

The Bible, Biblical Hebrew, Science and Their Inter-relationships

A compendium of essays, 2010-2023

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Preface

This book comprises posts published on [“Haim Shore Blog”](#), starting July 2010 up to the present (time of publishing, 2023). It also contains several articles, of general interest to the public, which I have published in local Israeli media.

The essays in this compendium are classified into three parts:

Part I: The Bible, biblical Hebrew and Science (45 items)

Part II: Lessons on Life (17 items):

- **Part II (A).** Current Historical Coincidences (4 items)
- **PART II (B).** Personal Relationships and Else (13 items)

Part III: Views on Statistics (6 items).

We hope that readers of the book (in particular Part I) may gain new insights about the Bible, biblical Hebrew and their relationship to science, as these have been expressed based on mainstream Jewish Bible scholars, past and present, and on my own life-long research and personal study. Some further essays, included in Part II and Part III, address various other subjects of general interest, which I have addressed over the thirteen years (2010-2023), when these essays have been authored.

Haim Shore

Raanana, Israel

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**PART I. The BIBLE, BIBLICAL
HEBREW and Science**

"And the Earth" (Genesis 1:1) Delivers the First Seven Decimal Digits of Pi

Posted April 13, 2023

First ten digits of Pi are: 3.141592653... (Last digit not rounded).

The first verse of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 1:1) is:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ.

In this post, we address the relationship between Pi and the only two biblical Hebrew words of Genesis 1:1 relating to the physical world (marked in red), namely: "And the Earth".

We have written several posts about the relationships between Pi and the first verse of the Bible, as revealed in Oren Evron research work (for example, [here1](#), [here2](#), [here3](#)). In this post we add another finding of our own, relating to Gematria values of the seven letters comprising the two words.

As explained and demonstrated elsewhere ([here2](#)), there are two types of Gematria values: regular Gematria and **small Gematria**. The latter is traditionally defined in Jewish scholarship as the sum total of the Gematria values of individual letters comprising the word, with the zeros deleted; for example, the letter *Yod* (10) is counted as 1, the letter *Resh* (200) as 2 and so on.

Let us examine small Gematria of the seven letters comprising the two marked words :

First letter: **6** (letter "ו"); Second letter: **1** (letter "א"); Third letter: **4** (letter "ת", value of 400 in regular Gematria); Fourth letter: **5** (letter "ה"); Fifth letter: **1** (letter "א"); Sixth letter: **2** (letter "ר", value of 200 in regular Gematria); Seventh letter: **9** (letter "ץ", value of 90 in regular Gematria).

Here are the two sequences, side by side:

Pi: {1, 4, 1, 5, 9, 2, 6}; Genesis 1:1: {6, 1, 4, 5, 1, 2, 9}.

Note that, ignoring the first digit in **Genesis 1:1** ("6"), the remaining three **pairs** of digits preserve same order as in **Pi**.

The Probability/Statistics oriented reader is challenged to calculate the probability of this finding happening by chance...

(hint: total possible number of such sequences is nine to the power of 7, namely, 4.8 million!)

Why a Jewish Rabbi wondered that Sun in Hebrew not named Eretz (Earth)?

Posted January 30, 2023

As reported in Jewish written sources, the name Earth in biblical Hebrew was the subject of much debate and puzzlement over the ages.

The source for these was the fact that the name for Earth in biblical Hebrew resembles the word for... “run” — namely, “move fast” (Earth in Hebrew *Eretz*, run is *ratz*).

A Geo-centric world view, according to which all heavenly bodies are rotating around Earth, was dominant for over 1500 years, until the late 16th century and onward, when it was replaced by the Heliocentric model of modern science (Wikipedia, [Geocentric Model](#)).

Living in the geocentric world view, Jewish scholars over the ages were puzzled about this resemblance of *Eretz* and *Ratz* (same philological root). They explained that this similarity is most probably due to the "fact" that the moon and the sun and all stars are “running” around the earth.

Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437– 1508), a well-known commentator of the Bible, did not accept this interpretation. In his commentary to Genesis, he explained that

“Since the earth is a still centre, it would have been appropriate that the wheel [meaning sun] should be called *Eretz*, and not the still centre around which it revolves.”

Obviously, living prior to the historic shift towards the heliocentric worldview, Jewish sages have tried to fit their interpretations to the scientific knowledge of the time. Abarbanel rejected their explanations, based on pure logic.

The Jewish rabbi was obviously unaware that not many years later, Copernicus (1473–1543), in his book published not long prior to Copernicus death, would start the heliocentric revolution.

This resolved the quandary, raised by the Jewish rabbi, about a single biblical Hebrew word, *Eretz*, which to this day is used in Hebrew and in other languages (Earth), **describing accurately what planet Earth is indeed doing, namely, “running” around the sun**”.

How Do the Ten Commandments Comport with Free-Will?

Posted July 10, 2022

A Divine Commandment is always fulfilled. To the letter.

An example:

“And Elohim said: “Let there be light”, and there was light” (Genesis 1:3).

If that is so. If divine command, by definition, is always fulfilled:

- How is it that the same has not materialized with regard to another set of Divine Commandments, the Ten Commandments?
- How come that since its inception at Mount Sinai, about three thousand and three hundred years ago, we are witnessing violating of the Ten Commandments by the human species throughout history, abundantly, continuously, right, left and centre?

And more generally:

How do the Ten Commandments comport with free-will, endowed by The Creator onto humankind, the created?

Free-will is emphasized in the Bible, time and again:

“See, I set before you today life, and that which is good; and death, and that which is bad” (Deuteronomy 30:15);

“I call Heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; Therefore, choose life that both you and your seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Hebrew prophets, likewise, never cease to insist (emphasized mine):

“He has **told** thee, O man, what is good and what does **Jehovah requires** of you, but to do justice and love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

If emphasis on free-will is so prevalent throughout the Bible, and given the wide-spread ignoring, throughout history, of the Ten Commandments — how should we account for this seeming inconsistency in the Bible?

The answer to this intriguing question is simple and straightforward:

In its original biblical Hebrew, the Bible does not have a concept of “Ten Commandments”. Instead, biblical Hebrew for the Ten Commandments is “Devarim”.

The root of this word, in its verbal form, means to speak. “Devarim”, literally, implies divine utterances.

A thorough discussion of this concept, with biblical quotes, is delivered in [“Diber” or “Dever” – Two Modes of Divine Dialogue with Humankind in a World of Free-Will](#) (it re-appears elsewhere in this book).

Agag, Haman the Agagite, Gog, Magog, Gag — What binds them all together?

Posted June 12, 2022

Gag in Hebrew is **roof**. For example:

“I lie awake; I have become like a bird on the roof (Gag)” (Psalm 102:8; 102:7, in some English translations).

Agag was king of Amalek. The latter, throughout the Bible, serves as epitome for the disconnect between the Heaven and the Earth (Genesis 1:1). Therefore, the Israelites are explicitly commanded, in no ambiguous terms:

“Remember what Amalek had done to you on the way, when you came out of Egypt...you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under the sky; thou shall not forget” (Deuteronomy 25:17,19).

The Bible tells us about king Saul, and what he did to Agag, king of Amalek:

“He took Agag king of Amalek alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the sword” (1 Samuel 15:8).

Haman, a central figure in the Book of Esther, was the first historic figure to conceive and then attempt to implement a “Final Solution” on the Jewish people (during the reign of the Persian Empire, as expounded in detail in the Book of Esther). Haman was a descendent of Agag, namely, of Amalek seed:

“Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he devised against the Jews” (Esther 8:3).

Gog and Magog are well-known names, central to Ezekiel’s prophecy of End-Time final war:

“Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him” (Ezekiel 38:2).

What binds together all these names?

Answer: The double appearance of a single letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, the third letter, *Gimel* (corresponding to the English g).

In biblical Hebrew, as well as in modern Hebrew, a double appearance of *Gimel* forms the Hebrew word Gag (written with two *Gimels*, גג). This combination has a single meaning — “Roof”.

The roof is that part of a house, which protects its residents from harm that may befall them from the sky.

In biblical terms, the roof attains a much wider meaning, indeed a gigantic symbolic significance:

As a roof of a house disconnects earth from sky, the biblical “Roof” symbolizes disconnect between “The Heaven” and “The Earth”, as these are alluded to in the first verse of Genesis:

“In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

The most concrete biblical allusion to this interpretation is given by the command, given to the Israelites, to build booths (*Sukot*) during the Feast of Tabernacles:

“You shall dwell in booths for seven days; All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so that your descendants will know that I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 23:42).

There is no solid protective roof for the booths, where the Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated. Traditionally, the roof must be made from natural elements that have grown from the ground. Most people use either palm fronds or bamboo with wooden beams as support. The roof also must be thick enough to provide significant shade, but **thin enough to let the stars shine through**.

Why does the Sukkah not have a solid roof? What does this signify?

The answer is simple: Lack of solid roof signifies complete faith in Divine Providence, in Divine protection against harm that may befall us. Conversely, relying on the symbolic “physical roof” as protection, perhaps sole protection, signifies a deep faith that “The Earth” (Genesis 1:1) is all that there is. There is no heaven. There is no God.

The roof of a house generates a disconnect from the sky. Symbolically, sitting in the booth during the Feast of Tabernacles, while removing the roof, signifies faith in Divine protection that would protect against any harm (from the sky or otherwise). And more generally, complete faith in the connection between “the heaven” and “the earth”.

Amalek embodies the opposite: There is no heaven, no system of Divine justice, no God. There is only “the earth” (the observable physical reality, ruled by law of nature). Everything else, which looks random, is indeed random. There is no Divine Providence.

Agag, Haman the **Agagite**, **Gog**, **Magog** — they all represent the Amalekite philosophy of life: “No God, no heaven, all is coincidental”. The biblical concept of “Roof” symbolizes exclusive reliance on our own ability (and capability) to understand nature, rule nature, and construct the needed “Roof” that would protect us.

“Roof”, consistently throughout the Bible, is an integral part of names of historic figures, past (Agag) or future (Gog), and of names of lands (like the mysterious Magog), which represent a philosophy diagonally opposite to that of the Bible, a philosophy central to current Western Civilization (see [here](#)) — the Amalekite philosophy of life.

Surprisingly and unexpectedly, all these names include the Hebrew “Gag” (Roof).

And how will the future Gog and Magog war end?

Quote from prophet Zechariah:

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations, which have come against Jerusalem, shall go up, every single year, to bow before the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the **Feast of Tabernacles**" (Zechariah 14:16).

Personal confession: Amazing!!

Comment

The Israelites, on their way to the promised land, committed two major sins, both being testimony to lack of faith in Divine protection:

- The sin of the Golden Calf (in Hebrew, sin of the *Egel*);
- The sin of the spies (sin of the *Meraglim*).

Both sins are considered, in Jewish tradition, to have fateful consequences to Jewish history.

The first sin caused Moses to smash the first tablets with the Ten Commandments. This required of Moses going up Mount Sinai to receive the tablets the second time.

The second sin occurred, in Jewish tradition, on the ninth of the month of Av. In Jewish tradition, this was the date when the two temples in Jerusalem had been destroyed. Other catastrophes in Jewish history are also known to occur on that same date.

Surprisingly, Hebrew names of both sins have, as their middle letter, the second most rare letter in biblical Hebrew, the letter *Gimel*. With these two sins, combined, the Israelites, on their way to the promised land, formed their own particular version of **GAG** ("Roof").

Values of Hebrew Day-Names in Genesis 1 Represent Ordinal Positions

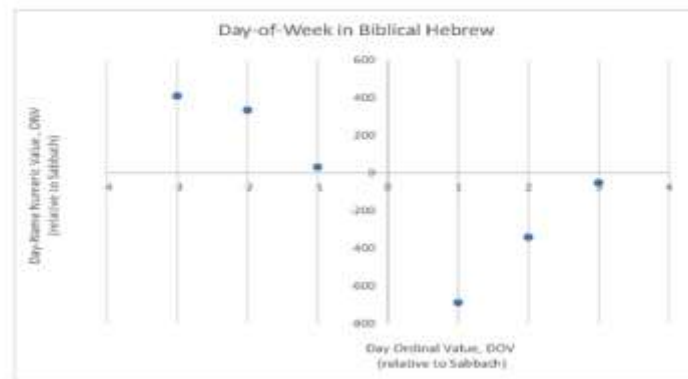
Posted May 25, 2022

All week-days in Genesis 1 have specific names. These are (Hebrew, left to right):

Echad ("One"; Sunday); *Sheni* ("Second"; Monday); *Shlishi* ("Third"; Tuesday); *Reviee* ("Fourth"; Wed.); *Chamishi* ("Fifth"; Thurs.); *Yom Ha-Shishi* ("The Sixth Day"; Friday); *Yom Ha-Sheviee* ("The Seventh Day"; Sat.) or *Shabbat* (Sabbath).

Each of these biblical Hebrew names has a specific numerical value, the sum total of the numeric values of the Hebrew letters comprising the name. Do these values represent the ordinal position of the days they represent?

Pursuing the same method used throughout my research of the Bible and biblical Hebrew (namely, "linear plot indicates same set of values, represented by two different scales"), the following plot, with its explanatory comments, seem to support the claim expressed in the title of this post:



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Explanatory Comment:

All values are based on names of week-days, as appearing in the first chapter of Genesis:

For the first three days (Sun. to Tuesday), DOV marks "distance from last Sabbath" (in positive increasing values, 1, 2 and 3, respectively).

For the last three days (Wed. to Friday), DOV marks "distance from upcoming Sabbath" (in negative increasing values, -3, -2 and -1, respectively).

Examples for calculation:

For Sabbath:

Numeric value=702; Therefore: $DOV = 0$; $DNV = 0$; This day is not marked in the plot;

First day of the week:

English: **Sunday**; Biblical Hebrew: *Echad*;

Numerical Values: $DOV = 1$; $DNV = 13-702 = -689$;

“Shamayim” — The Most Counter-intuitive Yet Scientifically Accurate Word in Biblical Hebrew

Posted January 11, 2022

The word *Shamayim* in Hebrew simply means Sky (*Rakia* in biblical Hebrew; Genesis 1:8):

“And God called the *Rakia Shamayim*, and there was evening and there was morning second day”.

Rakia in biblical Hebrew, like in modern Hebrew, simply means sky.

So why, in the first chapter of Genesis, is the sky Divinely called *Shamayim*?

And why, according to the rules of biblical Hebrew, is it fundamentally counter-intuitive, yet, so scientifically accurate?

The word *Shamayim* comprises two syllables. The first is *Sham*, which simply means there, namely, that which is inaccessible from here. The second syllable, *ayim*, is a suffix, namely, an affix added to the end of the stem of the word. Such suffix is added, in Hebrew, to words that represent a symmetric pair of objects, or, more generally, to words that represent objects that appear in symmetry. Thus, all visible organs in the human body that appear in pairs have same suffix, like legs (*raglayim*), hands (*yadayim*), eyes (*einayim*) and ears (*oznayim*). However, teeth, arranged in symmetry in the human mouth, though not in pairs, also have same suffix. Teeth in Hebrew is *shinayim*. Other examples may be read in my book at Chapter 5.

Let us address the two claims in the title:

- Why *Shamayim* is counter-intuitive?
- Why is *Shamayim* so scientifically accurate?

The answer to the first claim is nearly self-evident. When one observes the sky, at dark hours, the observed is far from symmetric. So much so that the twelve Zodiacal constellations had to be invented, in ancient times, to deliver some sense to the different non-symmetric configurations of stars that to this day can be observed by the naked eye in the sky.

Yet, despite the apparent non-symmetry observed in the sky, the Divine chose to grant the sky a word indicative of the most fundamental property of the sky, as we have scientifically learned it to be in recent times, namely, its symmetry (as observed from Planet Earth), or its uniformity (as preached by modern cosmology).

To learn how fundamentally uniform (or symmetric) the universe is, the reader is referred to Chapters 5 and 7 of my book, and references therein. Another good source to learn about the uniformity of the universe, as observed via telescopes and as articulated by modern science, is the excellent presentation by Don Lincoln at Wondrium channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRQvp3XPH_s

Note the term Desert, addressed in the lecture. The term is used, in modern cosmology, to denote the uniformity of the universe at the Big Bang ("In the beginning").

Surprisingly, the words, *Tohu Va-Vohu*, describing the universe “in the beginning” (Genesis 1:2), are also associated with desert, as they are employed elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

Consider, for example, Jeremiah (4:23, 26):

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was *Tohu Va-Vohu*...I beheld and, lo, the fruitful land has become the desert...”.

Refer also to Isaiah (34:11).

So:

- *Shamayim* is counter-intuitive and at odds with the picture, revealed in ancient times to the naive observer, our pre-science ancestors;
- *Shamayim* yet accurately describes current scientific picture of the universe, as formed in the last hundred years or so, based on cumulative empirical data (gathered via telescopes), and based on modern theories of the evolution and structure of the universe.

Articulated more simply: Whatever direction in the sky you point to, *Shamayim* states that it is all the same, contrary to what the naked eyes are telling us, in conformance with what modern science is telling.

Personal confession: mind boggling...

In biblical Hebrew — “Yom” is not necessarily “Day”

Posted December 17, 2021

In a recent post (and an accompanying podcast), we have shown that Erev and Boker, in Genesis creation narrative (Genesis 1), do not represent “Evening” and “Morning”, as commonly interpreted, and as traditionally assumed. Rather, these two words represent, respectively, two states — one of “Mixture”, Erev, the other of its opposite, Boker (outcome of sorting out the mixture into its constituents, namely, a state of “non-mixture”).

Does *Yom* in Genesis 1 mean “Day” (as commonly translated into English)?

Or perhaps the word, as used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, has a more general meaning, denoting, simply and non-specifically, “Period of time”?

To answer this intriguing question, we inspect verses in the Jewish Hebrew Bible, where *Yom* is used. The latter appears therein, with variations, no less than 2291 times. Naturally, in most cases *Yom*, and its variations, represent “Day”.

But...not always and not necessarily so.

We find out that in a considerable proportion of the verses, *Yom* simply denotes “Period”, whether in the future (future period, “**in/on that day**”) or currently (present period, “**to this day**”). We note that “Time”, in the common sense, does not appear at all in the Bible (where it rarely does appear, it means exclusively a specified point in time, like in “appointment time”). Therefore, “Day” is used instead to denote unspecified period of time. No other meaning can possibly be attached to the word, as it appears and being used in those verses.

Here are a few examples:

[1] “...he is the father of Mo’av **to this day**” (Genesis 19:37-38);

[2] “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted **on that day**” (Isaiah 2:11);

[3] “And it shall come to pass **on that day** that Jehovah shall beat out his harvest from the strongly flowing river to the Wadi of Egypt, and you shall be gathered up one by one, O Children of Israel” (Isaiah 27:12);

[4] “**In that day** shall the Lord of Hosts be a glorious crown, beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people” (Isaiah 28:5);

[5] “For the **day** is near, the **day** of Jehovah is near, a **day** of clouds, a time of doom it shall be for the nations” (Ezekiel 30:3);

[6] “**In that day** people will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, even from Egypt to the river, and from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain” (Micha 7:12);

[7] “**On that day** Jehovah will be one and His name One” (Zechariah 14:9).

“And There was Evening and There was Morning” (Gen. 1) — A Different Interpretation

Posted December 2, 2021

The known verse from the first chapter of Genesis appears therein, not surprisingly, six times.

The two central words of the verse, which confer on it its meaning, are *Boker* (morning in biblical Hebrew) and *Erev* (evening). However, their order of appearance in the verse is bizarre:

"...and there was evening and there was morning one day" (Genesis 1:5).

This is logically flawed (and same applies to all other five variations of the verse). The correct articulation should be:

"...and there was morning and there was evening one day".

Perhaps the verse is misconstrued by us?

Is there an alternative interpretation that may remove the logical flaw, inherent to current interpretation?

In this post (and the allied podcast), we offer a new interpretation. The latter integrates well with the creation narrative, as unfolding in Genesis 1, and, astoundingly, it also comports well with current scientific knowledge of the Big-Bang and its aftermath.

Ultimately, the new interpretation also explains why the same two words, *Erev* and *Boker*, stand for “evening” and “morning”, respectively, in traditional interpretations of the verse.

We base the new interpretation on a basic root analysis of the two words, and support it by numerous other verses in the Jewish Bible, where same roots appear in a context utterly divorced from the traditional meaning as “evening” and “morning”; yet, in context that is consistent with the new interpretation.

Therefore, both *Erev* and *Boker*, and their respective roots, are hence forth discussed with no relationship whatsoever to their acceptable meanings as evening and morning, respectively.

We start with *Erev*.

This word, and other words of same root, appear over 150 times in the Bible. The Hebrew root of *Erev* corresponds to E.R.B, in English. Most times, the root is associated with “evening”, but not uniquely so. Another common usage relates to mixing, or mixture. Thus, *Erev-Rav* (literally, “much mixture”) stands for a mixture of tribes, *Arov* stands for a mixture of animals (one of the Ten Plights of Egypt), and *Le-itarev* means to mix together.

In other words, *Erev*, in biblical Hebrew, simply means mixture.

Not surprisingly, the time of day when darkness starts crawling over earth, is also called *Erev* in Hebrew.

Let us next consider *Boker*.

Traditionally, the word means morning. We might be astonished to learn that its root is tightly linked to *Erev*, when the latter is interpreted as mixture. Furthermore, as we shall soon realize, the root of *Boker* diametrically represents the opposite of *Erev*, when the latter is interpreted as mixture.

Let us analyze usage of the root of *Boker* (B.K.R) in various biblical Hebrew words.

The grammatical *structure* of *Boker* is the same as *Chodesh* (month, in Hebrew). The verb associated with *Chodesh* is *Le-Chadesh*, meaning to renew. One may understand why month in Hebrew implies renewal, since the Hebrew calendar is based on the lunar (moon-based) month, with some periodical adjustments to keep it in tune with the solar calendar (sun-based calendar).

Similarly, the respective verb, associated with *Boker*, is *Le-Vaker*. Among other related meanings, *Le-Vaker* in biblical Hebrew means to seek out, namely, to make something that is mixed distinct and separate. For example (from Collins Concise Dictionary): “She sought out her friend from among the crowd”.

A typical example for the use of *Le-Vaker*, sharing same root with *Boker*, is found in Leviticus. The verse describes donation of an animal to be sacrificed to Jehovah. The verse addresses the donor and relates to his animal donation (Leviticus 27:33):

“He must not seek out (*Lo Ye-Vaker*) the good from the bad or make any substitution. If he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.”

In other words, if the donated animal is defective, impaired in some way, the donor must not distinguish the good from the bad, or make substitution, so that the sacrifice includes only good parts of the animal. The latter must be sacrificed in its totality.

Similarly, refer to Leviticus 13:36, or Ezekiel 34:11-12.

We realize that, according to the new interpretation based on root analysis, *Erev* and *Boker* are inherently connected, diametrically representing two opposite states. *Erev* describes a state of mixture; *Boker* describes a state that is the outcome of sorting out the mixture into its individual constituents, rendering them distinct, “separate from the crowd” (the mixture). In short, *Boker* describes a new state, where constituents of the mixture stand each on its own, materializing to full fruition as a result of the act of *bakarab* (seeking out the ingredients of the mixture).

With this new insight, based on root analysis of the two words *Erev* and *Boker*, the well-known verse, “and there was evening and there was morning”, acquires a completely new meaning. It may more precisely be re-articulated as follows:

”There was mixture (*Erev*), and then there was non-mixture (*Boker*)”, a new state where the mixture is dissolved, sorted out into its individual constituents.

We again note that the traditional interpretation, “And there was evening and there was morning one day” (and other versions of same verse) are logically flawed. The morning appears before the evening (to define a day), not the other way around. With the new interpretation, this logical flaw disappears since time is appropriately preserved.

Is the new interpretation consistent with the general description of creation, as unfolding in Genesis creation narrative?

Indeed, very much so. In Genesis creation narrative, as unfolding in the first chapter of Genesis, the word “create” (*Bara*), appears not six times, as might be expected, but only thrice. It first appears in Genesis 1:1 as an overall statement of all that have been created:

“In the beginning *Elohim* **created** the Heavens and the Earth” (Genesis 1:1).

The third time creation is mentioned relates to the human species (Genesis 1:27):

“So *Elohim* **created** Mankind, in His own image, in the image of *Elohim* **created** He him, male and female He created them”.

One may wonder: If creation had happened “In the Beginning” (Genesis 1:1), and then on the sixth day (Genesis 1:27), what has the Divine being engaged in the rest of the Six Days, when creation is not at all mentioned?

The surprising answer is embedded in the two words, *Erev* and *Boker*, based on their new interpretation, based on their root analysis.

In the other days, when no creation is specified, Genesis creation narrative describes, individually for each day, how *Elohim*, by Divine utterance, has turned *Erev* (a state of mixture) into *Boker* (a state of non-mixture, individual parts sorted out from the mixture).

In other words, in most of Genesis 1 creation narrative, the Divine separates the mixture (created “in the beginning”) into its distinct individual elements, materializing them from the uniform mixture, into which they were initially embedded.

How does this interpretation comport with modern science?

Indeed, surprisingly well.

The two words, *Erev* and *Boker*, as newly interpreted, are extremely consistent with how the Big-Bang and its aftermath, in the first few seconds of existence, are currently described by science.

A central element in this description is the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation (CMBR). This radiation is a relic of the Big-Bang and its immediate aftermath. The uniformity of the radiation across the universe testifies that in the “Beginning” the universe was extremely uniform.

This uniformity is echoed in the Bible, describing the just created physical world (“The Earth”; Genesis 1:2):

“And The Earth was without form and void (*Tobu Va-Vobu*)..”.

Using root analysis of the two Hebrew words, *Tobu* and *Vobu*, let us make sense of this verse and find out what it really conveys.

Science describes the first few seconds after the Big-Bang as extremely uniform. Nothing is yet distinct, there is no information to observe. This scientific description is reflected in *Tobu* and *Bobu*. The Bible describes the just created world as being in a state that whatever an observer at the time would observe, he or she will be bewildered (*Li-Tebot*, to wonder; Hebrew verb linked to *Tohu*). Also, the imaginary observer would look around purposelessly (*Li-vebot*; Hebrew verb linked to *Bobu*). Both descriptions allude to an observer, bewildered and looking around purposelessly. Why? because there is no information, nothing to observe that might help making sense of the observed (just as in a desert).

We have come to the end of our exploration journey regarding creation of The Earth, as alluded to in Genesis 1. We realize that in most days of creation, the Divine sorted out, by uttering a Divine command, that which was created “In the beginning”.

Let us address the second creation, that of humankind (on the sixth day of creation; Genesis 1:27). Humankind was not created when God created “The Heavens and the Earth” (Genesis 1:1), or the word “created” would not be repeated to describe creation of Mankind (Genesis 1:27).

Since creation first alludes to “The Heavens and the Earth”, and only later to Humankind, we, human beings, are doomed to repeat, in our own life, the same process, as described regarding The Earth in the first five days of Genesis creation (and some also on the sixth day) .

According to the creation narrative, the physical world (The Earth) has moved, from one day to the next, from a vague mixture (*Erev, Tobu Va-Vobu*) into its visible distinct constituents (*Boker*), turning the potential into observable reality.

We, human beings, who were separately created, are doomed to repeat the same process as The Earth.

Exercising free will, we are doomed to sort out the hidden faceless mixture, residing within us from infancy, into observable, distinct and separate personality and character.

Once we do that, transforming the potential, lurking within us in a mixture form, into the “I”, or “Me”, which we have grown up to become;

Once we do that, then, and only then, may we offer our own creation, our own non-mixed unique self, to the world, to be of benefit to the rest of humanity, and to all other creatures living on the surface of Planet Earth.

“Becoming Holy” — The Bible Prescription

Posted October 27, 2021

The desire to become holy, as a means to ascend to higher spiritual dimensions, is as ancient as human civilization.

But what does it mean to become holy? How do you become holy?

Several paths to holiness have been offered in the past. These include:

- **Path 1.** Seclusion in an isolated place, disconnected from human beings.
- **Path 2.** Refrain from talk (keeping silent) for an extended period of time.
- **Path 3.** Pursuing the path of a Nazarite (including abstinence from the other sex and from alcohol).
- **Path 4.** Adoption of certain dietary menus to cleanse the body, hopefully leading to holiness.

What is the Bible prescription to becoming holy?

It indeed departs appreciably from all the paths just described. However, it is exact. And it is specific.

The Bible delivers a prescription to becoming holy in the form of ‘Do’s and ‘Do-not do’s. These are scattered throughout the Bible (particularly, in Torah and the prophets). Yet, it is described in detail, in a concentrated fashion, in a certain segment of the Jewish Torah, generally referred to, in Jewish tradition, as *Parashat Kedoshim* (Segment “The holy ones”).

The prescription starts with a Divine assertion, repeated, nearly verbatim, close to the end of the Parashah.

Here is the opening verse (Leviticus 19:1):

“And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, speak to all the congregation of the Children of Israel and say to them: “Holy shall you be because holy am I, Jehovah your God”.

In a verse, prior to the end of the Parashah, the same assertion is repeated (Leviticus 20:26):

“And you shall be holy to me for holy am I, Jehovah...”.

Throughout the Parashah, the signature of the Divine is repeated, time and again, at the end of a set of ‘Do’s and ‘Do-not do’s, as if to remind the listener (or reader), of their Divine source:

“I am Jehovah”. (For example, Leviticus 19:16).

In this post (and the accompanying podcast), we concentrate on a certain small segment of ‘Do’s and ‘Do-not do’s. They are not related in particular to the Israelites (as are, for example, dietary Kashrut commandments). These ‘Do’s and ‘Do-not do’s are of a universal value, applicable to all aspiring for holiness in their lives.

We refer to verses 16 to 18 of Leviticus 19. They represent some of the ‘Do’s and ‘Do-not do’s, prescribed by Torah as a path to holiness in Chapters 19 and 20. We start with the ‘Do-not do’s.

1. Do-not Do 1 (Verse 16):

“Do not walk around offering your merchandise of slander”. (Expressed in four words, in the original biblical Hebrew).

In short, do not engage in slander. We note that slander, in biblical terms, means telling **un-pleasant truths** about a fellow human being. This is a profound diversion from modern judiciary systems, where

slander exclusively means telling **un-pleasant lies**, about a specific individual or about a group of people. According to Torah, these do not constitute slander. These are simply lies, or falsehoods. In Torah terms, slander exclusively relates to telling truths, unpleasant or embarrassing as they may be.

2. Do-not Do 2 (Verse 16):

“Do not stand still, while your fellow human-being is in a potentially threatening blood-shedding situation. I am Jehovah”. (First sentence, in the original biblical, Hebrew expressed in five words).

3. Do-not Do 3 (Verse 17):

“Do not hate your fellow human-being in your heart”.

4. Do-not Do 4 (Verse 18):

“Do not do wrong in return for wrong-doing committed unto you”.

In short, do not take revenge.

5. Do-not Do 5 (Verse 18):

“Do not reserve resentment”.

We note, that resentment may lead to revenge. This is comparable to coveting (subject of the Tenth Commandment), which may lead to stealing. The Torah commands, in both cases — Eliminate the root-cause: Resentment that may lead to revenge; Coveting that may lead to stealing.

We proceed to the “To do” list in the same small segment (Leviticus 19:16-18).

1. Do 1 (Verse 17):

“Reproach your fellow human-being lest you carry his sin, on your account”.

In the original Hebrew text, a different interpretation is also possible:

“Reproach your fellow human-being lest he carries a sin, due to you”.

In other words, because you have refrained from reproach, when one was needed, your fellow human-being may carry a sin, namely, become a sinner.

2. Do 2 (Verse 18):

“Love thy neighbour as yourself. I am Jehovah”.

Five ‘Do-not Do’s and two ‘Do’s in a very small segment of Divine prescription to becoming holy. These are a small representative sample.

To become truly holy, the Divine prescription, as articulated in Torah and in the prophets, need to be learned in depth, and then re-learned, and re-learned again. Until this prescription is practiced on a regular basis.

Once this happens, the prescription is engraved as a way of life, the ‘Do’s and ‘Do-not Do’s are absorbed to become like second nature.

In the language of Torah, a ‘Do-not Do’, which has formerly been observed as Divine command that needs to be fulfilled, is now replaced with “Not being able to do” (for example, Deuteronomy 21:16).

An aspiring individual, wishing to be holy, then no longer merely fulfills a Divine commandment: “Be holy, for I, Jehovah, am holy”.

Rather, he, or she, becomes God-like.

To become like God is an ancient desire. It had formerly been expressed, in Torah, in a perverted way, by Adam and Eve, who desired to be *like Elohim* (Genesis 3:5). To be *Elohim-like* means to resemble the Creator, namely, dominate nature.

This time, same desire, to be like God, is expressed differently, materializing the right way. It is expressed as a desire to become *Jehovah-like* via becoming truly holy.

Why becoming truly holy, Torah fashion, implies becoming *Jehovah-like*?

Because,

“I, Jehovah, am holy”.

God of History and Verse Number in Torah

Posted February 05, 2021

In the First Commandment, conveyed by the Divine to the Israelites in Mount Sinai, God "introduces" Himself not as creator of "the Heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1), but as ruler of History.

This complies with Jewish tradition, which asserts that God continuously engages in human affairs, in the history of the created, to implement the unknown and humanly-unknowable Divine Design (refer to my related post: [“And Elohim Saw Ki Tov” \(“that it was good”\)” \(Gen. 1\) — A Different Viewpoint](#)).

The First Commandment starts:

"I am Jehovah your God, who have brought you out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).

In compliance with this tradition, of Jehovah as God of History, Kabbalah claims that each verse in Torah corresponds to a single Hebrew-calendar year, and the verse consecutive (serial) number in Torah is indication of the Hebrew year, to which the content of the verse relates.

The above is based on introductory comments by Rabbi Benjamin Blech in a lecture of February, 1-st, 2021, a link to which is given below.

In this short post, we list verses from Torah (including some from the afore-cited source), with possible links to historic events that have occurred the same Hebrew year, as the verse serial number. We pursue Rabbi Blech comment that these cannot and should not to be used to predict the future; first, because the full historic significance of a Torah verse can only be comprehensively comprehended only post-factum (namely, after the Hebrew-calendar year, to which the verse supposedly refers, is already part of history); Secondly, because human prophesizing, lacking explicit Divine inspiration and authorization, goes against the most fundamental condition of human existence, namely, Free Will.

