



# WHAT EXACTLY WAS THE NOTION BEHIND THE WORSHIP OF MOLECH - PASSING ONE'S CHILD THROUGH FLAMES? HOW WAS IT SIMILAR TO BLOOD EATING, THAT THE TORAH ADMONISHES BOTH ALMOST IDENTICALLY?

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## Parashas BeChukotai

RABBI BERNARD FOX

"And the produce of your threshing season will last until the grape harvest. And the produce of the grape harvest will last until the planting. And you have your fill of food. And you will live securely in your land." (Va Yikra 26:5)

Hashem promises Bnai Yisrael that observance of the Torah will be rewarded with a blessing of

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## Molech Worship and Blood Eating

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Maimonides states ("Guide for the Perplexed", Book III, chapter XLVI, pg. 362 Dover ed.) that certain cultures who would either eat blood or sit around a pot of blood, as they felt they would be favored by "spirits". He writes:

*"They imagined that in this manner the spirits would come to partake of the blood which was their food, whilst the idolaters were eating of the flesh; that love, brotherhood and friendship with the spirits were established because they dined with the latter; at one place and at the same time, that the spirits would appear to them in dreams, inform them of coming events, and be favorable to them."*

After Maimonides explains the origin of the Torah prohibition against eating blood, he connects this prohibition to the prohibition to serve Molech, a fire god. (I will record a few sources in a moment which depict Molech's practice.) Maimonides continues:

*"...the law emphasized the prohibition (against blood eating) in the exactly in the same terms as it emphasizes idolatry. 'I will set My face against that soul that eats blood.' (Lev. 15:10). The same language is employed in reference to him 'who gives of his seed to Molech'; 'then I will set My face against that man.' (Lev, 20:5). There is, besides idolatry and eating blood, no other sin in reference to which these words are*



An area of the Taniit precinct (or Tophet as mentioned in Jeremiah) at Salambo, Carthage. Urns held the charred remains of children that had been sacrificed to Molech.

used. For the eating of blood leads to a kind of idolatry, to the worship of spirits."

Maimonides points to a connection between eating blood and Molech. His parallel is drawn from the Torah's own language, which is almost identical in both offenses, "I will set My face against that soul that eats blood", and , "then I will set My face against that man" regarding Molech. These two verses strengthen the equation of these two offenses. Maimonides also mentions the notion of "spirits", in application to both blood eating and Molech - a further equation.

### Molech Worship

How exactly did one worship Molech? According to

Maimonides, a parent would cause his child to pass through flames without burning the child. As he states, people felt this to be a "light thing", and by doing so, the imagined they were protecting their children. A "light thing" as he puts it means no risk. Followed by, "to protect their children" clearly indicates that Maimonides held Molech worship not to cause harm to the child. Ramban (Lev. 18:21) was of the opinion that parents would actually burn their children to the point of death. He bases this on many verses. He also equates Molech to the sacrificing of children to Baal, which he concludes are one and the same practice. He points out that the admonishment used by God in reference to such vicious

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# Molech Worship and Blood Eating

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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abominations is, "(matters) that I have spoken not of, nor entered My mind." What is so significant about Molech and Baal that this sentiment is used by God?

What is the common denominator in these theories of Molech worship? What would both Maimonides and Ramban agree is the element which distinguishes Molech from all other practices?

Why is Molech referred to more harshly than idolatry, "you defiled My sanctuary and profaned My name." (Lev. 20:3) And why is this prohibition followed immediately by prohibitions to divine spirits and enchanters?

On this point, the Talmud (Sanhedrin, 64a) teaches that Molech is in fact, not classical idolatry. It derives its proof from a previous Mishna on page 53a, where it lists Torah violators who are stoned. There, it includes "idolaters, one who gives his seed to Molech, ...". The talmud proves that had Molech been a classical form of idolatry, there would be no need to isolate it. It would be subsumed under the broader category of idolatry, as is done with regards to all other forms of idolatry. But as the Mishna lists Molech separate from idolatry, the Rabbis conclude, Molech is not idolatry. So what is it?

