

The Cubit

Volume 3, Issue 12

July 2001 / Tammuz 5761

These are the Generations of Noah

It hath been told thee, O man, what is good,
and what the LORD doth require of thee:
only to do justly, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God.
Micah 6:8

From The Editor

B"H

Much discussion has gone on in the past about whether or not the Jews has an obligation to teach the gentile nations – I hope that the essay, at the end of this issue, by Rabbi Boteach may go some way to raising the debate.

In addition to this, I have include a few general prayers that may be of interest to some of you – remember if you have access to the web you can access the Noachian Prayer site at:

www.geocities.com/noachian_prayers

Liz ❖

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A DEEP SLUMBER

A story for Shabbos from Ascent of Safed

www.ascent.org.il

"Yaakov awoke from his sleep" (Gen. 28:16) Do not read mishnato, from his sleep, but mimishnato, from his meditation on the Torah (Midrash).

The well known Torah scholar, Rabbi Dovid of Nikolayev, once encountered an old friend from his youth, who demanded to know what had decided him to be a follower of the Baal Shem Tov. Reb Dovid related the following:

I heard of the Baal Shem Tov and was interested to investigate what he had to offer. I went to visit him, but I did not find what I was looking for. The Chasidim there influenced me to stay a little longer. They told me that if I would remain until Shabbos, and make the effort on Friday afternoon to be in his presence when he recited Song of Songs, I would find what I sought. I changed my travel plans, and the Chasidim helped me to arrange what they had suggested. Well! I certainly heard something that was sublime and a delight to the ears. I even sensed that his words set up a clamor in all the supernal worlds! But still, he did not capture me.

The Chasidim then urged me to wait until the eve of the day on which the rebbe observed yahrzeit after one of his parents.

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That is when he would pace around his room all night long, and recite the entire Mishna by heart. This would undoubtedly captivate me. I stayed on, and that night hid in his room. What I saw was truly extraordinary. But still, I felt this wasn't it.

Then the Chasidim insisted that I should wait until the following night, when after a full-day fast, he would invite his elder disciples for a mystic meal. At that meal, they assured me, it was impossible that he should not draw out my soul. They also forewarned me earnestly that I must make sure not to fall asleep there, because for some reason slumber often overcame those who participated. I napped during the day and utilized other methods in order to ensure that I would not fall asleep at the table.

I was assigned a place at the gathering. The Baal Shem Tov sat at the head of the table.

Surrounded by his Chasidim, he began to expound upon the kabbalistic meditations that accompany the ritual immersion in the mikveh.

"But Rebbe," one of his Chasidim called out to him; "Does not the holy Ari of Safed, of sainted memory, explain these meditations otherwise?"

The Baal Shem Tov threw his head back. His face, which had been like a fiery flame, suddenly grew pale. His eyes bulged. He looked like one not in this world. At that moment I was overcome by a deep slumber, despite all my efforts to ward it off. In my sleep I saw myself in an unknown city. People were hurrying in one direction. I asked them where they hastened so urgently, and they told me that The Baal Shem Tov was soon to deliver a discourse, and they were eager to hear it. I ran with them, until we came to an imposing edifice, inside which stood two chairs.

"For whom?" I asked. "For The Baal Shem Tov and the Ari," I was told.

I managed to stand near the chair of The Baal Shem Tov, who soon began to expound the kabbalistic meditations of the mikveh. When he had completed his discourse the Ari challenged him with a series of questions, each of which the Baal Shem Tov answered. Finally it was clear that the Ari accepted the Baal Shem Tov's position as correct for the times that he lived in. At that point I awoke, and saw that I still sat at the table with the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples. The color was returning to his face, and it was becoming fiery once more. Again he began to deliver the discourse on

the meditations of the mikveh, and again the same disciple asked him: "Rebbe! Does not the Ari explain otherwise?"

The Baal Shem Tov turned to me, and said, "David! Stand up and testify as to what you have seen!"

At that moment, the Baal Shem Tov captured my soul.

Abridged and adapted by Yrachmiel Tilles from A Treasury of Chassidic Tales (Artscroll)

Note:

The friend who heard this report, Reb Meir, went to the Baal Shem Tov, and in due course became one of his outstanding disciples. His great-grandson, Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, was such an outstanding chassid of the first three Lubavitcher Rebbes, that the Tsemech Tsedek (the third rebbe) testified, "Reb Hillel is himself half a Rebbe."

Biographical Note:

Rabbi Yisrael, the Baal Shem Tov ["master of the good Name"], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed the Chassidic movement and his own identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 1734. He passed away on Shavuot in 1760.