Here are some examples (from Rabbi Blech presentation and else):

- **Historic Event:** Nazi Germany executing the "Final Solution" (Holocaust still in full swing, 1944; Jews uprooted from their place of residence to Concentration Camps, mostly in other countries); **Hebrew-calendar year: 5704 (1944)**; 5704-th verse in Torah:

"And Jehovah uprooted them from their land in anger, and in fury and in great wrath and cast them into another land, as it is this day" (Deuteronomy 29:27);

- **Historic Event:** End of World War II (also end of Holocaust, now revealed in its full dimensions, with lingering question mark in the minds of people-of-faith - "where was God?"); **Hebrew-calendar year: 5705 (1945)**; 5705-th verse in Torah:

"The hidden belong to Jehovah, our God, and the revealed are for us and for our offspring forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah" (Deuteronomy 29:28);

- **Historic Event:** Founding the State of Israel; **Hebrew-calendar year: 5708 (May, 1948)**; 5708-th verse in Torah:

"Then Jehovah your God will restore you from your captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples that Jehovah your God has scattered you" (Deuteronomy 30:3);

- **Historic Event:** Mass Jewish immigration to the State of Israel during its first 3 and a half years of existence, mostly from Moslem Arab countries ("Some 688,000 immigrants came at an average of close to 200,000 a year... As approximately 650,000 Jews lived in Israel at the time ... this meant in effect a

doubling of the Jewish population"; Source: site of The Jewish Agency for Israel); **Hebrew-calendar years: 5709 (1949) – 5712 (1952)**; 5709&5710-th verses in Torah:

"If your outcasts be at the ends of the earth, from there will Jehovah your God gather you and from there will He fetch you; And Jehovah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it, and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers" (Deuteronomy 30:4-5);

Comment: Based on lecture of Feb 1, 2021:

[Kabbalah: Can It Predict the Future? \(Ft. Rabbi Benjamin Blech\)](#)

“*Diber*” or “*Dever*” – Two Modes of Divine Dialogue with Humankind in a World of Free-Will

Posted June 11, 2020

The Ten Commandments, in their original biblical Hebrew, are — The Ten *Dvarim*, or Ten *Dibrot* (the singular of which is *Diber*); The Holy of Holies, where the tablets with the Ten Commandments were held in the first and second Jewish temples, is — *Dvir*; A plague is — *Dever*! All these share a common root in biblical Hebrew — D.B.R (ד.ב.ר).

The main use of this root in Hebrew is a verb... to Speak!!

What???? What is going on here?? Who is speaking to whom?

And how are these most central precepts of Judeo-Christian civilization linked to such a simple everyday verb... “to speak”? This post answers in detail all these questions, and some else. And the answers are astounding!!

We have formerly addressed, at length, Bible distinction between “say” and “speak”. This distinction is particularly of high significance when it comes to Bible description of God “saying” and God “speaking”. Read, for example, [here](#).

Let us start with a brief review when, in the original Hebrew Bible, God “says” and when does God “speak”. The Hebrew Bible is highly consistent here. The distinction is simple:

- When God **says** — this is a **monologue**; No human response is expected (even though such is sometimes given). An implication of this is that when God **says** — this is a command; And a command from the Divine is fulfilled, to the letter; No space here for human free-will;
- When God **speaks** — this is the start of a **dialogue**, between Jehovah and a member, or members, of humankind; This is a dialogue typified by recognition, and acknowledgement, of the availability of free-will to the latter (humankind).

Let us address two major “episodes”, described in detail in the Bible — Genesis Creation (of “the heaven and the earth”; Genesis 1); and Divine giving of the Ten Commandments, via Moses, to the Israelites, on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land.

In the Hebrew biblical descriptions of these two episodes, when does God **say** and when does God **speak**? Let us learn.

- Genesis 1:3:

”וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר”

“And God **said** Let there be light and there was light”.

In Hebrew, the Ten Statements by which God had created the Heaven and the Earth are *Asarah Maamarim*, Singular — *Maamar*, of same root, A.M.R (א.מ.ר), as *Le-Emor*, namely, to **say**.

God keeps “saying” throughout Genesis Creation narrative, not ever “speaking”. You scan Genesis further on, and you do not find a single instance of God **speaking**. God is always **saying** — to Adam and Eve, to Cain and Hebel, and even to Noah, prior Noah’s flood.

Where, in the Bible, does the Divine stops **saying** and for the first time starts **speaking** to humankind? The answer is amazing: The first time God **speaks** to humankind, indeed starting a dialogue between the

creator and the created (never ceased since) is after the old corrupt generation of human beings perished in a flood (Noah's flood), and "New World Order" is finally established!!

Is this a sheer coincidence, that this dialogue starts concurrently with Divine promise, regarding Noah's flood — "Never again"? Let us read the first Divine **speak** in the Bible:

"And God **spoke** to Noah, saying: Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and the wives of your sons with you" (Genesis 8:15).

And then, immediately thereafter, Divine assurances:

"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the impulse of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis, 8:21).

We move to another historic event, receiving of The Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai by Moses. The Ten Commandments are supposed to be the shield, which God provides humankind to protect against "the impulse of man's heart that is evil from his youth". But are these really Ten Commandments? Are there at all Ten Commandments in the Bible?

We read the introductory verse preceding the detailed reading of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-14):

שמות כ:1: "וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר"

"And God **spoke** all these words..." (Exodus 20:1).

In the original Hebrew — no commandment!! Just God **speaking**. Extremely strange. What did God speak? In Hebrew — *Dvarim*:

"And God **spoke** *Kol Ha-Dvarim Ha-Eleh...*" (Exodus 20:1).

However, *Dvarim* is not "words". This is an inaccurate translation. In biblical Hebrew, *Dvarim* is plural of *Davar*! What is *Davar* (singular of *Dvarim*)? The noun of to speak, namely, *Davar* is simply a verbal utterance, with same root as to **speak**, implying a **dialogue** between God and mankind.

Alternative forms, which one may find in the Hebrew Bible, are *Diber* or *Dibra*. In modern Hebrew, based on Jewish tradition — *Aseret Ha-Dibrot*. This, in an unfortunate wrong English translation, has become the Ten Commandments!! But commandments they are not, just *Dvarim*.

All three forms found in the Bible, *Davar*, *Diber*, *Dibra*, originate in the same root, meaning — to speak; meaning — dialogue between Heaven and Earth, between the Divine and us, the created, mere mortals on the face of Planet Earth.

We will shortly explain why in a world of free-will the Ten Commandments cannot possibly be called such. But let us first ask a required question: Perhaps this notation for the Ten Commandments is still a coincidence! Perhaps in other verses of Exodus, the Ten Commandments are "correctly" specified, namely, as Commandments?

We move to another chapter in Exodus, to find out that the Ten Commandments are addressed, yet again, as *Aseret Ha-Dvarim*:

"... And He wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten *Dvarim*" (Exodus 34:28).

Now, may be Exodus uses the name incorrectly, but in others books of Torah, the Ten Commandments are at last specified "correctly", as commandments. We move on to the final book of Torah, named in the original Hebrew, not surprisingly... *Dvarim* (Deuteronomy):

"And He *declared* to you his covenant, which he commanded you to do, *Aseret Ha-Dvarim*, and he wrote them upon two tablets of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:13);

Note that the speaker, Moses, is careful to say that God commanded the Israelites to do the covenant, not the Ten Commandments!

In the next chapter, Deuteronomy (5:6-18), the Ten Commandments are repeated by Moses (with slight variations to Exodus), reciting them before the assembled congregation of the Israelites, prior to entering the

Promised Land. What is the closing verse? How does Moses conclude reading the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel?

We read, Deuteronomy (5:19):

“These *Dvarim* Jehovah **spoke** to all your assembly in the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud and the thick darkness with a great voice which was not heard again..”

No commandment!! Later in the same book, Deuteronomy Ch.10, Moses talks about receiving the tablets the second time, after he had broken the first ones, yet again referring in the same identical and consistent way to *Aseret Ha-Dvarim*, no commandments:

“And He wrote on the tablets, according to the first writing, the *Aseret Ha-Dvarim*, which Jehovah **spoke** to you in the mountain out of the midst of the fire...” (Deuteronomy 10:4);

Obviously, when Moses refers directly to the Ten Commandments (not to the covenant), God *spoke* them, he never commanded Moses, or the Israelites!!

Last example, for use of same root, D.B.R, is the Hebrew for The Holy of Holies, the most sacred space in the temple, where only the High Priest was allowed in, and then only once a year, in the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). How is Holy of Holies denoted in Hebrew? *Dvir*!! (mentioned 16 times in the Bible). Again, a derivative of... to speak!!

Why this bizarre way of presenting The Ten Commandments, always and without exception, as resulting from God **speaking**, never God **saying**, which would necessarily imply God commanding? How is it that in the original Hebrew, God never commands (“say”) the Ten Commandments?

In other words: What is the root of this mystery and what is lurking behind it? Why the Ten Commandments are not Divine Command, always Divine speech?? The answer:

Free Will

This answer needs clarification. It is twofold, however both components are tightly linked to free-will. They complement one another.

First, note that the Ten Commandments, by definition, cannot be Divine commandments. Calling the Ten Commandments such is contradiction in terms. In Genesis creation narrative, when God commands — this is always fulfilled, to the letter. If God said “Let there be Gravity”, then there would be Gravity, and we, mere mortals, have no freedom to decide whether we wish to comply with it!!

Can we say the same about the Ten Commandments, that being Divine commandments they are invariably fulfilled? When God spoke to the Israelites “Thou shall not murder” (Sixth Commandment), apparently it is not a command for if it were — it would always be fulfilled. Therefore, the Ten Commandments are “only” a Divine declaration, God speaking, within God’s dialogue with humankind.

The second answer is also tightly linked to free-will. A famous Rabbi was once asked (a well-known question):

“Can God create a rock that heavy that even God cannot lift??”

The rabbi shrewdly answered

“Yes, He already did. It is called Free-Will!!”

Torah, and later the Hebrew prophets, never tire of repeating this message, in no uncertain terms — that we have free-will, and we are free to choose whether to pursue the Ten Commandments, and derivatives thereof; However, we need to remember that this is what God wishes of us, this is what He expects of us to be. Our first answer was that the Ten Commandments cannot be Divine command because if they were — they would always be fulfilled. The second reason, complementing the first (why God **spoke** the Ten Commandments) is **Free-will**. In Torah, existence of free-will, granted by God to humankind, is left, right and centre. It is declared therein in no uncertain terms:

דברים ל:15: ראה נתתי לפניך היום את החיים ואת הטוב, ואת המות ואת הרע;”

דברים ל:19: העדותי בכם היום את השמים ואת הארץ החיים והמות נתתי לפניך, הברכה והקללה, ובחרת בחיים למען תחיה אתה וזרעך”;

English translation, respectively:

“See, I set before you today life and that which is good; and death and that which is bad” (Deuteronomy 30:15);

“I call Heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; Therefore, choose life that both you and your seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Likewise, Hebrew prophets repeatedly insist:

מיכה ו:8: “הגיד לך אדם מה טוב ומה אדוני דורש ממך כי אם עשות משפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת עם אלהיך”

“He has **told** thee, O man, what is good and what does Jehovah requires of you but to do justice and love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

God has bestowed upon us free-will; It is up to us to decide whether we are willing to pursue the Ten Commandments, or, alternatively, to ignore them.

Let us summarize:

Divine commandments, as revealed in Genesis Creation, are not subject to free-will. Law-of-Nature demands total compliance. Since God **said** these commandments, they represent Divine monologue. No dialogue, no communication. Conversely, The Ten Commandments — they were **spoken** by God, they are part of a dialogue, God speaking to humankind, expressing what the Divine desires of us. Now it is for us to decide!!

The next required question is this: Why do we have free-will?

If the Ten Commandments are, in the original Hebrew, *Ten Dibrot*, expressing God **speaking** (Elohim *Medaber*, not God **saying** or commanding), so that free-will is maintained — Why do we NEED free-will? What is the purpose?

There is only one answer: We are here to create ourselves, to give ourselves a form. Each of us is given an opportunity to shape up his or her **own world**, and this requires free men and women, each maintaining free-will. In abundance...

In Hebrew, when a person has passed away you say: “*Ha-Lach Le-Olam*” – literally “Went to his world”! This idiom derives from *Qobelet* (Ecclesiastes):

קהלת 12:5: “כי הלך האדם אל בית עולמו, וסבבו בשוק הסופדים”

“...The man goes to the **home of his world**, and the mourners go about the streets” (Ecclesiastes 12:5)

We, Earth-bound mortals, are doomed to have free-will because it allows us, each, to create and shape up our own specific and special world — via the thoughts that we think, the decisions we take, the words we utter, the deeds that we do. Brick by brick, each of us build our own world; And when we die, this is the world that we are going to dwell in. Bible’s idea and truth, explicitly stated!! (not my own personal interpretation).

To build our own personal world, our future “home” after we die, free-will is essential.

The Ten Commandments are, therefore, not Divine *commandments* but Divine **declaration** that God has spoken to us, within his communication with humankind, so that our own personal world, that which we keep creating while alive, be for us a deserving hospitable home, once we die.

How is all these connected to current pandemic? to a plague, *Dever* (derived from same root as *Diber*)?

There are two legs to Divine communicating with humankind, God speaking to us, maintaining a dialogue. God speaks to us via the Ten *Dvarim* (singular of which is *Davar*), but also through *Dever*, identically written,

somewhat differently pronounced. What is *Dever*? A plague, that under special circumstance may turn into a pandemic.

Both *Davar* and *Dever* derive from same root as “to speak” !!

Could we conceive of a more bizarre link as that between the Ten Commandments and a pandemic? What is this link signalling to us?

Inescapably, it signals to us that as the Ten Commandments is Divine communication — God speaking to us — so is a plague, *Dever*. And both, put together, signal to us a choice, a simple choice — Either *Diber* (Ten Commandments) or *Dever* (bearing the consequence of going astray from the *Aseret Ha-Dibroth*). This theme is endlessly repeated by the prophets, linking *Dever* (plague) to *Diber* (member of the Ten Commandments).

The Bible refers to *Dever* (49 times) always as a tool in the hands of God to send his punishment for ignoring His *Devarim*. Biblical prophets (mostly Jeremiah and Ezekiel) enumerate three adverse Divine responses to human iniquities (violating the Ten *Dvarim*): “Sword, Famine, Plague”:

The sword (*Cherev*), Famine (*Raan*), Plague (*Dever*).

These are major punishments that Jehovah “sends”, or “judges with”, or “strikes with”, humankind gone astray; And the plague, *Dever* (like *Diber*, Commandment), would always remind us, reading the Bible in Hebrew, the double-message of Divine communication with human beings:

Both *Diber* and *Dever* are Divine speaking, maintaining a dialogue with us not as a collective, but as individuals.

The Ten Commandments are all pronounced, in the original Hebrew, as Divine call to the *individual*. They all are articulated in the singular. A plague is no different: It is striking the individual, not the collective or the community, as in an earthquake (!!). And it is up to each of us, as individuals of free-will, to choose — *Diber* or *Dever*.

- Divine Monologue: “Say” — Law-of-Nature; No free-will; Total compliance;
- Divine Dialogue: “Speak” — Randomness, granting Free will; and a choice— The Ten Commandments (*Diber*) or Plague (*Dever*).

This is our life. This is the basic structure of the world that we are doomed to create for ourselves, while alive; and to dwell in thereafter, ever after!!

Why do I Trust Biblical Prophets??

Posted May 5, 2020

Israelite prophets, some represented in the Jewish Hebrew Bible, have claimed to have received messages from God. Why should I trust them? Why should we trust them?

Why should I believe the Jewish prophets, declaring they only served as a conduit, so to speak, to the Word of the Divine, and not any number of lunatics making claims of a similar nature, some even judged by society (justifiably, based on science) to merit access to specially dedicated institutes, wherein one lives, free of charge, under strict medical care?

The Hebrew for Bible is *Tanakh*, acronym for first letters of the three parts of the Jewish Bible: *Torah*, *Nevi'im* (Prophets), *Ketuvim* (Writings). In fact, the Jewish Bible is “awash” with writings of prophets. According to Jewish tradition, “the number of prophets in the era of prophecy was double the number of Israelites who left Egypt (600,000 males). Only 55 prophets are recorded, because they said prophecies that have relevance for future generations and not just for their own generation” (Wikipedia, entry “Prophets in Judaism”).

What was the era of prophecy exercised within the ancient Jewish nation?

Prophecy existed therein for many generations, spanning nearly nine centuries — starting with the biblically-declared prophet, Moses (14th-13th century BC, possibly 1391-1271 BC; refer, for example, to Numbers 12:4-8), ending with prophet Malachi (possibly Ezra the scribe, active in the years **following** the reconstruction of the Second Temple in 536 BC, namely, fifth century BC; *Malachi* is believed to be pseudonym since it means — “My Messenger”, a word implied in the last chapter of the book of *Malachi*: “Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah”, Malachi 3:23).

Given the long time span of active prophesizing by thousands of Israelite prophets, and the public acknowledgement at the time, by authoritative rabbis (as recorded by Jewish tradition; see references in the afore-cited source) of *termination* of Jewish prophecy with prophet Malachi; Given that in all recorded prophecies (as expounded in the Jewish Bible), the prophet explicitly claims that God spoke to him, or through him; Given our current knowledge of the vast, indeed gigantic, dimensions of the universe (a humbling experience, unknownst to past generations); And, finally, given the acknowledged non-existence of prophecy ever since *Malachi* within the Nation of Israel (as previously alluded to);

Given all that:

Why should I believe prophecies in the Bible, delivered by human beings (Jewish prophets) “arrogant” enough to explicitly claim that God spoke to them, and that they conveyed the Word of the Creator of all that exists, “The Heavens and The Earth” (Genesis 1:1)??

Put more bluntly: Wherefrom did Jewish prophets draw the audacity to speak in the name of God?

I have been personally struggling with this important question for an appreciable part of my life; and I arrived at some important conclusions. I wish to share them with you. I emphasize, however, that I address herewith only prophecies in the Jewish Hebrew Bible, with which I am well acquainted.

How can one relate to a human being, claiming to deliver the word of God, in other words, claiming that God spoke to him or her?

The response can be tagged into one of three possibilities:

- **A False Prophet**, knowingly lying;
- **A False Prophet**, deceived by his own imagination (whether mentally-ill, or captured by an ego-explosion that led to a distorted perception of reality);
- **A True Prophet**.

The Bible relates to the possibility of a false prophet in no ambiguous terms:

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he gave you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not obey the words of that prophet...” (Deuteronomy 13:2-4).

These verses obviously attest to the wide prevalence of the phenomenon of prophecy among the Israelites already on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. For example, Moses responds to Joshua, his servant (Numbers 11:29): “...Are you envious for my sake? would that all of Jehovah’s people were prophets and that Jehovah put his spirit upon them”. In Jewish tradition, Moses, who led the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land, is considered the greatest of the Jewish prophets, apparently relying on explicit verses in the Torah (conveying a message from the Divine):

“Not so with my servant Moses, for he is the entrusted one in all of my household” (Numbers 12:7).

Later prophets were marked not by giving signs or doing wonders (relate to earlier quote about a possible signature of a false prophet), but by producing prophecies intended to be fulfilled either in the prophet’s own time, or intended for later generations (as most biblical prophecies are, having “relevance for future generations”). In fact, the main mission of true Israelite prophets in ancient times was not predicting the future, but to warn about possible future consequences, if the Children of Israel continued with their mal/unethical behaviour. In other words, Israelite prophets in ancient times were social messengers, destined to warn about moral decay, deterioration, either in the public sphere or in the personal domain; Warning about consequences for abandonment of moral standards, as the latter are preached in the Torah.

What then distinguish Israelite prophets in biblical times, rendering their writings, their prophecies for the future, credible?

There are certain personal traits to biblical prophets, which make them credible and distinct from supposed prophets (past and current). We address these in the following four sections:

1. Personal Integrity; 2. Humility; 3. Escape and suffering, finally — resignation (to mission); 4. Sophistication.

1. Personal Integrity (virtues)

Jewish prophets grew in a Jewish culture that cherished and glorified personal virtues, as implied from the roots and core of that culture, the Ten Commandments and the biblically-declared Covenant between Jehovah and his people (“Jehovah’s people”; refer to earlier quote from Numbers). The main core of Jewish prophecies is not predicting the future (although some are), but rather warning in the public square about future consequences of violating morality standards, as expounded in Torah. The prophets had a social message, not a presumptuous message that they saw the future clearer than anyone else because God had spoken to them. This trait is standing up, in full view, from every single word of every single chapter of every prophecy.

The emphasis on justice, equality, help to the poor and the helpless (like widows, orphans, migrants, slaves), keeping moral employment-standards (paying on time, paying fairly, ensuring rest-days for all), personal righteousness, they were all embedded foremost in every single message of the prophecies, right, left and centre.

Reading these social messages by the prophets, constantly calling for exercising, in the public domain as well as in the private, the moral commandments of God — Can one even conceive of these prophets as some esoteric group of people, exercising some gigantic plot of deception, passing on from one generation to the next over nine centuries??

(see a recent archaeological validation of the existence of prophets in ancient Israel — a [Seal of Isaiah](#), discovered in excavations in the City of David, Jerusalem, attributed to Prophet Isaiah).

One of the most preached virtue by Jewish prophets is humility.

2. Humility

Humility is a pre-condition, indeed a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for Divine revelation. To be attuned to Godly messages, indeed to be close to God, one needs to prepare an “empty vessel”, capable of

receiving Divine messages, absorbing and then retain them for public pronouncement. This is impossible when the soul, the psyche, is filled-to-overflow with the ego, its aspirations and its desires. Therefore, Torah and the prophets endlessly emphasize the humility of Jewish biblical heroes, prophets or non-prophets, prophet Moses in particular:

Abraham:

“And Abraham answered and said, behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, and **I am dust and ashes**, what if the number of righteous be five less than fifty, will you destroy the whole city for lack of five? ...” (Genesis 18:27-28);

Moses:

“And Moses said to God **who am I** that I shall go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:11);

“Now the man Moses was very **humble**, more so than all men that were on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3);

Isaiah:

“The spirit of Jehovah God is upon me because Jehovah anointed me to announce good tidings to the **humble...**” (Isaiah 61:1);

Micha:

“He has shown you, O man, what is good and what does Jehovah demand of you, but to do justice, and love grace and walk **humbly** with your God” (Micah 6:8);

King David:

“But **I am a worm** and no man, a reproach of men and despised by people” (Psalms 22:7).

Such preached humility of Jewish prophets or Jewish biblical figures should be contrasted with conduct, revealed by written sources of other supposed prophets (Jewish or non-Jewish), who, over centuries of written history, had used claims of Divine revelations in order to boost objectives of extremely egoistic or ego-centred nature, like conquering land, or conquering people (read enslaving), or stealing souls of people.

3. Escape and suffering (physically, emotionally, spiritually); finally — resignation (to mission)

Escape from mission, suffering for the mission and often paying dearly for the mission. As a general rule, biblical prophets were unwilling reluctant messengers of God. And they expressed their anxiety of the mission, their reluctance to fulfill the assignment and their suffering for it in any number of different ways — by escape, by expressing personal displeasure with the “Mission from Hell”, or by expressing resignation to mission, knowing full well that the latter was seeded with social outcast, often accompanied by physical torture inflicted by the public or by state authorities (usually the king).

How did the prophets know?

Well, nobody desires to be told, morning and evening, how bad their conduct was and how to correct it, hearing all the while of the devastating consequence for failure to do that. But that was the essence of the message that the prophets were required to deliver to their brethren Israelites, family or non-family; and they knew exactly what the personal consequences may be, reacting by escape, anxiety and often by expressing a personal sense of injustice for suffering for implementing the Divine assignment.

Here are some examples of escape from mission and suffering (physically, psychologically or spiritually), finally resignation.

Escape:

Moses:

“And he said, O Lord, I pray thee, send by the hand of whoever you will send” (Exodus 4:13);

Jeremiah:

“And I said, Ah Jehovah God! Behold, I cannot speak for I am a child” (Jeremiah 1:6);

Jonah:

“But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from Jehovah...” (Jonah 1:3).

Suffering physically

Jeremiah:

“..and Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned in the courtyard of the guard, which was in the royal palace of Judah, for Zedekiah king of Judah has imprisoned him there, saying, why do you prophesy, saying, Thus says Jehovah I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon...” (Jeremiah 32:2-3).

Micaiah:

“The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah and send him back... and put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely”; And Micaiah said, if you ever return safely, Jehovah had not spoken through me...” (1King 22: 26-28).

The City of Nob (city of the priests):

“The king then ordered Doeg “You turn and strike down the priests.”; So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep” (1 Samuel 22:18-19; Note that these verses refer to a related vulnerable group, the priests).

Suffering psychologically

Jeremiah:

“O Lord, correct me but only with justice, not in your anger lest you reduce me to nothing” (Jeremiah 10:24);

Elijah:

“Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree and sat down under it and he wished to die and said: “I have had enough, O Lord, take my soul for I am no better than my ancestors”” (1 Kings 19:3-4; Reminder: “Behold, I will send you Elijah *the prophet* before the coming of the great and the dreadful day of Jehovah”, Malachi 3:23).

Suffering spiritually

Abraham:

“...Should not the Judge of all the earth do justice?” (Genesis 18:25);

Jeremiah:

“Righteous would thou be, O Lord, that I bring a case before thee, yet I will reason justice with you: Why does the way of the wicked prosper, at peace are all that deal treacherously?” (Jeremiah 12:1).

Resignation (after experiencing the “wrath” of God)

Isaiah:

“On that day you shall say: “I praise thee, O Lord, for being angry with me; Your anger has turned away and you have comforted me” (Isaiah 12:1);

Jeremiah:

“You know, O Lord, ... how I suffer reproach for your sake; when your words came, I ate them, and they were for me joy and my heart’s delight for I am called by thy name, O Lord, God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:15-16).

Clearly, unlike claims of an egoistic nature articulated by false prophets (past and present), biblical Jewish prophets were reluctant to fulfill their mission, to comply with their assignment. They were aware of the personal hardship expecting them for antagonizing the public, for telling listeners to their prophecy to change their behaviour or else...prophecy realized.

4. Sophistication (content-wise and linguistic-wise; as revealed in Jewish biblical-Hebrew prophecies)

Reading prophecies in their original biblical Hebrew is a hard task, even for a layman like me, born in Israel and brought up by the essentially secular Israeli education system. The reason that prophecies in the Bible are hard to understand is their high level of sophistication, both in content and in language. This renders understanding prophecies an extremely arduous task, demanding, throughout generations of Jewish scholarship, numerous Bible interpreters that would lend some sense to the often-incomprehensible text (from the Mishna, initiated and edited mainly by Judah the Prince (135-217), to well-known interpreters, like Rashi (1040-1105) and Malbim (1809-1879), up to present day).

Two Examples:

Example 1:

“The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation; I am Jehovah, in its time will I hasten it” (Isaiah 60:22).

This verse, addressing end-time scenario, obviously contains a logical contradiction: Will this occur on its assigned time (“in its time”), or will God expedite it? The interpretation, commonly accepted in Jewish scholarship: If the Israelites at the time be non-deserving (in terms of adhering to the Covenant between God and its people) — “in its time”; Otherwise (Israelites deserving, Covenant preserved) — “I will hasten it”.

And the whole traditional interpretation relying on two biblical Hebrew words: “*Be-Ita Achishenah*”. Two words!!

One may not expect a disturbed person, claiming to hear and deliver the Word of God, to conceive of such a sophisticated articulation of a Divine message!!

Example 2:

“Son of Adam, because Tyre has said of Jerusalem “Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper” (Ezekiel 26:2).

However, the last sentence above is expressed in the original Hebrew by two words only: *Imalah Ha-Chareva* (literally, “I will be filled by the ruined one”).

What does that mean?

The *Gemarah* (part of the Talmud) often addresses the relationship between Israel and the Kingdom of Edom (represented in Jewish tradition by the Roman Empire and its derivatives). Tyre is the ancient *Tzor* (nowadays a Lebanese city), and it appears in the Bible with the letter *Vav* (the sixth in the Hebrew alphabet) or without (as in the above verse from Ezekiel). A common interpretation in Jewish tradition is that *Tzor* (with *Vav* missing), represents the Roman Empire. Therefore, this verse implies that the two, the pagan Roman Empire culture and the Israelite culture, cannot both prosper at the same time. Again, an interpretation accompanying Jewish scholarship over many generations, based on only two words in Ezekiel.

SUMMARY

The length of time prophesizing existed within the Israelite nation (nine centuries); the core values of the Jewish culture (with the Ten Commandments and the Covenant at its core); the essence of the prophecies

(preaching moral values); prophets' testimonials of their dis-pleasure with the assignment imposed on them by God (even before birth, Jeremiah 1:4), or testimonials of their suffering for executing the mission; and finally, the sophistication of the prophecies (both in content and in language);

All these have given me a high degree of confidence in the validity and truth of the words of the Israelite biblical prophets; as they have given trust and much faith to my Jewish ancestors, for over two millennia.

Linkage between Torah First Verse and Pi — Some of Evron's Findings

Posted January 17, 2020

In a recent [video, produced by Oren Evron](#), he expounded his astounding findings connecting the first verse of Genesis (in its original Hebrew) to Pi (π).

Since this video is Hebrew (an English version is currently in process), I detail herewith, for the benefit of the English-speaking readers, some of the findings (in a very concentrated fashion). The essence of Oren Evron's findings is the abundance of links between various numbers, traditionally associated with the first verse of Genesis, and patterns embedded in the first 628 digits (after the decimal point) of Pi.

Biblical-Hebrew first verse of Genesis:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

We introduce Evron's findings in the same order, as appearing in the video, with minor modifications, as deemed fit for this post. We start with some obvious numbers, associated with the structure of Genesis first verse, and then proceed to the less obvious (the new findings).

Numerical values associated with first verse in Genesis:

- Number of words — 7;
- Number of letters — 28;
- Sum of gematria values for all seven words — 2701;
- Sum of gematria values of first letter in each word — 22 (average per first letter: $22/7=3.14..$);
- Gematria value of the Hebrew word *Torah* is 611;
- **Small gematria** is traditionally defined in Jewish scholarship as the sum total of the gematria values of individual letters comprising the word, with the zeros deleted; for example, the letter *Yod* (10) is counted as 1, the letter *Resh* (200) as 2 and so on. Accordingly, **small gematria** of the biblical-Hebrew word *Torah* — 17; **Small gematria** of the first verse of the Bible — 82;
- According to Jewish tradition, *Torah* preceded the “beginning of the universe” (*Be-reshit*, “In the beginning”, the first word in Genesis 1:1). We replace the letters, comprising *Be-reshit*, by the respective letters in the Hebrew alphabet preceding them (except Aleph, the first in the Hebrew alphabet, which cannot be replaced). The gematria values of these six new letters sum up to 611, which is the gematria value of the word *Torah* (again, traditionally believed to precede *Be-Reshit*);

Associations between first verse in Genesis and Pi:

- Sum of **first 611** digits in Pi (after the decimal point) — 2701 (611= gematria for *Torah*, 2701 = gematria of **first verse** in *Torah*)!!;
- We repeat, with **small gematria**, the same “exercise”, as done earlier for “regular” gematria, to find out that in Pi, sum of the first 17 digits (after the decimal point) is equal to 82!! ;
- The 611 digits of Pi, starting with the seventeenth (namely, the last to represent *Torah*, in small gematria, in Pi), sum up to... 2701, again!! ;
- The 611 digits of Pi, starting with the digit **after** the seventeenth (the last to represent *Torah*, in small gematria, in Pi), sum up to... 2701, yet again!! ;
- The findings above (#2 and #4) imply that the first 628 (17+611) digits of Pi, after the decimal point, are divided in two non-overlapping consecutive sets: The first set relates to **small gematria** — 17 digits (= *Torah*) summing up to 82 (=first verse in *Torah*); The second (consecutive) set relates to **regular gematria** — 611 digits (= *Torah*) summing up to 2701 (=first verse in *Torah*)!!;

- Incredibly, this structure has a **mirror image** reflected when counting in reverse: starting with the **628**th digit and counting backward, we obtain for the first **17** digits a sum total of **82**; Counting further back we obtain for the remaining **611** digits a sum of **2701**!!

These mind-boggling findings by Oren Evron represent about 24 minutes from the complete video (lasting about 63 minutes).

A Mathematica program, in a PDF file, verifying Oren Evron's findings, as detailed in this post, may be downloaded here:

[Haim Shore Verification of Links between Pi and Genesis first verse Evron's Findings January 19 2020](#)

Reminder about the importance of Pi:

It appears in numerous scientific formulae, including the normal (Gauss) distribution and Einstein's fundamental equation of General Relativity. In other words, Pi is a basic building block of the universe. (My own single finding about the relationship between Pi and the first verse of Genesis may be read [here](#)).

“Thou shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk” (Exod. 23:19) — Why??

Posted November 15, 2019

This verse appears thrice in the Bible (additionally in Exod. 34:26; Deut. 14:21). It serves cornerstone for a large portion of Jewish dietary Kosher laws (regarding cooking and eating), forbidding mixing together meat with dairy products.

What is the logic behind this seemingly non-sensical fundamental tenet of Jewish way-of-life, setting the latter apart from all other peoples of the world (including followers of Islam, which comes closest to the Jewish *Kashrut* rules)?

The succinct answer is this:

Judaism is extremely strict about total separation of Life from Death.

And whenever an eventuality may occur, that the two may even remotely overlap or intermingle — a tall separating wall is constructed in Jewish law to ensure that this never happens. In that sense, Jewish *Kashrut* laws are just one instance in a sea of like-wise laws, ensuring that a Jew, strictly pursuing Moses Law (as specified succinctly in the written Torah and explicated in Oral Torah, later expounded in the Talmud), will never be exposed to scenarios, where Life and Death accidentally intermingle.

The origin for this total and strict separation is probably best articulated in the Divine commandment:

“I call this day to witness against you the heaven and the earth — **I have set before thee life and death**, the blessing and the curse; therefore, **choose life** that both you and your seed may live” (Deut. 30:19).

And the choice of Life over Death requires strict separation between the two, as reflected in numerous Jewish laws (we will elaborate on some soon).

Why eating meat with dairy products, with no time separation between the two, implies intermingling of life and death?

The answer is straightforward:

- Eating meat is the result of killing an animal; This means Death;
- Dairy products are derived from milk, originally created to assist life, namely, the growth of the just born; This means... well, Life.

Therefore, meat and dairy, associated with death and life, respectively, cannot be mixed and concurrently consumed.

Finally, we note that killing animals, in order to eat meat, had been permitted by the Divine **only** after realizing that “the impulse of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen. 8:21). Following Noah’s own initiative to sacrifice some of the animals that kept him company just now, for the last hundred and fifty flood-days (Gen. 8:20), God concludes that:

“The impulse of man’s heart is evil”; Consequently, a permit is now granted: “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; As green herb have I given you all” (Gen. 9:3).

Where else do we see the same underlying principle of Jewish life, total separation of Life from Death, so that one may more easily be led to “choose life that both you and your seed may live”?

Here are a few examples:

[1] “But flesh with its life, which is its blood, you shall not eat” (Gen. 9:4);

This requires, by *Kashrut* laws, washing away all traces of blood from the meat prior to cooking; An egg with stains of blood inside likewise is not edible;

[2] A Jewish cemetery is surrounded all around by a tall wall, strictly and explicitly separating the living from the dead; and when a Jew leaves the cemetery, he washes his hands, demonstrating symbolically and stating in no unclear terms that spiritually no “traces” of the dead remain on his body when he departs the cemetery;

[3] There is a set time for a mourning period (“Shivah”); This ensures that subsequently the deceased would not psychologically and spiritually intervene with the living;

[4] Judaism strictly forbids contacts with the dead via spiritualistic conferences; The living are not supposed to talk to the dead: “A man or a woman that is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death; they shall be stoned with stone, their blood-guiltiness is upon them” (Leviticus 20:27);

[5] A woman at the end of her menstrual cycle is forbidden sexual contact with her spouse; The former (menstrual period) marks life-potential not realized, the departure process of a potential life-generating egg, not consumed, now dead; The latter (sexual contact) is associated with live sperm, marking potential for generating life; The two are strictly forbidden from unholy mixture via time-concurrency: “Also thou shalt not approach to a woman in the impurity of her menstrual flow to uncover her nakedness” (Leviticus 18:19).