Furthermore, the Talmud asks, "Why is Molech called 'Molech'?" The answer according to one view is that "Molech" means 'that which rules'; one violates the Torah through allowing anything to rule over him, "even a pebble, even a chip of wood." This is significant, as idolatry usually has some fixed form, some unique structure for the idol. Here, the Talmud states that the worshiped form is irrelevant. And even though one might say, "are they not worshiping fire?" It might well be that they do burn their children in fire, but perhaps

they do so, not TO the fire per se, but to an imagined deity. An intangible thing. Let's keep this last point in mind. The fact is that Ramban pointed out that both Molech and Baal incorporate child burning as their practice, so I would say that the fire was a means of worship, not the deity.

## Blood Eating

What about the other practice which Maimonides equates to Molech, that of blood eating? How did one violate it? This seems very straight forward, based on Maimonides' description. People either ate blood, or dined around a pot of blood. Both practices were based on "dining with spirits". This fits in well with the verses which immediately precede the prohibition of blood eating. First, the Torah discusses prohibition to slaughter animals on the field: (Lev. 17:4-5) "And to the opening of the Tent of Meeting he did not bring to sacrifice offerings to God, before the tabernacle of God, ...he will be cut off from the midst of his people. In order that the Children of Israel bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice in the fields, and they bring them to God." Notice how in both verses the Jews are warned to bring their sacrifices to "God". This indicates that their crime is one where they are sacrificing to 'another' imagined entity. And two verses later, "And you shall not continue anymore your sacrifices to seirim (demons) that you err after,..." This proves that the sacrifices in the fields were intended for a recipient other than God. (Keep this in mind, as I believe this to be the underlying tie between blood eating and Molech.)

Now we find after these verses addressing sacrifice, the prohibition of eating blood. What does blood eating have to do with sacrifices to the "seirim", these demons? It



The Canaanite Molech - (seated at left)

would appear that the goal is one and the same, as both, sacrifices in fields (not to God's Tabernacle), and blood eating, were meant to approach spirits as Maimonides stated earlier. According to the Ibn Ezra, (Lev. 17:7) these spirits were seen only by fools, "mishugaim". They are not real, but imagined things. Maimonides says so well, "They sacrificed to spirits, not to God. According to the explanation of our Sages, 'lo eloha' (no to God) imply the following idea: They have not only not left off worshipping things in existence; they even worship imaginary things." (ibid, pg. 363)

To summarize, Molech and blood eating share in God's "setting of His face against that person." Molech is not considered classical idolatry, it is its own category. Maimonides mentions "spirit" numerous times when equating Molech with blood eating. Blood eating immediately follows the prohibitions of sacrificing to demons.

## Two Crimes - One Flaw

I believe we already see the initial idea mentioned by Maimonides, that blood eating and Molech worship are uniquely different from other crimes. They alone deserve the response of "I will set My face against that

man...." What is the crime they both share? I would formulate it as follows: "The assumption of forces other than God." Here is where these two crimes set themselves apart from idolatry. In classical idolatry, the worshiper does not deny God, but rather, he claims a certain sub-deity or practice is a method for relating to God. In regards to the Jews who bowed to the calf, the commentators say that no one thought the calf took them out of Egypt. Also, a Rabbi pointed out that Pharaoh accepted one God, but the method of worship was through sub-deities. So too the Prophet states, "Who would not fear you, King of the nations." (Jeremiah, 10:7) Idolatry does not include the denial of the One, true God. Rather, they deviate in their approach to Him. However, blood eating and Molech worship have a different deviation; both assume a new thing called "spirits". These violators believe there may be God, but they definitely believe in other forces too.

We said that the Talmud teaches Molech to be any object one accepts to rule over himself. Meaning, it is not a physical object or statue, but a force, or spirit. Blood eating too was described by Maimonides as a wish that imagined spirits would be favorable to those worshipers who

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# Molech Worship and Blood Eating

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dined near the pot of blood. Here too, forces are imagined to exist in addition to God.

