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WHICH DINOSAUR DID T. REX EAT?

T-REX ATE TRICERATOPS



Scientific Paper
Published in Science, Vol. 159, No. 3800, 1986.
The scientific community has determined
the phylogenetic relationship of T. rex to
Triceratops is as follows: T. rex is the
cousin of Triceratops.



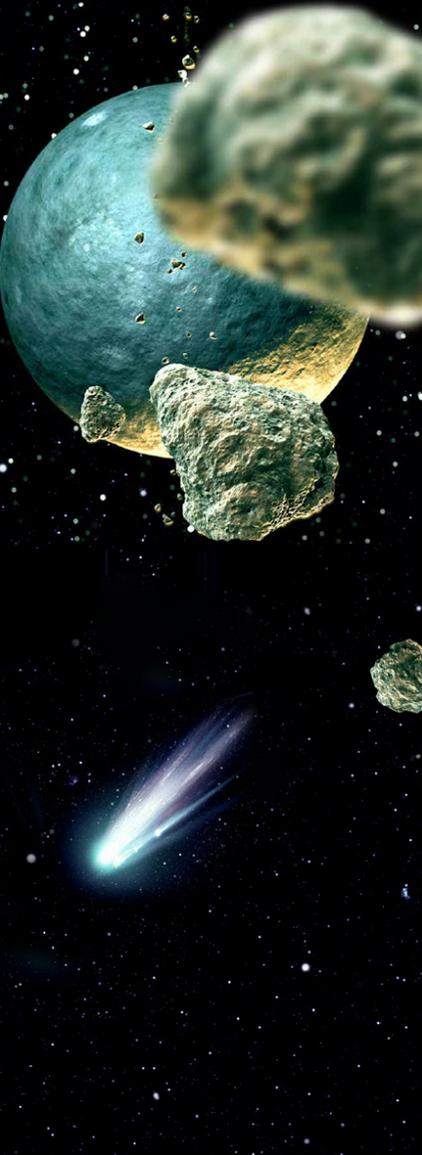
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| SCIENCE VS. TORAH |

"Lucy," a 3.5 million-year old fossil skeleton of a human ancestor, was discovered in 1974 in Hadar, Ethiopia. We do not reject facts to preserve a wrong Torah interpretation, but we adjust our interpretations to align with the facts. Maimonides wrote: *"If Aristotle had a proof for the universe's eternity, the whole teaching of Scripture would be rejected, and we should be forced to other opinions."* ("Guide," book II chap. xxv)

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

LETTERS

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Was Adam the First Man?

QUESTION: I need clarification please. Traditional Judaism believes that the 1st man and woman—Adam and Eve—were created 5000-6000 years ago based on sources mentioned in the Torah. But science rejects this, based on carbon dating a temple in Turkey, "Gobekli Tepe" built 6,000 years before Adam and Eve. There were found 40,000-year-old human skeletons in a European cave...older than the Adam and Eve narrative. So the Genesis account can't be accurate. How can anyone successfully refute that?

Someone is lying...either God is lying, carbon dating is lying, or people are lying. Someone dropped the ball somewhere. Please explain your perspective for my understanding. Thanks.

RABBI: God created science and Torah; they cannot conflict. Yes, humans predated Adam by tens of thousands of years. But about 5,500 years ago—Adam's arrival—these humans underwent a sudden leap in intelligence. Corroboration from a paper is found here:

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Written languages developed around 5,000–6,000 years ago, and approximately 4,000 years ago astronomy and mathematics appear on the scene. We see the expression of philosophical ideas around 2,500 years ago, invention of the printing press 1,000 years ago, and the modern scientific method about 500 years ago. The past 100 years have yielded a technological explosion that has completely altered the daily routines of humans. (Cornell University; <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1308.5034v3.pdf>)

Thus, we can explain Torah’s “creation of Adam and Eve,” not as the initial formation of humans, but as God’s introduction of a soul into man, as Torah says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26) referring to an intellectual soul.

And historical evidence below shows intellectual advancements after Adam and Eve (Credits: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~cpd/history.html>):

Years Ago

- 6,800 earliest artistic representation of introspection
- 6,200 domestication of corn, earliest extraction of salt
- 6,000 use of indigo blue for dyeing cotton fabric
- 6,000 board games (Egypt)
- 5782 Adam & Eve**
- 5,500 engineering of water delivery/storage
- 5,500 earliest ploughs for tilling
- 5,500 rising human fertility
- 5,500 domestication of horses
- 5,400 earliest wheeled wagons
- 5,300 start of the Bronze Age
- 5,300 earliest numeral systems, pictograms, cuneiform sexagesimals, hieroglyph decimals
- 5,200 full writing using the rebus principle: bookkeeping, instruction, commemoration, scripture, prayer, historical records
- 5,150 organic medicinal remedies
- 5,100 development of systems of governance
- 5,050 earliest standard weights for balance scales, and cubit length
- 5,000 synthetic glass
- 5,000 metal swords
- 5,000 solar calendar year of 365 days
- 4,650 lunar calendar year of 12 months
- 4,650 magnetic compass, used to orient chariots
- 4,550 earliest dictionary
- 4,500 earliest door locks
- 4,000 use of coal as fuel
- 4,000 abacus
- 3,750 principles of insurance against loss or damage
- 3,650 earliest planetary observations
- 3,550 reckoning with fractions and geometry; timepiece: an outflow water-clock
- 3,300 earliest notated music
- 3,000 earliest depiction of the cosmos; hydraulic plaster
- 2,950 first Jewish temple
- 2,900 earliest centre of higher learning; Plato’s Academy; prediction of lunar eclipses
- 2,650 use of metallic money

God Doesn’t Lie

OPINION: When God created the world, He created a history in progress, giving all things the appearance of age.

RABBI: We do not know whether God took a certain humanoid who evolved over millions of years, and suddenly implanted a soul in him 5782 years ago, that being Adam. Or, if man was suddenly and wholly made with a soul in year 5782. Based on unearthing a 3.2 million-year-old humanoid—“Lucy”—the former is more reasonable, and can merge with Torah.