All these examples, regarding Jewish living in accord with Moses law, point to a deeper principle, prevalent throughout the Jewish faith:

Everything that one thinks and speaks (orally or by other means), everything that one does, our behaviour in its totality – these are all spiritually meaningful. They have a spiritual effect on our soul, and they ultimately return like a boomerang to affect our lives (favourably or otherwise). In Hebrew, the arbitrary, seemingly meaningless, “Thing”, is *Davar*, deriving from same root as “speak” (*Daber*). All that we encounter in life “speak” to us— no “Thing” is insignificant.

Jewish laws, at first looking arbitrary, devoid of any rational justification, like “Thou shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk”, now acquire new very deep meaning:

We realize that violation of these laws, implying intermingling of Life and Death in our own every-day life, may affect our **spiritual well-being**; Ultimately, this will also be affecting our **well-being physically**.

“Law and Order”? — Sure, “only no fear of God in this place”

Posted August 28, 2019

Law and Order is cornerstone for a civilized society.

Is this enough for survival of a society, characterized by “only there is no fear of God in this place” (Gen. 20:11)?

Law may be formed, imposed and preserved by a brutal dictatorial regime. Human history is awash with such regimes, past and present. But what happens when Law and Order is maintained by democratically-elected representatives, forming “government of the people, by the people, for the people” (Gettysburg Address, Nov. 19, 1863)? Does this guarantee a civilized society, where morality laws are not rampantly violated?

The Bible painstakingly tells us, in great detail, two stories. They seemingly are non-related. Yet, they are amazingly look-alike; And they share the same conclusion regarding what happens when Law and Order is preserved, yet “there is no fear of God in this place”.

The first story is that of Abraham and Sarah, moving temporarily to reside in the Philistine city of Gerar. Abraham, fearing for his life because of Sarah’s beauty, introduces her as his sister (Gen. 20:5). This triggers the king of Gerar, Abimelech, to “take her” (Gen. 20:2). God appears in the dream of the night to tell King Abimelech that he would die because he took a woman who had a spouse. Then there is a dialogue between God and Abimelech, all within the same dream, and the king is repentant and apologetic (“in the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands have I done this”, Gen. 20:5). At the end of the dream, God tells the king that He knows that what Abimelech had done was innocently done, therefore he prevented the king sinning against God (by not letting him touch Sarah). Therefore, the king would not die.

Let us be reminded that the apologetic King Abimelech, who apologizes to God, is same king of fame:

“I know not who has done this thing, neither did thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but today” (Genesis 21:25-26).

Abraham is obviously aware that, Law and Order notwithstanding, when fear of God is non-existent, Sin and Apology goes hand in hand. So, when King Abimelech finally asks Abraham why he had lied about Sarah, his spouse, “...that you have done to me **deeds that ought not to be done**” (Gen. 20:9), Abraham replies:

“..because I said to myself **only there is no fear of God in this place** and they will slay me for my wife’s sake” (Gen. 20:11).

In other words:

“I, Abraham, fully understand your concept of Law and Order (“**deeds that ought not to be done**”). Yet, I was still anxious for my own personal survival because “**there is no fear of God in this place.**”

In the immediately adjoining Chapter 21, the scenario that Abraham was fearfully envisioning, sin under the auspices of Law and Order, came to full fruition:

“And Abraham reproached Abimelech for the well of water which Abimelech’s servants had plundered” (Gen. 21:25);

Sure enough, King Abimelech, **of fame** “**you have done to me deeds that ought not to be done**”, namely, Law and Order, replies:

“I know not who has done this thing, neither did thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but today” (Genesis 21:25-26).

“Law and Order”? — Sure, yet crime is acceptable because “ONLY there is no fear of God in this place.”

The second story is that of King David, Bathsheba and her late husband, Uriah the Hittite, “lawfully” dispatched to be killed in combat so that King David could lawfully take the pregnant Bathsheba for a wife.

Here is the story in brief. King David, walking around on the roof of the king’s house, see Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite, bathing; he calls for her and lie with her (2 Samuel 11:1-4). Learning that Bathsheba has become pregnant, King David first attempts, in vain, to convince recruited soldier, Uriah, to retire to his home and sleep with his wife, Bathsheba. Failing to do that, David ultimately sends Uriah to the battle front, where war is raging between the Israelites and the people of Ammon:

“..David wrote a letter to Joab..., saying, “Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him so that he might be struck down and die”, “...and some of the people, among David’s servants, fell, and Uriah the Hittite also died” (2 Samuel 11:14-15, 17).

Law and Order, as pronounced by the king, is preserved, and the written command of King David is carried to the letter. But that was not right in the eyes of God (“...the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of Jehovah”, 2 Samuel 11:27). Therefore, via prophet Nathan, a clear message is sent to the king, in a way that would not risk the reproaching prophet’s life. First, Nathan is telling the king a story, the story of the Poor Man’s Lamb (Second Samuel 12:1-4). It tells about a poor man, who had a single lamb, whom he nourished like his own daughter. Yet, when a rich man had a guest, he was reluctant to take of his own flock and instead took the poor man’s lamb to prepare a feast for the rich man’s visitor. King David, in rage, declares his verdict:

“The man that has done this is worthy to die” (2 Samuel 12:5).

And Nathan replies:

“...You are that man...” (2 Samuel 12:7).

David repents in the right way. He is not saying “I have sinned”, instead stating clearly: “I have sinned to Jehovah” (2 Samuel 12:13). Absence of fear of God now replaced by fear of God, once the Divine is revealed via Prophet Nathan.

This scene is an exact replicate of the two former scenarios, taking place hundreds of years earlier (according to biblical chronology), regarding King Abimelech:

- Fear of God in full view — when God is revealed to King Abimelech, in the “dream of the night”, the king repents;
- Fear of God vanishes — when God is not revealed, the internal restraint to avoid sin vanishes with it; This results in utter absence of repentance on King Abimelech part, and what remains is only social politeness and political correctness: “I know not who has done this thing, neither did thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but today”.

Contrast these scenarios with how Abraham is displayed throughout Genesis.

Righteous Abraham does not need constant Divine revelation to respect the command of God. He pursues the word of God even when Divine command is contrary to the essence of Abraham own biological self-preservation, contrary to the essence of his spiritual self-preservation (the belief in the righteousness of God) — the mission towards Isaac sacrifice.

Abraham fully understands that even when Law and Order is the law of the land, fully preserved and maintained under the umbrella of human morality (“you have done to me deeds that ought not to be done”), this is no guarantee that atrocities not be committed under the full authority of the humanly-created law (or democratically-created law, in today’s terms).

Why?

Because...

“Only there is no fear of God in this place”.

The Basic Human Condition — “Angels of God Ascending and Descending” (Gen. 28:12)

Posted July 27, 2019

The Bible starts with a succinct description of all that there is:

“In the beginning God created **The Heaven** (“*Ha-Shamayim*”) and **The Earth** (“*Ha-Aretz*”) (Gen 1:1).

This seven-word verse (in the original Hebrew) delivers four messages:

- There is God;
- There is creation;
- God and His Creation are separate (pantheism is false);
- There is a point in creation when time started (“In the beginning”).

However, there is an additional most important fifth message:

- There are two worlds apart: The Earth and The Heaven.

In the rest of Genesis creation narrative (Chapters 1 and 2), “The Heaven” is not addressed ever again. Genesis describes only that which is visible, or potentially visible, to humankind — “The Earth” (more specifically, the universe). As part of the description of the six days of creation of **The Earth**, the narrator relates to two separate parts of the universe (“**The Earth**”):

- That part that God calls heaven (“The” omitted) — “and God called the sky (*Rakia*) heaven (*Shamayim*)...”, Gen. 1:8;
- That part that God calls Earth (“The” omitted) — “and God called the dry land (*Yabashah*) Earth (*Eretz*)...”, Gen 1:10.

However, **The Heaven** (*Ha-Shamayim*) is not repeated again, neither described nor implied. When alluding to *Shamayim*, Genesis 1 refers only to *Rakia-Ha-Shamayim*, as if to emphasize that this is not *Ha-Shamayim* of the first verse of Genesis.

These two worlds, **The Heaven** and **The Earth**, are they communicating with one another?

The Bible is mostly mute about it. Existence of free-will for the human species cannot co-exist with the explicit and undeniable knowledge that **The Heaven** does exist, that **it influences our experiences in life and that... it responds to our decisions**.

This should be contrasted with our explicit knowledge of **The Earth** (the scientifically observable universe), governed by law-of-nature. The latter allows us knowing, or potentially knowing, how “**it influences our experiences in life and responds to our decisions**“. For example, we know well in advance how nature would respond if we have decided, out of free will, to jump from the rooftop of a high-rise.

So, is the Bible indeed utterly mute about communication between **The Heaven** and **The Earth**? Is there such communication at all?

There are stories of communication between the Divine and human beings, either one-way communication, like the Ten-Commandments, or two-way communication, like biblical stories of dialogues between the Divine and human beings (“...perhaps ten shall be found there? And He said: I will not destroy

for the sake of the ten”, Gen 18:32). Yet, these stories are not as compelling as Law-of-Nature — You believe these stories or you do not. Same cannot be extended to Law-of-Nature:

- Free-will is preserved, maintained and protected with regard to possible “dialogues” between human beings and *The Heaven* — these are completely invisible to us;
- Free-will is not so with regard to “dialogues” between human beings and Law-of-Nature (*The Earth*) — these are visible to us in their entirety.

Areas in our lives that are not subject to Law-of-Nature are areas where free-will is exercised. These are the areas where **The Earth** and **The Heaven** communicate. However, to preserve free will, Scripture is mostly mute about this communication.

There is one exception — a single verse in the Bible that describes, in a very vivid way, the basic condition of humankind, namely, the untold and intuitively unrecognizable continuous dialogue, maintained by us all, between **The Heaven** and **The Earth**:

“And he dreamed and, behold, a ladder set up to The Earth and its top reaches to The Heaven; and behold angels (*Malachim*) of *Elohim* ascending and descending on it” (Genesis 28:12).

To fully understand this verse, and the function of ladder in Jacob’s dream, let us be reminded what “Angel” (*Malach*) is in biblical Hebrew — a messenger (human or non-human), dispatched for an explicit purpose, to deliver a certain message or to perform a certain task.

Examples:

“The Lord God of **The Heaven**, who took me from my father’s house... He shall send his angel (*Malacho*) before thee...” (Genesis 24:7);

“And Jacob sent messengers (*Malachim*) ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of *Seir*, the country of *Edom*” (Genesis 32:3);

“The angel (*Ha-Malach*), who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...” (Genesis 48:16);

“And there came a messenger (*Malach*) and said...” (Job, 1:14).

We realize that same word, *Malach*, serves in Scripture to describe delivery of two sorts of “messages” — one via words, another via actions; Also, same word, *Malach*, is used for both human and non-human messengers.

In view of the new insight about the meaning of *Malach*, what does it mean that messengers are ascending and descending on a ladder that connects “The Earth” and “The Heaven”?

There can be a single interpretation:

“Messages” are being exchanged between the two worlds, explicitly declared to exist in the first verse of the Bible — “The Heaven” and “The Earth”.

These messages are being exchanged, unknowingly to us, continuously; And they are delivered by us by thought, by word and by action. Wishes that we express, prayers that we pray, acts of grace and righteousness, or, conversely, acts of evil, these are all “messages” sent by us, via “ascending messengers”, to “The Heaven”; Experiences we go through, which look to us random and not the outcome of interference of Law-of-Nature, these are “messages” sent back to us, by “descending messengers”, from “The Heaven”.

And these experiences, from the realm of “randomness”, where free will reigns supreme, unconstrained by Law-of-Nature, these are doomed to remain unexplainable so long as free-will is preserved and the Divine is hidden, hiding also His hiddenness (“*aster astir panai*”, Deuteronomy 31:18).

There are three well-known symbols signifying that same idea, an ongoing dialogue between The Heaven and The Earth.

- God relates to the rainbow, a bow aimed to Heaven from Earth, as a reminder, a message, sent to Him from humankind and all living beings on earth: “I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be a sign for the covenant between me and the Earth; Whenever I bring clouds upon the earth and the rainbow

appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and all living creatures of every kind, so that never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life” (Genesis 9:13-17);

- In the most well-known symbol of the Jewish faith, the *Magen David*, there are two triangles: One aimed from Earth to Heaven, another directed from Heaven to Earth;
- The pyramids of Egypt are similarly built as a triangle directed from earth to heaven.

In Conclusion:

The most basic condition of humankind is existence of a dialogue between “The Earth” and “The Heaven”, the two parts of creation alluded to in the first verse of the Bible (and only there). This dialogue is maintained via two channels:

- * **A visible dialogue** between all living creatures and Law-of-Nature; The latter, unexplainable but well described (by science), is all observable; In this “Dialogue”, Law-of-Nature is forced on us for full compliance — no compromise, no freedom of choice;
- * **A hidden dialogue**, partially visible to us in the sense that only “messages” from **The Earth** may be recognizable.

By contrast, to preserve free will, messages from **The Heaven** are invisible, incomprehensible to us; Yet, not always and not completely:

- * At times, they may be **deduced**, providing explanation to our experiences as Heavenly response (**descending angels**) to our own “messages” (**ascending angels**);
- * Other times, they may not even be deduced, doomed to remain hidden and utterly unexplainable (“..and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy”, Exodus 33:19; “Why bad things happen to good people”).

Are Genesis Creation “Days” Regular Days?

Posted July 20, 2019

What is the true meaning of Genesis creation “Days” — Are these regular days?

This has always been to me an extremely bizarre question. Yet, it has been a recurring subject in comments of viewers watching videos that describe my data-based research on Genesis Creation narrative.

Two common answers to what “Day” means in Genesis creation rely on terms and quotes from Scripture. We deliver these answers in the form of claims:

Claim I — Genesis “Day” is a regular 24-hours day (due to appearance of the basic components of a regular day, namely, “Evening” and “Morning”):

This claim is based on the use, for each creation day, of two Hebrew words — *Erev* (Evening) and *Boker* (Morning) — as in: “..and there was evening and there was morning one day” (Genesis 1:5).

I believe that this common interpretation of the meaning of *Erev* and *Boker* is misplaced. In the original biblical Hebrew, the two words can be differently interpreted. *Erev* indeed means evening but also mixture, for example, a mixture of people from different tribes, a mixture of people living in the desert or a mixture of different animals:

“And a mixed multitude (*Erev Rav*) went up also with them...” (Exodus 12:38);

“And all the kings of Arabia (*Arav*) and all the kings of the mixture of people (*Erev*) that dwell in the desert” (Jeremiah 25:24);

“And Jehovah did so and there came a dense swarm of gnats (*Arov*) into the house of Pharaoh...” (Exodus 8:20).

Similarly, *Boker* derives from a root that means the opposite of mixture or chaos, namely, separation of the elements of a mixture into its individual components, instituting control and order:

“He must not pick out (*Yevaker*) the good from the bad...” (Leviticus 27:33);

“As the lookout (*Ke-vakarai*) of a shepherd after his flock, when he is with his sheep that are strayed, so will I look after (*Avaker*) my sheep and will rescue them from all the places that they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness” (Ezekiel 34:12).

In modern-day Hebrew, *Bakarab* simply means... control!!

Thus, “and there was *Erev* and there was *Boker*” simply conveys a description of a transition from a state of chaos, where all is mixed together, lacking distinguishable elements that render control feasible, to a state of distinction, order and control.

How incredibly scientific and up-to-date!!

From these two basic terms, *Erev* and *Boker*, two additional biblical Hebrew words, evening and morning, were later derived to indicate, respectively, a state of half-darkness, where things are not clearly visible and distinguishable from one another (*Erev*, evening), and a state of full light, when all is visible, distinct from one another and fully controllable (*Boker*, morning).

Claim II — Genesis “Day” is equivalent to a thousand years:

This claim relies on a **single** verse from Scripture, taken literally:

“For a **thousand years** in your eyes **are like a day** that has gone by and like a watch in the night...” (Psalms 90:4).

Incredibly as it seems, this claim is pursued and adopted by many (as judged from viewers' comments).

My statistical analysis, as described in detail in my book and as presented in popular terms in the 71-minute video, clearly indicates that a "Day" in Genesis creation story is equivalent to 3.0007 billion years.

But does Scripture states anywhere that Genesis creation "Days" are no regular days??

Surprisingly, the answer is a resounding Yes!!

Let us read carefully the following verse from Deuteronomy and understand what it implies:

"For ask now for first days, long before your time, from the day that God created man on the earth..." (Deuteronomy 4:32).

This verse explicitly states that "first days" had started with the creation of man, namely, the sixth day of Genesis creation!!

This verse is in conformance with the Jewish lunar-month-based calendar, which counts years from the day of creation of man, when the first lunar cycle is believed to have started, namely, the sixth day of creation. Furthermore, the verse is also compliant with the well-documented Jewish tradition that man was created on the **fourteenth hour** of the **sixth day** (find details in [this post](#)). As may be learned therein, this "minor" detail ("fourteenth hour") serves to calculate average lunar-month duration to an accuracy of five decimal points (29.53059 days *v.* NASA's value of 29.530589 days).

In conclusion:

Deuteronomy 4:32 explicitly states that "first days" had started with the creation of "man on the earth", implying that Genesis creation days are no regular days!

Divine Justice and Skin-Color Discrimination (Numbers 12)

Posted July 10, 2019

The Hebrew *Midah Keneged Midah* (Measure for measure) expresses a basic tenet of the Jewish faith (and others) that there is universal Divine Justice prevailing in the world (“..Would not the Judge of all the earth do Justice?”, Gen. 18:25). For each mal-behaviour there is Divine reaction, and acts of grace, kindness and righteousness are divinely rewarded. Furthermore, Heavenly Judgement is delivered in same coin as earthly action (expressed also in divine commandment for quantitative equivalence while exercising human judgement — “..an eye for an eye..”; Leviticus 24:20).

This equivalency, between earthly action and heavenly reaction, allows earth-bound human beings to create a link between the two, thereby gaining opportunity for Tikkun (“Correction/Repair” to one’s own spiritual virtues). A similar concept in non-monotheistic faiths is [Karma](#) (or Cause and Effect Law).

Numerous verses in Scripture relate to the link between one’s action and the experiences that follow:

“Sow for yourselves by righteousness, reap the fruit of grace...; But you have ploughed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity.” (Hoshea 10:12-13);

“Does God pervert judgement? and does the Almighty pervert justice?” (Job 8:3).

In this post, I address an offense and its Divine punishment, as they appear in an extremely short chapter in Torah, Numbers 12 (verses 1-16). This chapter describes a single episode of Moses’ siblings, Miriam and Aharon, levelling unfounded accusations at Moses, and the immediate divine response to their slander. All in all, this chapter is a lesson on how Divine Justice is operating.

However, the nature of the sin is not at all clear-cut from the text. And here my interpretation of Numbers 12, although relying on commonly accepted traditional interpretations, still departs considerably from the “Bottom Line” delivered therein. Furthermore, in this post I will also address the reasons why I believe Jewish interpreters in the past were blind to “Elephants in the Room” (two, not one!) — obvious lessons that Numbers 12 conveys, which past generations chose to ignore, either purposefully or out of unfortunate sheer blindness to the true nature of the sin, with which this chapter begins:

“And Miriam and Aharon spoke harshly to Moses about the *Kushite* woman that he had taken, for he had taken a *Kushite* woman” (Numbers 12:1).

As I will show in this post, this verse may be differently read (in the original Hebrew), which grants this verse a completely different meaning (relative to traditional interpretations and translations). This gives the whole chapter, Numbers 12, a completely new perspective, which is reflected in the title of this post.

The post is divided into four parts:

1. Displaying major verses from Numbers 12 and related questions;
2. Explanation of two central terms that appear in the text (*Kushite* and *Pitom*);
3. Traditional Jewish commentary on Numbers 12;
4. The new interpretation.

1. Major verses from Numbers 12 and related questions

▪ The Sin (skin-color issue?):

“And Miriam and Aharon spoke harshly to Moses about the *Kushite* woman that he had taken, for (*Ki*) he had taken a *Kushite* woman” (Numbers 12:1; Explanation of *Kushite* follows);

- **Jehovah say suddenly (!):**

“And Jehovah said **suddenly** (*Pitom*) to Moses, to Aharon and to Miriam “Come out you three to the Tent of Meeting”, and the three of them came out” (Numbers 12:4; About the difference between “say” and “speak” in biblical Hebrew read [here](#); Explanation of *Pitom* follows);

- **The Punishment (skin disease):**

“And the cloud was removed from the Tent and, **behold** (*Hineh*) , Miriam is leprous like snow; and Aharon turned to Miriam and, **behold** (*Hineh*), leprous” (Numbers 12:10);

- **The Prayer (Moses Prays to God for Miriam healing):**

“And Moses cried out to Jehovah, saying: *El Na Refa Na Lab* (O God, heal her, I pray thee)” (Numbers 12:13).

Several questions arise from this obscure text:

What was Miriam and Aharon reproaching Moses about? (no explanation given!);

Why did God say **suddenly**? (a bizarre way to describe God initiating a monologue targeted at a certain group of people, Moses’ siblings);

What is so important telling us that “Aharon turned to Miriam”, realizing she was sick??

Why was only Miriam punished with leprosy, while Aharon, an accomplice to the supposed sin, seems to be spared?

While detailing our new interpretation to this bizarre chapter (Numbers 12), we will attempt some answers to these questions. However, our focus in this interpretation will always be, as suggested by the title, Divine Justice.

2. Explanation of two central terms that appear in the text (*Kushite; Pitom and Hineh*)

Kushite

Kushite literally means, in biblical Hebrew, a female of *Kush* descent. *Kush* was Noah’s grandson, one of Ham’s sons (“The sons of Ham: Kush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan”, Genesis 10:6). After Kush is named the land of Kush, “an ancient kingdom in Nubia, located at the Sudanese and southern Egyptian Nile Valley” (Wikipedia, [Kingdom of Kush](#)). Descendants of Kush were idol worshippers, probably bearing the curse of Noah to become slaves (a curse originally extended to Kush’s brother, Canaan; Genesis 9:25). Apparently, the Kushites (descendants of Kush) had an external signature (dark skin), which set them apart from other ancient residents of the Land of Israel. This is why the Bible often refers to Kushites addressing their skin color, for example: “Can a Kushite change his skin, or the leopard his spots? so may you do good, you evil-practitioners” (Jeremiah 13:23).

Scripture also refers to the fact that the Kushites were slaves, or, alternatively, to the fact that, being dark-skinned, they would not intermingle with other residents in the ancient Land of Israel. According to Jewish prophets, both are desirable characteristics for God’s people:

- * Be dedicated servants to God (this idea is realized in various Hebrew names, like Obadiah (“Slave to God”), and Arabic names, like Abdullah or Abdallah);

- * Be separate from other peoples. Prophet Amos expresses this explicitly:

“Are not you, Israelites, the same to me as the sons of Kushites? declares Jehovah...” (Amos 9:7).

In modern-day Hebrew, the term *Kushi* (male), or *Kushit* (female), has gained a status similar to Negro (in the US), namely, a derogatory term for black-skinned people of African descent, whose ancestors were slaves (in the US). Numbers 12 seemingly addresses the same issue, unfolding with the associated Divine Judgement, as the new interpretation, expounded below, attests to.

Two good sources about Moses wife, Zippora, and interpretations about whether the Kushite woman was Moses **second** wife, or the text indeed refers to Zipporah, **first** and possibly only wife, may be found in Wikipedia (entry [Zipporah](#)) and in site: thetorah.com ([Moses and the Kushite woman](#)).

***Pitom* (suddenly) and *Hineh* (behold)**

Of all twenty-five verses in the Bible, where *Pitom* appears — with variations — nowhere else does God **suddenly** “say”!! However, there are two other verses, both pronounced by prophets, where Jehovah acts suddenly (*Pitom*) — Isaiah (48:3) and Malachi (3:1):

“I send my messenger, and he shall clear the way before me; and **suddenly** shall come to his temple the Lord, whom you seek; and the messenger of the covenant, whom you yearn for, **behold** (*Hineh*), he has come, says the Lord of hosts”, Malachi (3:1).

This verse apparently refers to the ultimate Divine Judgement at end times, as described by the prophet. Note, that as in Numbers 12 (see verses displayed earlier, Section 1), where “suddenly” (*Pitom*) is accompanied by “behold” (*Hineh*), so are the two linked together here (in this verse).

We will elaborate later on the significance of *Pitom*, and show that God acts suddenly in this chapter not once (as may be deduced from the single appearance of *Pitom*), but twice, as may be deduced from the additional related word, *Ve-Hineh* (“and behold”), which appears twice in the chapter to express surprise at the sudden and unexpected immediate appearance of Divine punishment.

After God **suddenly** summons Moses, Miriam and Aharon to get to the Tent of Meeting, the rest of the chapter (verses 5-16) delivers:

- God’s description of the unique status of Moses as a prophet (unparalleled by any other Jewish prophet);
- Punishment of Aharon and Miriam: According to Jewish interpreters, both were punished with leprosy, however Aharon immediately recovered: “..and Aharon turned to Miriam and, **behold** (*Hineh*), leprous” (Numbers 12:10); This explanation relies on the understanding that Aharon was reluctantly “dragged” into this incidence by Miriam because in the original Hebrew text: “And Miriam and Aharon spoke harshly to Moses..” (Numbers 12:1), the word “spoke” is bizarrely in the singular feminine, implying that Miriam played major role in this incident;
- Aharon apology to Moses, asking for forgiveness;
- Moses prayer and Miriam’s seven days recovery (out of Israel camp), whereupon the people of Israel moved from *Hazereth* and camped in the wilderness of *Paran*.

3. Traditional Jewish Commentary on Numbers 12

Major Jewish interpreters of the Bible, among them Rashi (1040-1105) and Malbim (1809-1879), relate to the whole chapter (Numbers 12) as a single continuous story. They agree that the Kushite woman was Zipporah, Moses’ wife, daughter of Jethro (Exodus 2:21), of Midian descent (Midian was one of six sons of Abraham and Keturah, Genesis 25:2). Since Midian was a tribe of the desert, Rashi assumes that descendants of Midian were also dark-skinned and he states about “Kushite woman” (referring to Zipporah):

“The written states that all acknowledge her beauty, just as all acknowledge the blackness of a Kushi” (in biblical Hebrew *Kushi* is for male, *Kushite* for female).

Thus, Rashi acknowledges that there is a skin-color issue here; however, he interprets the reproach to Moses entirely favourably to Miriam, who is supposedly attempting to defend a basic right of the Kushite woman in her marriage life with Moses (as we will soon learn).

And what was Miriam’s reproach to her brother (according to Rashi, based on a quote from Rabbi Nathan)? That Moses abstained from his wife Zipporah (not fulfilling his duties as a husband) so as to be available to God’s word (namely, after being in God’s presence for forty days on Mount Sinai, Moses has become a Godly person, not engaged in regular earthly activities). Miriam and Aharon are not convinced (that Moses should abstain) — they were also receiving God’s word, yet not ever forbidden from having sexual relationship with their spouses: “And they said: “Has Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? He has spoken also with us! And Jehovah heard.” (Numbers 12:2).

Jehovah then **suddenly** intervenes (“and Jehovah **suddenly** said to Moses, to Aharon and to Miriam...”). Rashi explains that the latter two were both engaged with their spouses at the time, thus learning first-hand what it means when Jehovah **suddenly** talk and you are unavailable to hear his word. And what is God’s response to Miriam and Aharon claiming that they are also prophets, namely, receiving the word of God? Here is a present-day variation of God’s response, articulated somewhat sarcastically: “Kids, calm down — you, or anyone else, are nowhere near the status of Moses, my faithful servant prophet; How dare you compare and not being fearful to reproach my servant?!!”.

Or, with the exact wording from Scripture:

“Not so with my servant Moses, for he is the entrusted one in all of my household” (Numbers 12:7)...”Why then were you not fearful to speak harshly to my servant Moses?” (Numbers 12:7).

4. The New Interpretation (my Commentary)

4.1 *Two elephants in the room*

There are two elephants that traditional interpretations somehow failed to notice, which require some exploration. We describe these by two intriguing questions:

- **Question 1:** Numbers 12 begins with a verse that seems to be related to skin color (the Kushite woman), and ends with skin-related verses (Miriam’s leprosy). How is it that no link had ever been observed/established, by Jewish faith-bound Bible interpreters, between the two “stories”? (only link addressed in Jewish scholarship is the claim that Miriam exercised slander and punished for slander; No reference to the bizarre link to skin, of both the sin and its punishment, as displayed in Numbers 12);
- **Question 2:** If we accept that Kushite woman was indeed Moses second wife (the most reasonable interpretation to Numbers 12:1), and that the reproach to Moses, by his siblings, was that Moses had sexually abandoned her (becoming a Godly man, after being on Mount Sinai for forty days to receive the Torah), how is it that Aharon and Miriam ignored the other wife, Zipporah? And if, to the contrary, Zipporah is the Kushite woman (as interpreted by Rashi and others), why the use of a misleading and possibly derogatory term (Kushite woman) instead of the known name, Zipporah?

4.2 *Four basic facts*

We start this needed re-exploration of Numbers 12 by first establishing some basic facts. Based on these facts and a new mode of reading of Numbers 12:1, we articulate two claims regarding the real meaning of Numbers 12, and then expound four principles underlying Divine Justice (as we understand them from Scripture, in Numbers 12 and elsewhere):

- **Basic Fact 1: The Kushite woman is not Zipporah:** There is no way that Zipporah, of Shem descent, would be denoted in the Bible a Kushite woman, namely, a descendant of Kush, namely, of Ham descent (both Shem and Ham are children of Noah); Furthermore, Zipporah has already been introduced as Moses wife. The claim that the Kushite woman is not Zipporah is supported by a known Jewish interpreter, rabbi Shmuel Ben Meir (Rashbam, 1085-1158), a leading French Tosafist and grandson of Rashi. He also mentions an ancient Hebrew tradition that Moses was king of Kush for forty years and that he had taken a queen. Note that this interpretation is contrary to Rashi’s, addressed earlier. Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra, or simply Ibn Ezra (1089–1167), a contemporary of Rashbam, repeats this story.
- **Basic Fact 2: Aharon and Miriam reproach to Moses was not about absenteeism:** If it was so, and accepting Basic Fact 1 (see above), then the reproach to Moses would extend to Zipporah, but it did not;
- **Basic Fact 3: The sin and the punishment are both skin-related:** Given the emphasis in Jewish faith on sin and punishment being of same sort (in quality and in quantity, as we elaborated on earlier), one can hardly ignore the link between the sin (reproach to Moses, not specified in the text) and the punishment (very explicitly specified!!);
- **Basic Fact 4: Jehovah reproaches Aharon and Miriam for reproaching Moses.** What is the essence of the Divine reproach? Moses is my entrusted servant and he knows good and evil better than anyone else (“Not so with my servant Moses for he is the entrusted one in all of my household”); Why do you

think that you know better than him right and wrong so that you can reproach him?? (“Why then were you not fearful to speak harshly to my servant Moses?”); Note that the Divine reproach does not address at all the essence of Aharon and Miriam reproach to Moses; This remains mysterious and unknown, that is, unless we depart from traditional reading of the key verse Numbers 12:1.

4.3 Principles of Divine Justice

Several principles, supported by biblical verses, underlie our commentary:

- **There is Divine Justice:** “...Would not the Judge of all the earth do Justice?” (Gen. 18:25);
- **Divine Justice may be delayed:** Since Divine Justice is **comprehensive**, it is often not immediate (like violating law of nature) — sin, or, conversely, acts of grace and righteousness, may be belatedly responded by Divine justice: “..Jehovah’s Judgments are true, they are righteous **altogether**” (Psalms 19:10). In other words, Divine Justice should not be perceived individually, regarding that act or another, in which case Jehovah’s judgments may occasionally seem unjust (“Why bad things happen good people?”); Rather, it is the “sub-total” of Divine Justice that is just because “Jehovah’s Judgments...are righteous **altogether**“;
- **Divine Justice aims to teach; and learn you may only when “Action and Reaction” are linked in our mind, namely, being comparable:** This basic principle of Karma (law of cause and effect) is pursued by the Jewish faith. It is articulated by the fundamental biblical commandment: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot; Burning for burning, wound for wound, bruise for bruise” (Exodus 21:24-25). Oral Torah, believed to be delivered to Moses with written Torah, translates this commandment into human terms, namely, offender pays the offended the money-equivalent of the offense suffered. As demonstrated earlier (in opening paragraph of this post), numerous verses in the Bible relate to the link between one’s decisions (resulting in feel, speak or action) and one’s own experiences in life.
- **Divine Justice, unlike law of nature, is not automatic — It is often mitigated by *Hashgacha Pratit* (Divine Providence), which may be humanly unexplainable:** “..I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, thou cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live” (Exodus 33:18-20).

Given these basic facts (4.2), and these Divine Justice principles (4.3) we may now address the opening questions (4.1) and detail our new interpretation of Numbers 12.

4.4 The detailed Commentary

We start by making two claims:

- **Claim 1: Based on a common interpretation of the key word *Ki*, the first verse of Numbers 12 should be differently read and translated:**

Traditional interpretation (one mode of reading the text in its original Hebrew):

“And Miriam and Aharon spoke harshly to Moses about the *Kushite* woman that he had taken, for (*Ki*) he had taken a *Kushite* woman” (Numbers 12:1).

With this interpretation, the last part of the verse, starting with *Ki*, is told by the narrator as a statement of fact;

New interpretation (another, as justifiable, mode of reading the text in its original Hebrew):

“And Miriam and Aharon spoke harshly to Moses (about the *Kushite* woman that he had taken) that (*Ki*) he had taken a *Kushite* woman” (Numbers 12:1).

With this interpretation, the last part of the verse, starting with *Ki*, delivers the contents of the reproach by Miriam and Aharon. In other words, the *Ki* word does not mean “for” (thus preceding statement of fact by the narrator), but rather “that” (preceding detailing of the reproach, as pronounced by Miriam and Aharon).

Such interpretation of *Ki* is not at all rare in the Hebrew Jewish Bible, for example: “..why did you not tell me that (*Ki*) she was your wife?” (Genesis 12:18).

This interpretation sheds new light about the nature of the reproach. No longer is this a mysterious non-explainable one, which requires guessing as to its true nature (as Rashi and others did). Rather, there is an explicit statement: “Our dear brother Moses, why have you married a Kushite woman?”.

▪ **Claim 2: Numbers 12 is a demonstrative tale of how Divine Justice is exercised in world affairs:**

The reproach to Moses by his siblings should now be put in a wider context. It was common practice among ancient Israelites, the monotheists (believers in one God), not to inter-marry pagan worshippers. This is often addressed in Torah, for example, when Abraham desires a wife for his son, Isaak, he makes his loyal servant swear to him that he (the servant) “not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live” (Genesis 24:3);

Esau takes two wives of the Hittites (local people), “and they brought grief to Isaak and Rebekah” (Genesis 26:34-35);

“And Isaak called Jacob... and said to him:” You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother” (Genesis 28:1-2).

Obviously, the common practice was marrying within the tribes of Israel. Moses deviated from this practice, obviously marrying two — Zipporah (of Midian descent, Exodus 2:21), and later, as made clear in this chapter (Numbers 12) also a Kushite woman (of Kush descent). Thus, the reproach for marrying the Kushite woman (outside of the tribes of Israel) aimed at a current event. This straightforwardly explains why Zipporah is not mentioned — marriage to Zipporah had occurred many years earlier, and therefore was not anymore presently relevant.