He wrote no books, although many claim to contain his teachings. ❖



*"For lo, the winter is past;
the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing is come."*

Song of Songs 2:11

Did you ever wish you could change someone's negative feelings toward you into positive ones? Consider the following story:

In the days of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, it occurred that a butcher was angry at the Rabbi of his city for rendering a decision that the meat of a cow he wanted to sell was not kosher. In his anger, he devised a scheme to murder the Rabbi. On a pretext, he had the Rabbi travel with him on a lonely road. Along the way, the butcher took out his sharp knife and wanted to kill the Rabbi.

At first the Rabbi pleaded with the butcher to have compassion on him. But this was to no avail. When the Rabbi saw that nothing he could say would make a difference, he started to mentally focus on all of the positive qualities and attributes of the butcher. Suddenly there was an amazing transformation. The butcher began to cry, kissed the Rabbi, and begged his forgiveness.

The lesson: Love others and they can't help but to love you!

(see Rabbi Chaim Zaitchik - Maayanai Hachaim, vol.3, p.191; Rabbi Pliskin's "Consulting the Wise")

Taken from Daily Lift ❖

Spiritual Modality for Behaviour Modification

Taken from <http://www.chabadonline.com/>

The Two Souls

Neurological experimentation has confirmed the presence of the soul—also known as the mind. It is this incredible substructure that gives us purpose, meaning, transcendence and spiritual connection. It is this human software wherein the driving forces of life originate and from whence come the impulses for our thought, speech, and action.

In the Chassidic classic, Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi cites Kabbalistic sources expressing the Jewish tradition that every one of us is operated by two general souls. The first is the "animal soul" or life force that drives the base aspect of the person, including all bodily functions and desires ranging from hedonism, arrogance, ego, anger, laziness, depression to natural kindness and goodness. The second is the G_dly and pure soul from which all transcendent, selfless, and spiritually motivated manifestations originate.

The soul is further subdivided into five segments, each serving as the power source for the various aspects and functions of the person:

Nefesh is the basic life force that vivifies physical existence. It is related to the blood.

Ruach is the operating system of our emotions.

Neshamah drives our intellect.

Chayyah is the foundation of our wills and desires.

Yechidah is the connection to the essence of all life and being: G_d.

Generally the two souls function through the mechanism of thought, speech, and action. Some human actions seem self regulating, such as the heartbeat, breathing, and hearing, while others are specifically directed and caused, such as speaking and walking. The chain of command to a directed action originates in the person's desire, which activates the will, which manifests in the mind, which stimulates the emotion, which gives birth to the thought, which then can become words or deeds.

It is the nature of man, states Rabbi Schneur Zalman, for the mind to dominate the emotions and all the resulting behaviour. Consequently, when we want to modify our

behaviour (thought, speech, and action) we can do so either by addressing the act itself or by focusing on the primary origin of the act. For example when you feel the onset of rage and anger, you can clench your teeth or bury your head in a pillow to stifle the potential outburst; or you can make contact with the inner software where the anger was conceived and given life and switch it off at its root.

The benefits in the latter approach are obvious and manifold as you thus avoid contaminating the various aforementioned links by anger. Physiologically, as well, this way your inner personality remains free of the ravages of anger. In the former method, while the anger does not express itself externally, it has erupted internally.

The Torah Method

How do we identify the internal switches that operate the source of all actions, and do we have the mechanism to manipulate and control them?

It can be argued that while the mind certainly can dominate the person, nurture and habit have the power to effectively neutralise the mind's independence. Proof for this is the ease with which we make good, sound resolutions and the difficulty in keeping them. Behaviour patterns, whether intrinsic or learned, can be otherwise described as addictions. While some addictions are chemically or psychologically motivated, others

are a result of regularity and repetition.

One of the reasons postulated why successful dieting can be a greater challenge than rehabilitation from drug or alcohol addiction is the fact that you can completely eliminate drugs and alcohol from your regimen, but you cannot stop eating. Instead, you must modify and transform your attitude towards eating. It requires a lifestyle change. Many credible studies and much experience show that it would be futile to heal addiction to drugs or alcohol by modifying their consumption. In life most of the traits or actions that we want or need to change cannot be completely eliminated. For instance, if you want to stop gossiping, you must modify your communication pattern. You do not stop speaking entirely.

Hence we need to address the intended behaviour that we want to change by knowing and activating the source of that particular behaviour. Let us consider the two human software components, namely the animal soul and the



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divine soul, and analyse how they affect extremely different results in the hardware or body.

The way we modify our bodies is analogous to how we can modify our souls. If we wish to develop certain muscles, we repeat a specific exercise frequently. If we wish to reduce part of our anatomy, we repeat different specific exercises regularly. So, too, our internal operating systems (souls) respond to different stimuli to achieve different results.

