

The Rebbe and President Reagan

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The Rebbe and President Ronald Reagan

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory and President Ronald Reagan enjoyed a deep relationship for many years.

Mr. Reagan displayed a profound respect toward the Rebbe and his teachings. The President was an early and enthusiastic adherent of the Rebbe's call to make all people aware of the Seven Universal Laws, based on the belief in a Supreme Being. The Rebbe's call for a moment of silence in the public schools, and his persistent belief that America must export to the world faith-based moral values, were among the themes that found a welcoming ear in President Reagan.

Behind the scenes the President also acted upon the Rebbe's specific requests to help Israel and Soviet Jews in ways that are still coming to light.

Below we bring you little windows into the relationship; we hope that the additional documents, videotapes and anecdotes come to light soon.

Our thanks to Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, national director of American Friends of Lubavitch and the Rebbe's ambassador to the White House, for supplying us with these priceless documents so that we may share them with the public.

A delegation of Chabad Rabbis make a presentation to the President

National Day of Reflection: April 4, 1982

National Day of Reflection

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Amid the distractions and concerns of our daily existence, it is appropriate that Americans pause to reflect upon the ancient ethical principles and moral values which are the foundation of our character as a nation.

We seek, and steadfastly pursue, the benefits of education. But education must be more than factual enlightenment-it must enrich the character as well as the mind.

One shining example for people of all faiths of what education ought to be is that provided by the Lubavitch movement, headed by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, a worldwide spiritual leader who will celebrate his 80th birthday on April 4, 1982. The Lubavitcher Rebbe's work stands as a reminder that knowledge is an unworthy goal unless it is accompanied by moral and spiritual wisdom and understanding. He has provided a vivid example of the eternal validity of the Seven Noahide Laws, a moral code for all of us regardless of religious faith. May he go from strength to strength.

In recognition of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's 80th birthday, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled have issued House Joint Resolution 447 to set aside April 4, 1982, as a "National Day of Reflection."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 4, 1982, as National Day of Reflection.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 3rd day

of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

Ronald Reagan

April 2, 1982
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1982

Dear Rebbe:

Nancy and I are pleased to share in the joy and celebration which surrounds your 80th birthday on this 11 Nissan. On behalf of all Americans, we offer our most heartfelt congratulations.

You have so much of which to be proud. Since your first moments in the United States in 1941, you have shared your personal gift of universal understanding to the benefit of all. Time and again, your love and spiritual guidance have brought hope and inspiration to those confronted with despair. In bringing solace and comfort to the human spirit, you have helped to strengthen the foundation of faith which is mankind's most vital asset. Your life's work has been a response to that special calling few are privileged to hear.

I am especially pleased to join members of Congress in proclaiming a National Day of Reflection on your birthday. As I stated in the Proclamation, your work "stands as a reminder to us all that knowledge is an unworthy goal unless it is accompanied by moral and spiritual wisdom and understanding." As with all great leaders, you have given much more than you will ever receive.

God bless you today and always.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

April 18, 1982

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Lubavitch

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d

25th of Nissan, 5742

Brooklyn, N. Y.

President Ronald Reagan

The White House

Washington, D. C.

Greeting and Blessing:

Because of the Intervening Passover season, the Festival of Our Liberation, this is my first opportunity of acknowledging your gracious letter of April 2, 1982. I wish to assure you, Mr. President, and the First Lady, that I deeply appreciate your warm felicitations and good wishes on the occasion of my birthday.

I particularly appreciate your thoughtful and profoundly meaningful message that serves as the preamble to your Proclamation of a National Day of Reflection, in conjunction with the said occasion.

Following, as it does, your Proclamation of a National Day of Prayer, your Proclamation of a National Day of Reflection is not only eminently consistent with it, but indeed a corollary thereof. By focusing attention on "the ancient ethical principles and moral values which are the foundation of our character as a nation," and on the time-honored truth that "education must be more than factual enlightenment – it must

enrich the character as well as the mind," while reaffirming the eternal validity of the G-d-given Seven Noahide Laws (with all their ramifications) for people of all faiths – you have expressed most forcefully the real spirit of the American nation.

More than ever before the civilized world of today will look up to the United States of America for guidance as behoves the world's foremost Super Power – not merely in the ordinary sense of this term but even more importantly, as a moral and spiritual Super Power, whose real strength must ultimately derive from an unalterable commitment to the universal moral code of the Ten Commandments. Indeed, it is this commitment to the same Divine truths and values that, more than anything else, unites all Americans in the true sense of E Pluribus Unum.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlachah (success) in carrying out your enormous responsibilities for the benefit of all Americans and all mankind, and with esteem and blessing,

Cordially

M. Schneerson

President Ronald Reagan signs the proclamation for "Education Day U.S.A." honoring the Rebbe's birthday

November 23, 1982

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 23, 1982

Dear Rabbi Shemtov:

It was a special pleasure for me to greet you and your distinguished colleagues in the American Friends of Lubavitcher and to have our photograph taken together. I want

to thank you for the inscribed copy of Letters by the Lubavitcher Rebbe and assure you of my deep appreciation for the friendship and goodwill that prompted your giving me this handsomely bound collection of the wise counsel of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson. It certainly will be a meaningful addition to my library.

With my best wishes to you and everyone who joined in this kind gesture,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Following the signing of the proclamation of "Education Day U.S.A.," President Ronald Reagan presents the pen he used to sign the proclamation to Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, National Director of American Friends of Lubavitch and the Rebbe's ambassador to the White House.

National Scroll of Honor: Education Day – USA, March 25, 1983
National Scroll of Honor

Presented by the president and the Congress of the United States of America in tribute to the vision and spiritual world leadership provided by the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

on the occasion of his reaching the Eightieth Year

Whereas, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, has reached the eightieth year of his life which is devoted to the service of world Jewry and humanity in general; and

Whereas, his venerated vision, wisdom and leadership have contributed greatly to the promotion of education and the betterment of mankind ; and

Whereas, the President and both houses of Congress of the United States of America have accordingly recognized his

accomplishments by proclaiming "Education day- U.S.A." and "National Day of Reflection" on his birthday; and

Whereas, the Lubavitcher movement, through its scores of educational centers in this country and abroad, dedicates itself to preserve, protect and foster universal values that all free men hold dear; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, on the occasion of his birthday, March 25, 1983 corresponding to the 11th of Nissan 5743, we the undersigned do present the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson the National Scroll of Honor recognizing his brilliant achievements and wishing him health, long life and many more years of leadership to crown his celebrated career:

Ronald Reagan

The President of the United States

Above and below: President Ronald Reagan meets with Chabad representatives and signs the National Scroll of Honor on the occasion of the Rebbe's birthday

February 22, 1985

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 12, 1985

Dear Rabbi Shemtov:

It was a pleasure to greet you and your colleagues in the American Friends of Lubavitcher when you came to the White House on the eve of Hanukkah 1984. You were most kind to present me with the beautiful silver menorah and I truly appreciate the friendship that prompted your symbolic remembrance. May the light of the menorah always be a source of strength and inspiration to the Jewish people and to all mankind.

With my heartfelt best wishes to you and everyone who joined in this special gesture of friendship,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Federal Register: April 4, 1985
Proclamation 5317 of April 4, 1985

Education Day, U.S.A., 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In order to achieve its highest goals, education must be more than just a training in facts and figures, or even in basic skills, as important as they are. It must also include instruction in the deepest ethical values of our civilization.

Very few Americans have done more to promote these ethical values as the basis of civilization than Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the leader of the worldwide Lubavitch movement. The word "Lubavitch" comes from the name of a Russian city and means city of love. That is very appropriate because, of all the ethical values which inform our civilization, none is more important than love-love of wisdom, love of our fellowman, and love of our Creator.

These are the values which Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson exemplifies. And they are the values, with their roots in the Seven Noahide Laws, which have guided the Lubavitch movement throughout its history. They are the essence of education at its best, and we should be certain that we pass on this precious heritage to all young Americans.

In recognition of Rabbi Schneerson's contributions and in honor of his 83rd birthday, which falls this year on April 2, the Congress, by House joint Resolution 186, has designated

April 2, 1985, as "Education Day, U.S.A." and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States, of America, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 2, 1985, as Education Day, U.S.A., and I call upon the people of the United States, and in particular our teachers and other educational leaders, to observe that day with 'appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth. .

Ronald Reagan

Education Day, U.S.A., 1986

April 19, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From earliest colonial days, Americans have always known that education is the golden key that opens the door to achievement and progress. This Administration has placed renewed emphasis on excellence in education, and already the results are encouraging. By setting high standards we challenge the young to stretch their mental muscles and strive to achieve the best that is in them. Such an education succeeds because it makes learning an adventure.

Education is like a diamond with many facets: it includes the basic mastery of numbers and letters that give us access to the treasury of human knowledge, accumulated and refined through the ages; it includes technical and vocational training as well as instruction in science, higher

mathematics, and humane letters. But no true education can leave out the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life and human striving. Only education that addresses this dimension can lead to that blend of compassion, humility, and understanding that is summed up in one word: wisdom.

“Happy the man,” Scripture tells us, “who finds wisdom. ... Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who come to possess her.”

The Congress has sought to call attention to these durable values by adopting resolutions that pay tribute to the example of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, a man who has dedicated his life to the search for wisdom and to guiding others along its pathways. He exemplifies the rich tradition of the Seven Noahide Laws, which have been the lodestar of the Lubavitch movement from its inception.

In recognition of Rabbi Schneerson’s noble achievements and in celebration of his 84th birthday, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 582, has designated April 20 as “Education Day, U.S.A.” and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation in observance of this event.

Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, April 20, 1986, as Education Day, U.S.A., and I call upon the people of the United States, and in particular our teachers and other educational leaders, to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan

The President is presented with a silver Menorah in honor of

the holiday of Chanukah

February 3, 1986

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 3, 1986 Dear Rabbi Shemtov:

It was a pleasure greeting you and your fellow rabbis when you came to the White House, prior to the lighting of the National Menorah. I truly valued accepting the menorah from you on the occasion of the observance of Hanukkah, and the support of the Orthodox Jewish community means more than I can say. Your symbolic gift is a treasured remembrance of friendship from the American Friends of Lubavitch.

Nancy joins me in sending you and the members of your organization our warm best wishes.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Lag B'Omer, 5747, May 17, 1987

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Lubavitch

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d

Lag B' Omer, 5747

May 17, 1987

Brooklyn, N.Y.

His Excellency

President Ronald Reagan

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Greeting and Blessing:

Once again, dear Mr. President, it is a genuine pleasure to acknowledge your kind felicitations on the occasion of my recent birthday.

I was impressed with your meaningful Proclamation of "Education Day, USA" in connection with the Joint Resolution of the United States Congress, and I sincerely appreciate your heading the roster of signatories to the "International Scroll of Honor" affiliated with it. Its mention of "the historical tradition of ethical values and principles, which have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws, transmitted through G-d to Moses on Mount Sinai," is a clarion call vital to all mankind.

Furthermore, it is particularly gratifying that you use this occasion to bring to the attention of the Nation and of the International community the need of upgrading education in terms of moral values, without which no true education can be considered complete.

Consistent with your often declared position, that "no true education can leave out the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life and human striving," you, Mr. President, once again remind parents and teachers, in the opening paragraph of your Proclamation, that their sacred trust to children must include "wisdom, love, decency, moral courage and compassion, as part of everyone's education." Indeed, where these values are lacking, education is – to use a classical phrase – "like a body without a soul."

With the summer recess approaching, one cannot help wondering how many juveniles could be encouraged to use their free time productively, rather than getting into mischief – if they were mindful of – to quote your words – a Supreme Being and a Law higher than man's.

I take this opportunity of again acknowledging very gratefully your kind sentiments and good wishes.

With utmost esteem and blessing,

Cordially

M Schneerson

August 25, 1987

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Santa Barbara

August 25, 1987

Dear Rabbi Schneerson:

I'm sorry to be so late responding to your letter of May 17, but I'm just now having some quiet time to catch up.

I was very pleased to receive your message and to have the benefit of your reflections on the important role moral and spiritual values must play in the realm of education. The renewed attention being paid to these questions, not only in debates among public policy makers, but in academic and intellectual circles as well, is encouraging. I believe this trend is virtually certain to continue as the American people look for ways to apply the lessons of tradition to the problems facing our educational system and so many other areas of our national life.

I appreciate your contributions to these welcome developments and all that the Lubavitch movement has done to foster the inculcation of high moral and ethical standards.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

September 6, 1987

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Lubavitch

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d

12th of Elul, 5747

Sept. 6, 1987

Brooklyn, N.Y.

His Excellency

President Ronald Reagan

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Greeting and Blessing:

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your very kind letter of August 25, 1987. Your thoughtful and warm sentiments are certainly most encouraging and stimulating.

I want you to know, dear Mr. President, that from the reports reaching me from our emissaries in most States of the Union and in many major centers and outposts in various parts of the world, it is particularly gratifying to note that your consistent, often courageous, leadership in areas of the traditional American and universal values is finding an increasingly receptive response. This is even more evident in the realm of education, as you rightly note in your letter.

Similarly, we have reason to believe that your forceful supportive stance to help upgrade the moral standards of human relationships on the basis of the so-called Seven Noahide Laws (with all their ramifications) as imperatives of a Supreme Being who monitors all human conduct, has made a great impact on the consciousness of the contemporary troubled generation

of mankind.

I consider it particularly relevant to mention the above at this time, as we approach Rosh Hashanah (lit. the "head" of the year) in our Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah, as you surely know, is the anniversary of the creation of man, and thus also of the "Coronation" of the Creator as "King of the Universe." This Day is, therefore, a most auspicious occasion in Jewish tradition, the day when the Supreme King of Kings bestows His blessings on humankind, nations as well as individuals, graciously and generously.

In light of the above, your lasting contribution, through word and deed, to the advancement of all inhabitants in this blessed land and of humanity at large, will surely stand you in good stead for a goodly measure of Divine blessings.

Including, especially, the blessing of vigorous good health to continue from strength to strength in all your good endeavors.

With esteem and prayerful blessings

M. Schneerson

May I add, Mr. President, that the current year in the Jewish Calendar (5747) is a "Sabbatical Year" (Leviticus 25:1-7). One of the underlying purposes of this unique institution, which calls for rest from certain agricultural activities, is that it provides additional time which should be spent on more intensive study, and on activities dedicated to morally uplifting pursuits. This lesson has special significance in this day and age, when, largely as a result of what you rightly call incomplete education, moral and ethical standards have not kept pace with technological advancement.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you, dear Mr. President, that I deeply appreciate your personal warm sentiments and good wishes, which I heartily reciprocate in the words of our Sages, "Whoever blesses others is blessed by G-d Himself," the

Source of All Blessings, in a generous measure.

With prayerful wishes for your and the First Lady's good health and prosperity, and

With esteem and blessing,

M. Schneerson

February 18, 1988
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

By the Grace of G-d
30 Shevat, 5748
February 18, 1988
Brooklyn, N.Y.

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President

I deeply appreciate your kind and warm words of sympathy.

"Words emanating from the heart, enter the heart," the Sages say. I want you and Mrs. Reagan to know that they brought me comfort and solace,

We are, indeed, consoled by the abiding thought that the dear departed has left behind her a legacy of a lifetime spent here on earth in good deeds which live on, and continue to grow; and, of course, growth is a sign of true vitality. And her eternal soul – reflected in the ongoing activities of the institutions – will continue to be a source of inspiration and encouragement, especially to all whose lives were touched by hers.

In the Torah, an expression of sympathy in a time of grief, invoking solace from the One Above who is the true source of Consolation, is termed a "Blessing of Condolence," and is reciprocated with the words, "May you be blessed from Heaven."

I do so reciprocate your blessing. Needless to say, a blessing from Heaven, the Source of All Blessings, is replete and boundless with all good. I only add my prayerful wish that it be "in the kind of good that is revealed and obvious" – not only in Heaven, but also here on earth.

With profound esteem and with blessing

M Schneerson

The President is presented with a silver Menorah in honor of the holiday of Chanukah

December 21, 1988

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 21, 1988

Dear Rabbi Shemtov

As my Administration draws to a close, I want you and those of your fellow rabbis who accompanied you to the White House on December 1 to know that I was delighted to greet you and to accept the thoughtful gifts which you kindly brought for me.

It has been a pleasure each year to welcome you and your colleagues in the American Friends of Lubavitch on the occasion of Chanukah and to receive a beautiful menorah as an expression of your friendship. This symbol of your faith is a treasured keepsake of the valued support which I have enjoyed from the Lubavitchers over the years. Be assured that I am truly grateful for your loyalty and goodwill.

Nancy joins me in sending all of you our warm best wishes for a happy and rewarding future.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

King Solomon's Brilliant Verdict...

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King Solomon's Brilliant Verdict for the Ages

Rabbi Ben Tzion Krasnianski

27 Tevet 5764

Israel's greatest king, Solomon, was only twelve years old when G-d promised him that he would be granted wisdom, and that he would be the wisest man that ever lived. In the very first recorded decision in the history of legal jurisprudence, in the Book of Books (Kings 3:16), we read about Solomon's brilliance and how it endeared him at such a tender age to the entire nation of Israel, who willingly accepted him as their monarch.

Two women came before King Solomon.

One woman (the true mother) said, "My lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house. On the third day after I gave birth she also gave birth... This woman's child died during the night because she lay on him. She arose during the night and took my son from my side while I slept, laid him on her bosom and laid her dead child on my bosom. When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead! But when I observed him in the morning, I realized that he was not my son to whom I had given birth."

The other woman replied, "It is not so! My son is the live one and your son is the dead one."

King Solomon briefly reiterated their arguments and ordered, "Bring me a sword." The King then said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one and half to the other."

The woman who claimed that her son was stolen from her said, "Please, my lord, give her the living child and do not kill it."

But the other woman said, "Neither mine nor yours shall he be. Cut!"

The king spoke up and said, "Give the first woman the living child and do not kill it; for she is his mother."

Reportedly, in the summer of 2000, at Camp David, Yasser Arafat recited to former President Clinton this classical Biblical story, arguing that the very fact that Israel was willing to divide, to compromise and to negotiate on every point, including Jerusalem, while the Arabs were absolutely unyielding and uncompromising, proved that the Israelis were not the true 'mothers'.

Granted, it is possible that King Solomon in his divinely inspired wisdom was thinking of the widely celebrated and the internationally acclaimed dispute over the Holy Land, where

the two mothers, the Jews and the Arabs, are arguing over the same piece of land. It is fascinating to note that this case is the one and only example the Bible gives us of King Solomon's legendary brilliance.

Not surprisingly, however, Arafat completely missed the point of the story. The issue is not who agrees to cut the baby, but who cares about the baby. It's all about life; the true mother wants the baby to live, while the false mother would gladly see the baby die.

Following in King Solomon's footsteps, the international community has been unanimous in its decision to bring on the sword, to cut the baby in half and to divide the Holy Land. Consequently, just as in the original episode, everyone's true color has emerged for all to see.

The true mother, the Jewish people who love the land, who have a soul connection to the land, who for millennia prayed and continue to pray three times a day, "Please G-d return me to the land," have relinquished their just claim. For the sake of peace, Jews are ready to make painful concessions. Give the baby away rather than hurt the child, they cry out. The most mindless, radical Jewish left-wing fanatics, who follow in the footsteps of Neville Chamberlain, believing in "peace at any price," are ready to sacrifice their very own home, so that the land of Israel will flourish and its inhabitants will live in peace and tranquility.

The false mother, however, who never wanted the baby in the first place, and only wanted to deprive the real mother of her legitimate child, cruelly declared: "If I won't get the baby than kill the baby." The Arabs say that if they don't get Jerusalem and the Jews refuse to unconditionally surrender to them, they will destroy the land, maim and murder its inhabitants and strangle Israel's economy. Has anyone forgotten the searing images during the Gulf War, how the Arab settlers in Arab-occupied Ramallah danced on the roof tops

encouraging their hero, Sadaam Hussein, to rain missiles on Israel and to destroy the entire land?

The verdict is in by the most brilliant legal mind that ever lived. The Jewish people are the real mothers; Israel is their baby and the land is exclusively Jewish. Even when they were forcibly exiled from their land by their oppressors, the Jewish soul never went into exile and the Jewish people never ceased yearning for Israel. "Next Year in Jerusalem!" they cried out, as they physically turned their faces towards Jerusalem each and every time they prayed.

The Arabs, however, have no connection to the land. They are usurpers who have, by and large, migrated to Israel over the past 100 years because of economic opportunities made possible by the Jews. Jerusalem is not mentioned even once in the Koran, while it is mentioned close to a thousand times in the Bible. When Islam was born 1,600 years ago in Mecca and Medina, the Jewish people had already been in the land of Israel for close to two thousand years, and went through two Temples, two Commonwealths.

The classical Biblical commentaries are puzzled. Why was King Solomon so confident that the false mother would reveal her treachery by agreeing to literally cut the baby in half? After all, wouldn't human compassion have compelled her to spare the baby, to have mercy on the child and forego her claim so the baby could live?

The commentators explain that mothers throughout the world naturally love their children more dearly than life itself, and would not let harm befall their children. A person has enough presence of mind to not harm himself even in his sleep. Surely, a mother couldn't harm her newborn baby, even in her sleep. It's a fact that billions of mothers sleep with their infants without crushing them. Crushing her own baby to death, proved that, as the exception to the rule, she was sorely lacking in motherly instincts and was inclined towards

cruelty.

There's another puzzling mystery. When the real mother agreed to give up her baby why didn't the lying mother accept the offer, why did she insist that the baby be cut in half? After all, didn't she kidnap the baby in the first place because she wanted to have a baby?

King Solomon, in his brilliance, realized that she stole the baby not out of love for the child, but out of jealousy for the real mother. Surely, if she had no love for her own child and was able to smother her own baby to death, she wouldn't care about a stranger's child. It was a purely vindictive act to deprive the real mother of her child. Consequently, killing the baby by cutting the baby in half, thereby depriving the true mother of her baby, would suit her just fine.

Arab mothers who send their own children to die, and who celebrate their horrific murderous deaths and suicide missions as martyrdom, give the Arabs away as the true thieves, murderers and occupiers.

While the true mother, Israel, agreed to give the land away for the chance of peace, the Arabs prefer to have the baby killed. In response to Jewish overtures for peace, the Arabs unleashed the most vicious and murderous suicide attacks, unprecedented in human history, against innocent men, women, children and babies, attempting in vain to destroy beautiful Israel.

King Solomon, speaking across generations, is addressing our situation today in this landmark, internationally acclaimed verdict. King Solomon is clearly stating that there are definite and clear distinctions: While one mother is telling the truth, is kindhearted, compassionate, an ideal mother, the other mother is a cruel, stone-hearted kidnapper, a liar and a would-be murderer to boot.

In the end, truth and justice will prevail, even in the world

of smoke and mirrors, multiculturalism, pluralism and political correctness that we currently inhabit. The true mother has been exposed for all to see. Every lover of truth knows now beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Holy Land of Israel in its entirety belongs exclusively to its true mother, the Jewish people, forever and ever; never to be divided, never to be separated from the house of Israel



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<chabadues@aol.com>

Finding a True Rabbi

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Finding a True Rabbi

by Rabbi Simon Jacobson

It happened a few years ago. I was invited to sit on a panel discussion at Touro Law School in Huntington, New York. It was a panel discussion on some of the principles of Jewish faith including a discussion on Moshiach and redemption (geulah). My co-panelists were two other Rabbis, one Orthodox and another Conservative. From the story you will see why I don't call myself an 'orthodox' Rabbi. Our mediator presented ten questions on the given topics to all three of us and we all responded to them in a cordial way.

Then at the end of the evening, after we finished answering the mediator's questions, the audience was invited to ask their questions. We were in an auditorium filled with maybe three, four hundred people. A woman got up in the back of the room and asked the following question. She said, "I speak on behalf, I believe of 90% of the Jewish people who are assimilated and unaffiliated to any type of denomination. Some of us question the existence of G-d, many of us don't go to any synagogue. I want to know this: you all talk so eloquently about a final redemption and a world that will be driven by G-d and spirituality in the quest for divine knowledge rather than material pursuits. I want to know what will happen to myself and 90% of Jews today who are totally non-observant and not committed to any mitzvahs or any of the Torah laws, what will happen to us if Moshiach were to come tonight?"

“Pretty good question,” I say to myself.

The order of response was first the orthodox Rabbi. He said four words: “G-d will have mercy.” Subsequently, a resounding boo arose from the entire crowd. Clearly they were not satisfied with his answer and found it condescending. This was not exactly a reverent audience, you can imagine, so they didn’t mind booing a Rabbi. That’s what he said and that’s how they responded to his answer.

Then came the Conservative Rabbi’s turn. He actually turned to me and said, “yes, I have the same question Rabbi Jacobson. What will happen to the unaffiliated?” The crowd laughed. That would have been bad enough, but then he added the following. His voice dripping with cynicism, he said he once heard in the name of one of the Torah leaders and scholars of the last generation, I won’t go in to graphic detail, that the Holocaust was G-d’s punishment of the Jews, particularly those in central Europe, Germany and France (the birth of the reform movement there etc.), for breaking Jewish law. And the Rabbi went on to list how every atrocity perpetrated by the Nazis was a result of another broken commandment broken. The reason their hair was shorn was because they didn’t cover their hair, the reason their arms were hurt was because they didn’t put on Tefillin. Children were killed because they weren’t born in purity, etc. etc. And so if the Messiah were to come tonight, the conservative Rabbi turned to me and asked, “Is that what you believe will happen to 90% of the Jewish people, the people that don’t keep the Mitzvot, will they experience another holocaust?”

His words were chilling – he had succeeded in getting the entire crowd roiled up. Turbulence and tension filled the air.

There are questions and there are questions. This woman’s question was one of those moments of truth. Because ultimately her simple question touches the heart of all of Judaism; it exposes what we really believe, it touches us all. I must tell

you that this was one of the most powerful experiences in my life. Imagine the scene of 400 stunned people sitting there waiting for my response. I sat there on the podium under those glaring lights, getting hotter under the collar. A thundering silence filled the room. Clearly, this question went straight to people's hearts. The question was provocative but to the point. And how? As it came my turn to speak, every second turned into an hour. Frankly, I had no idea what I was going to say. One thing was for sure. I was not going to get away with some evasive cliché or humorous answer. This was a real moment of truth. Sometimes your entire life training is to prepare you to answer this type of question. I knew that my response – especially in context of the other Rabbis – what shall we call it...could make it or break it for hundreds of people.

So, what does one do in a time like this? You pray that G-d put the right words in your mouth. I thought to myself: How would Moses, the Baal Shem Tov, the Rebbe – all the true Jew lovers – what would they say to this question? What would G-d Himself say to this woman?

I prayed to G-d to put the right words in my mouth. I took a deep breath and here is what I said:

“One of the Rebbe's once said that if you are asked a question and you don't have an answer you should tell a story and if that doesn't work you should sing a song. I will try to tell a story and I hope this story answers your question and I won't need to sing.

“In the 19th century there was a Rebbe that lived in a town in Russia, a great Rebbe, mystic and scholar, and very well respected. One Simchat Torah in 1887 the Rebbe spoke about the great virtues of simple folk. He spoke very highly about their special stature, and how they are in some ways even greater than the scholar and pious person. These were not just words. Among the Rebbe's close acquaintances was a secular, non-

observant Jew. He was neither a scholar nor very pious, but the Rebbe spent serious time with him.

“Following the talk, one of the elder Chassidim came to the Rebbe and asked with respect. “The Rebbe encourages us to ask questions, so I have a question. While I understand that a simple person has certain virtues, yet the way the Rebbe described it seems somewhat ‘stretching it.’ I respect the Rebbe’s choices but how is it that the Rebbe can justify spending so much disproportionate time with this fellow who is neither a scholar nor a pious man, when so many of his students and followers would give their lives to spend just a few minutes with the Rebbe, for wisdom, for inspiration.

“Knowing that this Chassid was a diamond merchant, the Rebbe asked him to bring several diamonds of different values so that the he (the Rebbe) could choose the most precious one of the lot. It was a strange request but the Rebbe asked so a Chassid complies although he didn’t know what the Rebbe was getting at. He brought several precious stones of different values. The Rebbe chose the largest and brightest stone and exclaimed: “this is the most precious of the lot – am I right?!” he asked the Chassid. The Chassid didn’t want to contradict the Rebbe so he remained quiet. But after the Rebbe insisted, the Chassid said, “well, that is not really the most precious one.”

“But it looks so beautiful and large” asked the Rebbe. The Chassid replied, “with all due respect Rebbe, you need to have a trained eye. The naked eye cannot tell the value of a stone, the cut, the color, the clarity.” The Rebbe smiled and said to him, “with all due respect, if that is the case with stones, how much more so with neshamot, souls. It is not what meets the eye, you need to have a trained eye, the naked eye can’t tell anything about neshamot” That was his answer to his question about the value of people.

After telling this story, I continued: “There is no human

being in the world that can measure souls because souls are not man made, they are divine. Therefore only G-d knows the true nature of our souls, we humans don't. I don't know whose neshama is greater, whether it is yours (I pointed to the woman) or it's mine or its someone else's, or this orthodox Rabbi's or this conservative Rabbi's or anyone else in this room. Not only don't I know, but it doesn't even matter. It is not our business to know, or to judge or to measure the value of souls. If we had to know the nature of the soul, we would have been told. It is not our job and function to know. The fact is that we all have neshamot and we do not know whose is greater. Sometimes the one with the greatest challenges is the one with the greatest soul.

"We know very little about a soul and its journey. Remember, none of us chose to be born into the families that we were born into. Why for instance, is one child born into a healthy, nurturing home, and another child is born into a dysfunctional, abusive home? Why is one child born into a home which provided the child with a strong spiritual education, one that offered a proud and educated Jewish influence, and another child is born into a home that provided no education, or a very negative and illiterate one? These are part of G-d's mysterious ways and only G-d knows the answer to these questions. One thing is for sure: Each soul is pure and holy, and no one has the right or the knowledge to know the level of a soul. We cannot judge anyone, because we don't know all the forces that have shaped their lives.

"None of us chose to be born into the families that we were born into. I didn't choose my parents and the education and level of observance they provided me. You didn't choose your family, and the 90% of the unaffiliated Jews that you described also didn't choose. It is all driven by Divine intervention, G-d chooses. In other words, the type of education, the kind of family and environment that we would be exposed to is totally not up to us. So therefore we cannot

judge people and measure them based on that.

“The only thing we could measure – even if we had that right – is: what did you do with the abilities and opportunities that were presented to you?”

I continued:

“One step further. It says in holy books that Moses was shown all the generations to come. Moses is the first and greatest leader of the Jewish people, their shepherd, ‘roeh Yisroel.’ Before he passed away, G-d wanted to show him the future generations so that he would have nachas (pleasure) to see how they would thrive under all circumstances. Of all the things he saw what impressed Moses most was the effort and commitment of the last generation. The Torah tells us that Moses is the humblest man that walked the face of this earth. Why was he so humble? He was humble before our generation. When he saw this generation – one so assimilated, so secular, a generation that grew out of generations who suffered so much – and yet there are Jews trying to connect to G-d, that humbled Moses. This one tries to keep a Shabbos, this one tries to light a Shabbos candle, Yizkor on Yom Kippur, whatever. That humbled him.

“You know why? Because his generation was ‘enlightened.’ They all witnessed and experienced miracles. The exodus from Egypt, the parting of the sea, revelation at Sinai, forty years of miracles in the wilderness and yet they were far from perfect. But this generation did not see miracles. It is a generation that has every reason to deny G-d. A generation that followed the holocaust and before that, the pogroms in Eastern Europe, the Cossacks, and before that the Inquisition and the Crusaders. On and On, you name it and still there are people walking the streets of New York or Bangkok, Melbourne or Stockholm, Tel Aviv or Capetown, wherever it may be, and are aspiring and trying – that humbled Moses more than anything else.”

Then I concluded:

“I don’t know much more than you do, and I don’t understand it all on a cosmic level, but in reply to your question, I can say this: I was taught by my Rebbes that if Moshiach is to come tonight, people with the greatest challenges will march first – being the ones that made Moses humble. If Moshiach comes tonight, by tomorrow morning you and every person on this earth will recognize that Mitzvos and Torah is the healthiest and best way for a person and a Jew to self actualize and to live up to their divine calling and their highest potential.”

There was silent hush in the room after I finished speaking. I felt a very strong emotional reaction coming from the crowd, a powerful surge of electricity that was felt across the entire room. People were crying and the woman who asked the question came over to me in tears. It was amazing, beyond description. I was deeply moved and never forgot that evening.

I sincerely say this with all humility – because I know that my answer was not my own. I truly feel privileged to have a Rebbe who taught me how to answer to this question. Without that I honestly believe that I would have had the same blank response as the other two rabbis did.

I must admit that I felt proud at that moment, and every time I think about that evening. Not arrogant pride, but blessed pride. A pride that is mixed with deep sadness, because right here before my eyes I saw both the tragedy and blessing of our times. These two so-called Rabbis could not answer this earth shattering and life-defining question. If they cannot answer such a fundamental question, what are they doing to their constituents?! Without the basic understanding of the soul, are they truly able to foster love and respect for people that are not like themselves – people from other communities, people who may dress and behave differently, people who may go to other synagogues, unaffiliated Jews and so on?

The reason they could not answer the question is because they never learned about the neshama – the soul. They may know much about the Torah's laws and dictates, but not much about the human spirit. The reason I was able to address the issue was not because of my innovation or creative skills, but because I was taught these principles. The indispensable value and sanctity of every individual soul – despite its challenges and opportunities – is the most fundamental principle in Judaism. This is what Torah is all about; everything else is commentary.

G-d created the neshama. Each human being has a soul that is created in a divine image and all of us are trying our best through the information we have and through study and commitment to live up to it. Without knowledge or awareness of every soul's value, there is no way that we could find ways to love each other unconditionally. The mitzvah of "love thy fellow as yourself" is only possible because we have souls that unite, and we are not just bodies that divide.

And this is precisely what is lacking today in our education system, including the education of many of our Rabbis. This is one of the reasons that I struggle with the title "Rabbi" and "Orthodox." Because these names are labels that either don't mean anything, or even worse. I don't want to be stereotyped because of the behavior or ignorance of some many so-called "Rabbis."

We all are essentially souls of G-d walking around in material bodies. Titles are not that important, especially titles that become bureaucratic and tend to obscure the truth.

Those two Rabbis were very nice guys. The fact that they couldn't answer the question was not due to their own fault. They were never taught this information. Even if they were aware of the concepts, for them it was only a concept, not a viable reality. And without knowing the reality of this fundamental principle, how could they ever communicate the

message of Torah to unaffiliated 90% (or whatever number it is) of the Jewish people. The answer is they don't communicate it! They may communicate it to the other ten percent, their constituents, but this inherently creates an immediate separation between 'us and them,' so to speak, between this group and that group, because there is no spiritual common denominator communication between different types of Jews. Everyone is going their own way, completely oblivious that we are all interdependent souls, and each of us is incomplete without the other souls.

I repeat again: The only way to bridge and unite diverse people is through recognizing the sanctity and indispensability of each individual soul, regardless of background.

Last week I wrote about a foolproof method to determine the status of your Rabbi by asking him for his sources. In the same vein, if you want to have a good understanding of any Rabbi – and for that matter any scholar – ask him this woman's question: What will happen to the people who transgressed when Moshiach comes?

Let me conclude with the following words: There may be no perfect rabbis today. There may be no perfect synagogues and communities. However, G-d tells us that he does not ask us to accomplish our mission without giving us the abilities to do so. We have everything it takes to fulfill our calling. Therefore, we clearly have the power to search, discover and recognize the appropriate Torah authorities and mentors that will assist us in our life journey.

Remember, we are all in the same boat. We all face challenges of people not living up to the standards of their belief system; we all have experienced hypocrisy and the inevitable disappointments. But we also have been given strength to face these challenges, and we do not come alone. We are like 'midgets' that stand on the shoulders of 'giants' – all the

generations that come before us. With this enormous accumulative power we have within ourselves the ability to face corruption and not become victims.

What each of us has to do is find the best people around us, ask the right questions, have the courage to ask them, and always remember that each of us, even Rabbis, is an indispensable musical note in a grand cosmic composition.

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Prospectives on Noahide Laws

Prospectives on Noahide Laws

from Rabbi Dr Shimon Cowen, Perspectives on the Noahide laws – Universal Ethics (C) S.D. Cowen 2003. www.ijc.com.au

Introduction

There are seven laws, which are biblically binding on all humanity. They are prohibitions on idolatry, blasphemy (or the reviling of G-d), forbidden sexual relationships, theft, murder, lawlessness (the failure to establish courts and processes of justice) and the consumption of the limb of a living animal, associated with cruelty to animals. They are known as the seven Noahide laws. The reason for this name, is ostensibly because, although^[1] six of the laws were commanded to the first person, Adam, the seven laws were completed with Noah, to whom the seventh commandment was given. Only after the flood, was it permitted to humanity to slaughter meat for

consumption, and with this came the law prohibiting one to eat the limb of a living animal.[2]

These laws are an intrinsic “possession” of humanity. For the human being is, to use the biblical phrase, “created in the image of G-d”, that is to say, fitted to “imitate G-d”, and this imitation can take place only through the performance of the Divinely given Noahide commandments. The “image of G-d” in humanity is a potentiality: it could and did come to the fore in exemplary human beings; it was submerged, and even so-to-speak “removed” from those who made a travesty of the Noahide laws.

There were ten generations from Adam to Noah[3]. This long epoch of humanity was a history of degeneration and removal of the Divine image from humanity. Noah was unable to redeem the cumulative history of forgoing generations: his luminous ark was the refuge of the *ideal* of a redeemed humanity and nature[4]. Another ten generations passed from Noah to Abraham. Whilst both intervals of ten generations are part of what the Sages called the two thousand years of void (*Tohu*) or spiritual darkness[5], Abraham’s relationship to the epoch which preceded him was different. He was able to redeem the historical epoch (the ten generations) which preceded him.

This was because the service of Abraham marked the beginning of a new era in humanity, called the “two thousand years of Torah [Divine teaching]”. Torah is associated with “light”, symbolizing clear and manifest G-dly truth. Just as the Torah (through its commandments) formed the instrument of the refinement of the world, so Abraham worked on the human environment around him. In the process, he himself practiced and spread the observance of the Noahide laws (starting with the recognition of G-d), as well as keeping a further commandment, circumcision, which was given to him and forms the bridge to the further group of commandments incumbent on the Jewish people, to be given later at Sinai[6]. Abraham was a Noahide, but he was also the father of the Jewish people

with their own distinct spiritual character and task. In his offspring, the dual subject of humanity, Jew and gentile, with their complementary tasks, are broadly prefigured.

Thus, Abraham's son Isaac, who was circumcised, according to the Jewish law, at eight days, projects the Jewish people. From him was born Jacob, who descended into Egypt with his family and there the Hebrew nation grew. Abraham, however, had another son, Yishmael (Ismael) and so did Isaac – Esav (Esau), Abraham's grandson. According to tradition, Yishmael and Esav, are the fathers[7] of two vast world religions and cultures, Islam and Christianity. In the present world the adherents of Christianity and Islam constitute 55% of the world's inhabitants[8]; and there are traces and elements of the (Abrahamic) Noahide root teachings in these world religions[9].

After the passing of the matriarch Sarah, the mother of Isaac, Abraham had further sons from Ketura (or Hagar[10]), the mother of Yishmael. These sons, the Bible, relates, were sent off to the East by Abraham. Rabbi Menashe ben Israel in his work *Nishmas Chayim*[11], states that these sons went to India and disseminated the teachings of Abraham concerning the eternity and reincarnation of the soul. He associates the term "Brahman", (presumably referring to the priestly Hindu caste) with what were originally "Abrahamin", the sons of Abraham. Buddhism is in turn a derivative of Hinduism. Hence, traces of "Abrahamic" Noahide theology, are to be found in both these Eastern religions, even though they came to be embedded in religions which were otherwise non-monotheistic[12]. The adherents of Hinduism and Buddhism constitute another 21% of the world's population, so that in total 76% of the world's population is associated with religions influenced by the children of Abraham. It is interesting to note that another 14%, officially classed as "non-believing" are largely to be accounted for as the result of Chinese, former Soviet Russian and Eastern bloc political

training in atheism – in historical terms, a relatively recent overlay over a much deeper collective memory.

The pure tradition of the Noahide laws and theology as well as the further commandments which were acquired by the Jewish people before Sinai, was kept by Isaac and Jacob and the sons of Jacob. The Jewish people comes fully into its own at Sinai, with the giving of the Torah. At Sinai both the written Torah (the Pentateuch) and the Oral Torah (the elaboration of that which is only cryptically contained in the Written Torah) were given. The Rabbinic tradition which carries and elaborates the oral law is a unique hermeneutic path, which by virtue of the self-nullification of each generation of students to the forgoing generation of teachers, ensures a continuous and unified alignment with the original revelation of the Oral law to Moses at Sinai.

The Noahide laws, originally revealed to Adam and Noah, were reiterated at Sinai in the Torah, which *made known* that they had previously been given. Their statement at Sinai and the revelation of their details in the Oral law is now the source of their teaching, which is elaborated in the Talmud, and summarized pre-eminently in the Code of Maimonides. One of the tasks of the Jewish people is to guide the nations to the fulfillment of the Noahide laws. Perhaps, apart from more direct means, one of the ways in which it can achieve this is by being (in the words of the prophet) a spiritual “light to the nations”. Through this, the Noahide residues to be found both in the “image of G-d” latent in the spiritual makeup of humanity, as well as in its collective (un)conscious memory of Noahidism, can be crystallized and brought into transformative emergence in the world religions themselves.

This process of crystallization, sometimes achieved by self-redefinition, is profoundly assisted by a conscious orientation to the sources of the Noahide laws. Abraham, long before the complete formation of the Jewish people at Sinai, was known as a “Hebrew” and this Hebraic tradition is of

course consolidated in the scriptures of the Jewish people from, and after, Sinai. In modern times, elements of Noahidism have become increasingly disseminated, especially in western cultures[13]. Yet those nations with traditions which *consciously* relate to the Hebraic monotheism projected by Abraham and the Jewish scriptures, such as the United States of America, and elements of British culture[14] (with their cultural “offshoots” such as Australia), have come furthest in the crystallization of the Noahide values. Perhaps the most explicit expression of this development is to be found in a joint resolution of both Houses of the United States Congress, in 1991, which begins with the following words:

Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded;

Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws;

Whereas without these ethical values and principles the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning to chaos...[15]

Torah teaches that the Jewish and the gentile peoples are partners in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in creation. This purpose, described as the fashioning of a “dwelling place for G-d in the lower realms”[16], involves the manifestation of transcendent, unlimited G-dliness, within a finite and limited world. To this end, the service of the gentile nations consists in the conduct of the seven Noahide laws in order to produce a world, which *immanently* manifests Divine values: peace, goodness and order. The task of the Jewish people through the performance of their 613 commandments is to draw a *transcendent* G-dliness into a world, stabilized and harmonized by the Noahide laws.