However, Miriam does not refer to the Kushite woman by name, but calling her by descent, obviously aware of her skin colour (as we have learned from other verses in the Bible, where Kushite people are addressed). This should be contrasted with how the Bible refers to Zipporah, first wife of Moses — always by name (Examples are Exodus 2:21, 4:25, 18:2).

Thus, Miriam was offensive both to the Kushite woman, referring to her by her skin colour rather than by name; and to Moses, thinking she knows better whether Moses should have married the Kushite woman. The Divine response to Miriam is two-fold:

First, God clarifies — Moses knows good and evil better than any, including Miriam and Aharon; How dare you preach to him? (Numbers 12: 7-8);

Second, — You, Miriam, referred to the Kushite woman by her skin-color, rather than by name; Same will be done to you — the people of the Tribes of Israel would refer to you not by name but by the condition of your skin, namely, referring to you as the leprous woman; and this unexpectedly (“behold”, *Hineh*) starts with your closest, your brother Aharon: “...and Aharon turned to Miriam and, **behold (*Hineh*)**, leprous” (Numbers 12:10). The reader might be aware that the verse could be differently articulated, mentioning Miriam by name, like: “...and Aharon turned to Miriam and, **behold (*Hineh*)**, Miriam was leprous”. But this is not what the text says — “Miriam” is eradicated: the narrator no more relates to her by name, just by “the leprous woman” (*Metzuraat*). Divine Justice promptly applies, unexpectedly (**behold, *Hineh***), and it is delivered in the same coin as the sin.

Finally, given the new interpretation, based on the above two claims, why *Pitom and Hineh*?

The Divine talks to us in all manners of “talk”, sometimes with words only, often otherwise, with calamities and mishaps (like wars and diseases) that befall human beings (Sons-of-Adam, *Bnei Adam*):

“I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me so that when he twists his ways, I will **reproach** him with the rod of men and with such plagues as befall *Bnei Adam*” (2 Samuel 7:14).

And Divine “talk” to us, we humans, is more often than not — **SUDDEN!**

This lesson is true whether mode of Divine talk to us is by words (“And Jehovah suddenly said...”, Numbers 12:4), or when Divine “talk” is implemented via other modes of communication, “as befall human beings”. This universal lesson is taught to us in Numbers 12 not once but twice:

* **First time:** Jehovah **suddenly** says to all three, Moses, Aharon and Miriam, to get to the Tent of Meeting, where He calls the latter two to separate from Moses (Numbers 12:5) so that they listen to Him speaking about Moses’ unique status as a servant of God (Numbers 12:6-8);

* **Second time:** Miriam **suddenly** catches leprosy; So sudden and unexpected this incident is that Miriam and Aharon both are in a state of shock. By double use of the word *Hineh*, the biblical narrator excels in describing the unexpected nature of this “sudden” event, to Miriam as well as to Aharon (the reader may recall from earlier quotes that Scripture often combines *Hineh*, behold, with *Pitom*, suddenly):

“And the cloud withdrew from over the Tent, and, **behold** (*Hineh*), **Miriam** was leprous, as white as snow; And **Aharon** turned to Miriam, and, **behold**, leprous” (Numbers 12:10).

With this new interpretation in mind, relying basically on a different read of Numbers 12:1, and perceiving Numbers 12 as basically a display of Divine Justice in action, the last remaining difficulty is this:

Jewish scholars have attempted, throughout history, to beautify the story about the Kushite woman (as demonstrated in the summary of current commentary). However, they ignored the two elephants in the room, thereby reducing considerably the validity of their interpretation.

Why was that?

We believe that the fundamental motive was not to taint “too much” the images of Aharon and Miriam, siblings of Moses, with whom Jehovah spoke too (“Has Jehovah singly spoken only with Moses? Has He not spoken also to us?...”, Numbers 12: 2).

However biblical text, here as always, spares no effort to present reality as it is, without camouflage.

The story of the Kushite woman, where the Bible is shown to spare no effort exposing blemishes of character to some of the most cherished heroes of Jewish faith, thereby demonstrating to us what Divine Justice is.

This story should serve as inspiration to us all.

We, who aspire to equality and dignity for all human beings, we should relate to each not by number, by skin colour, or by any other visible characteristic that one may happen to possess or be associated with!

ALWAYS RELATE TO HUMAN BEINGS BY NAME ONLY.

Faust's Mephistopheles and Biblical Figures Mephi(boshet) and (Achi)tophel

Posted July 8, 2019

Has Faust's Mephistopheles name originated in the Hebrew Bible?

"In a letter to Carl Zelter of November 30, 1829, Goethe admitted that he had no idea what the name Mephistopheles means nor where it came from."

So starts a somewhat forgotten article by the late Professor Yehuda T. Radday (1913-2011), a research colleague and good friend of mine, who headed the Department of General Studies at Technion (Israel Institute of Technology). In his fascinating article of 1997*, attached herewith, Radday painstakingly demonstrates why both historically (via a thorough literature review), and by analysis of what the three figures represent in the respective literature (Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust; *Mephiboshet* and *Achitophel* in Second Book of Samuel), Mephistopheles is probably a combo of the names of the two biblical figures, both contemporaries of King David.

The idea of writing this post came to me at an intermission in a concert I attended that included Schoenberg music. A friend of mine reminded me of Schoenberg's link to the well-known Goethe's composition Faust (find details in [The Doctor Faustus Dossier](#) (Arnold Schoenberg, Thomas Mann, and Their Contemporaries, 1930-1951).

Recalling that my late research colleague and close friend, Y. T. Radday, had summarized his research about the possible (and intriguing) source of the name of Faust's central figure, Mephistopheles, I have decided to write this post.

A link to Radday's article: [Radday Y'T Mephistopheles – Biblical Hebrew Name? 1997](#)

Comment: The letter S is added twice to Mephistopheles, not appearing in either *Mephiboshet* or *Achitophel* (in their Hebrew original). In *Medieval Demonology*, Mephistopheles is one of the seven chief devils (and the tempter of Faust). It is an **interesting coincidence** that the added letter, S, not appearing in the original biblical names, corresponds to the Hebrew letter *Samech*, which represents, in biblical Hebrew, evil forces!! See details in my post:

[The Significance of the Hebrew Samech and Its Occurrence in Names of Enemies of the Jewish Nation](#)

Personal comment: Yehuda Radday passed away, while in Israel, concurrently with the victims of September, 11, 2011. Let this post be in honour of his memory.

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 * Radday, Y'T (1997). Mephistopheles — A Biblical Hebrew Name? . Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies (243-252). Published by World Union of Jewish Studies.

דברי הקונגרס העולמי למדעי היהדות (243-252)

The Mathematical Structure of the Priests Blessing

Posted June 14, 2019

The **Priestly Blessing**, or **priestly benediction** (*Birkat Kobanim*), is the blessing delivered by the priests in synagogues on Sabbath, holidays and else. Its source is Leviticus 9:22. Deuteronomy (10:8, 21:5) mentions Aaron or the other priests blessing the Israelites. Further details may be found on Wikipedia ([Priestly Blessing](#)).

The blessing itself is specified in Numbers (6:24–26). Here it is in its original Hebrew:

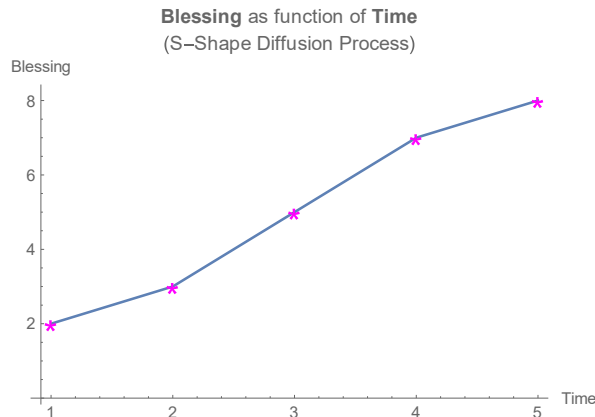
בְּרַכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ; יֵאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִחַנְנֶךָ; יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Adding the two sentences that serve as prelude and conclusion to the Priestly Blessing (not traditionally considered part of the blessing), we obtain (Numbers 6:23-27):

אמור להם:

**בְּרַכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ; יֵאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִחַנְנֶךָ; יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם;
וּשְׂמוֹ אֶת שְׁמִי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם.**

Plotting the number of words in successive sentences, $\{2,3,5,7,8\}^*$, as function of time, we obtain a typical S-shaped graph:



An S-shaped plot is typical to the penetration process into the market of a new product, and, more generally, to any diffusion process (find details, for example, in [Shore and Benson-Karhi, 2007](#)).

As it turns out, the mathematical structure of the Priestly Blessing (in terms of progressive word count) reflects a pattern similar to that of a diffusion process!

This implies a powerful lesson that Torah conveys:

Divine blessing is materialized gradually, S-Shaped — Be patient!

Let God's blessing take its effect!!!

Reference: Shore H, Benson-Karhi D (2007). Forecasting S-shaped diffusion processes via response modeling methodology. *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 58(6):720-729. DOI:

[10.1057/palgrave.jors.2602187](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jors.2602187)

* Probability of this orderly sequence to occur by random is $1/120$.

Why “God is He” in biblical Hebrew??

Posted June 12, 2019

In a recent video by Prager University ([“Why God is HE”](#)), Dennis Prager offers some insightful answers.

Here is my comment, as posted therein:

“In the relationship between the Creator and the created — God is always the “Giver”, humankind is always the “Receiver”. In all cultures of the world, the Giver is masculine, the Receiver is feminine. There are good reasons for that, psychological, biological, cultural and historical. And that is the only reason God is invariably referred to in Jewish Hebrew Bible as masculine.”

In this post, I wish to expand on this comment.

In all bi-lateral interactions that one may observe in the world, there is a **giver** and a **receiver**. Occasionally, the two sides to the interaction play a double role (as both giver and receiver). Furthermore, there is never a morally preferential, or superior, position to one over the other. When a sexual interaction results in pregnancy both giver and receiver are equal partners.

Oddly enough, in biblical Hebrew, where nouns are either masculine or feminine, the distinction between “Giver”, as masculine, and “Receiver”, as feminine, is to a large extent maintained (though not as a generally prevailing rule). Here are some examples:

Givers of heat, light and water — sun (*Shemesh*), moon (*Yareach*), star (*Kochav*), rain (*Geshem*) — are all masculine (*Shemesh* is occasionally addressed also as feminine);

Receivers — Earth (*Eretz*), land or soil (*Karka, Adamah*) — are feminine; However, *Afar*, of which Adam was formed (“And Jehovah Elohim formed man *afar min ha-adamah* (grains from the soil)”, Gen. 2:7) is interestingly masculine;

Central parts of the body that **deliver** to the body — central command, blood, food, oxygen — are all masculine (brain, heart, mouth, nose).

Parts of the body that **receive**:

From within the body — neuro-commands, blood, food, oxygen (hands & legs, kidney, stomach (*Kevah*), lung);

From outside the body — sound, light, objects to grip (ears, eyes, fingers), are all feminine;

Angel in biblical Hebrew (*Malach*, deliverer of messages) is masculine.

“State of Peace” **delivers** peace to its partners (*Shalom*, masculine); “State of War”, like black hole, always **receives**, never **delivers** (*Milchamah*, feminine).

And what is “World” in its relationship to humankind?? (hint, deliverer...)

Who were the Philistines? Why Were They So Named? Where Did They Vanish?

Posted February 22, 2019

The ancient biblical Philistines engaged in various kinds of “dialogue” with the Jewish nation for millennia, starting, historically, with Patriarch Abraham and ending with King David. However, as related in Scripture, they were relevant, engaged with the Jewish nation, even much later in forms and shapes that remind us of prophecies for days-to-come.

First mention of the Philistines appears in a bizarre verse, where, following the Great Flood, descendants of Noah are enumerated, one by one (“Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth”, Genesis 10:1). The sons of Ham are Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan (Genesis 10:6). Then comes a detailed enumeration of grandsons, amongst them the seven sons of Mizraim (also Hebrew for the land of Egypt):

“Mizraim gave birth to Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehavim,.., and Patrusim and Kasluhim, out of whom came the Philistines, and Kaftorim” (Genesis 10:13-14).

Rashi (1040 –1105), a most revered Jewish interpreter of the Jewish Hebrew Bible, probably wondered at this bizarre sentence (about the Philistines) in the middle of a detailed list of *brothers* (sons of Mizrayim). He comments, based probably on *Midrash Rabah* (*Bereshit* 37, 5):

“From both they came out since Patrusim and Kasluhim used to swap their wives, one with the other, and out of them came Philistines”.

Rabbeinu Behaye (1255 – 1340) further explains that the source for biblical Philistines were ancestors born bastards (namely, descendants of a mother not married to the biological father); And the reason for that was mutually-agreed **invasion** of privacy between the two brothers, Patrusim and Kasluhim.

Rashi’s non-conventional interpretation had been pursued by other Jewish interpreters. This interpretation probably leans, to a large extent, on the meaning of the biblical Hebrew root both for the name of the people (Philistines) and their region in Canaan, Philistia (*Pleshet* in Hebrew), where the Philistines dwelt prior to the arrival of the Israelites to the Promised Land, and a long period of time thereafter.

This Hebrew root is:

P.L.Sh (פ.ל.ש).

Originally, this root means “penetrate, “dig through”, “go from end to end”. A natural derivative gives rise to various Hebrew words, verbs and nouns, having one meaning in common:

“Invade”; “trespass”; “Get hold of that which is not yours”; “Seize illegally”.

Indeed, when one observes the various “dialogues”, more precisely violent encounters, that the Philistines had with the Jewish nation, starting with Patriarch Abraham and ending with their final defeat by King David, there is a common thread that connect them all — “Invasion”, namely, seizing illegally, or claiming to own, or wishing to possess, **that** which is not yours; And **“that”** may stretch from wives, to water wells, to spring water, to land (territory), and ultimately to important strategic assets of a foreign nation (the Israelites) — leaders, judges, members of the royal family, and finally even to the holiest object of the Jewish faith (at the time), the Ark of the Covenant.

Following are verses from Scripture that tell these encounters (between the Philistines and the Jewish nation), each preceded with a title that summarizes the significance of that encounter as an embodiment of an unlawful invasion (*Plishah*).

1. Seizing wife — Sarah, Abraham’s wife, seized by Abimelech, King of Gerar, King of the Philistines (Genesis 26:8):

“And Abraham said of Sarah, his wife, she is my sister; and Abimelech, King of Gerar, sent and took Sarah” (Genesis 20: 2);

2. Seizing an existing well — Abraham breaking the news to the “innocently ignorant” Abimelech that his servants had seized a well dug by Abraham’s people:

“And Abraham reprovved Abimelech because of the well of water which Abimelech’s servants had violently taken away; And Abimelech said, I know not who has done this thing, neither did thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but today” (Genesis 21:25-26);

3. Nearly seizing wife (again..) — Rebekah, Isaac’s wife, nearly seized by Abimelech, King of the Philistines:

“And Abimelech said, what is this you have done to us? One of the men nearly has laid with your wife and you would have brought guilt upon us” (Genesis 26: 10);

4. Unlawfully separating one from his lawfully-owned property — Philistines “deactivate” existing water wells, dug by Abraham’s servants:

“And all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham, his father, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth” (Genesis 26:15);

5. Claiming to possess water of a newly found spring — Philistines claiming spring water found by Isaac’s servants:

“And Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and **found** there a well of springing water; And the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, the water is ours; So, he named the well *Eseke* because they quarrelled with him; And they dug another well and they quarreled over it too so he named it *Sitnah*” (Genesis 26:19-21);

Comment: *Eseke* appears only here, however *Eshbek*, derived from same root, means robbing; *Sitnah* appears elsewhere (Esra 4:6), where it probably means extremely negative false slander; In modern Hebrew *Sitnah* simply means hatred;

6. Denying lawful owner taking hold of its property — The Philistines delaying the Israelites from reaching the Promised Land

“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, for God said lest the people repent when they see war and they return to Egypt; And God led the people around through the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea” (Exodus 13:17);

During Joshua’s wars to conquer the Land of Israel, *Pleshet*, the land of the Philistines, with its five main cities, were not conquered:

“Now Joshua was old and of advanced age and Jehovah said to him: You are old and of advanced age and there remains yet very much land to be occupied; This is the land that yet remains — All the regions of the Philistines...” (Joshua 13:1-2)

The Bible explains why the Philistines (and some other nations) were not conquered during Joshua’s wars to occupy the Promised Land:

“That through them Israel would be put on a trial to find out whether they keep the way of Jehovah to walk in them as their forefathers did keep them or not” (Judges 2:22); See also Judges 3:1-4.

Violent encounters with the Philistines therefore continued for a very long period of time, all remarkably characterized by symptoms of invasion, namely, “seizing that which is not yours”.

- 7. Invasion of privacy and consequently unlawful seizure of a major strategic asset of a foreign nation (Israel) — The Philistines approach Samson’s two women (first wife, and after murdering her — a Philistine concubine); Then capturing, by deceit, the Israeli leader (a judge and a warrior):**

(7a) The Philistines approach Samson’s wife secretly (invasion of privacy), subsequently killing her:

“And it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson’s wife: Entice your husband that he may declare to us the riddle lest we burn you and your father’s house with fire...” (Judges 14:15);

Samson’s wife complied, yet had not escaped the fate assigned to her by the Philistines:

“..and the Philistines went up and burnt her and her father with fire” (Judges 15:6);

(7b) The Philistines approach Samson’s concubine (Delilah) secretly:

Nearly same narrative (invasion of privacy) repeats with Samson’s concubine (Delilah), whom the Philistines approach, unknowingly to Samson:

“And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her: Entice him and find out wherein his great strength lies and by what means may we prevail against him that we may bind him and torture him; And we will give you, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver” (Judges 16:5);

(7c) The Philistines capture Samson:

Having approached Samson’s concubine (Delilah) secretly, the Philistines now seizing by deceit the Israeli leader (judge and warrior):

“And the Philistines took hold of him, and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains and he was a grinder in the prison” (Judges 16:21);

- 8. Unlawful seizure of the holiest object of the Jewish nation — The Philistines taking hostage the Arch of the Covenant**

This event happened once in history and never again. There is no historic evidence, either in the Bible or in archaeological findings, that the Arch of the Covenant has ever left Jerusalem, even during or after the destruction of the first Jewish Temple (586 BCE) or the second (70 AD). Yet, the Philistines captured this central artefact of the Jewish faith during one of their aggressive encounters with the Israelites, while the latter were dwelling in the Promised Land:

“So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated and they fled every man to his tent, and there was a very great slaughter and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers; and the Ark of God was captured and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Pinchas, died.” (1 Samuel 4: 10-11);

- 9. Unlawful seizure of a major strategic asset of a foreign nation — The Philistines kill the royal family (King Saul and his sons) and mutilate the bodies and hang them for display**

“Thus, Saul died with his three sons and all those of his house died together” (1 Chronicles 10:6; the full story is unfolding in I Chronicles 10:1-10).

In between these major historic events, the Philistines routinely invaded countless times the land occupied by the Israelites. Examples:

“Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim” (1 Chronicles 14:9);

“The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the Negev of Judah, and had taken Beth-Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages, and they settled there” (2 Chronicles 28:18).

The final defeat of the Philistines was inflicted by King David, after which they no longer harassed the Kingdom of Israel:

“David therefore did as God had commanded him and they struck down the army of the Philistines from Gibeon even as far as Gezer. Then the fame of David went out into all the lands; and Jehovah brought the fear of him upon all the nations” (1 Chronicles 14:16-17).

What was the final destiny of the Philistines? — The great flee from Canaan into the desert

For 300 years, from 900 to 600 BC, the Assyrian Empire expanded, conquered and ruled the Middle East, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and parts of today’s Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The final stage of the Assyrian empire began in 745 BC, when Tiglath Pileser III took the throne. Tiglath Pileser III received an empire in a slump with a demoralized army and disorganized bureaucracy. He took control and began reorganizing all aspects of the empire from the army to the bureaucracy to re-conquering rebellious provinces. Following Tiglath Pileser III, the Assyrian empire was ruled by Shalmaneser V, Sargon II and Sennacherib. Sennacherib’s reign (705 to 681 BC) welded the empire into an even greater force, and he conquered provinces in Anatolia, Judah and Israel, even sacking Jerusalem. Sennacherib moved the capital of Assyria to Nineveh.

(Source: [History on The Net — The Assyrian Empire, the most powerful empire in the world](#))

Based on Scripture and some archaeological findings, the culprit for the final disappearance of the Philistines was the Assyrian Empire. This empire regularly displaced peoples residing in the territories they had conquered, swapping them with another people as to minimize the likelihood of a rebellion of the local occupied population against the foreign occupier.

The most known example for that is the lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrian monarchs, Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) and Shalmaneser V. The later Assyrian rulers, Sargon II and his son and successor Sennacherib, were responsible for finishing the twenty-year demise of Israel’s northern ten-tribe kingdom, although they did not overtake the Southern Kingdom (Judah; Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib, but not taken). The tribes of the Northern Kingdom were forcibly relocated and resettled by Assyria, later to become known as the Ten Lost Tribes. Though captivities began in approximately 740 BC (or 733/2 BCE according to other sources), in 722 BCE, nearly ten to twenty years after the initial deportations, and after a three-year siege started by Shalmaneser V, the Northern Kingdom of Israel, ruled at the time by King Hoshea, is conquered by Assyrian king Sargon II, taking the kingdom’s ruling city Samaria. The biblical account below summarizes these events:

“And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.” (1 Chronicles 5:26);

“In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and he took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.” (2 Kings 15:29);

“Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore, the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” (2 Kings 17:3–6);

“And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: because they obeyed not the voice of Jehovah their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded and would not hear them, nor do them.” (2 Kings 18:11–12);

(Source: Wikipedia, entry Assyrian Captivity: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian_captivity).

The practice of the Assyrian Empire to dislocate local populations had consequences for the peoples residing in the Land of Israel and around it. When the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, son and successor of Sargon II, came with a huge army to conquer the Southern Israel Kingdom, Judah, with its capital Jerusalem, other local peoples, realizing what prior Assyrian rulers had done to the Ten Tribes of Israel, fled to the desert to mingle with the Ishmaelites, assuming rightly that the Assyrian Empire had no desire to rule the desert. Among the fleeing were the Philistines, residents of *Pleshet*.

Echoes to the massive flee from Canaan appear in several Hebrew Jewish sources. For example:

“Rabbie Yossi says: “When Sennacherib came to Eretz Israel, all the peoples in the surroundings of Eretz Israel saw his camp and they became very fearful and they fled each man from his place, for it is said: “For he has said, “By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this, For I have understanding; And I removed the boundaries of the peoples, and plundered their treasures, and like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants” (Isaiah 10:13). And they entered the desert and intermingled with the Sons of Ismael, and they were ten peoples in total, as it is said: “The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites; Gebal and Ammon and Amalek; *Pleshet* with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them..” (Psalms 83:6-8)”;

(Source: *Pirkei de-Rabbie Eliezer* 44).

Interestingly, the term “*Arav*” appears several times in the Bible, relating to the region south east of Canaan, and the rulers of this region are named Kings of *Arav* (similarly to today’s King of Saudi Arabia). Examples are Isaiah 21:13, Jeremiah 25:24 and Ezekiel 27:21. All these Jewish prophets, mentioning *Arav*, lived during Sennacherib’s failed attempt to conquer Jerusalem (and the great flee from Canaan that preceded that) or thereafter. The biblical Hebrew source of *Arav* is:

A.R.V (ע.ר.ב)

This root gives rise to various Hebrew words, all having one meaning in common — to intermingle, to mix together. For example, day and night are mixed together in the *Erev* (Evening).

Thus, the various verses in the Jewish Hebrew Bible that relate to “Arab” implicitly mirror the great flee from Canaan of the ten peoples residing therein and thereabouts, and ultimately mirror the mixing together of these peoples with residents of the desert, the Sons of Ishmael. The Philistines, therefore, vanished from Canaan while fleeing from *Pleshet* to mingle with the Ishmaelites in the land of *Arav* (Arabia in English). This Jewish tradition, which perceives the Arab nation as formed out of intermingling of the ten peoples with the Ishmaelites (the original tenants of the desert) perhaps may help explain why present-day Arab people encounter difficulties maintaining and preserving distinct and separate viable nation states.

Finally, Psalms 83, quoted earlier as echoing the Great Flee from Canaan, is worth re-reading, in depth and in full, as it includes, probably, some hints for current affairs and perhaps also for days-to-come. This “Psalm of Asaph” is a prayer for the Jewish people against its enemies; And what do these enemies aspire and conspire to achieve?

The known double-plot — against the Jewish nation and against its possession of Eretz Israel — is made explicit in Psalm 83, echoing what by now, millennia later, may be termed “Same old story”:

“Elohim, do not keep silence, do not turn deaf and do not be still, Oh God; For, behold, thy enemies make an uproar, and they who hate thee have lifted up the head...They take crafty counsel against thy people and conspire together against thy treasured ones; They have said, “**Come and let us wipe them out as a nation that the name of Israel be remembered no more.**” For they have consulted together with one mind, against thee do they make a covenant...that they say “**let us seize for our possession the pastures of God**” (Psalms 83:2-13).

This post is largely based on lectures by Rabbi Yinon Kalazan:

[The Philistines Rav Yinon Kalazan Nov 1 2014](#)

[The Philistines Rav Yinon Kalazan Dec 18 2018](#)

Where “Do Not Steal” Appears in the Ten Commandments

Posted January 20, 2019

The response to this intriguing question/title may surprise you — “Do Not Steal” does not appear at all in the Ten Commandments; At least, not in the conventional sense.

Jewish scholarship has unanimously agreed, throughout the generations, that the Eighth Commandment (“Do not Steal”) refers solely to “stealing souls”, namely, capturing (taking hostage) of fellow human beings.

Rashi (1040-1105), the most revered of Jewish Bible commentators, starts his explanation of “Do not steal” (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17) in no ambiguous words, consistent with how the Talmud perceives this commandment:

“The written speaks of one who steals souls”.

This interpretation relies on the position of this commandment relative to the two preceding ones, the sixth commandment (“Do not murder”) and the seventh (“Do not commit adultery”); However, it mostly relies on other verses in the Torah, where the concept of “stealing a person for sale” is addressed. For example (bold mine):

“He that steals a man and sells him, and found in his hand, shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 21:16);

“If a man be found stealing a soul of his brethren of the Children of Israel and deals with him as a slave, or sells him, then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from amongst you” (Deuteronomy 24:7).

This teaches us of the severity of the Eighth Commandment (“Do not steal”), implying thereby that “Do not steal” in the Ten Commandments could not possibly relate to stealing of property.

Does this imply that prohibition on stealing in the conventional sense, namely, stealing property, does not appear in the Ten Commandments?

Not exactly!!

True, Torah does not explicitly prohibit stealing (in the conventional sense). But it alerts us against harmful one-sided human relationship, the real root-cause of stealing, which may, often inevitably and inescapably, lead to “stealing”:

“Coveting, or desiring, that which is not yours”.

Therefore, Torah prohibits coveting, root-cause of stealing, in the most expansive and all-inclusive sense of the word (the Tenth Commandment):

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house...Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maiden servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour’s” (Exodus 20:14);

“Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s wife...Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s house, his field or his manservant or his maidservant, his ox or his ass or anything that is thy neighbour’s” (Deuteronomy 5:18).

"Ishmael&Esau" vs. "Obama&Trump"— Stunning Commonalities!

Posted September 14, 2018

- **Who was Ishmael?**

“Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, bore him no children and she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram: “Behold now, Jehovah has restrained me from bearing, I pray thee, sleep with my maidservant, perhaps I can build a family through her; and Abram obeyed to Sarai’s voice...and Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave his son’s name, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael” (Genesis 16:1-2; 16:15);

- **Who was Esau?**

“Isaac prayed to Jehovah on behalf of his wife, because she was barren, and Jehovah answered his prayer and his wife Rebekah became pregnant... When the time came for her to give birth, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first to come out was red all over like a hairy garment, and they called his name Esau; After that came out his brother, and his hand grasping Esau’s heel, and he called his name Jacob” (Genesis 25:21,24-26).

In Jewish tradition, descendants of Ishmael are identified with followers of the Islam faith; Descendants of Esau are identified with followers of the Christian faith. Both assertions are rooted in Jewish sources, based on verses that appear in the Jewish Hebrew Bible (particularly those of the Jewish prophets).

Two descendants of Ishmael and Esau, respectively, play a major role in how Jewish scholarship has perceived the relationships being shaped-up throughout history between the Jewish people and followers of Islam and Christianity:

***Kedar**, second son of Ishmael:

“These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, **Kedar**, Adbeel..” (Genesis 25:13); “These are their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael Nebaioth, and **Kedar**, and Abdeel..” (1 Chronicles 1:29);

* **Amalek**, grandson of Esau, son of Eliphaz (the second son of Esau):

“And Esau’s son, Eliphaz, also had a concubine named Timna, who bore him **Amalek**..” (Genesis 36:12); “The sons of Eliphaz: Teman and Omar, Zepho and Gatam, Kenaz and Timna and **Amalek**” (1 Chronicles 1:36).

In Genesis 36:40-43, heads of families belonging to descendants of Esau (*Alufim*) are enumerated, name by name. The tenth on the list is **Magdiel** (literally, “Increasing God”). Rashi (1040-1105), the most revered of Jewish Bible interpreters, explains:

“This is Rome” (referring to the ancient Christian Roman Empire and its historic derivatives).

In this post, we outline stunning common features shared by **Ishmael and Esau**, on the one hand, and, respectively, the 44th and 45th presidents of the United States — **Barack Hussein Obama II** (born August 4, 1961) and **Donald John Trump** (born June 14, 1946).

The post is divided into four parts:

1. Common personal physical traits;

2. Middle names (of President Obama and President Trump);
3. Continents and countries of origin (parents or grandparents);
4. Birthplace of ancestors

(all personal data below, on the lives of the two presidents, are extracted from Wikipedia)

1. Common personal physical traits

* **Ishmael:** The Bible does not specify that Ishmael was dark-skinned. Probably he was for two reasons:

1. His biological mother, Hagar, was Egyptian (namely, of African descent);
2. His second son, Kedar, has a name that its root in biblical Hebrew means.. dark or become darkened. This meaning appears in seventeen different words in the Jewish Hebrew Bible. Examples:

“For this shall the earth mourn and the sky above be darkened (*Ve-Kadrou Hashamayim*)..” (Jeremiah 4:28);

“Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and the moon are darkened (*Kadaron*)..”, “The sun and the moon are darkened (*Kadaron*)..” (Joel 2:10, 4:15, respectively);

The same meaning regarding *Kedar* is also imparted by the following verse from Song of Songs (1:5):

”Dark I am, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon”.

Tent, in biblical Hebrew, often means family, like in (Jeremiah 30:18):

“Thus said Jehovah, Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob’s tents and have mercy on his dwelling places..”.

* **Esau:** As the quote above regarding Esau implies (Genesis 25), Esau was probably red-headed.

* **President Obama:** Dark-skinned;

* **President Trump:** Red-headed (see Wikipedia, entry: “List of redheads”; note that list is sorted by first name).

2. Middle names (President Obama and President Trump)

* **Ishmael:** As noted earlier, in Jewish Bible-related scholarship descendants of Ishmael are followers of Muhammad (founder of the Islamic faith). As testified by Maimonides (1135 or 1138 to 1204), in his letter to the Jews of Yemen, Muhammad himself was a descendant of Kedar, second son of Ishmael. Let us address the related name Hussein. Wikipedia assets that:

“This name was not used in the pre-Islamic period and is recorded to have been first used by the Islamic prophet Muhammad when he named his grandson Hussein ibn Ali, saying he had been commanded to do so by Allah through the archangel Gabriel”;

* **Esau:** As noted earlier, in Jewish Bible-related scholarship descendants of Esau are followers of Jesus Christ (source of the Christian faith). Let us address the related name John. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (entry “John”), addresses eight religious figures that are central to the development and maintenance of the Christian faith, among them, “John the Baptist (died c. 30 AD), regarded as a prophet and the forerunner of Jesus Christ; John the Apostle (c. 30 AD), one of the twelve apostles of Jesus; John the Evangelist, assigned author of the Fourth Gospel, once identified with the Apostle; John of Patmos, the author of the Book of Revelation, once identified with the Apostle; John the Presbyter, a figure either identified with or distinguished from the Apostle, the Evangelist and John of Patmos; Pope John, several popes”.

In other words: The names Hussein and John are deeply embedded in the founding figures of the Islamic faith and of the Christian faith, respectively.

* **President Obama:** His middle name is Hussein;

* **President Trump:** His middle name is John.

3. Continents and countries of origin (parents or grandparents)

* **Ishmael's** biological parents, Avram and Hagar, were born in **two different continents**: Avram was born in **Asia** (Terach, Avram's father, lived in Ur Kasdim, modern day Iraq); Hagar, the Egyptian, was born in **Africa**;

* **Esau's** parents, Isaac and Rebecca, were born in **two different countries (regions), in the same continent**, Asia: Isaac was born in **Canaan**; Rebecca was born in **Aram Naharaim**, modern day Iraq (Genesis 24:10). Both regions are on the same continent, **Asia**;

* **Obama's** parents were born in **two different continents**: His father, Barack Obama Sr. (1936-1982), was born in Kenya, **Africa**; His mother, Ann Dunham (1942-1985), was born in Wichita, Kansas, USA, **North America**.

* **Trump's** grandparents were born in **two different countries, in the same continent**, Europe: "Trump's ancestors originated from the **German** village of Kallstadt in the Palatinate, on his father's side, and from the Outer Hebrides in **Scotland**, on his mother's side. All of his grandparents and his mother were born in **Europe**" (Wikipedia, entry "Donald Trump").

4. Birth place of ancestors

* **Esau:** A descendant of Esau is Amalek (see references in the Bible, as earlier quoted). Amalek represents the ultimate anti-thesis to the Jewish faith. While all monotheistic faiths believe that every occurrence on Earth is in the hands of the Divine ("All is in the hands of God except for the fear of God"), Amalek philosophy is that all is coincidental, random (read reference to this point in my book "Coincidences in the Bible and in biblical Hebrew", subsection 16.2 and also Example 2 in subsection 3.3). A descendant of Amalek is *Haman Ha-Agagi* (Haman the Agagite), namely Haman of Agag descent (Esther 8:3, 9:24). Agag was the king of Amalek, obviously a descendant of Amalek (1 Samuel 15:8). Haman, a descendant of Amalek, had plotted "to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, namely, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to take the spoil of them for plunder" (Esther 3:13)...and the king and Haman sat down to drink..." (Esther 3:15).

However, this time the plot to exterminate the Jewish people in "One day" was thwarted.

The term *Germamia* appears in the Talmud (*Gemara, Megilla* 6b). The *Gra* (Vilna Gaon, 1720-1797) and *Rav Yaakov Emden* (1697-1776) suggested that this was a spelling mistake, caused while manually copying the Talmud from generation to generation, and that the correct word is Germania. This implies that the *Gemara* is speaking not of some unidentifiable nation, as *Rashi* suggests, but of the very well-known nation of Germany (*Germania* in modern-day Hebrew). It is a long held Jewish tradition, starting with the *Gra*, that descendants of Amalek intermingled into the German nation, which is perhaps the reason *Rav Chaim Sonnenfeld* refused to meet with Kaiser Wilhelm II in Jerusalem, during the latter's visit to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1898.