Now we understand God's response, "I will set My face against that man..." The only proper response to one who imagines other forces, is that God take the most severe action. How does God do so? The worshiper feels that by eating blood, or worshipping Molech, that his fortune will improve. This is his very motivation. But when God actually destroys his fortune, the worshiper must say to himself, "The Torah's words of destruction have come true, and my imagined forces are false, they have not saved me." The wording is that God will "set His face against that man". Meaning, there is only God, and no other. Nothing else can respond to his practices of blood eating or Molech worship, because there are no such things as spirits. The only Being Who can respond is God. The very misfortune teaches the violator that in fact, his actions are only witnessed by God, the only Witness to his actions. Nothing else is "out there", so nothing else responds.

Denying the exclusive reign God retains over the entire universe violates the central focus of Judaism. Therefore, one who violates God's unity deserves the most "focus" from God. God responds by saying, "I will turn aside from all My involvements, and I will concentrate on him." (Rashi, Lev., 17:10) A deviation of such proportion requires God's proportional "attention".

The phrase of God, "(matters) that I have spoken not of, nor

entered My mind" is used in connection with Molech. Perhaps with this phrase, God wishes to indicate that Molech worshipers assumed forces outside of what is "real". Meaning, if this practice "did not enter God's mind", God means to teach that Molech is a practice unlike idolatry. It is a practice where one forges a false reality that God did not conceive of. Idolatry assumes the real God. Molech does not.

So Molech and blood eating are not idolatry. God plays no part in the goal of the violator. In idolatry, at least one is trying to approach the true God, but his methods are corrupt. But Molech and blood eating do not have God as their aim. They worship imagined "spirits", as Maimonides states repeatedly. The verses support this idea fully; "And to the opening of the Tent of Meeting he did not bring to offer sacrifices to God, before the tabernacle of God, ...he will be cut off from the midst of his people. In order that the Children of Israel bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice in the fields, and they bring them to God..." The Jews are warned to bring their sacrifices to God, because it is here that they attempt to communicate with something other than God. This approach also explains why Molech is followed immediately by prohibitions of divining spirits and enchanters.

One question remains: If blood eating and Molech are so similar, what in Molech alone is deserving of the statement, "you defiled My sanctuary and profaned My name"? (Lev. 20:3) Think about it. Write in with your answers. ■

# Parashas BeChukotai

RABBI BERNARD FOX

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abundant crops. The pasuk also assures security and peace.

The Midrash Torat Kohanim observes that the pasuk contains an additional message. The people are promised that observance of the Torah will be rewarded with security in their land. This is a reference to the land of Israel. The implication of the pasuk is that the promise of security can only be fulfilled in the land of Israel. The assurance does not extend to life in exile, outside of Israel.[1]

This is an amazing assertion. The midrash is telling us the observance of the Torah is rewarded with security in the land of Israel. However, Jews in exile are not assured of shelter. Observance of the Torah cannot procure salvation outside of Israel.

A poignant comment ascribed to Rav Yisrael Meir HaKohen – the Chafetz Chayyim – is relevant to this message. The Chafetz Chayyim often discussed the advent of the Messianic era. Towards the end of his life he delivered an informal discourse on this issue. He explained that the Messianic era is inevitable. We do not know when the Messiah will arrive. Nonetheless, we are certain that the Almighty's plan for humanity will only be fulfilled in the Messianic era.

He explained that we are not passive participants in the unfolding of history. Our actions and attitudes can hasten or delay coming of Meshiach. What can we do to expedite the Messiah's arrival? The Chafetz Chayyim explained that we must truly desire his accession. We must recognize exile as banishment. We must sincerely long for deliverance.

Conversely, apathy delays the coming of the Messiah. If we are complacent and comfortable in exile, we fail to recognize our banishment.

The Chafetz Chayyim offered a proof of his assertion. The

Chumash, in Sefer Shemot discusses our redemption from Egypt. The Chafetz Chayyim argues that this event is a model for future redemptions. In order to understand the conditions required for the arrival of the Messiah, we must study this previous redemption.

The Torah explains that Bnai Yisrael cried out to Hashem, in their suffering. Immediately after this appeal, the redemption began.[2] Our delivery from bondage was not initiated by repentance. It was set in motion by a much simpler event. The people turned to Hashem and asked for salvation. This provides a model for future redemptions. In order for the Almighty to act, we must recognize that we need His salvation.