Creating a thing as old, like creating ancient dinosaur fossils and not creating dinosaurs, God would violate His primary principle of presenting truth. According to this position, man would wrongly assume dinosaurs lived, when they did not. Again, if one suggests against scientific findings, that stars did not take 14 billion years to reach their current position, but that God initially created them that far from us, this deceives man about the universe’s age. We measure its age in part by detecting starlight that travelled billions of years to reach us. We also detect the stars hurling through space at immense speeds, indicating a prior Big Bang causing this ongoing propulsion. We do not suggest that God created a mere state of soaring stars, without also creating the cause: the Big Bang. God created man to live and think according to cause and effect, and not effect alone, as you suggest. Scientists measure the universe at 14 billion years of age, not that God suddenly created fully formed stars, and at distances only appearing to require billions of years for their right to reach us. This opinion, that God created stars to only “appear” old and speeding due to an explosion, when they did not, imputes to God that He misleads man.

Appearances

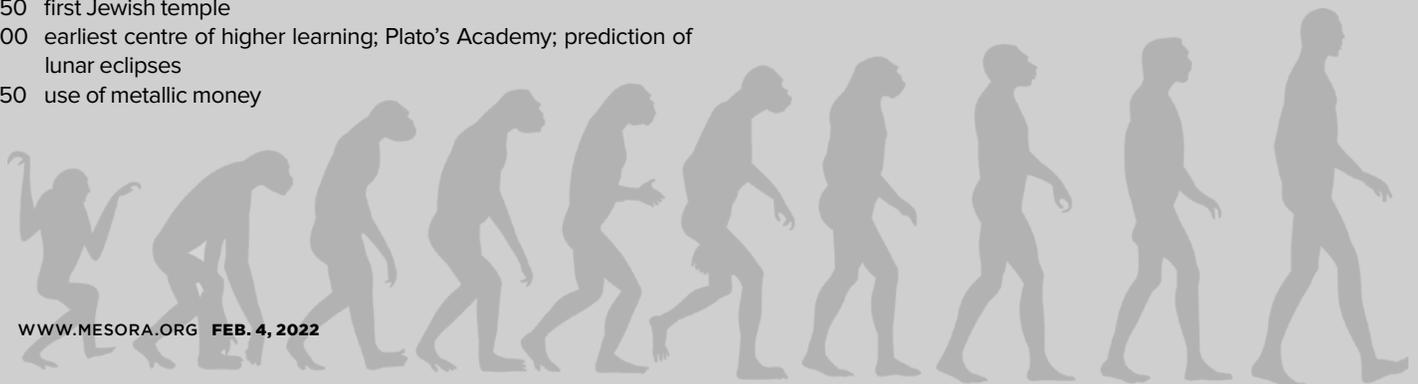
QUESTION: I was wondering if you can cite anything which speaks about taking pride in one’s appearance, be it for business appearances or otherwise, so as to use that to exude a “good impression”, The goal is to earn respect and thus to earn business, as opposed to someone looking shoddy and giving off the wrong impression, which would hurt their chances of earning the respect of a business prospect.

Moreover, just in general, aren’t we supposed to look/act a certain way, so as to set an example as Jews? I don’t assume it’s ok to look disheveled and still wear a kippah, such that other nations of the world “point and laugh.”

Is it ok to take pride in your appearance even outside the scope of work related necessity?

Thank you.

RABBI: Rashi quotes a Torah verse that we are “God’s children” (Deut. 14:1) and therefore we should not be bald. Furthermore the Jewish priests have unique garments for this purpose. And Talmud also says that a Torah student should not go out with a stain on his garment. This is all to give the proper impression of Torah and Judaism to both Jews and gentiles. But in terms of business, it’s common sense to have a good appearance. ■





In parshas Terumah, it states regarding the cover of the ark (Shemot 25:17-18):

And you shall make an ark cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits its length and a cubit and a half its width. And you shall make two golden cherubim; you shall make them of hammered work, from the two ends of the ark cover.

The Talmud describes the cherubim as being depicted in pure gold on the ark cover with the bodies of children and the wings of birds extended upward. Some hold that one form was a female child's body and the other a male child's body.

What is curious about this detail of the mishkan (the sanctuary) is that it seems, at face value, to contradict the fundamental prohibition against physical images that is at the core of Jewish belief. In the Aseres Hadibros (the Ten Statements) given to Moshe on Mount Sinai, the creation of a "pessel" (a stature or image for worship) is prohibited with the most severe punishment. Yet here, in the "Holy of Holies", the most sanctified area of the sanctuary, placed upon the holiest of the objects of the sanctuary, are the images of the cherubs-children's bodies with wings. We are also informed in this parsha that God communicated to Moshe from between these two cherubs. The parsha states (Shemot 25:22):

I will arrange My meetings with you there, and I will speak with you from atop the ark cover from between the two cherubim that are upon the Ark of the Testimony, all that I will command you unto the children of Israel.

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PARSHA

GRAVEN IMAGES

Despised & Redeemed

RABBI RICHARD BORAH

Maimonides in his great philosophical work, the “Guide for the Perplexed” (Moreh Nevukim) provides a detailed explanation of the reasons for the cherub forms being at the core of the sanctuary’s holy structure. According to his understanding, the cherubs presence there is to clarify that prophecy exists and that prophecy depends on the existence of angels (cherubs) through which God communicates with man. Therefore, the belief in the Torah, which was communicated through prophecy, must logically be preceded by a belief in the existence of angels. So the depiction of the cherubs is to provide clarity and strength to the belief in angels and therefore prophecy which is necessary to accept the Torah. The cherubs are depicted in tandem, as a single cherub might be mistaken for an object of worship. Maimonides states (Book 3:45):