It is indeed hard to digest that this nation, some of whom are (according to long held Jewish tradition) descendants of Amalek, grandson of Esau, has succeeded in a plot against the Jewish nation, where Haman (a biblical figure, a descendant of Amalek) had failed.

In conclusion, we note here that in this post we have included only "Commonalities" that have passed the test of political correctness, and also such that do not constitute, in any shape or form, a possible offense to either president.

President Obama and President Trump, during their tenure, respectively, as presidents of the United States, have been continuously monitored by the international media, with a magnifying glass, with regard to their relationship to current-day ultimate representative of the Jewish people — the State of Israel.

This post may teach us that perhaps there may be some good hidden reason for that.

What Do We Know of God?

Posted June 6, 2018

This eternal question has been the focus of human endeavors for millennia. Prophet Isaiah delivers a succinct answer to it, describing his vision of the *Seraphim* crying to each other, saying:

“...*Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh* (Holy, Holy, Holy) is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his *Kavod* (Glory)” (Isaiah 6:3).

Based on this verse from the Bible, a Jew prays several times a day in the most sacred part of the daily prayer (*Tefilat Shmona-Esre*):

“You are *Kadosh* and your name is *Kadosh*”.

However, the English translation of *Kadosh* (holy) fails to deliver the full scope of the meaning of the Hebrew-language root K.D.S (ש.ד.ק), source of *Kadosh*. When a Jewish groom marries his loved one, he recites under the Bridal Canopy (*Chuppah*), as he places a ring on her finger:

הָרִי אֶת מְקַדְּשֶׁת לִי בְּטִבְעַת זֹאת כְּדַת מֹשֶׁה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

(“With this ring, you are consecrated (*Mekudeshet*) to me according to the law of Moses and Israel”).

The translation is somewhat misleading — there is no intention to state that the bride becomes sanctified, or holy. Rather, that the bride becomes separated, namely, unavailable and inaccessible to other men. Indeed, when we examine various biblical uses of the root K.D.S, this interpretation keeps resurfacing. For example:

“And you shall be holy (*Kedoshim*) to me for I the Lord am holy (*Kadosh*) and have **separated** you from the peoples to be mine” (Leviticus 20:26).

Kadosh simply means separated.

But what does it mean that God is separate? Separate from what? The first verse of Genesis says it all:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

With these seven non-ambiguous Hebrew words, the Bible declares, in its first verse, that pantheism (“God and the world are one”) is null and void:

In the beginning, God **has created** the spiritual world (“The Heaven”) and the physical world (“The Earth”); Therefore, God cannot be part of the created. God is separate (*Kadosh*) and beyond.

This fundamental tenet of the Jewish faith is well rooted in the Torah and in various Jewish interpretations delivered by Jewish rabbis over the ages. Let us address two examples:

Example [1]: One of the Hebrew names for God is “The **place** (*Ha-Makom*)”. This bizarre term originated in the following verse, part of the Divine response to Moses request “Show me thy glory (*Kevodchah*)” (Exodus 33:18):

“And the Lord said, Behold, there is a **place** with me and thou shall stand upon a rock...; and I will cover thee with my hand while I pass by and I will take away my hand and thou shall see my back but my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:21-23).

Jewish rabbis explain the “place”:

“שהוא מקומו של עולם, ואין עולמו מקומו” (בראשית רבה)

“That He is the place of the world, but not the world His place” (*Beresbit Rabbah* 68:9).

Example [2]: By similar vein:

“..I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee...And He said, thou cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live” (Exodus 33:18-20).

In other words: Seeing God (“my face”) is impossible while we live. No knowledge of God Himself is possible.

We now understand why the Seraphim in Isaiah’s vision turn to God by His most important and significant name, *Kadosh*, namely separate and beyond His creation.

And that is all we know of God.

Humans cannot know anything else. All other biblical Hebrew names for the Divine, supposedly describing God, are indeed mere coins for **observable** modes of Divine leadership, via which God sustains and manages His creation; And these modes are all observed post factum, as accurately conveyed in the Bible (“thou shall see my back but my face shall not be seen”).

We, mere mortals, have to make do with this important message and fundamental distinction, expressed so explicitly by the very first verse of Genesis (and repeated elsewhere as we have demonstrated):

God is not part of the world. There was creation: God **created** the non-physical (“Heavens”) and He **created** the physical (“Earth”).

Therefore, God is *Kadosh* (separate) and His name is *Kadosh*.

“And *Elohim* Saw *Ki Tov*” (“that it was good”))” (Gen. 1)— A Different Viewpoint

Posted April 18, 2018

This famous verse from the first chapter of Genesis, referring to parts of Creation, appears therein, with variations, six times. It appears a seventh time as the act of Creation is drawn to its conclusion:

“And God saw everything that He has made, and, behold, *Tov Meod* (“it was very good”)” (Genesis 1:31).

These translations from the original biblical Hebrew, and as the original verses have been universally interpreted over the generations, both within Judaism and outside, are probably incorrect on three counts:

- They are inherently illogical and inconsistent;
- They constitute desecration of the Divine and defamation of God’s name;
- They are inconsistent with numerous other verses in the Hebrew Jewish Bible, where *Ki Tov* is interpreted differently, however with a unique and consistent meaning.

In this post, we first explain these three seemingly outrageous claims. Later we detail our own personal understanding of what these verses of Genesis 1 really mean. Finally, we address the astounding lesson that the Torah attempts to convey to us in its detailed tale of the Divine act of Creation, accompanied by “God has seen *Ki Tov*” or “God saw... and behold *Tov Meod*”.

We start with the first claim: Why are traditional interpretations of these verses illogical and inconsistent?

To understand this, we need to perform a formal analysis of what “Good” really means. First, note that Genesis “Good” is devoid of any moral judgment. “God saw the light that it was good” (Gen. 1:4) does not carry any moral perspective; Rather, “Good” here resembles, and is indeed compatible with, the definition of “Good” as used in quality engineering (which is my profession). To declare a produced item (or delivered service) “Good”, we require that two conditions/requirements be met:

- That the item conforms to certain pre-conceived and precisely-articulated technical specifications;
- That said specifications conform to all requirements that the product has been designed to fulfill.

When at least one of these conditions is violated^{3/4} the item at hand cannot be denoted “Good” (though in traditional quality-control parlance it may be called “conforming” if it satisfies the first condition). With regard to both requirements, denoting “something” as “Good” is senseless, and inherently illogical and inconsistent, if there is no standard to compare it with.

Does God have a standard for “Good”, so that He can declare, regarding His creation— *Ki Tov* (“that it was good”)?

This is a preposterous suggestion. Our very concept of God implies that God is source for all “Goodness”. This is clearly validated, in an extreme fashion, in the Torah, as God responds to Moses request: “Show me your *Kavod*” (“Show me thy glory”; Genesis 33:18). The Divine response:

“...I will make all my **goodness** pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy...” (Exodus 33:19-20).

“God”, by definition, does not have a standard by which to judge whether “something” He has created, or has done, is good or otherwise; Especially so given that all that exists is, per Genesis, the result of Divine

creation. Interpreting, indeed translating, from biblical Hebrew that “God saw that it was good” is therefore senseless and utter nonsense!!

This brings us to the second claim, tightly connected to the first: If our concept of God as source of all goodness holds true, then the idea of God judging the created as “Good” constitutes, by an inescapable logical conclusion, desecration of the Divine and defamation of God’s name.

We will address the third and last claim, articulated earlier, while working out what we believe is the correct interpretation of the current (wrongly translated) “*Elohim* saw that it was good”. To do that, we look for other verses in the Jewish Hebrew Bible that are carrying formal resemblance to the verses in Genesis or use the exact same non-conventional combination of the Hebrew words— *Ki Tov*.

We start with analyzing what “God Saw” really means. We first note that interpreting “God saw” in Genesis as a standalone, linguistically separate from what follows (*Ki Tov*; Gen. 1: 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), this phenomenon is not at all rare in the Jewish Hebrew Bible. It appears in multiple other verses, where a certain human action is attributed to God without specifying the object of the action. Examples:

“...I will now go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry that has reached me, and if not, I will know” (Genesis 18:20-21); Know what?

“And God saw the children of Israel and God knew.” (Exodus 2:25); Knew what?

In these verses and others, human actions are attributed to the Divine without specifying what was the object of the Divine action. Therefore “God saw”, without qualifying words of what God saw, is consistent with other verses in the Bible.

Secondly, addressing the “humanized” Divine seeing, we recall at least four instances where “God saw”:

“*Va-Yar* Jehovah (and Jehovah **saw**) that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that all the impulse of the thoughts of his heart was evil all day long” (Genesis 6:5);

“And Jehovah came down to **see** the city and the tower, which the children of men were building” (Genesis 11:5);

“And Jehovah said, because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grievous, I will now go down and **see** whether they have done altogether according to the cry that has reached me, and if not, I will know” (Genesis 18:20-21);

“And Jehovah said, I have surely **seen** the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry...” (Exodus 3:7).

In these particular verses, God is looking over the affairs of humankind, ultimately resulting in Jehovah’s intervention to correct that which had been twisted by human actions. These verses are obvious examples of Divine Providence, the Divine watching to see what transpire in His creation, and as needed intervenes.

Why should “God saw” in Genesis Creation be interpreted differently, even though this time Divine Providence applies not to human actions but to parts of Creation of Heaven and Earth and, finally, to Creation as a whole?

Thirdly, and most importantly, we search for other instances where the unique combination *Ki Tov* appears. The latter appears in the Bible (apart from Genesis 1) sixteen more times, all in a single idiom, with variations. Examples:

“O give thanks to Jehovah *Ki Tov* (“for He is good”); for His steadfast love endures forever.” (Psalms 107:1; 136:1; Chronicles 1 16:34);

“And they sang responsively in praising and giving thanks to Jehovah *Ki Tov* (“for He is good”); for His steadfast love endures forever...” (Ezra 3:11);

“... and praised Jehovah, saying, *Ki Tov* (“for He is good”); for His steadfast love endures forever...” (Chronicles 2 5:13);

“... they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement... and praised Jehovah, saying, *Ki Tov* (“for He is good”); for His steadfast love endures forever” (Chronicles 2 7:3);

“*Halleluiab* (“Praise God”) *Ki Tov* (“for He is good”), sing praise to our God for it is pleasant...” (Psalms 147:1).

We realize that when the combination *Ki Tov* appears elsewhere in the Jewish Hebrew Bible, preceded by a mention of “God”, it invariably has one meaning: “For God is good”. Furthermore, in all these instances *Ki Tov* appears in a sentence having common structure, namely, a first part relating to God, a second part comprising only the two words— *Ki Tov*. And these qualifying words refer to the present goodness of God. Consistently.

Why should *Ki Tov* be interpreted differently in Genesis creation story?

The implication of the new interpretation is staggering. Let me explain why.

Jewish scholars have consistently and insistently preached, throughout centuries of Bible-based Jewish scholarship, that there are two sorts of leadership by which God leads His world:

- * Via Law-of-Nature (Genesis 8:22); This leadership is denoted *Elohim*;
- * Via Divine intervention (looking over what transpires in His world and occasionally intervenes in real-time, as the above four examples about Noah’s flood, Tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomorra and Exodus testify); This leadership is represented by Jehovah.

Furthermore, Jewish rabbis have continuously insisted that Divine leadership is ever-present in the created, and if *Elohim*-Jehovah stopped sustaining His world— all would return to “nothingness” in a blink of an eye. Put differently: God is sustaining creation every single moment, and if He ceased “seeing” His creation, the whole world would collapse at once into *Tobu va-Vobu* (“without form and void”). Wikipedia, in entry “Divine Providence”, asserts that rabbinic literature, and in particular classical Jewish philosophers, “maintain that divine providence means that God is directing (or even recreating) every minute detail of creation”. The new interpretation of *Ki Tov* in the first chapter of Genesis obviously is consistent with that credo and support it.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Jehovah is not mentioned explicitly anywhere in describing Genesis creation— God appears therein explicitly only as creator (*Elohim*). But Jehovah is always there, looking over his creation. With the new interpretation of *Ki Tov* in Genesis 1 (the only logical and self-consistent possible), a new insight is gained and a powerful lesson:

“God saw, *Ki Tov*” testifies to the ever presence of Jehovah-*Elohim*, looking over His creation from the beginning (*Be-Reshit*), and ever thereafter, because of His goodness (*Ki Tov*). And when creation is taken in its totality, “behold, Jehovah-*Elohim* is *Tov Meod*”.

Kavod— The Most Peculiar Word in Biblical Hebrew

Posted February 16, 2018

Kavod in modern Hebrew means honor, respect or glory. A person may show *Kavod* to his fellow human being, and a military medal of honor, bestowed unto a military service person, is a medal of *Kavod* (*Ot Kavod*).

The word appears in the Jewish Bible no less than 199 times. Numerous times it appears therein in the same sense as in modern spoken Hebrew. Examples:

“Akhan, My son, give, I pray thee, respect to Jehovah, God of Israel...” (Joshua 7:19);

“And on that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob shall fade...” (Isaiah 17:4);

“The Heavens declare the glory of God...” (Psalms 19:2).

Yet, this is only one sense with which *Kavod* appears in the Bible and it is not the most frequent one. A more frequent usage does not relate at all to the *created* giving glory to the *Creator*. Rather, it relates to *Kavod* as intrinsically linked to the Divine. And here we encounter the impossible combination of words:

Jehovah's Kavod.

What does that mean?

Jewish bible interpreters have attempted, throughout the ages, to impart plausible meaning to this bizarre idiom; however, they have always relied on the traditional sense of “honor” or “respect” or “glory. In most Bible translations (from biblical Hebrew), “Jehovah’s *Kavod*” translates to “Jehovah’s glory”.

As we shall soon realize, all those interpretations fall short of satisfactorily explaining most usages of this combination of words in the Jewish Hebrew Bible.

Thus, we are left helpless figuring out and imparting any sensible meaning to this bizarre expression; that is, until we scrutinize instances where it appears, and try to integrate these with scientific knowledge we currently possess about the universe. Once we do that, stunning amazement and deep appreciation for Jehovah’s *Kavod* follows.

Let us start with a few examples:

- When Moses expresses desire to learn of Jehovah’s ways in leading His world, he asks:
“Please show me *Kevodcha*” (“Your *Kavod*”). The Divine response: “..I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, thou cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live” (Exodus 33:18-20);
- Prophet Isaiah explains why the world exists (seemingly the only time the Bible relates so explicitly to this question):
“All that can be named, by My Name and for my *Kavod* I have created it, I have formed it, I have even made it” (Isaiah 43:7);
- Prophet Isaiah delivers an account of his vision, hearing the Seraphim crying to each other, saying:
“...Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his *Kavod*” (Isaiah 6:3).

How can we settle the first example with the last, while they seem so much at odds and unrelated to one another?

In the first example, Moses obviously requests to learn how the Divine is leading His world. While the response Moses gets is unsatisfactory (“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious”), the Divine response

affirms that what Moses really desired in his request (“Show me your *Kavod*”) is to learn the ways by which God is leading His world. No reference whatsoever to God’s glory, as the latter is seemingly implied by the last example!!

Jewish tradition makes a reasonable distinction between two types of Divine leadership of the universe: By Law-of-Nature and by Divine Intervention (often explicitly expressed on a personal level as Divine Providence, or *Hashgachah Pratit*).

The former, Law-of-Nature, relates to the Ten Divine “sayings” of Genesis Creation narrative (Genesis 1). Later, after Noah’s flood, God re-assures humankind that Law-of-Nature exists and that it is ever-lasting: “While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night would not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

The latter, Divine Intervention, relates to divine intervention in the world to exercise a system of justice: “...Would not the Judge of all the earth do Justice?” (Gen. 18:25). However, this Divine intervention is mitigated by Divine graciousness and mercy, as the former quote of God’s response to Moses has shown. Furthermore, leadership by Divine intervention is not restricted to the confines of Law-of-Nature; occasionally, it operates contrary to Law-of-Nature, as the Ten plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7:20-12:30) testify.

Let us assume that indeed Jehovah’s *Kavod* is an overall term for the two basic modes of Divine leadership of the universe: By Law-of-Nature and by Divine intervention.

- Is there indication for Law-of-Nature in Jehovah’s *Kavod*?
- Is there indication for Divine intervention (or Divine moral code) in Jehovah’s *Kavod*?

Expressed differently: Can one find evidence, within the term itself, that Jehovah’s *Kavod* indeed represents the double-faceted Divine leadership of the world?

Surprisingly, the answer is a resounding YES.

Let us address the former first. As quoted earlier, prophet Isaiah describes his vision of Seraphim crying to each other, saying: “the whole *Eretz* is full of his *Kavod*.” (Isaiah 6:3). However, as addressed in my book (Section 14.1, p. 201), *Eretz* (earth in biblical Hebrew) implies either “world” or “Earth”. Given current scientific knowledge, we may therefore re-translate Isaiah thus: “..Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole universe is permeated with his *Kavod*.” (Isaiah 6:3).

Is there any hint in Jehovah’s *Kavod* for Law-of-Nature, something that, by modern science, permeates the whole universe?

We can think of one answer only:

Gravitation force!! (in modern spoken Hebrew, force of *Kevidah*).

By Einstein’s general theory of relativity, the gravitation field, generated by any celestial mass (like galaxies and stars), determines the most fundamental properties of the four-dimensional space-time, as we experience it in daily life and as we observe throughout the universe via astronomy, aided by scientific theory (Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity, with succeeding derivatives up to the present Super-string theory). There is indeed nothing else that we can state permeates the whole universe.

And how do we, mere Earth-bound mortals, experience gravitation force?

By sensing that every physical object, large and small, is heavy, carries weight. We nowadays are aware that this sensation of physical articles being heavy is due to gravitation force. That is how we experience it in our every-day life. Additionally, by modern science, we have learned that the gravitation force (indeed gravitational field) determines the fundamental properties of the four-dimensional space-time continuum, in which we live, and the gravitational field indeed permeates the whole universe.

So:

- If Jehovah’s *Kavod* expresses modes of Divine leadership of the universe (as Moses used the term in his request to God, “Show me thy *Kavod*”);

- And if one of the two modes of leadership, by Jewish tradition, is Law-of-Nature;
- And if per modern science, the most central and fundamental force-of-nature to determine the basic properties of the space-time continuum, permeating the whole universe, is the gravitation force;

Given all that, does Jehovah's *Kavod* in any way points to the gravitational force???

Amazingly, Biblical Hebrew makes the impossible and implausible link between two utterly non-related concepts: Jehovah's presence in the world via Law-of-Nature, and the most basic force of the universe, the most influential on observed Law-of-Nature, only known by modern science— the gravitation force.

Heavy, in biblical Hebrew, is *Kaved* (same root as *Kavod*, implausible as this may sound).

Examples (altogether 41 instances of *Kaved* in the Bible imply heavy):

“Behold, tomorrow about this time I will rain *heavy hail*, the like of which has not been in Egypt since its foundation until now” (Exodus 9:18,24);

“And now my father had burdened you with a *heavy yoke* and I will add to your yoke...” (1 Kings 12:11).

We finally address the second question, put forward earlier:

Is Jehovah's *Kavod* also indicative of Jehovah's leadership via Divine intervention, imposing the set of moral Divine commandments via a system of justice, operating within the confines of free-will?

The answer is similar to that for the previous question: As Jehovah's *Kavod* indicates a major Law-of-Nature (Gravitation Law), so it hints at a major Divine commandment, the fifth of the Ten Commandments, which starts with *Kabed* (meaning honor):

“*Kabed thy father and thy mother*” (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

We summarize:

- Jehovah's *Kavod*, mostly wrongly interpreted to-date as Jehovah's glory, has been shown in this post to really mean, consistent with Jewish tradition, Jehovah's double-faceted leadership of the universe;
- It is completely incomprehensible why biblical Hebrew should link “glory” with... ”heavy” (as both derive from same linguistic root);
- Aided by modern science, and pursuing the new interpretation of Jehovah's *Kavod*, an incredible link has been established between *Kavod* and *Kaved* (both emanating from same biblical Hebrew root);
- Consistent with the new interpretation, Jehovah's *Kavod* is appropriately indicative of both force of gravity (leadership by Law-of-Nature) and of the Ten Commandments (leadership by Divine intervention).

Personal confession: Mind boggling...

First Ten “Says”; Then Ten “Acts”; Finally, Ten “Speaks”

Posted January 18, 2018

Biblical Hebrew offers a fundamental distinction between “Say” and “Speak”. The difference put them worlds apart:

- In “Say” one sends a message in one direction; There is no expectation of a response. “Say” implies sending contents that no doubt will be accepted (by listeners) or implemented. Kings and absolute rulers “Say”. They do not speak. An example: “And God said let there be light and there was light” (Genesis 1:3);
- In “Speak” one sends contents in expectation of a dialogue with the receiver of the message. “Speak” implies an expectation of a listener that reacts and responds. An example: “And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am Jehovah” (Exodus 6:2). One wonders why the repetition of “Speak” and “Say”. But there is no redundancy. First— a message is sent to the reader that God started a dialogue with Moses. Then the message itself is said by the supreme ruler.

A byproduct of this distinction, an expression of the unique role of “speak” in biblical Hebrew, is *Davar* (thing). The latter derives from same root as “speak”. This sends a powerful message that every “thing” in the universe is intended to speak to us. Nothing is “message-less”. All have meaning. And that message speaks unto anyone who wishes to listen and maintains a constructive dialogue with the world and all that it contains. A good example is God Jehovah forming “out of the ground” “every beast of the field and every bird of the air” (Genesis 2:19), bringing them to Adam “to see what he would call them and whatever the man called every living creature that was its name” (Genesis 2:19). Thus, names are not senseless combination of letters but rather expressions of the essence of that which is named. And same goes to every *Davar* in the universe, defined by a certain combination of letters in biblical Hebrew.

Having elaborated on the distinction between “Say” and “Speak”, one may monitor the evolution of the dialogue of the Divine with mankind. Witnessing the different forces of nature and their seemingly unpredictability (for example, the seemingly random trajectories of the stars in the sky), ancient generations had no choice but to believe that they are helpless living creatures under the control of forces that they cannot understand or maintain dialogue with. The main message of the Torah is that this perception is fundamentally flawed, and it gives a timeline for the evolution from an “incomprehensible world” to a world, the creator of which wishes to listen and to respond.

Certain time-points mark the transition from one to another. First, Jehovah God calls unto Adam “Where are thou? (Genesis 3:9). But Adam prefers to hide and not to maintain a dialogue with the Divine because Adam, like most humanity nowadays, does not like anyone to tell him what he is allowed to do and what he is allowed not. This led to a perception of the world as rule-less, in ancient times, or as intervention-less (by the Divine), and ruled only by the mathematical laws of nature, as revealed to us by modern science. But in truth, nothing has fundamentally changed in the basic condition of humankind: Only the randomness of a chaotic world, as perceived by our ancestors, has been replaced by a rule-full world, as described by modern science.

But with non-explainable randomness notwithstanding, randomness of a different sort. Seemingly, randomness of the observed world of ancient times has been replaced by the inexplicable randomness of current laws of science. For example: The phenomenon of the constant speed of light, as well as the very value of the latter, both remain as mysterious and as random and inexplicable today as were directly observed natural phenomena of ancient times. Seemingly, randomness has migrated from the directly observable natural phenomena to the non-observable nature laws, as articulated by modern science. Yet, these are just as random and inexplicable.

To demonstrate to the struggling human species that not all is indeed random and that there is a monitoring authority that is not subject to laws of nature, yet wishes to start a dialogue with us, human

beings, the ten plagues of Egypt were initiated and carried out by messengers of the Divine, Moses and his older brother Aaron (starting at Exodus 7:20). The ten interventions of the Divine, as unfolding in Exodus, were meant by Torah to send a single message— The Divine is maintaining a dialogue with us, mere mortals. If only we listen. This dialogue is succinctly summarized in Jacob’s dream:

“And he dreamed and behold a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (Genesis 28:12).

We are reminded that in biblical Hebrew “angel” is *malach*, namely, a messenger whose only function is to carry a message or carry out a message. For example:

“But there came a messenger (“*Malach*”) to Shaul, saying, “Make haste and come, for the Philistines are raiding the land” (1 Samuel 23:27).

This lends Jacob’s dream a whole new interpretation: Every human being sends messages of his/her wishes and desires to Heaven. Most often, these messages are not expressed explicitly, but at times they do (as in prayer). These messages are “processed” and sent back down to Earth in corresponding Divine messages, to be executed by “descending messengers of God”.

How does Torah make explicit this dream, making clear that the dialogue between Heaven and Earth is a living reality?

By showing that the Divine intervenes in all that occurs on planet Earth, at times even via violating laws of nature.

This had occurred with the Ten Plagues of Egypt. And to Pharaoh, who had initially stated “Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, nor will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2), ten Divine interventions sent a clear message, causing Pharaoh to change his stance:

First, acknowledging Jehovah as a judge of the Earth (“..I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous and I and my people are wicked”; Exodus 9:27);

Eventually, by letting Israel go out of Egypt to worship their Jehovah God, but with a little request:

“..Rise up and get you out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel and go serve Jehovah, as you have said, ..and be gone and bless me also” (Exodus 12:31-32).

The ten Divine interventions in Egypt had started, indeed made possible, the process of a dialogue between heavens and earth. Now ten Divine “says” of creation, of the first chapter of Genesis, followed by the Divine seeking a dialogue with humankind (“Where are thou?”), then ten interventions demonstrating that the Divine is not subject to the rule of nature, eventually culminating in ten Divine “speaks”, as manifested in the Ten Commandments:

“And God spoke all these things (*Dvarim*), saying: “I am Jehovah thy God, who has brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slaves; Thou shall have no other gods beside me.” (Exodus 20:1-3)..“..Thou shall not murder Thou shall not commit adultery Thou shall not steal Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (Exodus 20:13).

Free Will— The Act of Separating and Choosing

Posted September 17, 2017

The essence of being human is exercising free will. This is the act by which we continuously create ourselves and form our personality and character.

The Divine has created mankind (“So God created mankind in his own image...”, Genesis 1:27); but He has also formed it (“And the Lord God formed mankind of the dust of the ground...”, Genesis 2:7). We, human beings, whether we wish it or not, are doomed throughout our lives to repeat, via exercising free will, the two acts of creating (establishing a solid link between soul and body, while we grow) and forming.

What is the needed environment for human beings to be able to exercise their free-will?

There are two conditions (necessary and sufficient):

[1] Existence of “Good” and “Bad” mixed together (as in “The Tree of Knowledge, good and bad”, Genesis 2:9);

[2] Hidden-ness of God and the concealment of God’s hidden-ness.

Prophet Isaiah delivers succinct and stunning expression to the existence of the first condition:

“That men may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides me— I am Jehovah and there is no one else; Forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating the bad, I Jehovah am doing all these” (Isaiah 45:6-7).

Note that creating (“something from nothing”) precedes forming (“imprinting form on the created”), just as forming precedes making. Yet, prophet Isaiah sets absence of light (darkness) and the bad (the harmful, the evil) at a level higher than that of light — the former were created, the latter was “just” formed.

Existence of the second condition, a daily human experience revealed in countless debates on whether God exists, is evidenced both by biblical Hebrew and by the Bible.

In biblical Hebrew, “World” (*Olam*) derives from same root as all Hebrew words pointing to concealment. Examples:

Ta’aluma (Mystery); *He’almut* (disappearance); *Ne’elam* (unknown (noun), as in an algebraic equation); *Alum* (secret, adj.).

In other words, the whole world is testimony to the hidden-ness of God. Prophet Isaiah repeats same motive:

“Indeed, thou are a God who hides thyself, O God of Israel, savior” (Isaiah 45:15).

Concealment of God, however, is itself concealed (“Does God exist?”):

“And I will surely hide my face on that day...” (*Haster Astir*; Deuteronomy 31:18).

The repeat of same root twice (in two consecutive words) is traditionally interpreted by Jewish scholars as implying concealment of the concealment, an integrated fact of life that we all have probably experienced at one time or another throughout our lives (“Does God exist?”).

Having studied the two conditions for the existence of free-will, the next question to ask is:

What are the limitations to exercising free-will and what does the latter entail?

We continuously live in two worlds, intermingled and most often inseparable and indistinguishable from one another: “World of Law-of-Nature” and “World of Randomness”.

We can exercise free-will only in an environment that allows choice, namely, in the “World of Randomness”. Unlike in the “World of Law-of-Nature”, where external constraints force us to behave in certain ways (and not others, namely, no free choice is available), in the “World of Randomness”, where randomness prevails, we are free to exercise whatever our heart desires. It is only then, in the “World of randomness”, that we become an agent of our own free will.

What exercising free-will is comprised of? It comprises two actions:

- Separating;
- Choosing.

We need to separate “Good” from “Bad”, before choosing.

Most often in our daily lives, the good and the bad are intermingled to a degree that the two can rarely be told apart; Therefore, we need to separate before choosing. God created darkness (per prophet Isaiah), thereby allowing the good and the bad in our world to co-exist, mixed.

Consider the biblical Hebrew word for “evening” (as in “...and there was evening and there was morning...”; Genesis 1:5, for example). The Hebrew word derives from same Hebrew root used for mixing (as in “mixture”). The “Tree of Knowledge good and bad” also implies mixed together. In biblical terms, one may allegorically assert that we have all eaten of “The Tree of Knowledge, good and bad”, where “Good” and “Bad” are mixed together in the same fruit.

And since then, “Good” and “Bad” have become intermingled in our body and soul, delivering us our mission in life to grow and mature and create ourselves and form our personality and character, all via the process of separating (“Good” from “Bad”) and then choosing.

The act of separating (good from bad) is two-folded and it is expressed differently in the two worlds we inhabit:

- In the “World of Law-of-Nature”, we need to separate “good” from “bad” because absent this separation we may choose the “bad”, thereby harming our well-being and possibly even endangering our life. Thus, buying fruit in the supermarket, we are careful to separate good apples from the bad ones (rotten apples) so that we can then make the correct choice of purchasing good apples only, benefiting our health and well-being. Separation is also inherent to many of our bodily processes (like in the kidney);
- In the “World of Randomness”, the act of separating good from bad (or “good” from “evil”, as commonly used in biblical parlance) is a much harder task. Unlike in the “World of Law-of-Nature”, where science assists us in forming clear distinction and separation between the good and the bad, we do not easily, clearly and immediately differentiate between the two in the “World of Randomness”. Let us demonstrate with a simple example. I am selling a used car, aware that the car carries a certain defect. I can inform the buyer about it or I can inform her not. In the latter case, the thinking goes like this: “I have allowed the buyer to inspect and check the car thoroughly, have I not? However, the defect was not exposed. It is the buyer’s responsibility to identify the defect, not mine, is it not?”. Such thinking testifies to the daily blurring, in the “World of Randomness”, of “good” and “bad” (or “good” and “evil”, in biblical terms). Therefore, Jewish Torah explicitly instructs: “Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor GIVE a stumbling block to the blind...” (Leviticus 19:14). In other words, one cannot hide behind an argument like the one just articulated. It is the seller’s responsibility to turn the blind into non-blind by alerting the buyer to the car’s defect.

Once we understand the act of separation in the two worlds, and grasp the role of science in assisting us separating in the “World of Law-of-Nature”, how do we separate and choose right in the “World of Randomness”?

Moses, speaking to the Children of Israel on behalf of the Divine, set to them clear separation and clear choice:

- Separation: “Behold, I have given thee this day life and the good, and death and the bad” (Deuteronomy 30:15);

- Choosing: “I call upon heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before thee life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Is free-will an endowment of the human species, granted to it for eternity?

Not according to Scripture. The free-will act bestowed on humankind, that of separating and choosing, has a limited life-span. It is not eternal. Time will come when God will reveal Himself and then free-will, by definition, will be no more:

“For then I will convert the peoples to a non-confounded language that they all call upon the name of Jehovah to serve him shoulder to shoulder” (Zephaniah 3:9);

“And Jehovah will be king over all the earth; on that day Jehovah will be one and his name One” (Zechariah 14:7).

Furthermore, not only the task of separating and choosing no longer be in the hands of mankind; At End-Times, the Divine will conduct a process of separation of His own; However, the separation process will not be between “Good” and “Evil” (as the latter exists in the “World of Randomness”), but rather between the righteous and the evil (who exist amidst humankind):

“I will also turn my hand against thee, and will purge away your dross as with lye and remove all thy alloy” (Isaiah 1:25);

“Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will smelt them and try them...” (Jeremiah 9:6);

“As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall you be melted in the midst of it...” (Ezekiel 22:22);

“I will bring the third part through the fire, and refine them as one refines silver and test them as one tests gold...” (Zechariah 13:9);

“But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like the washers’ soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...” (Malachi 3:2);

“Many will be purged and purified and refined...” (Daniel 12:10).

“World is My Own and I Have Made Myself”— A Tale of Two Cultures

Posted July 20, 2017

Prophet Ezekiel is prophesying on doomsday destiny of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and on doomsday destiny of Egypt’s ego-centered culture, of which Pharaoh is top representative. Ezekiel quotes the life-philosophy of that culture:

“Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great crocodile who couches within the midst of his streams, who has said “*Yeor* is my own and I have made myself” (Ezekiel 29:3).

What is the message conveyed by the prophet?

Yeor is biblical Hebrew for the Nile River, source of life that flows throughout Egypt and has enabled, throughout history, flourishing Egyptian civilization and human habitation, even though rain is rare in this geographical region. There is seemingly no need in this region for the grace of the Divine to live (have water). The constantly flowing Nile provides that commodity aplenty throughout the year and no prayer to the Divine for life-giving rain is required. The immediate consequence is this:

“Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, nor will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2).

Not surprisingly, the life-giving *Yeor* had been raised by ancient Egyptians to the level of Deity, as told to us by historians of ancient Egypt. Prophet Ezekiel succinctly summarizes the underlying philosophy of the supreme being of Egypt, King Pharaoh: Not only has he raised himself to the level of Deity (“I produced myself”) but he has also made the world in which he lived, the Nile River (“the world of the great crocodile”) his own (“*Yeor* is my own”).

Contrast this with the prevailing Scripture principle:

“How manifold are **thy works**, O Jehovah, in wisdom have you made them all” (Psalms 104:24).

The Land of Israel is diametrically at odds with the Land of Egypt. And the Torah finds it necessary to explicitly state the essential difference in the physical reality encountered by human beings living in the two regions:

“For the land, into which thou go to possess it, is unlike the land of Egypt... where you sow thy seed and water it with thy foot, as in a garden of vegetables; The land, which you transit into to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, by rain of heaven would thou drink water” (Deuteronomy 11:10-12).

Two regions, naturally (but not necessarily) leading to two cultures: One culture expressing no faith in the Divine (“I have produced myself”) or in Divine intervention (“World is my own”); Another based on inherent faith in the Divine and in Divine intervention.

The story of Pharaoh is not singular in the Bible. In fact, its underlying theme resurfaces in three different variations (as will be expounded soon). The background “story” differs (between variations). Yet, the underlying theme remains the same; and this same theme has re-surfaced as a major guiding principle in today’s prevailing culture, contrary to what a simple fact-finding exploration might have taught us.

After nearly five hundred years of modern science (starting with its initiators, like Copernicus (1473-1543), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727)), and accompanied by advances in technology that have immensely improved our well-being (and occasionally also our “bad-being”), humankind has not moved one iota closer to solving the fundamental mysteries of human existence on Earth, mysteries that confront us every single day of our lives:

- * Why are we here?
- * Where have we come from and where are we going to (if at all)?
- * Why does the world exist?
- * How has the universe come into being out of nothing?
- * Is there God?