Each of our two souls seeks to control the functions of the body according to its own agenda. The animal soul, seeking to express its brute animalism, becomes more emboldened and dominant by the very behaviour it activates. The divine soul likewise becomes stronger and more dominant when the behaviour it motivates is performed.

From the moment we are born, the animal soul is closer to our consciousness and sensations--eating, sleeping, enjoying, playing. The exercise that nurtures it and makes it grow derives from the natural instinctive aspects of existence. Thus when the human animal wants something, it employs all of its faculties, including intellect and emotion, to achieve the desire. (Though the mind is the domain of the divine soul, it can be overcome by a more powerful animal instinct and used for its hedonistic fulfilment. It is this level of intellect that Chassidism infers to as "immature intellect" that can be manipulated.)

The divine soul in its holy distinction also evokes behaviour that when carried out strengthens its influence on the personality. Its exercises are the spiritual acts of G_d's directives--the mitzvot, or Torah commandments. Performing mitzvot utilises the animal soul to perform its necessary function but subordinates its will to the divine soul.

When the divine soul dominates a person, his/her behaviour pattern operates in purity for good purposes. Spiritual acts habituate a person to behave in a G_dly directed manner.

Since the revelation at Mount Sinai, G_d has been commanding us to behave in a way that reverses the natural internal chain of command. (See Figure 1.) Generations before Sinai, our forefather Abraham began his process of spiritual growth the "natural" way, starting with his intellect. Maimonides states that Abraham began to wonder about the universe--contemplating about it for more than fifty years--and concluded that there must be a Creator. He then promulgated his findings and conclusions by teaching and propagating G_diness to the world. Only at the age of 99 was the Divine command of an action conveyed to him, when he was directed to circumcise.

Action (mitzvot)



Speech (emotion)



Thought (intellect)

Figure 1. The Torah system of behaviour modification reverses the "natural" hierarchy of the chain of command within the human personality.

The seemingly natural chain of command in human behaviour is reversed in the Torah-directed system of how to live. Instead of thought (intellect) leading to speech (emotion) that ignites action, the Torah way requires action (mitzvot) first, which then opens the doors for speech (emotion) and thought (intellect). This is most fundamentally demonstrated by the commitment of the Jewish people at Sinai to "do before we understand."

In the Jewish life cycle, we start with action. At the age of eight days a boy must be circumcised. Then from the time a child learns to say "Daddy" or "Mommy", s/he begins to learn the words of the Torah. Only at a more mature stage does the child decipher true understanding and feeling from these words. The meaningful continuity of the Jewish people as a unique nation is proof of the success of this method. The act of performing commandments is the critical element that touches and affects our inner being, which in turn affects behaviour.

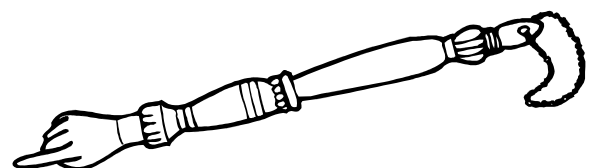
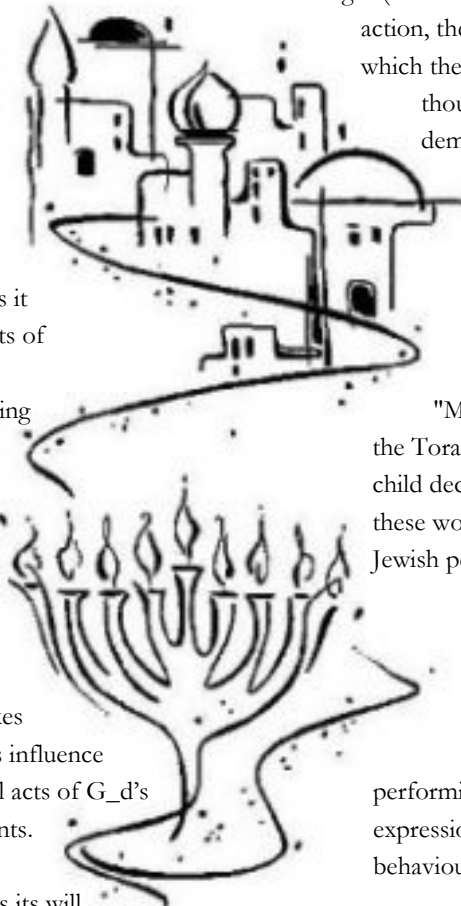
Activating the G_dly soul through performing mitzvot and opening the doors for its expression brings about positive change in human behaviour.