Just as Jews need gentiles to make the world manifest an immanent G-dliness, an order, in which it is possible and (beyond this) most effective for Jews to perform their transcendent commandments, so gentiles need Jews as a light and beacon in their fulfillment of the Noahide laws. G-d needs *both* for *His* purpose, to reveal Himself through the housing of transcendent G-dliness within the world. The greatness of a human being is the extent to which one performs one's *own* allotted task in this redemptive purpose[17].

[1] According to Maimonides, *Hilchos M'lochim*, 9:1.

[2] The Maharal of Prague is of the view that the seven commandments were in fact all given to Adam, including the prohibition on eating the limb of a living animal, even though – since meat could not then be slaughtered for consumption – it was not yet relevant in that particular form. Its broader significance and application was that a person must show restraint, and the ability to delay the gratification of desire (which is epitomized in the requirement that a person wait until an animal has been killed before eating part of it). Adam, himself, however, according to the Maharal of Prague, transgressed this very commandment in another form. By not waiting the few hours required before the fruit of the tree of knowledge would become permissible, he also showed an inability to delay the gratification of desire. In this way the sin of the tree of knowledge was in transgression – in concept – of the prohibition on eating the limb of a living animal. See the Appendix to this volume, “The Maharal of Prague on the Noahide laws”.

[3] *Pirkei Avos*, 5:2., See here and in the following, Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Biurim l'Pirkei Avos*, 1-5 (N.Y.: Kehos), pp. 253ff.

[4] Cf Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos* (N.Y.: Kehos), Vol. 1, p. 10 *et passim*.

[5] The flood was followed by further moral decline – the generation of the dispersion (through the tower of Babel, which was fundamentally blasphemous in intent), the corruption of Sodom and Gemorah, the morally degenerate society of Egypt.

[6] Thus in the phrase “One [*Echod*] was Abraham” it is explained (by the previous Rebbe) that the middle letter of *Echod* – the *ches* – which has the numerical value of eight, stands for the seven Noahide laws plus the mitzvah of circumcision (Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1 [5711], Part 1, pp. 317-318).

[7] Not in the sense of concrete historical individuals who founded these religions, but rather as their cultural and spiritual roots.

[8] Refer to the website <http://www.adherents.com>

[9] *Hilchos M'lochim*, end of Ch. 11.

[10] According to Rashi on Genesis, 25:1.

[11] 4:21.

[12] See *Zohar* parshas Vayera, 99a, “Amar Rabi Aba...”, which speaks of elements in a work of the teachings of the sons of Abraham who went to India, which contained elements that were “close to the words of Torah”, but were then “drawn to various sides.”

[13] See the third section of the chapter on “Sovereignty, persons and the Noahide laws”, especially in regard to the view of the *Me'iri*, the *Remo* and the *Nodeh B'Yehudah*.

[14] See Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, (edited with an introduction by J. Dover Wilson, London: Cambridge University Press, 1960) in reference to the puritan tradition in English culture, termed English Hebraism.

[15] Public Law 102-14, 102d Congress, 1st Session, H.J. Res.

104.

[16] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 6, pp. 13-25, with reference to the *Midrash Tanchuma*, *parshas Noso*, 16.

[17] To the extent to which the Talmud *Sanhedrin*, 59a refers to a gentile occupied in the study and practice of his or her commandments, as being as great as the High Priest of the Jewish people.

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These essays do not claim to present or imply authoritative halachic rulings. For these, one must turn to a Rabbinic authority.

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Chapter 1

A STATEMENT OF THE NOAHIDE LAWS

Social perspectives

1. Moral authority

Monotheism and Divine law

[1] The prohibition on idolatry

The great sociologist, Max Weber, sought and believed to have discovered the orienting values of socio-economic, political and legal organization in the various world-religions. At the

same time, in his study of the world religions and the varieties of social organization, he was left with the picture of a “polytheism” – a relativism and conflict – of beliefs, and consequently of practical, concrete values. In a personal letter, he wrote:

The realm of values is dominated by insoluble conflict, hence by the necessity for continuous compromises. Nobody can definitively decide how the compromises should be made, unless it be a ‘revealed’ religion[1]

Perhaps Weber was here writing sceptically. The issue, however, is a central one. Morality is concrete: we are faced daily and even moment by moment with the question, “what should I do, here and now?” What, indeed, is the source and the authority of practical right conduct? The answer to this question, from the point of view of the Noahide laws, is that there is one G-d, Who in the biblical revelation at Sinai made known the laws for His creation.

The prohibition of idolatry is the fundamental precept of the Noahide laws. This is because it relates to the acceptance of G-d, together with which the transcendent authority of Divine revelation, including the Noahide laws, goes[2]. There may be some paradox in the notion of a Divine commandment prohibiting idolatry, for the very acceptance of the *commandment* implies that one already believes in G-d, who has commanded it? Indeed to this comes the response that, however concealed this may be from the individual, the human soul – made in the “image of G-d” – already “natively” or intuitively acknowledges G-d[3]. It is ready to acknowledge G-d, even before it is commanded to (in the form of a prohibition of idolatry). The *belief* in G-d and the *sense* that these laws are Divinely revealed and ordained laws, are ratified ultimately, not by reason, but by their resonance with soul, the G-dly in humanity. The commandment against idolatry serves to make a *conscious* principle of what the human soul natively acknowledges.

What is idolatry? The great medieval codifier, Maimonides, in his account of the origins of idolatry[4], explains that in the days of Enosh, the grandson of Adam, human beings began to accord honour to major forces – the sun, the moon and so forth – in the universe. They did this because they saw that G-d, Whom they acknowledged as the G-d of these potencies – the “G-d of gods” – had channelled major influences to the creation through these powers. They mistakenly believed that it was G-d’s will that these entities be accorded honour beside G-d, a relationship of “partnership”[5]. This, however, led to a further step, whereby G-d was forgotten, even as the “G-d of gods” and the “intermediary” entities became the sole objects of worship. Idolatry, for the Noahide laws, is accordingly the ascription of absolute significance to any created entity or part of creation: whether to a stone image, a person or even “success” or “money”. Indeed, an “atheism”, which raises “matter” to the sole and absolute principle, would present one of the most strident forms of idolatry: it takes something created – matter – and makes it absolute, even if its terminology and approach is ostensibly “anti-religious”.

For a gentile to make some part of creation a “partner” with G-d, with G-d acknowledged as the ultimate source of creation, is, according to some opinions, not considered idolatry. It is considered idolatry for a Jew. For a Jew, the notion that any force in creation is anything but an instrument in the hand of G-d is idolatrous, and indeed this view is the “purest” form of monotheism, commendable also for a Noahide[6].

The question will therefore arise for an individual belief system or religion, whether or not it has taken some aspect of creation and made it absolute. Frequently, one finds a high degree of flux in human beliefs. It may, therefore, be less pertinent to ask what a particular religion or belief system maintains, than what those who declare themselves adherents of those religions actually believe. If they ascribe importance to something other than the one G-d, what is the nature of

that ascription? If, however, prayers are offered to a specific entity within creation, as the absolute source of salvation, then that would be considered idolatrous. If these powers were understood as pointers to the one monotheistically conceived G-d, then that might not be considered idolatry, though it is still not the purest form of monotheism. But where devotion “stops” at these gods or figures, it is idolatry.

Respect for moral authority

[2] The prohibition on blasphemy

The simplest, bluntest sense of blasphemy is that of cursing G-d. It is not “disbelief” in, but rather rebellion against, G-d, for the blasphemer “knows” his Master and nevertheless intends to affront Him. One finds that the State often rests in some sense on a religious recognition, in that oaths[7] of public office, loyalty and legal process may invoke G-d. An article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica on “blasphemy” states that

Blasphemy is always something which is regarded as fundamentally injurious, harmful to society with the underlying idea being that an attack on religion is necessarily an attack on the State. In the words of Chief Justice Hale, a Judge in 1675, “the allegation that religion is a cheat tends to the dissolution of all government”[8].

Even if it is true that government has in many places become secular and separate from religion, and that the affirmation is an alternative to the oath, there is a wider, cognate sense of “blasphemy”. This consists in statements which outrage public values, public offices and institutions. The use of the word “blasphemous” here is not purely metaphorical. For in that the idea of social order *per se* is a Divinely sanctioned

value, in fact representing the ultimate “intention” of the Noahide laws, to provide a settled, civilized society, the outraging of social values *as a goal in itself* has a quality of blasphemy. One, who violates social practices and institutions, not for principled reformatory reasons (that is, to alter them) but because these *are* social practices and institutions[9], is rebelling against a Divine value.

Similarly, the dictionary definition for blasphemy includes the more popular sense of “bad language” and “profanity”. This also relates to the essential definition of blasphemy in that it constitutes a debasement of *language* – itself a fundamental institution of society. The term “profanity” is telling. Formally, it signifies “defilement” of the holy or the sacrosanct. One could argue that such language is sometimes simply colourful or even affectionate, but there are clear borders at which the intention of blasphemy is to subvert social norms in language.

The rebellion in blasphemy is also the soul of vandalism and pornography. The vandal and the pornographer paradoxically “believe” or at least “rely upon” the values which they are destroying. For were these values not to obtain there would be no benefit or motivation for them in their desecration of them. Similar to this is slander and the verbal attack upon persons and institutions, which has a solely destructive intention. The spirit of blasphemy is irreverence, not a whimsical and fundamentally apologetic irreverence, but a humanly “empty” – a cold and cynical – irreverence. It is rebellion for the sake of rebellion. Its object moves from the sacred to the sacrosanct.

The prohibition against idolatry makes conscious the acknowledgment of G-d as the moral authority of Divinely revealed laws. The prohibition on blasphemy makes conscious the principle of respect for that authority.

2. Society

The state and the containment of violence

[3] The prohibition on murder

The order of civilized society is threatened most by violence in its extreme form: killing[10]. The state, as Weber wrote, is distinguished by the fact that it possesses the sole legitimate resort to violence. It uses violence and death as its ultimate resource of order[11]. The state or society “emerges” from, and is the antithesis of, violence and killing. It has contained – that is to say, controlled – it and the permission to kill is transferred solely to it.

In a situation of non-government, which describes the formal condition of international “society”, there is no legitimate monopoly of the resort to violence. Order of a sort may be established by treaty or customary law, but this is only an order voluntarily subscribed to, or one established under duress, inherently unstable and without any overarching legitimate authority. Violence, potential (more or less explicitly threatened) or actual, is the foreground of international relationships. Likewise, in extreme circumstances, the State may have to go outside its own orderly existence, including the prohibition of murder, to reestablish order. It is then that the state reconstitutes itself from the condition of uncontained violence into the state of society[12].

Even where killing is arguably not harmful to basic social order, as in the cases of suicide, abortion and euthanasia, it is also forbidden by Noahide law. A human being is the union of a body and a soul. Concerning these, the liturgy[13] states, “the soul is Yours [G-d’s] and the body is

Yours". The human being was created in order to serve G-d and belongs to G-d. One is not permitted to dispose of his or her or anyone else's life, where this is not mandated by Divine law.

The sentient, bodily existence of a human being can experience suffering, and this is to be heeded, but its alleviation is not an absolute[14]. One's life is not one's own, that it may be destroyed at will through suicide. Yet the Divine law (by this we refer to the Noahide laws) might mandate a form of suicide, such as allowing oneself to be killed rather than kill another, when forced to this choice. The preservation of the soul in the body is of immense value, but its preservation in the body under all circumstances is also not an absolute. A terminally ill person himself, let alone anyone else, cannot authorize the active termination of his life, because it is not his life. Yet the Divine law might mandate forms of passive euthanasia, by not requiring one to pursue the prolongation of a life in pain without prospect of cure. An unborn fetus is not one's, that it may be destroyed at will through abortion. But the Divine law could mandate destruction of an unborn fetus, where the unborn child physically threatens its mother's life. So also it permits to kill in mortal self-defense of oneself or another.

There are Divinely ordained norms of human conduct, and their proper application in consideration of particular situations, discloses the Divine Will through which human being is practically to serve G-d. A person can serve G-d though living and through dying. But in all these cases, Divine law operates; it is the source of principles and the application of those principles and human reason must be guarded against a "reasoning" which imports other principles and assumptions.

The family: true and false unions

[4] The prohibition of forbidden sexual relations

From a theological point of view, not only is the basic social *unit*, but also the most complete and fullest identity of an *individual* its participation in, heterosexual marriage. The Bible states, "Man *and* woman He created them"[15], and mystical commentaries interpret this to mean that husband and wife constitute an entire soul and an entire body. An individual human being is thus intrinsically half a soul, half a person. Even prior to being married, he or she in some sense potentially relates to the "other half", wherever it may be[16]. The sexual union with an ethical and institutional commitment defines a *person* as well as the fundamental *social* unit.

There are three categories of sexual offences prohibited by the Noahide laws. These are those (1) prohibited by reason of closeness, such as incest, (2) prohibited by marriage, namely adultery and (3) prohibited because they run against the created nature and essence of the person, namely homosexuality and bestiality.

Incest constitutes perhaps the most "natural" universal prohibition[17]. Adultery represents a destruction of the fundamental social composite. Homosexuality and bestiality are strange and contrary to the nature of human identity: the whole *essential* human being was not created as two men or women or as a human and an animal.

The argument that false sexual unions could be justified where they are freely and "faithfully" contracted, employs a mistaken notion of freedom. The philosophers of the Enlightenment set forth freedom and personal liberty as ideals because they believed that it brought forth a human essence:

individual human autonomy realized and expressed through the act of choice. Freedom is good because through it a person becomes what he or she “is”. From a religious point of view, the freedom to contract a sexual union with the same-sex human being or with an animal is not freedom, but rather enslavement and alienation of human essence. And in that a human being belongs to G-d with the task to serve G-d, there is no more permission to pervert that essence than there is to remove it by killing it.

The argument, that a human being is created a homosexual and “genetically” has no choice but to be one, is similarly false, before entering into any “scientific” debate on the matter. Quite simply, G-d, Who creates and sustains human beings, has instructed the human being against homosexual practice. That G-d should have created and sustained humans as something which makes it impossible for them to do what He has instructed them to do, is false. A person is not compelled to be a homosexual, just as he is not compelled to be a thief. Whilst a person may have strong impulses in that direction, that is an animal nature, which G-d has instructed humans, through the guidance of their spiritual faculty – with suitable effort and assistance – to contain and transform.

Economy: the integrity and reciprocity of human dealings

[5] The prohibition on theft

Life itself is threatened by the violence of murder, property by theft. Theft, like murder, is a crime patently injurious of social order. The Rabbis stated that the prohibition on theft is so natural and obvious that had it not been biblically given we would have learnt it from ants: namely, from their social character and non-infringement of what belongs to others[18]. Indeed property – owned goods, tools and skills –

the object of theft, is the material of human economic activity, which in turn founds social organization. When Proudhon said that “property is theft”, he was saying that the *capitalist order* of property (not property *per se*) is theft, and his paradoxical formulation points to the reality that theft endangers property, and is the fundamental crime against basic human economic order[19].

Theft is a *wresting* of property from persons, contrary to the notion of the reciprocal contract and exchange, characteristic of civilized economy. Deceptive advertising, unfair competition, fraudulent benefit from work conditions, all impair the basic reciprocity, the openness and integrity of human dealings. It disaggregates society as a stable order created for the mutual economic satisfaction of needs.

There is a strong spiritual dimension to the issue of theft. For theft, which proceeds by stealth, does so that it not be seen. If not other people, G-d, however, sees the deed, and for this reason theft bespeaks a great deficit in the fear of G-d, for the individual is not perturbed by the “seeing eye” of G-d. Daylight robbery, on the other hand, might indicate a “higher” consciousness of G-d in this respect, but on the other hand, it borders on murder, since it forcefully wrests from its owners[20].

Often a logic of *personal* justice operates to rationalize theft: that the system owes me, or that it has unjustly withheld the item from me or that its requiring of me such and such is inherently unjust. Here comes the principle, that so long as laws are legitimate, in the sense to be discussed in connection with the seventh Noahide law, stealing is an offense against the Divinely sanctioned value of *social order*.

3. Transcultural norms

Relationships to nature

[6] The prohibition on cruelty to animals: in consuming the limb of a living animal

The variety of cultures, determined principally by the major world religions, indicate a variety of attitudes towards the "world". In the analysis of Max Weber, Judaism, Christianity and Islam display a theocentric character, oriented towards "world-overcoming" and "world-mastery". On the other hand, the Eastern religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism were more cosmocentric (i.e. world-centred), oriented more to "world-flight", and in the case of Confucianism, to "world-adjustment". These differences of posture to the world find a reflection in the attitude to killing and eating animals. Vegetarianism is found widely in the Eastern religions (except Confucianism), and not in the first group.

Whilst the prohibition on consuming the limb of a living animal has clearly to do with disallowing cruelty to animals, it is not a mandate for or against vegetarianism. Nature, whilst a creation of G-d and often reflecting G-dliness, was never, as a whole, sacred[21]. Nor is humanity its "steward" in the sense of preserving it in particular state. The verse in Genesis[22], which speaks of the subduing of the creation by human beings is not a license for power and dominion for its own sake. Humankind was placed in the Garden of Eden to "work it and to protect it"[23], in short, to elevate it. The task of humanity is much rather to redeem nature. The savagery of animals one to another is a defect in animals as indicated by the prophecy of Isaiah, with its *redemptive* vision of the lion lying down with the lamb, envisages, through human conduct, a transformation in the nature of animals[24].

Perhaps the major transaction between humans and the animal world is eating. A person should eat, not simply to gratify

desire, but also mindful that this food is given by G-d and should be consumed for a higher purpose. That higher purpose might simply be to gain strength to perform good and useful deeds. This intention, as explained in mystical commentaries[25] on the Bible, also rectifies the animal by attaching the Divine spark within it, to G-d. This in turn explains the significance of the prohibition on the consumption of the limb of a living animal.

Adam had, through his Divine service, so elevated the animal realm that there was no need for their consumption by human beings, to reattach them to the Divine. This is why Adam was a vegetarian and why humans were not permitted to slaughter meat for consumption. It was only with the subsequent corruption of the animal world (on account of human misconduct), that humanity from the time of Noah was permitted to eat meat. For then meat could undergo an elevation through its consumption by humans with a higher purpose. This does not make the consumption of meat mandatory, but invests the permission to eat meat with considerable responsibility.

At this point there entered the major qualification that the limb of a *living* animal not be consumed for reasons apart from the issue of cruelty. In utilizing and incorporating something for a higher purpose, it must first be a material capable of, and fit for, elevation. Otherwise, the object itself can overcome and bring down the person who has come to elevate it. Certain things are intrinsically incapable of elevation. Amongst these is the animal's *life*, its raw animal vitality: whilst it is in the flesh, the animal cannot be elevated through eating. The animal must first be slaughtered, and then its flesh is capable of elevation. Thus the concept of the elevation of nature is also at the heart of the prohibition on consuming the limb of a living animal.

The transcultural norm of the Noahide laws here teaches that the animal world is to be elevated materially and spiritually through its incorporation in the Divine service of human

beings. If human beings live to sanctify the creation, then the animals, which they have used, benefited from and consumed, become part of that service. Thus, Noahide law permits the consumption of animal flesh after slaughter. It would also permit the use of animal experimentation for the benefit of human beings. In all these cases, however, it teaches to minimize the suffering of animals.

Legitimate legal systems

[7] The prohibition upon failing to establish processes of justice

In his sociology of authority and “domination”, Weber delineated three general kinds of legitimate legal-political order. These were societies (1) where tradition furnished the basis of the legitimacy of a set of substantive laws with its governmental-administrative order; (2) where their basis was the charismatic qualities of the leadership; and (3) where the basis is the rational procedures through which political leaders were appointed and laws made (the rational-legal order). This typology admits a wide variety of historical societies. It does not, however, tell us anything about the substantive or normative validity of these systems’ values. Its focus is on the sociological bases of the authority, rather the objective normative validity of the substance, of law and social process.

The Noahide commandment of processes of justice relates, according to the commentator Rashi, is akin to the notion that the “law of the land is law” (*dina d’malchusa dina*) namely, secular law in the fiscal-administrative realm (not contradictory to Jewish law) which the Torah recognizes as binding upon a Jew[26]. As Maimonides rules, the commandment is to establish courts which will enforce the other Noahide laws, by means of processes (and with fiscal-administrative

regulations) which are discretionary and culturally variable.

Whilst law in this category could have a variety of expressions, one may learn from its comparison with the notion of the “law of the land is law”, as binding upon a Jew, in respect of the criteria which make secular laws acceptable. Maimonides sets these out in “the laws of robbery and lost property” in relation to the question of whether one may purchase land confiscated by a non-Jewish king from his subjects. Namely, is this land in the category of “stolen” land, in which case the general stricture against receiving stolen goods applies, or not?

The first criterion for the normative legitimacy of a legal rule or value is that the conduct of a secular system has to be *consistent* and non-arbitrary in its application. Thus Maimonides writes

...the law of all kings permits them to confiscate all the property of those ministers with whom they are displeased, and the king has therefore canceled the owner’s original right to it, so that the courtyard or field in question is regarded as ownerless, and if one buys it from the king, he becomes its lawful owner. But if a king takes the courtyard or field of one of the citizens, *contrary to the laws he has promulgated*, he is deemed a robber, and the original owner may recover it from anyone who buys it from the king[27].

An extension of this criterion is the *openness* of the legal system, as distinct from one which involves “non-public” acts of terror and persecution. This would rule out tyrannical states such as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia and societies in which corruption is rife. The public profile of law is in such cases inconsistent with its (often secret or private) execution. Its illegitimacy consists in the promulgation of judgments “...not in accordance with a law known to everyone but by doing violence to [... a particular] person”[28].

The conduct of law and government is moreover binding inasmuch as the subjects subscribe to the authority of the sovereign (or to the law-making body). Legitimacy thus reflects an element of *consensus* in relation to the existing system of authority. Maimonides formulates an empirical criterion to express the consensual foundation of the legitimacy of a legal-political system:

All the above rules apply only to a king whose coins circulate in the localities concerned, for then the inhabitants of the country have accepted him and definitely regard him as their master and themselves as his servants. But if his coins do not circulate in the localities in question, he is regarded as a robber who uses force, and as a troop of armed bandits, whose laws are not binding. Moreover, such a king and all his servants are deemed robbers in every respect.[29]

Where there is no, or only marginal, black-market activity, we have a measure of the legitimacy of the order. For then the patterns of economic activity and exchange correspond to legal and political realities. There exists stable, orderly, civilized society.

[1] From a letter to Robert Wilbrandt, April 2, 1913, cited by W.J. Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutsche Politick, 1890-1920*, and which is taken as the motto of W. Schluchter's book, *The Rise of Western Rationalism* (transl. G. Roth), Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1981:

[2] Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, p. 137 cited in the anthology of writings of Rabbi Schneerson on the Noahide Laws, *Kol bo'ei olam*. The editor of the latter work contrasts this with a seemingly contrary statement in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 7, p. 33, fn.18.

[3] See S.D. Cowen, "Foundations of the Noahide Laws" in *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 2 (5760/1999).

[4] *Mishneh Torah*, "Laws of Idolatry and its practitioners", chapter 1.

[5] This term is not employed by Maimonides, but is found in the *Remo*, *Shuchon Oruch*, *Orach Chayim* 156.

[6] There are also views that this is mandatory for a Noahide. See *Sha'alos u't'shuvos V'shov HaKohen* 38 and *Sha'arei Efraim* 24.

[7] With the option of an affirmation.

[8] 1964 printing, Vol. 3, p. 763.

[9] Certain doctrines which actually subscribe to a theory or philosophy of anarchy would be similarly be considered principled, as distinct from this fundamentally idle or indifferent destruction of values.

[10] See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, "Laws of the murder and physical protection" 4:9

[11] Cf the definition of the State by Max Weber as "that human society, which, within a particular area... (successfully) claims for itself the monopoly of physical violence" *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 5th edn, Studienausgabe, Tuebingen: J.C. B. Mohr(Paul Siebeck), 1972, p. 821.

[12] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 161.

[13] *Selichos*, and in the prayers of the High Holidays, Rosh HaShonah and Yom Kippur.

[14] As distinct from the argument of Peter Singer in *Animal Liberation*, for whom this constitutes the sole significance of a human or animal being.

[15] Genesis 1:27.

[16] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, pp. 95-6.

[17] See Levi Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (transl J.H.Bell et. al.) Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), ch. 1. Though see also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, pp. 273-74.

[18] Talmud, Tractate *Eiruvin* 100b.

[19] See George Lichtheim, *A short history of socialism*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970 who speaks of Proudhon's doctrine of the mutualism of property, whilst maintaining that workers should own their own tools.

[20] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 32, pp. 112-119.

[21] Such a concept , indeed, may be idolatrous. See M. Gerstenfeld, "Neo-paganism in the public square and its relevance to Judaism", *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 11: 3-4, Fall 1999 and his monograph *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment – Mapping and Analysis*, Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies & Rubin Mass Ltd, 1998.

[22] Genesis 1:26.

[23] Genesis 2:15.

[24] See Isaiah, ch. 11.

[25] *Baer Mayim Chayim* on Genesis 9:4.

[26] Rashi, Talmud Tractate *Gittin* 9b. Whilst there are some views that the laws of the Noahides within the category of "legal processes" are to resemble Jewish laws and institutions (commentary of Ramban on Genesis 34:13), there are authoritative opinions, as mentioned within, that this is not so.

[27] *Mishneh Torah*, "The laws of robbery and lost property", 5:13. Emphasis added.

[28] *Ibid.*, 5:14.

[29] *Ibid.*, 5:18.

Chapter 2

FOUNDATIONS OF THE NOAHIDE LAWS

Theological perspectives

1. In the image of G-d

The soul and the resonance of the Divine[1]

Jewish thought addresses not only the Jewish people but also general humanity. Whilst there are differences in the spiritual personality of Jew and non-Jew and the Torah provides different directives for each, there is an important area which is common to non-Jew and Jew alike. This commonality relates to the phrases used in the Torah “Let us make man in Our image and as Our likeness”[2] and, later on, that mankind was created “in the image of G-d”[3]. These phrases apply to all humanity[4].

The sense in which human beings exist in the “image of G-d” refers to a *faculty* found in mankind, termed by Jewish thought the “intellectual soul”, by which it means the intellectual being or characteristic of humans. The expression in the Hebrew of the Bible is *b'tzelem Elokim*, “in the likeness of *Elokim*”. Commentaries explain that the word *Elokim* to refer to the angels[5]. The intellectual soul of man, to which this term refers, thus has a likeness to the angels. Angels (*m'lochim*, literally “emissaries”) are spiritual beings without a body. They have no conflicts between their intellectual attachment to the Divine and feelings arising from a bodily existence, since they do not possess a body.

Similarly, the intellectual soul of human beings has in common with angels that it is intrinsically or potentially *removed* from physicality, from bodily drives and emotions. Human intellect is capable of independent attachment to G-dliness.

The difficulty for the human intellect, unlike an angel, is that it resides in a body together with what is termed the "animal soul", the bodily, emotional personality of a human being[6]. This has consequences for intellect itself. Thus, it has been stated[7] that the nature of the reasoning of intellect is that it builds on, and applies, first principles, and does so also by means of certain rules or styles of reasoning. But whilst reason can faithfully and rigorously apply and develop first principles, it is not the source of those first principles, nor is it the source of its particular style of reasoning. Reason as a pure instrument is thus forced in all honesty to acknowledge that which is other than reason, that with which reason works.

The first principles with which reason work have been termed "dispositions" (*ha'nochos*)[see note on the meaning of ethics from ethics textbook]. They arise in personal and cultural *will* (called by the Lubavitcher Rebbe *r'tzono ha'tov*). Certainly much of the social, human and behavioural sciences will acknowledge the pre-set biases or dispositions in knowledge and judgment and recent philosophy follows suit. Particular systems of reasoning or works of human creativity are, however, *validated* by the essentially arbitrary bases – preferences and dispositions which have been rationally expressed as assumptions – that condition them.

That which, on the other hand, makes intellect receptive not to the dispositions of personal will, but instead directs intellect to the Divine, is a fundamental humility, self-negation, called in Jewish thought *bitul*. The recognition of G-dliness and the content of Divine revelation as "authoritative", as the "life" of creation involves seeing the

creatureliness of mankind including human intellect (not to mention feeling). This is a spiritual perception of intellect: a possibility of intellect.

If the outcomes of reason follow from the arbitrarily selected assumptions and rules of reasons, how could *in terms of reason*, the orientation of intellect to the Divine rather than any other starting point, be defended? The answer to this is in the spiritual quality itself which resides within – which is the true “soul” of – human intellect[8]. The truth of the Divine is measured by the resonance, or the chord, which it finds in the human *soul*, whereby the G-dly in mankind recognizes and resonates with G-dliness at large. Intellect can verify this perception once experienced, but it is certainly not compelled to come to this perception. Indeed, this native, spiritual sense of the intellect has more often than not been concealed.

The commandments and the modelling of the Divine

A second significance of the term “in the image of G-d”, the commentaries state[9], is that, by its essence, mankind “rules”: just as G-d rules over the lower realms, so also man can and should rule over the lower realms, over the physical realm of nature. In the microcosm this would mean, and is so explained elsewhere that the intellectual soul has the ability to rule over the lower “nature” of man: to direct and refine emotion. Feeling is implanted in animal nature and in the animal with man. The raven, our Sages told us, has a quality of cruelty; whilst another is kindly disposed by its nature. Unlike the animal, however, no human being need be *impelled* by emotion since intellect is able to prevail over it.

Jewish thought presents human nature as composed of a number of attributes – *chesed* (love), *g'vurah* (severity or discipline), *tiferes* (harmony) and so forth – which are also the names of Divine attributes[10]. The difference is that in the animal nature of human beings these emotions can also take

on an unholy expression. Love can be other-directed or it can be venal and self-indulgent. So too the quality of severity could express itself in self-discipline and sanctification or it could take on the face of violence and aggression[11]. The significance of the commandments of the Torah, the knowledge supplied in Torah is to convert the attributes of human nature into their Divine expression. The Divine commandments, Maimonides writes, were given to “*rectify behaviours and to make deeds upright*” (*l’saken hadei’os u’l’yuasher hama’asim*[12])– through the 613 commandments of the Jew, and similarly, we might argue through the seven Noahide laws of the gentile.

Along these lines various authors[13] have written that the individual Noahide laws rectify – and have sought to identify – specific temperamental qualities (*middos*). The prohibition of murder comes to refine the characteristic of *g’vurah* (severity) from its degenerate expression (ultimately) in murder into the holier expression of self-discipline. The prohibition of forbidden sexual relations rescues *chesed* (loving kindness) from self-directed gratification to other directed kindness. But, whatever the correspondences between the Noahide laws and particular qualities of character may be, the basic notion remains that they have to do with a modelling of character which “resembles” the Divine. This notion of the modelling of the Divine does not mean that qualities of “kindness” and “severity” or “judgment” inhere in, or define, G-d. Rather, in the way G-d *practises* kindness, so should we; in the way G-d *practises* judgment, so should we.

The extension of a human personality modelled on the Divine is a harmonious and orderly society. The practical goal of the Noahide laws is thus manifested in the notion of civilized society: both in terms of the relationships of human being with G-d, and with other human beings. This ideal has been called by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel

Schneerson, “*yeshuvo shel olam*”, the “settled inhabitation of the world”[14]. This is not simply an “ideal”, a “plus”. Its absence is seen as something profoundly negative. An uncivilized world is a barbaric world. For since the world was created for a purpose, namely, the manifestation of G-dliness in it through the agency of mankind, both Jewish and non-Jewish, when there is a vitiation of this purpose through essentially barbarous human conduct, it is as though the purpose of human existence has been forfeited[15].

This is why the violation of the Noahide laws are associated with the “liability” of death. It does not mean that the Jewish people, who were instructed by Moses, at the command of G-d, to bring the nations to observance of these laws, have the legal possibility of carrying out this penalty[16]. The practical significance of the sense of the “liability to death”, associated with violation of the Noahide laws is the forfeiture of the purpose of the existence of human beings, who were created in the first place to carry out the settled and civilized inhabitation of the world, and have vitiated that purpose[17].

Non-Jews and Jews

What can keep the intellectual soul trained on G-d and the Divine commandments, rather than its being submitted to personal will[18]? Whilst the intellectual soul is potentially sovereign over emotion, its “proximity” to emotion is its weakness. To be attuned to the G-dly and to remain attuned, the intellectual soul has in the Jew the *wholly* separate pilot of the “G-dly soul”.

Even though this spiritual faculty in the Jewish people has a pre-history, its “installation” relates significantly to the exodus from Egypt and the receiving of the Torah, through which there occurred what is termed the “choosing of the

Jewish people". This meant an historical-spiritual bonding of the Jewish people with G-d, becoming, so to speak, part of their "spiritual genetics". It is expressed in the notion that a Jew inwardly steadfastly recognizes and cannot be separated from G-dliness. It is true that this spiritual consciousness can be covered over: there are Jews who are unobservant. But this spiritual attachment is latent and resurgent. It readily emerges at critical times[19].

There is a famous law in the Code of Maimonides[20] defining a righteous gentile as one who performs the Noahide laws not simply because they make sense, but because they have been commanded by G-d to Moses in the Torah. This is a statement of attachment to the Jewish people and to *their* attachment to G-d through Torah[21]. Thus innermost awareness of G-d, through the G-dly soul, not only keeps the intellectual soul of a Jew, at least in some sense latently, trained on the Divine. In a wider sense, it constitutes also that which the prophet referred to as a "light to the nations[22]".

Not only is this light focussed by the Jewish people upon the nations, and indeed Maimonides rules that the Jewish people are obliged to see to the moral conduct (the observance of the Noahide laws) of the nations. There is, however, a sense also in which the *soul* faculty (however consciously or unconsciously) of the nations *knows* the Jewish people to be their beacon. This dimension in humanity derives a vitality from the Jewish people and *desires* to be attached to them and to assist them; and through this more deeply to tap into the Divine[23].

Not only are the Jewish people a beacon or a light, in the words of the prophet, to the nations in the sense that it is there for those who *wish* to chart their course by it. Maimonides rules that the Jewish people have an obligation to *bring* the nations to fulfilment of their commandments[24]. This, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe has pointed out, is not based upon any particular means of influence nor is it limited by

its immediate prospects of success[25]. Only of Moshiach is it stated (at the very end of Maimonides Code[26]), that he will effectively be able to bring the entire world to the service of G-d inclusive of fulfilment of the Noahide laws. The service of Jews in influencing the gentile world up to that time, is of an essentially preparatory nature[27]. At the time of Moshiach, a great Jewish leader of prophetic dimensions, there will be the revelation of a Divine "light", of G-dliness, which will drive away moral darkness from the nations. We cannot know how this rectification of the world will be. Certainly the prevailing spirit in Chassidic thought, in relation to the propagation and establishment of the Noahide laws, is in a manner of "paths of peace" consonant with the Biblical verse, invoked by Maimonides[28], that "G-d is good to all and His mercies are with all his creatures"[29].

2. Rival philosophies of Noahidism

Two approaches

Whilst the obligation upon the Jewish people to influence the nations to keep the Noahide laws, as mentioned above, applies at all times, it has until recently not been vigorously practised. A reason for this, sanctioned by Torah itself, is the fact of danger. This was due to the vulnerability of the Jewish people in the context of a general society antagonistic to them. Yet at this critical juncture in history, when it appears that Jews can proceed without fear to teach and influence the non-Jewish world quite explicitly with regard to the Noahide laws, and as Noahide movements emerge, there opens up an issue of fundamental philosophical difference of approach to Noahidism.

Two fundamental approaches emerge. One of these is the classical orthodox Jewish tradition, which can be documented

in Maimonides, the Maharal of Prague and the writings of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. This is at the foundation of first section of this essay. The other stems from relatively recent writings associated with the names Benamozegh and Palliere.

In 1955 there was published for the first time an English translation of a work written in French by a Moroccan-born Jew, Elijah Benamozegh, who for 50 years held a Rabbinical post in Livorno in Italy. His life spanned the years 1823-1900 and was marked by prolific writing and a thoroughgoing acquaintance with the secular learning of his time. His name and quotations from his work appear in a number of recent orthodox works in English on the Noahide Laws, but these come through and are quoted in the book, *The Unknown Sanctuary*, of a French gentile, Aime Palliere, whom Banamozegh inspired to a life of Noahidism. A reprint of Palliere's book, with a new introduction by David Novak, appeared in 1985[30]. Palliere is presented by some as the gentile "high priest" of Noahidism. His work shows a fundamental consonance with that of Benamozegh, whose thought he faithfully propagated.

It would appear that until the recent appearance of a new English translation, *Israel and Humanity*[31], Benamozegh's work *itself* has been little known (notwithstanding the Hebrew edition and translation which appeared in 1967). In emerging contemporary writings on Noahidism positions are being taken up which correspond with each of these positions. Some, residing within the orthodox tradition, quote the writings of Benamozegh and Palliere sympathetically, but it would appear that they have not made a systematic analysis of these works, which in fact are at variance with their positions. The purpose of the following is bring out the essential difference between these two philosophies of Noahidism.

The distinct tasks of Jew and non-

Jew

The crux of the issue is the notion – which has always agitated Jewish apologists – of the difference and chosenness of the Jewish people, in relation to the other nations of the world. For traditional Jewish thought, the chosenness of the Jewish people relates to the idea, noted above, that they acquired a level of spiritual perception and connectedness, during the exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Sinai, associated *transcendent* G-dliness. This relates to G-dliness which infinitely surpasses the creation and in fact engenders it *ex nihilo* into being. It is to be contrasted with the perception and level of *immanent* G-dliness, a “contracted G-dliness” which resides and manifests itself within the creation. In the words of the Maharal of Prague, the Jewish people acquired an attachment to transcendent G-dliness, making their existence *nivdal* (“separate”) from the ordinary realm of nature, and characterized by a miraculous Providence[32].

The intellectual soul of the gentile, on the other hand, is concentrated in the capacity to relate to the way in which Divine contracts and enclothes itself within creation, to *immanent* G-dliness. This spiritual difference between Jew and non-Jew is reflected, according to the Maharal, in the differences between the commandments applying to the Jewish people on the one hand, and to the gentile nations, on the other. The Jewish people have the multiplicity of six hundred and thirteen commandments reflecting their intense connectedness to a level of G-dliness transcending the creation. The gentile nations on the other hand, whose relationship to the Creator is more via the creation itself, have the less complex bond of seven general commandments[33], even though these are widely ramified.

The “chosenness” of the Jewish people is therefore not connected with “domination”[34] or “exclusiveness”. It

signifies the bonding with a level of transcendent G-dliness[35] expressed through the performance of six hundred and thirteen commandments. Jew and non-Jew have a partnership to fulfil in which each has a crucially complementary service to perform. The Sages of the Talmud themselves spoke of the greatness of a non-Jew occupied in the study of the Torah in relation to the Noahide laws in terms comparable to that of the service of the High Priest of the Jewish people[36]. The complementary roles of Jew and non-Jew are both integral to the notion of redemption.

Two of Maimondies thirteen principles[37] of the faith – the Messiah and Resurrection – relate to a notion of redemption in traditional Jewish thought. As this is formulated in Chassidic thought, it means the transcendent – boundless, supernatural – Divinity will be drawn into, and manifested within, the “ordinary” frameworks of life: that the miraculous will be inserted in the “Mundane”, and that this will itself constitute the greatest revelation of the Creator and reward for humankind. In this scheme, as explained in Chassidic thought, the function of the seven Noahide laws is to fashion an orderly and civilized world – in which immanent G-dliness is manifested – as the fundament *upon which* the drawing of the higher transcendent revelation into this world by the service of the Jewish people, can take place[38].

Benamozegh’s thought seems to repress the distinction between the transcendent and immanent spiritual orientations of Jew and non-Jew[39]. It is true that he distinguishes between what he calls the more mystical and suprarational character of the “Mosaic” law and the more “rational” and worldly religions, but in the end he sees these as two sides of the one revelation and the one teaching. The Jewish preoccupation is with the pure monotheistic idea, the unity of the Divine; the nations have focussed on aspects of the Divine, which they have transfigured into divinities in their own right. Judaism becomes therefore the sum of the individual deities, which are

the “partial” truths of nations[40]. This he seeks to support with what he regards as an “emanationist” doctrine of the Kabbalah, whereby the transcendent Creator actually resides in the creation, which then become so many facets of His unity[41].

Benamozegh is arguably much closer here to the neo-Platonist philosopher Plotinus and to non-Jewish mystical philosophers such as Bruno and Ficino[42] than to Jewish Kabbalah. For one of the basic notions of Kabbalah is that the “world” the creation as it is, is a “damaged” world in which Divinity has been driven into concealment rather than being revealed within it. Benamozegh’s approving quotations from Spinoza[43] only strengthen the impression that the Creator of the Jewish people is not truly transcendent, but only an immanent extrapolation from the creation itself. Benamozegh presents Judaism as relating essentially to the same plane as Noahidism. He sees the particular laws (“Mosaism”) of the Jewish people as intended simply to suit them for the role of trustee in the implementation of a universal religion of mankind (“Noahidism”). That is, instead of introducing transcendent G-dliness into creation, their task is simply to assist the Noahide manifestation of G-dliness immanent within creation, propagated through the seven Noahide laws[44].

Benamozegh’s removal of the transcendent/immanent distinction between the spiritual service of Jew and non-Jew or of Judaism and Noahidism produces a different vision of the redemptive goal of creation, set out in Torah. In Benamozegh’s view, humankind – Jew and non-Jew as a collective agency – is seen simply to work gradually on its own perfection, but without any fundamental, qualitative transformation of creation of the kind suggested in traditional Jewish sources. If, as Benamozegh wishes to argue, Israel and humanity are basically two perspectives of the one thing, then the gods of the nations are a very disturbing aggregate reflection of the one Creator of the Jewish people. Indeed Benamozegh seems to

express equivocations about this at the end of his book, where he laments the persecutions of the Jewish people by the adherents of the world religions, seeing only “now” an emerging tolerance and acknowledgment of Jewish monotheism on the part of the nations.