Naturally the fundamental belief in prophecy precedes the belief in the Law, for without the belief in prophecy there can be no belief in the Law (the Torah). But a prophet only receives divine inspiration through the agency of an angel...“The angel of the Lord called” (Gen. xxii. 15); “The angel of the Lord said unto her” (ibid. xvi. 11); and other innumerable instances. Even Moses our Teacher received his first prophecy through an angel.” And an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the flame of fire” (Exod. iii.). It is therefore clear that the belief in the existence of angels precedes the belief in prophecy, and the latter precedes the belief in the Law...when the wise men discovered and proved that there was a Being, neither itself corporeal nor residing as a force in a corporeal body, viz., the true, one God, and that there existed besides other purely incorporeal beings which God endowed with His goodness and His light, namely, the angels, and that these beings are not included in the sphere and its stars, it became evident that it was these angels and not the images or Asherot (trees used in idolatrous worship rituals) that charged the prophets. From the preceding remarks it is clear that the belief in the existence of angels is connected with the belief in the Existence of God; and the belief in God and angels leads to the belief in Prophecy and in the truth of the Law. In order to firmly establish this creed, God commanded [the Israelites] to make over the ark the form of two angels. The belief in the existence of angels is thus inculcated into the minds of the people, and this belief is in importance next to the belief in God’s Existence; it leads us to believe in Prophecy and in the Law, and opposes idolatry. If there had only been one figure of a cherub, the people would have been misled and would have mistaken it for God’s image which was to be worshipped, in the fashion of the heathen; or they might have assumed that the angel [represented by the figure] was also a deity, and would thus have adopted a Dualism. By making two cherubim and distinctly declaring” the Lord is our God, the Lord is One,” Moses dearly proclaimed the theory of the existence of a number of angels; he left no room for the error of considering those figures as deities, since [he declared that] God is one, and that He is the Creator of the angels, who are more than one.

The placing of the cherubs in the holiest of places of the sanctuary, may also clarify something about the restriction of images that is so fundamental to Judaism. We do not, as Jews, despise images or physical beauty, per se. There is nothing phobic or absolute about the separation of images from Judaism or even Jewish worship. The cherubs on the ark cover in the holy of holies makes this clear. What we do despise is falsehood. To equate God with anything of this world by His depiction as an image is the absolute falsehood upon which any other conclusions one would make must also be absolutely false. It is for this reason that the absolute separation between God and image has been set at the foundation of Judaism in its many prohibitions against idolatry. But when an image is used to depict a truth, the use of the image becomes sanctioned and redeemed and, as we see, is not only permitted, but commanded. Rabbi Soloveitchik in his text, “The Worship of the Heart” explains this concept of the “redeeming of the aesthetic”. He states:

Thus beauty has been linked up with transcendental and absolute Being and freed from the contingency of a volatile, passing and conditional world arrangement. God sanctions not only the true and the good but also the beautiful. It is delightful and fair because it reflects eternal glory and majesty. In beautiful things, the transcendental hint (to something beyond) is inherent. Beauty is not hemmed in on all sides by the boundaries of finitude (page 60).

Once redeemed, beauty and the aesthetic experience not only lose their demonic quality, but becomes a uniquely powerful and sanctioned manner of exalting God, as man understands that God is not only the source of all knowledge but that “absolute beauty rests in God”. What has been sanctioned by God in the images of the cherubs on the ark cover, according to Maimonides, is to use the beautiful depiction of the cherubim on the ark cover to clarify the fundamental truth of the existence of angels. The acceptance of the Torah rests upon this truth, as these angels are the true medium of prophecy.

In closing, I would like to propose an approach as to why the cherubs are depicted as children with wings. As Maimonides has stated, angels do not possess physical bodies. So to portray them this way in prophecy and on the ark cover is worthy of reflection. The child is the representation of the purely instinctual part of the human being. A small child lacks intellect and pursues its instinct purely. The wings represent the intellect and the “tzelem Elokim” (image of God) which is man’s non-physical, potential for knowledge. The cherub image represents this amalgam. What is curious is that an angel do not possess the instinctual dimension, as it is without a body. So why is the angel imaged in this manner? Perhaps it is to show that the angel is the conduit, the “meeting point” between the pure knowledge of God and man who can never divorce himself from his instinct, no matter how high the level of his development as a spiritual being. The cherub connects the pure Intellect (God) with the instinct-intellect (man) and the Torah upon which the cherubs rest on the ark cover, is the medium by which the instinct-intellect amalgam of human beings can partake of the pure Intellect of God. The cherub’s portrayal as a winged child is not expressing what it is, but how it functions for man. ■



PARSHA

MENORA

a Map to the Universe

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Unlike other religions toting arbitrarily-designed ceremonial objects and garb, and tapestries that express raw human fantasy...each of God's Torah laws and designs are precise, containing fundamental intellectual and moral truths.

Of all the Temple's vessels, the Menorah is most perplexing. As Einstein would not dismiss any order detected in the universe, we too cannot dismiss the Menorah's intricate details. With them, God intends to share something profound with mankind. While some details may be technical, patient study of the Menorah is rewarded with new insights and increased appreciation for God's design and purpose of this mitzvah, and of man. Without understanding the Menorah's designs and laws, we miss His intended lessons.

Let us first identify the unique features of the Menorah, and then progress in an orderly manner to define those features. While there is much room for drash and allegory, it is vital for the sake of arriving at the true lessons of Menorah, that we do not overstep, or suggest ideas that are not loyal to Menorah's designs and laws.

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Menorah's Design

Unlike most other vessels, the Menorah was made of pure gold, like the Ark's cover. Both could not be made in parts, and then subsequently assembled. They were both hammered into their final form from a single block of gold. Why?

Iconic to Menorah is its six branches emanating from a center seventh branch: three branches protruded from both sides, left and right, totaling six protruding branches, plus a seventh center stem. Why do the six branches emanate from the seventh; not standing on the ground independently, on six separate bases, just like the seventh stem?

On top of all seven branches was a basin for the oil. The wicks of all six branches faced towards the center stem: those on the right faced left, and those wicks on the left faced right. And the direction of the center stem's wick faced towards the Holy of Holies. Why?

On each of the six branches were unusual designs: three cups, one flower and one sphere. On the center stem there was an additional cup, three additional spheres (out of which the six branches protruded), one additional set of a flower, cup and sphere, and finally one more flower at the base. The base had three legs.

We readily understand Moses' perplexity of the Menorah's design, that is, until God showed him a vision of it. We too wonder what these cups, flowers and spheres mean. And why were there more cups, than flowers and spheres? But the near duplication of design on all seven branches must teach something. And the seventh's additional designs too teach another lesson. Furthermore, a miracle occurred that the center stem's wick burned unnaturally longer than the other six branches.[1] What was the need for this miracle? What is that lesson?

In general, what is Menorah: a lamp? The Talmud states that God does not need light, for He lit our journey through the desert! King Solomon sought to highlight this unnecessary need for light precisely by designing the Temple's windows narrow on the inside, and wider on the outside[2]. Menorah was not for the purpose of physical light.

Now, let's proceed to answer this enigma, step-by-step...

What is Light?

