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THE BIBLE

How & Why
God Gave it
to Man

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GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS

One teacher to his students: "I don't fear your questions, and you should not fear my answers."

PEACE

Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Hanina said: "Torah scholars increase peace in the world" (Tal. Brachos 64a). This is because scholars do not operate based on petty emotions, they can be silent when attacked, and they avoid discord. Their focus is their attachment to God, so they don't contend with man. If one party in a relationship is silent, there cannot be friction, but only peace.

PERFECTION

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Rivalry's Many Evil Facets

Save us God. For the pious are no more; men of truth have vanished from mankind. Men speak lies to one another [with] smooth lips; they talk with duplicity. May God cut off all smooth lips, every tongue that speaks arrogance. (Psalms 12:2-4)

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King David says there are 2 human corruptions: piety and truth are no longer found. Piety refers to man's perfect actions, where ego and selfishness are fully restrained in both action and speech. The pious man acts on truth, justice, kindness and charity. Rav Chaim saw a man fallen in the snow outside, as there was a plague. He determined that this man certainly risked life, while Rav Chaim himself felt his own risk (infection) was an uncertainty. He therefore rushed outside, lifted the sickly individual, and brought him indoors to care for him. This is piety.

"Men of truth" refers to not only communal matters, but in all areas, "Men of truth" do not veer from God's will. This can be in communal matters, business (greed), speech (ego) and personal acts of mitzvah (humility) even while alone. Both, the pious man and men of truth do not follow personal preference (ego, laziness, greed, etc.) but they are attached to God's will. This is verse 12:2.

In verse 12:3, King David isolates crooked peoples' 3 flaws. The first mentioned is the act of sin: "Men speak lies to one another." Man lies to take advantage of others. Keeping others oblivious to one's true subterfuge, man misleads others to decisions they believe are good for themselves, but truly benefit only the deceiver. Man is selfish and seeks to benefit the self alone.

What then is added by "smooth lips"? Doesn't this refer to lying? King David already said these people are liars! However, the King was inspired by God; his words teach great insight and are not redundant. Although one is a liar, "smooth lips" refer not to the act of sin, but to man's "state." King David is saying that man reaches a level of corruption of his soul; he has become a despicable person. Meaning, he is in a ruined state. As such, he is forever bent on harming others. The third matter "talking with duplicity" identifies the psychological cause of man's selfishness: his divided heart, where he conceal from others his destructive plans.

Thus, "Men speak lies" is the act of sin, "smooth lips" is the corrupted status of the sinner, and there is the core cause of this corruption: man's divided heart, his emotional makeup where he seeks the self over others.

May God cut off all smooth lips, every tongue that speaks arrogance (12:4)

With this next verse, King David provides which precise element demands God to wipe out such evil people: "smooth lips" i.e., the corrupted soul deserves to be wiped out. It is his regression to this state of corruption that yields no salvation and requires God's justice. It's not the single act of lying

that warrants one's death, but his regression to a despicable corrupt status that earns his death. Similarly, God says to Abraham, "And your seed shall return here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16). Here, God tells Abraham about his children's return to Israel: it is contingent on the Amorites' regression to a level of sin warranting annihilation. Thus, we see another expression of this principle that when man sinks to a certain status of corruption, this warrants his death. ■

The Wise Man is Unique

Who is like the wise man, who knows the interpretation of a matter? A man's wisdom lights up his face. His brazenness is changed (Koheles 8:1)

King Solomon shares 4 traits of a wise man:

- 1) he is unique
- 2) he can interpret matters
- 3) wisdom lights his face
- 4) wisdom removes his arrogance

1) Man follows either his emotions or his intellect; there is no 3rd choice as man does not have a 3rd faculty. First, King Solomon says the chocham—the wise man—is unlike all other men. For all other men are led by their emotions, while the chocham is in a passive perceptive state pondering God's wisdom which awes him; man's countenance is what engages the awe of wisdom (Rabbi Israel Chait).

2) The chocham differs from others in his engagement of his soul; he alone witnesses the design of reality and Torah. He alone appreciates the depth of brilliance they behold. This awe of wisdom is achieved only through analysis, interpretation and definition, as the chocham digs [1] into the layers of design, purpose and beauty[2] revealed in creation and in Torah. God is not simple; His creations and words [Torah] cannot be readily grasped without lingering on these matter, and using their embedded clues to uncover greater truths.