Yet, advances in science and technology (modern day “eating of the fruit of knowledge”) have blinded us to this grim reality and hid it from our vision. Consequently, we find ourselves today unknowingly in the same state-of-mind as were Adam and Eve, as were the builders of the Tower of Babel, as was Pharaoh, king of Egypt:

- Adam and Eve wished to eat of the fruit of knowledge to be *Elohim-like* (knowing law of nature, thereby controlling nature); Yet they ignored the true name of God, **Jehovah-Elohim**, which conveys the double-faceted leadership of the Divine in our world. The narrator of the story of the Forbidden Fruit repeats this double-name no less than **eleven times**, using no other name for the Divine; Yet Eve and the Serpent relate only to *Elohim*. For not desiring at all to be also **Jehovah-like**, Adam and Eve were doomed to be expelled from the Garden of Eden, with the Serpent, which can never advance in a straight-line, becoming their permanent escort;
- The people of the city of Babel, led by Nimrod (literally meaning “Let us rebel”; Genesis 10:9-10), have just developed new technologies to rule nature and have proven them viable: **“And they said to one another, Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly; And they had brick for stone and slime had they for mortar”** (Genesis 11:2). Once the people of Babel have become aware of their newly acquired technological capabilities, allowing control of nature, the immediate aftermath of this realization is not unlike modern day response to current-day scientific and technological advances: **“Let us build us a city and a tower whose top reaches Heaven”** (Genesis 11:4);
- Pharaoh: **“Yeor is my own and I have made myself”** (Ezekiel 29:3).

Three biblical stories telling same story in three varieties. They all convey same human condition in which we find ourselves today (only to the extreme), resulting in an identical response:

“World is My Own and I have Made Myself”

Scripture on “Animals Killing Animals”

Posted July 2, 2017

Human beings killing human beings. Is this natural?

The Bible is very definite: No!!!

And there is cost to be paid!!

Scripture provides verses aplenty to drive this home. Examples:

* “Whoso sheds man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed; For in the image of God has He made man” (Genesis 9:6)

* “Thou shalt not murder...” (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:13)

* “...nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4).

Animals killing animals. Is this natural?

The Bible is very definite: No!!!

At present, “animals killing animals” is natural, not an anomaly; However, this is so merely for a limited time, just for the time being!!

“Animals killing animals” is, per Scripture, a display of evil, unacceptable and against Divine will. Therefore, in future, when “things” finally fall into their (correct) place, peace prevails and world order restored to its natural course, cruelty of predators (“animals killing animals”) would disappear and predators become plant-eating animals; Or, alternatively, predators themselves would be extinguished from the surface of Earth, leaving to survive only “non-evil” animals:

* “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid...the lion shall eat straw like the ox; the sucking child shall play on the hole of the cobra and the young child put his hand on the viper’s nest; They shall neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the water covers the sea” (Isaiah 11:6-9);

* “Wolf and lamb shall feed together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox and dust will be a serpent’s bread” (Isaiah 65:25);

* “And I will make with them a covenant of peace and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land...” (Ezekiel 34:25).

Human beings killing animals. Is this natural?

* “And God said: Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed that is upon the face of the whole earth and every tree having fruit yielding seed to you it shall be for food” (Genesis 1:29);

* “...replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:28; refer also to Genesis 9:2);

* “...I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the impulse of man’s heart is evil from his youth...” (Genesis 8:21); And soon thereafter: “Every moving thing that is alive shall be for you to eat; Like the green plants am I giving you all” (Genesis 9:3).

Why Genesis Third Day is Unlike the Rest?

Posted January 26, 2017

My statistical model for Genesis creation links the scientific time-scale (in terms of billions of years since Big-Bang) to Genesis narrative (in terms of “Days”).

However, Third Day narrative had been excluded from the data used in the statistical analysis that led to the final highly-significant statistical model.

Why was that?

The answer is straightforward: Genesis narrative for Third Day (Genesis 1:9-13) implies that Earth and all vegetation (plants, trees, grass and else) had preceded formation of the sun and the moon on the fourth day (“and God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night”, Genesis 1:16).

This seems strange and defies current scientific knowledge. Thus, the mystery remains: If all other Genesis “Days” fit nicely (in the statistical model) with current scientific knowledge, what is special about Third Day that it does not?

I have long been tormented by this question, which seems to undermine and defy the notion that Genesis Creation is a faithful description of the timeline of modern science (as has been validated via the highly-significant statistical model). But then I was reminded of a known idiom, repeatedly uttered by Jewish sages:

“Torah spoke as in human language” (“דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם”).

What this idiom implies is that although Torah source is Divine it does speak in human terms so that humans can understand Torah and relate to it.

To realize how this idiom is relevant to the “Third Day Quandary”, let us be reminded of the prevailing world view throughout ancient times, in fact until the time of Copernicus (1473-1543). The prevailing view was the geocentric model (also known as Geo-centrism, or the Ptolemaic system; In what follows we pursue Wikipedia, “Geocentric model”). This model reigned supreme for over 1500 years of human history, and it had served as cornerstone description of the cosmos in numerous ancient civilizations, such as those of Aristotle and Ptolemy. According to this model, the sun, moon, stars, and planets all encircle Earth (“geo”), therefore Earth is the center of the universe.

Two observations supported this idea:

- The sun appears to revolve around Earth once per day. While the moon and the planets have their own particular motions, which change over time, they also appear to revolve around Earth about once per day. The stars appeared to be on a celestial sphere, rotating once each day along an axis through the north and south geographic poles of Earth;
- Earth does not seem to move from the perspective of an Earth-bound observer; it appears to be solid, stable, and unmoving. (refer, however, to page 118 in my book, where I describe why Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437-1508) expressed objection to the geocentric model, based purely on his logical analysis of the root of the Hebrew word for Earth).

Geo-centrism (Ptolemy’s geocentric model) stayed unchallenged in Western culture until the 16th century, when, through the synthesis of the theories of Copernicus and Kepler, it was gradually superseded by the current scientifically validated Heliocentric model (Sun-centered model) of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler.

Genesis Third Day description is realization of the geocentric world view, prevailing in ancient times. If the sun and the moon rotate around Earth, the latter must have been formed earlier than the former. There is no other way to describe creation and remain faithful to the intuitive geocentric view. Thus, Genesis Third Day narrative had become a prerequisite for Genesis creation to preserve any semblance of reliability. Being consistent with the then prevailing geocentric world view, Torah ensured that the ancient Israelites would

have accepted it as of Divine origin and not reject it outright as utterly false. Just try to imagine Torah telling ancient Israelites that the sun and moon, rotating Earth, had been formed prior to Earth. Would Torah then be acceptable to them? “Torah spoke as in human language”.

Is there any signature to the Third Day, pointing to it as somewhat unlike all other days?

I believe there is: This is the only day where the words “and God saw that it was good” appear twice. This is in stark contrast to the “routine” employed in all other days, where Torah expresses this idea in its typical succinct way, namely, stating this only once.

This unique feature of the Third Day perhaps has a mission: Telling us that this description of events, supposedly taking place on Third Day, intends to speak to us in the then humanly comprehensible language. But only for a limited period of time, that is, until the emergence of the scientifically validated Helio-centric world view.

Exclusion of Third Day events from the data, used to derive the highly significant statistical model, thus seems to be corroborated and completely justified.

What Ultimately Comforted Job?

Posted January 23, 2017

The first of the Ten Commandments reads:

“I am Jehovah, your Elohim, who have brought **thee** out of the Land of Egypt, of the house of slaves” (Exodus 20:2).

This commandment looks more like a declaration:

- There is God;
- There is Divine Providence (*Hashgacha Pratit*: “For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He sees all his goings”, Job 33:21).

What then transforms this “declaration of facts”, “description of reality”, into a commandment?

“Why bad things happen to good people” is an ancient quandary that has occupied the minds of thinking people for millennia. We have likewise addressed this issue in [this post](#). As related therein, perhaps the ultimate source to address this issue is the biblical book of Job, not coincidentally attributed to Moses. The story of Job is well known:

“In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil” (Job 1:1). Furthermore, he had a family and much property so that “...this man was the greatest of all the men of the East” (Job 1:3).

Alas, one day the angels came before Jehovah, among them Satan, and the latter challenged the Divine that Job is “blameless and upright and fears God and shuns evil” (as described by God; Job 1:8) only because Job was protected and blessed by God (Job 1:9-10). God then delivers Satan the permission to harm Job any way he wished (“all that he has is in thy power”) except for taking Job’s soul (Job 1:12). Thus, Satan was allowed by God to test Job so that all may realize whether Job, despite all “bad things” that had befallen him, remained faithful to his former self.

Following description of the “bad things”, three of Job’s friends come to visit him “to mourn with him and to comfort him” (Job 2:11). The multi-sided dialogue that then develops, between Job and his friends, is in essence a debate on whether “Bad things happen to good people”. Job holds on to his basic conviction that he is “blameless and upright and fears God and shuns evil” and therefore he is helpless to explain all the harm that has befallen him. The friends defy this claim and elaborate on why it is illogical and impossible to assume that the perfect God would allow this to happen, therefore concluding that Job probably is not “blameless”, as he pretends to be.

Job remains unconvinced and therefore also un comforted.

What then ultimately comforted Job?

Throughout Scripture, a single theme keeps resurfacing: “The ways by which Jehovah leads his world are unknown to us and therefore humanly unexplainable”.

Examples:

- “I will be Whoever I will be” (Exodus 3:14)
- “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy” (Exodus 33:19)
- “And Moses said to Jehovah...show me thy way that I may know thee” (Exodus 33:12-13), and Jehovah said “you cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live...” (Exodus 33:20); Therefore, “thou shall see my back and my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:23).

Re-phrased: One may witness the results of Divine leadership and intervention in the world; these, however, cannot be explained (predicted) in advance, neither can they be explained post-factum. These results remain only to be witnessed!

The debate between Job and his friends comes to an abrupt conclusion when Jehovah intervenes in the debate. The essence of God's explanation for "Why bad things happen to good people" is a genuine mystery: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4)

Obviously, this does not constitute a satisfactory answer to the basic question. Surprisingly, Job is now comforted and he expresses this explicitly:

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now that my eye has seen you I abhor myself and am comforted for the dust and ashes" (Job 42:5).

(Note that "dust and ashes" are signs of mourning, as mentioned early on in Job 2:12.)

Job had not received an answer to the basic question "Why bad things happen to good people". Yet, once God has spoken to him, Job is comforted. He understands that there is Divine Providence and there is no more room for the basic question—silence is the right response ("*...and Abaron kept his silence*", Leviticus 10:3).

We, mere mortals, are not privileged as was Job. We are "doomed" to exist in a universe of **free will**, and the latter cannot co-exist with the **certainty** that God exists and that there is Divine Providence. Either we have free will or we know for certain that God exists. Both, by definition, cannot co-exist. Job, once being exposed to God speaking to him, is no more a man of free will. We are.

The first of the Ten Commandments, **outwardly** looking like a mere declaration of facts, is **in fact** a commandment that demands of us the ultimate expression of free-will:

"Out of free will I accept as faithful description of reality existence of *Elohim-Jehovah*; Out of free will I accept as faithful description of reality existence of Divine Providence (*Hashgacha Pratit*)".

The Five Principles of the Ten Commandments

Posted November 25, 2016

The Ten Commandments are a wakeup call unto the ego to acknowledge the existence of “the other” and develop appropriate (moral) relationships with “non-ego” others.

There are two “non-ego” others:

- The Divine (God)
- Living beings, in general, and fellow human beings, in particular.

Accordingly, the Ten-Commandments are divided into two sets of five commandments each: The first five relate to relationship with God; The last five relate to relationships with other living beings, human beings in particular.

Both sets preserve a unity in the sense that for each commandment in the first set there is a corresponding commandment in the last five. Each of the five pairs of commandments represents a single principle, and all five form the core guidelines that the ego should pursue to be able to relate morally to “non-ego” others. Accordingly, all principles are moral ones, as mandated by the Divine. They are not intended to instruct the ego how to profit from relationships with “non-ego” others; Rather, they provide the ego with necessary and sufficient requirements for it to be able to relate to others and maintain and preserve these relationships. In other words: The five principles form the core of Divine morality, to be expounded and detailed further throughout the Torah.

In this post we detail the five principles to the best of our understanding of these principles.

Comment: Periods after Bible quotation below indicate partial quotation (namely, commandment is not always presented in full).

1. Principle 1: Acknowledge existence of “non-ego” others

Commandment 1: “I am Jehovah, your *Elohim*, who have brought **you** out of the land of Egypt, from a house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2)

Explanation: Acknowledge existence of God and acknowledge intervention of the Divine in whatever occurs in your life (“Hashgacha Pratit”). Note that **you** in the original Hebrew is in the singular.

Commandment 6: “Thou shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13)

Explanation: Murdering a human being is ultimate and concrete denial-of-existence of another, equal to you in all rights; Therefore it is the ultimate violation of first principle.

2. Principle 2: Own your relationships with “others” (be loyal, be faithful)

Commandment 2: “Thou shall have no other gods besides me...” (Exodus 20:3)

Explanation: Do not engage in idolatry.

Commandment 7: “Thou shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:13)

Explanation: Do not engage in adultery.

3. Principle 3: Preserve integrity (avoid hypocrisy) in relating to “others”

Hypocrisy means that one pretends to others to be (or do; or believe; or think) one thing but in fact pursues the opposite, as “one in mouth, another in deed”. Acknowledging the “other” as equal to you can only mean that no façade of falsehood towards the other is acceptable, or else your “ego” would lose its capability of relating to “others”. The epitome of hypocrisy is pretending to pursue the first principle above but in reality behaving in complete denial thereof. Two extreme models for lack of integrity (hypocrisy) are addressed in the third and the eighth commandments.

Commandment 3: “Thou shall not take the name of Jehovah, your *Elohim*, in vain...” (Exodus 20:7)

Explanation: You may swear, in the name of God, to act in a certain way (if certain conditions are met); Or you may similarly swear that a certain claim you make about reality is true. According to the Talmud, repeated by Rashi, this commandment refers to the latter. When one take oath in the name of God, the objective is to lend enhanced validity to your claim. You swear in vain, in violation of the third commandment, either when you tell a lie or when you swear about an indisputable truth, a claim that no one doubts, so that “recruiting” God’s name to enhance the validity of your claim is redundant, unnecessary. Why taking oath in vain shows hypocrisy? Because what you declare to others is at odds with what you know. Thus, a split is taking place between your true self and the façade you display to others, attempting thereby to gain a certain profit for the ego on account of the “others”. This violates the first principle (particularly, first commandment): You pretend to acknowledge that God exists but behave as though He is not there, witnessing your every falsehood as you display “split personality” relating to “non-ego” others. Using God’s name in vain, namely, “Swear by the name of God that marble is gold or that gold is marble” (an example from the Talmud), you outwardly acknowledge that God exists but behave as though he is not there, witnessing you using his name in vain (either in order to substantiate and strengthen a false claim, or when the claim is well established so that there is no need to summon God’s name to corroborate it).

Commandment 8: “Thou shall not steal” (Exodus 20:13)

Explanation: Jewish sages agree that the text here does not address stealing in general but rather “stealing a soul”, in other words, taking hostage.

Why is that equivalent, or corresponds, to “taking the name of Jehovah, your *Elohim*, in vain...”? Because in both cases you acknowledge the first principle outwardly but behave otherwise. Acknowledging existence of the “non-ego” other, who, just like yourself, had been created in the image of the Divine with certain inalienable rights, while denying to him/her first basic right, the right to freedom, is as contradictory to the first principle as one can imagine (besides murder, which is total denial of that principle).

4. Principle 4: Preserve integrity (avoid duplicity) in relating to society and its institutions

Making public claims means bearing witness. You bear witness to God’s creation of the Heavens and the Earth by keeping the Shabbat, and you bear witness in the court of law. In both cases, your attention is directed not to relationships with individuals but rather to society as a whole and to its institutions (The Shabbat and Court of Law).

Commandment 4: “Remember the Shabbat day to keep it holy...for in six days the Lord made the Heaven and the Earth ...and rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8,11)

Explanation: Keeping the Shabbat holy you bear witness to God’s creation. Since this is done both in private and in public beware of a split: A façade of keeping the Shabbat holy in public while otherwise in private.

Comment: In Deuteronomy (5:12-15) the commandment is to “keep the Shabbat to sanctify it” in order to bear witness to *Hashgachab Pratit* (rather than to God’s creation, as specified earlier):

“Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and Jehovah, your *Elohim*, brought you out of there with a mighty hand...” (Deuteronomy 5:15). Again, “You”— in the singular...

Commandment 9: “Thou shall not bear false witness about your friend” (Exodus 20:13)

Explanation: While delivering witness in the court of law, preserve integrity in the claims you make: Tell what you know and do not tell what you do not know; and do not pervert either.

Preserving integrity in relating to society does not end there. When you evade tax by bearing false witness about your income you also deprive the “other”, this time society as a whole, of its right (the right to portion of your money, as mandated by the agreed-upon law).

Comment: One of the reasons Jewish sages give for the special contempt reserved in Judaism towards the non-kosher pig is its duplicity, appearing outwardly as “Kosher” but inwardly it is not...

5. Principle 5: Acknowledge uniqueness of “others” (as you acknowledge your own) and respect it

You have been created unique, destined to fulfill unique mission on Planet Earth and provided by the Divine with all means necessary to pursue your life mission. To maintain moral relationships with “non-ego” others, acknowledge their own uniqueness, either by respecting them (as your parents) or by not coveting the means provided to them to fulfill **their** own mission in life. In other words, do not covet that which constitute others’ own unique private environment.

Commandment 5: “Honor your father and your mother... (Exodus 20:12)

Explanation: It is no coincidence that this commandment is the fifth, forming a bridge between commandments addressing relationship with God (1-5) and those that relate to relationships with other human beings (6-10). As related by Jewish sages, three participants are there to creating life: the father, the mother and the Divine. Honoring your father and your mother you declare that even though you may still share private environment with them, even though your parents have kept fulfilling your ego desires (not unlike yourself), they are nevertheless separate unique “others”; they are not part of you and your own ego (as a just-born baby feel for a while). Therefore, as unique and separate “others”, your parents deserve to be respected as equal “others”, entitled to be treated according to all guidelines and all commandments directed towards other human beings, perhaps with an extra surplus...

Commandment 10: “Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s...” (Exodus 20:14).

Explanation: This last commandment is somewhat unique in the sense that it relates to the desires of the heart, not to believes, spoken words or deeds.

SUMMARY OF FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR DIVINELY- MANDATED MORAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH “NON-EGO” OTHERS:

- **Principle 1: Acknowledge existence of “non-ego” others** (Commandments 1 and 6)
- **Principle 2: Own your relationships with “others” (be loyal, be faithful)** (Commandments 2 and 7)
- **Principle 3: Preserve integrity (avoid hypocrisy) in relating to “others”** (Commandments 3 and 8)
- **Principle 4: Preserve integrity (avoid duplicity) in relating to society and its institutions** (Commandments 4 and 9)
- **Principle 5: Acknowledge uniqueness of “others” (as you acknowledge your own) and respect it**

Comment: Since this post first appeared, I was asked what “Non-ego other” means (see first principle). To understand the concept, it is perhaps best to define the opposite. An “Ego other” is a human being whom one considers an extension of his/her own ego. The epitome for an “Ego other” is a slave. However, “Ego other” may appear in more obscure forms, where the potential exists, like a personal assistant, a subordinate (at work), one’s own child or a spouse. All forms of “Ego other” are morally wrong.

The Three Pillars of Truth—Lessons from the Hebrew Alphabet

Posted November 21, 2016

Truth is a sublime concept. But what does it stand on? What are the required ingredients for something to be “Truth”?

As it turns out, observing the two words *Emeth* (Truth) and *Sheker* (Falsehood/lie), as their letters appear in an orderly sequence of the Hebrew Alphabet, teaches us powerful lessons on what constitute “Truth”.

Emeth is written in Hebrew: אמת

Sheker is written in Hebrew: שקר

The letters of these words appear emphasized in the sequence of orderly Hebrew Alphabet below (read from right to left; letters in parentheses are “final letters”, appearing only as last letters of words):

Emeth:

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ (ן) ס ע פ (ף) צ (ץ) ק ר ש ת

Sheker:

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ (ן) ס ע פ (ף) צ (ץ) ק ר ש ת

Based on these two sequences, three observations are called for that define the three pillars of “Truth”:

1. Pillar 1: Completeness

The letters of *Emeth* (Truth) “scan” the whole spectrum, from first to last of the Hebrew Alphabet, with the middle letter appearing exactly as a middle term in the sequence. By contrast, the Hebrew letters for “Falsehood” are **concentrated** together in a small segment of the sequence, conveying an impression of “Half-truth”, of an incomplete picture.

The tendency to make judgements or general assertions based on partial truths produces the worst form of falsehood. Partial truths contain seeds of truth, thus conveying an impression of truth when such is non-existent. This renders it difficult, at times impossible, to tell truth from non-truth. We judge a person based on a single wrong deed or utterance, ignoring a lifetime of righteous and fruitful deeds. We take part of a sentence, or paragraph, to slander someone ignoring the context and the true meaning of the complete pronouncement.

The book of Psalms regards “Completeness” as main feature of truth, which we have to account for observing and attempting to understand Divine righteous intervention in the world:

“Judgments of Jehovah are true (*Emeth*), they are righteous **altogether**” (Psalms 19:10).

Only in its totality may one appreciate Divine judgement as righteous. Components of that judgment, on their own, do not constitute righteousness; and only when taken **altogether** may these components be regarded as *Emeth*.

2. Pillar 2: Correct Order

The letters of *Sheker* appear in a perverted order in the sequence above, unlike the correct order of appearance of *Emeth*.

Falsehood is often generated, and truth violated, by placing “things” not in their correct order. Violating correct order can appear in all forms and shapes. When two warring parties are engaged in war, and we ignore the correct order of events that have “rolled” the parties into a state of war, or at times portraying real events, however in a perverted order of occurrence – we create falsehood (lie). Interchanging cause and effect, calling cause effect and calling effect cause, displaying thereby an incorrect cause-effect relationship, also obscure

truth and generate falsehood. When a person blames his business partner for a certain adverse reaction to his own conduct, portraying his own conduct as reacting to that reaction (rather than as a trigger for the latter), he is engaged in creating falsehood. Preserving correct order is an essential ingredient for preserving truth.

3. Pillar 3: Supportive Evidence

Observing the two sets of Hebrew letters that constitute *Emeth* and *Sheker*, one discerns a major characteristic that tell them apart: The letters of *Emeth* look stable, well rooted in the ground (as shown by two “legs” or by a horizontal base, as in the middle letter). Conversely, all letters of *Sheker* seem shaky, not well rooted in the ground, two standing on one leg and a third (the first letter) “prone” to swing from one side to the other. Observing these letters an impression is conveyed of instability, as though the letters do not really have anything to support them. One is led to the conclusion that lack of evidence, grounded in reality, is main feature that distinguishes “truth” from “falsehood”, *Emeth* from lack thereof.

In conclusion: The Hebrew Alphabet teaches us that to tell truth from falsehood one needs only examine and confirm to what degree do the three essential ingredients of truth prevail; to what degree do **Completeness, Correct order** and **Evidence** permeate given descriptions of world affairs.

Present-Day Double Message of the Forbidden Fruit

Posted August 3, 2016

As humans we experience two worlds: The “World of Law-of-Nature” and the “World of Randomness”. Violating law in the former incurs immediate penalty. In the latter world, we are uncertain of the consequence of our decisions and therefore it is in this world solely that we may exercise free will. I have addressed this distinction at some length previously (for example, [here](#) and [here](#)) and therefore will not elaborate on it further here.

The relevance to our days and time of the sin of eating of the forbidden fruit, as described in Genesis (3:1-19), had been discussed by me in a separate post. Here I expand on that and address the double message conveyed by the story of Adam and Eve eating from the forbidden “Tree of Knowledge, Good and Bad” (*Etz ha-Daat, Tov ve-Ra*), or “Good and Evil” (as commonly translated, erroneously in my opinion).

Studying present-day relevance of the forbidden fruit, particularly with regard to the two worlds, as just described, reveals stunning new insights. Let us start by elaborating on the true meaning of the Hebrew *Daat* (knowledge).

There are two modes of learning (obtaining knowledge), which in biblical Hebrew are denoted by two separate terms:

- One may learn by absorbing new information, utterly dis-associated from the source of knowledge;
- Or one may learn (and know) by experiencing, by connecting to the source of knowledge.

An example for the first mode is conducting research on the Internet. No personal experiencing of the subject of learning is involved. An example for the latter mode is touring a mountainous area, as a result of which one is acquainted, connected, knowing by personal experience, the visited area.

The Bible is permeated aplenty with the distinction between “Acquiring knowledge” (*Haskalah*) and “Knowing by Experiencing”, or “Knowing by Connecting” (*Daat*). For example, prophet Jeremiah calls, in the name of the Divine:

“Thus says Jehovah: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in this – *Haskel* (“Acquiring knowledge”) and *Yadoa Oti* (“Knowing Me”) that I am Jehovah exercising grace, justice and righteousness in the land, for in these I delight”, so says Jehovah” (Jeremiah 9:22-23).

And elsewhere in the Bible:

“He who keeps the commandment shall experience no evil thing (*Lo yeda davar ra*); and a wise man’s heart would discern (“Yeda”) both time and method” (Ecclesiastes 5:5). And similarly: “And Adam once more knew (*Va-yeda Adam od*) his wife and she bore a child and she called his name Shet” (Genesis 4:25).

Likewise, in modern day Hebrew we wish a bereaved family *Lo tedeo od machov* (“You shall know pain no more”). Knowing here is devoid of any of the common sense reserved for knowledge, but everything to do with personal experiencing.

Given these sources and others, it is essential that we take note that the forbidden tree is not a tree of wisdom, neither a tree of understanding or of advice. No. This is a tree of “Knowing by Experiencing”, *Etz ha-Daat*, which spells a two-stage learning process: First we experience and then we internalize that experience so that we are capable of telling apart the “bad” from the “good”. The first stage of the learning process is prone to pain and suffering because only after experiencing the “good” and the “bad” may one tell them apart. Not a moment earlier. Adam and Eve, not privy to the agony associated with experiencing the “bad”, are eager to eat of the forbidden fruit noticing only the end result— that they will be like *Elohim* (God as creator). In modern day parlance, such a fake imaginary process of learning is called “Instant Learning”

But what is “Good” and “Bad”?

Given the two worlds that we constantly experience in our lives, the “World of Law-of-Nature” and the “World of Randomness”, it is obvious that one needs to specify “Good and Bad” in terms of both worlds. Not coincidentally, the narrator of the story of the sin of Adam and Eve already relates to the Divine **only** by the double name, *Elohim-Jehovah*, imparting the two aspects of leadership that the Divine exercise in His world: Leadership by Law-of-Nature (scientifically exposed, “public” leadership by the creator, *Elohim*); and the hidden, concealed leadership by *Jehovah* in the world of free-will, in the seemingly “World of Randomness”. There is perhaps no better demonstration for the latter than the famous dialogue between Abraham and Jehovah:

“And Abraham drew near and said:” Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? ... Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do justice?”; And Jehovah said: “If I find in Sodom fifty just men within the city then I will spare the whole place for their sakes” (Genesis 18:23, 25-26).

But fifty righteous men were not found, neither ten. And the people of Sodom were puzzled, probably to their last moments, why the world is so random and unexplainable. As were probably the residents of the corrupt “Sodom-like” ancient Pompeii, destroyed by random by mother-nature at 79 AD.

“Good and Bad” in the story of eating of the forbidden fruit therefore carries double meanings: “Good” and “Bad” in the physical world, which is governed by “Law of Nature” (imprinted on nature by *Elohim, the creator*); and “Good” and “Bad” in the “World of Randomness”, governed by “Law of Justice and Grace” (emanating from *Jehovah*, ultimate source of morality):

“For thus says *Jehovah*, creator of the Heavens, he is the *Elohim* that has formed the Earth and has made it” (Isaiah 45:18).

The double message of the “Tree of Knowledge” sounds loud and clear for our times:

Message 1: Not all that can be experienced in the physical world, in the “World of Law-of-Nature”, is allowed.

There is a spiritual dimension to our existence as human beings that imposes limitations on our behavior in the physical world and on what we may experience. Eating of the “Tree of Knowledge”, supposedly the most natural and beneficial thing to do, is not without boundaries. And once these are crossed, seemingly without inflicting physical harm, the spiritual dimension may adversely be affected, ultimately causing harm also in the physical world (due to loss of ability to exercise free will in the “World of Randomness”). This realization may at times be extremely excruciating and agonizing. Ask any ex-alcoholic, or ex-narcotics-addict, who had gone through rehabilitation, and you may get a faint idea what the process of “knowing by experiencing” may look like once the spiritual dimension of our existence is ignored.

(Again, we note that Adam and Eve’s idea is limited, nearly contrary to reality: According to their perception, eating of the forbidden fruit would educate them how to distinguish “the bad” from “the good” in the physical world so that they would instantly be *Elohim-like*; all the while being unaware of the pain and suffering that this prolonged learning process, ignoring the spiritual dimension, may entail.)

Message 2: To live life fully, it is not sufficient to distinguish “Good” from “Bad” within Law-of-Nature only.

The “World of Randomness”, where free-will is exercised, has its own “Good” and “Bad”, decided by the “Law” that prevails in this world (law of morality, grace and righteousness; or law of Karma, as preached in some religions). And that law, relating to our spiritual dimension, should be heeded, learned and internalized no less than the “visible”, scientifically validated, Law-of-Nature, that we are so intent and careful on pursuing every single moment of our lives on this planet.

“Speak Hebrew and Be Righteous”

Posted June 30, 2016

Speaking Hebrew, one is led, perhaps unconsciously and despite one’s own volition, to adhere to the basic concepts and tenets of Jewish tradition.

In this shorty, I demonstrate this by addressing seven Hebrew words (having five different philological roots). In all examples, it is assumed that different words sharing same root must somehow be inter-related (even though outwardly the compared words seem not to be sharing anything in common). Also, we emphasize that these examples do not relate to Gematria, which assumes that two words sharing a **numerical** value must somehow be inter-related.

The first two examples appear in detail in my book.

Example 1: “Sin” is not the result of evil but rather an aberration due to missing the target (“Sin” and “Miss” share same root in Hebrew)

Example 2: There are three modes of standing before God:

“Thanking”, “Acknowledging”, “Admitting” (a sin).

They all share same philological root in Hebrew, giving rise to the single Hebrew verb *Le-Hodot* (which imparts respective meanings to all three modes of relating to God).

Examples 3 and 4: “Thing” in Hebrew is *Davar* (derived from same root as “to speak”, *Le-Daber*); “Object” in Hebrew is *Chefet* (meaning also “Will” or “Wish”).

The obvious implication for a Hebrew-speaking user of these “generic” words is unconscious acknowledgment that all that exists is the result of God’s will and speak. Genesis creation narrative could not have been more explicit!!

Example 5: “Resentment” (or “Grudge”) is in Hebrew *Timab*; *Tin* is Hebrew for “Silt” (mud that sinks to the bottom of the pool).

The Hebrew language educates: Resentment is like silt. The latter rests silently at the bottom of the pool, nearly undetected, until the pool’s water is disturbed. The mud then rises up to blur and obscure all that shape up under the surface of the water.

Likewise, resentment can be hidden from view (even your own) until triggered into action. Once activated, old grudges rise up to blur and obscure all that is shaping up inside your psyche, rendering your soul non-transparent. This results in distorted vision of reality, in impairing relationships with family and friends and ultimately in poor judgement in decision-making scenarios.

The Hebrew language advises:

Resentment stains your soul; Therefore, it is impure and unholy; Be righteous by letting go of old grudges; Get rid of resentment!!

The Human Desire to be like God

Posted June 30, 2016

At the core of all human endeavors is the burning desire to be like God.

The desire is already expressed in the third chapter of Genesis: “For God knows that on the day you eat of it” (of the Fruit of Knowledge) “then your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as God..” (Genesis 3:5).

But what does it mean to be like God?

The serpent expresses it explicitly:

“You shall be like *Elohim*, knowing good and bad” (Genesis 3:5)

(*Elohim* is Hebrew for God as the creator).

Jewish prophets have incessantly preached differently:

“I am Jehovah speaking righteousness, I declare things that are right” (Isaiah 45:19)

(Jehovah is Hebrew for God as source of morality and virtues).

Human history is the tale of nations and individuals seeking to be as powerful as *Elohim* via dominating resources (whether of knowledge, of human-beings (erroneously perceived as resource) or of physical properties).

Human history is also a tale of nations and individuals ignoring the message of the Jewish prophets that to be like God **also** means to be like Jehovah (all the while concurrently harming the carriers of this inconvenient message).

Present-Day Ultimate Replay of the Sin of Adam and Eve

Posted November 27, 2015

We, as humans, entertain free will. This is made possible since our submission to the Law-of-Nature is not total. There are isolated islands in our lives where randomness prevails, allowing us to do whatever our heart desires, with apparently no moral consequences and no penalty due to violating some punishable law.

For example, we cannot decide to jump out of the window of a fifteenth floor of a high-rise because penalty would be immediate and ultimately catastrophic to our very survival. No free will here. Conversely, we may decide whether we wish (or wish not) to join a certain group of people for a shared activity with seemingly no devastating consequence, irrespective of which course of action we may have decided to pursue.

In summary, without ever so defined, our lives comprise two worlds intermingled with one another and generally indistinguishable from one another: The world of the “Law of Nature” and the world of “Randomness”. Our ability to exercise free will is conditioned on the existence of the latter; However, we are prevented from exercising free will within the confines of the former.

Let us rephrase this assertion in biblical terms. The two seemingly unrelated and independent worlds, that of “Randomness” and that of “Law of Nature”, both originate in one source, which the Bible relates to as “Jehovah-*Elohim*”. Jehovah is source of the law of morality that prevails in the world of randomness. *Elohim* is source of physical creation and of Law-of-nature, within which confines creation conducts itself since the beginning of time, at the Big Bang.

From its inception, humankind has aspired to be like God. But in what sense?

As the sin of Adam and Eve is described in the third chapter of Genesis, the serpent seduces Eve, explaining to her why it would have been beneficial to eat of the “Fruit of Knowledge”:

“For *Elohim* knows that on the day that you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and **you shall be like *Elohim***, knowing good and bad” (Genesis 3:5).

In other words: Gaining knowledge, by eating of the Fruit-of-Knowledge, aims at becoming like *Elohim*, knowing the Law-of-Nature that would grant us knowhow of that which is beneficial to us (“Good”) and that which is not (“Bad”). The burning desire is dominance over nature (including dominance over other human beings), but not the study of Law-of-Morality, which prevails in the “World of Randomness”, concealed from us so that we may exercise free will.

For that sin, the sin of wishing to know *Elohim* (source of Law-of-Nature), and not Jehovah-*Elohim* (the complete and all-encompassing manifestation of God’s leadership of his world, which is also **the only name for God used by the “objective” narrator**), Adam and Eve are subject to expulsion from the Garden-of-Eden.

Knowing *Elohim* with the objective of being *Elohim*-like implies knowing Law-of-Nature and gaining dominance over nature and people. Murdering another human being is the ultimate expression of dominance over nature as a result of the desire to be as powerful (and as “Great”) as *Elohim*.