By Rabbi Sholom Lipskar, founder and director of The Aleph Institute. Presented at the Third Miami International Conference on Torah & Science, 15 December 1999

This article is from the recently released Volume 12 of the B'Or HaTorah: Journal of Science, Art & Modern Life in the Light of the Torah, Published by SHAMIR, <http://www.borhatorah.org/>

A project of the Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters

Produced by the Lubavitch News Service ❖





It's natural to protect ourselves from information we perceive as threatening. But it can be a big monkey wrench in seeing the elephant and recognising G_d.

by Rabbi Nechemia Coopersmith

Four blind men encounter an elephant. One grabs the leg and concludes it is a tree trunk. One holds the tail thinking it is a whip. Another touches the elephant's trunk and decides it's a hose and the fourth man pats the side concluding it's a wall.

The wise man tells them, "All of you are right."

The first time I heard this parable, I thought it was illustrating that truth is relative. Here are four different people, each one coming away with very different conclusions.

Years later I realized the story conveys exactly the opposite: truth is objective. After all, is there an elephant? Of course an elephant is there! That is the objective reality, independent of anyone's viewpoint.

Truth is complex, multi-faceted, and at times very difficult to fully grasp. But it's not relative. There is truth out there; we just need to figure out what piece of the puzzle we're holding onto.

The four blind men fell prey to a common mistake: reaching conclusions without sufficient information.

The four blind men fell prey to a common mistake: reaching conclusions without sufficient information. Based on an elephant's trunk alone, it is unlikely anyone will come to an accurate conclusion.

The four blind men should talk to each other and share their information. By putting all the pieces together, a clearer picture will begin to emerge and some initial conclusions could be made: this is not a piece of furniture, it's definitely a large four-legged animal. With more and more information the picture will eventually sharpen, revealing the identity of the elephant.

The Hebrew word for truth, *emet*, is comprised of three letters, the first, the middle and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, because truth is a composite of the whole -- the beginning, the middle and the end. In order to come to a just verdict, a judge tries to get as complete a picture as possible.

Seeing the elephant is by no means easy. It requires an openness to challenge our axioms, assumptions and beliefs. A genuinely open mind can be daunting.

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

Let's take for example the blind man who mistakenly thought he was grasping a hose, not a trunk of an elephant. We'll call him Mr. Gray. Based on his discovery, Mr. Gray goes on to

write best-selling books on the nature of "hose," becoming a famous, successful author and frequent guest on the talk-show circuit. He establishes a chair in a prestigious university dedicated to researching the nature and benefits of "hose."

One day there is a knock on his door. "Pardon me, sir. Are you Mr. Gray, the author of *The 7 Secrets of Hose?*?"

"Yes I am," he proudly answers.

"Well I have some very important information for you, Mr. Gray. I don't know exactly how to tell you this but ... you got it all wrong! You weren't holding a hose. You were holding a trunk of an elephant!!"

How does Mr. Gray react to this information? Does he say: "You mean to tell me I've been making a mistake all these years? Gosh, it's a good thing you told me! How can I ever thank you?!"

We want to protect ourselves from information we perceive as threatening, especially when we sense it may be true.

More likely Mr. Gray slams the door on the guy's face. It is a natural reaction. We want to protect

ourselves from information we perceive as threatening, especially when we sense it may be true. Mr. Gray instinctively throws up a defensive barrier attempting to shut out the truth that has come to tarnish his reputation and career.

Only computers assess data devoid of all emotion. Our volatile emotional world often clashes with our rational intellect. When faced with consequences we perceive to be potentially painful, whether it's a wounded ego or a difficult change, the heart struggles with the mind. It doesn't matter if those negative consequences have nothing to do with reality. When feeling threatened, our knee-jerk

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HOLIDAYS & FESTIVALS FOR JULY

FAST OF TAMMUZ 17

STARTS: SUN 08-JULY-01 / 17-TAMMUZ-5761

FAST OF TAMMUZ 17 - A day of fasting commemorating the breach made in the defense wall surrounding Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. This led to the capture of the city and the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar, three weeks later and the exile of the Jews to Babylonia.

FAST OF TISHA B'AV

STARTS: SUN 29-JULY-01 / 09-AV-5761

FAST OF TISHA B'AV - A day of fasting commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

reaction is to shut all systems down, reject the data and override our desire for truth.

NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

This is called cognitive dissonance. It is the major monkey wrench in seeking the truth -- and no one is immune.

The discovery that the earth is round was initially rejected, even in the 17th century when Galileo presented undeniable proof through the usage of new telescopes. Without understanding gravity, people could not comprehend why they were not falling off the earth. Accepting this bizarre notion was too unsettling, and besides, who likes to admit that they're wrong? It was much easier for people to just ignore the facts.