3) This in turn lights up man's countenance. It becomes his sole focus, and thereby, 4) his own brazenness dissipates as King David said, "When I see your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars You established, what is man that you are mindful of him?" (Psalms 8:5). Here, King David embodies our verse. ■

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THE BIBLE

How & Why God Gave it to Man

God's revelation of Himself and His Bible to 2.5 million Jews at Mount Sinai was the world's greatest event. This event renders Judaism the only religion based on mass witnesses, and thereby, the only proven religion.

This event contained a few unique elements: God created a voice emanating from fire, He gave 2 tablets of sapphire bearing miraculous text of the 10 Commandments, and He caused lightning, thunder, earthquakes and the sound of a shofar. Can we understand why God orchestrated Revelation in this precise form?

1. Why must revelation include fire? This question is strengthened as 8 times in Deuteronomy Moses reminds Israel that, "God's voice emanated from inside the fire."

2. Why are tablets needed? Why can't those 10 commands be written in Torah like all other 603 commands, and do away with the tablets? The need for these tablets is further seen, as after Moses breaks the tablets, God instructs him to hew a replacement set.

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Exodus 32:15,16 reads as follows:

And Moses turned and descended the mountain and the two Tablets of Testimony were in his hand: tablets written on both sides, from this side and that side they were written. The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing, embedded (charuss) on the tablets.

3. What is the plain meaning of the tablets' script written "from both sides"? What purpose does this serve? Moses broke the tablets, as Rabbi Israel Chait said, lest the Jews worship them as they worshipped the Gold Calf. The tablets were significantly superior to other stones. How so?

4. What is meant by "God's tablets" and "God's writing"? "Charuss" (Ibid. 32:16) can be understood as Maimonides states, naturally formed letters, not subsequent engraving upon the tablets:

"The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing" (Exod. xxxii. 1:6), that is to say, they were the product of nature, not of art, for all natural things are called "the work of the Lord." The writing may also have been produced by His direct will, not by means of an instrument (Guide, book I, chap. lxxvi).

Ibn Ezra offers no conclusive translation as he says Torah contains no other instance of "charuss." Therefore, charuss need not be translated as carved or incised, but merely as somehow "present" in the tablets. What is Maimonides' message that the writing was "natural"?

5. Earlier (Exod. 31:18) Torah says, "When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the pact, stone tablets inscribed with the finger of God." Why does God divide the tablets' description into 2 Torah sections?

Appreciating the details and hints about Sinai's astonishing miracles, God's precise Torah formulations direct us to the answers.

Fire: The Source of Torah is not Biological

In front of 2.5 million Jews, God created a voice to emanate from the fiery mountain. Maimonides says the Jews heard no distinct words, only the "sound" of words, following the verse, "The Lord spoke to you out of the fire; you heard the sound of words but perceived no form—nothing but a voice" (Deut. 4:12).

Life exists in all substances and regions, in ice, under sand, and in water. But all biological life perishes in fire. A voice emanating from fire teaches that this intelligence is not earthbound. But as Maimonides says the Jews heard no distinct words, only the "sound" of words, validation was yet required that Torah's content was divine. The voice emanating from fire taught that God is not physical. But how was God's communication verified?

Astonishing Tablets

Torah's divine source is validated through miraculously formed commands. "From both sides" does not mean "etched" writing, for the Jews could have believed that it was not God, but Moses who fabricated that writing, thereby stripping the tablets of their divine nature. And proof that this was possible was that as Moses "hewed" a second set of stones (Exod. 34:4), certainly he could "etch" letters on their surfaces.

Rather, "From both sides" means this: as sapphire is translucent, the internal sapphire grain is viewable from both sides, from all angles. God selected a translucent object for this purpose. As these 2 bricks of sapphire formed during creation (Avos 5:6), sentences also formed naturally inside the sapphire. This is a feat impossible for Moses to have fabricated; there is no manner in which Moses could have written "inside" the stones. Only the one Who formed sapphire, also authored Torah text within the sapphire. These stone tablets must have been an amazing sight. It is akin to cutting a tree open to find the rings inside are composed of Torah text. The creator of trees is Torah's author.