An individual calling “Allahu Akbar” (“Allah is greatest”), while taking someone else’s life in an act of murder, commits the exact same sin as that of Adam and Eve, only taken to the extreme:

“I know *Elohim* (since I know Law-of-Nature)” → “Therefore I have gained dominance over nature” → “Therefore I am *Elohim*-like” → “Therefore I have *Elohim*’s privilege to take your life away”.

All wrong!! And on many counts.

The privilege to take away one’s life does not belong to *Elohim* but to Jehovah *Elohim*. Alone.

And no amount of knowledge of *Elohim*, supposedly leading to a state of being God-like, provides complete knowledge unless complemented by the knowledge of **Jehovah** and his law:

“And now, Israel, what does Jehovah, your *Elohim*, requires of you but to fear Jehovah, your *Elohim*, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah, your *Elohim*, with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12).

The history of the human race is marked by committing, over and over again, the exact same sin of Adam and Eve: Gaining knowledge about Law-of-Nature, originating in *Elohim*, with utter lack of interest in knowing Law-of-Morality, originating in Jehovah.

The stated mission, indeed the role, of the Jewish nation in the world is to declare in the public square:

“The free will that you experience in the “World of Randomness” is an illusion. As there is Law-of-Nature there is also Law-of-Morality. These are not two separate worlds, one governed by Law-of-nature and another governed by.. nothing.”

And days are coming, when all will know, and aspire to know, not only *Elohim* but also Jehovah:

“Behold, days are coming, says Jehovah, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of *Yebudal*”, ..., “and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, **know Jehovah; for they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says Jehovah” (Jeremiah 31:30-33).

“Allahu Akbar”, followed by murder, is present-day ultimate replay of the ancient sin of Adam and Eve. The latter have produced first human attempt at separating *Elohim* from Jehovah, learning the ways of the former (leading by Law-of-Nature), while ignoring, and neglecting to learn, the ways of the latter (leading by Law-of-Morality).

Days are coming, prophesizes prophet Jeremiah, when this artificial separation of the two worlds will be no more.

The Planets Example—the Case of Saturn

Posted March 3, 2015

An outstanding finding of my statistical analysis of biblical Hebrew is that numerical values of Hebrew names of planets linearly correlate with physical properties of the planets. A special issue that is often raised by curious viewers of Oren Evron's movie is how have I determined names of individual planets. I explain this in detail in my book, and it is also addressed in the movie.

In this post, I wish to address in particular the name of Saturn, which had been assigned the biblical Hebrew *Temán*. Since the latter is referred to in the Hebrew Jewish Bible as either a southern land (for example, Zachariah 6:6), or simply as indicating “South” (for example, Deuteronomy 3:27), one may wonder how have I reached the conclusion that this word (*Temán*) probably denotes also a name of a specific planet (Saturn).

This conclusion had been reached similarly to how I have reached the conclusion that the Hebrew *Shachar*, “dawn” in modern Hebrew, is a name of a planet (conclusion compatible with traditional well known Jewish interpreters, like Metzudat-David and his son Metzudat Zion; relate to Section 8.3.5 in my book). In the case of *Shachar*, my conclusion had been reached based on a verse in Song of Songs:

“Who is she that appears like *Shachar*, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession” (Song of Songs 6:10). One can hardly refrain from concluding that *Shachar* here implies also a celestial object, though which one remains to be specified.

By similar vein, let us read Job (9:9):

“Who makes *Ash*, *Ksil* and *Kimab* and the chambers of *Temán*“.

(all italicized words are biblical Hebrew).

Rashi, a most revered Jewish interpreter, interprets *Ksil* and *Kimab* as known stars (“Mazalot”; planets, as known today, were unknown at Rashi's time). Metzudat-David relates to all first three names as known stars. Let me emphasize: Not constellations of stars but individual stars.

Is there a good reason why *Temán* should not also denote a star name (a planet name, given today's scientific knowledge)?

As it turns out, based on my quantitative analysis, the most probable candidate for *Temán*, as a name of a planet, is Saturn (find details in my book, Section 8.3.5). Therefore, this is the biblical Hebrew name I have assigned to Saturn.

Here comes the amazing surprise (coincidence):

Saturn is a southern planet (as seen from the northern hemisphere). It has an orbital period of 29.5 years (the time it takes to complete a revolution around the sun). If our conjecture is true and Saturn is indeed *Temán*, it is most extraordinary to find out that as *Temán* denotes in Hebrew both a **southern planet** and the concept of **South**, so the English **Saturn** and **Southern** are pronounced nearly identically (though written differently).

How unexpected!!

!

(This interesting observation about the similarity of “Saturn” and the English “South” was conveyed to me by the movie producer, Oren Evron; I thank him for this insight.)

The Two Books of the Divine and Their Scientific Linkage

Posted April 8, 2015

In this post I discuss the significance of my research about the Jewish Hebrew Bible and biblical Hebrew. Since my research findings were first published in a book (Shore, 2007) and later, when these findings had become more widely spread due to Oren Evron's movie (Evron, 2014, 2015), I have received mixed responses, extending from complete apathy, to attempts to explain away the findings by attributing them to ancient Earthly civilizations that somehow possessed modern scientific knowledge, up to sincere and true appreciation of the implications of the findings as alluding to the Divine origin of biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew Torah.

In all these responses, one element seems to have been missing, and that is the inevitable conclusion emerging from the new discoveries:

The two books of the Divine are scientifically linked.

What do we mean by "the two books"?

Since its primary inception at the historic event of receiving the Ten Commandments by Moses at Mount Sinai, Judaism has consistently emphasized the two aspects of the Divine, as experienced by humans: God as creator of the cosmos and Law of Nature (Genesis 1:14, 8:22), and God as source of morality and its dictates.

Those two percepts of the Divine correspond to our own personal experience as concurrently living in two worlds:

"The World of Law of Nature", where free will is not feasible since violating law of nature results in immediate, apparent and non-miraculous penalty;

"The World of Randomness", where apparently no law exists with adverse consequence for its violation, wherefore we are free to act as we please.

An example for the first world ("Law of Nature") is jumping from the 100th floor of a high-rise, where ignoring ("violating") gravity results in immediate unambiguous "penalty";

An example for the second world ("Randomness") is responding to a beggar's plea for money, where we exercise free will on how to react, with seemingly no apparent consequence and no implication to our own personal destiny (irrespective of how we have responded).

The Ten Commandments, relevant only to the "World of Randomness", where free will can be exercised, convey to us the "news":

By word of the Creator, you *are not* completely free to act as you please.

Our own personal experience of the world as allowing free will, however only to a confined degree, namely, only in "The world of randomness", this personal experience is expressed in biblical Hebrew in two concepts of the Divine, as creator and as source of morality. These concepts are epitomized in two names for the Divine, which repeatedly appear throughout the Hebrew Jewish Bible:

Elohim and Jehovah

(Please relate to my talk with Avi Ben-Morechai, accessible on my blog).

Prophet Isaiah explicitly references these two names and what they stand for:

"For thus says *Jehovah* that created the heavens, *Elohim* himself that formed Earth and made it, he has established it, not a wasteland created He it ... I am *Jehovah* and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:18).

The two books of the Divine, corresponding to these two names, are the physical cosmos, subject of investigation by modern physics, and Hebrew Torah. These two books have heretofore been perceived as unrelated to one another (at least not scientifically). For example: To this day, well known physical constants, like the speed of light or the electromagnetic charge of an electron, are accepted by modern physics as given. Furthermore, it is accepted that there is no scientifically established theory to determine these constants, apart from stating that if these constants were minutely changed the cosmos as we know it would not have been in existence (see lengthy discussion of this issue, for example, in Wikipedia, entry “Fine-tuned Universe” and references therein).

Obviously, no one ever linked these physical constants to biblical Hebrew.

The *scientific* new discoveries have changed this perception. They lead unavoidably to the conclusion that numerical values of biblical Hebrew words represent quantitative values of major physical properties of objects that the words stand for. For example, *Eretz* (Earth in Hebrew) represents Earth’s geometrical properties (like diameter and surface area) but also Earth’s mass, all of which are major physical properties of Earth. The scientifically unexplainable nature of the physical constants, alluded to earlier, become explainable in light of the new scientifically established discoveries: The speed of light (a physical constant) is what it is because light in Hebrew is *Or*, with a numerical value of 207 (which, by proper change of scale, converts into the physical speed of light).

By establishing the deep significance of the numerical values of Hebrew words, namely, their relationships to actual physical properties observed in the cosmos, the two worlds experienced in our lives, the “World of Law of Nature” and the “World of Randomness” (where apparently no law prevails unless one regards the Ten Commandments and their derivatives), these two worlds are scientifically unified and experienced as originating in one source.

At the same time, the two books of the Divine, “Law of Nature” and “Law of Morality”, *Elohim* and *Jehovah*, respectively, no longer are experienced as separate “entities” — One subject to scientific enquiry, the other existing as a controvertible article of faith.

Rather, physical reality and morality are experienced as stemming from a single source.

With this, an ancient prophecy starts to begin to have its imprint on the annals of human history:

“..On that day *Jehovah* will be one and his name One” (Zechariah 14:9).

“And God Spoke to Moses and Said to Him: I am God”

Posted April 30, 2014

I consider this bizarre verse (Exodus 6:2) one of the most important verses in the Torah. In this blog entry, I wish to explain why.

The exact verse, as it appears in common English translations, is:

"And God spoke to Moses and said to him: I am the Lord" (Exodus 6:2).

The original Hebrew verse uses two *different* names for God: *Elohim* and *Jehovah*. Its literal (word for word) partial translation is:

"And *Elohim* spoke to Moses and said to him: I am *Jehovah*" (Exodus 6:2).

Why the use, in this short verse, of two different names for God; and how is this important or significant?

To answer this, we first have to make two assertions about the Torah, pre-requisites to our ability to later analyze the true meaning of this verse:

- Names are extremely important;
- Biblical Hebrew is extremely precise.

Regarding the latter point, the reader is referred to my blog entry, "[The mathematical precision of biblical Hebrew](#)", where I address the precision of words and verses in the Torah, and demonstrate by four examples how the true meaning of Torah verses may be lost in translation because the mathematical precision of the original text is not preserved in the (unsuccessful) transition to English.

Regarding the former point (addressing names in Torah), there is repeated and uniform reference to names as the ultimate embodiment of the essence of the named; Therefore, naming should not be taken lightly. Examples:

- “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Genesis 1:5);
- “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field...and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, this was its name” (Genesis 2:19);
- “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee” (Genesis 17:5);
- “And God said to Abraham. As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be” (Genesis 17:15);
- “And God said Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a child indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac” (Genesis 17:19);
- “And she bore him a son, and he called his name Gershon; for he said I have been a stranger in a strange land” (Exodus 2:22);
- “And Moses said to God, Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you; and they shall say to me: What is his name? What shall I say to them?” (Exodus 3:13);

- “And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name, The Lord, I was not known to them” (Exodus 6:3)
- “And the Lord said to Moses: “I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for thou have found favour in my sight and I know thee by name” (Exodus 33:17);
- "I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah 41:8)
- For my name's sake will I defer my anger..." (Isaiah 48:9);
- "For from the rising of the sun until it goes down, my name is great among the nations; and in every place incense is burnt and sacrifices are offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 1:11).

And the list goes on and on (see some further examples in my book, Section 4.1).

We have now reached the crucial point:

Why is it so important for the Bible to convey to the reader that God (*Elohim*) has revealed himself to Moses, saying to him: “I am God (*Jehovah*)”?

To start providing some clues, let us first note that in Jewish tradition mankind knows absolutely nothing about God except that he exists!

Several verses in the Bible stress the point. Examples:

- “Thou cannot see my face; for no man shall see my face and live” (Exodus 33:20);
- ”Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel” (Isaiah 45:15);
- “How long, O Lord, will thou hide thyself, forever?” (Psalms 89:47)

If no knowledge about God is at all possible, what meaning can one possibly attach to names of God appearing in the Bible?

The response is also rooted in long Jewish tradition: Though one has absolutely no knowledge about God, one can observe the ways in which he leads his world. In other words: Names of God in the Bible denote various “modes of conduct” of God in relation to his world. How God reveals his presence in the world is open to observation. Furthermore, this is consistent with how God responds to Moses, after the latter pleads: “Show me thy glory” (Exodus 33:18). God’s response:

“I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take my hand and thou shall see my back but my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:22-23).

In other words: You can see the effects of my presence in the world (“thou shall see my back”) but the root cause cannot be observed (“my face shall not be seen”).

Given this general introduction about the meanings of different names of God in the Hebrew Bible as conveying different “modes of conduct” by which God reveals his presence in the world, we may now turn our attention to how Jewish tradition would interpret the bizarre verse from Exodus:

"And *Elohim* spoke to Moses and said to him: I am *Jehovah*" (Exodus 6:2).

Generally speaking, the two names reveal the duality of human existence on this planet, and the associated two categories of observations humans can make regarding the world around us:

Law of nature, where no free will can be exercised (*Elohim*);

Seeming randomness (as perceived by humans), where free will can be exercised (*Jehovah*).

We start with **Elohim**

This name of God is, according to biblical Hebrew grammatical rules, the plural of the Hebrew *Eloah*, which means God, but also of the shorter *El*, which means both God and power, or capability (for example,

Genesis 31:29). Thus, *Elohim* should be addressed in the Bible in the plural. But it is not. *Elohim* is always related to in the Bible in the singular except for one place (refer to Section 7.2 in my book). *Elohim* is the only name of God, and only this name, that appears in the description of creation in Chapter 1 of Genesis. Gematria devotees are quick to mention that the word *Ha-teva* (“the nature”) and *Elohim* have the same numerical value (86). Analysis of the root of the word “nature” in Hebrew (*Teva*) leaves no doubt that laws of nature are “perceived” by biblical Hebrew to be “stamped” into the universe since the Hebrew root for this word is the same as that of...coin (like in: “Who has coined this phrase?”). Examples:

“Before the mountains were settled” (Proverbs 8:25);

Re-phrased literally (word for word), the verse reads: “Before the mountains were coined” (*Hotbau*);

Regarding Earth:

“Whereupon are its foundations fastened”...” (Job 38:6);

Re-phrased literally: “On what were its foundations stamped” (*Hotbau*).

Note that *Teva*, in the sense of “nature”, does not appear in the Bible, and its use started long after the Jewish Bible had been canonized (during the era of the Jewish Second Temple).

Biblical Hebrew relates to all that exist as consequence of the word or the will of God:

- “Thing” in Hebrew is *Davar*, having same root as to speak (D.B.R);
- A desired thing, or matter, is *Chefetz*, same word as will.

Obviously, *Elohim* signifies nature laws that humans have no choice but to obey since their violation implies instant penalty. Jumping from a roof, or pushing a hand into fire, a human being defies laws of nature and learns instantly that he has no space for free will regarding these laws.

Elohim therefore signifies God presence in the universe in the form of laws of nature, comprising that part of humankind life where no free will can be exercised.

Jehovah

The basic structure of this name for God and its implications are addressed at length in my book, Chapter 4. We continue this discussion here, as it relates to *Elohim*, relating to the most holy name for the Divine in biblical Hebrew,.

If the latter embodies God’s presence in the world in the form of laws of nature, how is the presence of God revealed by *Jehovah*?

In traditional Judaism, there are two kinds of leadership by which Jehovah conducts His world:

- Leadership by justice (*Hanhagat Ha-Mishpat*; literally “Leadership by law”);
- Leadership by a measured combination of justice and mercy (*Hanhagat Ha-Chesed* and *Hanhagat Ha-Yichud*).

Leadership by justice means that there is a law of justice, and any violation of the law deserves penalty. One could allegorically assert that laws of nature are of this type of “leadership by Justice”. However, God realized that the world cannot exist under such leadership alone, therefore the Divine mingled mercy with justice:

“Thus said the Lord: “If I create the world with a measure of mercy—sin increases; with a measure of absolute justice—how could the world stand? Therefore, I will create it with a measure of absolute justice and a measure of mercy, and hopefully the world would stand” (*Midrash Rabbah, Bereshit*, Chapter 12).

Thus, presence of God in the world, as represented by *Jehovah*, is revealed by special traits of His conduct (in leading His world), traits that are beyond the laws of nature. These traits are manifested in that part of human life, which by nature is perceived by us random. To get closer to God and more God-like, human

beings need to pursue these same traits of conduct in their effort to acquire proximity to God. The traits are called “The thirteen virtues of God”, and they are expounded in Exodus (34:6-7):

“...The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and graceful God, slow to anger, abundant in grace and truth; maintaining grace to thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, but not cleaning the guilty and visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children and upon the children of children and upon descendants of third and fourth generations”.

This leadership “style” of God is not utterly comprehensible to human beings. Even when all 13 traits of the conduct of Jehovah are understandable and accounted for, acts of the Divine are not always explainable, as God explicitly conveys to Moses: “

“And the Lord said: “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name *Jehovah* to you and **I will show grace to whom I will show grace and show mercy to whom I will show mercy**” (Exodus 33:19).

Elohim and *Jehovah* are logically separate and so are they experienced to human beings. The former reflects the laws of nature, the latter is invisible, not self-evident, and reflects the Divine moral conduct, as revealed in the “random” part of our lives.

Deities in the ancient world were often mean and full of emotions, not unlike humans. Morality was not an integral part of the concept of God. Combining the two concepts of God, that which is source of creation (*Elohim*) and that which is source to morality (*Jehovah*) is the greatest message of the Torah.

Combining the two sources together, the Torah declares, in no uncertain terms, that the two are one and the same:

"And *Elohim* spoke to Moses and said to him: I am *Jehovah*" (Exodus 6:2).

The Mathematical Precision of Biblical Hebrew

Posted April 28, 2014

Reading ancient Jewish texts, one is often bewildered at the seriousness with which Jewish scholars have addressed each word and phrase that appear in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, this respectful perception of sacred text is a common phenomenon, extending to all individuals of faith, in ancient times as well as at present.

A necessary condition to finding justification for such an attitude towards sacred text is fulfilling of the following basic requirement: That the text is exact, that wordings and phrases do not seem to be randomly selected, that precise meaning is always imparted (even though the latter is not always known due to historic reasons). Sacred text, in other words, has to display characteristics reminiscent of a legal document.

I have always admired the mathematical precision of the Hebrew Bible. In this blog entry, I demonstrate the background for this admiration by detailing four examples of biblical verses, where English translations have lost the original sense of the verse, as well as the unique mathematical precision with which these verses convey ideas and thoughts in the original biblical Hebrew.

These examples are expounded in the linked article below.

Reading ancient Jewish texts, one is often bewildered at the seriousness with which Jewish scholars, as well as other individuals of faith, have addressed words and verses in the Hebrew Bible. For example, if the same word appears in two different locations in the Bible, in seemingly unrelated contexts, the general attitude in ancient Jewish interpretations of biblical text is that probably some hidden message is conveyed, which should be uncovered, about the linkage between the different usages of a seemingly identical word.

A famous example is the word "איכה", spelled the same but pronounced differently and also carrying different meanings in Genesis (3:9), where it means "Where art thou?", and in Lamentations (1:1), believed to be written by prophet Jeremiah, where the same word means, in today's everyday parlance, "How come?" (Like in: "How come you are still here?").

One is naturally tempted, or inclined, to relate to this careful analyzing of the meaning of each word and verse in the Hebrew Bible, and the meticulous exploration of hidden meanings in them or in their mutual relationships, as excess and exaggeration of people of faith, who believe in a Divine source for the Hebrew Bible.

Is this inconceivable that the Hebrew Torah had been written with occasional random selection of words and phrases, not unlike one may find in any typical human text? Why treat each word so seriously?

In other words: Have not Jewish scholars, in their lengthy explanations of every single word and verse in the Hebrew Bible, somehow crossed the fine line of reasonable interpretation of sacred text?

The purpose of this blog entry is to demonstrate the mathematical precision of the Torah text. This precision often leaves one stunned at the high level of attention-to-detail displayed by Torah words and their inter-relationships. This knife-sharp precision of expression cannot but arouse respect for Torah text, even for non-believers. Accordingly, none of the four examples, to be expounded below, relates in any way to articles of faith but only to the exactness of expression, which leaves one doubtless about what biblical Hebrew text, words, sentences or verses, intended to convey.

Example 1: "And there was evening and there was morning—the first day" (Genesis 1:5)

This is the commonly translated verse that one may find in English translations of the Hebrew Bible. Alas, this is not what is written in the Hebrew Genesis.

Some years ago, I had spent a year in Madison, Wisconsin, where I stayed as a visiting professor at the invitation of the local branch of the Wisconsin University (in the year 1993-1994). A few days after my arrival, I went to a local bookstore to purchase an English version of the Hebrew Bible. I had made up my mind in

advance to buy only a translation that fulfilled a certain criterion: that the fifth verse of Genesis was properly translated. I had to examine several different translations prior to arriving at a single version, where the correctly translated verse appeared. It read:

"And there was evening and there was morning, one day".

Why is "one day" *kosher* and "first day" is logically impossible?

Simply put: You can denote something "first" when, and only when, it appears at a certain position in an orderly arranged set of objects. When there is yet only one object, it is nonsensical to denote it "first", even if other objects may join at a later time. The Torah makes it no secret that the days of creation occurred consecutively, in an orderly succession. Therefore, one cannot logically call the first day of creation "first" when there was not yet a second day, a third day and so on.

"First day", or "Day one", are logically wrong; "One day" is correct, and this is how it appears in the Hebrew Bible.

Mathematical precision; Have we mentioned it?

Example 2: "Thou shall love thy neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18)

This is one of the most well-known verses of the Bible. Alas, this is not what is written in the Hebrew text. A common joke amongst young Israelis is:

Friend 1 (to friend 2): "Tell me, a fisherman, does he love fish?"

Friend 2: "Of course";

Friend 1: "So why does he eat them?"

The source of the joke humor (agreeing that one exists...) is that the same word, "love", is used in two divorced senses. When one asks his friend "Do you love wine?" and "Do you love your child?" the meanings imparted are completely at odds with one another. One loves wine because it satisfies her needs. But when the same question is asked about one's own child it implies total readiness to satisfy someone-else's needs, the child's needs. The first love implies taking. The second love implies unconditional giving. And when one gives it is most often expressed with the qualifying "to", like in: "The money was given to the needy".

The Hebrew Torah, in an obvious effort to clarify that the intended meaning is "Love in order to give", rather than "Love in order to take", formulates the command to "love thy neighbor" as follows (my literal (word-for-word) translation):

"Love to thy friend as yourself".

Interestingly, this is the sole chapter in the whole of the Hebrew Bible, where this bizarre combination of "love to" appears (it re-appears in verse 34 of same chapter). Apparently, when a command is given in the Torah, the language of the law should be clear-cut, as in a legal document, leaving no space for confusion.

Mathematical precision.

Example 3: "If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile towards me, then in my anger I will be hostile towards you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over" (Leviticus 26:27-28)

Here the various translations diverge quite a bit mainly because the word that is at the heart of these verses, *Keri*, appears only in this chapter (several times) and nowhere else in the Bible. Furthermore, *Keri* is not explained and is hard to come by based on relevant context. So naturally interpretations diverge but they all imply rebellion against God.

But what does "rebellion against God" mean?

In my book, I dedicate a whole section to how the Bible, and Torah in particular, relate to randomness (therein, Section 3.3). The key word here is *Keri*, the root of which is K.R.H, shared by all words relating to randomness or to "occurring by random". In fact, the Hebrew *Karab* (meaning occurred) and the English counterpart sound alike.

Employing this insight, the above verse can be literally translated from the Hebrew origin thus (my literal translation):

“If in spite of this you would not obey my laws and walked with me in *Keri*, then I would walk with you with the wrath of *Keri* and would also be tormenting you seven times over for your sins”.

The original Hebrew contains only 19 words (versus 41 for both alternative interpretations displayed earlier). Therefore, some further explanation seems due. “Walk with God” appears earlier in the Torah, for example: “and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). It means, simply, that Noah related to God, with no further qualification. Apparently, taking account of the Hebrew root of the word “*Keri*”, “walking with God in *Keri*” implies a belief that God’s code for leading his world is completely incomprehensible to humans and therefore it looks to humans as utterly random. God’s response: If you hold on to this belief, that whatever occurs to humans is independent of their own conduct, then I will punish you with further randomness. In other words, if you do not believe that justice prevails in how the Divine “manages” the world (like in “why bad things happen to good people?”), then I will burden you with further randomness so that you will be tormented by turning blind to how Divine justice permeates world affairs. Thus, your belief in randomness will transform into a self-fulfilling prophecy, tormenting you seven times over by your inability to establish linkage between your own conduct and whatever happens to you.

In nineteen words, selecting a magically focused single word, *Keri*, the Bible conveys precisely the idea intended.

Mathematical precision at its best in biblical Hebrew text!

Example 4: "Thou shalt not... put a stumbling block before the blind" (Leviticus 19:14)

The English translation of the original Hebrew verse, and as it commonly appears in various English versions of the Bible, distorts the original meaning of the Hebrew text. The latter appears, bizarrely one may add, with the word "give" rather than "put", namely:

"Thou shalt not... give a stumbling block to the blind" (Leviticus 19:14)

This lends the verse a whole new meaning, and Jewish scholars painstakingly interpreted it using a panoramic view of the basic idea the text intends to impart to the reader.

I have addressed this verse in great detail, based on traditional Jewish scholarship, in Section 1.3.3 of my book.

(Book downloadable free at my personal blog haimshore.wordpress.com).

Conclusion

The four examples intended to deliver to the reader a taste of the mathematical precision with which the Hebrew Bible succinctly conveys ideas and information. These examples may hopefully generate deeper understanding of why Jewish scholars have traditionally attributed so much importance to the exact articulation of every verse and word in the Bible; and why the Hebrew Bible has so meticulously been duplicated (copied) over the generations in order to guarantee that the exact wording of the Bible be preserved and that the mathematical precision of biblical text will not be lost.

As a result, current day Bible continues to serve, as it did in the past, a source of inspiration and of guidance to humankind.

Adam and Eve—What was the Sin? What was the Cure?

Posted May 5, 2014

The story of the sin of Adam and Eve, as it is unfolding in the third chapter of Genesis, is well known. Simplistically summarized, the story relates how God had forbidden Adam from eating of the Tree of Knowledge, good and bad, warning him that “on the day that thou eat of it thou shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Seduced by the serpent, Eve, Adam’s madam, defies God’s command and also convince Adam to join the party. As a result of the sin, God imposes custom-made penalties on the serpent, the woman and the man, and expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden lest they also ate from the Tree of Life and would live forever (Genesis 3:22-24). The whole story of the sin begins at Genesis 2:15-17 and ends at Genesis 3:1-24.

Many interpretations have been offered for this story. I will not attempt here a comprehensive review of these, as they are easily accessible over the Internet. In this article, I offer an innovative interpretation (or so I believe), based on a careful examination of the Hebrew wording of the sin story and based also on links connecting the different parts of the story, as told in the Hebrew Genesis.

As a departure point, let us note that throughout the sin story, God is related to by two names:

- A composite name: *Jehovah Elohim* (in English, the Lord God);
- A partial name: *Elohim* (why this is partial and how is it indicative of the developing corruption that had preceded the sin will be explained shortly).

In a separate article [1], I discuss at length the use in the Hebrew Bible of the two different names for the Divine, *Elohim* and *Jehovah*. These names may appear separately but occasionally also together (as in the sin story). I deliver here a short summary of the meanings of these names as understanding of their significance is crucial to the later understanding of the significance of the sin, as told in Genesis.

The Bible relates to names very seriously and perceive names as representing the very essence of the named. Examples are given aplenty in the cited reference. There is however one exception. Mankind, according to Jewish tradition, does not have and cannot have direct knowledge of the Divine; except that God exists. The only possible knowledge of God is indirect, via learning of how God reveals his presence in the world. The two names for God, *Elohim* and *Jehovah*, therefore address two separate and logically unrelated concepts of God’s visible and seemingly visible presence in his world:

- By **law of nature**, revealed in the Hebrew *Elohim* (God);
- By justice combined with grace and loving kindness, revealed in the Hebrew *Jehovah* (God).

The two names relate to two facets of God’s presence in the world — as the **creator**, who had imprinted law-of-nature on the universe, and has dominion over all forces of nature; and as a **gracious judge**, source of absolute morality and justice mitigated by love and grace.

In the afore-cited source, I have explained at length, with numerous quotations from the Hebrew Bible, how these two names are consistently used throughout the Bible to deliver precisely the intended context, as befit the mathematical precision, characteristic to biblical Hebrew text [2].

Accounting for the double facet of God’s presence in the world, it is no wonder that when the narrator of the sin-story relates to God, it is always by the proper full name, *Jehovah Elohim*, reflecting God’s double-sided leadership. This full name is mentioned in the verses comprising the sin story (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24) eleven times.

However, there are altogether 15 references to God in these verses. The other four relate to God by his partial name, *Elohim*.

Why the change?

The eleven occurrences of *Jehovah Elohim* are integrated into the narrator's "objective" description (from the narrator's perspective) of God's involvement in the sin story (what God has done or said). The other four are all part of the dialogue between the serpent and Eve, in preparation for committing the sin. This is indeed bizarre:

Why use of a partial name for God, *Elohim*, where in the rest of the chapter God is always addressed as *Jehovah Elohim*??

And how the choice of *Elohim*, rather than *Jehovah*, is testimony to the real character of the sin and why the remedy (delivered by God) befits the malaise?

Answers to these questions and others may shed new light on the contents of the Original Sin — what it really was, why the prescribed remedy and what lessons does the Bible offer the reader.

Reading the unfolding of the sin story and the consequences of the sin, one may distinguish six different parts to the story:

- **Part 1:** Pre-sin moral decay, reflected in the corrupt dialogue between the serpent and the woman. The dialogue is corrupt on two counts: by its contents, but also by the corrupt use of the partial name of God, namely, *Elohim* (I will elaborate on this soon);
- **Part 2:** Committing the sin, namely, eating of the forbidden fruit;
- **Part 3:** Having formerly ignoring God double-faceted presence in the world, and violating his explicit command while discussing how to trick God ("And the serpent said to the woman you shall not surely die", Genesis 3:4), now our heroes try to hide from God so that God has to "call" upon Adam and Eve ("Where are thou?", Genesis 3:9);
- **Part 4:** Separate exchanges of "clarification talk" between God and Adam, and between God and Eve, revealing the instant corruptive effects of the sin:
 - **Effect A:** Escape from freedom – "It was not me who decided" (I just succumbed to others' will or seduction);
 - **Effect B:** Escape from responsibility – "That was not my responsibility, I have only followed orders" (Adam; Genesis 3:12; 3:17); "I have been seduced to eat" (Eve; Genesis 3:13). Exact quotation for the former: "And the man said: "The woman whom thou did give to me to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12); Note the defiance and rebellion — both God and the woman, Eve, are the culprits, to be blamed;
 - **Effect C:** Slander: "The woman, whom thou did give to me to be with me, she gave me of the tree" (Genesis 3:12);
 - **Effect D:** The ultimate outcome of the sin: Separation between human beings.
- **Part 5:** *Jehovah Elohim* prescribes "medication" for the distorting effects that the sin had on all involved, custom-made separately for the serpent, for Eve and for Adam (Genesis 3:14-19).
- **Part 6:** Expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24).

The following questions may now be raised and answered:

Q1. How is corruption revealed by the exclusive use of *Elohim* in the dialogue, pre-sin?

Q2. What was the real intention in committing the sin, pre-sin?

Q3. Why eating of the Tree of Knowledge, good and bad, resulted in corruptive effects?

Q4. How do the remedies delivered by the Divine heal from the corruptive effects of eating of the Tree of Knowledge, good and bad?

We will address each question separately.

Answer 1: Human perception of God can be realistic or corrupt. The realistic perception leads to referring to God presence in the world by the composite name, as strictly used by the "objective" narrator: *Jehovah Elohim*. By contrast, the serpent and Eve refer only to *Elohim*, the owner of all forces of nature. By their perception of

the Divine, being God-like (via eating of the Tree of Knowledge) would lead to dominion over the forces of nature (being *Elohim*-like). There is no desire to be *Jehovah*-like, via eating of the forbidden fruit. This corruptive perception ultimately leads to calling God “The Great” (linked to *Elohim*), omitting the “righteous” part of God leadership (linked to *Jehovah*). The latter mode of reference to the Divine repeatedly makes appearances in the Hebrew Bible, always with a single connotation. An example: “Jehovah is righteous in her midst; he will not do iniquity: each morning he brings forth his judgment to light, none is absent; but the unjust knows no shame” (Zephaniah 3:5). Note that *Elohim*, God as owner of dominion over all forces of nature, is missing here, not coincidentally.

Answer 2: The true purpose of the sin is explicitly articulated by the serpent in no uncertain terms: “For *Elohim* knows that on the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened and you shall be like *Elohim*, knowledgeable of good and bad” (Genesis 3:5). Note that this interpretation deviates from the traditional one, where the Hebrew “good and bad” is translated as “good and evil”. In fact, Eve and the serpent have no interest in matters of good and evil. Calling God by *Elohim* only, their sole interest in being God-like (via knowledge gained by eating of the forbidden fruit) is allowing them to distinguish between that which is good for their well-being, survival and pleasure, and that which is bad, namely, detrimental to that objective. This new interpretation is so obvious, so consistent with a later sin, that of the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), that I find it difficult to explain how “good and bad” were wrongly interpreted in English, and so perceived also by Jewish tradition. Reading the text, it is apparent that our heroes have no interest in matters of justice but only in the betterment of their lives via domination over the forces of nature, acquired by knowledge related to the concept of *Elohim*.

In other words, our heroes would embrace warmly Apple’s bitten apple logo.

Answer 3: The corruptive effects of perceiving God exclusively as *Elohim*, ignoring the *Jehovah* element in God’s presence in the world, has been amply manifested in human history over the centuries. It had been shown in incessant religious wars in the name of “God the Great”, and it is shown today in the ever more sophisticated employment of advanced means, all the result of acquiring knowledge of nature, in order to kill and maim living beings. In the modern era, it is many times over more manifested in how knowledge of the law of nature, and the consequential control over nature, has led to means of mass murder. The immediate outcome of acquiring knowledge related to *Elohim*, while ignoring *Jehovah*, is not only immoral dominion over nature but also the corruption of human character. We had related to this earlier as we have delineated Part 4 of the sin story. Aspiring to be *Elohim*-like, absent a desire to be *Jehovah*-like, is the great sin of humankind to this day.

Answer 4: By Jewish tradition, God does not punish but only heals and correct moral distortion of character. This is explicitly conveyed to King David, when God addresses his off-spring Solomon: “I will raise up your off-spring to succeed you...He is the one who will build a house for my Name...I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chase him with the rod of men, and with such plagues as befall the sons of Adam” (2 Samuel 7:12-14). The English translation, as it so happens, misses the real intent of the Hebrew verse: there is no “when he commits iniquity” therein. The correct (literal) translation is: “When he distorts his ways, I will rebuke him with the rod of men” etc. No punishment, just needed correction to distortions of character. Job makes the point even more bluntly: “I have sinned and perverted that which was straight and it profited me not” (Job 33:27).