The Chafetz Chayyim concluded by asserting that many Jews of his time were complacent. They had come to accept exile. They did not regard exile as banishment. They uttered the prayers beseeching the Almighty for redemption. But they were not completely sincere. He felt that it was crucially important to change this attitude. Bnai Yisrael must acknowledge exile as a severe punishment. The people must earnestly turn to the Almighty and pray for salvation.[3]

The Chafetz Chayyim's comments are reflected in the midrash from Torat Kohanim. We can never achieve security in exile. Why? We must always recognize that exile, by definition, is a punishment. In order to assure that banishment never becomes too comfortable, the Almighty denies us security in exile. Throughout history this lesson has been repeated. Many times the Jewish people became apathetic and began to feel secure and comfortable in exile. On each occasion the Almighty provided a terrible reminder of the instability and terror of exile.

The Chafetz Chayyim made these comments at the end of his life. He passed away in 1933.

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# Parashas BeChukotai

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**“These are the commandments that Hashem commanded Moshe on behalf of Bnai Yisrael, at Mount Sinai.”** (VaYikra 27:34)

The Midrash Torat Kohanim derives from this pasuk a fundamental principle of the Torah. “These are the commandments”, teaches that a future prophet may not add any mitzvot or nullify any of the commandments.[4]

Maimonides explains that the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot enumerated in the Torah are a permanent system. Any prophet claiming that Hashem revealed to him a new mitzvah is a false prophet. The same conclusion applies to a prophet claiming that Hashem has removed a mitzvah from Taryag – the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot. The consequence for false prophecy is death.[5]

Maimonides continues with an interesting comment. A prophet does not have the authority to temporarily suspend a mitzvah. If a prophet commands us to disobey a commandment for a specific period, we are obligated to obey this command. This is not a theoretical principal. In practice, prophets did suspend mitzvot on a temporary basis. The most famous example involves Eliyahu the Prophet. Eliyahu challenged the priest of Baal to a test. This test involved the priests and Eliyahu each offering separate sacrifices on Mount Carmel. The Torah forbids offering sacrifices outside of the Beit HaMikdash. Eliyahu suspended this law, in order to participate in the demonstration he designed. However, this suspension of the law was temporary. Therefore it was permitted.[6]

Why can a prophet suspend a mitzvah on a temporary basis? It seems that the Torah does not forbid a prophet from issuing a command that contradicts the Torah. He has the authority to adjure us to ignore a mitzvah. The limitation upon the

prophet is that he may not tamper with Taryag. This means he may not add to or subtract from the system of Taryag. The temporary suspension of a mitzvah does not represent a subtraction from the system. The mitzvah remains a component of Taryag. It is merely temporarily suspended. In contrast, if a prophet tells us that we no longer are required to observe a mitzvah, he has subtracted a component from Taryag. This is beyond the authority of the prophet.

[1] Midrash Torat Kohanim, Parshat BeChukotai, Chapter 1. [2] Sefer Shemot, 2:23-24. [3] Rav Ahron Sorasky, Rabban Shel Yisrael (Netzach, 1979), pp 99-100. [4] Midrash Torat Kohanim, Parshat BeChukotai, Chapter 13. [5] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Yesodai HaTorah 9:1. [6] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam / Maimonides) Mishne Torah, Hilchot Yesodai HaTorah 9:3. □

## Psychoanalyzing Our Founders - Part II


RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

**Reader:** In your recently posted Q&A, (Part I of this series, click here) you write: "We have to claim ignorance when understanding the "why's" of their actions, unless as you pointed out, we are taught some reason by Chazal, the Rabbis. But for us to assess their psyche, is an inherently flawed undertaking. It will be based - at best - on our own, greatly inferior understanding of human psychology, coupled with an ignorance of their great perfection." Doesn't that approach contradict your general approach, promulgated through your website, that emphasizes objective analysis and emphasizes the ability of modern man to grasp eternal truths - to the point where you explained that Ibn Ezra as saying that we would abandon a mitzvah that we could not explain rationally? Why would something be in the Torah at all if we couldn't learn from it?