Palliere, rather than presenting the nations as setting the stage for the introduction of transcendent G-dliness into the creation by the Jewish people, similarly inverts this relationship. He makes the Jewish people ministers of a universal Noahidism. He quotes Benamozegh, that “not only has the Noachide law never ceased to be in force, but even Israel, with its special code, Mosaism, was created for it, to safeguard it, to teach it, to spread it”[45]. The entire significance of the Mosaic law, is not to effect the transformation of creation and humanity, and to provide a conduit for the introduction of transcendent G-dliness into the creation, but simply a regime to make the Jewish people fit to act as a priesthood for Noahidism.

The practical consequences

The basic difference in the philosophical understanding of the relationship between the Jewish people and the gentile nations has practical consequences for another issue in Noahidism, the authority of the Oral Law, *Torah sheb'al peh*. Maimonides in the Introduction to his great Code lays down the principle that the giving of the Torah was not only as a written text but also with a body of interpretation. It is impossible, according to this principle, for the meaning of the scriptural verses (in this case, the verses in Genesis from which the Noachide laws are learnt) to be comprehended without the tradition of commentary passed from generation to generation embodied in the Rabbinic tradition. Its transmission is characterized by an attitude of profound *bitul* – humility, deference and receptivity – towards the body of detailed commentary of previous generations, going all the way back to

the interpretation – the Oral Law – given to Moses at Sinai. The ability to derive new rulings and applications of the law is something for which the Jewish people, and within it the Rabbinic tradition, are uniquely fitted.

Similarly, the source of the authority of the Noahide laws is not an “independent “ tradition which goes back to Adam and Noah, but the giving, at Sinai, of the Torah, which makes known that the gentile nations had previously been instructed in these laws and gives these laws a *new* authority. In the words of Maimonides, the righteous gentile is one who has taken upon him or herself to perform the Noahide laws specifically

...because the Holy One blessed be He commanded concerning them in Torah and *made known through our teacher Moses* that the sons of Noah have *previously* been commanded in them[46].

The giving of the Torah at Sinai to Moses, *both* in its written and oral forms, is thus the source of *authority* and *interpretation* of the Noahide law. Contrary to this is the view that the Noahide law is essentially independent of Sinai. Palliere puts this plainly. Noahidism is “the religion of the patriarchs for the Gentiles”[47], “the religion *preserved* by Israel to be transmitted to the Gentiles”[48]. This is a view which separates the Noahide laws from the transcendent beacon and guide of the Jewish people and makes them into an autonomous tradition which antedates Sinai. The Oral law, the Rabbinic tradition, which stems from Sinai, for this philosophy of Noahidism becomes irrelevant.

From the traditional point of view, the Oral Law, maintained within the Rabbinic tradition, is of course the living fount of adjudication and application of the Noahide laws is vitally important for the Noahide Laws. Without it one cannot know the meaning and details of the Noahide laws cryptically set fourth in Scripture. Moreover, just as the Oral Law sets for the teaching of Torah in matters of halachah, so too does it

provide us with the philosophical outlook of Torah and with the instruments of biblical exegesis and historical interpretation, which no independent "bible study" can supplant.

Benamozegh seeks to adduce arguments from his own interpretations of biblical verses, interpretations which are sometimes at variance with (or indifference to) those of great figures of the oral Tradition. When, similarly he makes historical judgements which are similarly at variance with the Oral Law, this is fraught with more obvious consequences. Thus, he makes a parenthetical statement in his Conclusion, that Jesus "was a good Jew who did not dream of founding a rival church"[49]. Making a "pristine, restored" Christianity into the carrier of Noahidism rather than the Noahide laws, together with their detail, set out in the Oral law, is profoundly problematic.

Palliere similarly validated Christianity in its supposedly "pristine" form, which he sees as excluding the doctrine of incarnation, as the legitimate extension of Judaism to the nations. In his words, "one cannot find any lack of continuity between the Hebrew Bible and the Gospel"[50]. Jesus becomes for him the prototype of a Noahide: "I said to myself that I was no longer a Christian in the proper sense of the word, but a Jew, probably as Jesus had been a Jew"[51]. This view of Jesus is not the view of Maimonides[52] or of Torah sources in general.

One cannot expect the young Noahide movements to have knowledge of the dynamics and methods of the oral, Rabbinic traditions, together with its ways of resolving the various strands of opinion amongst the Sages of the Jewish People down to the present day. But it is important for them to know that when they seek instruction about the righteous gentile existence, it can only be through the filter of the living Rabbinic tradition.

[1] I am grateful to Rabbi Dovid Zirkind for comments on this essay.

[2] Genesis 1:26

[3] *Ibid.* 1:27

[4] See Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos* (NY: Kehos), Vol. 15, pp. 58-62 and the discussion in S.D. Cowen, "The concept of a person: reflections on Judaism and psychotherapy" in *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 1, pp. 26-28.

[5] See *Rashbam* and *Chizkuni* on Genesis 1:27

[6] See the discussion in Cowen, "The concept of a person...", *op. cit.*, together with the references cited there.

[7] For the following see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p.561.

[8] See Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Sefer Maamorim 5713*, p.361. This reference was kindly drawn to my attention by Rabbi Dr. A.L. Solomon.

[9] See *Chizkuni* on Genesis 1:26.

[10] Or '*s'firos*'. These are attributes not in the sense that they inhere in G-d, but that describe his actions or ways, as described below.

[11] See "The concept of a person...", *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.

[12] *Hilchos T'mura* 4:13.

[13] See Rabbi Y. Bindman, *The Seven Colours of the Rainbow* (San Jose, California: Resource Publications, 1995) ostensibly based on writings of Rabbi Yitzchok Ginzburg. See the afterward to the translation of the "Maharal on the Noahide laws".

[14] "*Yeshuv ha'olam*". See for example *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, pp.159-60, Vol. 20, p.140.

[15] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 160.

[16] See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Avodas Cochovim* 10:6, *Ra'avad* and *Kesef Mishneh* on *Hilchos Milah* 1:6.

[17] I am grateful to Rabbi Chaim Gutnick *zichrona livrocho* for elaboration of this point.

[18] Cf the concept of *r'tzono hatov* above. This is a term also used by Lionel Trilling to refer to the unleashed emotional complex in man, in a virtually Freudian sense. See the second part of the discussion on "Lionel Trilling and Jewish Tradition" in this volume.

[19] This is a notion expressed repeatedly in Chassidic thought, elaborated already in the *Tanya* of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. The notion is also there in the writings of the Maharal of Prague. See S. D. Cowen, *Jewish Thought in Context 2nd edn* (Melbourne: Monash University, 1998), pp. 53-54.

[20] *Hilchos M'lochim* 8:11.

[21] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, pp. 61-62.

[22] Isaiah 49:6.

[23] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p.142-3.

[24] *Hilchos M'lochim* 8:10. The Lubavitcher Rebbe based his campaign to influence the nations towards fulfilment of the Noahide laws, based principally upon the ruling of Maimonides. See, on the positions of other Rishonim in this regard, the discussion by Rabbi Michael J. Broyde, "The Obligation of Jews to Seek Observance of Noahide Laws by Gentiles: a Theoretical Review", in *Tikkun Olam – Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (ed. David Shatz, Chaim I. Waxman and Nathan J. Diament), Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1997).

[25] Except where there is an issue of danger in promoting

these mitzvos publicly, which explains why there is relatively little record of Jewish activity in this regard until recently (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, pp. 141-42. This reference kindly shown to me by Rabbi M. Lipskier). See Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Shaarei Halachah u'Minhag*, Vol. 3 (*Yoreh Dei'ah*), *simen* 20 at length on the enduring obligation to influence the nations, even if this cannot be done in a manner of "forcing".

[26] *Hilchos M'lochim* 11:4.

[27] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 175.

[28] See the end of ch. 10 of *Hilchos M'lochim*.

[29] Psalms 145:9. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 175, f n. 45.

[30] *The Unknown Sanctuary – A Pilgrimage from Rome to Israel*, transl. Louise Waterman Wise, new edition with preface by David Novak, New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1985.

[31] Translated with an introduction by Maxwell Luria (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1995).

[32] Chassidic thought goes further to speak of a bonding of the Jewish soul with a level of quintessential or absolute G-dliness, higher than transcendental G-dliness. See S.D. Cowen, *Jewish Thought in Context*, p.109-110.

[33] See *Tiferes Yisroel*, ch. 9.

[34] *Hilchos M'lochim* 12:4.

[35] And to absolute G-dliness (*Atzmus*); see fn.32.

[36] Sanhedrin 59a.

[37] Set out in his *Pirush Hamishnayos*, introduction to the tenth chapter of Sanhedrin.

[38] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p.140, Vol. 5, p. 159ff, Vol. 15, 150.

[39] This distinction receives some lipservice on p. 71, which he also seeks to reinforce by reference to the Kabbalah. However, it becomes clear, that the transcendence is not a genuine transcendence, as will be noted below.

[40] *Israel and Humanity*, p. 47, where he writes "Nothing can be more natural than to use the name 'Father' for Being itself, as substance, and 'isms' for His attributes". Or, as on p.268, where he writes "of the various divinities of paganism, in which Judaism taught their adherents to discover the scattered fragments of divineTruth". Similarly on pp. 300-1, he states his view that the gods of the nations are hypostasized aspects of the One, true G-d. In this, his thought represents more neo-Platonism and Gnosticism than authentic Kabbalah. See Moshe Idelsohn's concluding essay in the volume, where he speaks approvingly of Benamozegh's matching of these latter doctrines with the Kabbalah, p. 379. Note also Benamozegh on page 99, where he writes that "an uninterrupted ladder joins all levels of existence, from the most sublime to the most ephemeral", but this is used in a neo-Platonist, Plotinian way rather than in accordance with the concept of *tzimtzum* and the phenomenon of evil, as found in works of classical Judaism such as the *Sha'ar hayichud v'ho'emunah* of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.

[41] *Israel and Humanity*, p. 96 et passim.

[42] *Israel and Humanity*, pp. 221, 316.

[43] *Ibid*, pp. 204, 256.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 316 et passim, where the significance of the Jewish people is as a priesthood to the nations. This point is brought out more explicitly in Palliere (see below).

[45] *The Unknown Sanctuary*, p. 144.

[46] *Hilchos M'lochim* 9:11, emphasis added.

[47] *The Unknown Sanctuary*, p.136

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 135, emphasis added.

[49] *Israel and Humanity*, pp. 329-30.

[50] *The Unknown Sanctuary*, p.119.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Hilchos M'lochim* 11:4.

Chapter 3

RATIONALITY AND THE NOAHIDE LAWS

Philosophical perspectives

1. The realm of belief

Weber and Russell: the negation of a transcendent realm

Both Max Weber and Bertrand Russell dismissed the *objectivity* of supra-rational, religious values. To say this of Weber might at first seem strange. A great deal, possibly even the major focus of his work, was the historical sociology of religion, particularly as this served his analysis of the rise of western modes of rationalization and capitalism. His sociology interpreted historical forms of social, economic and cultural organization in terms of their orientation to complexes of – primarily religious – values.

Yet, concerning the objective reference of religious worldviews (*Weltanschauungen*), he wrote that we

have to know that we cannot read the *meaning* of the world in the results of its [scientific] investigation, no matter how perfect, but must instead be in a position to create that meaning ourselves; that '*Weltanschauungen*' can never be the product of advancing empirical knowledge; and that therefore the highest ideals, which move us most powerfully, are worked out for all time only in the struggle with other ideals, which are just as sacred as ours are to us.[1]

That is, notwithstanding a formal respect for beliefs, in which the next must be judged as "sacred" as ours, and an irruptive nostalgia for a commitment to ultimate values, Weber saw these as being merely personal and without objective truth, ultimately a "polytheism" of "warring gods".

In regard to Weber's position on religion, Max Scheler[2] wrote,

Weber...equates the 'subjective' with the 'personal' instead of with maximal and hypernormal [*übernormal*] *objectivity*, and is uninterested in the merely general values and purposes of life

The rejection by Weber of the reality of the object of religious belief, as distinct from the objectivity of rationality and science, is made explicit by Bertrand Russell, in an essay entitled "Mysticism and Logic"[3]. Russell sets up four oppositions between mystical-religious and logical or rational modalities of thought. These are that (1) mystical thought rests on intuition or insight whilst rational thought is discursive; (2) mystical thought sees unity where logical thought sees plurality; (3) mystical thought ignores time whilst logical thought recognizes its reality; (4) mystical thought sees evil as illusory, whilst logical thought clearly and empirically discerns good and evil.

The very opposition between the requirements of rational

thought and the mystical, religious view is for Russell sufficient to strip the latter of objectivity. Should one, however, wish to distinguish mystical[4] from “more” rational religious views, Russell deals with this also in the essay, “Why I am not a Christian”[5]. There he seeks to dispose of arguments for the existence of G-d, which are based on rational lines of thought: in terms of time, space and causality. He rejects the “first cause” theory of the existence of G-d, which pursues a regress until a first Principle is discovered, by stating that there is no compelling reason to presume that the world *has* a first cause. Against the “natural law argument” he argues that if there is good reason for the creation being the way it is, then one is making this order or standard anterior to the Creator, so why does one need a Creator? He rejects the argument from design, by asking simply, who says the design is good? He then rejects what he finally puts forward, as the moral argument, namely that “that there would be no right or wrong unless G-d existed”[6], by saying again that if right and wrong is by G-d’s command, then again one is making right and wrong anterior to G-d, since one is not maintaining that G-d is above and ultimately “indifferent” to good and bad.

These arguments for the existence of G-d (rejected by Russell), place G-d *inside* the framework – time, space and causality – of *immanent* reality, instead of being their *transcendent* Creator, existing, as the “mystic” and indeed the Noahide[7] ultimately sees, beyond these categories. Here, the religious Noahide can respond with the reported remark of a contemporary Jewish sage: the “G-d, in which you do not believe, I also do not believe”. The G-d, to whom *belief* pertains, transcends the immanent, created realm of time, space and causality.

Noahide theology: the objectivity of a transcendent realm

From a Noahide theological point of view, the Weberian perspective – that there is no objective transcendent reality

– is *obviously* false to the organ of *belief*[8], the soul. Noahide theology maintains that the soul “knows” G-d in that the human soul is a (lesser) likeness of G-d. Like is a receptor for like. The soul “sees” or “picks up” the Divine in that it has an intrinsic affinity for it. The ability to see spiritually, and the potential for all human beings spiritually to see the same thing, relates to the universal constitution of the human soul in the image of G-d. The presence of a common root spirituality in all humanity cannot be proven or refuted “rationally”. Rather, it could only be confirmed through a process of growing native spiritual resonance, *when* presented to, or evoked in, individuals of different cultures. The common recognition of the Divine through the common spiritual constitution with which human beings are endowed, is, according to biblical tradition and its commentaries, to become fully manifest in the redemption of humanity.

Russell’s objection, that the mystical or religious principle vitiates rational discourse and scientific activity is also disposed of by Noahide theology. This can be understood by way of the introduction, that there in fact simultaneously exist two dimensions of reality, the result of the operation of two different Divine powers in creation. One is a “transcendent” Divine power which relates to the factual existence of all things in creation, namely their being engendered constantly into existence *ex nihilo*. This is the source of their ultimate unity[9]. At the same time there operates in conjunction with this infinite, transcendent Divine power, another Divine power – of “contraction” – which, analogously to a coloured filter over a white light, functions to screen out that “infinite” creative light and to delineate, so to speak, the finite and specific forms of things. These two powers – an infinite engendering one and a delimiting one – are issued and coordinated by G-d in the act of creation.

Now, the fact that the entities of creation are left with a

finite form and coexist in great multiplicity and differentiation is in no contradiction to the infinite engendering power, the continuous fount of their existence. This is because the unitary transcendent engendering force, from "G-d's [- the transcendent -] perspective", is wholly unaffected by the contraction, which presents division and multiplicity from the perspective of the creation, such that the finite creatures should be shielded from all but the modicum of vitality required for their internal enlivening. The world fashioned by the power of contraction, articulates what we immanently know as "nature", with its framework of time, space, causalities and other structures. These are dealt with through the categories of another created, natural entity – human intellect. Behind the surface of nature, which is all the secularly thinking mind can perceive, however, functions the unified engendering life force, with qualities which transcend human understanding, but which the soul accesses ("sees") through belief.

This removes the "contradiction" posited by Russell (1) between the "mystical" intuition of the *soul*, which accesses the deeper reality, and the "discursive" grasp by reason of the surface, contracted, reality of nature and creation. Russell mistakenly makes them compete on the one immanent plane of reality. The appreciation of the coexistence and co-operation of these two dimensions of reality also dissolves the other (remaining three) oppositions which Russell posits between mysticism and logic, since these simply relate to the different dimensions of existence.

Thus, (2) the *transcendent* reality – or Divine power – continuously founding things *is* unified, whilst the power of contraction *does* produce multiplicity on the surface of immanent reality. Unity and multiplicity are not contradictory but co-function on different planes of reality. (3) The most primary element[10] of structure effected through the power of contraction is time, associated with change and sequence. On

the other hand, the transcendent aspect of creation, as indicated in the etymology of the tetragrammaton (the ineffable name of G-d, signifying "was", "is" and "will be" all as one) is wholly beyond time. So also, (4) good and evil are both matters of indifference vis-à-vis a transcendent Creator. Yet, in terms of the contracted, immanent creation which He sustains and allows the human actors to influence, good and evil become distinct realities and alternatives. Reason and *its* realm, immanent created reality, exist *within* the envelope of a transcendental order.

Belief accesses not only the Divine source of creation, but also the values, known also as Divine attributes, transcendently imparted through revelation. These attributes, paralleled in the human soul, also find translation into the Divine commandments in general and the Noahide laws in particular.

2. The realm of reason

Weber and Kant: rationality and the harmonization of human goals

Whilst, consistent with his view of the ultimate subjectivity of human ends, Weber could not posit an ethic of ends, he at the same time introduced an ethical notion of rationality. In his essay "The Profession and Vocation of Politics"[11] he adumbrated an "ethic of responsibility" (*Verantwortungsethik*), which states this doctrine of ethical rationality. This Weber contrasts with an "ethic of conviction" (*Gesinnungsethik*) where substantive ends absolutely and with little sense of consequences, dictate action. Indeed, Weber recognized the value of passionate attachment to ideals in the politician, and that this passion will inevitably be rooted in *personal* belief. The function of the "ethic of responsibility", however, is to moderate these

value standpoints with some measure of rationality (as is to be explained).

Weber himself made approving reference to Kant's ethical doctrine[12], and it is this which invites comparison of the Weberian with the Kantian ethic. Now, Weber's "ethic of responsibility" is unlike Kant's in certain important respects. It is not, in the words of Wolfgang Schluchter, a "cognitivist" reflexive ethical principle like that of Kant, which is applied to *produce* an ethic. This would be established in Kant on the principle of the "categorical imperative" ("Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law"). Values for Weber, as noted, much rather represent prior commitments. Rather, Weber's is a "criticist" reflexive principle[13], that is to say, one which seeks to make as rational as possible a position which has arisen through belief or personal conviction. Nevertheless the elements of rational thought in Kant's teaching – freedom, consistency and reciprocity of perspective[14] – do bear consideration for the way in which they are applied in Weber's ethical thought.

The role of the Kantian ethical principle of *freedom* in Weber's thought is understood with the introduction that, according to Kant, the human being, has an emotional nature *and* a rational self; these belong respectively to the sensible – i.e. emotional, sensual – world and the intelligible – i.e. rational – world. Only in the latter world is the human being "free" (i.e. undriven)[15]. The concept of ethical duty follows from the fact that this is a law, which I give myself and to which I submit because I have given it. This concept of rationality implies an ability, and the exercise of the ability, to rise above passion and impulse, not to submit uncritically to its dictation, but to accept or reject it freely. Passion, as we have noted, is part of the requirements of a politician, in Weber's eyes. But this must be equally moderated by responsibility in pursuing an ethical

stance: to exercise, in Weber's words, "*judgment*, the ability to maintain one's inner composure and calm while being receptive to realities, in other words *distance* from things and people"[16].

Secondly, there is the Kantian requirement to think *consistently* and without contradiction. In Weber this means thinking through the chain of value assumptions in a political-ethical stance as well as the consequences of all of these values once incorporated into action. Indeed this is one of the first characteristics of rational organizations and of rationality in general. It pursues the consequences of positions and it seeks their formal coherence. Through it, one comes to know

(1) the unavoidable means and (2) the unavoidable consequences [as well as] (3) the thereby incurred conflict of various possible value responses with one another in terms of their practical consequences.[17]

In relation to the third aspect of Kantian rational thinking, it would appear that Weber departs from the Kantian notion of universalizability, expressed in Kant's notion of the categorical imperative. For this notion was set up formally to establish principles of action, whereas, for Weber, value positions cannot be ultimately grounded. Rather, Weber appreciates an ethic which comprehends non-agreement and seeks clearly to delineate and discuss the area of difference. In the context of necessarily "collisional" viewpoints, it is not a matter of "understanding" of "forgiving" the other[18], but rather to know "that, why and in which areas one *cannot* come to an understanding"[19]. In one place, Weber puts it thus:

To what extent a goal justifies unavoidable means and so also the other [consideration]: to what extent undesirable consequences will have to be assumed, as well as finally, how conflicts between several desired or necessary goals which come concretely into conflict with each other, can be

managed., This in plain terms is the issue of choice or compromise[20].

What remains of Kantian universalizability in Weber's work, in Schluchter's phrase, has to do with an ethic of value discussion:

The universalizing principle as a principle of critical examination requires an ethic of dialogue. The basic principle of such an ethic of dialogue can be formulated, in analogy to Kant's philosophy of religion, in the following manner: You ought to move from the ethical state of nature, where your conviction is continuously threatened by self-deception, to the state of concrete value discussions, because the latter are capable of producing self-clarification and a sense of responsibility, both of which have to be pursued by anyone seeking to satisfy the imperative to be rational.[21]

The task of the ethical person, is to *reduce* the one-sidedness of one's standpoint, to modify it in the sense of displaying a universal regard for other persons and their positions, notwithstanding one's commitment to a personal goal. It is this which mediates values with rationality.

The Noahide laws: rationality and worldly integration of the Divine

The features of rationality found in ethics, discussed above – freedom of intellect (from drivenness), the probing for consistency and the harmonization of perspectives – all find their counterpart in the Noahide laws. The difference here is that we are not dealing here with “autonomous” individual wills and purposes, but rather the individual parts which humans have in the *Divine* purpose, as themselves having been created in the Divine image.

The Kantian notion of freedom is connected with the

sovereignty of intellect. This is meritorious inasmuch as it signifies the *sovereignty* of reason over drivenness. But from a Noahide point of view this is insufficient. Intellect must take its first principles from somewhere[22]: if not from unreflected passion, or ultimately unquestioned assumptions and predispositions, then from some other “unquestionable”, “non-rational” and yet true source. The Noahide laws here open up the vista of the “service of G-d”. In freeing itself from the driven-ness of emotion, intellect should now and next become receptive to the knowledge of the soul, the imitation of the Divine. Moreover, only when intellect has first subordinated itself to belief, and to the information of belief, does it fully free itself from the sway (“the bribery”[23]) of emotional and dispositional biases.

It is, moreover, through self-subjugation (*bitul*) to a common spiritual source that possibility of the unification, articulation and harmonization of individuals becomes possible. When the purpose and concern of individuals, is of “one kind”[24], one has the grounds on which unity is feasible. This is neither a historically-relative substantive (Weberian) or an abstract-formal (Kantian) ethics. It is an intellectual alignment with the imitation of G-d. The soul so oriented is called “intellectual” (*sichli*) – the “intellectual soul” (*nefesh hasichlis*).

The attuned intellectual soul further becomes an instrument for the prescriptive regulation of human existence as an extension of the Noahide laws. Indeed, the Sages said, “had the Torah not been given, we would have learnt modesty from the cat and [the prohibition of] theft from the ant”[25], which maintains order within its colony. Intellect would have selected and utilized these models. So also all forms of behaviour which the healthy intellect deems requisite, such as the keeping of one’s word[26], or additional strictures assumed to protect moral[27] standards become mandatory as Noahide law.

The Noahide laws are, secondly, associated with the allaying of conflict. This is the aspect of rationality, which, in Weberian terms, thinks through the consequences for oneself and others of one's individual position. The opposition to conflict is expressed in the notion of settledness, of purposive, constructive and so co-operative activity, in the goal of "the settling of the world" (*yeshuvo shel olam*)[28], or in the verse that world "was created not for chaos but to be settled"[29]. This is further intimated in that the Noahide laws are negative laws, which mitigate conditions of disorder (not to blaspheme, not to steal, not to murder and so forth). Noahide law opposes barbarism. It seeks to create order by opposing chaotic phenomena. It wants human beings not to be engaged in destructive and socially disintegrative activities. Consistency in the moral realm, as Weber abstracted this Kantian category, as concern for the conflictual consequences of one's moral position, has its counterpart in the Noahide laws in the sense in which one's service of G-d has to "sit with" and "in" worldly order (*his'yashvus*). The regard for others is motivated by the notion that one's service of G-d should be *accommodated in the world*[30].

Finally, there is the sense in which, not simply negatively – as opposing disorder – but positively, the Noahide laws are intended to implant *peace* in the world. This peace has a quality, apart from freedom from chaos: especially when this is a peace, which realizes the identities of individuals in terms also of their relationships with the Divine. It is explained by the Maharal of Prague[31] that at the beginning of the creation, the Divine Presence rested – that is, there was a *revelation* of G-dliness – in the world. The condition for this was the observance of the Noahide laws. Through the transgression of these laws, the Divine Presence "departed" by degrees from the world. It was not until the revelation at Sinai that the Divine Presence returned to the world. It took the totality of the revelation of the six hundred and thirteen commandments given to the Jewish people to re-establish this

manifestation of the Divine in the world. The Noahide laws, which were reiterated in this revelation, and now take their force and authority from Sinai[32], were an essential element of this reconnection[33]. The retrieval of this state and the ascent beyond it is the work of Jews through their commandments and of non-Jews with the Noahide laws. The quality of that (heightened) peace – suffused with the Divine – is expressed in the words of Maimonides:

In that era, there will be neither famine nor war, envy or competition, for good will flow in abundance and all the delights will be [as common] as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d[34].

3. The rightness of reason

Weber and Aristotle: rationality and natural success

Weber's ethic of responsibility sought to modify prior value commitments through calculation of their consequences. In so doing, its purpose was also to make actions realistic and assured of some degree of *success* ("success-value" [*Erfolgswert*]).[35] It is attuned to what Weber calls "the autonomous logic of the world"[36] as distinct from the "irrationality of consequences"[37] embarked upon through a pure ethic of conviction.

The significance of success, as a criterion for ethics, is developed in Aristotle's thought. Central to his ethics is

the famous doctrine of the “mean” as a rule and criterion for ethical conduct,[38] associated in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, with the notion of “success.”[39] Success has frequently a material, natural sense, similar to the promotion of physical health.

P. Huby[40] draws attention to an analogy in Aristotle between the wise ethicist and the physician. Aristotle’s approach is

... to draw a distinction between the good man and the bad man, which he takes to be similar to the distinction between a healthy man and a sick one. The healthy man has a taste for food that is truly wholesome, while the sick man may fancy other things. In the same way, the good man wishes for what is truly good, but the bad man has a variety of wishes, and in particular is led astray by pleasure[41].

Marvin Fox also describes Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean as a highly naturalistic one. The mean is good in that it accords with the “principle that *nature* always seeks the middle way”[42]. It copies, in Weber’s words, the purported “*autonomous* logic of the world”.

Nicholas Rescher spells out this model of “natural” rationality in the realm of ethics, most bluntly. He introduces a rationality of *ends* based on “real and legitimate interests”:

If our ends (our goals and values) are themselves inappropriate – if they run counter to our real and legitimate interests – then no matter how sagaciously we cultivate them, we are not being fully rational. (A voyage to a foolish destination – no matter how efficiently conducted – is a foolish enterprise.)[43]

Rescher similarly puts it that “values that impede the realization of a person’s best interests are clearly inappropriate”[44]. But what are these best interests of a human being? Do they include a reliance upon prayer or a

forgoing of material wellbeing in order to fulfil precepts which are not comprehended by natural-scientific reasoning? Aristotle's keyword in relation to correct ethical conduct is the "flourishing" of a human being. But what does "to flourish", mean? Rescher explains it, along the lines of his earlier quoted notion of "real and legitimate interests", as objective "needs":

The rationality of ends inheres in the simple fact that we humans have various *needs* – that we require not only nourishment and protection for the maintenance of health, but also information ('cognitive orientation'), affection, freedom of action, and much else besides. Without such varied goods we cannot flourish as human beings – we cannot achieve the condition of human well-being that Aristotle called 'flourishing'...The person who does not give these manifold desiderata their due – who may even set out to frustrate their realization – is clearly not being rational.[45]

In short the ethic is a biological one, the ethicist is a doctor, who recommends those values and preferences which best assure the human being's negotiation of nature as a natural being. Nature is the sole "autonomous" reality and success and wellbeing flows from obeying *its* laws.

The Noahide laws and the spiritual orientation of reason

If secular rationality is anchored within an immanent, natural concept of human success or flourishing, the Noahide laws and Noahide theology start from the opposite point of view. Nature is not "autonomous": it is enlivened from a spiritual source. In its spiritual descent, it is capable of corruption, along with human intellect itself, a created entity within creation. What is of normative significance is not the successful negotiation (with all the hidden value-criteria in "success") of nature and society, but rather the spiritual template of

Divinely given values. It is these which not only possess normative authority, but also bring the true long term “success”, even in natural terms[46]. Rationality, which wants efficacious normality, needs to remain attuned to the spiritual source which *defines* (and specifies the values through which the human is meant to *effect*) the desired normality of nature and society.

This point is brought out in the comparison of Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean, with an ostensibly similar teaching in Maimonides. The latter is found both in Maimonides “Introduction” – known as the *Eight Chapters* (*Shmoneh P’rokim*)[47] – to the Mishnaic work, *Ethics of the Fathers*, as well as in the section, “*Hilchos Dei’os*” [48], of his great halachic code, the *Mishneh Torah*. Here Maimonides appears to be saying something quite similar to Aristotle, namely that one should seek virtues which take up a middle position between extremes.

In some places Maimonides applies this rule quite straightforwardly. Thus liberality or generosity is the mean between the extremes of miserliness and squandering. Yet, as Marvin Fox observes, “Maimonides ...regularly invokes the rule of the mean, but just as regularly deviates from it”[49]. Thus between arrogance and humility, one should not seek a mean, but wholly embrace humility. Now in truth, Aristotle also says that there are some behaviours which are wholly and unqualifiedly bad, such as immoral relationships which allow of no moderation. The real difference, however, between the thinkers, is, as Fox writes, that Maimonides is not invoking a natural principle, but rather the imitation of the Divine: “physicians of the soul must be trained by Divine norms. They are not training man on the analogy of training a dog or a horse. Rather they are directing a human soul in its totality, towards the Divine ideal”[50]. Still, the question remains, why does Maimonides use the term “the mean” when he is in fact referring to a Divine norm? The term “mean” seems to imply a

wholly natural concept, a midpoint between extremes.

This is understood first by reference to the idea that the “mean” in Maimonides is associated with the idea of reciprocity and harmony. The mean balances the extremes, not simply in the sense of averaging them, but because the extremes are potentially able to agree to the mean. It represents the notion of peace or compromise between the extremes. In the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, a quality of character is called median “because it gives place to another”[51]. Maimonides states in the *Eight Chapters* that in the verse “Love truth and peace”[52], “‘Peace’ refers to the ethical virtues, for they will lead to peace in the world”[53]. “Peace” is the rational order of conduct in creation which Torah brings about. It is here called the “mean”. In short the “mean” refers to the central notion of rationality: that of peace, with its sense of balance and harmony.

Maimonides, moreover, states[54] that the halachic requirement to pursue conduct, which expresses the “mean”, is associated with the verse “and you shall go in His paths”[55]. The Lubavitcher Rebbe here asks a question. G-d’s “paths” are His commandments. Why then does Maimonides enumerate, beyond the totality of specific commandments, a *general* commandment to observe the commandments, contained in the verse “and you shall go in His paths?”

The answer[56] to this question proceeds from the knowledge that the commandments are individually intended to instil specific qualities in the human who performs them, as found in the statement of the Sages, “just as the Holy One blessed be He is called gracious, so should you be gracious; just as the Holy One blessed be He is called merciful, so should you be merciful...”[57] The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that in order fully to actualize the qualities, which individual commandments are intended to implant in the agent (although some result is achieved even without this intention) there

must be a “going” in them: “You shall go in His paths”. This refers to a spiritual ascent – accompanying the practical performance of the precept – accomplished through the attitude of *emunah* or belief, by which one seeks to “imitate G-d”. It is the spiritual service and aspiration to imitate G-d, which achieves the right tuning of action that expresses and installs peace in the world. Spirituality attunes rationality.

This concept is elaborated in the sixth chapter of the *Eight Chapters* where Maimonides cites the words of the Sages that a Jew should not say with regard to the precepts which are *not* rationally grasped (such as the dietary laws and laws concerning ritual impurity) that he would find “impossible” – i.e. repugnant – the transgression of these laws. Rather, he should say “It is possible for me, but what shall I do? My Father in Heaven decreed against it”[58]. The reason for this is ostensibly that rationality should not seek to encroach upon a plainly supra-rational realm. However, Maimonides goes on to say that one *may not* say this regarding those commandments which *are* rationally grasped (such as not killing or stealing): they *should be* repugnant to reason. For, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains, one whose reason does not find them repugnant, has experienced a basic corruption in the qualities of personality[59]. Rationality without spiritual tuning – without the qualities acquired in the imitation of G-d – is itself corrupt.

[1] Quoted in L.A Scaff, *Fleeing the iron cage: culture, politics, and modernity in the thought of Max Weber*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 82.

[2] Max Scheler’s “Sociology and the Study and Formulation of *Weltanschauung*” in Lassman, P. and Velody, I. and Martins H., eds, *Max Weber’s ‘Science as a Vocation’*, London: Unwin Hypman, 1989, p. 89.

[3] *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* Vol. 8, (J. G. Slater ed.), London: Routledge 1986.

[4] In printed "Discussion which followed the address" as an appendix to the paper "The Existence and Nature of G-d", published in 1939 and reprinted in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 10, London: Routledge, 1966, Russell states: 'On the one hand it [mysticism] is an emotion. On the other hand as a result of that emotion people come to certain beliefs" (p. 265). There Russell associates Islam, Buddhism and Taoism with mystical sentiment.

[5] Published in 1927 and reprinted in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 10.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[7] On the concept of belief in relation to Noahide teaching, see Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos*, NY: Kehos, Vol 35, p. 28.

[8] The Hebrew term for belief is *emunah*, which has a sense of "fixity" or "firmness" or "trainedness" of the hand. It signifies the way in which the soul holds to its conviction of the existence of G-d by virtue of having "seen" G-dliness.

[9] In accordance with teaching of the Ba'al Shem Tov, that the creation has no measure of subsistence whatsoever, and without constant enlivening, it would revert to absolute nothingness, as before the six days of creation. See Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, *Sha'ar HaYichud V'ho'Emunah* ("The Gate of Unity and Belief"), which is the second book in his work *Tanya*. Much of the immediately forthcoming discussion is based on that book.

[10] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, pp. 63ff.

[11] See the translation by R. Speirs in *Max Weber, Political Writings* (ed. P. Lassman and R. Speirs), Cambridge: CUP, 1994.

[12] Wolfgang Schluchter in his *Paradoxes of Modernity – Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber* (Stanford:

Stanford University Press, 1996) quotes a fragment in Weber's writing, which states that "the Kantian imperatives [are]...valid analyses of certain of the simplest facts [*Tatbestände*] of the procedure [employed] in an ethical judgment" (p.90). At the same time Schluchter remarks in a footnote (fn. 153) that the fragment at the same time indicates Weber's qualification of Kant's "ethical formalism". In Schluchter's words: "The attempt is made in the fragment to demonstrate that ethical formalism cannot provide a rule for making decisions, neither for conflicts within the ethical sphere, nor for conflicts between this and other value spheres."

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-96.

[14] Schluchter brings to our attention a sentence in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, which embodies these elements: "'(1) thinking for oneself, (2) thinking from the positions of each and all others, (3) always thinking in harmony with oneself'" (or thinking consistently)". (Quoting Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, J.C. Meredith, trans. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982: B 158-60, A 156-58.)

[15] See the introduction by Theodor Valentiner to Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 1972, pp. 12-13.

[16] "The Profession and Vocation of Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 353

[17] "*Der Sinn der Wertfreiheit*" in Max Weber, *Methodologische Schriften*, ed J. Winckelmann, Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1968, p. 247. This and the following translations from "*Der Sinn der Wertfreiheit*" are those of the present writer.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 247-48.

[21] *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

[22] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, pp. 561-62.

[23] *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 1118, fn 26.

[24] *Ibid.*, Vol. 29, p. 126.

[25] Talmud tractate *Eiruvin* 100b.

[26] Or at least not acting deceptively. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, pp. 147-48.

[27] See Rashi's commentary on Genesis 34:7, and *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 147.

[28] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 159.

[29] *Isaiah* 45:18.

[30] Compare here *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol 22, p. 140.

[31] *G'vuros HaShem*, ch. 66. This piece is translated in the present volume.

[32] I.e. from their reiteration at Sinai, as distinct from their original instruction to Adam and Noah before Sinai.

[33] So that they also express the concept of peace, which specifically Torah brings into the world. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 39, pp. 35-6.

[34] Maimonides, *Hilchos M'lochim u'milchomoseihem* 12:5. (transl. Rabbi E. Touger), NY: Moznaim, 1987.

[35] See Schluchter, *op. cit.*, p. 48, who quotes and translates from Weber's essay "*Der Sinn der Wertfreiheit*": "I, for my part, will not try to dissuade the nation from the view that action is to be judged not merely by its success value [*Erfogswert*] but by its convictional

value [*Gesinnungswert*] as well.” That is to say, whilst admitting, the non-rational element of conviction, he describes the complementary rational criterion as “success value”.

[36] Quoted and translated by Schluchter, op. cit. p. 283 fn. 43 from Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1920-21, Vol. 1, pp. 552-53.

[37] Ibid.

[38] See Book 2 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

[39] *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (transl. Sir David Ross), London: Oxford University Press (series: The World's Classics), 1954 (1963), 2:6, p. 38: “Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of ‘success’; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue.”

[40] *Greek Ethics*, London: Macmillan, 1967.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[42] *Interpreting Maimonides – Studies in Methodology, Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990, p. 102. Emphasis added.

[43] Nicholas Rescher, *Rationality*, Oxford: OUP, 1988, p. 96.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[46] See the discussion of Ecclesiastes (*Koheles*) in S.D. Cowen, “Above the sun, under the sun: a religious existentialism”, *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 2, pp. 108-112.

[47] Chapter 4.

[48] Chapter 1.

[49] *Op. cit.* p. 121.

[50] *Ibid.* p. 121.

[51] *Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 29, p 126.*

[52] *Zachariah 8:19.*

[53] Translation by Rabbi E. Touger, "*Shmoneh Perakim*" [Eight Chapters] in Maimonides, *Pirkei Avot*, Jerusalem: Moznaim, 1994, p. 29.

[54] *Hilchos Dei'os*, 1.

[55] Deuteronomy 28:9.

[56] *Likkutei Sichos, Vol 4* , pp. 1130ff.

[57] *Sifri, Eikev 11:22.*

[58] *Sifra, Parshas K'doshim* as quoted by Maimonides in the *Eight Chapters* (Rabbi Touger's translation), *op. cit.*, p. 40.

[59] *Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 16, p. 248.*

Chapter 4

THE NOAHIDE LAWS AND HUMAN PERSONALITY

Psychological perspectives

1. Universal values

The objectivity of universal values[1]

The spiritual is winning its place back into psychotherapy. This should be conceded not simply for practical or empirical reasons: that most patients, if not therapists, avowedly and unashamedly believe in G-d, are helped in their recovery by this belief and for that reason, the therapist should make acknowledgment of the patient's belief[2]. Rather, the therapist has to ask a deeper question – whether this spiritual realm is indeed an objective one. For if it is, then the therapist also needs to connect with the spiritual in him- or herself, to establish the “therapeutic alliance”[3] also in this most potent realm, even though this is not their main area of training and expertise.

The discussion here is of the notion of objective universal values, and a *common* spirituality, which unite human beings, including the patient and therapist. This is counterposed to a relativism of (and hence also an objective scepticism[4] concerning) religious outlooks. For therapeutically applied, even if it were practically, empathically and conceptually possible for the therapist to take (and “enter”) a “spiritual history” of the patient and to use it for the mental restitution of the patient, there are methodological qualms. One is whether all “spiritualities” are authentic, and another whether indeed certain religious outlooks might themselves be symptomatic of personality disorder, rather than serving the restitution of mental health. Gordon Allport in the *Individual and His Religion*[5] already addressed this last point, and Elisabeth Lukas, the major living student of Viktor Frankl, writes that authentic human spirituality has to do not with simple “subjective meaning”[6], which could also include that of the terrorist. Rather, she notes, “the conscience [a term which Frankl blended with that of the soul and the spiritual sense in the human being]...is an appreciation of values, which is a precursor of all that is moral, that every human being

instinctively carries within himself"[7]. Here is the reference to an *objective*, universal spirituality, which the therapist needs to know about in him- or herself, as well as in the patient.

In the Bible, the concept of the common spirituality of humanity is contained in the verse which states that the human being was "created in the image of G-d"[8]. That is to say, the soul possesses and parallels on a human scale Divine qualities, regardless of whether this is conscious in the person. Concerning the spiritual template of personality, Viktor Frankl wrote in the concluding sentence of his basic essay, "Ten theses concerning a 'person'": "The true discovery of the human, the *inventio hominis*, occurs in the *imitatio Dei* [the imitation of G-d]"[9].

The substantive character of universal values

What is the *character* of the universal virtues derived from "the imitation of G-d"? First of all, in a moral discourse, one must be particularly cautious when considering virtues which pertain to the supposed valour of the *doer* without stating anything specific about the deed *done*. Qualities such as "honour", "courage", "competitiveness" and even "compassion" are ambiguous. Courage and loyalty are found among thieves. Competitiveness could express itself in an economic libertarianism, in which the weak go under. Compassion could be extended to persons and causes which really need correction of some kind: the indulgence of a child (or adult) crying for something which is not good for it, is not necessarily beneficial to the child (or adult).