This means that the sapphire—creation—is subordinated to Torah. That is, nature is harnessed to share Torah...the physical world is subservient to Torah. The message at Sinai was that Earth was designed for a goal: for man to find God through studying Torah and nature. This message of nature facilitating the greater goal of sharing Torah is also demonstrated in the voice God created emanating from fire: God harnessed fire and sound, and enabled Torah to emanate.

The Rabbis teach, "God viewed Torah and created Earth." Meaning, Torah is Earth's blueprint; Torah is prior and superior to Earth. Rashi on Avos 2:8 says that if the Jews don't follow Torah, God will reverse creation back to voidness.

Additionally, the verse says they were "tablets of God." This means that each individual tablet was naturally formed. Naturally-formed complete tablets with no effects of human tampering complements the proof that the writing was not created by Moses, as the tablets were in their complete natural form.

All Creations are His

Shofar blasts cannot be produced naturally, but only by intelligent life. At first, Torah records that the shofar accompanied the thunder and lightning (Exod. 19:16). This demonstrated that the natural thunder and lightning was not separate from an intelligence (shofar). Torah then isolates the shofar, this time adding that it grew louder and louder (Ibid. 19:19) to stress that this was not a human production. When man blows a shofar, his breath weakens until he must stop and inhale once again. Thus, this shofar blare conveyed the presence of a divine intelligence.

God also "descended" on Mt. Sinai (Ibid. 19:20), and

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Deuteronomy 4:36 says that God spoke from the heavens to demonstrate His control is not limited to Earth alone. And the mountain shaking (Ibid. 19:18) displays God's control over Earth as a whole. All in heaven and Earth are shown to be guided by God's will.

2 Accounts of the Tablets

"When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the pact, stone tablets..."

Here, the operative word is "finished." Yes, God finished speaking to Moses, but He did not wish this lesson to be finished. This explains why only here God mentioned the tablets "stone" nature. God selected stone as a means to encapsulate His commands in an eternal substance. His prophecy to Moses concluded, but His lessons for man live on eternally in stone.

But the second account of the tablets does not mention stone at all. Rather, it highlights the tablets' miraculous nature. Why? As Moses descended Mt. Sinai to the idolatrous Jews, God highlights the tablets' miracle, in contrast to the imagined deity of the Gold Calf. The tablets' miraculous nature was now relevant to contrast the inanimate Gold Calf and teaches a lesson about what to deify: God alone.

Sinai's lessons were now complete: Fire taught that God is not physical, not biological, not of this world, and that He is the source of Torah. The miraculous stones and their writing taught what are His commands, and that they were not Moses own inscriptions, but were miraculous writing which only God could have created inside the translucent stones for all to see. And lightning, thunder and shofar demonstrated God's complete control of the world.

A theme emerges: fire with intelligence (voice), stones with intelligence (writing), and heavenly and earthly phenomena with intelligence (shofar). The lesson is that the physical world is subservient to God, whose will is that man pursue Torah over all else. When giving the Torah, God compromised the nature of fire, earth (sapphire tablets) and the heavens (thunder and lightning) to share His Torah. The Jews learned that all that is, exists only for man to study God through Torah.

God proved His supernatural existence amidst flames, Torah's commands were validated as divine, and the tablets "testified" as such, earning their title "Tablets of Testimony." And God demonstrated His dominion over heaven and Earth. Heaven and Earth were put in service of God imbuing mankind of Torah's vitality.

This Shavuot celebrates 3334 years since God gifted mankind a system to direct our lives towards the most happiness and fulfillment, in pursuit of God via His wisdom shared in His Torah. God orchestrated Revelation on Mt. Sinai to serve as everlasting validation of His metaphysical existence, His Bible authorship, and His control over creation. Harnessing creation to display Torah through tablets and God's communication through fire, teaches man that Earth is subservient to Torah. Our earthly lives were created for the purpose of Torah study. ■



Shavous

Dani Roth

“There upon Moses turned and went down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, tablets inscribed on both their surfaces: they were inscribed on the one side and on the other”

When Moshe got the Luchot, it specifically mentions that they were inscribed on both sides. Why was this an important feature of the Luchot? Wouldn't one side be sufficient to communicate God's commands?

Furthermore, couldn't Moshe make the inscriptions on both sides himself? If he could inscribe them himself, what's the proof that the Luchot were made by God?