**Mesora:** Ibn Ezra is stating a separate concept: Commandments, by definition, are testaments to truths. As such, if one is bereft of a reason for a command, then he cannot fulfill that law, as that would oppose the purpose of acting in line with reason. Ibn Ezra teaches that Torah commandments have as their primary and essential goal, man's acting in accordance with rational principles. If there ever was such a command that we could not comprehend, then man would violate the Torah's principle of acting with reason. In such a case, man could not act out the command. This would violate the Torah's primary goal. This is Ibn Ezra's point.

We seek understanding for all commandments. This is clear. However, we now discuss a completely different topic, the perfection of the Matriarchs and Patriarchs. We have exited the topic of commandments, and now enter the topic of human perfection, and our understanding of the degrees of this perfection in various, Torah personalities. When discussing this topic, there is a grave danger which exists, as it does in any science: Overestimation of our own knowledge. We might erroneously feel we have a grasp of the area in its entirety. This is where our new discussion begins. The Rabbi quoted in our previous article made it clear that people today have not approached anywhere near the level of perfection of Judaism's founders. To assess their perfection based on our highly limited scope of understanding and perfection, is an inherently flawed pursuit. This does not mean we cannot seek reasons for commandments, but that is not this topic. What we now discuss is whether our understanding of human perfection is complete enough to grasp how the Founders operated. The answer is no. We have no basis to accurately assess their perfection. What are we to say, that their motivations are like ours? This is foolish. Since this is not so, and we are bereft of another suggestion for their actions, we must draw a blank. This crime of projecting our own subjective reasoning onto an any area, is not limited to analyzing

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# Psychoanalyzing Our Founders - Part II

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

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the Matriarchs and Patriarchs. In any area, if we are ignorant of the facts, we must remain silent.

**Reader:** Further, this sort of analysis does seem to be a staple of your articles on Tanach, for example the one about Dinah, Shimon and Levi. What parts of the Biblical narrative can we analyze and which parts should we accept as being beyond us?

**Mesora:** I am not suggesting that this area is "beyond us", as you put it. It can be learned eventually. This is why God recorded these accounts. To reiterate, the point is that we have motives for all our actions. But these motives have not raised us to the level of perfection where God has initiated conversation with us, placing us as leaders of the Jews, as He has done with others.

I hope my contrast is clear. There is a severe, qualitatively higher degree of perfection possessed by the Founders of Judaism, than what we possess. God selected them - and not us. He spoke with them, and related to them in such a close manner which we have never experienced. We cannot attribute to such perfected people, our own motivations. This being so, how do we learn their actions? Torah Sages possessing the Mesora (traditions of learning tracing back to Moses), who can decipher the teachings God has hinted to in the Torah's cryptic verses will assist our study. Such Sages also possess Oral Traditions communicated down through the generations. This is another basis for following them, and not others.

In the area of understanding personalities, we have to be careful. This area differs from other areas of study, in that we naturally project our own motivations onto others. But when studying

math or natural law for example, we are not biased. Here, we are not studying another person. We are objective, and we are unfamiliar with the new scientific topic and facts. We are open to receiving information about an area alien to us. We admit ignorance. We learn properly. We learn accurately. But when studying personalities, we feel all too familiar with how and why man does what he does. We immediately suggest our own motivations for the Founders' actions which may be similar only in appearance. Big mistake. God is not documenting simple actions of simple people in His great Torah. This eternal guide for all mankind is much deeper.

**Reader:** Additionally, where should we draw the line as far as who is allowed to offer an explanation that we would not consider flawed? Early Rishonim? Late Rishonim? Early Acharonim? R. Nathan Kaminestsky? I'm curious to hear your response.

**Mesora:** Where do we draw the line on what we can or cannot understand? Here. When studying the personalities and perfections of the Founders of Judaism. We allow the Sages to teach us, not the reverse. Our predisposition to assume we know all about psychology is the cause for grave error.

A few rules will guide us. First of all, if we hear anyone suggesting a psychological reason or motive for an action of the Founders, we can dismiss that notion, regardless of who said it. Such an approach means to say that the Founders operated with the same emotional tendencies as we do. However, God does not select as leaders, those who are regular victims of their emotions. The Founders did the reverse -

they ruled their emotions, and were not acting out of impulse, or any desire similar to our own. Remember, God spoke with them. This is a severely high degree of perfection. Don't assume they operated as we do, and yet, God related to them.