This point is brought out by a story of the a saintly Rabbi – Meshulam Zusya of Anipoli – who, as the account goes –

learned a number of methods of serving his Creator from a thief: (a) He works quietly without others knowing. (b) He is ready to place himself in danger. (c) The smallest detail is

of great importance to him. (d) He labours with great toil. (e) Alacrity. (f) He is confident and optimistic. (g) If he did not succeed the first time, he tries and tries again[10].

Here we see modesty or discretion, courage, attentiveness and application, diligence, alacrity, a positive outlook, and perseverance – all in the service of theft. These virtues become virtues only when they possess a substantive, concrete orientation, which makes them *lawful* in a moral sense. Rabbi Meshulam Zusya honed and directed these valences of character in the concrete service of G-d, in performance of the laws of the Bible, elaborated through tradition[11].

What is the substantive *content* of this objective universal spirituality? Judaism, the original and “mother” religion of monotheism, has transmitted – as distinct from the more comprehensive and detailed code binding Jews – a code for all humanity. It is a body of seven laws – to be set out later in this essay – which biblically bind the descendants of Noah, the survivor of the flood and ancestor of general humanity.

The practical conduct of the Noahide laws actualize in the person, the spiritual template of the soul, intended by the Bible, in the words that the human being was “created in the image of G-d”. Frankl did not say what the content of the “imitation of G-d” was, and I have not found in his writings any mention of the Noahide laws. But, as discussed elsewhere[12], the values expressed in his writings indicate a general consistency with the Noahide laws.

Universal values as heteronomously (externally) willed

If the “imitation of G-d”[13] becomes focussed and concrete in the person through the Noahide *laws*, it in turn becomes a moral (and a therapeutic) *force* when these laws are experienced as embodying Divine will, as *commandments*. By submitting to laws which are heteronomously willed – by G-d – the human being does not curtail his or her autonomy, but in

fact realizes it. "Autonomy" in a secular Enlightenment sense, typically expressed itself in the "freedom" *from* religious control. The price of that view was that the "emancipated 'I'" excluded the spiritual, the Divine within the person. When the "I" is seen essentially to be the soul, then the true exercise of freedom is to bind oneself, notwithstanding many contrary inclinations, *to* a religious ideal, in order to actualize the "image of G-d" within the entire person.

It is this sense of virtue as Divine command, which also gives a person the true resource of will for personal transformation. For the deepest powers of will are rooted in conscience (or soul). This is distinct from the *willfulness* of emotion and brutish ambition, which the person knows (certainly at the level of conscience) ultimately not to be the ground of his or her being. Therapeutically, it is important for the individual to know what the ultimately healthy "I" is, upon the resources of which he or she calls. This "I" is not located in the shifting sands of emotion (the "bodily" existence of the person) or even of intellect with its susceptibility to the mere "rationalization" of predispositions[14]. The ultimate "I" is not my predicament, my distress, though the condition of body and mind are *my* condition. Rather the true locus of the fundamental person is in the citadel of the soul, above the bribery of emotion and the adjunctive rationalization[15] of intellect. From there the G-dly power within emerges to *help*[16] in dealing with the predicament of mind and heart in the course of therapy.

The "image of G-d" – actualized through the Noahide laws – is the root historical spiritual consciousness and, in many cases, *unconsciousness* of the various major world religions and cultures. The major world religions (including the Eastern religions[17]) and cultures descend from Abraham, who practised the Noahide laws. As something conscious, it is understood as the Biblically mandated foundation of

civilization. This consciousness again surfaces and is articulated in a resolution of the United States Congress in 1991 in the following terms:

..Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society...these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide laws...[18]

2.The structure of human personality

Internal dimensions of personality

The bodily dimension. The human being, as explained by the Maharal of Prague, is a composite of body, intellect and a higher unitary existence of mind and body. The principal feature of the *bodily* existence of a person is *desire*, This was the true insight of classical psychoanalysis in relation to *eros*, though it did not adequately distinguish between raw libido and its higher transformation into (or fusion with) love. Hence, desire can be precoccupied with self-gratification or it can be incorporated into a fusion and union with another, *to which* one brings oneself, and through which one actualizes oneself[19].

The desire of the material or bodily aspect of the person also has other objects. It desires to eat, it desires possessions. Thus the quality of the body is its *wanting*, though that wanting could take an altruistic form for another or even in relation to itself[20] – a disinterested concern for its maintenance (as distinct from indulgence). Gordon Allport, who was primarily concerned with the emotive personality of the human spoke its character of striving, its desire for *actualization*. The affective nature of the human being wants to enlarge itself in some sense, it wants and drives to *incorporate*, or meet with its objects.

The intellectual dimension. The distinguishing quality of the intellectual or cognitive dimension of the human being is, in the words of Viktor Frankl, its ability to *transcend* the predicament of the body, the affective, bodily self. As such it is capable of abstraction. The intellectual self *judges*, it conceptualizes. It has the *ability* to hold back from affect and to judge it.

Here too, however, it is capable of both altruistic and perverse applications. The impulse to transcendence is to establish a generality or totality of meaning. The question is, whether the act of transcendence genuinely transcends one's partial, emotive self, or whether it absolutizes partiality[21], in short whether it rationalizes self-interest into an absolute principle. That is to say, whether affective interests, the object of one's bodily or emotional or dispositional wanting, effectively "bribe" and drive the ostensibly "dispassionate" scheme of reason[22].

One can see this from the number of morally acceptable and unacceptable meanings formulated by intellect, which express prejudice or are re-biased by predispositions. Where, however, intellect functions *dispassionately* in such a way as to craft and utilize emotion in the service of a *higher ideal*, it has achieved proper function. The assurance that intellect is "in charge of emotion" and not vice versa, is when intellect is receptive to that which is higher, above both it and emotion, that is, the conscience or the soul.

The unitary dimension. The unitary dimension[23] of the person is that level at which intellect (or the intellectual soul) and the bodily function as a composite identity. This is the "whole" person, and at the same time is expressed and embodied as a distinct faculty or level of personality. This level demonstrates two salient characteristics, brought out in a passage of the Talmud. In it, the question is related:

How could the body and the soul [both exempt] themselves from judgment? The body says, the [intellectual] soul is the sinner, for since it departed from me, I am left like an inanimate stone in the grave. The soul says, The body has sinned, for since I parted from it, I have flown through the air like a bird[24].

In response the following parable[25] is presented. Two delinquent watchmen of an orchard. One was able-bodied but blind, the other lame but seeing. Neither could get to the fruit on the trees, one because of lameness, the other because of blindness. So the lame, seeing one, got on the shoulders of the tall, blind one and together they were able to take the fruit. The analogy with body and soul is clear.

The question indicates that without the union of the body and soul (in terms of the discussion of the Maharal of Prague, the reference is to the intellectual soul, consciousness or mind) there is no living person. The answer indicates that as a living whole, both body and consciousness participate in responsibility.

Life and the *responsibility* of a living person go together. In theological terms, a person is created to serve G-d – to fulfil a Divine purpose in the creation. The negation of life vitiates this ultimate responsibility and the sanctification and elevation of life is its ultimate *fulfillment* of purpose. The unitary person is characterized by his or her stance to life itself.

The external domains of human personality[26]

The domain of the “natural” self. The borderland between animality and humanity, that which makes the person a *human* being is his or her ability to achieve some control of impulse or instinct. Broadly speaking there are three levels in this relationship. The *first* is the inability of the person

to regulate impulse even at the most basic level, to delay the gratification of an impulse which in a matter (even of a brief) time, will be available. At person at this level, is generally unable to follow other, specific imperatives.

The second is the ability to delay gratification, but the inability in certain cases to resist a desire, for which gratification will not normally come in the course of time. For such a person other imperatives are meaningful though it is possible that the person will not be successful in keeping all of them.

The third and highest level is the complete control of desire, such that other transgressions are in fact unthinkable. Hence, the relationship to the natural self, is the prior regulatory issue with which a person must seek to deal, before coming to moral issues all together.

The personal domain. The personal domain is the domain in which the individual relates to him or herself and creates a *private* identity. In a secular parlance this might be called a realm of personal morality. This realm bears upon the *personal* integrity of the individual, not “public” areas which are regulated because of possible infringement by another person. Typically the areas of belief[27] and expression[28] termed “private”.

It is also interesting to note, however, that sexual morality, except where it constitutes an assault on another, such as rape or where it could be said to carried out without proper consent, such as with a minor, is also classed as something private. Wherever sexual relationships are entered upon by “mature, consenting partners”, there is no supposedly no “victim” even in aberrant relationships. Hence, this is not a *public* relationship, an area in which people are susceptible to – and warrant protection from – harm and infringement.

The religious conception of this realm is its denotation as the realm "between the human and G-d" rather than the "private" realm. For, from a religious point of view, there is no such notion as something which is "private": even if such a realm is not seen by others, it is seen by G-d. This is not simply a question of surveillance and judgement before others. It has to do with the issue of who and what the person is, before coming to deal with others. The human being is responsible not solely in terms of what he or she contracts with others, but also in terms of what they are in the *space* of his or her *own* being, and this is "before G-d".

The interpersonal domain. The interpersonal (social) domain of personality subsumes and integrates the other domains. Society aggregates and articulates individuals into an organized whole. The interpersonal realm appears to have an "ultimate" – or at least, a greater – significance over what happens in the personal realm. The reason for this is that in Noahide theology, the Creation exists *for the sake of the human being*: not for simple domination, but rather for cultivation and peaceful settlement (and ultimately, redemptive transformation) by the human being. This cultivation and refinement is necessarily a collective and interactive one. Hence society in a sense is and stands for the "world" more than the individual *personal* ("private") lives of human beings.

At the same time, the personal – supposedly "private" realm fundamentally affects the interpersonal, "public", interpersonal one. For the relationships *between* persons, which all agree allow of regulation, are not a matter of simple "rationality": they are themselves subject to corruption. People will agree that murder, theft and violation of processes of justice are bad. But, does the prohibition of murder include mercy killing, abortion on demand? Does the prohibition of theft allow deceptive advertising? Are all forms of adversarial litigation just? The honing of

conscience, the moral sense, which properly informs interpersonal conduct, *begins* in the personal realm.

Conversely, a *social order* which exemplifies cooperation and mutual regard, but which in the personal realm is corrupt is also ultimately vitiated in that it *exists* to serve individuals with corrupt goals. Such was the case in the Biblical example of the Tower of Babel, where the builders were entirely united with one another, but in the common purpose of struggling with G-d.

3. Universal values and the structure of personality

Relation to natural self basic impulse control: cruelty to animals	Bodily	Intellectual	Unitary
Personal	forbidden sexual relations	prohibition of idolatry	prohibition of blasphemy
Interpersonal	prohibition of theft	Prohibition of injustice	prohibition of murder

The relation to the natural self: prohibition of cruelty to animals[29]

The prohibition of cruelty to animals in the Noahide laws is expressed in the prohibition on the consumption of the limb of a living animal. The Maharal of Prague explains that this conduct relates to an inability of a human being to delay the gratification of impulse. For, even though the animal can be readied for consumption through slaughter, the person, who consumes whilst it is still alive, cannot wait. Associated with this degree of self-absorption in desire is the cruelty countenanced by one, who consequently has no empathy with the objects of his or her desire.

The total partiality to impulse within swings into to complete indifference to the other. In this infancy of human development, which may yet be afraid to act consciously against society or against G-d in "adult sins", one may yet wreak havoc with that which is essentially helpless, and which cannot retaliate: the animal (and needless to say, the physical and vegetative environment).

The personal-bodily realm: sexual morality

It is clear that sexual morality has to do with bodily desire in the personal realm. What interests us here is why it should be seen as private and personal. A negative reason, given above, is that it does not necessarily involve infringement or harm to another, since even where it is forbidden, it may be based on consent. The reason for including it in this category is that sexuality has a great deal to do with self-identity. The sexually bonded married couple understands, and there theological grounds for its understanding, itself as a unit. The person exists prior to the union, but there is a fundamental "filling out" of the person through this relationship. Hence the Biblical expression: "man *and* woman He [G-d] created them"[30]: that is to say the person has ultimate identity by virtue of participation in this union and man and woman are each halves of the one body and soul. Adultery, incest, bestiality – all prohibited by the Noahide laws – represent a confounding of one's identity as one bonded to one's proper wife, one's essential body-and-soul partner. So also the other sexual unions prohibited by the Noahide laws, confound the identity of the person who participates in them.

The personal-intellectual realm: the prohibition of idolatry

Idolatry is a cognitive attitude which views a part of creation as "absolute", as the all. It fetishizes a particular entity, which might range from a primitive totem to "money" and "material success" in westernized societies. It is a

misuse of the intellective generalizing faculty to rationalize an object of personal affect. Recent instances of terrorism, which proceed with a religious language, could be regarded as an idolatry: the establishment of a *particular* group ethos through violence has been made absolute (subordinate to, or coexistent with, no other consideration) by its adherents. The positive, antithetical value is that of authentic transcendence, an altruism which is genuinely other-directed, which rigorously looks beyond the self, its group identity and its interests (the partialities of emotion and personal predilection); in other words, which achieves a genuine transcendence, by turning to G-d.

The personal-unitary realm: the prohibition of blasphemy

Blasphemy, the reviling of the Divine, is performed through speech. Speech is a quintessential human faculty, which calls upon both the bodily and intellectual aspects of the person. It is a physical expression of thought. The animal makes sounds, through which it facilitates or preserves a *material* existence. In the human being, the physical act of speech also serves an intellectual or conceptual purpose. Speech expresses the unitary person. Blasphemy, the ultimate misuse of speech engages as its *vehicle*, the unitary, the "whole" person.

The whole person, as adumbrated above, is the *living* person. Similarly the *object* of blasphemy relates to the whole person. Blasphemy, having already acknowledged G-d (which makes the act of blasphemy "meaningful"[31]), is directed towards the Principle of life, G-d. Hence in blasphemy, literally the cursing of G-d, is the attack by the unitary (the *living*) person on the Principle or Foundation of the person's *own* life[32].

The interpersonal-bodily realm: the prohibition of theft

The major expression of unrestrained desire in the

interpersonal realm is directed to the property of others. Theft is the act, which incorporates and appropriates another's property his or her substance, in a way which, while not as intense or as final as murder, is yet comparable to murder. It infringes the other's *being*[33].

The opposite to this is regard for the other's property and the measures of extra consideration which are to be found in restoring lost property or in taking measures to protect other's property from harm. Nevertheless, the Noahide law is concerned here, as elsewhere, to negate undesirable conduct rather than to demand, as basic, a measure of "elevated" conduct. The latter, however, is clearly desirable and might conceivably be grasped as a higher level of performance of the negative commandment. Charity, though not amongst the seven Noahide laws is also incumbent upon Noahides.

The interpersonal-intellectual realm: the prohibition of injustice

The sense of justice is a quality of reason applied to the interpersonal realm. The detachment – the balance of intellect – and its power of transcendence of emotive interest, is, at a minimum, linked to a consistent system of justice, though not necessarily one with symmetrical and reciprocal relationships. Its primary concern is to be non-arbitrary. It works on an intersubjectivity and predictability. Justice seeks the settlement of human conflict, its arbitration and resolution with reference to stable procedures and rules. Whilst it might accord privilege, it is marked by a thinking which excludes the *irruption* of personal interest.[34]

The perversion of justice is simply the *arbitrary* application of established principles and the capricious favouring of specific interests. Subjectivity has disturbed a previously known accepted mode of judgment between individuals. Though its outcomes are concrete, injustice is essentially a perversion of *reason*. The corrupt judge might not be a thief,

but s/he has made theft a virtue.

The interpersonal-unitary realm: the prohibition of murder

Murder, in a sense, is the greatest travesty which a human being can commit. Its object is the whole person. The slain person, unlike one who has been harmed materially (robbed) or in a more spiritual sense (through implication in an aberrant sexual relationship, has been entirely annihilated. In destroying a person (where there was no warrant, based on self defence etc), one is, in the words of the Sages, as though one has destroyed "an entire world"[35]. For this was the purpose of Creation, as mentioned above, that it be cultivated, settled and civilized by human beings. Adam was created alone, simply to heighten the importance and centrality to Creation of even a single individual[36]. When a person is destroyed, the very Creation, enlivened for the sake of the service of a person becomes purposeless.

The travesty is not only of the object but also of the perpetrator. The act of murder is a crime and a perversion of the entire person: it is not simply a perverse act of, and against, the body (as in sexual transgressions or theft) or of, and against, reason (as in idolatry and injustice). Body and mind, which themselves are united in the concept of life, have come together to eliminate life, an entire person. It is one of the crimes of the unitary person against the nature and purpose of the unitary person: blasphemy is directed against the *Principle* of life, and murder against life *itself*.

[1] The following essay is in part based on – and constitutes a psychological schematization of – a fundamental essay of the Maharal of Prague, Chapter 66 of *G'vuros HaShem*, appended to this monograph

[2] See the results of the surveys carried out by R. D'Souza, "Do patients expect psychiatrists to be interested in spiritual issues?", *Australasian Psychiatry*, Vol. 10, No. 1,

March 2002.

[3] See S.D. Cowen, "Universal religion, Viktor Frankl and Gordon Allport", *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 4, 2002, which offers an analysis of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's remarks on the failure of logotherapy to achieve the dissemination it deserved, inasmuch as the therapist is not always a "living example". I wrote: "The therapist has to be an example of that which spiritually, a human being *is*, in terms of spiritually *universal* values. Through this, a trans- or intersubjective resonance with the patient is achieved in that the therapist has thereby tapped into the (latent) *objective* soul powers of the patient.", p. 90.

[4] See comments on Weber's relativism in his doctrine of world-views, and his judgment of them as merely subjective meanings, in the chapter, "Rationality and the Noahide Laws".

[5] *The Individual and his religion. A psychological interpretation*, New York: Macmillan, 1950. See the discussion by Kate Loewenthal, "A contemporary interface between religion and psychotherapy", *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 4, 2002.

[6] Elisabeth Lukas, *Logotherapy Textbook* (transl. T. Brugger, Toronto: Liberty Press, 2000, p. 21.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[8] Genesis, 1:27.

[9] Viktor Frankl, "Ten theses concerning a 'person'" (transl. S. D. Cowen), *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 3, p. 10.

[10] Rabbi M. M. Schneerson (compiler and arranger), (transl. Rabbi Y. M. Kagan), *Hayom Yom – From Day to Day* (for 3 Iyar), N.Y.:Kehos, 5748 (1988), p. 50.

[11] It is interesting to note that the Renaissance thinker,

Machiavelli, signaled as the primary virtue of the statesman, the quality of "*virtù*", which has been variously translated as "prowess", "valour", "audacity", "skill", "civic spirit", "virtuosity", "ability" (see S.D. Cowen, *Jewish Thought in Context*, Melbourne, Monash University, 2000, p. 61.) And yet all these are qualities of the Machiavellian statesman, whose conduct can shade into quite a few kinds of action unacceptable in terms of the Noahide laws. Virtues cannot be conceived simply as powers – valences – which adorn and suggest the noble empowerment of the doer. Rather, they have to be made and given substantive direction. Non-substantive values of character indicate only potentialities: courage, trustworthiness, loyalty, efficiency, competitiveness are all multi-valent.

[12] S. D. Cowen, "Viktor Frankl's logotherapy and universal values", paper presented to the 14th World Congress on Logotherapy, Dallas, 2003.

[13] See the criticism of the Thomist concept of the "image of G-d", claimed, in accordance with Natural Law theory, actually to orient human personality. The point made here is that there is a fundamental *struggle* to actualize this "image" in the human being, not that it *in fact* guides the self. See S. D. Cowen, "Universal Religion, Viktor Frankl and Gordon Allport", *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, Vol. 4 (2002)

[14] See the "12 steps" of Alcoholics Anonymous, which patently appeal to G-d in the mustering of will: "1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of

character. 7.Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8.Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9.Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10.Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11.Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12.Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs".
(www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.au)

[15] See Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos*, (NY:Kehos), Vol. 4, pp. 1114-1121.

[16] We are not here speaking solely of healing based on spiritual resolve, but of spiritual resolve in conjunction with complementary therapies.

[17] According the Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 91a cited by the commentator Rashi on Genesis, 25:6.

[18] H.J. Res. 104

[19] See, for example, "Liebe und Sex" in V.E. Frankl, *Der Mensch vor der Frage nach dem Sinn*, München: Piper, 1979.

[20] Thus, it is recounted that the Sage, "Hillel, the Elder...when going to eat, used to say [to his students] that he was going to perform an act of kindness to the 'lowly and poor creature', by which he meant his body, which he regarded as if it were foreign to him", *Tanya – Likkutei Amarim* (Bilingual Edition – trans. Rabbi Nissan Mindel), Chapter 29.

[21] Allport spoke of the "proprium" in the person, the locus of "deeper motives and interests, lasting sentiments and prejudices", cited in S. D. Cowen, "Universal Religion, Viktor

Frankl and Gordon Allport", *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[22] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, *loc. cit.*

[23] This is the term which the Maharal uses: the *union* of body and *intellectual* soul

[24] *Sanhedrin*, 91a.

[25] *Sanhedrin*, 91a,b.

[26] That is to say, the domains in which the personality as a whole, in all its dimensions, as set out in the foregoing, acts.

[27] See the chapter, "A statement of the Noahide laws".

[28] Ostensibly blasphemy is a "private" issue, a personal expression. For the Noahide laws, however, the way a person speaks, is also something which needs to be lawful.

[29] This commandment relates, according to Rabbi M.M. Schneerson (the Lubavitcher Rebbe), to a concept of cruelty to animals. However, it is evident from a talk by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, that its basic concept is that of insensitivity to suffering (*Kol bo'ei olam*, 1:19). The two explanations of the Maharal of Prague (that the commandment relates to the basic level of impulse control, the ability to delay gratification) and of the Lubavitcher Rebbe (that it relates to cruelty to animals) can be reconciled as follows. The greater the self-absorption, and the less one is able to distance oneself from one's own desires, the greater is one's indifference to the other. Cruelty is most often the product of indifference to suffering, of awareness and empathy for the other. A great figure, such as Moses, whose self-displacement was absolute, was characterized by the greatest compassion and empathy for others.

[30] Genesis, 1:27.

[31] If the object of blasphemy, were not believed by the blasphemer, to be invested with sanctity, then the passion in blasphemy would go.

[32] One could add that it attacks or corrodes one's own quintessential identity, the soul, made in the image of G-d, as it reviles G-d.

[33] Maimonides states it thus: "One who robs his fellow as much as a *p'ruta*, is as though he takes his soul..." (*Hilchos g'zeila v'aveida*, ch. 1). See the chapter, "A statement of the Noahide laws", on the prohibition of theft.

[34] The term "interest" is associated with bias, that which "rolls over" a procedure. The criterion of consistency overrides the irruption of emotion, the freedom of emotion to unbalance.

[35] "Accordingly, Adam was created alone in the world to teach that whoever destroys [and removes] one person from the world, is considered as having destroyed the entire world, and anyone who preserves one person in the world is considered as having preserved the entire world". Maimonides, *Hilchos Sanhedrin*, 12:3.

[36] *Ibid.*

Chapter 5

SOVEREIGNTY, PERSONS AND THE NOAHIDE LAWS

Legal-political perspectives

1.The sovereignty of G-d

World society and the Noahide laws[1]

The sources of modern international law are customary international law, based on practices which nations chose to observe; an International Court of Justice, to which nations elect to subscribe; a United Nations, the members of which stand in political relationships to one another, where also certain nations possess veto powers; and finally the contractual activity of nations in treaty-making. The common feature of all of these aspects of international law is that they are essentially voluntary; they represent elective commitments of sovereign nations, which are bound to no moral or legal authority above their individual sovereign existences, except to the extent that they chose to subscribe or be bound by one. That authority, at all events, is not absolute.

This is the character of *modern* international law, the law which was formulated and practised in modern times since the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It corresponds to the political reality of the rise of sovereign national entities. This law was historically preceded by a different political reality and different notions of law. In ancient and medieval times, before the emergence of sovereignty as a universal principle of states, there prevailed a notion of natural law. This was the concept of a concrete morality of universal application which governed states just as municipal or domestic law governs the individuals within a single state.

Typically, in its Roman law or medieval canon law expressions, this law was based on purportedly universal and immutable principles. The political reality corresponding to this natural law was that of the Roman empire – the *pax Romana* (the Roman peace) – and later, the political supremacy of the Catholic church in medieval Europe. A “natural”, universal morality was to arbitrate the laws of individual states. This was intended to be the law of *all* human beings and all

states[2].

Roman and Catholic canon law historically lost their claims to be the universal law of humanity. There is a “new” candidate for a universal substantive law for all humanity. It is new only in the sense, that contemporary conditions for the first time have allowed public discussion of it[3], though in fact it is the most ancient of codes of universal law. These are the seven laws which bound Noah the biblical survivor of the flood, and his descendants, humanity at large. Now, their authority comes from Sinai, where they were implied and reiterated in the Biblical, written text and expounded within the Oral law, both of which were given to Moses.

These are the laws which constitute the foundations, not only of domestic, but also international society. Thus war, where there are no legitimate grounds of self-defence, will also fall under the Noahide prohibition of murder[4], just as it applies within societies. The conditions of peace, set out by Maimonides in the laws of kings and their wars, include acceptance of the Noahide laws, by a nation, vanquished in war[5]. Peace is established, to modify a phrase of J. F. Kennedy, ultimately not by pacts or deterrents, so much as by a culture of peace and common grassroots values supporting this peace in the societies constituent to the peace. These common values and belief, intrinsic to all human beings, are contained in the Noahide laws.

That the law of international order, of *world society*, is the concrete morality of the Noahide laws, is of interest not only from a legal point of view, but also from that of the theory of international politics. It is far from *Realpolitik* and notions of balance in mutual deterrence in an intrinsically lawless, anarchic world of sovereign nations. To the contrary, according to Torah, the order of the international community represents a moral imperium, arbitrated by suitably constituted and qualified courts of law. Hence, the first feature of a universal, Noahide law, which places nations

“under G-d” is the continuity of national and international law. This does not remove authority from individual states (in their own administrative and fiscal arrangements)[6] nor does it seek to merge their cultural personalities, but it subjects them to the same law of humanity: the Noahide laws.

The fact that these laws are expounded in the tradition of the Oral – or Rabbinic – law, does not imply any concept of Jewish *political* suzerainty (supremacy). These laws, which are part of Torah, are the law of G-d. Before the formation of the Jewish people, there were Noahide courts which arbitrated this law, and made enactments binding upon the nations in general[7]. Since the biblical revelation at Sinai, however, these laws – as part of Torah in general – are interpreted, where new questions arise, by those properly qualified to do so.[8]

The Noahide laws and the integrality of “public” and “private” morality

The second feature of the Noahide laws in placing all persons “under G-d” is the inseparability of the laws relating to “private” morality, i.e. between the human and G-d, and those between person and person. Most pointedly this means that personal morality, including sexual morality, becomes a concern of Government and legislation, whether in regard to what it does (commission) or fails to do (omission). This is a delicate realm, calling for sensitivity in positive action, but Government certainly may not, for example, legitimize and facilitate sexual behaviours forbidden by the Noahide laws. Irrespective of whether and to what extent Government can do something about it, before G-d there is no distinction between the private and the public, between morality and law.

The integrality of the private realm (between the person and G-d) and the public realm (between persons) is borne out from

a number of perspectives. Thus, it has been explained elsewhere that the prohibition on idolatry – a commandment in the personal realm – is primary among the Noahide laws: it represents the acceptance of the “King” (G-d), upon which is predicated the acceptance of the “King’s decrees”, the remaining Noahide laws[9]. Whilst a prohibition on blasphemy would appear closely related in the personal realm to the prohibition on idolatry, it is harder at first glance to see how laws bearing on sexual relationships have to do with one’s relation to G-d. The answer to this would seem to be that it has to do in a very basic sense with the assertion of the spiritual over the physical in a human being. A “purity of...private life”[10] is also part of the general attunement to G-d – required by the “private” Noahide commandments – from which fulfillment of commandments in the public (interpersonal) realm obtains its authority and force. Indeed, Divine lawfulness is first authentically *accepted* in the personal realm.

Secondly, Divine lawfulness needs to be *extended* from the personal realm to the realm between persons. Even in the openly “rational” laws, such as the prohibitions of theft and murder, grey areas abound. Outright killing no one would support, but what of assisted suicide, euthanasia etc? Stealing money is prohibited, but what about forms of psychological deception and manipulation (called in Jewish law the “stealing of understanding”) practised in the market place? A legal system is one of the precepts of the Noahide laws, obviously operating in the realm between persons. But what of the technical use of the system, in such a way as to favor wealthier clients? The Noahide laws illuminate all these darker areas in the public realm, but they are extended *rigorously* to the public realm only by one of strong integrity in personal belief and practice – who is willing to accept Divine commands, a Divine will, rather than following the vagaries of personal reason.

It should be noted that the gentile societies which have most resiliently remained decent societies in the public realm – which have not succumbed to despotism and terror – are those which acknowledged the biblical source, if not the explicit detail of the Noahide laws themselves. These were societies which practiced what *in fact* was a basically unalloyed monotheism and were influenced by a tradition which is called “Hebraic”, as elaborated by Matthew Arnold in his discussion of the puritan strain in English culture, which is certainly (and more so) manifest in American culture[11].

American society, which (though imperfectly and contradictorally) approximates Noahide ethos more than any other nation, congressionally endorsed the Noahide laws in 1991[12]. It is also the most religious gentile nation on earth, in terms of the professing of a belief in one G-d, upon the part of ordinary Americans. On its currency is written the words “In G-d we trust”, and the explicit moralism of American politics extends, notwithstanding certain historical “isolationist” episodes, to its relationship to the world society. Marxists, and other *materialistically* minded critics, might view the motives of Americans much more skeptically, as being driven by material interests, but then again it was Karl Marx, and those critics, who sought to remove G-d and the soul from human discourse.

2. Persons

The norm of humanity

When we speak of persons – whether as individual constituents of a society or as collective cultures or societies – we find a concept of humanity in Noahide theology, which relates to persons, individually and culturally, in terms of their relationship to the Sovereign of the universe, G-d. In Hebrew (biblically, the original language of humanity) the generic

term for human being (which is the name of the first individual human being, *Adam*, or in the ashkenasi pronunciation of Hebrew, *odom*) is explained etymologically to be related, not simply to the word *adama*, the earth, from which Adam was fashioned, as the Bible relates. It is also associated with the concept of *adama l'elyon*, "I resemble That which is above"[13].

What this signifies, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains in relation to the Jewish people – and this can be extrapolated to the gentile[14] – is that the "entire concept and being of the of the Jewish body is that it should be a vessel to the soul: in order that the soul should be able to fulfil the will of G-d as this is encloded in practical commandments..."[15]. That is to say the body is subordinated to the soul, not in an ascetic sense, but that the powers of the body are harnessed by it to Divine purposes.

In the Jewish people, the Maharal of Prague found the freeing and crystallization of the spiritual vis-à-vis the physical or material. This was a result of their special historical experience in the Exodus from Egypt and the biblical revelation at Sinai, through which they achieved their "essentially *removed [nivdal]* " spirituality. This was distinct from the wholly *submerged* spirituality of the Egyptians, who represented the dominance of the physical, as expressed in their rife immorality; and also in the barbarous practices of the nations of Canaan, which represented the form – or essence – of materiality (or physicality) itself[16].

On the other hand, a person or national society in which the spiritual form has, or is returning to, clarity and preeminence (and may be called *odom* – resembling the Above), has to that degree realized its humanity. In the words of the Maharal of Prague, "... the G-dly image relates to the [gentile] person [*odom*] inasmuch as he [or she] is a person [*odom*] also, and this is obvious [*m'vuar*] "[17].

Moreover the concept of balance and harmony of good values in action, which defines the person [*odom*] extends also to the concept of the gentile sovereign, the personification of the nation. For, where a sovereign refrains from theft and (other abuses of the Noahide laws), he or she has been worthy to receive an endowment of a Divine quality of judgment to be able to manage the stability and welfare of the state in balance and harmony. This is the spiritual significance of the law in Torah that the fiscal and administrative conduct of the State is binding on all, Jew and gentile alike (*dina d'malchusa dina*), for the Sovereign administering this fundamental harmony is acting in imitation of the Divine[18].

Human “autonomy”

From a Torah point of view, the essential function of a legal “person”, whether an individual or a state, is to carry out the will of G-d[19]. In contradistinction to this, there is a concept of human autonomy in its modern sense, going back to the Renaissance and the Reformation, which defines itself also in the context of the “separation of religion and state”, and in the freedom *from* the imperatives of religion. The social elaboration of this doctrine of autonomy in its liberal-democratic form is that the human being can and should be an “autonomous” independent, free entity insofar (this being the formulation of later liberal theory, as in J.S. Mill in *On Liberty*) as this not infringe the similar liberty and the rights of others. In Noahide doctrine, the will of the human soul is understood to be the desire to imitate the Divine. Its will coalesces with a Divine norm. In this case, the Renaissance and Enlightenment concept of human autonomy, is to be understood as the freedom of the person *from* this spiritual side of his or her being. It is the freedom of the material-volitional dimension of the human being. And indeed, this is precisely how the biblical account of the sin of eating from

the tree of knowledge explains the entrance of free will, in as much as the human physical impulse gained a power which could occlude the soul and its imperatives.[20]

Whilst freedom of choice is a fundamental principle in Noahide theology, being free from compulsion and being able to chose, does not define the actualized essence of a human being. The essence of a human being according to *Noahide* concepts is not to be something other than, but rather to actualize the Divine Image, the spiritual faculty in humankind. What realizes that essence is the modeling of the Divine in man through performance of Divine commandments (*mitzvos*) which *connect* a human being with G-d. In the case of a gentile, these are the seven Noahide laws set out in Torah for all humanity. For a Jew, it is the 613 commandments set out in Torah. The greatness of a human being, however is not *that* he or she can chose arbitrarily, but that choice is exercised to affirm the spiritual. By “submitting” to the commandments a person does not “nullify” or abrogate his or her significance. To the contrary: a life of fulfillment of Divine imperatives – which actualizes the Divine image within humans – *is* their significance[21]. Conversely, when a person is free “from” religion, he or she is in fact alienated from his essence and paradoxically this amounts to a form of enslavement[22].

Similarly, in the Noahide concept, the individual material personality of the person and the particular cultural personality of the society is not repressed as a result of the assertion of the spiritual. Rather, these become personal expressions or vehicles for the service of G-d. The greatness of a person or a society, consists also in the integration of its personality into the service of G-d.

The concept of the imitation of G-d is the imitation of Divine attributes, as these are expressed in the commandments[23] as discussed elsewhere[24]. At this point, however, it should be noted that the “Divine attributes”, are not attributes which actually inhere in G-d, for nothing could actually be said to

define G-d Himself. Rather, it is explained that these attributes are the instruments or modalities which G-d chose to create, through which to act in the world. These modalities or attributes are replicated in the human soul – enabling a basic relationship and communication – “imitation” – between the person and the Divine, microcosm and macrocosm. These attributes, as they are employed by G-d, have a quality of transcendence, infinitude[25]. G-d’s kindness is not in the measure of normal human kindness, nor is His quality of mercy or of judgment.

Nevertheless, there are different levels or ways in which the human imitation of the Divine proceeds. One is the attempt to imitate the Divine attributes in their transcendent aspect: this draws holiness (in Hebrew, *k’dusha*, transcendent removed G-dliness) into the order of society and nature. Another is their imitation on the immanent plane, as they pertain to the harmonious internal maintenance of society and nature. Finally, there is a level of transgression and disregard for these qualities, resulting in harm to the social-natural order, which, so to speak, removes the Divine image from – or wholly submerges it within – the persons, societies and cultures, which transgress the precepts associated with these qualities. Each of these relationships to the imitation of the Divine ways expresses itself in a different kind of agency and mission (or in the last case, counteragency) in realizing the Sovereignty of G-d in the world.

3. Human agencies of the Divine

The Jew

The Talmud states that everything in which a gentile has been prohibited by Torah, a Jew has also been prohibited[26]. In addition, a Jew must also do what ever a gentile is required

to do. A Jew is commanded to cleave to G-d's attributes, through fulfillment of the six hundred and thirteen commandments and to fulfil them in a manner of transcendence[27]. Hence, most of the mitzvos incumbent upon Jews relate to acts, which appear supererogatory – go beyond and above, what would normally be required – in relation to the normal maintenance of the world. These are mostly strikingly expressed in a multitude of commandments relating to concepts of purity and holiness, including those associated with the service of the Temple. On a practical social level, they involve acts of social kindness. An example of this is lending money without interest. Taking interest is in itself not a bad thing. It is the rental of money like the rental of any other item. By common societal standards, it could not be said to be evil and is permitted to Noahides. Nevertheless, a Jew is enjoined to lend without interest[28], as an extra measure of kindness, and similarly to take pains to return lost property.

In the first place these and a multitude of other supererogatory acts are required of a Jew only in relation to another Jew and in the context of the society of Jews, who are reciprocally obligated in them. However, their extension to a Noahide is permissible[29] and also desirable especially where those societies have *themselves* accepted these norms (such as which have lost-property offices) so that these acts are reciprocally meaningful. Similarly, a Noahide *may* take upon him or herself the commandments incumbent upon Jews with the exceptions of the Jewish Sabbath and certain modes of the study of Torah[30].

A Jew moreover has an obligation to sustain[31] – to provide livelihood, where necessary, for – the *ger toshav*, a non-Jew, who at the time when this procedure can take place[32], accepts before a religious court to keep the Noahide laws. There are those who state that in many respects a gentile nowadays, who accepts (even informally) the Noahide laws, has

the same rule as the *ger toshav*[33]. Just as the majority of the commandments given to the Jews go beyond the ordinary maintenance of the social order, so the function of their performance through Jews is to draw an *additional sanctity*, a transcendent holiness, into a social and world order which has already been stabilized by the nations following the Noahide laws[34].

The Noahide

Ordinary pity and kindness, as well as the measured severity required to curtail forms of anti-social behaviour are all (Divine) attributes which find concrete embodiment in Noahide law, to preserve peace (*sholom*) and social order (*yeshuvo shel olam*). The seven Noahide laws represent *negative* commandments incumbent upon Noahides[35]. There is also a positive obligation upon Noahides to give charity[36]. Indeed, the Lubavitcher Rebbe states that, beyond the seven Noahide laws there are two further categories of laws mandatory upon Noahides[37]: (a) qualities of conduct, mandated by normal human decency (known by the spiritually informed intellect[38]) such as the keeping of one's word[39], ordinary modesty and so forth and (b) additional restrictions (and ordinances) which the nations have taken upon themselves.

The Noahide laws are generally held to be so evident and normal that one cannot plead ignorance or lack of warning to be exempt from liability for their non-observance[40]. The theoretical punishment of the Torah for transgression of the Noahide laws is death, although such a penalty could only be enforced at a time when the great Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Court, convened in its place on the Temple Mount[41], and it seems that even when that was the case, this penalty was almost never carried out. The significance of the theoretical death penalty in general, whether for Jew or non-Jew, is given in the words of *Rashi*, namely that "one has transgressed the

will of one's Creator"[42]. In the case of the Noahide laws, it is that the very purpose for which a human was created, namely to settle the world peacefully has been contradicted and, and so also the essential point of the human being's existence has been vitiated[43].

In many places in the Talmud the terms for gentile (*goy* or *nochri*) without any further qualification (i.e. not the term which explicitly signifies "idolater") denotes idolatrous and barbarous peoples, such as those in whose midst the Jews lived. Already, however, a major late medieval Rabbinic authority, the *Me'iri*, (who lived some 700 years ago) observed that most of the nations of his time in some broad sense observed the Noahide laws, following a life regulated by laws and conventions. Speaking in relation to certain penalties laid upon idolaters in relation to damages, he writes, "that for all those who follow the Noahide laws, their rule in relation to us is like our rule in relation to them and there is no favour towards ourselves. Needless to say this applies to orderly, civilized societies [*b'darchoi dosos v'nimusim*]"[44]. Closer to our time, the *Remo*[45], the author of the great Ashkenasi gloss on the *Shulchan Aruch* (the code of Jewish law) writes similarly, and this has clear halachic force. And the *Nodeh B'Yehudah*[46], a few hundred years after that, writes even more positively that the nations amongst which the Jewish people lived in his time "have basic religious belief in the creation of the world, in the prophecy of the prophets and the wonders related in the Torah and Prophets", and so have no comparison with the status of certain earlier barbarous peoples. This does not mean that all contemporary cultures are observant of the Noahide law, or that those which in some sense broadly are, are without imperfection in many areas of their observance. Yet there are societies which in many ways are exemplary: and this opens up the vista of human perfectibility described by the Talmud, which speaks of a gentile, occupied with the study and practice of his or her commandments as being like the High

Priest of the Jewish people[47].

The barbarian

The “idolater” – one who neither authentically recognizes G-d or His laws[48] – is whether individually or a collectively (as a culture), barbaric. Within an otherwise orderly domestic context, the idolater is typified in Torah sources as the social outlaw, the strongman or gangster (such as the tax farmer who takes what he wants above and beyond the amount which the King had required[49]), both on a domestic and international level. The *Torah T'mima*[50] speaks of this category as one of individuals or societies, whose conduct disregards the intent of the Noahide laws (“maintenance of the world and society, security, life and possessions, mercy and pity upon creatures”) and moreover actively do the *opposite* – who kill, are sexually immoral, thieves, actively pursue forms of cruelty and so forth[51].

Society (both on a world and domestic level) has to deal with them as people, who, in different degrees are at war against society. How is one to relate to them? On the one hand, we find that, on the positive side, basic pity can be shown to those who are not actively at war with society. Thus Maimonides writes that a Jew is also to give charity to poor idolatrous non-Jews, to bury those of their dead, left without burial, alongside poor Jews[52].

On the negative side, one may not steal from them[53], though one may impose penalties upon them for anti-social behaviour. Thus the Mishnah[54] (the early codification of the oral law) discusses a case where people allow their livestock to roam and cause damage. If a Jew's livestock causes unforeseen and unpredicted damage to the idolater's livestock, there is no penalty upon the Jew, whilst the idolater must pay full damages. Maimonides explains that in this case no obligation

was placed on the Jew to pay damages to the idolater, in those circumstances where *they* do not do this for one another. The *Jew* is not depriving them of an entitlement, which they conventionally possess. He is not violating reciprocity at that basic level. However, the Torah has placed upon the idolater a *penalty* to pay damages, when he or she causes damages, because of “their carelessness in mitzvos and because they do not remove damaging entities”[55]. A removal of entitlement might be an infringement (and in terms of their own expectations, there is none here), but the exaction of a penalty is not[56]. Through the penalty, however, they are then motivated to a *higher* level of social responsibility. (When, however, they themselves, practice basic decency, then, in the words of the *Mei’iri*, quoted above, “their rule in relation to us is like our rule in relation to them and there is no favour towards ourselves”).