We can answer both questions as follows. Our passuk can mean not that they were written on both sides, but rather that they were legible from both sides. Meaning, that as the Luchot were made from translucent sapphire, one could see the text from both sides. The key point is that the text was embedded inside the Luchot, not scratched upon its surfaces. Something like this could never have been done by Moshe or any human. This shows how God communicated how Torah was divine.

This theory is supported by the very next pasuk that says that the writing was “The writing of God.” Meaning, this writing was impossible to be created by a human. ■

Yom Yerushalayim

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Chait

This past Sunday, the 28th day of the month of Iyar (May 29), we celebrated Yom Yerushalayim, the day the Israeli forces in 1967 liberated and united the Old City of Jerusalem. But most importantly we liberated the Temple Mount and for the first time in almost two thousand years the Temple Mount was returned to Jewish sovereignty. Many major mistakes were made on how to govern our new found treasure both politically and more importantly Halachically (see Min Hahar article dated Feb. 26, 2022). Most felt that the administration of The Temple Mount should be left in the hands of the Arabs, the Waqf. There were a few individuals such as Rabbi Sholomo Goren who insisted from the onset that we should follow strict Halacha protocol but for the most part his pleas fell on deaf ears. As time went on the Arabs began to recover from their humiliating defeat of the six day war. They began to remove any ties between the Jewish people and the Temple Mount. Most of the Jewish world paid little attention to what was taking place on The Temple Mount. Any sign of Jewish religious practice was banned. Even standing in a position that indicated you were praying was banned. The significance of Yom Yerushalayim was focused on the unification of the city. Marching through all the gates of the old city waving Israeli flags, culminating at Herod's Western wall was the theme of the day. The celebration ended at Herod's wall. The other side of Herod's wall i.e. the Har Habayit was of little interest. As time went on people began to turn their thoughts and hearts to the holy Temple Mount, slowly realizing that it was long neglected. This year we reached a new record-breaking number of people ascending the Temple Mount; over 2,600. In the year 2000 only 1,000 Jews ascended the Temple Mount the entire year. The number would have been larger but the allotted time of three and a half hours expired, depriving many of their right to ascend the Har Habayit. But it was more than just numbers that has changed this year. It was a new spirit that was felt on The Har. One of euphoria, of joy; the excitement was breath-taken. Some groups were shouting Shema Yisroel, Hashem Hu

Haelokim. Others were saying Hallel out loud, others were singing the Hatikva while waving the Israeli flag. All this on the Temple Mount right in front of the Arabs who were shouting at us (see our website XXXXXX for various videos showing the excitement of the day). Change is in the air. We are moving forward and there is no going back now. An official representative of Al Aqsa was quoted as saying "What took place on Yom Yerushalayim (the outburst of Jewish jubilation on the Temple Mount) hasn't happened since 1967.

The term "Yom Yerushalayim" carries with it a dual meaning. On the one hand it signifies a day of joy and celebration which became the colloquial meaning of today. The term is also found in Tehillim, chapter 137 as part of the chapter "Al Na'haros Bavel" "By the rivers of Babylon". Many have the custom to recite this before grace after meals on weekdays in memory of the Temple's destruction. Verse 7 states "Remember, Hashem, for the offspring of Edom the day of Jerusalem for those who say 'Destroy' to its very foundation". Here the term "Yom Yerushalayim" has the connotation of a day of mourning, emphasizing the theme of a day of destruction. I believe this dual meaning carries an important message for us today. We find certain days are categorized as days of "Simcha", joy and happiness. For example, Yom Tov, where the essence of the day is Simcha, all forms of mourning are therefore prohibited, as mourning is contrary to the theme of the day. Other times, the day is defined as a day of mourning, such as Tisha B'av where activities of celebration become prohibited as this conflicts with the theme of Tisha B'av. But we find a third category where we must express both feelings at the same time. For example, a wedding celebration, where we are obligated to express two antithesis feelings. Standing under the Chuppah, the Chatan and Kallah who are experiencing that peak moment of happiness, must show signs of mourning and remorse for the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. It is incumbent to express this by such actions as breaking a glass as well as placing ashes on the head of the Chatan as he stands under