Who are acceptable teachers? I feel we have all seen the brilliance and scope of study displayed by Ramban, Rashi, Sforno, Radak, Maimonides, all of whom possessed great minds and had the entire Torah on their fingertips. The Rabbis of the Talmud are their forerunners, and thus, are to be studied with great awe and care. Follow those Rabbis today who adhere meticulously to the teachings taught by all those named above. Follow those who earnestly study the Talmud, who are afraid to misquote a single word, and realize the magnitude of Torah knowledge, those who listen carefully to each and every word of the Torah as more precious than fine gold. Follow those who explain the Torah with an exactitude, that their teachings comply completely with the Torah's verses, that the verses seem to require their explanations. You will know a brilliant insight when you hear one, it will be an idea you feel is "essentially true". You will feel, "it must be this way." It will resonate with a clarity, and will bring you much enjoyment.

But even the Rishonim and Rabbis in the Gemara argue, so who shall we follow? In such a case, all we have is our own minds, so what appears as most appealing to our reason, and is in accord with the verses, that is what we must follow. We have no other choice! This is God's wish, that we follow what our minds tell us is most reasonable. □



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# THE DECLARATION OF SHAVUOS

RIVKA OLENICK

**“and thou must also make clear to them the Laws and the Teachings and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the deeds that they are to do.” Exodus 18:20.**

This is the time of the year when we see the beauty of Spring evolve and God is revealed to us through nature. We walk out of our homes and what hits us are the amazing colorful flowers, the lush green grass and the fragrant blossoming trees. There's a clear blue sky and the bright sun illuminates everything. Even on a rainy day, which is a gift from God, we are still captured by what is growing all around us, and every year it all reappears exactly at this time. It's not the handiwork of the gardeners it is the handiwork of God. It is His annual gift to us, just one of the many gifts God gives us. One of the many gifts that uplifts our spirits and our senses as we realize without a doubt God's Mastery of the universe. Shortly it will be Shavuos which is referred to as the Festival of Reaping, the barley offering that was brought to the Temple, was also distributed to the poor. The day of bikkurim, commemorates the time when we bring to the Temple the two loaves of bread from the new grain harvest as a first offering. Shavuos is also referred to as the day of Atzeres or assembly, which commemorates an ingathering. Moses refers to the day on which the Torah was given as the Atzeres.(Deuteronomy 9:10) The Festival of Shavuos is literally called Weeks as we count the seven complete weeks from Passover. During this time we count the Omer in anticipation that Shavuos is approaching. We do not celebrate Shavuos in a specific month, rather it is the culmination of the fifty day period, the counting

of the Omer. Shavuos commemorates the Revelation at Sinai. “And you shall declare on this very day.” Leviticus 23:21.

What are we declaring today in anticipation of the upcoming commemoration? How can we raise ourselves intellectually and spiritually this Shavuos? While the sweetness of the Spring season enraptures our senses, we should ask ourselves these questions. This time before Shavuos can be used for reflection and positive self-introspection if we use the time appropriately. It is not only a time to make simchas, wind down the school year and make summer plans. All of that planning takes us away from thinking about how we can elevate ourselves and revive our true purpose in life. What is our “derech” our way in life? Our culture does a very good job of distracting a person by keeping one away from their true “way in life”. Our way is in life, not of life. ...make known to them the way in which they are to walk... A way “in” indicates more depth as within something, an involvement in something, whereas way “of” life implies coming out or away from something. When Bnei Yisroel were given the Torah through Moses, they were to learn and live in it, live in the ways, the laws and in the teachings of the Torah. “but ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.” Exodus 19:6. The laws and teachings are what provide us with our derech, our way, our foundation in life. Obviously Judaism has a very different meaning of derech or way in life. Accepting the way in the Torah means accepting our mission, which is that all human existence is dependent on our covenant with God. We are the light unto all the nations. What do we do in our daily life that sanctifies

God's name? How do we interact with other Jews and with gentiles that creates a positive example that we as Jews serve and fear God?