The concept of such a penalty is hence to rectify a behaviour. It is already foreshadowed in the conduct of Abraham, related in the Midrash[57] who would receive wayfarers into his home and feed them. He would then ask them to thank G-d for the food. If they declined, he would present them with a high bill – shocking, but *justified* (not an act of theft) in terms of the difficulty of bringing provisions to his desert oasis – for the food they had consumed. This kind of action – a harsher *justice* for one who was ordinarily so kind – indicates that sometimes a measure of coercion is required to transform the coarseness of an individual or culture. The brazenness of the person would be “broken”, but the intent was to reorient the individual, not to visit him or her with retribution[58].

At the same time, and indeed before the application of this form of coercion, Abraham would, by speaking about G-d and perhaps through the example of his person and conduct, seek to awaken a recognition of G-d on the part of those around him. Indeed the most profound “coercion”, is that which individuals

or cultures apply to themselves. This occurs especially when they experience a revelation of (especially a transcendent) G-dliness and respond by wanting to submit their minds and bodies as instruments of Divine purpose[59] and themselves experience the Redem

[1] I am grateful to Professor Arnold Loewy and to my wife, Miriam Cowen, for their critical comments on an earlier version of this essay.

[2] For a discussion and comparison of positive and natural law doctrines, see S.D. Cowen, "Eternal law and human legislation: secular and Jewish perspectives", *Journal of Judaism and Civilization*, vol. 1, 5758/1998, pp. 68ff.

[3] See Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, pp. 141-42, who explains that persecution for centuries, if not millennia, made dangerous the public discussion of this universal morality, set forth for humanity, in Jewish tradition.

[4] Rabbi S. Zevin, *L'Or HaHalachah*, pp.16-18.

[5] See Maimonides, *Hilchos M'lochim*, 6:1-3 in connection with the war of a Jewish king with gentile nations. It is not simply a question of submission or surrender, but a substantive subscription to the laws which make normative international society.

[6] As expressed in the concept of *dina d'malchusa dina* – the law of the land is law, also in the eyes of Torah. See below, Section 2.

[7] Such as the court of Shem, the son of Noah. See Talmud *Avoda Zora*, 36b, cited by *Or HaChayim* on Genesis 38:24. See also *Rashi* on Genesis 34:7.

[8] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 98.

[9] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, pp. 138-39.

[10] With which Grotius extolled Louis XIII, in his dedication of *De jure Belli ac Pacis*, Vol. 1 of the translation by F.W. Kelsey et al, NY: Oceana Publications, Inc, (reprinted 1964), p. 4.

[11] See Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, edited with an introduction by J. Dover Wilson, London: Cambridge University Press, 1960.

[12] Public Law 102-14, 102d Congress, 1st Session, H.J. Res. 104. The resolution begins with the following text:

“Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded;

Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws;

Whereas without these ethical values and principles the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning to chaos...”

[13] See Rabbi Menachem Azariah Mipano, *Asora Ma’amoros, Ma’amar “Eim Kiol Chai”* 2, 53, cited in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 10, p. 103 fn. 23. The term relates to the person’s *ability* to resemble the Divine, but actualizing this depends on his or her own choice.

[14] See below, in the name of the Maharal of Prague.

[15] *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 10, p. 104.

[16] See *G’vuros HaShem*, chapter 4.

[17] In *Sefer Netzach Yisroel* of the Maharal (*Netzach Yisroel*, ch. 11, p. 74).

[18] Rabbi DovBer, “*Bad Kodesh*”, letter 27 in *Igrois Koidesh* –

Admur Hazoken, Admur Ha'emtza'ee, Admur Hatzemach Tzedek, NY: Kehot, 1987

[19] Inasmuch as the Divine will is enshrined in the Divine (Noahide) laws governing humanity. In regard to seeing to it that *others* should keep these laws, we find an explicit instruction in Torah (Maimonides, *Hilchos M'lochim* 8:10) that Jews should do all they can to induce the non-Jewish world to keep the Noahide laws. When non-Jews themselves participate in disseminating knowledge and strengthening observance of the Noahide laws in the world, they are participating in the redemptive task of humanity as a whole, in conjunction with the Jewish people. The Congressional proclamation of 1991, mentioned above, can itself be seen as an act of this kind. See *Kol bo'ei olam*, pp. 189ff.

[20] See the commentary of *Rashi* on Genesis 2:25.

[21] America was first settled by a group which wanted freedom *of* (i.e. to be religious), rather than freedom *from*, religion. The concern that the state, in upholding religious (Noahide) values, could in fact be discriminating against *other* religious values, is at variance with the basic Noahide theological concept, that the Noahide laws in fact represent the *common* – essential and root-historical – spirituality of humanity.

[22] In the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, in regard to Jews: "When a Jew does not fulfil Torah and mitzvos... then, even though he looks as though he is "free" – without a yoke – and it is easier than fulfilling torah and mitzvos, this is in fact a form of unnatural servitude [*avodas perach*]. This is because conducting his life not according to Torah is the opposite of what his true essence and nature and demands.

This is analogous to the statement of our Sages that unnatural servitude means "(the work of men for women and) and the work of women for men". Even though the work is an easier one for

men, it is an “unnatural servitude” because it does not correspond to their habituation and nature” (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 17, p. 75).

[23] It has to be remembered that these are not the *foundations* of the commandments, which originate in the Divine will, but are rather qualities expressed in, and inculcated through, the performance of the commandments.. See the chapter on “Rationality and the Noahide laws”.

[24] See the chapter “The Noahide laws and human personality”.

[25] See S. D. Cowen, *Jewish Thought in Context*, Melbourne: Institute for Judaism and Civilization, 2001 (4th ed’n), pp. 35-36.

[26] See Talmud *Sanhedrin*, 59a.

[27] See here *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol 34, pp. 153-59 and especially fn. 56. So also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol 37, pp. 72-78.

[28] Although this prohibition can by certain arrangements, known as a *heter iska*, be circumvented, the imperative of kindness as applied in interest-free loans remains wherever possible.

[29] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 12, p. 115; *Pischei Chshen, Dinei Aveidoh* 1:18 (with notes, including elaboration of the position of Rashi, which counters the above).

[30] Maimonides, *Hilchos M’lochim*, 10:10.

[31] See *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, Vol. 6, column 292.

[32] I.e. when the laws of the Jubilee year are practised (Maimonides, *Hilchos Issurei Bi’a*, 14:8).

[33] See Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, *Sha’arei Halachah uMinhag* (Vol 3, p. 56), which cites the Tzafnos Panei’ach that according to Maimonides (*Hilchos M’lochim*, 10:10), Jews

are obligated to sustain also a Noahide, who accepts the seven Noahide laws, even without the formal acceptance of this in a Jewish court, made by the *ger toshav*. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, p. 134, fn 23*, which intimates that such is the view also of the *Tzemach Tzedek* in *Sha'alos u'T'shuvos*, *Yoreh Dei'ah*, 83.

[34] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 39, pp. 35-6, in addition to Vol. 34, pp. 53-59, mentioned above.

[35] Sanhedrin 58b. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 157.

[36] Based on Rabbeinu Nissan, *Chiddushei HaRan* on Sanhedrin 56b. The *Yad Rama* on *Sanhedrin*, 57b is also cited in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 157, fn. 54.

[37] See Hisvaduyos of Shavuos, 5747 in Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Toras Menachem* 5747, part 3, p. 429ff.

[38] See in general the chapter, "Rationality and the Noahide laws".

[39] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 147.

[40] Maimonides, *Hilchos M'lochim*, 10:1.

[41] Maimonides, *Hilchos Sanhedrin* 14:11, and so would seem to the ruling according to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in *Sha'arei Halachah uMinhog*, Vol. 3, pp. 56 ff, but see Rabbi J.D. Bleich, "Capital punishment in the Noachide Code" in his *Contemporary Halakhic problems*, Vol 2, NY: K'tav, 1983, pp. 342-43.

[42] See Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 10a.

[43] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 160, cited above in the chapter "Foundations of the Noahide Laws".

[44] On *Bava Kama*, 38a.

[45] In *Shulchon Oruch*, *Orach Chayim*, 156..

[46] *"His'natzlus ham'chaber"*.

[47] Talmud *Sanhedrin*, 59a.

[48] Even though such individuals and cultures may associate their belief with "G-d", one would have to say that *that* is their idolatry: that a *particular* interest, identity or entity is made absolute and is called "Divine".

[49] See *Bava Kama* 113b; and *Aruch HaShulchan, Choshen Mishpot* 348:2: *"ovdei cochovim anasim hakadmonim"*.

[50] *Torah T'mima, Sh'mos* 21: 277.

[51] See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 160.

[52] See end of chapter 10 of Maimonides, *Hilchos M'lochim*.

[53] Maimonides, *Hilchos G'neivah*, 1:1.

[54] *Bava Kama*, 4: 3.

[55] *Hilchos nizkei momon* 8:5

[56] Just as a parking fine is not an act of theft.

[57] *B'reishis Rabbo*, 49:4.

[58] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, pp. 122-128.

[59] See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 181

Appendix

APPENDIX

THE MAHARAL OF PRAGUE ON THE NOAHIDE LAWS

(G'vuros HaShem, Chapter 66)

Translated and annotated by Rabbi Dr Shimon Cowen[1]

Says Yehudah the son of Betzalel[2]:

Everything has a purpose, and according to the nature of each thing is its purpose. Accordingly, if the work is an important and great one, it will fittingly also have an important goal. For it is inappropriate that there should be an inferior and lowly goal for an important work. How much more so with the works of G-d, all of Whose deeds are with wisdom and understanding, that all His deeds should be directed towards a goal, which is fitting to the deed.

We saw in the Exodus that G-d wrought very great, awesome deeds, and in His glory, Himself brought them out from Egypt. Accordingly, it is appropriate that there should be a purpose for this act – commensurate in importance with the act which G-d worked for the sake of that goal.

In Scripture we find that the purpose of the Exodus was that He should be the G-d of Israel, as is written at the beginning of the Exodus: "...I shall bring you out from beneath the burdens of Egypt...and I shall take you to Me as a people and I shall be your G-d..."[3]. [Then], at the end of the portion of *Tetzaveh* it is written "...Who brought them out of Egypt to dwell amongst them..."[4]. From [this] it is evident that the Exodus, from the outset, was in order that He should be their

G-d. For this reason, the portions come in the order, initially that He brought them out of Egypt and afterwards gave them the Ten Commandments, the first of which is "I am the L-rd your G-d, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; you shall have no other gods..."[5] and after that the other [of the Ten] Commandments and then the portion *V'ela hamishpotim* [setting forth much detailed civil law]...

Afterwards, He wanted to dwell amongst them, as is written: "They shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them"[6]. It is evident that the purpose of the Exodus was that He should be their G-d and that His Divine Presence should be in their midst.

We need to look into this goal: whether this should be considered appropriate to [such] a great act. For it must be asked – after all, "the heavens are His throne and the earth His footstool[7]" and His Divine Presence is in the upper realms. Why then should He have chosen to dwell in the lower realms? In relation to His Divinity, ascent is more appropriate than descent. What need does [He] have in the lower realms, which are dust, maggots and worms?

If, however, it is the case that the entire purpose of existence depends upon His Divine Presence being in the lower realms, and that this is all important, the question disappears. [And this will be so] when one appreciates that G-d unites with the existing beings because they are caused by Him. For G-d, Who is the Cause of everything, desires what He has effected, and when there is a Cause, there is an effect[8]. It turns out that the bond of the First Cause with the existing beings is by virtue of the fact that He is their Cause and they have been effected by Him. We have already dwelt at length upon this special bond in conjunction with the verse, "And He called to him from within the bush"[9].

On the basis of this explanation, we must say that not the upper, but rather the lower, realms are [truly] united with G-

d. For the fact that they are called “upper” realms, means that they [themselves] have an effect upon the lower realms and [themselves] are considered a cause. Rather, the lower realms, as the lower realms, are the essential effect. Accordingly, the true bond of the First Cause, which is the true cause, is with the lower realms, in that they are the true effect.

The Midrash, on the portion of *B'reishis*[10] states:

[The verse states:] “And they heard the sound of G-d the L-rd walking [*mis'halech*] through the garden towards the sun”. The word *m'halech* is not used [for “walking”], but rather *mis'halech* [which signifies jumping, or leaping in bounds]. The principal [dwelling place] of the Divine Presence was [originally] in the lower realms. When Adam sinned, the Divine Presence departed to the first Heaven[11]. Cain sinned and It departed to the second Heaven. The generation of Enosh sinned and the Divine Presence departed to the third Heaven. The generation of the Flood sinned and the Divine Presence departed to the fourth Heaven. The generation of the Dispersion [which built the tower of Babel] sinned and the Divine Presence departed to the fifth Heaven. The people of Sodom arose and sinned and the Divine Presence departed to the sixth Heaven. The Egyptians arose in the days of Abraham and sinned and the Divine Presence departed to the seventh Heaven. Afterwards, seven righteous individuals [*tzaddikim*] arose and brought the Divine Presence down to earth: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehot, Amram [and] Moses, as it is written, “The righteous shall inherit the earth and forever *dwell upon it*[12]”. Now, what [based on this verse] do the wicked do? Do they fly in the air?! [Rather, the meaning of the verse is not that] the righteous [dwell upon the earth, but that they] *cause* the Divine Presence *to dwell* upon the earth.

Now the explanation of this, as we have said, is that when the world was first created and there was no impairment in the effect [– the world -] G-d joined with it, as befits the

unity of the Cause and effect. The joining was solely with the lower realms, inasmuch as they were the true effect. [This lasted only] until sin was [manifested] in the effected beings, at which point a separation developed in that attachment, until there was no connection between the Cause and the effect.

These seven sins, committed by the effected beings [which caused the progressive departure of the Divine Presence were violations of] the commandments which [G-d] gave them from the beginning of the creation of His world. [These are the prohibitions on] consuming the limb of a living creature, blasphemy, idolatry, forbidden sexual relationships, courts [the prohibition upon arbitrary judgment and arbitrary processes of justice], theft and murder. In these seven commandments consist the connection between the Cause and the effect[ed beings: that is,] through His decrees and commandments, in that the effect accepted the decree and commandment of the Cause. This is to be further explained in the work *Tiferes Yisroel*. Thus, as soon as man was created, G-d gave him seven commandments.

[Now,] it would appear that G-d chose these seven commandments because He desired that the human being should be good to Heaven and good to his or her fellow creatures"[13]. A person's righteousness is established in these two dimensions, as the verse states: "Praise the righteous person, *for he is good*, since he consumes the fruits of his deeds"[14]. [Its meaning for us here is unlocked by the question] asked in the first chapter of the Talmudic tractate *Kiddushin*[15]: [Does this verse imply that] there is a righteous person who is good as well as a righteous person who is *not* good? To this the answer comes: "[one who is] good to Heaven and good to one's fellow creatures" is a righteous person who is *good*. One, who is good to Heaven, but not good to one's fellow creatures is a righteous person, who is not good".

Accordingly, G-d gave three commandments between the

individual and his or her Creator, so that the person should not be bad to Heaven. These are [in relation to] forbidden sexual relationships[16], blasphemy[17] and idolatry. [Similarly,] He gave three commandments in the relationship with one's fellow creatures: theft (that one should not steal from another), courts of justice, and [the prohibition of] murder, so that one should not be bad to one's fellow creatures. The seventh commandment, [the prohibition on] consuming the limb of a living creature, is the starting point and foundation, from and upon which one will not come to the [other] transgressions. This commandment was given as an antidote to the bad impulse [in a person], such that he should not desire to eat and cut up an animal before its life has left it. On account of his impulses, and in order to suppress them, the human being was given this commandment. Our Sages said, "The law of the young tree [namely that we must wait three years before consuming its fruit] cuts off the feet of the butchers and those who have marital relations with their wives who are still in a state of ritual impurity [*niddah*][18]. " [That is to say,] the Torah instructed a measure of three years [to wait before consuming the fruit of] a sapling – "three years they shall be *areilim* to you"[19] – but [there are such] butchers [who] are unable to wait for the life of the animal to leave it [before eating their flesh] and [those] who have marital relations with their wives, who are in a state of ritual impurity [*niddos*]and cannot wait until [their wives] immerse [in a *mikvah* – ritual bath – to purify themselves for marital relations]. Therefore, this commandment [prohibiting consumption of] the limb of a living animal [was given] so as [to train] oneself not to follow impulse. For if one does follow one's inclination, in the end one's inclination will tell one to do this and then to do that, until one transgresses *all* the prohibitions. Similarly, [we find] at the end of the Ten Commandments [given to the Jewish people], "You shall not covet", for the sin of [simply following] desire is the beginning of all sins. Indeed the liturgical poet

formulated it thus “in ‘you shall not covet’ [are] included all”, to tell you that all the commandments are included in “You shall not covet”, since if one does transgress in the sin of “you shall not covet”, one will come to transgress in general. For this reason [the prohibition on consuming] the limb of a living creature is enumerated seventh [as the comprehensive principle of all the Noahide commandments].

Now, to Adam, to whom meat was not permitted at all, G-d gave in place [of the prohibition of consuming the limb of a living creature] the commandment not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, about which Scripture states that it was “goodly to eat and desirable to the eyes”[20] – so that he would not follow his impulse [and take and eat it before it was permitted[21]]. It was this [unconstrained desire] which caused him to sin, as is written in the verse, that he was drawn after his inclination. He was therefore given [all] these commandments [i.e. the remaining six, since the realm of possible transgression had now been opened up, through his failure to keep this commandment].

Why was he give three commandments, in the dimension of the relationships between human beings and three commandments bearing on the relationship between G-d and the individual human being? [This is understood by way of the introduction that] the parts of the human being are body and soul[22]. The human being as a whole comprises these parts, in that through them [together], the person receives the form of the human. This third dimension is like a house, which has as its parts wood and stones, but afterwards is made a house, compounded of both. It is something other than its parts and this [idea] has been explained before very many times.

[Proceeding though each of these two dimensions, in each of *their* three aspects, we have schematically the significance of these six commandments.] In order that one should not sin towards Heaven with his soul, G-d gave the person [the prohibition of] idolatry as the verse in *Ezekiel* states “in

order to seize the House of Israel for what is in their minds [*b'libom*]"[23] which refers to idolatry. Concerning this, the Talmud in the chapter "*shilu'ach hakein*"[24] states, "Perhaps he entertains idolatrous *thoughts*". For in none of the transgressions is thought reckoned a deed, except for idolatry (as it is written, "in order to seize the House of Israel for what is in their minds") so the sin [pertains] to the soul [alone].

[Further, in the dimension of the person's relationship to G-d] forbidden sexual relationships relate to the [bodily component, the] flesh, on account of the impulse in the body which desires forbidden relationships. So it is explained in various places that the sin of forbidden relationships relates to the body, as the Torah states [expounded in the Talmudic Tractate] *Sota*[25], that the sacrificial flour offering of the woman suspected of infidelity should be of barley [not wheat]: her act was the act of a donkey and so her offering should be [barley,] the food of a donkey. [We see that] the sin of forbidden sexual relationships is a physical, bodily one and this has been explained in various places.

Blasphemy relates to the human being composed of both body and soul. For in blasphemy, one sins with speech by cursing G-d and the category of a person is that of a living being which speaks. Speech is the distinguishing form [*tzura*] of the human being [as such] composed of both body and soul. Hence, with blasphemy, through speech, it is the person *as a whole* who has sinned – just as is done with the soul in idolatry and with the body in forbidden relationships – through speech, which embraces the whole person. Moreover, you should know, and this is the main point, that the reason why the sin of blasphemy implicates the human being as a whole is because one who sins in this way denies the basic Principle [G-d, the basis of existence] by cursing G-d, and if there is no basis, the person's [own] existence is nullified. He thereby sins with his whole person, and thereby his existence is utterly

nullified. Just as with forbidden sexual relations, he sins with his body and with idolatry the sin attaches to his soul, so with blasphemy, the sin is fundamental and attaches to the person in totality.

This is the reason the Torah instructed that [upon pronouncing judgment on him, all the judges and witnesses] lay their hands upon the head of one who blasphemes and say to that person, “your blood is upon your head”: as though to say, you have brought it upon yourself; we have not caused it to you. For in all other sins, there might have been some argument in his favour, and if he is pronounced guilty in court, it is the court which is sentencing him to death but still there he might have some argument in his favour to allow us to say that [by his conduct] he did not [really] bring his death upon himself. However, in the sin of blasphemy, in which one denies the basic Principle, there is no argument in his favour[26] at all. This is why they lay their hands upon his head and say to him “your blood is on your head” – because you caused it to yourself, you have no possible argument in your favour. This idea is elaborated in the work *Gur Aryeh*.

In the dimension that one should not be bad to [one’s fellow] humans, there are three transgressions [stipulated by the Noahide laws:] courts [i.e. the prohibition against arbitrariness in justice], theft and murder. In arbitrary justice the sin is with one’s soul, namely the perversion of true justice and uprightness, [the concepts of which are] found in the soul of man. For truth and uprightness are appraised in the soul. Accordingly, this is a sin of the soul, since uprightness and justice are apprehended only in the intellectual soul.

Moreover, when a person does not rightly carry out justice, this comes from a deficiency of the soul, for anyone who sees injustice must be aroused in his soul to [do] justice. This is why every judge has to have a strong and resolute mind [*leiv*] for justice. It is evident that justice comes from

an arousal of the soul, and when one contemplates this properly, one will understand that justice is an act of the soul. So too in the [Midrash][27] it is written: “Two things are at the left of the Holy One blessed be He – justice and the soul: justice, as it is written ‘And My hand takes hold of judgment’[28]; and in regard to the soul [it is written] ‘For in Your hand is the soul of all life’[29]; and wherever the word “hand” [appears in Scripture], it refers to the left [hand]. The Torah is [here] saying, I created the soul in the place of judgment; it has gone out and sinned. That is why it is written [in conjunction with civil law], “When a *soul* will sin...”[30]. For the soul seeks justice since it was created in the place of justice and if there is injustice, it is reckoned to the soul as a sin. This is clear and simply grasped.

Now this commandment parallels [the prohibition of] idolatry, which is a commandment that one should not be bad to Heaven. For idolatry is called *Elokim acheirim* [“other gods”] and the judge is also called *Elokim* in all places. [In this regard] the Sages stated: “one who appoints a judge, who is unfit, is as though he planted an *asheirah* [a tree used for idolatrous worship]”[31]. They represent the one notion in all respects and therefore, corresponding to the commandment, which G-d gave that one should not sin with other gods – this commandment being between the person and his Creator – He commanded in the dimension between fellow humans, that one should carry out true justice: not to sin in relation to a matter which is also called *Elokim*.

Theft parallels forbidden sexual relationships, as we find everywhere, that the Sages spoke of “theft and forbidden relationships, [things] which the soul of man desires”.[32] We see that these things match each other. The main aspect of theft is the pursuit of money, and the desire for wealth and riches are physical matters like forbidden sexual relationships, simply that [theft is an infringement] between fellow humans.

Now forbidden sexual relationships and theft are not included in [the general category of] desire [the object of the prohibition on consuming the limb of a living creature]. For in forbidden sexual relationships, whereby one desires and pursues women[33], or theft, where one pursues wealth, this is not desire *alone* [and in *general* unbridled] but desire for a *specific* thing – to be led by sexual desire or to scramble after wealth. Desire [in general] is the desire for *whatever* one lacks, which [means that such a person] is a creature of desire [in general]. This is something else altogether, as will be explained, which derives from [an intellectually and spiritually unmediated, and so in a sense immature, pre-fully human] *physicality* of the person, as will be explained. These matters are clear.

The sin of murder is between fellow human beings. This is a sin in which the entire person sins; the sin is not in a part, but rather in all of the person. [For] just as in the sin of blasphemy, where one denies the [Divine] Principle which is [the source of] everything [spiritual and physical], so this murderer spills the blood [of the person] totally. [That is to say, he destroys both the spiritual and the physical identity of the slain person], and hence this sin similarly implicates the entire person [both body and soul, both of which destroyed facets of humanity in the slain]. This is not like the sin in [the perversion of] justice or the sin involved in theft, where the sin is not such that the whole person sinning is corrupted – but rather only a part is corrupted. However, just as with blasphemy, where one denies the basic Principle entirely [and] it is as though there is no G-d, Heaven forbid, similarly this murderer in spilling the blood of the person completely, has sinned with his entire person[34].

The seventh [prohibition] relates to the [unmediated] physicality [(*chomer*) of the person], from which desire arises such that a person is unable to hold back [from eating the flesh of the creature] before slaughtering [it]. This is the

desire which comes from the physicality that constantly lacks and so lusts and desires to fill its lack.

[The Midrash goes on to] say that Adam came and sinned with desire when he took the fruit which he coveted, and the Divine Presence departed to the first Heaven. Cain came and sinned with murder [and] the Divine Presence departed to the second Heaven. The generation of Enosh came and sinned with idolatry, as the Sages stated in the chapter of the Talmud, "*Kol Kisvei*": "The verse states, 'One who keeps the Sabbath from being profaned...' and next to it is written 'Happy is the person [*enosh*] who will do this'[35]. From this [apposition is learnt] that anyone who keeps the Sabbath according to its laws, even if he served idolatry like the generation of Enosh, will be forgiven. For it is written *m'chalalo* ['from being profaned'] but do not read it as *m'chalalo*, but rather as *mochul lo* ['he is forgiven']"[36]. His generation was the first to serve idolatry, as it is written 'then it was begun to call [the names of men and other beings] by the Name of G-d"[37], and the Divine Presence departed to the third Heaven.

[Then] came the generation of the flood and sinned with theft, as the verse states explicitly, "And the earth was filled with violence"[38] – other than this, no other sin is explicitly stated [in Scripture in relation to the Flood] – and the Divine Presence departed to the fourth Heaven. [After that] the generation of the Dispersion came and sinned with blasphemy when they said, "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower"[39] and make war with Him – this was blasphemy – and the Divine Presence departed to the fifth Heaven. [Then] there arose the people of Sodom and sinned [in the realm of] justice as is evident from the deeds, which are told of them, and of what the judges of Sodom did and how their judgments were, and the Divine Presence departed to the sixth Heaven. The Egyptians arose [next] in the days of Abraham and sinned [with forbidden] sexual relationships as is evident from the "practice of Egypt" referred to in the verse, "Like the

practice of Egypt..."[40]. For this reason Pharaoh did not say to Abraham, "Behold, my land is before you..."[41] as Abimelech said to Abraham, since he acknowledged that the Egyptians were immersed in lewdness, and the Divine Presence departed to the seventh Heaven.

Now came Abraham, like whom no other had ever been as guarded in matters of forbidden sexual relationships. Concerning him, our Rabbis of blessed memory, said[42], "Put earth in the mouth of [i.e. silence] Job, who said, 'I have established a covenant with my eyes, so how could I have thought of a maiden'. [43] [That is, Job] did not gaze upon another, but upon his own he did gaze. However, Abraham, did not gaze even upon his own, as [the verse] states, 'Behold, now I have known that you are a woman of beautiful appearance'[44]". [That is to say,] up to that point of time, he had not recognized her [- his wife's -] beauty, since he had not gazed at her. Accordingly, he brought the Divine Presence down to the sixth Heaven.

Isaac arose and was righteous in justice, in that he accepted upon himself with love the [Divine] attribute of judgment, when, [at the binding (*akeidah*)] he stretched forth his neck to be slaughtered. He was [thus] the opposite of the people of Sodom, who corrupted justice. And there is no difference between the judgment of Heaven [which was given to Isaac] and the judgment of earthly courts [which the people of Sodom perverted, for it is all justice. It is known that Isaac [embodied] the attribute of justice and therefore he drew down the Divine Presence to the fifth Heaven.

Jacob [then] came and sanctified [G-d's] Name, as it is written in the verse, "And sanctify the Sanctified One of Jacob"[45]. [Moreover] the third blessing [of the silent prayer (*Amidah*)] was established corresponding to Jacob, for the first three blessings correspond to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Even the angels sanctify in the name of Jacob, as it is written "blessed is the G-d of Israel [another name for

Jacob”[46], as explained [elsewhere, the concept] that the angels sanctify in the name of Jacob. Accordingly, he countered the people of the generation of the Dispersion who blasphemed the Name of G-d, and he [Jacob] brought down the Divine Presence to the fourth Heaven.

Levi [the son of Jacob] was the antithesis of theft, where [one] covets and takes what is not one’s. Levi was its opposite in that his entire tribe had no portion in the land [of Israel] or inheritance in the spoils [of war]. “G-d is his inheritance”[47]. Levi was removed from money matters and from the pursuit of money and even that which should fittingly have come to him, was not his. [Now] if the tribe of Levi was not so disposed, G-d would not have given them [this lot] – rather, only because [the tribe] was satisfied with what it had. Now, can we say [that this was the quality] simply of his tribe but not of [Levi] him[self]? This is impossible, for his tribe would not have acquired this quality, if not from their father, since the name Levi applies to the tribe as a whole. That is why he drew down the Divine Presence to the third Heaven.

Kehot [the son of Levi] is the contrary of idolatry. His family [within the tribe of Levi] served G-d with their bodies, carrying [parts of] the sanctuary and all their offspring were serving G-d with their bodies. [In this they were] different to the families of Gershon and Merari [also of the tribe of Levi] who had wagons [upon which to transport those parts of the sanctuary entrusted to them]. But the family of Kehot “shall carry on their shoulders”[48]. And something which one serves with one’s body is [truly] called service. So also amongst their offspring were the *Kohanim* [the priests], upon whom was incumbent [also] an actual service [of G-d, that is to say, one performed with their bodies]. For this reason, he brought the Divine Presence down to the second Heaven.

Then came Amram, who was a person of such great righteousness

that he did not sin [at all] and death did not come to him on his own account. The Sages said in the Talmudic Tractate *Bava Basra*[49] that Amram died only on account of the counsel of the snake [in the Garden of Eden]. That is to say, it was not appropriate that he should die, were it not for the snake, which had brought death to the world. Accordingly, he is the contrary of Cain, who took up the craft of the primordial snake and brought death to the world. Amram, however, did not die because of any sin of his own, and indeed he is the total opposite of Cain who brought death upon another. And even though it is the way of the world to bring death upon oneself through one's own sin, Amram did not bring [it upon himself]. It follows that Amram was entirely life and Cain entirely death; and this is clear. For this reason, he brought down the Divine Presence to the first Heaven.

[Then] came Moses, who was a righteous person who separated from his wife. From this you know that desire was not to be found in Moses. For if he had possessed it, it would have been improper for him to separate from his wife, lest he come to sin. This is why we know that desire was absent from him. He is therefore the contrary of Adam, who possessed desire. For this reason, [at Sinai] he brought the Divine Presence down to earth, through which the Divine Presence returned to its original place.

At all events, we know from this that the [proper] place of the Divine Presence is upon earth, for the reason, which has been explained. Moreover, it will be clear how specifically the lower realms [humanity] deserved that the Divine Presence should [rest] in the lower realms, were it not for sin, which separates between existing beings and the First Cause.

Translators Afterward: The Noahide laws and the Divine attributes (s'firos).

An attempt has been made to correlate the seven Noahide laws with the Divine attributes

or *s'firos* of *chesed* (kindness), *g'vurah* (might), *tiferes* (beauty), *netzach* (victory), *hod* (glory), *yesod* (foundation) and *malchus* (kingship). This was done in the book *The Seven Colours of the Rainbow*[50] by Rabbi Yirmeyahu Bindman. The correspondence which he posits are *chesed* – the prohibition on forbidden sexual relationships, *g'vurah* – the prohibition on murder, *tiferes* – the prohibition on theft, *netzach* – the prohibition on idolatry, *hod* – the prohibition on blasphemy, *yesod* – the prohibition on consuming the limb of a living animal, and *malchus*, the precept of courts. It appears that this schema was based on a teaching to this effect by Rabbi Yitzchok Ginzburg, published on the website of his organization, *Gal Einei*. No sources are mentioned in either of these places for the suggested correspondence.

The Maharal was himself a great Kabbalist, who, however, in his writings does not use an overtly Kabbalistic vocabulary, but rather mediates Kabbalistic concepts through logical and philosophical constructs, as in this piece. Nevertheless, his account of the correspondence of the Noahide laws with the sequence of righteous individuals who restored them, and the sequence of the last six (of the nine) Heavens together with the earth, the seven stages through which the Divine Presence was brought down, suggests a different correspondence. One of these, Isaac, explicitly associated with the Divine attribute of *g'vurah* or (translated above as “might” but equally known as “judgment”) is associated by the Maharal with the prohibition on arbitrary justice (courts) – not murder. Moreover the Maharal organizes six commandments into three groups (one might say, “columns”) with internal affinities: (forbidden relations-theft, blasphemy-murder, idolatry-arbitrary justice [courts]) after which is that which sums them all up, the prohibition on eating the limb of a living animal, with the significance explained by the Maharal. Without wishing to spell out a correspondence of the Noahide laws with the *s'firos*, the translator not having seen this explicitly in any source, it seems to the translator that

there are sufficient grounds, based on this essay of the Maharal, to doubt the other suggested correspondence.

[1] Gratitude is due to Rabbi David Coney for helpful comments and suggestions on a draft of this translation. Notes of the translator are placed in square brackets.

[2] [The Maharal (Rabbi Yehudah Ariele Loeve) adds the blessing after the name of his father (Betzael): "whose remembrance is for the life of the world to come"- Trans.]

[3] Exodus 6:6-7.

[4] *Ibid.*, 29:46.

[5] *Ibid.*, 20:2.

[6] *Ibid.*, 25:5.

[7] *Isaiah* 66:1.

[8] [Note that representing G-d as a Cause, which entails an effect, applies only at the level at which G-d chooses to enter the realm of existence, shared by created beings. As Maimonides writes, however, and is elucidated in Chassidic thought, there is a level at which G-d is wholly beyond this, and there apply Maimonides' words in *Hilchos Dei'os* 1:3: "If one would imagine that all other beings did not exist, He would not cease to exist with their cessation of existence." This is a level beyond ordinary causality. See Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, NY:Kehos – Trans]

[9] Exodus 3:4.

[10] *B'reishis Rabbah*, parshas *B'reishis* 19:7.

[11] [One should here note that in Jewish cosmology, as set forth in Maimonides, *Hilchos De'ios*, chapter 3, the universe is comprehended as a number of spheres – in all nine

– encompassing the earth in their centre. The first heaven is the first or innermost of these spheres, around the earth – Trans.]

[12] Psalms 37:29.

[13] As indicated in the immediately forthcoming quotation from the Talmud.

[14] *Isaiah* 3:10. [The translation here follows the interpretation of the commentary *M'tzudos Dovid*. – Trans.]

[15] 40a.

[16] [It needs to be explained why this is in the category of “bad to Heaven”. The reason would seem to be that the partners to a forbidden sexual relationship could both consent, so that formally neither has “violated” the other. Rather, the transgression is against the personal identity of a person, created in the image of G-d. A degradation of the person is a degradation of the One in Whose image, he or she has been made. Compare here the commentary of Rashi on Deuteronomy 21:23 – Trans.]

[17] [Called by its opposite “*bircas HaShem*”, literally “blessing HaShem” – Trans.]

[18] Talmud, Tractate *Beitzah* 25b.

[19] Leviticus 19:23.

[20] Genesis 3:5.

[21] [See Rabbi M.M. Schneerson, *Likkutei Sichos* (NY: Kehos), Vol. 3, p. 747, where based on the Midrash (Breishis Rabbo) and other sources, he explains that the prohibition had a duration of only three hours – Trans.]

[22] [Note that the Maharal will call this the *nefesh hasichlis* or “intellectual soul” later in connection with the

discussion of the Noahide commandment concerning courts and justice. This is important because we need to distinguish between the soul in its spiritual root, where it possesses a purity, which we might call the Divine spark, and the intellectual soul which is *capable* of sinning, as we say: He sins *with his soul* – Trans.]

[23] 14:5.

[24] Tractate *Chulin* 142a.

[25] 14a.

[26] [Since he has directly reviled the basis of his existence – Trans.]

[27] See *D'vorim Rabbo* 5:4.

[28] Deuteronomy 32:41.

[29] *Job* 12:10.

[30] In a number of places in the portion *Vayikro*.

[31] Talmud, Tractate *Sanhedrin* 7b.

[32] Talmud, Tractate *Chagiga* 11b.

[33] [The Maharal has earlier quoted the Talmud which, from the law of (abstaining from the fruit of) the young trees for three years, rebukes those who eat the flesh of an animal which has not yet been slaughtered and those who have relationships with their wives before waiting for them to purify themselves. The concept is here explained in two stages. First this desire is regarded as a general desire, for whatever the person lacks. It is desire, which is ultimately exemplified by the infant, who is unable to check, repress or sublimate any desire which it feels. The person, who desires something specific, such as forbidden relationships or theft, has at least been able to suppress *other* desires. It is simply

that in some specific area, he cannot contain desire. According to this, however, the question arises: why here does the Maharal exemplify this *general* desire with the quotation from the Talmud, which indicates that such desire leads a person to have relations with his wife, before she emerges from a state of ritual impurity. After all, this is also in the category of a forbidden relationship, like the forbidden sexual relationships which are the subject of a separate, *specific* Noahide law. The answer to this is in the difference between the two forbidden relationships. Those forbidden relationships covered by the specific Noahide law against forbidden sexual relationships relate to persons, who will always remain forbidden to a person: very close relatives, homosexuality, and a person who is married to another, in that they are and remain married to another. On the other hand, one's wife can eventually emerge from her ritual impurity, just as the fruit of the tree will become permitted in the course of time (after the first three years) and so also the flesh of the animal will be permitted once it has been slaughtered. All that is required is that one *wait*. In general, we have a principle that a person can constrain desire and resist temptation *now* because he has "bread in his basket" (*pas b'salo*), that is to say, what he wants *will* become available to him. The general desire, at which the prohibition of consumption of the limb of a living animal is aimed, is general in the sense that it cannot bear any delay in its gratification; it is wholly unmediated. So also, as mentioned above (in a footnote), the duration of the prohibition upon the fruit of the tree of knowledge – an instance of the generic prohibition on consuming the limb of a living creature – was only for three hours, and Adam was unable to *wait* this time – Trans.]

[34] [The infringement of something spiritual is a defect of the soul of the sinner; the infringement of something physical is a defect of the physical nature of the sinner (a sin with the body). Hence when there is an infringement (with

blasphemy) against G-d, the Source of all, both spiritual and physical, the whole person is implicated and tainted. When the person sins against the entire existence (spiritual and physical) of a person, through murder, the entire person of the sinner is similarly implicated and tainted – Trans.]

[35] *Isaiah* 56:2.

[36] In the Talmudic tractate *Shabbos* 118b.

[37] *Genesis* 4:26.

[38] *Ibid.*, 6:13.

[39] *Ibid.*, 11:4.

[40] *Leviticus* 18:3.

[41] *Genesis* 18:19.

[42] Talmud Tractate, *Bava Basra* 16a.

[43] *Job* 31:1.

[44] *Genesis* 12:11.

[45] *Isaiah* 29:23.

[46] See *Psalms* 41:14 quoted in the Midrash, *Bamidbar rabbo* 4:1.

[47] *Deuteronomy* 10:9.

[48] *Numbers* 7:9.

[49] 17a.

[50] San Jose: Resource Publications, 1995.

A New Analysis Of Modern Science, In Torah (Biblical) Account Of Creation

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A New Analysis Of Modern Science, In Torah (Biblical) Account Of Creation

An New Analysis Of Modern Science, In Light Of The Torah (Biblical) Account Of Creation

By Rabbi Yosef Y. Keller, author of Astronomy According to Maimonides Brooklyn N. Y.

In The Beginning G-d created

G-d created the universe five thousand seven hundred and sixty two (5762) years ago. In the very first moment of creation, G-d created all physical matter. as the entire universe. The universe consists of two dimensions Heaven [1] and Earth. Heaven is spiritual and is in a constant state of motion, while Earth is physical and static. [Genesis 1, 1. Nachmanides ibid. Maimonides: laws of *Yesodei HaTorah* 3, 1-4. Guide to The Perplexed II].

the (more spiritual) Heaven (which is in constant motion), 2) the (more physical) Earth (which stays in one place, and does not move)

The Earth was originally created in a chaotic state; including all earthly physical matter, but not yet divided into separate properties of solid, liquid, gas and plasma [Genesis 1, 2. Nachmanides *ibid.* Guide to The Perplexed *ibid.*] .

Then the Earth was divided into 4 separate entities: 1) the earth (solid), surrounded (on all sides) by 2) water (liquid), surrounded by 3) gas, Surrounded by 4) electromagnetic energy [*ibid.* Maimonides: laws of *Yesodei HaTorah* 3,9-10; 4,1] .

Then G-d said: let Light be developed. And part of the heaven became energy that radiates light and heat [Genesis 1, 3].

This large Light was later divided by G-d on the fourth day of creation [2] into many separate balls of radiating heat and energy. Namely, the Sun and many stars [3] [commentary of Rav S`adya Gaon on Genesis 1, 3-4].

The Heaven surrounds the earth (and its atmosphere) and revolves around it. Completing a full revolution of 360 degrees around the earth and its atmosphere in approximately one day (23 hours, 56 minutes and 4 seconds). The direction of the daily revolution is from east to west, parallel to the equator (which is located right between the north and south poles). Therefore the Sun and all the stars and planets rise in the east and set in the west [Maimonides laws of *Yesodei HaTorah* 3, 1-2].

At the same time the sun moves in its own independent motion from west to east, at a much slower pace (completing a revolution of 360 degrees every 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 49.6 seconds [4]). Thus; only at the end of a full day (which is then divided into 24 hours), does the sun return to its original position [Maimonides: laws of *Kiddush Hachodesh* 12, 1] .

The light that was created on the first day, moved (in its own independent motion) at the same pace as the sun later would.

When the light was developed, it was placed 90 degrees west of Israel (just below its horizon [5]); thus causing night to last for approximately 12 hours, followed by an equal amount of day-time, forming one complete day(12/25 01) [6][Genesis 1, 5].

On the second day G-d said, "Let there be *Rokia* (atmosphere)in the midst of the waters, and let it separate between water and water." And it was so [Genesis 1, 6] [7] .