"Nare mitzvah, v'Torah Or – A (single) flame is a command, and Torah is light (Proverbs, 6:22)."

Here, King Solomon alluded to a primary metaphor: wisdom is likened to light. Further-

more, the wisdom of one mitzvah illuminates to 'some' degree: a command is equated to one flame. While observing Torah entirely, removes all darkness. It is "light." It is only with a broad understanding attained through observing "all" of Torah, that we see the truth in all areas, as if one walks in broad daylight. The Menorah, then, is not for God, as He needs nothing. The Menorah is to embody the concept of wisdom, light. And in Proverbs (chap. 8) King Solomon personifies wisdom as metaphorically "calling out to man." Verse 19, wisdom says, "My fruit surpasses fine gold." We thereby find Torah equating fine gold to wisdom. Therefore, Menorah's light and requirement to be made of pure gold both attest to its equation to wisdom. Additionally, hammering the Menorah out of one gold block instead of making it through assembly requires greater wisdom, and embellishes this idea.

What wisdom does Menorah impart?

Six Branches = Six Days

The first step in answering this question, is to recognize Menorah's unique aspects. Seven branches, where six emanate from the center seventh stem, clearly parallel the Six Days of Creation, and the Sabbath. Just as our first blessing each morning – "Baruch She'amar" – defines God as the God of creation, Temple equally requires this concept. The most primary notion of Temple service is that the nation firmly attests to God as the sole cause of the universe. Menorah delivers this message. Rashi on Exodus 28:6 cites Talmud Yuma regarding the priest's clothing, that with every six strands of blue, purple, red and linen, there was wound a seventh strand of gold thread. Again, the concept of six days of Creation is highlighted.

But if, as Sforno teaches, subsequent to the sin of the Gold Calf, Temple came to correct man's notions, what does Menorah correct?

Six Dependent Branches: The Physical is not Absolute

The sin of those who created the Gold Calf was that they viewed the physical world as what is truly "real." They viewed tangible things as absolute truths, more true than the abstract metaphysical God to whom they could not relate.

In truth, the physical world, this universe, does not have to exist.

It does, only due to God's kindness. The six branches "depend on the seventh," as they

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emanate from the latter. This teaches that the continued existence of the universe – the six days' creations – depend on God's will, as the universe cannot sustain itself. God willed all matter into creation, and He can equally will it out of existence. This design of six branches "depending" (suspended) on the seventh, corrects the fallacy harbored by the Gold Calf followers. They felt a physical object was "more real" than something abstract. "Arise and make for us a god that will go before us, for this Moses, the man, who took us up from Egypt, we know not what has become of him (Exod. 32:1)." Here, immediately prior to fashioning the Gold Calf, the Jews expressed their attachment to the "man" Moses. Our very point. But in fact, the physical world's existence is flimsy, always depending on God's will for its continued existence. "He renews every day regularly, the works of Creation (Daily Prayers)." The Menorah corrects the false notion of an absolute physical world. Six branches – six days of creation – are dependent on the seventh. Decoded, this hints to the physical world (six branches) as dependent on God's will and His natural laws, or the metaphysical world, referred to as the seventh branch. The seventh branch – the sabbath – has as its goal man's removal from physical creativity, and the engagement in wisdom.

What has Greater Reality?

We must realize that the universe is guided by metaphysical laws that are "outside" of the universe. And these laws are more real than the physical world, as they guide the physical world. If one thing guides another, the former is more real than the latter. Natural law is falsely viewed as "inside" all physical objects. But science likes simplicity. We do not say each body has its own law of gravity inside itself, in an attempt to explain why all elements fall after being lifted. Our minds say there is a "single" law of gravity that governs everything, and is external to all matter. Laws are metaphysical realities. We find this approach more pleasing and sensible. Similarly, God does not will each leaf to fall from every tree. Rather, we find far greater expression of God's greatness by viewing such phenomena as a result of His "laws", not His independent attention to each leaf. A law removes the need for individual attendance to all leaves. It is much more pleasing to our minds, and we view God greater with such an explanation.

The six branches depending on the seventh for their suspension, refers to the six days of Creation depending on metaphysical laws for their existence. The Gold Calf disease can be

corrected by recognizing that physical objects are subjugated to the laws that govern them. To embellish this point, the seventh center stem had a miracle of its flame burning longer than its oil quantity could sustain. This demonstrated that the physical laws that typically would cause that flame to extinguish, were overridden by God's will. Natural law can be altered by the metaphysical world, or God's will.

To further express the subjugation of the physical world to the metaphysical, all six branches had their wicks pointing towards the center branch: a manner of deference. But interesting too is that the center branch itself had its wick pointing towards the Holy of Holies! This teaches that even those very metaphysical laws are not absolute, but they too are God's creations, and subject to His will. (The Holy of Holies is from where God caused His communications to emanate.)

Spheres, Flowers & Cups: Harmony Reveals God's Greatest Wisdom

Now we must address the Menorah's unique decorations.

Each branch represents one of the six days of creation. Yet, despite the difference in each day's creations, all six branches are identical. What, then, must we say these cups, flowers and spheres refer to?

It would appear, what is identical on all days are the main categories of creation. I refer to substance, form, and properties, or function. Regardless of the specific created entities, all matter possesses these properties. And it is precisely by studying these properties that man attains God's intended lessons. These are the areas of wisdom, which each day imparts.

As we study the universe, we identify numerous "elements." Originally, man assumed there were four elements: earth, air, fire and water. But man later learned there exists over one hundred elements as identified in the Periodic Table. Varying properties of each element, from carbon to uranium, teach us about God's universe.

We then witness various "forms" of creation, such as living species and minerals. For example, we learn from the different mouth structures of beasts, which are carnivores and which are vegetarians. Carnivores have much wider jaw openings and fanged teeth to help in their hunt and eating. Vegetarians, like cows, have smaller jaw openings. Fish have vertical fins, while mammals like dolphins and whales have horizontal fins in order to propel them upwards to rise above the surface for air.

But what imparts to man the greatest appreciation of God's wisdom seen in creation, is

the "functioning" of matter, or rather, the "systems" we witness. The solar system, digestive system, weather, etc. impress us most. And when many systems coexist and complement each other as is found in the human being's respiratory and circulatory systems, we are even more amazed. The reason a system is most impressive, is because it points to a greater plan, and thus, greater knowledge and planning, than in a single entity's substance or form.