The Torah recognizes that everyone is prone to bias:

You shall not pervert justice, you shall not display favoritism, and you shall not take a bribe, for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise and distorts words that are just. (Deut. 16:19)

The Torah is addressing all of us. Anytime we make a decision we are in the position of being a judge, and we need to check the subtle and not so subtle bribes that cloud our thinking.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE AND G_D

When it comes to recognizing the existence of G_d, cognitive dissonance can be a tremendous obstacle. Rightly or wrongly, many of us view G_d in ways that can make Him a real turn-off. Some of the more common negative associations people may have with G_d are:

1. G_d, the Killjoy.

The existence of G_d presents an unbearably high standard of morality which snuffs out freedom and unadulterated fun.

2. G_d, the Tyrant.

With so much pain and suffering in the world, it seems that G_d sure has a lot of explaining to do. War, starvation, domestic violence, natural disasters -- what kind of G_d is this?

3. G_d, the Unknowable.

There's something out there that I can't understand! I'm supposed to relate to a dimension that is beyond me? We have free will and yet G_d knows everything? How can I live with paradox? I give up.

4. G_d, the Unfashionable.

Take a leap of faith and have everyone think I flipped



my lid? Actually pray and take this religion stuff seriously? No, thank you. Religion is outdated and not for me.

Since cognitive dissonance can be so strong when dealing with the issue of G_d's existence, it is important to be aware of its influence.

It's a struggle to attain objectivity. How do we overcome internal bias? Are we hopelessly lost within our own subjectivity?

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler writes:

... bias never entirely obscures the truth. Even after the desires of one's heart have persuaded him to accept the false way as true, he still knows in his heart of hearts that the true path is "truer" than the other one. He accepts falsehood as a substitute for the truth, not as truth itself ... Every human being thus has the faculty of determining in his own heart where the real truth lies. ("Strive for Truth: The Truth Perspective")

We never lose the objective part of ourselves. Even in the midst of an argument when our emotions flair, we know that if we really wanted to we could force ourselves to be objective and hear the other side. We could even admit we're wrong.

In spite of the fog, we can still be honest. It's not easy, but when we decide that truth is always in our best interest, we are motivated to rise above the emotions and to work hard at ensuring that our mind is out in front leading our decisions.

Let's go find that elephant.

Rabbi Nechemia Coopersmith is the Director of Research and Development for Aish HaTorah and is Managing Editor of aish.com. He lives with his wife and children in Jerusalem. ❖

Prayer Seems to Make No Sense

By Rabbi Asher Resnick

"When asked, more than 90 percent of Americans profess a belief in G_d. More than half say they pray at least once a day, and in any given week, more than 40 percent claim to have attended worship services."

-- Newsweek, November 29, 1993.

Even if we're sceptical about the actual numbers quoted, it's obvious that both G_d and prayer occupy a central place in our society. (At the very least, in terms of how people want to be perceived by others.) What are the perceptions people have of prayer, and what is the reality of prayer?

In Judaism, there are three different aspects to prayer: praise, requests and thanks. The problem is that none of these three seem to make any sense!

1. Praise

Why does G_d need all this? Does He have a weak ego?

2. Requests

If something I'm asking for is good for me, why would a kind, loving G_d need to be asked? And if it's not good for me, why should the same kind, loving G_d want to do something bad for me? What's the point, therefore, of ever asking G_d for anything?

3. Thanks

If G_d runs the world and supervises all that occurs, then why thank G_d for getting us out of the very situations that He Himself put us into?

Whether we are reading prayers from a book, or simply

pouring our hearts out, making sense of these three aspects is critical for our understanding of prayer.

Is prayer for G_d or for me?

Perhaps the biggest misconception of prayer is the belief that G_d "needs" our prayers. This is obviously ridiculous. What could an infinite G_d possibly need from a bunch of finite human beings? Clearly, prayer is not for His sake.

So what is the purpose of prayer, if not for G_d? For ourselves.

Prayer ("tefilla" in Hebrew) allows us to get in touch with ourselves and with reality. Three times a day, Jews all over the world take time out from their schedules to remind themselves that there's more to life than business deals, sports scores or this week's "must-see" TV show. Reconnecting with G_d, plugging ourselves into the Infinite - even for a few minutes each day - brings clarity to the hustle of daily life. With this in mind, we can begin to answer the above questions.

Blessings of praise: Flattery gets you nowhere.

G_d knows how great He is. Do we?

The purpose of praising G_d during prayer is to spell out in the clearest possible terms just Who it is we are speaking to. We need to know and be constantly reminded that G_d - as the prayer book says - is "great, mighty and awesome."

It's absurd to think that we can flatter G_d. Objectively speaking, it would require infinite praise to properly praise an infinite being. From G_d's perspective, anything less would be insulting!

So the only logical reason for praising G_d is that we need to. Praise helps us realize how all-encompassing G_d's reality is. G_d gives us this opportunity to praise Him and tune into reality. And despite our inability to adequately "praise" G_d, He "tolerates" it, so to speak - for our sake, not His.