G-d made the atmosphere. The water that is above the atmosphere exists in clusters of ice (some of them known as comets); when they descend to the atmosphere, they turn unto liquid water and then evaporate. The water below the atmosphere exists in colder temperatures in the solid form (ice), in warmer temperature in liquid form; when it heats up enough, it evaporates and rises and becomes clouds [Genesis 1, 7; 2, 6].

At the end of the second day, the water below the atmosphere still surrounded the solid Earth from all sides, covering and submerging it completely.

On the third day G-d said the water under the atmosphere should gather into one place, and let the dry land be revealed and it became so [Genesis 1, 9].

G-d designated the dry land (with its rocks, minerals and dust) to become the land that is going to be populated by human beings and animals. The gathering of water was designated by G-d to become oceans, rivers, lakes and wellsprings [Genesis 1, 10].

The earth brought out all kinds of grass, grain, fruits and vegetables [8] [Genesis 1, 11-12].

During the first 3 days of creation, there existed only one light and one unit of time (the day). Only 2 physical entities existed above the electromagnetic field of energy: the

physical heavens and the Light.

On the fourth day G-d made the two great luminaries: the gaseous sun and the solid moon. Initially the moon light came from within (i.e. the moon radiated its own light). The moon: complained it is not worthy of two kings to use the same crown, i.e. that it is not proper that there should be two luminaries (that appear to be about the same size to an observer from earth [9]) both radiating their own light. G-d told the moon "go diminish yourself", i.e. cease to radiate light [10]. From then on, the moon only reflects sunlight, and does not radiate its own light [Chulin 60b] [11].

G-d also made (on the fourth day) the stars, planets and satellites [12].

1. Heaven is the translation of the Hebrew word "shomayim". The modern reference to it as "Space"; is a result of the modern conception that only something which can be sensed with 1 of a Human Being's 5 senses (sight, hearing, touching, smelling and feeling) can be defined as something physical. Thus stripping the more spiritual Heaven of its physical character; attributing motion to something else; replacing the word "Heaven" (that refers to something physical) with the word "Space" (that refers to something that is not physical matter, but merely space that physical matter can occupy). This is one example of the answer to an interesting question: what is the relationship between science (Particularly: modern science) and Torah. The Torah represents truth and reality as revealed to us by the Creator himself. Science is based on observations of finite human beings, and cannot even pass judgment on whether or not anything absolute (for instance: absolute motion) exists..
2. These days of creation were equal in length to the day that exists today. Since the creator is omnipresent; the question that arises when one reads the Torah's account of creation is not: how could this have been

accomplished in such a short period of time, but rather: why did G-d create the world in six days, when he could have done it all in one second. [For an answer to this question, see note 6]

3. The apparent width of the Sun (to someone observing it from the Earth) is 32 minutes of a degree (a complete circle being divided into 360 degrees and a degree into 60 minutes). The apparent width is a result of the proportion of its distance from the Earth to its actual size. It seems that the Light (that was created on the first day of creation) was placed at such a distance, so that its apparent width (to someone observing it from the Earth) should be 32 minutes of a degree.
4. Maimonides (laws of *Kiddush Hachodesh* 12, 1) does not specify the exact length of the solar year. However; it can be calculated from the amount of degrees, minutes and seconds that Maimonides (*ibid.*) states that the Sun goes per 100 (1000 and 10000) days.
5. horizon is a 180-degree radius (90 to each direction: north, south, east and west).
6. from the fourth day onwards, there were three units of time: 1) day. 2) month. 3) Year. The sixth day of creation (the day that man was created) was the first day of the first month of year 2 (1/1 02).
7. Every physical aspect of creation was preceded by a corresponding spiritual action: The dual language in the Torah concerning the formation of the *Rokia* – first G-d said “let there be *Rokia*... and it was so,” then G-d made the *Rokia* (atmosphere) – is explained by Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi in his *Likkutei Torah (Pinchos 78b)* as follows: “Let there be *Rokia* ” refers to the spiritual *Rokia*, which separates the G-dly source of physical matter from physical matter itself; “G-d made the *Rokia* ” refers to the physical *Rokia* (the atmosphere). The same explanation applies to the dual language concerning the formation of the luminaries. The development refers to the spiritual Luminaries. “And G-d

made the two luminaries... and the stars" refers to the physical luminaries (the sun, moon, stars, planets and satellites).

8. The Light supplied the energy for the plants and fruit.
9. The Sun is much larger than the moon (the Sun's diameter is 5.5 times the diameter of the Earth. Hence, its volume is $166 \frac{3}{8}$ the volume of the earth. The volume of the Earth is approximately 40 times the volume of the moon [Maimonides: laws of Yesodei HaTorah 3, 8]). The diameter of the Sun is 20 times the diameter of the moon. However, the distance between the Sun and the Earth is 20 times the distance between the moon and Earth. Therefore the apparent size of the moon (when it is full) is close to the apparent size of the Sun.
10. With this statement, the Talmud (Chulin 60b) explains the verse (Genesis 1, 16) that begins "and G-d made the two great luminaries" and continues "the greater luminary to rule the day and the smaller luminary to rule the night". When they were first created, they both radiated their own light; hence, they are referred to as "the two great luminaries". Later, when the moon ceased to radiate its own light and it merely reflects sunlight, it's referred to as "the smaller luminary". Rav Yisroel Yitzchok Piekarsky (*Even Yisroel*, Droshoh for *Shabos HaGodol* 5708) explains: the Talmud (Bava M`tziah 12b) says that someone who eats by his parents is considered a *Koton* (minor), but if he is self-supported then he is considered a *Godol* (adult). Hence, the luminary that radiates its own light is considered a *Maor Hagodol* (the larger luminary), but the luminary that does not radiate its own light (and merely reflects someone else's light) is considered a *Maor HaKoton* (the smaller luminary).
11. In the days of moshiach, the moon would once again radiate its own light.

12. The luminaries visible to the naked eye (that is not aided by a telescope) are divided into 2 categories:
- a. 7 planets (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) that are relatively close to the Earth (the Moon completes a full revolution of 360 degrees in approximately 27 days and 8 hours. The Sun, Mercury and Venus complete a full revolution of 360 degrees in approximately $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days. Mars completes a full revolution of 360 degrees in approximately $2 \frac{1}{2}$ years. Jupiter completes a full revolution of 360 degrees in approximately 12 years. Saturn completes a full revolution of 360 degrees in approximately 30 years).
 - b. stars that are more distant from the Earth. These stars are fixed in the Heaven (that rotates daily around the Earth and its atmosphere parallel to the equator, and completes a full revolution of 360 degrees in approximately 25,000 years tilted $23 \frac{1}{2}$ degrees north and south of the equator).

The Rabbi Leadership

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

THE ORTHODOX RABBI'S LEADERSHIP AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

By : Yakov J. D. Cohen

The Rabbi and the People. This study of rabbi's past, present including leaders of the generations beginning with Moses and the Maimonides in the twelve century Spain and Egypt

The Rabbi's Moses and Maimonides were obviously head and shoulders above the ordinary rabbi however their leadership will act, as a history of past, present, and future leader should be aware of, and to use as guide.

The review of the yeshiva in the last few hundred years as the Rabbi serving as the head , on to more recently with the founding of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva with the Rebbe at it's leader Rabbi J I Schneerson during the world war II and on to the USA with his successor Reabbi M. M. Schneerson in post war serving as a Rebbe that Rabbi's and lay people find leadership and guidance.

The review of the first Rabbi Moses our teacher for all rabbi's to emulate as his self-sacrifice for the Jewish people, we will study his unprecedented leadership that like Torah is timeless.

The great Halachic (Jewish Law) rulings of Rabbi Moses Maimonides regarding the Messianic Laws in his compendium of the entire Oral law.

We will go into great detail as he continues in the last two chapters of the Misnah Torah a digest of the great Torah scholars as well as his contributions to philosophy and medicine.

The essence of any great leader that have led the Jewish people in our long journey of exile into the footsteps of redemption have all way looked at our first redeemer Moses that led the Jewish nation out of Egypt to be come the chosen people.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe has talked and written much about Moses and our times and the redemption of Moshiach. Our sages tell us that everyone has within himself a spark of Moses and Moshiach that we must revile.

The verses establish the third principle that is fundamental to the Jewish belief in Moshiach: that the Torah's commandments are the ultimate blueprint for life on earth, and that there will come a day when the divine plan for creation will be fully realized in our world. For certainly, as Maimonides puts it, "G-d did not command it in vain."

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I wish to express my appreciation to my many colleagues, friends and family from my hometown Brooklyn, New York USA. Who have showered upon me their constant love and support in my difficult times.

I also wish to dedicate this work to the memory of my mother

Esther a"s, and to my children Mina, Hadassah, Chana.

And may we all be united with Moshiach in the holy city of Jerusalem now.

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Chapters One and Two

Chapter one

THE ROLE OF THE RABBI

Rabban Gamliel the son of Rabbi Judah HaNassi would say... Be careful of the government, for they befriend a person only for their own needs. They appear to be friends when it is beneficial to them, but they do not stand by a person at the time of his distress. Ethics of the Fathers 2:3

Rabban Gamliel is not only speaking to community leaders and political activists, but to each and every one of us. From the moment that Moses place his hands upon the head of his student Joshua and ordained him as the new leader of the Jewish people of Israel, (Numbers 27:18) Jews through out history have looked to their rabbis for guidance and leadership in an

dynamic ever changing environment and governments, resulting in ever changing roles and expectations that communities have on their rabbis.¹

Among all who served as leaders in the Jewish community, whether they are scholars, educators or heads of community, none is as important as a rabbi, ² for leaders, to one degree or another, are depending upon the rabbi to analyze the Torah and mobilize community support for their goals and programs. In addition together with the synagogue as an institution, rabbis " have exercised the most profound influence upon the course of Jewish life throughout history". It would be not exaggerated to say that without them Judaism would have not survived the test of time ³

1 Henry Berkowitz, Intimate Glimpses of the Rabbi's Career (Cin. Hebrew Union College Press,1921),³.

2 Charles S. Liebman, The training of American rabbis, in American Jewish Yearbook 69 (1968)⁵.

3 Samuel Belkin, Essays in Traditional Jewish Thought (new York Philosophical Library, 1956), 154

Today at our current situation we require much guidance from all rabbis not only for its issues of Halakah whether the food is kosher, in today world with all current events taking place around the world especially in Israel the rabbis must be able to guide the Jewish people in today's difficult times.

There has been, however, no universally accepted view of what the role of the rabbi should be nor how he should relate to the American Jewish community. Some have looked upon the rabbinate essentially as it has functioned for centuries in Eastern Europe and others who sense that America is indeed

different, acknowledging that “the openness of American society has created a whole new set of options for American Jews..”.⁵

In the course of the last three to four decades, during which time the American rabbinate has firmly established itself as a vital force on the American Jewish society, ⁶ an increasing number of works have been published that offer an analysis and evaluation of the rabbinical seminary or of the rabbinate, by a number of individual rabbis, providing views from their unique perspectives. ⁷

⁵ Charles E. Silberman, “A Certain People “ (New York Summit Books, 1985), 22.

⁷ Jeffrey S. Gurock “ Resister and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbi, 1886-1983, The American Rabbinate , ed. Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck (New Jersey Ktav Publishing House 1985),10-69.

However according to Stern ⁸ no study has been made of the orthodox rabbi in his congregation and how the training he received in preparation for his professional role furthermore, no definite procedure for the evaluation of an orthodox rabbis professional performance as determined by a universally accepted understanding of the professional expectations of the orthodox rabbinate has ever been presented.

As recently as 1991, the rabbinical of America appointed a committee on the professional rabbinate to establish current guidelines to govern the relationship between the orthodox rabbi and his congregation. Now it was not a study of the rabbinate, the committee’s report reflects the difficulty in its evaluation. The scope of the rabbi’s responsibilities is very comprehensive that an evaluation cannot be accomplished.⁹

8 Frank Elash Stern, Factors Influencing the Career Decisions of North American Reform Rabbis (Ph.D. diss., University of Ca. Riverside, 1983), 2-3

9 Guidelines for the Relationship Between Rabbi and Congregation, Committee on the Professional Rabbinate, Rabbinical of America, New York: 1991.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The rabbi are the major leader in both Rabbinic and political issues that serve the Jewish people and need to operate in a professional manor in order to have the support of the people.

This study investigated the difference between the expectations of what areas are most important for the rabbi that are currently working on a professional level.

The opportunities for rabbinic training in homiletics, pastoral counseling, Halakha , Moshiach, care for the aged and out reach programs to the not yet orthodox to name a few.

The importance of this study and specific demands made by the rabbinic profession at seeing in the eyes of the professional rabbi. The research would provide data that would enable the rabbinical college to best select the knowledge and skills to be taught that would ultimately enable the future rabbis to serve their communities with their many problems, conflicts and challenges. The accurate and precise the knowledge and skills to be taught, the more appropriate will be the training to experience and more fully will our future rabbinic leaders be ready to guide, teach minister and lead those who look to them for all this and a lot more.

HYPOTHESIS

The specific focus of this study will be an analysis of the Rabbinical Leadership is the past and the opinions of the

rabbinical student from Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim Brooklyn, New York and the opinions of the professional Rabbi. There will be significant differences in the rank orders of the importance of specific rabbinic functions between new rabbi's students and professional rabbis.

There will be a significant difference in the importance of rabbinic leadership from the professional rabbi to the rabbinical student. This study will not take into account the following considerations the marital status of the membership nor the financial status.

LIMITATIONS

The proposed study will have the following limitations in design.

The sample

All the students in this study are students of the orthodox Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim. While it is likely that application on the findings to students of other orthodox rabbinical seminary may be appropriate, application of the findings to students of the non- orthodox seminary may not be appropriate. As many questions asked to the respondents relate specifically to orthodox Jewish living.

ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the students and rabbis in this study will share the common desire to assume that American orthodox Jewish communities are served by the most professionally prepared rabbis on United Lubavitcher Yeshiva is able to produce.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Congregation

In this study, the term congregations is viewed as an organized body of Jews who maintain an orthodox synagogue for worship, religious instruction and all other forms of social interaction.

Halakha

Body of Jewish religious law.

Chinuch

Jewish education, Hebrew day schools.

Kashrut

—

Jewish religious law that forbids the consumption of the meat of certain animals, fowl and fish and their products. As well as the separation of meat and milk.

Tephillin

Two square black boxes that containing holy biblical passages and traditionally worn on the left arm and on the head of Jewish men over 13 years old on weekday mornings.

—

Talmud

—

The tomes of the Oral Law that discuss and elaborate upon the bible.

—

Family Purity

Jewish religious laws that forbids sexual relations between husband and wife and restricts physical contact between them during the wife's menstrual flow, until she goes to a Mikvah.

Orthodox Judaism

Judaism that adheres to the Torah and Talmud as interpreted by the code of Jewish law Shulhan Aruka

Applies their principles and regulations to everyday modern living.

Sefer Torah

Parchment scroll of the Pentateuch.

—

Moshiach

—

The Era of Redemption by the Jewish Messiah. According to Maimonides one of the principles of faith.

Rabbinical Student

Final year students studying rabbinical ordination to obtain degree to become a rabbi.

Chapter two

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

THE YESHIVA AND THE RABBINICAL SEMINARY

With the end of second Temple 3338 BC. And indeed from the time the Jewish people were first exiled from Israel. The yeshiva was the center of the Jewish nation. In the past few hundred years prior to the nineteenth century, the yeshiva was a local community organization.¹⁰ The yeshiva was managed the local the people and a majority of the students came from the local community. Among local students would be a numbered young married that would be dependent on their in laws, wife and local charities to be supported. Each day the local orthodox rabbi would give lectures and served has the head of the yeshiva.¹¹

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a number of new yeshivos were established in Europe. These yeshivos were very different from the local community yeshiva, as they were not focus only on the local rabbi and students rather the entire Jewish nation in that country.

¹⁰ Simcha Asaf, Merkorot l'Toldot (Tel Aviv:Dvir Co Ltd.,1936), Vol.III, 170-179.

¹¹ Menachem Friedman, "The Changing Role", The Jerusalem Quarterly 25 (Fall 1982): 85.

THE UNITED LUBAVITCHER YESHIVA

Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim was established in 1897 by the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneerson.¹² Soon the foresight of the Lubavitcher Rebbes became apparent to all, as the students and graduates of Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim steadfastly maintained Jewish tradition, even in the face of hunger, bitter cold and relentless persecution. The Rebbe Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson himself experienced harrowing imprisonment in 1927, for his continued activities to insure a Jewish education for the next generation.

In 1933, the Rebbe Rayyatz Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson settled in Warsaw, Poland, where he had previously established a Lubavitcher Yeshiva 12 years before. Now it became the central Lubavitcher Yeshiva with high scholastic standards. In 1936, it moved with the Rebbe to Otvotzk, outside of Warsaw. Meanwhile, affiliate Yeshivos were founded in various Polish and Lithuanian cities, educating many hundreds of students.

The Rebbe Rayyatz Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson survived the bombing of Warsaw and the occupation of Poland by Germany. He arrived in New York in early spring of 1940. Although physically broken from his experiences, he remained strong in spirit and conviction. ¹³

¹² Beis Rebbe, (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1965)

¹³ Heroic Stuggle (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1980)

“The Divine hand has saved my life so that I may turn America into a land of Torah,” proclaimed the Rebbe upon arrival at the New York harbor.¹⁴ “America is no different from the old country, for G-d and His Torah are timeless.” He

announced immediate establishment of a new central Lubavitcher Yeshiva, and studies began the next morning.

In the 40's the Yeshivah was established on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn 15 and then moved to the building on Ocean Parkway, which still houses the Lubavitcher Yeshiva elementary school. The Yeshiva's doors were open to students regardless of previous academic studies and regardless of whether or not they were able to pay the tuition. It was a particularly welcoming Yeshiva for new immigrants to the United States from far flung Jewish communities around the world.

At the time when the Rebbe Rayyatz passed away, in 1950, the American 'ice' had long been broken.¹⁴ Under his son-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gourary, the Yeshiva expanded and flourished. Assuming leadership of Chabad Lubavitch, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the younger son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayyatz, has overseen numerous branches of new Lubavitcher Yeshivos, opening in dozens of cities around the globe.

¹⁴Marking of Chassidim (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1985)

¹⁵ ULY Dinner Journal (Brooklyn, New York 2001)

¹⁶ Ibid.

THE CENTRAL YESHIVA AT 770 EASTERN PARKWAY TODAY

From Lubavitch, Rostov, Warsaw and Otvotzk, the Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim is now located 770 Eastern Parkway, the very nucleus of the world Lubavitch movement. ¹⁷

Torah Scholars from all over the world seeking high standards of Torah studies flock to The Central Yeshiva each year,

participating in the intense learning program and taking the challenging examinations to receive their rabbinical ordination. Each year hundreds of new students come to the Central Yeshiva from Israel alone, joining hundreds from other countries, such as South America, Argentina, Australia, England and countries across Europe.

During their years of study at '770,' the students receive practice in delivering lectures and writing Talmudic essays. They gain valuable experience in teaching, shechita (ritual slaughtering), safrus (scribal arts) and organizing outreach programs. 18

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

In the summer months, the students take on responsibilities as head counselors in camps and youth group leaders in summer programs the world over, from Honolulu, Hawaii to Tashkent in Siberia. Many participate in a program known as 'Merkos Shlichus,' where they set out to places of low Jewish population, not usually visited by Rabbis. They will be found visiting Jews in small towns in British Columbia, Canada and in the remote countryside of Idaho. They bring mezuzahs with them, Jewish books and a friendly smile for everyone. On Pesach, one hundred and fifty students travel to the Former Soviet Union to conduct seders for Jews in metropolitan areas, as well as isolated villages. Yearly Seders are conducted by the rabbinical students for the thousands of Israeli backpackers in Tibet and Nepal as well as Chili, Bolivia and Peru.19

The studies, the training and the outreach programs, of the

students of 770, are all permeated with commitment to Yiddishkeit and Ahavas Yisroel (caring for one another through action as well as emotion), as future world leaders diligently prepare themselves for their colossal task ahead.²⁰

19 Merkos Shlichus, A Panorama (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1970)

20 Ibid.

NINETEEN-CENTURY EUROPE

During the early eighteen hundreds, the Reform Movement had significant success in drawing away communities in Germany away from Orthodox Judaism. The introduction of the "Science of Judaism" ²¹ States "had resulted in the deepening of the schism between the followers of the reformers and the followers Orthodox. The new science constituted a departure from the traditional manner in which Jewish studies have been taught. This science refused to tolerate an attitude of unconditional discipleship to the spirit and content of the Jewish Scripture. It placed this study of the Torah on a level with other scientific research.²² The methodology of the biblical criticism was applied to the Torah resulting in the destruction of the belief in its holiness. ²³ The fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Schneerson came out strongly opposing the Reform movement known as the Haskalah movement ²⁴ and met with leaders of his generation to condemn the Haskalah movement.

21 Hermann Schwab, The History of Orthodox Jewry in Germany (London, Mitre Press,1950),35.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.,36

24 Haskalah movement, (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1965)

The roots of American Conservative Judaism can be traced to the Breslau Seminary in Germany 1854, the first rabbinical college in Germany. The mission of these and other rabbinical seminary was to expose the students to the breath of Jewish culture, including Bible, Talmud, Midrash, history and rabbinical literature. It was also their objective to teach the students to analyze and utilize the scientific method of study to be dispassionately when reading the holy ancient texts.²⁵

In 1873 Israel Hildesheimer founded the Rabbinerseminar fur das Orthodox Judaism in Berlin. It was to be the answer to the intellectual problem of the nineteenth century, that challenged traditional Judaism in the modern age.²⁶ He recognize that a rabbi required more of an education than just Talmud, and for subjects other than Talmud the study pattern should follow that on the universities.²⁷ At the same time the religious standards and ideology of is seminary were different from the non orthodox seminary, including the study of Talmud, Shulhan Aruka, all biblical literature with the classical commentaries, philosophy, history, Hebrew literature and Jewish folklore.

25 Scharfstein, Vol. 1,131.

26 Isi Jacob Eisner, "Reminiscences of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary," in Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XII (1967) 37.

27 Libmam, 7-8

28 Shulvaas, Ibid., 997-700.

In London, Jews College was established in 1855. The inaugural meeting was convened by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler as a response to an acknowledged and troubling lack of English trained rabbinic leaders. The chief rabbi presented a proposal to offer a general education with strong Jewish training. His objective was to prepare students to attend University College, London to acquire higher secular education as well as Jews College, for the appropriate theological and scholars training and preparation in order to assumed a rabbinic position. Lastly, he also sought to maintain the objectives of the traditional Beth HaMedrash.²⁹ Jews College has become one of England's great institution's of Jewish learning. Its graduates have served through out Great Britain and it has counted among its alumni those who have served as the chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth, the rabbis of the Sephardic communities of Great Britain, several Dayanim of the London Beth Din and the Jews College itself. ³⁰

29 Israel Cohen, "Dr. Michael Friedlander", in Men of the Spirit, ed. Leo Jung (New York : Kymson Publishing Company, 1964), 470-472.

30 Albert M. Hyamson, Jews' College (Great Britain : R. H. Johns Limited, 1954), 127.

THE NON-ORTHODOX RABBINATE

In his discussion of the non orthodox rabbinate, Simon Greenberg book ³¹ Understanding American Judaism asserts that " no profession feels that it plays a role in the communal decision making process commensurate with its own conception of the knowledge, skill and general competence of its

practitioners.” He further states the undefined focus of the rabbinate as a profession, both in the minds of the rabbis and the community, is responsible for the tension between the rabbi and the community.” The AmericaRabbinate .. is.. search of its identity.”³² As we see today that the American rabbi has seemingly endless number and the variety of expectations from the congregation and communities have on them.³³

31 Simon Greenberg, “ The Rabbinate and the Jewish Community Structure” in Understanding American Judaism; Toward the Description of a Modern Religion. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc, 1975), 117.

32 Ibid., 118.

33 Simon Greenberg, “ The Rabbi as Darshan,” Judaism 40 No.4 (Fall 1991) , 471 –483.

THE ORTHODOX RABBINATE

In contrast to the relatively recent history of the non-orthodox rabbinate, orthodox rabbinic scholars have authored, during the last two thousand years, more than one million responsa and other great literary works. The works have been in legal, as in the Mishne Torah of Moses Maimonides and philosophy and folklore based on the biblical texts as will explain in the following chapter.

This entire body of literature, while providing guidance and insight regarding the fulfillment of the Torah principles, only presumes the apparentness of a rabbinic authority to guide the application of these laws. Entire collections of responsa devote little, if any attention to the rabbi within the community. Even in vast work as the *St'dei Chemed*, ³⁴ Deals primarily with discussions of the rabbi

addresses the matter of identifying an appropriate responsa. Discussions' regarding the role of the rabbi in a community does not appear until the eighteenth century.

Rabbi Samson Rephael Hirsch, Germany (1808-1888) authored a number of articles devoted to the Jewish community in the course of his struggle with the successes of the reform movement in Germany in the later half of the nineteenth century.

34 Sedi Chemed, Marechet 20, Klal 31. (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1965)

In an article entitled " Jewish communal life" that appeared in the first number of the monthly magazine " Jeshurun" he states that it is the responsibility of every Jewish community to promote the knowledge and understanding of religious law, the regular practice and observance of the law, and respect and caring in inter-personal relationships. Communities must provide "schools and colleges... congregations, slaughterhouses, Mikvahs, Kosher and matzah bakeries, distributed charity funds, associations for the sick and watching the dead, cemetery." 35

Hirsch also clearly states that the community must have a rabbi to supervise these institutions to ensure that the law is properly observed. It is therefore, the duty of the rabbi to teach the law and create an atmosphere in the community to enhance its observance. The rabbi is to serve as the final and highest authority in private or public matters which are to be determined in accordance with religious law. 36 Hirsch also focuses on the growing chasm between the individual members of the community will play on role in the community, and a few lay people who share with the rabbis responsibility for the development of the community

35 Ibid., 105-106

36 Ibid.

He declares that " Jewish communal life is not embodied in its representatives". Neither a contribution to the communal fund nor the casting of a paper into the ballot box fulfills one's responsibility to the community. If religious welfare is not being promoted and does not flourish within the community or if communal funds are not being used for their stated purpose, no individual is absolved from taking the necessary steps to assure such development. "Above in heaven nothing is known of Laity and Clergy". 37 Every person in an equally responsible member of the community is held accountable for the role he plays within it.

In Hirsch's view, it is the responsibility of the rabbi to motivate and excite the members of his community to greater religious and spiritual attainment.

37 Ibid., 98-99.

Chapter Three

Chapter three

THE REVIEW OF THE FRIST RABBI

The question one may ask "Was Moses Orthodox?" let's take a step back. Rather than trying to determine the validity of "orthodoxy," we should figure out what, in fact, makes a Jew a Jew?

Is it culture? Education? Observance? Personality? Genes? History? Programming? Anti-Semitism? Chicken soup? The list

goes on.

The answer is simple. What makes you human-and most importantly, what makes you a Jew-is one thing and one thing only: your soul, your Neshomo.

In fact, you are your soul, contained in the vehicle of the body. Your soul is shaped by G-d in His own Divine image. This soul is an "inalienable right" of every human being, unalterable and no arbitrary. Just as G-d is immutable, so too is the soul. 38 Fundamental to Torah thought is that nothing-no action, no behavior-can alter the essential Divine nature of the soul. The soul is eternal; a Jew has a unique Jewish soul. 39

38 Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Likutei Amarim, Tanya, chapter 2 (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1960)

39 Ibid.,

Even if a person, G-d forbid, sins and transgresses, there is always the hope for teshuvah (atonement). Maimonides wrote, "The Torah assures that at the end of exile Jews will ultimately do teshuvah." 40 Even if one does not atone, the affect of his behavior is on his body and the relationship of the body to the soul;

On the soul. There is, unequivocally, no such thing (in Judaism) as eternal damnation of the soul.

This is not an opinion or a viewpoint, but a fundamental component of Jewish faith-faith in the immortality of G-d and the Divine soul, and absolute belief in the realization of G-d 's plan for existence. Judaism teaches that evil is transient and good is eternal. Good must and will prevail. This is the entire basis of our belief in the Messiah and redemption: that

the world will realize the purpose for which it was created. Anything less questions the validity of G-d Himself. 41

40 Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishne Torah Yad Hachzakah, Introduction

41 Ibid.,

The well-known statement from Hillel reads, "Love all creatures, and bring them close to Torah." 42 When Hillel uses a seemingly strange expression, "creatures" instead of "people," he is reminding us somewhat arrestingly that even if a person has no apparent quality or virtue, he must be loved by the mere virtue of being G-d's creature; G-d chose to create him or her and that is the greatest reason to love one another. We therefore love everyone unconditionally, including a criminal and someone who is not living up to his calling.

It does not stop there. True unconditional love also means that you want the best for your beloved. Thus Hillel continues: "And bring them closer to Torah." 43 Love for your fellow man dictates that you do everything in your power to inspire and motivate him to live up to his greatest potential. I may therefore disagree with another Jew's behavior or choices, but I never disagree with the person. I embrace him as my brother, both of us children of G-d.

42 Ethics of the Fathers 1:13

43 bid.

THE ANONYMOUS ESSENCE

And Moses returned to G-d and said: "I beseech You: this

nation has sinned a great sin, and have made themselves a god of gold. Now, if You will forgive their sin—; and if You will not, erase me from the book that You have written.”

And G-d said to Moses: “Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I erase from My book.”

Exodus 32:31-33

No human being is as deeply identified with the Torah as Moses: the prophet goes so far as to refer to the revealed wisdom of G-d as “The Torah of My servant Moses.” 44 As the Midrash explains, “Because he gave his life for it, it is called by his name.” 45

And yet, there was one thing that was even more important to Moses than his connection with the Torah: his connection with the people of Israel. In order to secure G-d’s forgiveness of Israel for their sin in worshipping the Golden Calf, Moses was prepared to forgo his place in the Torah. Following Israel’s transgression, Moses gave G-d an “ultimatum”: if you cannot forgive them, obliterate my name from the book that You have written.

44 Malachi 3:22. Cf. “The Five Books of Moses.”

45 Mechilta Beshalach 15:1.

Our sages tell us that “the righteous emulate their Creator.” 46 The same is true in this case: in giving precedence to Israel over Torah, Moses was following the divine example. As the Midrash states, “Two things preceded G-d’s creation of the world: Torah and Israel. Still, I do not know which preceded which. But when Torah states ‘Speak to the children of Israel...,’ ‘Command the children of Israel...’—I know that Israel preceded all” 47

In other words, since G-d’s purpose in His creation of the

universe is that the people of Israel should implement His will as outlined in the Torah, the concepts of "Torah" and "Israel" both precedes the concept of a "world" in the Creator's "mind." Yet which is the more deeply rooted idea within the divine consciousness, Torah or Israel? Does Israel exist in order that the Torah might be implemented, or does the Torah exist in order to serve the Jew in the fulfillment of his mission and the realization of his relationship with G-d? Says the Midrash: 46if the Torah describes itself as a communication to Israel, this presumes the concept of Israel as primary to that of Torah. The very idea of a Torah was conceived by the divine mind as a tool to enhance the bond between G-d and His people—a bond that "predates" it and which it comes to serve.

46 Midrash Rabbah, Bereishit 67:8.

47 Tana D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah, ch. 14.

48 Ibid.,

Thus our sages have said: "A Jew, though he has sinned, is still a Jew." 49 Even if the Jew sins, thereby violating his relationship with G-d as defined by Torah, he is still a Jew. For the essence of his relationship with G-d runs deeper than that aspect of it that is realized through his fulfillment of the divine will as formulated in the Torah.

Therein lies the deeper significance of Moses' declaration to G-d, "...if You will not [forgive them], erase me from the book that You have written," and G-D's response, "Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I erase from My book." At first glance, Moses' words, dramatic and moving as they are, are very puzzling: other than its dubious value as some sort of "threat" to G-d (?), how would Moses' eradication from the

Torah (G-d forbid) help the people of Israel attain atonement for their sin?

G-D's reply also requires explanation. G-d seems to be rejecting Moses' plea, saying, in effect, "I will do what I see fit with My Torah. You are in; they go out." But that is not what G-d does. He forgives the Jewish people and gives them a second set of tablets engraved by His hand with the Ten Commandments to replace those broken as a result of their sin. Moses' words have their desired effect: the Jewish people are rehabilitated, and their place in Torah is preserved, even enhanced. 50

49 Talmud, Sanhedrin 44a.

50 Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 46:1 and Talmud, Nedarim 22b, .

But according to what we said above, we can understand the deeper stratum of meaning implicit in their exchange. True, Moses is saying to G-d, Your people have sinned a great sin. A sin so great, a sin that so acutely violates Your relationship with them as formulated in Your "marriage contract" 51 with them, the Torah, that in terms of this relationship, their betrayal is unpardonable. But Your bond with them runs deeper than Torah, deeper than anything that can be expressed or destroyed by their deeds. If You cannot forgive them, it is because You are continuing to relate to them on Torah's terms, continuing to define Your bond with them on a level on which their sin cannot be tolerated.

Well, said Moses, I, for one, will not accept such a state of affairs. If there is no way that Torah allows for their forgiveness, then erase me from the Torah. Erase (cut) me out of the very thing that has consumed my mind, heart and life so completely that the book that You have written has come to be called "the Torah of Moses." 52 Strip me of my very identity; so that I shall stand denuded of all save my very essence—my

relationship with my people.

51 Talmud, Berachot 57a on Deuteronomy 33:4; Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 30; Rashi, Exodus 34:1.

52 Ibid.,

Now it was the Creator who emulated the righteous. “Whoever has sinned against me, him will I erase from My book,” G-d promised. Those whom Torah cannot forgive, those with whom I can no longer sustain the relationship delineated by My book, I will exempt from My book. I will transcend My Torah to revert to the quintessential bond between them and Myself that precedes and supersedes My word, wisdom and will. I will follow your example, Moses, you who are prepared to relinquish everything you have and are, should it interfere with your most quintessential priority: your oneness with your people.

Ultimately, Israel’s “erasure” from the Torah resulted not in a diminution, G-d forbid, of their Torah-defined relationship with the Almighty, but, on the contrary, in its reinforcement and intensification. For once the quintessential bond between G-d and Israel had been reiterated, this selfsame relationship could now be manifested via the vehicle of Torah, which would now be “broadened” to accommodate that which earlier was beyond its realm. Torah would now incorporate the highest level of teshuvah (“return”)—the level on which “sins are transformed into virtues” 53 and the greatest failing and the most terrible betrayal can be sublimated into even greater achievement and even deeper connection.

53 Talmud, Yoma 86b.

In the words of our sages, “The First Tablets contained only the Ten Commandments. The Second Tablets contained also

Halachah, Midrash and Aggadah.” 54 “Had Israel not sinned with the Golden Calf, they would have received only the five books of Moses and the book of Joshua. Why? Because, as the verse says, ‘Much 55 wisdom comes through much grief.’ 56

The same is true regarding Moses: his readiness to divest himself, G-d forbid, of his identity as the vehicle through whom G-d communicated His Torah to man, actually resulted in a deepening of his identification with Torah, as we shall see. 57

Given the centrality of Moses’ role to the transmission of Torah to humanity, it comes as no surprise that his name is mentioned, often as much as several dozen times, in every single parshah (section) of the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.58

55 Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 46:1.

56 Ecclesiastes 1:18.

57 Talmud, Nedarim 22b. As Chassidic teaching explains, the “Oral Torah” –the dimension to Torah that was added in the wake of Israel’s sin, G-d’s forgiveness, and re-issue of Torah in its “broadened” form –is synonymous with the concept of teshuvah, as it employs the doubt, contradiction and refuted assumptions that are part of every intellectual discourse (and reach their height in the pilpul of the Babylonian Talmud) to achieve an even deeper appreciation of a truth than is possible by the more “tranquil” approach of faith and tradition (see Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah 5666, pp. 85-93; Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat, vol. I, pp. 364-370; et al.).

58 The first of the Five Books of the Torah, Genesis, relates events that occurred before Moses’ birth. The fifth book, Deuteronomy, consists wholly of Moses’ words to the people of Israel before his passing.

Every parshah (section), that is, but one. The single exception is the parshah of Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20-30:10), in which the word “Moses” does not appear. Most amazingly, Tetzaveh is the section that, by rights, should be most saturated with Moses’ name: in the annual Torah-reading cycle, Tetzaveh is almost always read either on the Shabbat preceding the 7th of Adar or on the Shabbat that follows it.⁵⁹ Adar 7 is the day most closely related to the life of Moses, as it is both the date of his birth (in the year 2368 from Creation–1393 BCE), and the date of his passing (2488–1273 BCE).

In his commentary on Torah, the Baal haTurim ⁶⁰ explains this omission as the result of Moses’ words, “erase me from the book that You have written.” Our sages have said that the words of a tzaddik, even when expressed conditionally, always have an effect. ⁶¹ So once Moses uttered these fateful words, they were destined to somehow be realized. Thus, concludes the Baal haTurim, even after G-d forgave the Jewish people and the conditions for Moses’ proclamation no longer applied, there remains one section of the Torah devoid of his name.⁶²

⁵⁹ Cf. Shaloh, introduction to Parshat Vayeishev: “ ‘To everything there is its season, the appointed time for each purpose’ (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Certainly, the arrangements of the festivals and days of commemoration of the year, both the [biblical] ‘seasons of G-d’ and those rabbinically ordained ... all have a connection to the [weekly] parshah in which they fall, for all is arranged by the hand of G-d.”

⁶⁰ Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, 1268-1340.

⁶¹ Talmud, Makot 11a.

⁶² Baal HaTurim on Exodus 27:20.

But upon closer examination, Moses is hardly absent from the

section of Tetzaveh—indeed, he is more profoundly present there than any mention of his name could possibly express. Tetzaveh consists entirely of G-D's ongoing communication to Moses, instructing him with the details of the menorah-lighting in the Sanctuary, the construction of the priestly garments, and the Sanctuary's inauguration. All that is missing is the customary "G-d spoke to Moses, saying..." that precedes the divine directives in the rest of the Torah. Thus, Tetzaveh begins almost in mid-sentence: "And you [Moses] shall command the children of Israel to bring you pure olive oil, crushed for illumination, to light up a constant lamp..."

On the surface, there is a diminution of Moses' presence—his name does not appear in the entire parshah. But he is the subject of its first word, v'atah, "and you"—a word that is a truer and deeper reference to Moses than his name. A name, after all, is something that is given to a person, something appended to an already existent being (in Moses' case, the name "Moses" was given to him by Pharaoh's daughter when he was more than three months old); "you," on the other hand, is a reference to the person himself. Thus, a person's "name" represents his manifest self—his intellect and character, his communicable thoughts and feelings—while the abstract "you" refers to his anonymous essence, anonymous because it is too sublime and ethereal to be articulated. 63 Tetzaveh is thus the parshah in Torah that embodies the "you" of Moses, his transcendent essence.

63 Our sages have said that a person's name is the conduit of his life, the channel that carries the flow of vitality from his soul to his body (Shaar haGilgulim, Hakdamah 23, et al.). But this itself indicates that it is secondary to the person's very essence, as "the soul, prior to its entry into the body, has no name whatsoever (Likkutei Torah, Behar 41c).

This is fully in keeping with the Baal haTurim's explanation

that Moses' anonymity in Tetzaveh is the result of his expressing the possibility that he be erased from G-d's book. Moses was prepared to forgo his place in Torah because his bond with his people was on the level of his "you," his truest, most quintessential self—a self even deeper than his connection to the Torah. In effect, Moses actually did obliterate his "name"—his identification with Torah—in order to be one with his people. As a result, G-d, too, was moved to forgo His insistence on relating to His people on the "name" level—i.e., on Torah's terms⁶⁴—and to reaffirm His quintessential bond with them. This was followed by a renewed giving of the Torah in which this deeper bond could also be "named" and expressed. Nevertheless, even after Moses' and Israel's identity were re-grounded in Torah, there remains one parshah—the parshah most intimately related to Moses—in which his anonymous essence reigns supreme, unencumbered by name and name-defined identity. Tetzaveh stands as an eternal tribute to Moses, as the Torah's own testimony to his greatness in relinquishing everything, including his bond with Torah, in order to preserve his bond with his people and restore them to their G-d.

64 The entire Torah is names of G-d" (Nachmanides' introduction to his commentary on Torah).

Moses Today

The "Mosesless" section of Tetzaveh attests to Moses' self-sacrifice for his people, and is an example and lesson for every leader of Israel. It is also of eternal relevance to each and every one of us.

We all sense that beyond our expressed self lies a deeper, more intimate self—thoughts, feelings, convictions and potentials that are too sublime to articulate to others, or even to our own conscious self. But what effect does this

deeper self have upon our actual behavior and accomplishments? Does it remain in a “seventh heaven” of abstraction, or can it somehow be made to impact our daily lives? We know that Moses, in his greatest moment, touched this purest core of self. But Moses was the most perfect human being to ever walk the face of earth; 65 what do his achievements imply to us?

The Talmud cites the verse “And now, Israel, what does G-d want of you? Only that you be in awe of G-d...,” 66 and asks: “Is awe of G-d a minor thing?” The answer given is: “Yes, for Moses it is a minor thing.”67 But G-d’s request is addressed to all of Israel. How does Moses’ capacity for the awe of G-d answer the question?

65 Maimonides’ introduction to chapter Chelek, principle 7.

66 Deuteronomy 10:12.

67 Talmud, Berachot 33b.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi explains: “Each and every soul of the house of Israel contains within it something of the quality of our teacher Moses, for he is one of the ‘seven shepherds’ who feed vitality and G-dliness to the community of the souls of Israel... Moses is the sum of them all, called the ‘shepherd of faith’ 67 in the sense that he nourishes the community of Israel with the knowledge and recognition of G-d.”68

Indeed, it was Moses’ uncompromising identification with his people, no matter to what depths they might have fallen, that ensured that each and every Jew, regardless of his spiritual station and moral circumstances, possesses, and can readily access, the “Moses” within him—his quintessential source of faith and oneness with his Creator. 69

67 Raaya mehemna, usually translated "faithful shepherd"; here Rabbi Schneur Zalman renders it "shepherd of faith," in the sense that Moses is Israel's conduit of faith, the one who inculcates them with their quintessential recognition of G-d as a shepherd who feeds his flocks their vital needs.

68 Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Likutei Amarim, Tanya, chapter 42 (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1960)

69 Based on the Rebbe's talks, Shabbat Tetzaveh 5740 and 5751 (March 1, 1980; February 23,1991)

Now let us once again consider the question of Moses' religious "affiliation." So again we ask, was Moses an "Orthodox Jew?"