the Chuppah. We therefore see that at times at the height of simcha we must express mourning. Yom Yerushalayim demands us to express such ambivalence, because both ideas exist. On the one hand we look back and ask ourselves what have we done to the Har Habayit in the past fifty years since HaKadosh Baruch Hu returned it to Jewish sovereignty. We have openly disgraced it and violated the Mitzvah of showing awe and fear to the Har Habayit. We neglected the Mitzvah of Binyan Beis Hamikdash but worse, we turned it into a shrine for Islam, we made it a mini Mecca. This is heresy. We openly rejected the path of the Torah. This demands us to mourn. This is the Yom Yerushalayim of Tehillim. However, we recognized our mistakes and we are going back to correct them. We have made great progress in the last few years. Tefilla has returned to Har Habayit!! More and more people are realizing our error and are ascending the Har Habayit. In the year 2000 only 1,000 Jews ascended the Temple Mount the entire year. This year we are looking at hopefully over 50,000. The word is spreading. People are realizing our mistakes and are becoming more active. This is indeed something to rejoice about. New hope lies for the sanctity of the Har Habayit. But the road back isn't easy, it is fraught with new challenges and obstacles. We are hopeful that with the help of Hakadosh Baruch Hu we will be successful, and the words we recite at the end of Shmona Esrei "May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days" comes to fruition.

All those who wish to donate to our Yeshiva and Kollel or want additional information on the Har Habayit click on our link www.harhabayit.org ■

NOTE: One should not ascend the Temple Mount without proper Rabbinical instruction:

- 1) You should be informed of the various routes that are available according to the different Rabbinical opinions.
- 2) You must immerse in a Kosher Mikvah that meets the standards to be kosher med'orisa.
- 3) You must receive instructions for the proper preparations for the Mikvah (Chafifah)

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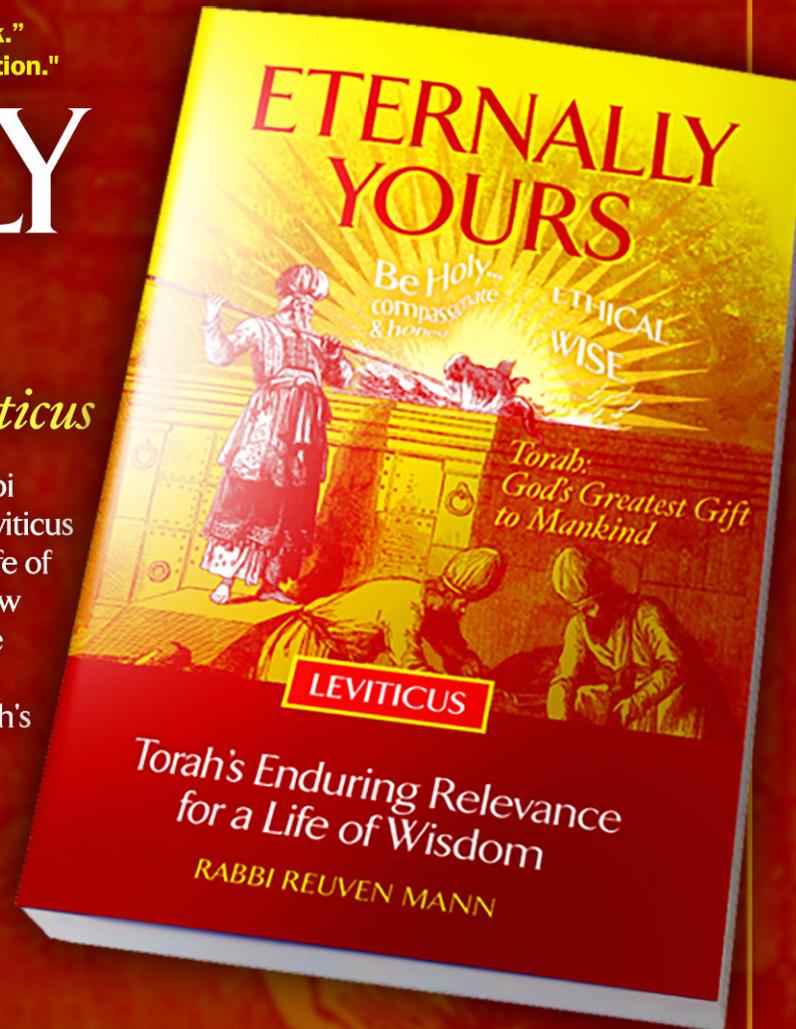
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