Requests: Please, please me.

What separates a person from G_d? Negative character traits and bad habits - such as arrogance, insensitivity and anger, to name a few. This is where "requests" fit into the structure of Jewish prayer.

Like the ideal parent, G_d always gives us exactly what we need. Therefore, whatever occurs to us in life is actually a direct function of who we are. When we pray for something that hasn't yet been given, what we are really trying to do is change ourselves into the kind of person who will be fitting to receive what we're asking for!

The Hebrew word "to pray" - "li-heet-pallel" - is a reflexive form of the root "pallal," which means "to judge." The literal

ASK AISH

QUESTIONS TO THE RABBIS AT AISH HATORAH
<http://aish.com>

HEAVENLY SHOT
From: Mike

We really enjoy the "heavenly shot"
(<http://www.thewall.org/photos/heavenly.htm>).

My 10-year-old son Noam would like to know how the photograph was taken.

The Aish Rabbi Replies:

Glad you like the photo! It is an aerial view from a low flying plane, shot with a fish-eye lens.

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meaning of "li-heet-pallel," therefore, is "to judge oneself." So when our prayers are successfully answered, it's not because G_d changed. It's because we changed ourselves.

Blessings of thanks: Seeing G_d's hand.

A young Jewish man described to Rabbi Noah Weinberg (Dean of Aish HaTorah) how a brush with death changed his life. "I've changed my perspective recently," said the young man. "One day, I was riding my motorcycle on a mountain road, when a large truck suddenly came around the bend. I swerved to avoid it, and went over the edge. As I fell, I instinctively called out to G_d. And you know what happened? I landed in a bush without so much as a scratch. I fell off the mountain, and G_d saved me. Since then, I feel like G_d and I are buddy-buddy."

Gently stroking his beard, Rabbi Weinberg said to the young man, "I'm very glad you saw G_d's hand in saving your life. But tell me: Who do you think pushed you off the cliff in the first place?"

G_d is not a Superman who only comes to our rescue when we call out in distress. G_d is involved in our lives all the time. He actually causes the challenges in our lives in order to help us grow. He also helps us overcome those tests. Thanking G_d helps us see the process that steered us to where we are today.

The Effects of Prayer

We learn a great deal about prayer from numerous references found in the Torah. These give us a glimpse of how our ancestors actualized their relationship with G_d through prayer.

When he returned to the land of Canaan, Jacob prayed to be saved from the anger of his brother, Esau.

After being rescued from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, the Jewish People sang praises to G_d in what is known as "the Song of the Sea."

When the Jewish People were threatened with destruction after the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses appealed to G_d through the 13 attributes of Divine mercy.

Our ancestors knew that saying words out loud - literally giving physical form to their thoughts - creates spiritual realities in heaven just as a stone creates ripples in a pond. Prayer is the tool we use to create spiritual ripples in heaven.

If prayer is ripples, then sincere prayer from the depths of our soul produces tidal waves. For example, Chana's fervent prayer for a son resulted in the birth of Samuel the prophet. The Sages cite Chana's prayer as the model from which we most learn how to pray. ❖

SHABBAT & HOLIDAY READINGS FOR JULY

Days start at sundown and end at sundown.

Thus Sat 5th XXX would start at sundown on Friday not midnight Friday night / Saturday morning.

Holiday	Date	Torah	Haf Torah
Shabbat	07-July	Num. 22.2-25.9	Micah 5.6-6.8
Fast of Tammuz 17	08-July	am: Exo. 32.11-14, 34.1-10 pm: Exo. 32.11-14, 34.1-10	pm: Isaiah 55.6-56.8
Shabbat	14-July	Num. 25.10-30.1	Jeremiah 1.1-2.3
Shabbat	21-July	Num. 30.2-32.42 Num. 33.1-36.13 Other Selection: Num. 28.9-15	Hosea 14.2-10, Micah 7.18-20 or Hosea 14.2-10, Joel 2.15-27 Other Selection: Isaiah 66.1-24
Shabbat	28-July	Num. 30.2-32.42 Num. 33.1-36.13 Other Selection: Num. 28.9-15	Hosea 14.2-10, Micah 7.18-20 or Hosea 14.2-10, Joel 2.15-27 Other Selection: Isaiah 66.1-24
Fast of Tisha B'Av		am: Deut. 4.25-40 pm: Exo. 32.11-14, 34.1-10	Am: Jeremiah 8.13-9.23 pm: Isaiah 55.6-56.8

A Prayer for the Sick

Baruch HaShem

He Who blessed our forefather Noah - may He bless and care for the sick person: (name of person), son /daughter of (mother's name) , a beloved Ben Noach / Bat Noach.