I suggest Menorah's cups refer to creation's properties and functions (systems), Menorah's flowers refer to form, and its spheres refer to raw amorphous substance. While Earth's substances (Menorah's amorphous sphere), and the form of all creations (Menorah's flower) carry important lessons, Menorah's cups (properties & systems) are more numerous on each branch. I believe this may indicate it is through studying the laws and systems of the universe whereby man attains the greatest appreciation of God's wisdom. An apple is a beautiful creation, but when we study the revolution of the Moon and Earth, which cause seasons, combined with the precise distance of Earth from the Sun, and its axis, we are amazed at the plan, and with God. Therefore I believe there are more cups on each branch to emphasize this point that the study of the universe's functions—not substances or form—reveals greater wisdom.

Through our study of these three areas, we view God's wisdom. Thus, each branch, each day of creation, intends to offer man expressions of God's wisdom, as seen in elements like iron and hydrogen, in various forms like plants and animals, but mostly, "how" these creations operate, seen in the numerous systems that guide our universe, from the subatomic world, up to the birth of stars. (The reason we find cups, flowers and spheres on the seventh branch, despite the fact that no creation took place on day seven, is to teach that the physical creations of the six days are based on their metaphysical designs – the seventh branch.) The reason the six branches emanated from spheres (and not flowers or cups) on the center branch, teaches that the six days' creations were formed from that substance (sphere) that came into existence on the first day. That is, no new matter was created on days 2, 3, 4, etc. from which God formed the additional creations on those days; all creations on all days were made from the initial matter created from nothingness on day 1.

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Summary

Menorah is a lesson in the dependent and limited nature of the physical world. This world was created. Nothing demands it exists other than God's will. God also determined what properties all creations possess. Placing more trust in physical objects than in God, and certainly imagining physical things help us in any way other than through their natural properties, is foolish. We must not value Gold Calves more than God, who controls all physical entities, and prohibits their worship. However abstract He is and however emotionally displeasing we initially find it, we must follow our minds and strive to become convinced that physical entities cannot answer our prayers, be they Western Walls, red bendels, dead Rebbes, or Gold Calves. Instead, we are to follow God and His lessons. God provided manna. He performed numerous miracles. And although we are commanded to follow His natural laws and toil to earn our living and not rely on miracles, prayer teaches us that ultimately, God is the source of our success.

There exists a physical world with laws that govern who eats and who starves. Sitting idly while a farmer toils each season, the idle person dies of hunger while the farmer thrives. But the farmer who is a Torah Jew knows this: despite droughts, a righteous person ultimately relies on God, who can deliver his daily bread. The righteous Jew plans according to nature but relies on God to bring matters to success. He gives tzedaka without fear of diminishing wealth, and in fact views charity as a means of enriching his lot. And although he abstains from work each Sabbath, he does not fear this will diminish his wealth. God is his rock.

Menorah itself is an example that the details of God's creations must be studied to witness God's wisdom: as we study every inch of the universe, we also study the Menorah and all other commands. Menorah's primary lesson is that the universe is subjugated to the metaphysical world, to God's will. Menorah corrects the flaw of the Gold Calf followers and hopefully will correct the false views of those Jews who still place their hopes in anything except God alone. ■

[1] Menachot 86b

[2] Kings I, 6:4, Menachot 86b

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A Resounding Yes!

Rabbi Reuven Mann

This week's Parsha, Terumah, begins the section of the Torah which describes in great detail the construction of the Mishkan (tabernacle). This will be the subject of the remainder of the Book of Shemot. The following Book, VaYikra, will take up the subject of the Sacrifices and Services which were to be performed in the Sanctuary.

Construction of the Mishkan (tabernacle), comes on the heels of the portions that deal with the Ten Utterances; and Parshas Mishpatim which focuses on the requirements of living with the principle of justice and compassion, in one's relationship to others. What, if any, is the connection between the Temple Service and the pursuit of social ethics and morality?

With regard to this issue—it is interesting to note—that there is a dispute among the Rabbis, concerning an important aspect of the Ten Utterances. One position maintains, that after each of the first five of the Ten Statements, the people responded with their affirmation and shouted “Yes!”

With regard to the last five Commandments which are the negative ones—the so-called, “Thou shall nots”—there is a dispute. Some maintain, that here the response was in the negative i.e. the people shouted “No!” (Meaning, “we will not do that”). However, Rabbi Akiva holds, that here too the assembled, affirmed their acceptance by yelling, “Yes!”

At first glance, both sides seem to be in agreement, that the people had to voice their assent to what they were being commanded to do. So what difference can it make whether they did so, with a “Yes” or a “No”?

In my opinion, it is a matter of great significance, how one voices acceptance of the command; with a reply in the affirmative or negative. In the response of “No!”, one is referring to the content of the matter one has been charged with. If one is being exhorted,

“Do not murder” and one retorts, “No!”, this means that one rejects the notion of killing. Many people will declare that they are intrinsically opposed to the taking of life, and would never dream of doing so, even if there were no commandment prohibiting it.

The response of “Yes!”, references acquiescence to the Word of Hashem, and in effect asserts, that we may or may not be opposed to killing, but we unconditionally accept the Mitzvah and all that it requires. On the practical level, this has important consequences. For example, many people who regard themselves as extremely compassionate by nature, to the point where they could not “hurt a fly”, do not see an inconsistency in vehemently defending the “right to choose” i.e. abortion.

But the one whose position on murder is governed by G-d's Command, takes a different approach. He maintains, that his actions cannot be based on the way he feels about things. Rather, he is beholden on all of these types of matters, to yield to the Will of Hashem; as it has been revealed, not through the medium of his personal conscience, but through Objective Divine Revelation i.e. through Matan Torah. (Giving of Torah).

The goal of removing baseless hatred and persecutions from mankind, and replacing them with respect and dignity for all people, cannot be achieved by cultivating an enhanced “humanitarian” outlook. Man's natural impulses, however refined, are not sufficient to restrain the practice of cruelty, when it becomes appealing to his “moral conscience”. We see from the words of our Patriarch Avraham, when explaining to Avimelech, why he had to resort to claiming that Sara was not his wife but his sister, Avraham said, “...Because I said, ‘There is no fear of G-d in this place; and they will slay me because of my wife’ (Bereishit 21:11).”