In Egypt everything we had was taken from us and we were spiritually diminished. We survived as lowly slaves to the Egyptians who knew nothing of the God that created man. They believed in their own warped, corrupt ideas that they attached to their own fake gods. They lived evil, wicked lives, and still the contaminated nation of Egypt reigned over everyone. Our lives were pathetic and low. How could we restore ourselves back as the descendants of Abraham, the descendants of truth? God freed us from the dungeon of Egypt by taking us out and by taking us to him as His nation. God strengthened us and gave an opportunity to acquire wisdom and understanding through His Torah. At Mount Sinai we declared: “All that God has spoken we will do.” Exodus 19: 8. Justice and kindness would rule the world because we would be examples of this, as a holy nation. When God chose us we accepted our responsibility as partners in His covenant, His covenant of truth. At the Revelation at Sinai, through Moses God gave us the foundation of our life, and for all future generations. We were crowned as His bearers of this divine mission. We are His nation, He is our God. All gifts to us.

Before Shavuos think about making a commitment to Torah study “the laws and teachings of the Torah”. By doing this a person will develop a better, “clearer” understanding of the commandments. Intellectually and philosophically one will develop a clearer understanding of “the way in which we are to walk and the deeds that we are to do”.

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## Using the Web to Drive FiveTowns' Sales

ShopFiveTowns.com (SFT) is new website designed by NYDesign.com. Its goal is to promote local businesses and merchants. But it's not your typical website. You don't buy any products here.....you promote, and promote big time. The website offers numerous, well thought-out programs which are easy to join, inexpensive, and effective.

SFT proactively advertises your business: The "specials" page is not only a page on the site, but that page is also emailed every week to thousands, displaying merchants' promotions. Businesses may buy text or banner ads which can be linked to their websites and/or emails. SFT offers webpage design so businesses may display even more of their wares.

The coupon program (right image) enables merchants to offer 10-20% discounts. The coupon is also mass-emailed weekly to drive in-store traffic. Customers print the coupon from their own PC and redeem it upon their purchases. Below is a snapshot of the SFT home page. Various sized banner ads link to vendors' SFT webpages - an effective means for displaying new products and sales - Sort of a web-based window display! SFT webpages also enable customers to email vendors. This interactivity is not available in print ads, and generates increased sales. It also allows vendors to save that email address for future marketing.

ShopFiveTowns.com home page displaying merchants' banner ads

increase sales, SFT is an effective advertising medium. If you're a retailer, professional, or another type of establishment, we'll grow your local business with exclusive ad opportunities: Enter your email at left to stay up to date on how we promote you!

- Advertise **business** on our home page, **designed for FREE!**
- Advertise on our **specials** page emailed weekly to 1000's of five towns and beyond.
- Post a **webpage** with sales & email info.
- Join our **coupon** program - get more traffic.
- Place a **FREE** ad in our **directory**, and post banner ads to stand out!

Businesses, read more: [Click here](#)

Press release: [Click here](#)

A powerful, store traffic magnet is the "directory" feature. It allows anyone to quickly locate any store, business or establishment by category.

The "classified" page is a cost-effective way to announce, advertise, post or search jobs, and more. Ads remain online for 30 days and can contain your website and email links.

All these promotional features increase your reach to more customers. Instead of passively waiting for walk-ins, SFT enables merchants and businesses to proactively and aggressively market themselves to larger audiences via new, exclusive opportunities. SFT harnesses the 24/7 web availability and the immediate reach of the internet, delivering your message to its ever-growing subscriber list.

Emailed coupons, sale announcements, banner ads, classifieds, and directory listings drive new traffic to those establishments purchasing these programs. Advertising is easy, and can be purchased online with a secure credit card transaction. To those of you interested in selling nationally, SFT webpages enable just that, with e-commerce already available for you.

SFT is also promoting itself on major search engines, and forging alliances with high-trafficked websites to increase your publicity. But to benefit from this publicity, you'll have to advertise on SFT.

Future plans include articles, a community events calendar, SFT street sales, LIRR timetables, selling goods online, and much more!

**ShopFiveTowns.com launches soon.**  
 Visit our new website and take advantage of exclusive advertising opportunities to grow your business!

Developed by NYDesign.com  
 This logo means savings at participating merchants



Print page, cut along edges and save 10%!  
Mail a coupon to a friend or relative! Good until June 1.

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- Goldmine Jewelers:** 524 Central Ave. (516) 374-4682

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