

# The Evolution of G-dliness

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## The Evolution of G-dliness

Ha-Yom Harat Olam

By Eliyahu Kitov

Today is the birthday of the world; on this day He calls all the created beings of the worlds to stand in judgment. [Are we regarded] as children or as servants? If as children, have mercy upon us as a father has mercy upon [his] children; if as servants, our eyes are turned to You until You will be gracious to us and bring forth our judgment as the light, O Awesome and Holy One.

This prayer is recited after the blessing at the end of each of the three special sections of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf prayer.

We mention the world's Creation to remind ourselves that Rosh Hashanah is a day of renewal. The prayer is repeated three times as an allusion to the three renewals that the world has experienced: the six days of Creation, the period after the Flood, and the day of the giving of the Torah.

At the time of Creation, the world was under the dominion of Divine sovereignty – malchuyot. This changed after the Flood, when Divine providence became dominant – a trait that is symbolized by G-d's accounting of mankind's actions – zichronot. After G-d gave the Torah, the trait of Divine revelation – shofarot – was also introduced.

For the first 1,656 years after Creation, G-d treated man with the attribute of sovereignty alone. The L-rd, King of the Universe, crowned man over the lower creations; he imbued him with honor, granted him power and might, made his life long, and let him do as he wished without restraining him through precepts and obligations.

He did not give him the Torah, nor the Seven Laws of the gentiles [except by allusion], and He promised neither reward nor punishment, for those who are members of the King's household should not require any codes.

They are expected simply to live up to their greatness, retain the honor of the Kingdom, and be worthy of their high standing, by upright deeds and thoughts, as prescribed by the wisdom of their hearts.

But man was unable to stand up to the test of sovereignty. Instead of imbuing the world with grace through the mighty powers that he had been granted, he filled the whole world with greed, ugliness, and wickedness. Instead of becoming a partner of He Who created the world for him with grace and love, he became instead an associate of Satan, and used his greatness only to corrupt.

For many years G-d treated man with tolerance and patience. But when man showed that there was no chance that he would change his evil ways, the Flood came and inundated the world. It was apparent that a world based on the foundation of sovereignty alone could no longer exist. Man's instincts would always overpower him if he lived in a world without fear or worry.

Thus, G-d tempered the trait of Divine Sovereignty with the trait of Divine Providence for the next 792 years. Perhaps sovereignty together with providence would secure the world's existence.

Man would not lose his superiority with the created world but

he would have to accept a yoke of specific commandments and precepts – the Noahide laws – that would make him aware of his responsibilities, that he was acting under supervision and that he was accountable for his actions.

G-d also shortened the number of years that man would live and diminished his powers, so that even if he wished, he could not bring the world to a state of absolute corruption.

But man did not pass this second test either. Ten generations passed between Noah and Abraham – generations that defied G-d's law even though they knew what the result of their rebellion would be. Sovereignty and greatness had not sufficed to defend man against his evil instincts, and Divine providence did not suffice either.

The knowledge that he would be called upon to account for his deeds was not enough to keep man from transgression.

The world stood on the brink of a second disaster and would have been again subject to destruction, but a nation arose, of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, creating a people that would take responsibility for all of Creation and take upon itself the task of restoring honor to those who were created in G-d's image. When they accepted G-d's Torah they saved the world from being returned to void and emptiness; at Mount Sinai the world was renewed, and this time until eternity.

With their acceptance of the Torah, G-d introduced a third element to join with sovereignty and providence as manifesting His Presence in the world. This element – Divine Revelation – provided man with the ability to perceive G-d's revelation; to hear His voice speak through the Prophets; to listen to the call of conscience that would stir him to repent; to tremble in awe of the Creator when the shofar blasts would remind man to consider who he is and what he must do.

Thus, the world after Sinai stands on three pillars: the

sovereignty of G-d Who is the absolute source of all that is; the providence of G-d Who rewards and punishes man for what he does; and the revelation of G-d, the yoke of Torah, given to man with the sounds of the shofar that reverberate within him and keep him faithful to his mission.

The echoes of the shofar are always heard. At times they are strong and at times they get weaker, and then strong again. When the great Day of the L-rd comes, they shall burst forth with their full might and be heard by all mankind, as it is said (Isaiah 27:13): And it shall be on that day, a great shofar shall be sounded...

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Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, OBM, was one of Israel's most acclaimed religious authors, whose books on the Jewish way of life and the Chassidic movement have become renowned. Text translated from the Hebrew by Nachman Bulman and Dovid Landseman.

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