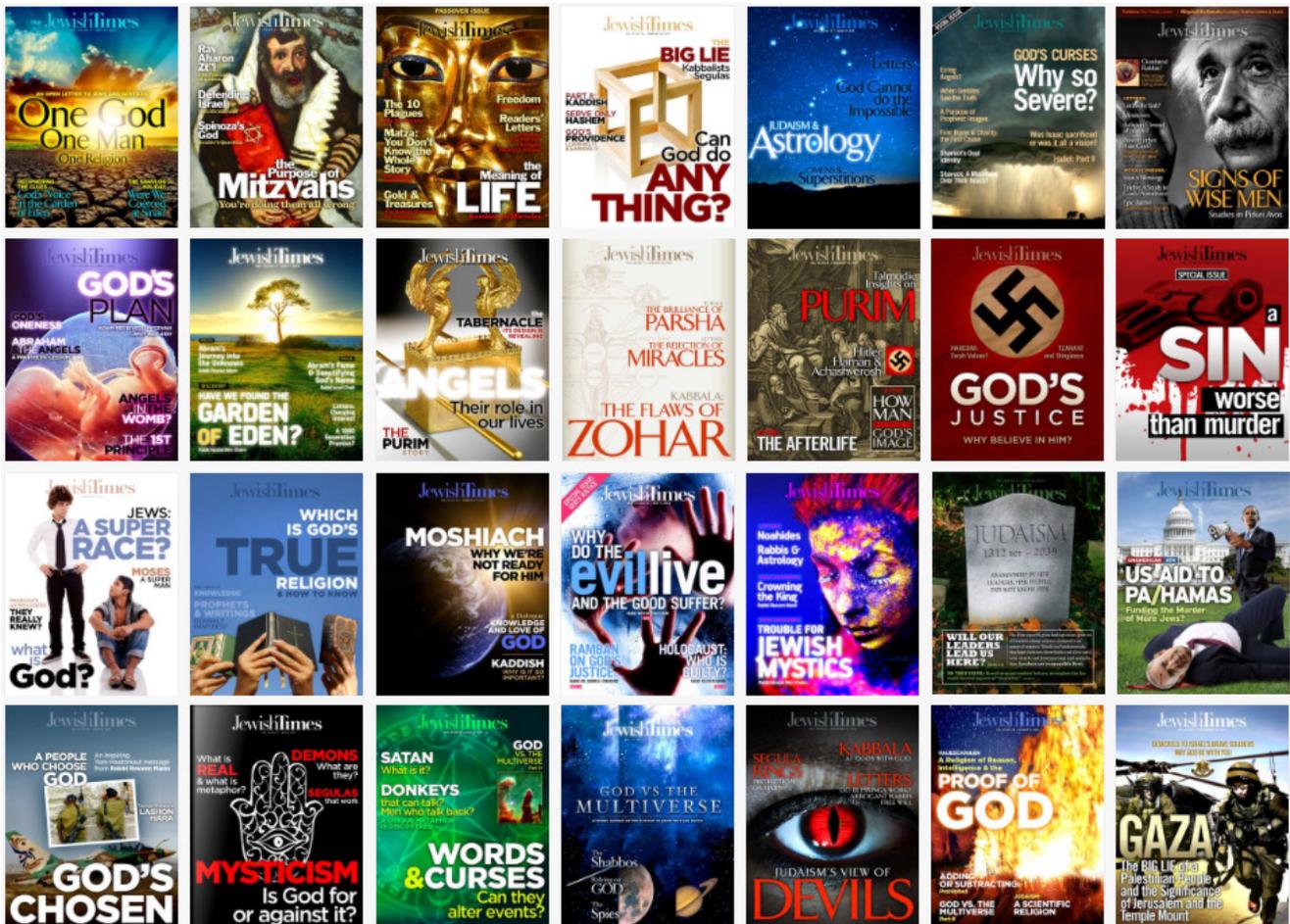
And that, perhaps explains, the transition from the interpersonal laws enumerated in Mishpatim to the delineation of the rules pertaining to the Mishkan, in our Parsha. The purpose of the Karbanot (Sacrifices), is to perfect one's relationship with Hashem, by recognizing that He Is the Source of All Existence, and accepting His Will, as the governing principle by which we live.

May we elevate ourselves, by crowning Hashem as the Ruler of the Universe. To accomplish this grand endeavor, we must study meticulously, to determine in the most truthful fashion, the most accurate meaning of the Torah. And may we constantly strive, to bring our actions and deeds, in line with the prescriptions of moral and ethical conduct, that have been revealed to us in our Torah.