The word "orthodox" has been politicized and bureaucratized. To most secular people it does not mean "Torah observant" and "G-d- fearing Jew." It means a "political party," a "dogmatic minority" that wants control and power, and imposes its will on others. For better or worse, this is the way "orthodoxy" has been "spun," and this is its image in many people's minds. They do not see Orthodox Jews as G-dlier people.

Who can say that they are wrong? How many Jews have been "turned off" of Judaism for legitimate reasons, escaping religiously oppressive homes, experiencing deep alienation in synagogues and with rabbis who are bureaucratic, punitive, angry, hypocritical or even abusive, all supposedly in the name of "orthodoxy" and fulfilling "G-d's Will." These rabbis miss the point, following the letter of the law while missing its spirit.

"Orthodox" often implies inflexible and stagnant. In truth, Halakha (Jewish law) also means halicho (motion), as it is a dynamic and live system. Not a throwback to archaic times, but a vibrant approach to life, and one that continues to play infinitely new combinations of Divine music uses the same

“musical notes” of our holy ancestors.

Nowhere in the Torah is there any mention of the word “orthodox,” or in fact “reform” or “conservative.” The denomination called “Orthodox Jewry” was created only after the birth of the reform and conservative movements in order to contrast between them, man-made labels and definitions have no place in a relationship between our souls and G-d. Each Jew should emulate Moses’ uncompromising identification with his people.

THE WRITINGS OF RABBI MOSES MAIMONIDES

Maimonides began his literary career at an early age. His earliest work, written at the age of sixteen, was the *Millot ha-Higayon*; it is succinct exposition of the meaning of various technical terms in logic and metaphysics. It was written in Arabic and then translated into Hebrew

Another of this early works was his *Essay on the calendar*, written originally in Arabic but now available only in Hebrew translation.

The first great work of Maimonides was the commentary on the *Mishnah*, which he began at the age 23 and completed in ten years. ⁷⁰ The *Mishnah* summarizes the opinion of the great master of the Jewish who functioned in the Palestinian academies until the third century of the Common Era. As Moses Maimonides states in his introduction to the commentary on the *Mishnah*, “I Moses the son of Maimon the Spaniard have built it, from the ocean of the Talmud did I draw it “it is doubtful that he traveled with an entire library Talmudic manuscripts. However his knowledge is vast.

⁷⁰ Maimonides, Mose. Commentary on the *Mishnah*. 7

volumes. Arabic original with Hebrew translation by Joseph Kafih, Jerusalem, 1968.

71 Maimonides, Moses. Mishneh Torah : The Code of Maimonides. An English translation has had 13 volumes appear by 1977. Yale Judaica Series. New Haven.

The Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud's were based in it, and to that extent offered some exposition of it. He wrote it during his travels while having only limited sources of information.

His commentary is concerned with elucidating the individual passage as well as the larger themes to which it is addressed. He defines words and phrases, entering upon philosophical discussions when necessary. He supplies archaeological and scientific background to certain texts without which they cannot be understood.

His introductions and philosophical discussions have become famous in themselves without any reference to the text one of these is his historical introduction to the Mishnah, which include the thirteen principles of faith.

Maimonides spent another ten years in the compilation of what is known as the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazakah the mighty hand. It is a digest of all Jewish law, as Maimonides states that one needs only to study the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazakah to learn the entire Jewish law Torah. 72

The Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazakah is a triumph of the art of systematization of the whole Torah. It brings together the entire Talmudic law as well as philosophy and folklore into one coherent whole, rendering final decisions as a guide to action.

Each of the thirteen books into which the code is divided deals with a number of commandments that comprises the general theme. More than 200 commentaries have been written, dating

back to the time when it was first written.

72 Ibid.,

The most imposing philosophical work of Maimonides was the *Moreh Nevuchim* or the guide to the perplexed. 73 He began working on it about the year 1185. He labored on it for approximately fifteen years it is the greatest philosophical work produced in Judaism. Its aim is to meet the challenge of Greek philosophy, especially that of Aristotle, Maimonides wrote this great work in Arabic, where it has been translated into Hebrew and English.

The *Moreh Nevuchim* or the guide to the perplexed is organized around the teachings of the bible, which require clarification. The importance of this work extends beyond the Jewish community. For a number of great philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and Spinoza have preferred to the guide to the perplexed.

The influence of the *Moreh Nevuchim* or the guide to the perplexed has had on Jewish philosophy is enormous. Maimonides was also the author of a number of minor works including *Resurrection of the Dead* and *Epistle to Yemen*. 74 Show him as a leader of the Jewish community.

73 Maimonides, *Moreh Nevukim*. Translation into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon with 5 commentaries : Abravanel, Narboni. New York, 1975.

74 Maimonides, Moses. *Iggeret Teman: Epistle to Yemen*, English translation by Boaz Cohen. New York, 1952.

The contributions of Maimonides to medicine are less well known but they were significant. Maimonides wrote at least ten works on medicine. His *Aphorisms* consisting of twenty-four

chapters was his most popular work on medicine. Another popular work was a miscellany of health rules, stressing the importance of moderate living for proper health Screening 75

THE LAWS KINGS

At the outset it must emphasized that for Maimonides the belief in the coming of the Messiah is not a concession to the national feeling which unconsciously urged him to include this belief among the articles of faith, but is inherently connected with his entire religious and ethical view.

In the last book of the Mishnah Torah Law of Kings chapter eleven 76 "In future time, the King Mashiach (Messiah) will renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Mikdash (Temple) and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then in his days, all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah.

75 Twersky, Isadore. A Mianomides Reader. New York 1972.

76 Ibid.,

Whoever dose not believe in him, or dose not await his coming denies not only the statement of the other prophets, but also the Torah and of Moses our teacher, for the Torah attests to his coming, stating 77 "And the L-rd your G-d will bring back your captivity and have compassion upon you. He will return and gather you... Even if your dispersed ones are in the furthest reaches of the heavens, ... G-d will bring you...

We must understand as to the detailed laws concerning the Messiah as Maimonides wrote the Mishnah Torah as a book of laws as he writes. It is a digest of all Jewish law, as

Maimonides states that one needs only to study the Mishnah Torah or Yad-Hazaka to learn the entire Jewish law Torah. Why we must know all details regarding the days as he states "We will sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah"

He continues 78 in the second law "Similarly, in regards to the cities of Refuges, it is stated, When G-D will expand your borders. You shall add three more cities..."

The Mishnah Torah is a book of laws that provides a clear guide as to the Halachah. To know what to do as is this information in our current stage. We must therefore say that all it is critical.

77 devarim 30: 3-5

78 Ibid.,

As Maimonides has stated in his introduction to the 79 Mishnah Torah is to provide a single reference for Halachahic. "Ruling". Why does he go into detail as to the Times of the Messiah "In future time, the King Mashiach (Messiah) will renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Mikdash" This information does not have any bearing on the person that is required to believe in the coming of the Messiah. And moreover the Rambam Maimonides has already told us of the commandment to believe in the coming of Messiah as part of the Thirteen principles of faith that one must believe and await his coming.

As Maimonides is one of the few that brings Halachic ruling regarding the Messianic Laws I will go into great detail as he continues in the second Law 80 "Similarly, in regards to the Cities of Refuge, it is stated "when G-D will expand your borders. you shall add three more cities. "This command has never been fulfilled. (Surely) G-D did not give this

command in vain, and thus the intent was that it be fulfilled after the coming of Messiah. " There is no need for us to know this information from an Halachaic book of Laws.

79 Maimonides, Mose. Commentary on the Mishnah. 7 volumes. Arabic original with Hebrew translation by Joseph Kafih, Jerusalem, 1968.

80 Ibid.,

Maimonides 81 continues with the following " who ever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only the statement of the other prophets," but also the Torah and of Moses our teacher " for the Torah attests to his coming, stating, and G-D will bring back your captivity" Maimonides, however, does not content himself with a single proof texts, and continues" there is also a reference in the passage concerning Bilaam, who prophesies about the two anointed kings the first anointed king, David who saved Israel from her oppressors, and the final anointed king who will arise from among his descendants Save Israel at the ends of days that passage states 82 "I see it, but not now" this refers to David "I perceive it, but not in the near future "This refers to king Messiah. "A star shall go forth from Yaakov" this refers to David " and a staff shall arise in Israel" This refers to King Messiah." He shall crush all of Moab's princes" this refers to David, as it is written Samuel 8:2 "He smote Moab and measured them with a line "; he shall break down all of Seth's descendants " This refers to think Messiah about whom it is written" He will rule from sea to sea ". This extensive quotations from the bible and Torah prophecies is not Maimonides normal style as he rarely brings quotations as well as sources in his writings.

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80 Numbers 24; 17-18

82 Ibid.,

To understand as to why Maimonides goes into great detail regarding the Messiah. We must compare the first Messiah referring to King David as quoted above, as being the anointed one and does not include King Saul who was also anointed.

Again it must be emphasized that for Maimonides the belief in the coming of the Messiah is not a concession to the national to the national feeling which unconsciously urged him to include this belief among his Laws, but is inherently connected with an Halachahic ruling to provide a clear halachahic guide to action and is not a story and connected with his entire religious and ethical view.

These questions can be resolved within the context of the explanation of a more general issue, namely the location the law of kings at the conclusion of the Mishnah Torah. At the beginning of these laws of Maimonides has stated that 83 "Israel was commanded to fulfill three Mitzvot and when they entered the holy Land to a point a king. to destroy the descendants of Amalek., and to build G-ds chosen house." 84

Accordingly, it would appear appropriate to record the laws governing the appointment of a king at a much earlier stage within the book of code.

83 Ibid.,

84 Ibid.,

He nonetheless chooses to make these laws at the conclusion of the Mishnah Torah, as a compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate and complete performance of all Mitzvot of the Torah will be attained when

a king rules over Israel. It is then that we will fulfil the Mitzvoth of waging the wars of G- D, destroying Amalek, and building the Temple Mikdash. Similarly, our observance of the Torah and its Mitzvoth will be enhanced in totally. As he writes at the conclusion of chapter four," The king purpose and intend should be to elevate the true faith." 85

This conception of the monarchy found full expression in King David, who united the entire Jewish people, completed that conquest of Israel, secured peace for our nation and began the preparation for the building of the Temple Mikdash in Jerusalem.

Within this context we can appreciate Maimonides understanding of the Messiah in the beginning of chapter eleven" king Messiah will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty," And therefore when we pray three times a day the Amidah or Shemone Esrei, eighteen benediction the fourteenth benediction that is a prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem clearly makes reference to king David " Return in mercy to Jerusalem your city and dwell therein as you have promised: speedily establish their in the throne of David your servant," and in the fifteen for the arrival of are Redeemer the Messiah again makes reference to king David

85 Maimonides, Moses. Shemonah Perakim. Translation into English by J L Gorfinkle under the title The Eight Chapters of Maimonides on Ethics. New York, 1912.

The Amidah are as old as our people and date back to the times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and our current prayer books dates back to a later time, to the time of Ezra the scribe and the Men of the Great Assembly more than 2300 years ago. That was the time of the Babylonian exile, for the men of the Great Assembly saw the need to establish one prayer in Hebrew for all the Jewish people regardless of the place and time.

He therefore implies and defined Messiah as a King who will not only redeem the Jews from exile, but also bring about the complete and total observance of the Torah and Mitzvots, even greater than the times of the Temple Mikdash, as there will be an additional three cities of refuge, that was never available only when the Messiah comes.

Our faith and our yearning for the Messiah is an integral part of the belief in the coming of the Messiah. And only now can we understand why it is necessary to know the times of Messiah in all its detail. The time of Messiah will be the ultimate practices of the Laws Mitzvot. As he states "all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah. 86

86. W.D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/ or the age to Come. Journal of Biblical Literature, Monograph series, vol. VII, 1952.

THE MESSIAH ACCORDING TO MAIMONIDES

The Era of the Messiah is a time that the Mitzvot will be in their complete glory and will be even greater than the times of the Mikdash; Temple. And is part of the belief of the coming of Messiah. And therefore it is paramount to explain that "We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to their particulars set forth in the Torah. Therefore in the times of Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Mikdash Temple. As it is written in "Jer 36:26 he will remove the stone from your breast"

As Maimonides states in the Laws of Kings, chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D.

The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential; as it is written Isaiah 11:9 "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." 87

87 Ibid.,

The understanding of the stages of Messiah is part of the basic obligation to believe in the coming of Messiah; outlined in the Thirteen principle of faith that one must believe and await his coming. Is part of the perfection of keeping the Mitzvoth. The Messianic Age is the only one, which will enable men to realize their real and ultimate purpose in life.

Maimonides states this view in the code saying, in chapter twelve law 4: " the sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that the Jewish people rule over the world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted by them, nor in order they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that the Jewish people be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom, with out any one to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to come, as we explained in Hilchos Teshuvah. 88

We thus see that the belief in the Messiah is integrated with the entire view of Maimonides that the Torah as a whole was given for the purpose of helping man to self development in order to reach the human genus of the highest degree of intellectual perfection, the realization of which is only possible in the coming of the Messiah.

In chapter eleven of the Mishah Torah law 1;" He will rebuild Temple Mikdash and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then, in his days, all the statutes will be to reinstated as in former times.

88 Ibid.,

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson 89 Explains that the times of the Messiah will be even greater than the times of the Temple Mikdash. This knowledge of the Messiah and all its details is connected to the first Mitzot of knowing G-D, and since at that time we will have an increased in knowledge "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." and this is not possible to fully understand G-D without the Messiah.

And therefore is crucial and fundamental part to know that only in times of Messiah we will "and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential"

And continues 90 in chapter 12, law 5. "In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delight will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Why is necessary to know the stage of the world. "The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the full extent of mortal potential" why does have to say mortal potential it is obvious as we are merely men.

89 The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson Likutei Sichos vol. 27 p250

90 Ibid.,

Maimonides is telling us 91 "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D." Is part of our Mitzvoth

according to Torah in our times that are occupation is purely to know G-D. That even a person that his occupation is Torah must sustain themselves with business, however in the times of the Messiah "will be solely to know G-D". And solely for that reason and for the sake of Torah, and this is why he writes "Only" for the will be no other motives even holy ones.

Halachah is to refine the world at large so that it will exist in harmony with G-D's will. There have been times during which this intent has been put into practice by Jewish kings. In the most complete sense, it will be realized when the Messiah comes, when the observance in all the Mitzvot associated with the Mikdash Temple will be restored and our people will devote all their energies to this goal. Similarly, the effect of the Mitzvot in the world at large will be completed. There will be no pressure or disturbances hindering the observance of the Torah. Furthermore, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will be abundant.

91 Ibid.,

In the laws of Kings. 92 Maimonides explains that there is a relationship of cause and effect between the obstacles and the generous flow of the divine beneficence. " There will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance". For this relationship to the affected not only must man receivers the divine blessings, but he must also be conscious of them, otherwise he may fall prey to envy and competition.

Furthermore for this reason he emphasizes that in the time of the Messiah " good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available. Being involved in material delights in the time of the Messiah is however somewhat problematic. At a time when humanity and the world at large will be refined and elevated to a state of perfection, it is difficult to conceive a man that would choose to invest his

time in physical delights, by stating it will be" as freely available as dust". Although they will be accessible to man and he will partake of them for the sake of his health, he will consider them like dust as being worthless.

92 Ibid.,

Although we will live in an Era of material prosperity our attention will not be focused on it. Rather the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. Is part of our Mitzvoth according to Torah. This implies two concepts. One. Because good things will flow in abundance in all the delights will be freely available, and we will be able to direct all of our energies to the study of Torah. Two. More particularly, our energies will be directed to the knowledge of G-D.

At present our study of Torah has many different objectives, most obvious among them and knowledge of how to perform the Mitzvot, however in the Era of redemption our study of the Torah will have a single goal, the knowledge of G-D. In that Era we will still observe the Mitzvot in perception. Nevertheless since nothing will disturb our Torah study, we will be able to learn how to observe the mitzvoth perfectly into a relatively short time. Therefore our attention will be devoted into the deeper dimensions of Torah study.

And goes on to say 93 "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." this example of the water covering the ocean does not seem to fit with understanding, for covering implies is beyond comprehension, can just as the water concealed that what is in the sea.

93 Ibid.,

To the contrary by quoting "for the world will be filled with knowledge of G-D as the waters cover the ocean bed." He highlights the manner in which the knowledge of G-D will permeate the world and the thought processes of every individual person. To understand the simile, the vast varieties of creatures that live on dry land are readily discernible as separate entities.

A vast multitude of creatures likewise inhabits the ocean, however when looking at the ocean, what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains. Similarly, although in the Era of the Redemption the world will continue to exist, individual creatures will lose consciousness of their separate identity and will be suffused with the knowledge of G-D.

The Era of the Redemption will not negate the world existence; on the contrary, it will affirm the true existence of the world. As Maimonides 94 bring in his very first law Yesodei Ha Torah 1:1 " All the Beings of the heavens, the earth, and whatever is between them came into existence solely from the truth of His Being." And this how Maimonides begins and concludes the Mishnah Torah, the compendium of the entire Oral law. With this he emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of creation of the world will be when King Messiah Comes.

94 Maimonides, Moses. Mishneh Torah : The Code of Maimonides. An English translation has had 13 volumes appear by 1977. Yale Judaica Series. New Haven.

Maimonides begins by saying the first Mitzvoth is " to know that there is a G-D" and since one must know of G-D before any Mitzvoth therefore we can not say this is the first Mitzvoth.

The Knowing of G-D .As the 95 Abarbanel writes, "The first Mitzvoth to believe that there is a G-D. We already know that he exists. Therefore we must say that it means, that G-D is complete and that he dose not need any thing, and that all, need him." And this that "He Is" and needs no one is understood according to intellect, since he created intellect he is not bound by it. As explained by the Rasbah he can be two opposites and no rules apply.

We might further add that it will be an age of peace and plenty and the chief interest of man will be the knowledge of G-D. In that Maimonides in speaking of man's objective, says in Moreh Nevukim 96 Guide to the perplexed" the fourth kind of perfection is the true perfection of man, the possession of such notion which lead to true metaphysical opinions as regards G-D. With this perfection man has obtained his final object, it gives him true human perfection, it remains to him alone, it gives him immortality and in its account he is called man."

95 Reines, Alvin J. Maimonides and Abarbanel on prophecy. H.U.C.A.Press

96 Ibid.,

Thus we see that Maimonides is of the conviction that immortality is based upon ideas, upon knowledge. "His (Man's) aim must be the aim of man as man, viz., the formation of ideas and nothing else. The best and sublimes among them is the idea which man forms of G-D, angels and the rest of the creation according to his capacity." Consequently the intellectual perfection attained by the soul of the righteous after death is the final purpose of human life.

Therefor the belief and knowledge of G-D in three stages. One: The general belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth. Two: The belief and knowledge according to intellect that he is the

first. And all come from him. This is the first Mitzvah. Three: And even greater knowledge, that he is not limited by intellect. And the mind itself understands this. As it says “the greatest knowledge that you do not know him.” 97

Likewise in Mitzvoth we also have three stages One: before any Mitzvoth, one must except the yoke of heaven, like when the Jews said before receiving the Torah we will “Do” and then we will hear. As the belief that G-D exists before the Mitzvoth of knowing G-D. Two: To understand with ones intellect the Mitzvoth, action to be able to do by learning Torah. Three: Great is study that brings to action. To fulfill because it his (G-D’S) will.

97 Ibid.,

And the third stage will only be when the Messiah comes that one will be totally “Only to know G-D” 99 one will have no other motives even holy ones. Only for the sake of the knowledge and understanding of Torah. And not to be rewarded in the world to come. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-D. The Jews will be free to study Torah and its wisdom.

99 Rambam, Finkel, Avraham Yaakov, Yeshivah Beth Moshe 2001, 62

Chapter Four

Chapter Four

THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP

Moses is Israel and Israel is Moses.... For the leader of the generation is as the entire generation, for the leader

embodies them all Rashi, Numbers 21:21

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

We expect our leaders to be wise: to be able to discern right from wrong and make the proper decisions on issues that affect our lives. To provide us with a vision of where we stand and where we are headed, and guide us toward the realization of our goals.

We expect our leaders to be caring and committed: to empathize with our needs and aspirations and devote themselves to their fulfillment.

We expect our leaders to be strong: calm and decisive in times of crisis, capable warriors and diplomats in the furtherance of our aims. We expect our leaders to be individuals of high moral character and integrity, bearers of an ethical standard for young and old to emulate.

But the most important (and probably the most overlooked) function of the leader is to unite us: to knit diverse individuals into a single people and to inspire diverse—and often conflicting—wills to coalesce into a common destiny. A Chorus in Three Versions destruction of their former enslavers when the Red Sea split, to allow them passage and drowned the pursuing Egyptians. The Torah relates how, upon beholding the great miracle. 100

100 Deuteronomy 4:34.

One of the first things we did together as a people was sing. The nation of Israel was born on the 15th of Nissan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 bce)—the day that G-d “extracted a nation from the bowels of a nation,¹ freeing the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery. Seven days later, the

Israelites witnessed the

Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to G-d, saying:

I shall sing to G-d for He is most exalted;
Horse and rider He cast in the sea.
G-d is my strength and song; He is my salvation
This is my G-d, and I shall glorify² Him
The G-d of my fathers, and I shall exalt Him...101

This song, known as Shirat HaYam—"Song at the Sea,"—goes on to describe the great miracles that G-d performed for His people, G-d's promise to bring them to the Holy Land and reveal His presence among them in the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple) in Jerusalem, and Israel's goal to implement G-d's eternal sovereignty in the world. Its forty-four verses express the gist of our relationship with G-d and our mission in life, and thus occupy a most important place in the Torah and in Jewish life.102

101. Exodus 15. Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar points out in his Ohr HaChaim commentary that the words "I shall sing" are in first person singular, implying that the people of Israel sang the "Song at the Sea" "as a single man, without difference and separation."

102 The Song at the Sea is recited daily in the morning prayers. The annual Shabbat on which this song is read in the synagogue as part of the weekly Torah reading is given the special name of Shabbat Shirah, "The Shabbat of Song."

Our sages also focus on the prefatory line to the Song at the Sea, in which the Torah introduces it as a song sung by “Moses and the children of Israel.” Moses was obviously one of the “children of Israel,” so the fact that the Torah singles him out implies that Moses took a leading role in the composition and delivery of this song. Indeed, the nature of Moses’ role is a point of much discussion by our sages: the Talmud 103 relates no fewer than three different opinions on exactly how Moses led his people in their song of praise and thanksgiving to G-d.

According to Rabbi Akiva, it was Moses who composed and sang the Shirat HaYam, while the people of Israel merely responded to each verse with the refrain “I shall sing to G-d.” Moses sang, “For He is most exalted,” and they answered, “I shall sing to G-d”; Moses sang, “Horse and rider He cast in the sea,” and they answered, “I shall sing to G-d”; and so on with all forty-four verses of the song. Rabbi Eliezer, however, is of the opinion that the people repeated each verse after Moses: Moses sang, “I shall sing to G-d for He is most exalted,” and they repeated, “I shall sing to G-d for He is most exalted”; Moses sang “Horse and rider He cast in the sea,” and they repeated, “Horse and rider He cast in the sea,” and so on. A third opinion is that of Rabbi Nechemiah: according to him, Moses simply pronounced the opening words of the song, following which the people of Israel all sang the entire song together. In other words, each of them, on their own, composed the entire—and very same—forty-four verses! 104

103 Talmud, Sotah 30b.

104 Rashi on Talmud, *ibid.*, as per Mechilta on Exodus 15:1.

These three versions of how Moses led Israel in song express three different perspectives on unity, particularly the unity achieved when a people rally under the leadership of their leader. 105

Rabbi Akiva describes an ideal in which a people completely abnegate their individuality to the collective identity embodied by the leader. Moses alone sang the nation's gratitude to G-d, their experience of redemption, and their vision of their future as G-d's people. The people had nothing further to say as individuals, except to affirm their unanimous assent to what Moses was expressing.

At first glance, this seems the ultimate in unity: 106 more than two million hearts and minds yielding to a single program and vision. Rabbi Eliezer, however, argues that this is but a superficial unity—an externally imposed unity of the moment, rather than an inner, enduring unity. When people set aside their own thoughts and feelings to accept what is dictated to them by a higher authority, they are united only in word and deed; their inner selves remain different and distinct.

105 Cf. Mechilta *ibid.*: "Moses being the equivalent of the children of Israel, and the children of Israel being the equivalent of Moses"; See also Rashi on Numbers 21:21 (quoted at the beginning of this essay) and Tanya, end of ch. 2.

106. The census taken one year after the Exodus counted 600,000 males between the ages 20 and 60; a rough demographic estimate makes for a total of 2-3 million Jews.

Such a unity is inevitably short-lived: sooner or later their intrinsic differences and counter-aims will assert themselves, and fissures will appear also in their unanimous exterior.

Thus, says Rabbi Eliezer, if the people of Israel achieved true unity under the leadership of Moses at the Red Sea, then it must have happened this way: that the people of Israel repeated each verse that issued from Moses' lips. Yes, they all submitted to the leadership of Moses and saw in him the embodiment of their collective will and goals, but they did not suffice with a "blind" affirmation of his articulation of Israel's song. Rather, they repeated it after him, running it through the sieve of their own understanding and feelings, finding the roots for an identical declaration in their own personality and experience. Thus, the very same words assumed two million nuances of meaning, as they were absorbed by two million minds and articulated by two million mouths.¹⁰⁷

This, maintains Rabbi Eliezer, is the ultimate unity. When each repeats the verses uttered by Moses on his own, relating to them in his individual way, the singular vision of Moses has penetrated each individual's being, uniting them both in word and in essence. AND UNITY

¹⁰⁷ Talmud, Sotah 30b.

Rabbi Nechemiah, however, is still not satisfied.

If Israel repeated these verses after Moses, argues Rabbi Nechemiah, this would imply that their song did not stem from the very deepest part of themselves. For if the people were truly one with Moses and his articulation of the quintessence of Israel, why would they need to hear their song from his lips before they could sing it themselves?

No, says Rabbi Nechemiah, the way it happened was that Moses pronounced the opening words of the song, following which each and every Jew, including “the infant at his mother’s breast and the fetus in the womb,”⁹ sang the entire song themselves. Indeed, it was Moses who achieved the unity of Israel, as evidenced by the fact that their song could not begin until he sang its opening words. Were it not for his leadership, they could not have risen above the selfishness that mars the surface of every character. Had not the people of Israel abnegated their will to his, they could not have uncovered the singular core of their souls. But once they made that commitment, once they unequivocally responded to Moses’ opening words, each independently conceived and articulated the very same experience of the historic moment in which they stood.

Each and every individual Jew, from the octogenarian sage to the unborn infant, expressed his deepest feelings and aspirations with the very same 187 words. For in Moses they had a leader in whom the soul of Israel was one. (Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Beshalach, Shevat 11, 5748 January 30, 1988) 108

108 At a farbrengen (gathering) marking the passing of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, on the tenth of Shevat, 5710 (1950), and the Rebbe’s formal assumption of the leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch on the same date, one year later. Likkutei Sichot, vol. XXXI, pp. 69-76.

FREEDOM

And G-d said to Moses: "...Go to Pharaoh... and say to him: G-d, the G-d of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying: Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

Exodus 7:14-16

Our sages call Passover "The Season of Our Freedom." For the Exodus from Egypt was more than one of the many salvation's of Jewish history; it was the first and ultimate bestowal of freedom upon man. Before the Exodus, there was no true freedom; and having experienced the Exodus, the Jew is forever and invariably free, and no force on earth can enslave him.¹⁰⁹

"Freedom," in the most basic sense of the word, is the removal of all constraints on a person's development and self-expression. In other words, we assume that freedom is the natural state of man; that if we liberate a person of all external forces that limit and inhibit him, we have a free human being.

But if that were all there was to freedom, Passover would hardly qualify as "The Season of Our Freedom." For while the Exodus freed us from Pharaoh and his taskmasters, it committed us to a greater, more embracing servitude. "When you take this nation out of Egypt," G-d said to Moses from the burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai when He first revealed Himself to him and commissioned him to redeem the people of Israel, "you shall serve G-d at this mountain."¹¹⁰

109 Gevurot Hashem, chapter 61.

110 Exodus 3:12.

Standing before Pharaoh, Moses did not merely demand in the name of G-d, "Let My people go," but, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." 111 The raison d'être of the Exodus was to bring us to Mount Sinai to be bound in a covenant with G-d as His "nation of priests and holy people"112 –a covenant delineated by the 613 commandments of the Torah.

Thus, the festival of Shavuot, which marks the day on which we received the Torah at Sinai, is the only festival that has no calendar date: the Torah designates it not as a certain day of a certain month—as it does all other festivals—but as the 50th day after Passover. This is to emphasize that Shavuot is an extension and fulfillment of Passover, for the purpose of the Exodus was realized only on the day we stood at Sinai.

Why, then, is freedom the defining quality of Passover? Granted, servitude to G-d is preferable to servitude to Pharaoh, and every moral person will insist that servitude to G-d is preferable to a hedonistic "freedom" in a lawless world. But servitude and freedom, by definition, are diametric opposites. So why is Passover the quintessential season of freedom? If anything, it should be called "The Season of Our Servitude"!

To understand the freedom achieved by the Exodus, we must examine the nature of Israel's enslavement in Egypt.113

111 Ibid., 7:16, et al.

112 Ibid., 19:6.

113 Exodus 1:14.

Our sages state that "All galuyot (exiles and persecutions)

are called by the name of Egypt.” The very name Mitzrayim (Hebrew for “Egypt”) means “boundaries” and “constraints.” Every time we are limited—by a foreign power, by a hostile or merely alien environment, by the corporeality of our bodies, the subjectivity of our minds or the shortcomings of our character—we are in Mitzrayim. If freedom means the absence of constraint, Mitzrayim is the limitation of man on all levels —physically, emotionally, intellectually, morally, or spiritually.

But there is more to galut than constraint and limitation. To refer to the Egyptian prototype, our galut in Egypt entailed more than an imprisonment of the body and a stifling of the spirit; we were slaves in Egypt, whose “lives were embittered with hard labor, with mortar and bricks and in all manner of work in the field—all the work to which they subjected them was crushing labor.” 114

The phrase “crushing labor” (avodat perech) appears repeatedly in the Torah’s account of the Egyptian galut, the text of the Passover Haggadah, and the symbolism of the seder observances. What is “crushing labor”? Maimonides defines it as “work that has no limit and no purpose.”¹¹⁵

114 Karpas, the vegetable dipped in salt-water at the beginning of the seder, alludes to samech perech—“sixty myriads (600,000) enslaved by crushing labor.”

115 Mishneh Torah, Laws of Servitude 1:6; see Hagahot Maimoniot, *ibid*.

Work even most difficult work—that has a defined end-point and a defined objective is not as demoralizing as endless, futile

work. The Egyptians, whose aim in enslaving the Jewish people was to break their spirit, refused to impart any schedule, logic, efficiency or utility to their work. They worked them at the most irrational hours, gave to each of them the task most ill-suited to his or her abilities, and repeatedly destroyed what they had built only to order them to rebuild it again and again.¹¹⁶

Pharaoh had whip-wielding taskmasters to enforce his work-edict. Today, our world has “progressed” to the point that millions voluntarily subject themselves to “work that has no limit and no purpose”: work that spills over from its five-day, forty-hour framework to invade every moment and thought of the week; work that is dictated not by the capabilities and resources of the worker but by status, profitability and vogue; work that is not the means to an end but a self-perpetuating labor that becomes its own aim and objective.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ See Midrash Tanchuma, Vayetzei 9; Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 1:14-15.

¹¹⁷ Tanya, chapter 2; et al.

Ultimately, the capacity for such labor can have only one source: the “spark of G-dliness” that is the essence of the human soul. ¹¹⁸ The physical self is finite and pragmatic; how, then, is it capable of “work that has no limit and no purpose”? What can be the source of the drive to scale

mountains because they are there or to search for centuries for a way to turn lead into gold? Only the infinite well of divinity at our core. From where stems the bottomless commitment to the ever-receding goal of material “success”? Only from a soul that possesses limitless vigor and fortitude, from a soul whose commitment to its Creator is not contingent upon envisionable goals and calculable objectives.

The soul of man is thus subjected to a galut within a galut: not only is it prevented from expressing its true self, but it is forced to express itself in ways that are completely opposed to its true desires. Not only is it constrained by a material self and world—it also suffers the usurpation of its quintessential powers to drive the material self’s mundane labors. Not only is the soul’s capacity for infinite and objectiveness commitment inhibited and repressed—it is distorted into an endless quest for material gain.

118 Exodus 20:9 (as per Rashi’s commentary).

The road out of Egypt passes through Sinai.

The Torah regulates our involvement with the material world. It commands that we may, and should, create, manufacture and do business six days a week, but that on the seventh day, not only must all work cease, but we should assume a state of mind in which “all your work is concluded.” On a daily basis, it tells us to set aside inviolable islands in time devoted to Torah study and prayer. And at all times, a multitude of Torah laws define the permissible and the forbidden in business and pleasure.

The Torah also enjoins us to “eat of the toil of your

hands"—to invest only our marginal faculties in the business of earning a living, leaving our choicest talents free to pursue more spiritual goals.¹¹⁹ And it insists that all material pursuits should be but a means to an end, but a vessel to receive G-d's blessings and a tool to aid us in our life's work of bringing sanctity and G-dliness into our world.¹²⁰

In so restricting our physical lives, Torah liberates our souls. By limiting the extent and the nature of our material involvement's, Torah extricates our capacity for infinite commitment from its material exile, freeing it to follow its natural course: to serve G-d in a manner of "no limit and no purpose"—in a manner that transcends the parameters of self, self-gain and our very conception of "achievement." Based on the Rebbe's talks on Passover 5719 (1959) and 5720 (1960) 121

119 Psalms 128:2. See *Beyond the Letter of the Law* (VHH, 1995), pp. 188-189.

120 See *Bread From Heaven*, WIR, vol. VI, no. 20.

121 *Likkutei Sichot*, vol. III, pp. 848-852

HOLY LAND AND SEE

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan; and he said to them: "Go up this way by the south, and go up into the high land. And you shall see the land—what it is..."

Numbers 13:17-18

One of the greatest tragedies of Jewish history was the debacle of "The Spies." Fifteen months after the Exodus from Egypt, as the people of Israel camped in the Paran Desert poised to enter the Holy Land, Moses dispatched twelve men—each a leader and representative of one of the twelve tribes of Israel—to spy the land that G-d had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Forty days later the

spies returned praising the fertility of the land and bewailing the military might of its inhabitants. "But the people who dwell in the land are strong," they said, "and the cities fortified and very great; we saw giants 122 there... We won't be able to go up against these people, for they are mightier than we."

The Spies incited panic among the people, who wept that entire night in terror and despair. "Why is G-d bringing us to this land," they cried, "to fall by the sword, and that our wives and children be put to prey? Why, it would be better for us to return to Egypt!"

That night of faithless tears became "a weeping for generations." 123 G-d delayed Israel's entry into the Holy Land for more than 38 years, until that entire generation had died out and a new generation, more trusting of G-d's promises, had grown up to replace them. When the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, it was not Moses who led them but his disciple, Joshua, who was but a pale moon to Moses' sun.¹²⁴

122 Numbers 13:27-31.

123 Talmud, Taanit 29a; see note 6 below.

124 Ibid., Bava Batra 75a; Rashi on Numbers 27:20.

Our sages point out that Moses' achievements were all eternal: the Torah he transmitted to us transcends the vicissitudes of time; the Sanctuary he built was never destroyed (unlike the Temples built by King Solomon and Ezra in Jerusalem). If Moses had brought us into our land, we would never have been driven from it; if Moses had built the Holy Temple, it would never have been destroyed. 125 Thus, all the travails and defeats of Jewish history are descendent from the night that Israel wept for lack of trust in the divine promise.¹²⁶

The Reality of Sight

Where did the Spies go wrong? Why did their mission, dispatched by Moses with G-d's approval, fail so miserably?
127

Before their departure, Moses had instructed the Spies to observe the nature of the land, the quality of the soil, and the strength of its inhabitants. Of these they gave an honest account, reporting on these realities as they saw them. But Moses had prefaced his instructions with the injunction: "You shall see the land."

125 See Talmud, Sotah 9a; Megalleh Amukot, Ofan 185; Ohr HaChaim on Deuteronomy 1:37 and 3:25; Ohr HaTorah, Va'etchanan, pp. 65, 93 and 2201; *et al.*

The reason that Moses' work is eternal is that his every thought, word and deed was done in a state of utter attachment to G-d. Thus, the angel who appeared to Joshua to aid Israel's conquest of the land said, "Now I have come" (Joshua 5:14)—"Now," since in the days of Moses, when G-d proposed to send an angel to accompany them, Moses had insisted: "If Your own self is not going [with us], do not take us out of here" (Exodus 33:15; Midrash Tanchuma, Mishpatim 18).

(The difference between Moses and Joshua is alluded to by the Talmudic saying that compares Moses to the enduring sun and Joshua to the fluctuating moon, whose light waxes and wanes and, on the darkest of nights, is completely concealed.)

126 The night following the return of the Spies was the night of Av 9—the day that saw the destruction of both the first and second Temples and numerous other tragic events in our history.

127 Ibid.

Sight is more than a faculty, more than just another sensory tool. To hear, smell, taste or touch something is to “perceive” it, to collect data that informs us about its nature and characteristics; to see something is to experience it. When we say, “I saw it myself,” we are really saying: “This is a truth I have experienced absolutely. So there is no way that you can convince me otherwise. This is not something that has been ‘proven’ to me and which might therefore be ‘disproved’ with stronger, more compelling arguments and proofs. This is something I have seen. This, to me, is reality.”

“You shall see the land,” said Moses to the Spies. I am not sending you as mere gatherers of data; I am sending you as spies in the most literal sense of the word: as those whose mission is to see.

I am sending you, Moses was saying, to serve as the eyes of Israel: the eyes through whom the nation would achieve an absolute and unequivocal identification with their divine heritage; the eyes through whom they would experience its reality in a way that cannot be swayed by mundane data, however adverse or threatening.

This was where the Spies failed their mission. They traversed the land, examined and probed it, sniffed about and sounded it out, and analyzed the facts they had garnered. But they failed to see the land, and failed to bring back sight of the land to the people of Israel. Before his passing, Moses pleaded with G-d: “Please, let me cross over and see the good land across the Jordan; the goodly mountain and the Lebanon.”¹²⁸

128 Deuteronomy 3:23-25. “Lebanon” refers to the Holy Temple.

G-d did not allow Moses to “cross over,” but He did grant him his request to see. “Ascend to the summit, and lift your eyes westward, northward, southward and eastward, and see with your

eyes... I have shown it to you so that you see it with your eyes, though you shall not cross over to there.” 129 Our sages tell us that every soul possesses a spark of the soul of Moses. 130 Moses’ sight of the land empowers each and every one of us to “see” the holiness and perfection of G-d’s native home and make it an unequivocal reality in our lives. 131

And G-d spoke to Moses, saying: “Send you men that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel. One man, one man, per tribe shall you send, each a prince among them... Numbers 13:1-2

And you all approached me, and said: “Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land and bring us back word regarding the road by which we shall go up and the cities into which we shall enter.” And the thing was favorable in my eyes; and I took twelve men from amongst you, one man per tribe... Deuteronomy 1:22-23

The commentaries reconcile these two accounts of the sending of the Spies by explaining that the initiative indeed came from the people of Israel. Moses then consulted with G-d, who said to him, “Send you men...” to imply: “Send them as dictated by your understanding. I am not telling you what to do. Do as you see fit.” 12 Thus, the Spies’ mission, while receiving G-d’s consent, was a purely human endeavor, born of the desire of the people and dispatched because “the thing was favorable” in Moses’ eyes.

129 Ibid. v. 27; 34:4.

130 Tanya, ch. 42.

131 Torat Menachem–Hitvaaduyot, vol. III, pp. 164-173.

The result was a tragic setback in the course of Jewish history. The Spies brought back a most demoralizing report and

caused the people to lose faith in G-D's promise of the land of Israel as their eternal heritage. The entire generation was then deemed unfit to inherit the land, and it was decreed that they would live out their lives in the desert. Only 40 years later did Moses' successor, Joshua, lead a new generation across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. (Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies to speak in favor of conquering the land, and the only two of that generation to enter the land.)

Up until that time, G-d had imparted specific directives to Moses and the people of Israel virtually every step of the way. The case of the Spies was the first instance in which G-d said, "I'm not telling you what to do—do as you see fit." Should this not have set off a warning light in the mind of Moses?

Indeed it did. Our sages tell us that Moses sent off Joshua with the blessing, "May G-d deliver you from the conspiracy of the Spies."¹³² So why did he send them? And if, for whatever reason, he thought it necessary to send them, why did he not at least bless them as he blessed Joshua? Even more amazing is the fact that a generation later, as the Jewish people finally stood ready (for the second time) to enter the land, Joshua himself dispatches spies(!) This time, there are no adverse results; but why did he again initiate a process which had ended so tragically in the past?

132 Rashi, Numbers 13:16.

Obviously, Moses was well aware of the risks involved when embarking on a course of "Do as you see fit." For man to strike out on his own, without precise instructions from On High and with only his finite and subjective judgment as his compass, is to enter a mine-field strewn with possibilities for error and failure. Yet Moses also knew that G-d was

opening a new arena of human potential.

Choice: A most crucial element of our mission in life is the element of choice. Were G-d to have created man as a creature who cannot do wrong, then He might as well have created a perfect world in the first place, or no world at all. The entire point of G-d's desire in creation is that there be a non-perfected world, and that we should choose to perfect it. It is precisely the possibility for error on our part that lends significance to our achievements.

The concept of choice exists on two levels. When G-d issues an explicit instruction to us, we still have the choice to defy His command. This, however, is choice in a more limited sense. For, in essence, our soul is "literally a part of G-d above"¹³³ and, deep down, has but a single desire: to fulfill the divine will. In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: "A Jew is neither willing, nor is he able, to tear himself away from G-d." When it comes down to it, each and every one of us desires only to do good, as defined by the will of G-d. The only "choice" we have is whether to suppress our innate will or to express it in our daily life.

¹³³ Tanya, ch. 2, after Job 31:2.

Up until the episode of the Spies, this was the only choice offered the Jewish people. G-d provided unequivocal guidelines for each and every issue that confronted their lives. They had the choice to disobey, but to do so would run contrary to their deepest instincts.

