seeing if the land dried up, as he didn't send the dove, for whose purpose this served. But he first sent a flesh eating bird, with a Torah-concealed purpose. I believe that purpose was to discern whether there were bodies near the ark, something Noah did not want to face. If the raven did not return, Noah would then know the raven found food—corpses—and he would be prepared to face the tragic site outside of the ark.

By prompting us to ask new questions regarding a word change or repetition, or concealing an explanation, the Torah teaches us new insights. The Torah is also discrete and thus conceals more distasteful information. ■



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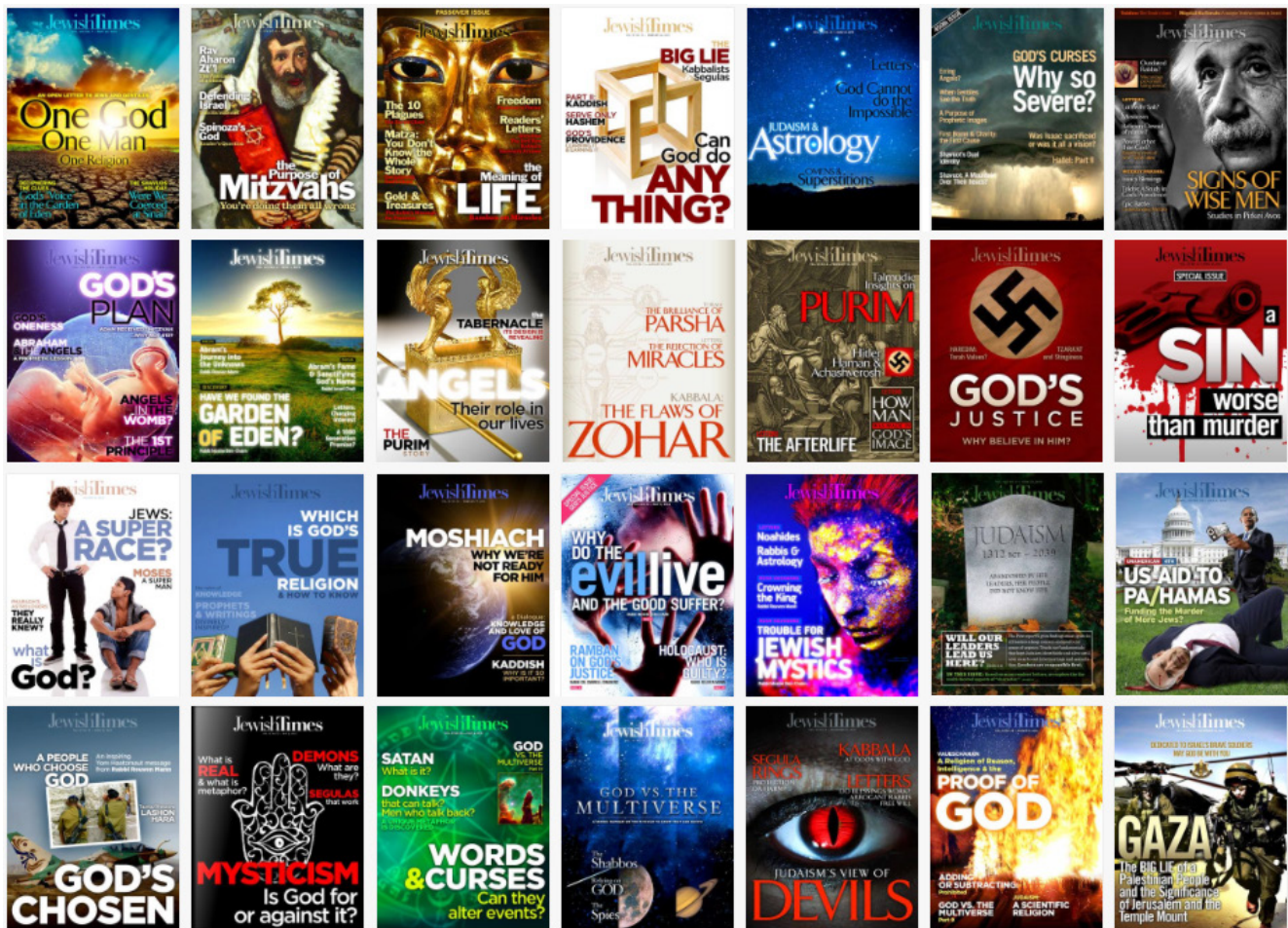
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