Shabbat Shalom. ■

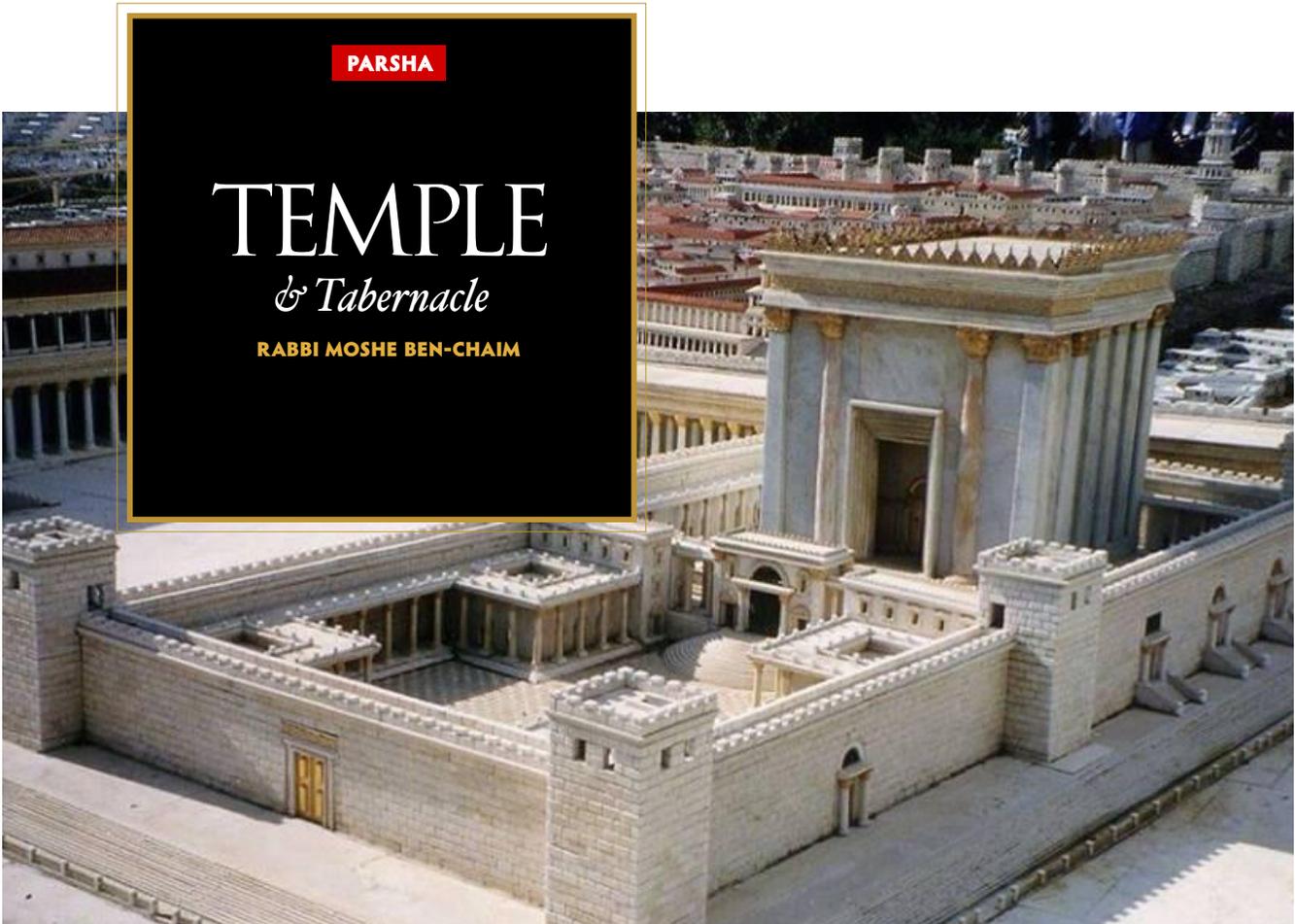
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PARSHA

TEMPLE & Tabernacle

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

The Temple and Tabernacle and Temple Mount have been at the center of world, during its existence in days of the great kings, and even afterwards today, as we all await its final reconstruction. But why? What is so important about this structure? What was God's objective for its existence? As we study it, we will find that its form is very specific in design, bearing Biblical fundamentals.

The object of this article is to shed light on the Tabernacle's following requirements: the purpose of the two rooms (the Holy, and the Holy of Holies), the various vessels found therein, and the restriction of entering the Holy of Holies except for the high priest on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

The form of the Tabernacle is rectangular, 30 cubits long by 10 cubits wide; a cubit measuring approximately 1.5 feet. Its only entrance is on the eastern side. The first ten cubits upon entering are called the Ulam. No vessels are placed in this area. In the next ten cubits are found the Menora, the Table and the Inner Altar. Together the Ulam and these additional ten cubits form the Kodesh, the Holies. The remaining ten cubits are separated from the Kodesh and is called the Kodesh Kodashim, the Holy of Holies, separated by a curtain called the Paroches. In this Holy of Holies is placed the Ark, which contains the Tablets of the Law (the Ten Commandments), the staff of Aaron, the canister of oil used for anointing the kings of Israel, and the jar of the Manna—the food with which God fed the Jewish people in the desert over a forty year duration.

There is one command with regard to the High Priest which sheds light. The High Priest, and certainly other priests can never enter into the Kodesh Kodashim, except for one day of the year, on Yom Kippur. On this day, the Jews are forgiven for their transgressions. The High Priest alone enters on this day into the Holy of Holies and brings in the incense from the inner altar, places it in

front of the Ark, and causes it to cloud that room. He leaves and enters only one more time to remove the fire pan with its ashes. What objective is there that none should enter into this room?

Interestingly, a peculiarity of this room is that God says (Exod. 25:22) that He causes a voice to emanate from this room from between the two cherubs which are above the Ark. This implies that God is commanding us not to approach the point from which He causes His voice to project. This demonstrates the idea that one cannot approach God with one's limited understanding. As God had told Moses, "You cannot understand Me while alive" (Exod. 33:20). We can only "go so far." Therefore, abstaining from entering this room demonstrates that we cannot understand God in our present, human state.

This explains the relevance of the vessels in this room. The Ark contains the Divine Law which man could have never developed on his own; ideas which must be of Divine origin, belonging to God's realm. The oil was used to anoint the kings of Israel who were chosen only by God; man has no knowledge as to who will be king. When Samuel thought to select King Saul's successor, Samuel said of Eliav (David's brother), "This is God's anointed," whereby God replied to Samuel (Sam. 1.XV, 1:7) "Look not on his countenance nor on the height of his stature because I have refused him." Thereby teaching Samuel that he had the flaw of assuming God's knowledge, and therefore required correction. This is precisely why God did not originally instruct Samuel on which son was to be king; God wished Samuel's error be brought out into the open so Samuel might perfect this flaw.

The staff of Aaron was placed in this room as well. This was the staff which miraculously blossomed into almonds during the revolt of Korach. Korach was claiming the priesthood for his family, assuming that Aaron (already chosen by God) had erred in acting

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as the priest. Thus, Korach was suggesting that he knew better than Divine Wisdom. This staff was also placed in this Holy of Holies, as it too testifies to God's supreme, unapproachable, and unknowable wisdom. The Manna is also a demonstration of Divine Wisdom: while it is food, it does not produce human waste. Its appearance was miraculous, which the Jews wondered "what is it?"

All articles found in the Holy of Holies share a common distinction: they epitomize that which man cannot approach. In Samuel I, 1:19, a passage occurs which concurs with this idea: "And God had smote the men of Bet Shemesh because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord". The sin of these people was that they were expressing the heretical notion that they could see something (about God) by looking into the Ark. Their error was generated by a need to make God tangible somehow, which is the worst of philosophical crimes. We must, above all else, possess the correct ideas concerning God. We must know that our proximity (in terms of perfection) to God is directly proportional to our understanding of His Laws, not to the proximity of physical creations. Rambam states that "proportional to our knowledge is our love of God."