The second level of choice was introduced with G-d's reply to Moses regarding the Spies. When Moses heard G-d saying, "Do as you see fit," he understood that G-d was opening another, even deeper and truer, dimension of choice in the life of man. By creating an area in which He, the creator and absolute master of the world, states, "I am not telling you what to do," G-d

was imparting an even greater significance to human actions. Here, and only here, is the choice truly real; here, and only here, is there nothing to compel us in either direction. 134

When we enter this arena, the risks are greater: the possibility to err is greater, and the consequences of our error more devastating. But when we succeed in discovering, without instruction and empowerment from Above, the optimum manner in which to “enter the Holy Land” and actualize the divine will, our deed is infinitely more valuable and significant.

134 Exodus 33:11.

The Self of Joshua

This was why Moses dispatched the Spies, though fully aware of the hazards of their mission, without so much as a blessing that they be safeguarded from the pitfalls of human endeavor. Were he to have blessed them—to have imparted to them of his own spiritual prowess to succeed in their mission—he would have undermined the uniqueness of the opportunity that G-d had granted by consenting that their mission be “by your understanding.” The entire point was that both Moses (in deciding whether to send them) and the Spies (in executing their mission) would be entirely on their own, guided and empowered solely by their own understanding and humanity.

The only one to receive Moses’ blessing was Joshua, who was Moses’ faithful “servant... never budging from [Moses’] tent.”¹³⁵ The unique relationship between Moses and Joshua is described in the Talmud with the following metaphor: “Moses’ face was like the face of the sun; Joshua’s face was like the face of the moon.”¹⁶ On the most basic level, this expresses the superiority of Moses over Joshua, the latter being but a pale reflector of the former’s light; on a deeper level, this alludes to the depth of the bond between the greatest of

teachers and the most devoted of disciples. As the moon has no luminance of its own but receives all of its light from the sun, so had Joshua completely abnegated his self to his master, so that everything he was and had derived from Moses.

135 Ibid.

For Moses to bless Joshua was not to empower Joshua with something that was not himself: Joshua's entire self was Moses. Armed with Moses' blessing, Joshua was truly and fully "on his own"—this was his essence and self, rather than something imposed on him from without.¹³⁶

Thus it was Joshua, who had successfully negotiated the arena of true and independent choice, who led the people of Israel into the land of Canaan. For the conquest of Canaan and its transformation into a "Holy Land" represents man's entry into a place where there are no clear-cut divine directives to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, and his independent discovery of how to sanctify this environment as a home for G-d.

The Doorway of Choice

And when Moses would enter the Sanctuary to speak with [G-d], he would hear the voice speaking to him from above the cover of the Ark of Testimony, from between the two kruvim; and it spoke to him [only]. Numbers 7:89

One might think that this (the fact that only Moses heard the voice of G-d) was because the voice was low. So the verse stresses that it was "the voice"—the same voice that spoke to him at Sinai. But when it reached the doorway it stopped, and did not extend outside of the Sanctuary. Rashi, *ibid.*

A basic tenet of the Jewish faith is that man has been granted the freedom to choose between good and evil, between adherence

to his divinely ordained mission in life and rebellion against, or even denial of, his Creator. 137

136 Talmud, Bava Batra 75a; Rashi on Numbers 27:20.

137 Sefer HaSichot 5749, vol. II, pp. 536-540.

As Maimonides writes, "Were G-d to decree that a person be righteous or wicked, or if there were to exist something in the essence of a person's nature which would compel him toward a specific path, a specific conviction, a specific character trait or a specific deed...how could G d command us through the prophets 'do this' and 'do not do this,' 'improve your ways' and 'do not follow your wickedness'...? What place would the entire Torah have? And by what measure of justice would G-D punish the wicked and reward the righteous...?"

This is the deeper significance of the divine voice's "short stop" at the doorway of the Sanctuary. At Sinai, the words "I Am G-d your G-d" resounded throughout the universe, permeating every creature and creation. 138 At that moment, there was no possibility of doubt in G-d's reality or of nonconformity to His will.139 But then the world fell silent, and the voice retreated to hover about the "Ark of Testimony" that contains G-d's Torah and confine itself to the four walls of the Sanctuary that houses it.

138 Midrash Rabba, Shmot 5:9-10; see An Absorbant World, WIR vol. III no. 49

139 Indeed, for this reason our sages have said that we were, in effect, 'forced' to accept the Torah: what other option was there in face of a divine revelation of such magnitude? It is only when we reiterated our commitment under conditions of divine self-concealment that this potential 'contest' on our

covenant with G-d was refuted (Talmud, Shabbat 88a, as per Torah Ohr, Esther 98d; see The Thousand Year Difference, WIR vol. III no. 28).

The volume was not lowered—the voice is no less infinite and omnipotent than it was at Sinai. One who enters the Sanctuary hears a voice that penetrates and permeates all, a voice that knows no bounds or equivocations. But one can choose to remain outside of the domain of Torah, to deny himself the knowledge and the way of life in which G-d makes Himself heard. One can choose to remain outside, in the field of G-d's self-imposed silence. It is this choice that creates the challenge of life, making our every moral victory a true and significant achievement. 140

140 Likkutei Sichot, vol XIII p. 22-23. Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Naso 5725

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THE NUMEROLOGY OF REDEMPTION

And G-d called to him from the thornbush: "Moses! Moses!" And he said: "Here I am."

...And G-d said: "I have seen the suffering of My people... Go, now, I shall send you to Pharaoh, and you will take My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

And Moses said to G-d: "Who am I, that I might go to Pharaoh, and that I might take the children of Israel out of Egypt? ... Please, my Lord, send by the hand of he whom You will send."
Exodus 3:4-4:13

"Send by the hand of he whom You will send"—by the hand of Moshiach, who is destined to be revealed. Midrash Lekach Tov on Exodus 4:13

Our sages state that "the first redeemer, he is the final redeemer."¹⁶⁰ This is not to say that Moses, who delivered the Jewish people from their first exile, and Moshiach, who will bring about the final redemption, are the same person. Moses was from the tribe of Levi, while Moshiach is identified as a descendent of King David,¹⁶¹ from the tribe of Judah. Rather, it means that the redemption achieved by Moses is the source for the redemption by Moshiach.

The purpose of the Exodus, as G-d told Moses when He revealed Himself to him in the burning bush, was that "when you take this nation out of Egypt, you will serve G-d at this mountain"¹⁶²—that the Jewish people should receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. The final redemption represents the full and ultimate implementation of the Torah, G-d's "blueprint for creation," in the world. Thus, "the first redeemer, he is the final redeemer"—Moses' Torah is the essence of Moshiach's

perfect world.¹⁶³

160 Cf. Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 2:4; Zohar, part I, 253a; Shaar HaPesukim L'HaAriZal, Vayechi; Torah Or, Mishpatim 75b.

161 Isaiah 11:1; Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings, 11:5; et al.

162 Exodus 3:12.

163 Midrash Rabbah, Bereishit 1:2.

Yet when Moses begged that G-d send Moshiach and make the Exodus the first and final redemption, G-d did not accept his plea. First the Jewish people must be taken out of Egypt and given the Torah—a task that only Moses can achieve. Then they can embark on their mission to “perfect the world as the kingdom of G-d” ¹⁶⁴ via the Torah, until its ultimate realization through Moshiach. Two Shades of One :

The relationship between Moses and Moshiach is reflected in the numerical value of their names. (In the Holy Tongue every letter is also a number, so that a word is also a string of numbers; the sum of these numbers is the word's numerical value, or gematria. The gematria of a word represents a deeper stratum of significance than its linguistic meaning, so the fact that two different words have the same numerical value indicates that they are variant expressions of the same truth.) The numerical value of “Moshe” (Moses) is 345, ¹⁶⁵ and that of “Moshiach,” 358 ¹⁶⁶ So the difference between Moses and Moshiach is represented by the number 13; otherwise stated, Moses plus 13 makes Moshiach. ¹⁶⁷

164 Siddur, Aleinu prayer.

165 Mem=40, shin=300, hei=5.

166 Mem=40, shin=300, yud=10, chet=8.

167 The same concept is also expressed in the verse "The scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh will come." The gematria of "Shiloh," an appellation of Moshiach, is 345, expressing the idea that "the first redeemer, he is the final redeemer." The word yavo ("will come") has a numerical value of 13, so that the words yavo Shiloh ("Shiloh will come") equal 358, the gematria of "Moshiach."

Thirteen is the numerical value of echad,¹⁶⁸ a word that is the keystone of the Jewish faith. Every morning and evening of his life, the Jew recites the verse Shema Yisrael, Ado-nai Elo-hei-nu, Ado-nai echad—"Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is echad."¹⁶⁹

The Jewish people are called "an echad nation on earth" because they reveal the echad of G-d in the world.¹⁷⁰ And the era of Moshiach is described as "the day that G-d will be echad, and His name echad."¹⁷¹

Echad means "one." The Shema proclaims the oneness and unity of G-d, which the people of Israel are charged to reveal in the world, and which will be fully manifest in the era of Moshiach. But is echad the ideal word to express the divine unity? Like its English equivalent, the word does not preclude the existence of other objects (as in the sequence "one, two, three..."), nor does it preclude its object being composed of parts (we speak of "one nation," "one forest," "one person" and "one tree," despite the fact that each of these consists of many units or components). It would seem that the term yachid, which means "singular" and "only one," more clearly expresses the "perfect simplicity"¹⁴ of G-d and the axiom that "there is none else beside Him."

168 Alef=1, chet=8, daled=4.

169 Deuteronomy 6:4.

170 Siddur, Amidah for Shabbat afternoon; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, ch. 9.

171 Zechariah 14:9.

Chassidic teaching explains that, on the contrary, echad represents a deeper unity than yachid.¹⁷² Yachid is a oneness that cannot tolerate plurality—if another being or element is introduced into the equation, the yachid is no longer yachid. Echad, on the other hand, represents the fusion of diverse elements into an harmonious whole. The oneness of echad is not undermined by plurality; indeed, it employs plurality as the ingredients of unity.

As one Chassidic thinker once put it, G-d did not have to create a world to be yachid. He was singularly and exclusively one before the world was created, and remains so after the fact.¹⁷³ It was to express His echad-ness that He created the world, created man, granted him freedom of choice, and commanded him the Torah. He created existences that, at least in their own perception, are distinct of Him, and gave them the tools to bring their lives into utter harmony with His will. When a diverse and plural world chooses, by its own initiative, to unite with Him, the divine oneness assumes a new, deeper expression—G-d is echad.¹⁷⁴

171 I.e., the fact that there are no parts, components or aspects to His being (The Second Principle, Maimonides' introduction to Perek Chelek; Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Fundamentals of Torah, 1:7).

172 Deuteronomy 4:35

173 "Prior to the world's creation, He was one alone, singular and unique, filling all the 'space' in which He created the

world. Now, too, this remains the true reality... The change is only from the perspective of those who receive the life and light emanating from Him, which they receive via many 'garments' which conceal and obscure His light"—Tanya, ch. 36.

174 This is expressed in the three letters/numbers that comprise the word *Echad*—*alef, chet, daled*, or 1, 8, 4: that the oneness of G-d be made to pervade the “seven heavens and the earth” (8) and the four points of the compass.

The Limits of Revelation

Moses plus echad equals Moshiach.

Moses revealed the divine wisdom and will to man. But this was a revelation, a burst of light from Above. It was not something the world understood or agreed with, but something imposed upon it by the force of a higher truth. It was a display of the divine *yachid*, of the exclusive, all-obliterating reality of G-d.

Moses wanted that G-d should send Moshiach to take the Jewish people out of Egypt—that the Exodus should lead to the inculcation of the divine echad in the world. But an echad—oneness, by definition, must come from below, when a diverse world chooses, by its own initiative, to merge into an integral whole. Moses could provide the key, the formula—but the process had to unfold in the course of the thirty-three centuries in which the world absorbed the divine truth and implemented the divine will.

In the words of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: “The era of Moshiach ... is the culmination and fulfillment of the creation of our world—it is to this end that it was created... In the future [world of Moshiach], the light of G-d will be revealed without any obscuring garment, as it is written: ‘No longer shall your Master be shrouded; your eyes shall behold your Master’ 175.

“A semblance of this was already experienced on earth at the time that the Torah was given, as it is written: “You have been shown to know that the L-rd He is G-d, there is none else beside Him”¹⁷⁶ ... [But] then their existence was literally nullified by the revelation, as our sages have said, ‘With each utterance [the people of Israel heard from G-d at Mount Sinai], their souls flew from their bodies...’¹⁷⁷ Yet in the end of days the body and the world will be refined, and will be able to receive the revelation of the divine light ... via the Torah.”¹⁷⁸

Based on an address by the Rebbe, Passover 5729 (1969) 179

175 Isaiah 30:20.

176 Deuteronomy 4:35.

177 Talmud, Shabbat 88b.

178 Tanya, loc. cit.

179 Likkutei Sichot, vol. XI, pp. 8-13.

THREE SOURCES OF MOSHIACH

And Bilaam said to Balak: “...Come, let me advise you what this people shall do to your people in the end of days.... I see it, but not now; I behold it, but it is not near. A star shall go forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall arise from Israel; he will conquer the ends of Moab, and rule all the children of Seth.... And Israel shall be valiant... Numbers 24:12-17

The prophets of Israel describe a future in which a great leader shall arise in Israel, awaken his people to return to G-d, restore them to their homeland, rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and bring about an age of

universal enlightenment, harmony and perfection. As Maimonides describes it, "In those days there will be no hunger or war, no jealousy or rivalry; for... the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d."1

The coming of Moshiach is also referred to, though less explicitly, in the Torah proper-the Five Books of Moses. Thus Maimonides writes: "Whoever does not believe in him, or does not anticipate his coming, not only denies the other prophets – he also denies the Torah and Moses our Teacher."2 Maimonides goes on to cite three instances in which the Torah itself speaks of the Messianic Redemption:

1. a) Deuteronomy 30:1-10: "And the L-rd your G-d ... will return and gather you from all the nations amongst whom [He] has scattered you. If you are dispersed to the ends of the heavens, from there will the L-rd your G-d gather you, from there He will take you. [He] will bring you into the Land which your fathers have possessed and you will possess it, and he will do you good and multiply you, more than your fathers. [He] will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children, to love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul... G-d will again rejoice over you as He rejoiced over your fathers, for you shall hearken to the voice of the L-rd your G-d, to keep His commandments and statutes which are written in this book of the Torah."
2. b) Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings, 12:5.
3. b) Numbers 24:17-19: "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but he is not near. A star shall come forth from Jacob, and a ruler shall arise from Israel; he will conquer the ends of Moab, and rule all the children of Seth... And Israel shall be valiant..."
4. c) In Deuteronomy 19, the Torah commands to set aside "cities of refuge" to serve as a place of exile for "one who shall unintentionally kill his fellow." Then the Torah adds: "And when G-d shall broaden your borders ...

and give you the entire land that He promised to give to your forefathers -for you shall keep all these commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the L-rd your G-d and walk in His ways forever-then you shall add another three cities..." Maimonides notes that, "This never yet came to pass, and G-d did not command it in vain" – so that here we have a further reference in the Torah to the Messianic Era, when "the entire land that He promised to give to your forefathers" shall be given to the Jewish people. 180

These three "proofs" are all necessary, for they establish three principles that are fundamental to the Jewish concept of Moshiach: the redemption of Israel, the person of Moshiach, and the integrity of Torah.

180 In the covenant He made with Abraham, G-d promised: "To your descendants I shall give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." These borders include lands never conquered or settled by the people of Israel throughout their history.

The first citation, from the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, contains the most explicit reference to the final Redemption in the Five Books of Moses. However, there is no mention there of the person of Moshiach as the divine agent of its realization. From these verses alone we can only infer that there will be a redemption (Israel's return to G-d, their restoration to their homeland, etc.), but not that a human leader will bring it about.

Yet the Jew's belief in Moshiach is not in some abstract "historical process" by which the world progresses to perfection, but that "There will arise a king from the house of David, who studies the Torah and fulfills its precepts as David his ancestor ... and he will prevail upon all of

Israel to follow it and repair its breaches, wage the battle of G-d ... build the Holy Temple on its site, gather the dispersed of Israel ... [and] rectify the entire world to serve G-d together.”⁴ While many of the prophets speak explicitly of the person of Moshiach, Maimonides wishes to show that this principle is also contained in the Torah itself. It is for this purpose that he cites his second proof, from Numbers 181.

Moshiach and the Mitzvot

Moshiach achieves many great things: he liberates the people of Israel and restores their true independence and sovereignty; he teaches the divine wisdom of Torah, illuminating the intricacies of the human soul and the divine essence of all reality; he is a prophet of the highest order, communicating the word of G-d to man. But the most important thing that Moshiach does is to bring about the perfect and absolute implementation of the entire body of mitzvot, the divine commandments of the Torah, in the world.

⁴181 Mishneh Torah, *ibid.*, 11:4.

Today, we are capable of achieving only a very limited actualization of the divine program for life. More than half of the Torah's commandments (343 out of a total of 613) can be observed only when the Holy Temple is standing in Jerusalem and/or when the entire community of Israel resides in the Holy Land. And even the Mitzvot that we can observe in our current state of galut (exile) are but pale “models” of the real thing, for the divine commandments can be optimally fulfilled only in a post-redemption of Israel.¹⁸²

Furthermore, while we might do everything in our power to fulfill the Mitzvot that are available to us today, we are daily confronted with a world that is still at odds with the will of its Creator. The Torah commands, “Do not kill,” yet people are killing each other all over the world; the Torah

commands, "Love your fellow as yourself" "Honor your father and your mother," "Remember the day of Shabbat to sanctify it," and "Do not cook a kid in its mother's milk," yet a great portion of those to whom these commands are addressed are indifferent to, or even ignorant of them.

In our present-day reality, the Torah seems more like a "religion" or an "ideal," than the cardinal law of reality. So the coming of Moshiach, the man who brings about the universal commitment to the divine law, is not just another event predicted by the Torah or another of its concepts and principles; it is the validation of the very essence of Torah as the divine blueprint for life – as the ultimate description of what the world can, ought to, and inevitably will, be.

182 The Midrash goes so far as to consider the mitzvot observed in galut as mere "reminders" for the true mitzvot, those observed in the Holy Land. Quoting the prophet Jeremiah, "Set for yourself markers" (Jeremiah 31:20), it says: "

This is the significance of Maimonides' third source for Moshiach in the Torah. When the Torah commands us to add three "cities of refuge" upon establishing Jewish sovereignty over the entirety of the Promised Land, it is not only predicting the future Redemption, but also stating that the advent of Moshiach is required for the implementation of a divine command. Here is an example of a mitzvah, commanded by G-d at Sinai, whose conditions for fulfillment have never existed, and will exist only upon the arrival of Moshiach.

These verses establish the third principle that is fundamental to the Jew's belief in Moshiach: that the Torah's commandments are the ultimate blueprint for life on earth, and that there will come a day when the divine plan for creation will be fully realized in our world. For certainly, as Maimonides puts it, "G-d did not command it in vain."

Based on talks by the Rebbe in the summers of 5738 (1978) and 5746 (1986) and on Shavuot of 5751. 183

183 Likkutei Sichot, vol. 34, Shoftim (5749); Sefer HaSichot 5751, pp. 574-576.

THE MOSHIACH ERA

“ It should be proclaimed and publicized that we are living in a special time, when only one solitary thing remains to be done “Stand ready, every one of you,” for the forthcoming rebuilding of the Beis HaMirdash with the coming of David, the King Moshiach” From a talk of the Rebbe Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, 5747 , 1987.

Moses' uncompromising identification with his people, no matter to what depths they might have fallen, that ensured that each and every Jew, regardless of his spiritual station and moral circumstances, possesses, and can readily access, the “Moses” within him—his quintessential source of faith and oneness with his Creator. And his self-sacrifice for the

children of Israel remains legendary as discussed.

The sequential similarity of the first redemption from Egypt and the last redemption in our days is as explicit as the similarities between Moses and Moshiach and between the miracles of the exodus and the wonders of the final geulah (redemption). These two redemptions are one, for the redemption from Egypt was the beginning of a process, and our redemption is the end. Therefore, the prophet connects them, pledging the "Like the days of your coming out of the land of Egypt will I show the nation marvelous things" (Michah 7:15). Similarly, "The first redeemer is the final redeemer" (Shemos Rabbah 2:4). So too, When G-D promised, "I will surely bring you up again (from Egypt)" (Gen 46:4). By repeating the verb bring up, once for the redemption from Egypt and once for the future redemption. Conversely, Even in the messianic era, we will recall the liberation from Egypt. 184

184 Talmud Berachos 12b

the Arizal is of the opinion the generation of the footsteps of Mashiah (Ikvesa Dimeshicha) a reincarnation of the generation of the wilderness. 185

The Chasam Sofer writes; Just as Moses our Teacher, the first redeemer, reached eighty but still did not know or sense that he would redeem Israel... so will it be with the final redeemer... And when the time comes, G-D will reveal Himself to him, and the spirit of Moshiach, which has been hidden in the higher worlds until his coming, will light upon him. The Tzaddik himself does not realize. However, when, please G-D, the time comes, G-D will reveal Himself to him as he did to Moses in the bush. 186

The eminent Rabbi Yisreal Salanter once explained "The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog" as follows.

A dog by nature runs ahead of its master, always turning around to see where he heading, whatever that direction may be, the dog arrives there first. Now in common Hebrew and Yiddish parlance, the phrase Pnei Hador " the face of the generation" signifies those who are supposed to be the leaders of the generation. In our time, however, on the eve of the Redemption, these ostensible leaders merely look around to see where their congregates would like to head, and they run there first... This statement is addresses the ordinary Rabbi. 187

185 Menachem M Brod. Days of Moshiach (Chabad Youyh Org. 1993) p 122

186 Likkutm, responsa Choshen Mishpat, ch. 98

187 Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. VII, p59

The Rebbes Rabbi M. M. Schneerson legendary leadership has inspired Jews from every corner of the world from Yemen to the physical devastation of Europe to the spiritual devastation of Russia in every walk of life from the intellectual to the simple Jew, all continue look to the Rebbe to their guidance and inspiration.

The Jewish people have been challenged over that last 1900 years in many ways just as Moses realized the hardship that the Jewish nation will have to go thou and pleaded with G-D to allow him to enter the land of Israel as there will be no more exiles if he was permitted to enter the land of Israel. The Rebbe has taken the Jewish people out of our apathy and indifference and has said " we must welcome Moshiach with acts of goodness and kindness". The Rebbes pioneering vision from Israel policy not to trade land for peace, to his prophetic regarding the former USSR and everyday matters over the last century can provide us with a taste as to what it will be like when Moshiach will fill the world with the divine light.

The day the Rebbe became head of Chabad Lubavitch 10 day of Shevat 5711 1951 he presented his first Chassidic Discourse " behold, this is what is demanded of every one of us, the seventh generation... For although we are not the seventh generation by choice, and it has not resulted from our efforts- and in certain aspects, it is perhaps are beloved. We find ourselves at the end of Ikvesa Dimeshicha, (Footsteps of Moshiach) and we must finish drawing down the Shechinah (divine light)- and not just the Shechinah but the essence of the Shechinah- into the lower worlds." Sefer HaMa'amarim, Basi LeGani 5711.

In these few lines, the Rebbe summarizes the objective of our generation. We did not choose to be in this generation., and had we been asked, perhaps we would not even have wanted to be here, but it is a fact we are living through the conclusion of Ikvesa Dimeshicha, (Footsteps of Moshiach) and we must complete the dwelling of the Shechinah in this world and bring Geulah (redemption).

All the Rebbe's actions in the last fifty-two years have served this purpose. He has turned to every Jew the world over, lest anyone be unprepared for redemption. The Rebbe emphasizes repeatedly, "It depends on us" The more we prepare, and the more we expedite the dissemination of the light of Torah and Mitzvos, the faster and easier redemption will be.

As far back as in the times of the Talmud our Sages taught the "all the appointed times have passed" How much more of must this be today, after all the divine service of our people throughout this long and bitter exile, for over 1900 years. Moshiach must most certainly come immediately" The rebbe Shaboss Vayechi, 5751 (1990)

Over the years, the Rebbe's proclamations have become more explicit, slowly raising expectations and awareness of Moshiach and redemption. The Rebbe leaves no room for doubt he

speaks about redemption as a concrete reality that has already begun.

What is the core of the Rebbe's message, that Moshiach coming should not be regarded as a dream of the future, but as a cogent factor that influences the way we live our lives today: moreover, that living one's life in this manner will actually bring about the fulfillment of these promises?

Our sages point to Moshiach and redemption as the ultimate purpose for the creation of the world. For G-D created the world in order that he have "a dwelling place among mortals" and this goal will be realized in the Era of redemption. 188

However, G-D desired that mortals themselves should fashion this dwelling, for man has a natural tendency to appreciate the fruits of his own labors. If instead this dwelling were to be granted as gift from above. For centuries the Jewish people have been consciously or unconsciously constructing G-D's dwelling, and now it is emerging before our very eyes.

To explain by means of an analogy, a builder is hired to build a complex mansion, from the moment he designs it, and throughout the building process, a clear picture of the final structure remain intact before his minds eye. His workers may monetarily lose sight of the goal, yet ultimately, as it takes shape they begin to envisage the edifice that their own hands are transforming from a blueprint into a reality. And as it progresses, the building itself shows its builders the goal of their endeavors

188 Touger Eliyahu, Sound the Great Shofer (Kehot Publication NY USA 1992)p12

In our generation, at last the Jewish people can begin to see the edifice, G-D's dwelling, which has been constructed by our actions and divine service throughout the period of exile, and

which will be consummated by the coming of Moshiach.

Our Sages 189 describe Moshiach as waiting anxiously to come. In previous generations, however his coming was prevented by the fact that the Jews had not completed the tasks expected of them. At present, however those tasks have been accomplished, there is nothing lacking. All we have to do is accept Moshiach.

This is the challenge facing our generation. To make the world conscious so Moshiach, and create an environment that will allow his mission to be fulfilled. Every element of our study of the Torah and our observance of its Mitzvots should be permeated by this objective, and directed towards it.

189 Friedman Alter .Eliyahu, from Exile to redemption (Brooklyn, New York, Kehot Publication Society. 1992) p1

Chapter Five and Summary

Chapter Five

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

SUMMARY

In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition. Maimonides Laws of Kings 12: 5

The Jewish people and indeed, the world at large will join together in bonds of love and unity. An awareness of G-Ds transcendental oneness will pervade all existence and this will produce a higher and more inclusive conception of unity than is possible at present.

In our present era, unity involves people of differing natures

joining together, as the diverse limbs of the body function together as part of a single unit, so too, unity can be established between different individuals 190. Nevertheless, such bind does not raise a person above his individual identity entirely. On the contrary, his very awareness of self has to be employed in his efforts to unite with others.

In contrast, the transcendent unity of the Era of the Redemption will raise every individual above the limited horizons of his personal identity, "for the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-Ds as the waters cover the ocean bed". 191

190 Likkutei Torah, Paeshas Nitzavim 87a.

191 Rambam Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachhim 12:5

The verse employs this simile to express the following concept. A vast multitude of creatures inhabit the ocean, nevertheless what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains.

Similarly, in the Era of redemption, individual created beings will lose consciousness of their separate identities, for they will be suffused with an awe inspiring knowledge of G-d. The unity that will be established between individual entities will thus be of a higher and more consummate nature. We should anticipate these concepts in our own present conduct. Since we are on the threshold of the redemption, it is now possible to appreciate a foretaste of the spiritual awareness to be achieved in the era, and to apply it in our daily lives.

We are at the pinnacle of Jewish history, just as Moses was when he redeemed the Jewish people from Egypt, we should take inspiration from the rabbi's that lead and the Rebbe that has guided us to believe that Moshiach and G-d are reality.

The very next moment can be the last moment of exile, and the moment, which follows, the first moment of redemption. Our energies must be directed to “ opening our eyes” appreciating the redemption and living our live in its spirit.

Our sages describe every person as an entire world, and the world as a personality in macrocosm. Conceiving of ourselves as a world. i.e., multifaceted and multi dimensional, enables us to develop harmony between and within the different aspects of our beings.

Conversely, viewing the world as a macrocosm of man also provides us with constructive insights. Just as an inner sense of spiritual purpose is the key to an individual’s success and happiness, so too the world at large will thrive from gaining awareness of its spiritual purpose.

The world was created solely for Moshiach, our sages tell us, more specifically, that G-D created the world because He desired a dwelling among mortals. Living with the redemption on a conceptual level, learning about the ideals which G-D envisions for our world, and integrating these principles in our lives, can serve as a trim tab for every individual, channeling the direction of global change. By anticipating the redemption in our minds and lives, we can precipitate its coming.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

At some point in our lives, many of us have shared a relationship with a parent, teacher, or employer, which deeply affected us. That person had high standards, he stood for something and invited others to stand with him.

He was demanding, he never gave in and never accepted mediocre performance. But he also never gave up, and constantly communicated high expectations and the trust that we could

meet them, trust and confidence empowered us.

When we look up to someone with well earned respect and feel that he genuinely knows us and believes in us, it is natural to want to live up to his expectations, with a pride that goes much deeper than self, we apply ourselves to the tasks before us, for our goal is not merely to earn reward, but to give shape and form to the ideal we share.

The scarcity of genuine leadership is a source of concern in politics, business and culture. Many have complained that America is over managed and under led. They indict the individuals at the heads of our organizations for being far too concerned with the bottom line, for trying to maintain a structure that produces a favorable annual report, instead of desiring to inspire creative change.

True leadership requires vision. People can be forced into following, but even while that control is enforced, negative feelings will be aroused, for humans have a natural tendency to resist coercion.

Genuine leadership must inspire people with a long-term vision that gives meaning to their efforts. It must point them in a new direction, endow them with deeper understanding and higher aspirations, and show how their actions form an indispensable part of a purposeful whole. It is important to emphasize the difference between inspiration and demagoguery. A demagogue can get people excited, but he speaks about unrealistic expectations, the vision with which a genuine leader inspires others, by contrast rings true. Like an idea, which makes a listener, say: "Aha I always understood that, but never had words for it" a leader's vision touches a chord within the inner self of others.

We must live with that ideal in our times, finding a person that will inspire us, when a leader can not be found we must become leader our self, meaning to emulate great leader's of

the past like Moses and Maimonides. Moshiach teachings will inspire a series of real changes in our approach to life. As people throughout the world become aware of his message, they will desire to take part in spreading the atmosphere of spiritual purpose, knowledge and peace. This will create a bridge between the ideal and the actual, allowing mankind to create an environment appropriate for a world that is G-D's dwelling.

There is no alternative. There is no way that we can develop a perfect society without perfecting people, we must refine our characters. Leaders whose personal example and leadership will inspire others to make such changes within themselves, and within their environment. Each and every one of us possesses an ability to lead in our daily life.

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**102nd Congress of the United States of
America**

March 5, 1991

Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded;

Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws;

Whereas without these ethical values and principles the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning

to chaos;

Whereas society is profoundly concerned with the recent weakening of these principles that has resulted in crises that beleaguer and threaten the fabric of civilized society;

Whereas the justified preoccupation with these crises must not let the citizens of this Nation lose sight of their responsibility to transmit these historical ethical values from our distinguished past to the generations of the future;

Whereas the Lubavitch movement has fostered and promoted these ethical values and principles throughout the world;

Whereas Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch movement, is universally respected and revered and his eighty-ninth birthday falls on March 26, 1991;

Whereas in tribute to this great spiritual leader, "the Rebbe," this, his ninetieth year will be seen as one of "education and giving," the year in which we turn to education and charity to return the world to the moral and ethical values contained in the Seven Noahide Laws; and

Whereas this will be reflected in an international scroll of honor signed by the President of the United States and other heads of state: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That March 26, 1991, the start of the ninetieth year of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the worldwide Lubavitch movement, is designated as Education Day U.S.A The President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved March 20, 1991.

Signed by George Bush,

A Moral Code to Unite Mankind

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A Moral Code to Unite All Mankind

From a 1990 Address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

By the Grace of G-d

We find ourselves now at a turning point in history. Changes have swept the world as dissolving repressive regimes have given way to a climate of increased moral consciousness. It is thus an appropriate time to reflect upon the dynamics of these changes and thereby draw encouragement and guidance to affect them fully. In explaining the purpose of Creation, our sages say that G-d, the Essence of all good, created the world as a result of His desire to do good. As it says in Psalms 145, "The L-rd is good to all, and His mercies are over all his works." For as it is the nature of good to do good unto others, the creation of the universe was a Divine expression of goodness. In this way, the universe and all life are recipients and objects of Divine goodness.

Hence, everything that occurs in the world, even the apparent bad, such as natural disasters, must ultimately have redeeming

good. Similarly, the negative inclination within human beings, who essentially desire to do good, is but a “mechanism” by G-d’s design, to establish free choice. For had G-d created a world that is totally and exclusively good, without any efforts on the part of mankind to achieve it, there would be no or little appreciation of goodness. In light of this, it is important to realize that in the individual’s struggle with evil, within the world at large or within one’s self; the approach should not be one of confrontation. Rather, by emphasizing that which is good in people and in the world, and by bringing the positive to the fore, the evil is superseded by the good, until it eventually disappears.

Although G-d created the world giving people free choice, He nevertheless has given us the tools and the guidance we need to encourage us to choose the good: a Divine moral code, one that predates all human codes, and the only one that has timeless and universal application for a good, moral civilization. This Divine code, known as the Seven Laws of Noah, establishes an objective definition of “good” – one that applies to all people. For as recent history has proven, a morality that is based on human ideas of good, is relative, subjective and essentially not persuasive. Furthermore, as is abundantly clear to educators and law-enforcement agents, neither intimidation nor threat of punishment can foster a deep sense of moral obligation. This can only come from the knowledge – through education, that there is an “Eye that sees and an Ear that hears” to Whom we are all accountable.

The Noahide Code of seven basic Divine laws was given to Noah and his children after the deluge. These laws would assure Noah and his children, the forebears of the new human race, that humanity would not degenerate into a jungle again. The laws, which command the establishment of courts of justice and prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, homicide, incest, robbery, and eating the limb of a live animal (cruelty to animals), are the foundation of all morality. And they extend, by laws derived

from these, into all aspects of moral behavior.

A particular task [is] to educate and to encourage the observance of the Seven Laws among all people. The religious tolerance of today, and the trend towards greater freedom, gives us the unique opportunity to enhance widespread observance of these laws. For it is by adherence to these laws, which are in and of themselves an _expression of Divine goodness, that all humankind is united and bound by a common moral responsibility to our Creator. This unity promotes peace and harmony among all people, thereby achieving the ultimate good. As the Psalmist said: "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity."

Quoted in full as printed in Lubavitch International, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Summer 1990), p. 3.

The Rebbe speaks on Noahide

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The Rebbe speaks on Noahide

11 Nissan 5743 -1983

Every Jew has the obligation to ensure that all the peoples of the world observe the Seven Noahide Laws. Although this task seems awesomely difficult, especially in this troubled time of exile, a true story concerning a Jewish yacht owner teaches that a Jew's actions have far-reaching influence, and the effect of even a single deed is immeasurable.

The mission and purpose in life of the Jew is to make this world a dwelling place for G-d. The world, which seems to run according to its own natural laws, is not independent. It has a Creator, Who has not left it unattended. G-d is on earth as He is in heaven.

The Jew, through his service to G-d, demonstrates that the spiritual and the physical can be brought together. The mundane can be sanctified, and everyday life can become holy. G-d dwells in the world.

The Seven Noahide Laws

An integral component of the Jew's task is to see to it that all peoples, not just Jews, acknowledge G-d as Creator and ruler of the world. The world, we are told, "was not created for chaos, but that it be inhabited." A chaotic world results when there are no absolute criteria by which man lives, when morals and ethics are based solely on man's understanding. Man is swayed by interests other than reason and justice; and we have only too recently seen the destruction which results when laws and philosophy are perverted to serve personal ends.

G-d, the Creator of the world, has not abandoned His handiwork, but has given clear guidance how the world can be made "inhabited," settled and productive, decent and enduring. The nations of the world have been given a Divine code of conduct, the Seven Noachide Laws, which consist of six prohibitions against murder, robbery, idolatry, adultery, blasphemy, cruelty to animals – and one positive command, to establish a judicial system. These Seven Noachide Laws are general statements, which, with their ramifications and extensions, encompass countless details.

The reason these Seven Laws are to be observed is also important. The Rambam rules (Code, Kings 8:11) that the Sons of Noach (i.e. all humanity) must observe these Laws because "G-d commanded them in the Torah and informed us through Moshe that the Sons of Noach had already been so commanded." A non-Jew conducts himself in consonance with the Seven Laws not

because human logic compels him to do so, but because they are G-d's commands transmitted through Moshe. This ensures that self-interest will never be allowed to pervert the Divine criteria of conduct.

It is through the observance of the Seven Noachide Laws that the entire world becomes a decent, productive place, a fitting receptacle for the Divine. Then, promises Scripture, "the glory of the L-rd will be revealed and all flesh together will see that the mouth of the L-rd has spoken." The culmination of this will be the Messianic epoch, when, through the agency of Mashiach, "all will call in the Name of the L-rd and serve Him with a common consent."

Jew's Role in World

The Jew has a crucial role to play in this. He cannot be a bystander, remaining aloof from the world's conduct. The Rambam explicitly rules (Code, Kings 8:10): "Moshe Rabbeinu commanded from the mouth of G-d to convince all the inhabitants of the world to observe the commandments given to the children of Noach." It is the Jew's duty to see to it that all peoples lead the righteous and decent life which comes from compliance with the Seven Noahide Laws.

Not only is it a Jew's duty because he has been so commanded by G-d, but it is also to his own benefit. A world full of "chaos," where nations and individuals live by no law except that dictated by self-interest, must inevitably affect the Jew. And, as noted above, the universal observance of the Seven Noahide Laws is the prelude to the Messianic era when all will serve G-d together.

Yet the task seems immense, beyond a Jew's capabilities. All Jews together are but a tiny minority among the nations of the world. How can Jews influence non-Jews to acknowledge G-d and observe the Seven Noahide Laws?

But it can be done. Even one action can have far-reaching consequences, ever widening ripples, until the cumulative

effect of many such individual actions produces a mighty storm.

Lesson from a Story

A story. A true story which happened only recently, which illustrates just such a ripple effect. A story of a Jew, who unknowingly started a chain of events of which he could not even dream.

A Jew blessed by G-d with great wealth, who likes to take an occasional vacation on his yacht. He employs a captain, a non-Jew, to sail the yacht.

The time for prayer arrives. He knows that Jews face towards the holy city of Yerushalayim during Shemoneh Esreh, towards the east. He is not a nautical man. He does not know where east is on the ocean. He asks the captain.

Prayer time again. Again the same problem, where is east. Again he asks the captain. And so with the third prayer time, and the fourth.

The first time he asks, the captain pays no special attention. When the owner keeps on asking the same question from time to time, the captain becomes curious. His employer is not the navigator. Why is he always interested in knowing where east is? He asks him.

The Jew is not ashamed of his religion. "I am a Jew," he answers, "and I want to pray to G-d. Prayers pass through the site of the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. I must therefore face in that direction, which in this part of the world is east. Every time I pray I thus need to know where east is."

The captain is greatly impressed. This is a successful man, he thinks, wealthy enough to own his own yacht and hire a captain to sail it. Yet he considers it proper and right to interrupt his affairs to pray to G-d – and to even bother to face the correct direction. "I too," exclaims the captain to the owner, "shall begin to think of G-d, begin to pray to Him."

The story has a sequel. Some time later the captain told the Jewish yacht owner that ever since he decided to pray to the Creator of the world, he has, at every opportunity, also told his family and friends of the necessity to pray to G-d. "If all the people of the world would think about their Creator," concluded the captain, "the world would not be the jungle it is!"

The lesson from this story is clear: A Jew can influence non-Jews to acknowledge the Creator and ruler of the world, and to therefore conduct themselves accordingly by observing the Seven Noachide Laws. Moreover, as seen from the story, such influence is effective just by a Jew being proud and firm in his religion. The yacht owner did not consciously intend to fulfill the Rambam's ruling. Because he conducted himself properly, his influence was automatically felt. He could not know of the ripple effect he would cause merely by asking where was east. And because of him, a non-Jew began to think about G-d, conduct himself more righteously – and in turn, lead others in the same path. All because of one Jew's actions.

A Parable

We can go further. Nothing in this world happens by chance. All is through Divine Providence. The above episode of the yacht serves as a timely parable to a Jew's function and place in the world.

The Jew's task, we have explained above, is, through Torah, to reveal the G-dliness in the world. The "natural" laws of the world are but a mask, veils which conceal its true existence. Torah is the instrument wherewith Jews strip away these veils – and bring the world closer to G-d.

But a Jew can easily become despondent. The state of the world is not heartening. Nations do not seem to hearken to the voice of Torah, and governments, not Jews, seem to be the arbiters of the world's conduct.

The truth is different: The Jew and Torah can have influence on the world. It is only because of the darkness of the exile that it seems the governments of the world are its true arbiters.

The world in this troubled time of exile is like a ship sailing in stormy seas, steered by the governments of the world. But appearances are misleading. It is not they, with their plans and strategies, who truly determine its course and destination. What is truly important in the world, what has a permanent effect, is the Torah and mitzvos performed by the Jew. Before this all else is insignificant, unimportant. Whether the world will be in better or worse shape is in the hands of the Jew. One mitzvah, one act of bonding with G-d, has incredible repercussions – whether we are aware of it or not.

Beyond the obvious, beneath the surface, lies much, much more. The course of the world is not determined by the physical. The spiritual is what counts. The governments who actually conduct the world's affairs are not more than the captain who steers the ship on behalf of the owner. Jews are engaged in loftier things, the things which are really important, Torah and mitzvos. But it is these things which are the true determinants. The governments of the world steer the ship, the Jew charts the course.

And this is what the above story of the yacht teaches. Outwardly it seems the non-Jewish captain is the master, for it is he who controls the rudder which steers the ship. Yet it is the Jewish owner who is truly master, and it is the owner who directs the yacht's destination.

The owner of the yacht is wealthy – and “there is no wealthy person except in knowledge,” knowledge of Torah. Through Torah, the Jew can influence the world, can chart the course. Just as the yacht owner, through acting according to the dictates of Torah, influenced the captain to come closer to G-

d, so too Jews in general, through standing firm in matters of Torah and mitzvos – including the command to convince non-Jews to observe the Seven Noahide Laws – can influence the nations of the world to acknowledge the Creator and Master of the world.