May the Holy One Blessed be He be empathetic to them, and strengthen them. May He speedily send her comfort and take away her pain, among all the other sick people of Israel and the Nations, both a physical and spiritual recovery, and let us respond: Amen.

A Prayer for Peace

May it be Your will O God, that peace shall reign among all peoples. May we learn to live together and accept each other as brothers and sisters in your creation. May no rift appear between us and may we each play our parts in serving you and creating a better society: Amen

A Prayer for Families

Oh Lord, Father of all Families of the earth, may my family know only Health, Happiness and Prosperity. May we always know true bonds of Love and Friendship and may this help us to overcome any obstacles that will block our path: Amen ❖

A Response to Those who Believe that the Jews Have No Obligation to Teach the Gentile Nations About G-d

Oxford University L'Chaim Society Weekly Essay, by Rabbi Shmuel Boteach

Few men in history have been grand and bold enough to conjure up and conceive a truly global vision. Even men of great and inspired ideas have usually been constricted by geographical and parochial interests and boundaries. Even today, a great statesman is someone who conceives of a bright and courageous vision for his particular country or region. So, for example, a forward-looking French President might dream up something as novel as a European Union, or an American President a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, but invariably, large segments of the globe are excluded from that vision. Perhaps the greatest testimonial to this is how limited the tremendous achievements of the first and second world nations have had on the underdeveloped third-world countries. Another classic illustration of how leadership tends to exclude whole regions which are not deemed to be in the national interest is the tragic contemporary case of Bosnia.

Unfortunately, this has been particularly true of religious leaders whom, throughout history, have all too often tailored their messages and appeals specifically to their own particular faith communities. Indeed, the current dearth of inspired leadership is an even more agreed upon fact than the generally deteriorating state of the world. According to a recent story in Time Magazine there is only one political leader in the entire Western World who enjoys a popularity rating above fifty percent.

In this respect, I pay tribute to two of the great leaders and visionaries the world has known. Ever since our Master Moses ascended Mt Sinai to receive the tablets of the Covenant and subsequently lead the Jews in the Wilderness for forty years, the concept of leadership has been absolutely central to the higher purposes and goals of our nation. Indeed, after having been informed by the Almighty in last week's Torah reading of Parshas Pinchas that he would not merit entry Eretz Yisrael, Moses turned to his Creator with one final request: Yifkod Hashem Elokei Haruchos Ish Al Hoeida - he prayed that the Jewish people never be abandoned like a flock without a shepherd; that they never be impoverished of a charismatic and spiritual guide who would go before them always. Three thousand years of Jewish history is resplendent with towering figures, both scholarly and lay. But few have ever held so grand and comprehensive a vision, not just for the Jewish people but

for all humanity, and commanded so towering a presence, as Maimonides and the Lubavitcher Rebbe. A vast number of uncanny similarities unite these giants, but perhaps none so much as their universalist outlook of Judaism and its ultimate purpose, namely the complete envelopment of society and civilisation by G-dliness and G-dly ethics. Both Maimonides and the Rebbe were principally distinguished by their holistic and total approach to Judaism, and the new world order which it seeks to establish.

Already in our Torah, the Jewish people were instructed by the Almighty to be a Mamleches Kohanim, a kingdom of Priests, and, more importantly, an or lagoyim, a light unto the Nations. The metaphor of light is particularly striking. Four out of five of the human senses are directly applicable without the need for any outside agency. Thus, one may smell directly with the nose, touch directly with the hand, and hear directly with the ear. Not so the eyes. It is not enough to possess the faculty of vision. The eyes are utterly useless without the intervening agency of an external light-source. In short, without light the world remains not just obscure and undefined, but utterly dark and for all intents and purposes, non-existent.

The Jews do not comprise the only nations on this planet. To the contrary, they are a small minority thereof. But the Bible instructs them to serve as a powerful source of the world's light. They must assist and direct the other nations as to the way forward. As the standard-bearers of divine law and moral statutes, and witnesses to the collective divine revelation at Mt Sinai, the Jewish people must help serve as the world's moral and spiritual compass, instructing the earth's inhabitants in the Universal Code of Ethics and Morality by which they shall all achieve redemption and have the glorious Messianic era thrust upon them. The Jews are enjoined to impart and teach the Seven Noachide laws which constitute the minimal standard by which all of humanity must live and abide, thereby preparing this world as a sanctuary and home for the Almighty. No king can dwell in a soiled palace, and the Creator of the World cannot live in a world devoid of justice, kindness, and benevolence, all in turn inspired by the rule of divine law. Sadly, this global preoccupation to teach all Nations of the one true G-d and instructing them to walk in His ways, has often been neglected by G-d's chosen messenger. Centuries of persecution have led the Jews to be distrustful of non-Jewish nations. A self-imposed ghetto, veritably to live and work principally among Jews, became the most repetitive Jewish response to the age-old curse of anti-Semitism. Our people have done an unparalleled job at communicating Jewish tradition - teaching chumash, gemara, midrash, and kabbalah - to our progeny, thus ensuring the continuity of our illustrious tradition. But all too often, the passion by which

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we impart our teachings are done exclusively to our own. The nations of the world, who, like ourselves, are our charge to teach and uplift, are forgotten by the wayside.