Now that we have posited that the Holy of Holies—the room behind the curtain—is to remind us of that which we cannot approach, we may suggest that the Holies shares concepts that are understandable. We need not guess what those concepts are, for they are already familiar to us.

The High Holidays prayers outline 2 praises to God. 1) He is Omnipotent 2) He is Omniscient. That is, God is all-powerful and all-knowing. There are only these two categories, for all acts which God performs are understood by us to be a display of either His Power or His Knowledge. In order for us to be constantly aware of this, God commanded Moses to create the Table, upon which there was always to exist the twelve loaves of bread. Twelve signifying the twelve tribes, and bread to signify God's ability to provide sustenance. God also commanded Moses to build the inner altar. Upon the Altar the priests would offer the incense, a man-initiated relationship between man and God, demonstrating that God is aware of man's actions. The Table reminds us of God's Omnipotence, while the Altar reminds us of God's Omniscience.

What then is the purpose of the Menora? We begin every morning with "Blessed be the One Who spoke and the world came into being, blessed be He." In Daniel's blessing of God after God had granted his request to be informed of Nevuchadnetzar's dream and its interpretation, (Dan. II:19, 20) Daniel said, "To

the One Whose name is Eloka, blessed is He forever and ever." In both cases God is defined first, before any praise is made. This is to say that when one relates to God, it is essential that he knows to Whom he is directing his thoughts. Therefore, we first define to Whom we direct our praises each day. Daniel did the same, and perhaps the Menora serves this very purpose. Namely, to define (not God forbid to embody, which is impossible) that the God which we are relating to in the Tabernacle is the God Who created the world and rested on the seventh day. We are reminded of this by seeing the Menora which is composed of seven branches, six branches emanating from the seventh, as there were six days of creation and a seventh of rest. The six branches pay homage to the seventh as their wicks must all be directed to the center seventh. The seventh, center branch displays the seventh day as the purpose of creation. Contrary to the popular view that creation was an ends in itself for the physical, Judaism claims that the six days of creation target a goal: a day of physical abstention, enabling man time for pondering the world of wisdom. Finally, the command to create the Menora from one solid block of gold (not made through soldering segments) might serve to remind us of the concept of the Unity of this Creator.

Thus, we have three main concepts derived from the Kodesh:

1) We must understand before all, that we are relating to the God who created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. We define Who we are praising. This is the Menora.

2) This God is Omnipotent—all powerful. This is represented by the Table.

3) This God is Omniscient—all knowing. This is represented by the Inner Altar. An altar only makes sense if the Recipient of our prayers—God—is aware of human beings and their attempts to draw near to Him.

These are the categories knowable to man, and therefore: what we are reminded of by the Temple's vessels.

However, if we cannot approach God directly, how is it that the High Priest can enter the Kodesh Kodashim, the Holy of Holies, and why with incense? Why is he commanded to cloud the room (as the Torah states, Leviticus XVI:13) "that he die not," and why on Yom Kippur? The answer is that as we have said, the incense represents our approach to God. The High Priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies shows us that there is a "closer relation" to God on this day due to God's act of forgiving our sins. He therefore brings in that which represents our approach to him. That which represent our prayer (incense) is

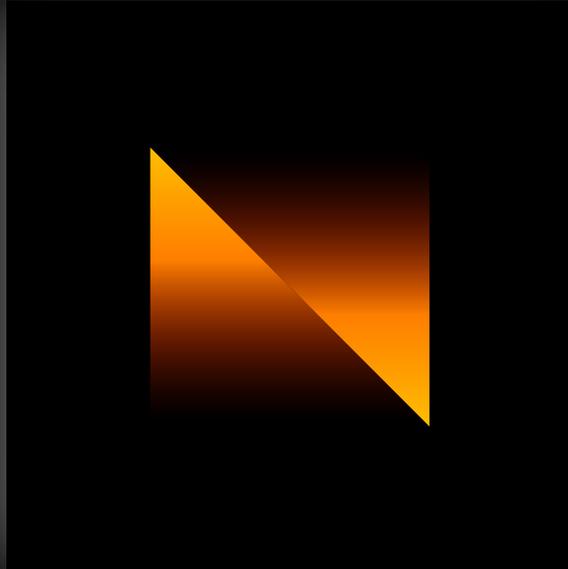
figuratively brought closer to God. The same idea is represented with the levels of restriction upon man at Sinai: Moses alone drew to the top of the mountain, Joshua lower, and others still lower. The purpose of the priest smoking up the room is to remind him while he is there, that his understanding of God is still blocked, represented by the smoke. God knows that even a person who is on the highest level and enters into the Holy of Holies, is still in danger of forming erroneous ideas about God. Smoking up the room physically demonstrates that there is a veil between him and God...even in this room. Similarly, when God revealed Himself to the Jews on Mount Sinai, the Torah tells us that there was "darkness, cloud, and thick darkness (fog)" (Deut. 4:11). This again was all done to demonstrate that there is a constant veil between man and God.

In regards to why there is a specific arrangement to the vessels in the Kodesh, the following reason may be given. Both the Menora and the Table are placed close to the dividing curtain to represent that these two concepts are closer to perfection (closer to the Holy of Holies) than is the altar. The altar, being man's approach, is not always perfect, and is thus removed further from the Paroches than are the Table which represents God's Power and the Menora which defines the God to Whom we relate. These two being undoubtedly perfect as they emanate from God.

In summary, the Tabernacle is a structure which represents our limited understanding of God, but also informs us of truths. It is a vehicle for us to be aware of our relationship to God on the different days of the year, as we see differences in the sacrifices on different days. And conversely, when we witness the absence of the Tabernacle, we are made aware of a severed relationship.

Addendum

The priest wore 8 special garments as part of his dress. Two of which point to interesting ideas: The gold headplate, the "Tzitz" had "Holy to God" inscribed upon it. He also wore a breastplate which had 12 stones, corresponding to the 12 tribes. I believe these are to relate two aspects of a person living on the highest level: The headplate denotes that one's thoughts, his intellect, should be used primarily for understanding God. This is why it is placed on the head, the figurative location of the soul. The breastplate is placed upon the heart, demonstrating that one's heart, the seat of the emotions, should be devoted to his brethren, the 12 tribes. Thus, both aspects of man, his intellect and his emotions are subjugated to the correct areas. Our tefillin demonstrate the same. ■



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