Today it is commonplace to hear of Rabbinical figures as well as Jewish lay-leaders speak of the immorality of modern society and the decrepit state of the world. But one cannot decry civilisation's sorry state without simultaneously speaking of the Jewish abrogation of our eternal responsibility to enhance and uplift - veritably to pour light - on many of the nations of the world who wallow in darkness in societies that are not governed by the rule of law and who yearn to find their Creator and source.

In the past thousand years, the first great Jewish thinker who could be called a universalist and beckoned the Jews to transcend their limited and parochial vision and assume their places on the world stage was the Maimonides. In an historic ruling, he codified as law in Laws of Kings the Jewish obligation to teach the Gentile nations the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach. In the chapters that follow this monumental ruling, Maimonides went on to discuss at length what the Days of the Messiah would be like, making it thereby clear that the Jewish obligation to teach the Gentile nations served as a prerequisite to Moshiach finally coming.

This brave vision was echoed and reinforced almost nine centuries later by the Lubavitcher Rebbe and it is safe to say that no Jewish leader of any consequence, at any time in history, has ever more ardently or forcefully advocated the Jewish need to educate the world in monotheistic ethics. But the Rebbe took this Maimonidean idea a step further. In a Public Oration of the Last Day of Passover, 5743, the Rebbe embarked upon a new campaign, instructing his global network of thousands of emissaries to initiate a grand plan teaching all the non-Jewish nations, kol baei oilam, the Noachide code and encouraging them to live a moral and ethical life, suffused with the light of G-dliness and goodness, thereby endowing human life with higher meaning and ultimate purpose. The Rebbe threw all the resources of his global Jewish empire behind a bid to educate all peoples in the adherence of the Seven Laws. The Messianic era will be a time when, not just the Jewish people, but the entire world and all its inhabitants, reach their zenith and crescendo. The created world and all therein will be raised to its highest peak. To bring about this glorious transformation, we must prepare the world today. The fact that the Jews were chosen a the communicators of G-dly ethics and virtue is not at all an elitist idea. On the contrary, it is a humble calling which teaches the

Jews that G-d loves all of his Creation and all of his creatures. And if the Jews are to think for even one moment that their divine worship alone is satisfactory to the Creator, G-d made their entire calling a mission that would remind them always that they are not sufficient on their own and that the Almighty wishes to embrace and enjoy a close relationship with all the children of Adam.

To be sure, there were many to whom this latest of the Rebbe's campaigns seemed radical and there were those critics who pointed out that there seemed to be no traditional Jewish precedent, especially among the Jewish legalists, enjoining the individual to teach and spread the Seven Noachide Laws. Pre-empting this criticism, the Rebbe pointed out in the same public discourse that the only reason that the Shulchan Oruch, Code of Jewish Law, and other edifices of Jewish law did not expressly codify the dissemination of the Noachide Covenant was due to the fact that at the time of these works' compilation, Jews were being hounded and persecuted by their Gentile overlords. They had all too few rights and all too much woe. Had they acted in accordance with an express obligation by the Shulchan Oruch to teach their Gentile brethren the Sheva Mitzvos, they would have brought upon themselves even further tragedy and suffering. No organised medieval population, who barely suffered the Jews even as completely passive citizens, were about to allow them to take a leading role in influencing society. Thus, because endangerment of life always takes precedence over the commandments of the Torah, pikuach nefesh doicheh es hakol, the Rabbis did not obligate the Jews to diffuse the Seven Laws and therefore it was omitted from all responsa. Of course, as the Rebbe explains, this does not in any way apply to our own time. The society in which we operate is deeply democratic and rights are granted to all. Freedom to disseminate and openly express religious and ethical mores is a fundamental right of every democratic society, a right which the Rebbe enjoined us to exercise to the utmost. Jews have today emerged at the vanguard of society, serving as captains of industry, education, and commerce - even politics. They have no impediments, therefore, preventing them from emerging as the principal exponents of holiness, morality, and goodness to the world's inhabitants.

It is that brilliant, pristine and universalist vision of luminosity and guidance, warmth and openness, which the Rebbe instilled within each of our hearts, which sustains us and motivates us until we are shortly reunited with him in the coming of the Messianic age. ❖