Thus, sin does not call for punishment but for a cure that will straighten that which had been perverted. And God’s cure for Adam and Eve is obvious:

“You, Adam and Eve, have thought that being God-like means domination over nature. And you intended to achieve that goal via acquiring knowledge (of law of nature). But you have forgotten Jehovah. Therefore, here is a taste of what is awaiting you: You will eventually acquire knowledge of the law of nature, and you will be able to differentiate between the “Good” (favourable to your survival and pleasure) and the “Bad”. However, you will have to work hard and agonize through it for many years to come, with much hardship. Until, at the end of the road, you will perfect your corrupt character to recognize that you need to aspire to know God’s conduct in its entirety, *Elohim* and *Jehovah*”;

And know you will:

- “And I will give them a heart to know me that I am Jehovah, and they shall be my people, and I will be their *Elohim*; for they shall return to me with all their heart” (Jeremiah 24:7);
- “Thus said Jehovah: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; But let him that glories glory in this, learning and knowing me, that I am Jehovah exercising grace, justice and righteousness on Earth, for in these I delight”, says Jehovah” (Jeremiah 9:22-23);
- “Behold, days are coming, says Jehovah God, when I will send starvation in the land, not starvation for bread neither thirst for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah” (Amos 8:11).

The sin of Adam and Eve was recognizing God as *Elohim* only, aspiring to be *Elohim*-like by tasting of the Tree of Knowledge, consequently leading to discovering law-of-nature, and domination over nature. The cure was an agonizing war-laden and atrocity-laden human history, throughout which a Tikun is slowly being implemented until *Jehovah* is finally recognized.

And a new aspiration to be Jehovah-like is born.

References:

[1] Shore, H. (2014a). “And God spoke to Moses and said to him: I am God”. An article posted on [Professor Haim Shore Blog](#).

[2] Shore, H. (2014b). The mathematical precision of biblical Hebrew. An article posted on [Professor Haim Shore Blog](#).

Average Length of the Lunar Month Calculated from *Baharad* and *Ve-Yad*

Posted October 24, 2014

The average duration of the lunar (moon-based) month is, according to NASA site, 29.530589 days. Jewish tradition offers two concepts, basic to the Jewish calendar:

Baharad and Ve-Yad.

Both are related to an “attempt” to include the six days of creation (no regular days by any account) in the regular Jewish calendar. This is done by defining an imaginary year that preceded the start of the first lunar renewal in the Jewish calendar (starting, according to Jewish tradition, with the completion of the creation of Adam).

In the article, linked below, I show that these two concepts alone, *Baharad* and *Ve-Yad*, are sufficient to obtain a solution to an algebraic equation, which implies that the average duration of the lunar month is 29.530594 days (a deviation of 0.000005 days from the value cited at NASA site).

This article is based on Chapter 18 in my book *Coincidences in the Bible and in Biblical Hebrew* (3rd Edition, 2023). It is a somewhat shortened version of an article in Hebrew that appears as a separate entry on my blog.

1. Introduction

The average duration of the lunar month (the number of days between successive moon renewals, which fluctuates somewhat between months) is 29.53059 days. This value may be found in different available sources, for example: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_month. NASA site cites a more precise value of 29.530589 days (<http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsaros/SEsaros.html>).

Surprisingly, this average is already quoted in the Talmud (by Raban Gamilel; *Rosh Hashbanah* 25:71) and by Maimonides (*Mishne Torah*, *Sefer Zmanim*, *Hilbot Kidush Hachodesh*, Chs. 6 and 11).

The question is: How was the average lunar month duration known to such a high precision in ancient times? Furthermore, do we have to accept the quoted value by Raban Gamliel as given (mysteriously known to Jewish sages in ancient times), or is there a way to calculate this value from known sources, relying only on text in the Hebrew Torah and how Jewish tradition complemented this text by oral commentary?

In this article I show that average lunar month duration may be calculated, accurate to five decimal digits, using only two basic numerical values. These values are derived from the timeline described in the Hebrew Genesis creation story and from Jewish traditional commentary on the text that complements this timeline. I refer to the following basic constructs of Jewish tradition, part and parcel of the current Hebrew calendar:

Baharad (in Hebrew: בַּהַרָד);

Ve-Yad (in Hebrew: וַיָּד).

2. Jewish Traditional Sources of the Two Concepts

According to Jewish tradition, the first lunar renewal started with the completion of the “creation” of Adam on Friday. This event marked the completion of the Divine act of creation, and with that the moon, hidden since its creation on the fourth day (Genesis 1:16), now revealed itself and the first Hebrew year had started, on the first day of Tishrei, the first month of the Hebrew calendar. This timeline is related to *Ve-Yad*, as will be explained soon in more detail.

However, if first moon renewal occurred on the sixth day of creation, how do we account for the five “days” of creation that preceded it? Which year in the calendar do they belong to?

To account for these days, an imaginary year is defined, denoted in Hebrew *Sbnat Tobu* (year of *Tobu*, where *Tobu* is taken from Genesis description of Earth as being initially *Tobu va-Vobu* (“without from and

void”; Genesis 1:2). This year of *Tobu* is created figuratively by rolling back a whole lunar year, to the first day of *Tishrei* in the year of *Tobu* (also denoted *Shnat Yetzirah*, Year of Creation, the first year in the current Hebrew calendar). *Babarad* and *ve-Yad* specify the exact times in the week that the imaginary year started and ended, respectively:

Babarad — The second day (accounting for the first Hebrew letter in *Babarad*, *Bet*, with numerical value of 2); at the fifth hour of the day (accounting for the second Hebrew letter in *Babarad*, *Hei*) and additionally (204/1080) of the sixth hour (accounting for the Hebrew *Resh* and *Daleth* in *Babarad*). Note, that these two letters combined indicate 204 parts of the 1080 parts that an hour was divided into in ancient times;

Ve-Yad — The sixth day (accounting for the Hebrew *Vav*) at the end of the fourteenth hour (accounting for the Hebrew *Yod* and *Dalet*). Since the Jewish day starts at 6.00PM on the previous day, this implies that the first lunar renewal in the Jewish calendar (and the end of the imaginary year that preceded this event) started at 8.00AM on the sixth day of creation.

Babarad, according to Jewish tradition, may be read directly from the Hebrew Genesis thus: Start with the first letter in Genesis 1:1, *Bet*; Then skip 42 letters to get the next letter in *Babarad* (*Hei*); Continue so until you get to the last Hebrew *Dalet* in the Hebrew word *Va-Yavdel* (Verse 4). In Jewish tradition, *Babarad* is associated with one of the sacred names of God, a 42-letter-long name.

Ve-Yad is based on a long held Jewish oral tradition that is often quoted in the Talmud and in other ancient Jewish sources. Those sources tell us that creation of Adam was completed at the end of the fourteenth hour of the sixth day of creation and with that the Divine act of creation had been completed and the moon, hidden since the fourth day of creation, now revealed itself to Adam to start the first lunar renewal in the Jewish calendar (Jewish sources for this description from the *Talmud* can easily be found from a Google search, either in English or in Hebrew).

Surprisingly enough, those two time points of the week, *Babarad* and *Ve-Yad*, incredibly beyond the confines of our present scientific world view, are sufficient to calculate average lunar month duration to accuracy of five decimal digits. In this article, I show how these two concepts alone inevitably lead to an average lunar month duration of 25.530594 days (deviation of 0.000005 days from NASA figure).

3. Calculating Average Lunar Month Duration with *Babarad* and *Ve-Yad*

To start the calculation, we first define an equation in three variables:

A – A value that may be directly calculated from *Babarad* and *Ve-Yad*;

X – Average lunar month duration (in days); this is the value we seek by solving the equation developed below; it is known that the solution for X (the value that maintains the equality of the two sides of the equation) has to be between 29 and 30, the alternating number of days in a normal Hebrew month;

K – An integer value that represents the number of whole weeks contained in the difference between the true average duration of the lunar year (12X) and the length of the lunar year based on an assumption of four weeks (28 days) per month. We denote this difference by **Δ**.

Given these variables, the following equation for **Δ** is easily obtained (expressed in days):

$$\Delta = (12X) - 12*28 = 12(X - 28) = (7K) + A,$$

while both X and K are unknown, the parameter A in the equation can easily be calculated from *Babarad* and *Ve-Yad*:

From Monday, on the 5.1888 hour (5 plus 204/1080), to the exact same time point on Friday: Four days.

From the 5.1888 hour on Friday to the end of the fourteenth hour (indicated by *Yad* in *Ve-Yad*):

$$14 - 5.18889 = 8.81111 \text{ hours}$$

Therefore, the total difference (expressed in days):

$$A = 4 + 8.81111 / 24 = 4.36713 \text{ days}$$

Since a Hebrew month can be either 29 or 30 days, we assume: $29 < X < 30$.

We now calculate values of X in the above equation, with the calculated A, while introducing for the integer K various values that result in X maintaining the above constraint (inequality). We obtain:

$$\text{For } K=1: X=28.947261$$

$$\text{For } K=2: X=29.530594$$

$$\text{For } K=3: X=30.113927$$

Obviously only K=2 results in X maintaining the above constraint!

We conclude therefore that the average lunar month duration, from ancient Hebrew tradition and based on Genesis creation timeline, is 29.530594 days.

This is a deviation of five part in a million (namely, 0.000005 days) relative to the value specified by NASA.

PART II. LESSONS ON LIFE

PART II (A). CURRENT HISTORICAL COINCIDENCES

“Corona” in biblical-Hebrew (??)

Posted March 10, 2020

The name of the rapidly spreading epidemic, now becoming pandemic, the Corona virus, may be read as biblical-Hebrew in two modes:

- As an original Hebrew word (it is not!); In that case one may wonder— What would the biblical-Hebrew root of this word be?
- “Translated” into biblical-Hebrew (namely, the word Crown); In that case one may ask— What is the biblical-Hebrew root of this word, or other Hebrew words originating in the same root, or a permutation thereof?

As have happened often before (relate to Chapter 19 in my book; read also [here](#) and [here](#)), names originating in non-Hebrew languages surprisingly often tend to carry significant meaning in the Hebrew language, namely, embody meaning directly related to the essence of that which the non-Hebrew word stands for.

A typical example from the Torah is Pharaoh, known to be a real historic figure (ruler of Egypt in ancient times). When considered as a Hebrew word (it is not!), the root of this word gives rise to various words implying acts of violence. For example, the biblical Hebrew *Praot* (Judges 5:2) has routinely been used, in modern Hebrew, to describe pogroms, namely, unrestrained maiming and killings of Jews (in exile). Such acts were probably also executed during Pharaoh reign, when Jews were slaves to the king (as described in Exodus).

Let us address individually each of the two options to relate to “Corona” (namely, as originally biblical-Hebrew, or relate to its biblical-Hebrew translation).

1. “Corona” as originally biblical-Hebrew

Several Hebrew words have structure similar to Corona. Ignore, temporarily, the letter “a” (later to be addressed as a suffix). The word “Coron” has similar Hebrew words of the same structure. We have in Hebrew *Svivan*, derived from the root *S.B.B.*, and we have *Shomron*, derived from the root *S.M.R.* When words represent names of places, adding “a” as a suffix (in Hebrew, the letter *Hei*), implies in biblical-Hebrew “in the direction of”. For example, “I go *Shomrona*” means “I am going to *Shomron*”.

So, were “Coron” a biblical-Hebrew word, what would its root be?

In the same manner that we have determined the roots of *Shomron* or *Svivan*, the root of “Coron” would be *K.R.H.*, which gives rise to such words as *Mikreh* (coincidence), *Karah* (occurred; also, cold (n.)) and *Keri*. The latter is of particular importance. In the Bible, it appears seven times in Leviticus, Chapter 26, and only there. I have discussed this word at length in my book (Section 3.3), and, more generally, the concept of “Randomness” in biblical-Hebrew and in the Bible.

In Leviticus (26), God warns the Children of Israel that if they walk with Him in *keri* (pretending everything that occurs is accidental, random), then He will walk with them with the wrath of *keri*, punishing them seven times over for their transgressions. Torah repeatedly warns, here and elsewhere, against pursuing a worldview that all that one experiences in life is coincidental (rather than an act of the Divine – “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justice?”, Gen.:18:25).

The biblical embodiment of this worldview is *Amalek*, who had waged war against the Children of Israel on their way to the promised land (Exodus 17:8). When Moses leaves his instructions to the Children of Israel, prior to his departure, he requests that they remember *Amalek* who “has *occurred* to you”, while you, the Israelites, were somewhat like *Amalek* at the time, “tired and exhausted and *not God-fearing*” (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).

It is indeed stunning that the World Capital of this worldview (“all is coincidental”) is:

- The country where the ruling culture has totally expelled (from amidst its population) God and worshippers of God;

- The country ruled by the most secular regime on Planet Earth (deriving its legitimacy from the ruling Chinese Communist Party);
- The country that has originated one of the most devastating pandemics the human species has ever witnessed (this post is written while the epidemic is evolving into a pandemic, based on the prevailing prognosis regarding its future evolution).

And the name of the virus, originating that pandemic, rings like, well, ...coincidence.

2. “Corona” and Crown in biblical-Hebrew

Assuming that the name Corona has indeed originated in Crown, we inspect its translation into biblical-Hebrew, *Keter*. The root is *K.T.R*, a permutation of which is *K.R.T*. The latter root originates numerous words, which appear no less than 285 times in the Jewish Hebrew Bible. The plain and straightforward meaning of the Hebrew verb *Li-Chrot* is to cut, like cutting-off branches of a tree, or cutting trees. From this, the meaning of the word expanded to mean also annihilate, or destroy, or perish.

Examples:

“I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut-off (*lo ikaret kol basar od*) by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth” (Genesis 9:11);

“Because he has despised the word of Jehovah, and has violated His commands, that soul shall utterly be cut-off (*hikaret tikaret*), his iniquity shall be upon him” (Numbers 15:31);

“...and all that harbour iniquity shall be cut-off (*ve-Nichretoo*)” (Isaiah 29:20).

We realize that the non-Hebrew “Corona”, translated into Hebrew and its biblical-Hebrew root permuted, produces an accurate description of the final effect of this pandemic.

Pandemic in Hebrew, *Dever*, from the root D.B.R.

This root gives rise to various verbs and nouns associated with...**speaking**, either human or Divine. Thus, the Ten Commandments are the Ten *Dibrot*, and “a thing” is *Davar* (implying that all result from Divine **speaking**). In the desert did the Divine **speak** to humans (the Ten Commandments, given to the Israelites, through Moses, in the *Sinai* desert). Desert in biblical Hebrew — *Midbar*.

Final quotes from prophets Isaiah and Zechariah, describing the Final Judgement at End-Times:

“Go, my people, **enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you**; hide yourselves for a little while until indignation is overpast. For, behold, Jehovah is coming out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth shall disclose the blood shed upon her, and shall cover no more her slain.” (Isaiah 26:20-21)

“And it shall come to pass”, declares Jehovah, “that in the whole land two parts in it shall be cut-off (*ikaretoo*, perish); but the third shall be left in it. And I will bring the third through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name and I will answer them...” (Zechariah 13:8-9).

And then:

“Jehovah will be king (“Crown”) over the whole land; On that day Jehovah will be one and his name One.” (Zechariah 14:9)

Comments.

[1] This comment is added in response to readers’ questions about permutation of *K.T.R* (root of *Keter*, “Crown”) into *K.R.T* (root of *Karet*, “Cut-off”). In Kabbalah, *Keter* is the first (uppermost) of the Ten Sefirot, describing “Divine superconscious Will that is beyond conscious intellect” (Wikipedia, entry “Sefirot”). In Jewish tradition, distortion (permutation) of the right order of the root-letters of a biblical-Hebrew word, related to the Divine, may generate words representing the harmful, the undesirable. Thus, for example, *Tom* (completeness, righteousness; a two-letter word) becomes, permuted, *Met* (a deceased person; a two-letter word); *Osber* (riches, abundance), permuted, becomes *Resha* (evil). In the orderly alphabet, *Emeth*

(truth; a three-letter word) appears in the correct order, however the three letters of *Sheker* (lie, falsehood) appears as a permutation of the correct order (read more [here](#)).

[2] A while after this post went on-line, I came across a most recent talk by Rabbi Sacks, who, not surprisingly, also discusses at length the meaning of the central biblical Hebrew concept, addressed in this post — *Keri*. You may wish to view this talk and to learn in more depth the term and its implications:

[Corona pandemic and the biblical Keri Talk by Rabbi Sacks March 26 2020](#)

[3] A most inspiring talk by Rabbi Elyahu Kin: “In the Shadow of the Corona Virus” (English; Hebrew subtitles):

[In the Shadow of the Corona Virus Talk by Rabbi Kin April 3 2020](#)

Signature of Evil — “M” and “N” Combination in Names of Willing Executioners of the Jewish People (Bible perspective)

Posted January 8, 2020

Following the sin of eating of the forbidden fruit, God asks Adam (original Hebrew followed by English):

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עָרַמְתָּ אֶת־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵבִלְתִּי אֶכְלָהּ-מִמֶּנּוּ אֶכְלָתָּ

“And He said: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree **of which** I commanded you that you should not eat?” (Genesis 3:11)

The Hebrew word marked in red comprises three Hebrew letters (read from left to right):

{Hei (ה), Mem (מ), Nun (נ)}

Note that two of the letters appear in two forms: the first (read right to left) — as regularly written, the second — as it appears at the end of a Hebrew word (there are altogether five such letters).

Surprisingly, the same word, marked in red above, appears in exactly same form (though pronounced differently) elsewhere in the Bible. This is the name of a biblical hero, Haman, who had “the privilege” of being the first human being on Planet Earth to conceive, publicly declare and actively planning executing the “Final Solution” on the Jewish people.

The book of Esther relates how Haman had initiated a plot to murder all Jews in all provinces of the kingdom of the Persian King Ahasuerus:

“Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar ... And the king and Haman sat down to drink” (Esther 3:13, 15).

How very familiar...

Jewish Bible scholars failed-not noticing the astounding similarity between the above two words, similarly written but pronounced differently, while carrying absolutely different meanings:

”המן מן התורה מנין? שנאמר (בראשית ג, יא) "המן-העץ"”

“Haman from the Torah, how do we know that? As it is written (Gen. 3:11) “**the tree of which**” (Babylon Talmud, Hulin, 139-2).

It is indeed an **incredible coincidence** that Haman found his death by being hung on a tree (Esther 7:10), while tree is mentioned, adjacent to “his name”, in Genesis 3:11.

The **incredible coincidences**, however, do not end there. They only start there...

Observing appearance of the last two letters in Haman’s name, “M” and “N” (adjacent to one another, in Hebrew), in names of historic foes of the Jewish people, those plotting to annihilate the Jewish people or its modern-day representative, the State of Israel — that combination of letters is incredibly represented therein, disproportionately and abundantly. Furthermore, the same order of the letters, as in Haman, is preserved throughout, without exception.

Examples:

- Haman;
- Nazi Germany;
- Eichmann (Nazi officer in charge of executing the Final Solution (exterminating six million Jews) in Nazi Germany);
- Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (father of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and its first Supreme Leader, 1979-1989);
- Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Second Supreme Leader, 1989 to present);
- General Qassim Soleimani (chief architect of Iranian expansion in the Middle East, arch-terrorist assassinated via targeted-killing by USA, Friday, January 3 (US time), 2020).

A direct linkage between the [sin of Adam and Eve](#) (relating to God by [Elohim, neglecting Jehovah](#)), and its ultimate products — Haman, Eichmann and Soleimani.

(refer also to [Hebrew Samech and Its Occurrence in Names of Jewish-Nation Enemies](#))

The Significance of the Hebrew *Samech* and Its Occurrence in Names of Enemies of the Jewish Nation

Posted October 5, 2014

The letter *Samech* is the fifteenth in the Hebrew alphabet with a numerical value of 60. This letter corresponds to the English “S”, like in Serpent. As with other Hebrew letters, *Samech* has a special significance in Jewish tradition and its “loud” absence from most biblical Hebraic names is not coincidental. To explain the meaning of *Samech*, I will mostly pursue Rav Shmuel Yaniv’s *Parashat Hashavua* (Torah weekly portion, source [1] below). For the reader’s convenience, the article by Rav Yaniv (Hebrew) may be downloaded via the link below.

Generally speaking, *Samech* signifies in the Hebrew alphabet that which is evil, contrary to holiness, to life, to morality and to happiness. Accordingly, *Samech* is absent from biblical text or names dealing or associated with holiness and purity. Conversely, it appears abundantly in biblical text and names that are in essence opposed to these virtues or describing adversity in our earthly world. Thus, in all twenty names of the first ten generations, from Adam to Noah, the letter *Samech* is “shoutingly” missing. Similarly, in all next ten generations of Hebraic genealogy, including Noah’s son, Shem, and his 26 offspring, *Samech* is loudly absent. By comparison, Ham, also Noah’s son, has seven offspring with 2 *Samech* in their names. Abraham’s descendants also do not carry this letter, neither do Isaac’s offspring or those of Esau (the latter totaling 40! relate to Genesis 36). Joseph, Jacob’s son, is the first to carry *Samech* in his name. This is so extraordinary and unique that Rav Yaniv has considered it requiring special explanation (as indeed is expounded in the afore-cited source).

Conversely, entities affiliated with evil, impurity, corruption and death consistently include *Samech* in their names. Thus, Sodom contains “S”, and so does Samael (or Samuel, also Sammael or Samil), considered in post-Talmudic lore a figure who is an accuser, seducer and destroyer, the angel of death and the representative of Satan on Earth who had seduced Eve, appearing to her as a Serpent. Interestingly, names of the only biblical Hebraic heroes that could have been corrupted (they have not!), due to living for an extended period of time within an unclean nation, Joseph and Esther, both carried an S in their names. Rav Yaniv explains that since both Joseph and Esther had to fight seduction, corruption and impurity in the society they were living in *Samech* is part of their names. In the same vein, in the biblical list of names of pure (clean) animals and birds (those Kosher for eating), *Samech* does not appear. It does appear, however, in names of impure (unclean) animals, like Hassida (stork) or Peres (vulture).

Biblical text describing Creation (action of the Divine; Genesis 1:1-31 and 2:1-9) does not include even a single *Samech*; neither do verses in the Torah relating to the Menorah (all in all 1521 letters, according to Rav Yaniv).

One cannot be surprised to find out that Hebrew words conveying suffering, negative virtues, calamities, undesirable situations, regularly contain the letter *Samech* in their root. Such are *Kaas* (anger), *Sevel* (suffering), *Goses* (dying), *Ason* (disaster), *Sakanah* (danger), *Siuv* (corruption), *Siut* (nightmare), *Heres* (destruction), *Romes* (trampling), *Chamas* and numerous others. Further discussion may be found in Rav Shmuel Yaniv’s article.

Given this role of the letter *Samech* in the Hebrew language, in Hebrew biblical text and in biblical names of Abrahamic Jewish descent, it is an interesting coincidence that to this day the majority of Israel’s avid enemies, bent on destroying the Jewish nation or the Jewish State (in the modern era), tend to include *Samech* in their names. Indeed, the occurrence rate of that single Hebrew letter in the list of names of individuals and organizations, actively hostile to the Jewish nation, is mind boggling!

In ancient times, such names are the biblical Sisra (Judges 4:2), Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13) and Sanvallah (Nehemiah 2:10). Non-biblical names are Antiochus and Titus, the latter being responsible to the destruction of the Second Temple, 70 AD.

Here is a list of names of individuals and organizations, from the 20th and 21st centuries, all engaged in hostilities against the Jewish nation, either by waging wars or via acts of terrorism. Most names are most likely familiar to the reader and therefore are in no need of detailed introduction:

- [1] Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Palestinian Mufti (serving Hitler during WWII);
- [2] Joseph Stalin;
- [3] Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt (during the Six-day War);
- [4] Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt (during the Yom Kippur War);
- [5] King Hussein of Jordan (engaged in battle against Israel in the Six-day War);
- [6] Saddam Hussein of Iraq (firing missiles at Israel in the first Gulf War);
- [7-8] Assad family (father and son) of Syria (the former engaged in the Six-day War and the Yom Kippur War);
- [9-10] Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas of Palestinian leadership (engaged in terrorism for part of their lives);
- [11] Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah;
- [12-13] Hamas and ISIS, current terrorist organization and self-declared Islamic state, respectively (the latter, though hostile to the Jews, has not yet 4 launched combat operations against Israel; as of the time of writing this post);
- [14] Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Egypt's current president (not yet engaged in military activity against the Jewish State; as of the time of writing this post);
- [15] Hassan Rouhani, Iran's current president;
- [16] Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, ex-president of Iran (fourth president of current regime).

The arch-enemy of the Jewish people in modern time had not carried an S in his name (although a close T). It is interesting, however, to observe how Nostradamus refers to (probably) Hitler in the 24th quatrain of Century II (refer to source [2] below, which also delivers the original French):

“Beasts ferocious from hunger will swing across rivers; The greater part of the region will be against the Hister, the great one will cause it to be dragged in an iron cage, when the German child will observe nothing”.

In an attached comment (therein, p. 589), the author notes that

“With Hister as an anagram for Hitler, this quatrain was long held by Nostradamians to forecast the fate of Hitler.”

Referring negatively to modern interpretation of Hister as the Danube (river), Leoni notes that “it must be admitted that it is difficult to see what the Danube being dragged in an iron cage could refer to.” The crucial point here: Assuming that the above interpretation is correct, it is intriguing to note how Nostradamus felt a need to include an “S” in reference to Hitler.

Summary: Presence of the Hebrew *Samech* (“S”) in numerous names of devout enemies, past and present, of the Jewish nation; and the “roaring” absence of *Samech* in biblical Hebraic names — these may all be just historical coincidences (a lot of them..).

REFERENCES

[1] Rev Shmuel Yaniv: *Daf Shvui* #794, *Parashat Yitro*: “Why is *Samech* absent from Shabbath Mizvoth (commandments)?” (Hebrew) <http://www.biu.ac.il/jh/Parasha/yitro/yani.html>

[2] Leoni E (1982). *Nostradamus and His Prophecies*. Reprint of a previously published: Nostradamus: Life and Literature. Originally published in 1961. Random House Co. NY 10003.

“An Outrage in Afghanistan”; and One in Israel

Posted February 16, 2014

In his Talking Points on “Bill O’reilly Factor” (Fox News), February 13, 2014, the anchor, Bill O’reilly, related to the outrageous release, by President Karzai of Afghanistan, of 65 convicted Taliban terrorists, who have killed or maimed Americans.

In a response comment, Posted the same day at Foxnews blog, I wrote:

“Whence the surprise that Americans have to furiously witness release of Taliban terrorists, who have killed Americans, if only a few months ago Israelis had to furiously witness the American administration forcing the Israeli government release Palestinians terrorists, who have murdered Israelis? (check the two numbers!)”

In this post I detail the two parallel cases, which have surprisingly occurred no more than six months apart.

On August 2013, the Israeli Cabinet agreed on a four-stage process by which 104 Palestinian prisoners will be released as part of a “confidence-building” measure aimed to boost renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. This decision was taken after US Secretary of State John Kerry, in his efforts to persuade the Palestinian side to re-embark on peace talks with Israel, posed two possible (one may say impossible) options for the Israeli government: To cease construction in Jewish villages and towns beyond the green line (Israel pre-1967 war borders) or release Palestinian terrorists, convicted in due judicial process in the Israeli Justice System.

All of the prisoners slated for release were convicted for terrorism against Israel before the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993; most were directly involved in the murder of Israelis and many were serving life sentences. On August 13, 2013, Israel released the first group of 26 convicted Palestinians terrorists. Another group of 26 were released October, 30th, and another group of 26 prisoners on December 31st, 2013.

By February of 2014, altogether **78** convicted Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli jails in accordance with the decision of the Israeli government. (a fourth group was slated to be released April, 2014).

On February, 14th, Afghan President Hamid Karzai ordered the release of **65** captured Taliban terrorists who were supposed to be tried for crimes against civilians in their own country. These killers have also been linked to the deaths of 32 Americans and allied troops according to the U.S. command. This decision by Karzai was termed by Bill O’reilly “An Outrage in Afghanistan”.

The parallelism, between US conduct towards the State of Israel and supposed consequences to the US, is the subject of several books, all pursuing a single paradigm: “As America Has Done to Israel...”.

Examples:

- McTernan, J. (2008). *As America Has Done to Israel*. Whitaker House.
- Kroening, W. R. (2008). *Eye to Eye: Facing the Consequences of Dividing Israel*. About Him. Revised Edition.

The above current historical coincidence may be just that (or not).

PART II. LESSONS ON LIFE

PART II (B). PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ELSE

How I Repaid Maccabiah for Saving My Father from the Holocaust

Posted December 12, 2022

Maccabi World Union is a Jewish International Sports Organization, spanning more than 450 clubs in over 70 countries in 5 continents. Every four years, Maccabi organizes the [Maccabiah](#), routinely called the Jewish Olympics, during which time (summer time), thousands of Jewish athletes come to Israel to compete in various sports branches.

The [First Maccabiah](#) opened on March, 1932. A large delegation from Poland participated, among them my late father, Daniel, who was part of the soccer team. My father grew up in Lvov, then of Poland (currently Lviv of Ukraine). After the Maccabiah ended, my father decided to stay in Eretz Israel (then named Palestine, under British mandate).

Doing so, his life was spared. Not so with the rest of his family members, most of whom perished in the Holocaust.

On July of 2009, the [18-th Maccabiah](#) was scheduled to take place. About a year earlier, the organizing committee of the 18th Maccabiah approached me with a request to organize a Satisfaction Survey, intended to be administered online after the Maccabiah ended. The survey was to be conducted separately for three groups of people (Athletes, Delegation Officials and Staff).

At the time, I was affiliated with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, where I served as a tenured engineering full professor (retired 2015). As common practice, Israeli universities allow employees, after obtaining proper permission, to engage in delivering services outside the university, even when services rendered are not in academia. I started negotiating with the representative of the organizing committee of the Maccabiah on the terms of the contract, under which the planned Satisfaction Survey would be carried out.

Shortly after negotiations started, it dawned on me that my own life would not have come into existence were it not for the First Maccabiah, which hosted my father and ultimately caused him to stay in Eretz Israel.

I notified the organizing committee of the 18-th Maccabiah that I would conduct the requested survey free of charge. I explained the motivation.

At the time (summer of 2008), 3rd year undergraduate students in my engineering department were supposed to find a subject for their final project, to be carried out during the final 4th year of study. The final project was supposed to be carried out by a pair of students, although larger teams were occasionally allowed. Two students responded to my call, Rinat Bidany and Keren Farm. During their fourth year of study, the three of us worked diligently to build the necessary tools to conduct the survey. Once the tools were ready, they had been submitted to the Maccabiah, which administered the survey during the summer of 2009. By that time, the academic year was already over, Rinat and Keren got their high mark for their final project, and all three of us were invited to attend the opening ceremony of the Eighteenth Maccabiah, held in Ramat Gan, with participation of the Israeli president, the late Shimon Peres.

I spent most of the summer of 2009 statistically analysing the results of the survey, culminating in a three-volume report that was submitted to Maccabi World Union Executive body. The first volume is attached herewith.

As a token of appreciation, I was granted a nice three-dimensional figure, representing the Maccabiah 18 emblem.

The label (Hebrew) reads:

"Prof. Haim Shore. With Gratitude for Your Contribution to the 18th Maccabiah".



Free-Will? — Flowchart Answer

Posted June 15, 2020

The question of whether we are endowed with free-will is as old as human civilization. In this post, we offer a new perspective to this question — addressing it via a series of consecutive questions, located at decision-points of a flowchart.

Each answer directs us to a different path on the flowchart. Some answers land us at a dead-end. This requires regressing back to the recent decision-point, re-thinking our earlier decision (answers that landed us at a final-point on a path in the flowchart). Once we reach a final decision-point, which answers accurately the question (do we have free-will?), we are assured that the answer is well-founded, adopted only after all other options have been carefully explored, examined and rejected (or not, dependent on circumstance).

The flowchart includes Ovals (marking beginning or end of a path in the flowchart), Diamonds (decision-points) and Rectangles (steps in the flowchart). Other symbols commonly used in drawing process flowcharts are not needed. For each decision-point (diamond) — a question is asked. Each rectangular — provides an answer, addressed in detail below.

The questions forming the decision-points in the flowchart indeed form three filters, that only after we have “succeeded” passing them, can we be assured of the validity of our final conclusion, confidently asserting whether we entertain free will or otherwise.

The flowchart is now displayed, followed by comments relating to each of the decision-points (represented in the flowchart by ovals).

Enjoy the journey!

[Professor Haim Shore Blog Free Will Flowchart June 14 2020](#)

(see also chart at end of this post)

As we may now realize, the general structure of the flowchart comprises three fundamental questions/filters. They are:

- Scientific?
- Faith?
- Optimization?

We now address each filter, what it means and what are its implications, regarding the basic question:

Do we exercise free will?

1. Scientific?

A scientific theory, or scientific claim, requires that a criterion be provided how this claim can be rejected, falsified. For example, an acceptable criterion is that if a scientific theory predicts a certain outcome (obtained from experiment, or from sheer observation of nature, where “experiments” are hard to manipulate, as in cosmology), and if this predicted outcome fails to realize — that alone may collapse a scientific theory, invalidate it.

Is the claim “Humankind has free will” scientific? Since this claim relates not to humankind as a collective, this question reduces to the following:

Can we predict human response to any given Free-Will situation?

The answer is a resounding — No.

Human conduct can be predicted, to a certain degree, only regarding the collective, not individuals. Furthermore, given that randomness is part of nature, observed all around us, we never know whether the unpredictability of human response to given free-will situations is the result of nature randomness, observed everywhere in nature, or due to existence of individual free-will.

In short: The claim that human beings have free-will is not scientific, not falsifiable. We need to regress back to the decision-point and select a different path on the flowchart, which lands us at the next filter.

2. Faith?

This question relates to a single issue (for members of the monotheistic faiths):

Do you believe in God?

If positive, do you believe in the Divine source of the Bible, and consequently, in the truth of the Bible?

If the answer is again yes, then we have to decide that human beings do have free-will, as individuals, because this is a theme asserted endlessly in the Bible (refer to two quotes, from Torah and the prophets, in a most recent post, [here](#)). This ends our journey — Yes, there is free-will because that is what the Bible preaches, in all forms and shapes, and we believe in the Divine source of the Bible.

If we are non-believers, or agnostic — we need again to regress to the most recent decision-point, choose another path that leads us to the last filter.

3. Optimization?

Many free-will situations are not really what they look like. Often, these are just optimization situations, ego-centred decision scenarios, where the ego attempts to optimize the outcome of its decision. For example, what would I gain and lose from pursuing this path and not another? We then choose the optimal path for which the net gain is maximal. This scenario is typical to most decision scenarios we encounter in everyday life. Therefore, one cannot say that the situations, where the ego optimizes its response, are indeed free-will situations. They are merely optimization scenarios, the simplest of which can be answered by a computer (refer to an earlier post, discussing these points more extensively, [here](#)).

What then characterizes free-will situations?

These are decision-points in life, where we can act, on ethical grounds, against our ego and our best interest, to achieve ethical goals that do not necessarily benefit us.

Examples:

- Risking one's life in battle to rescue fellow soldier;
- Persisting in resuscitating a patient, undergoing heart failure, even though an acceptable standard for exercising such effort has long-ago been surpassed;
- Sharing food with fellow human beings in conditions of extreme food scarcity;
- Ego-free donation.

All these scenarios, few drops in an ocean of possible scenarios that one may conceive of, demonstrate exercising ego-free free-will decisions, based on ethical principles, even when these may go against self-interest and self-preservation. An old Jewish idiom comes to mind (in the *original* language of Chazal, tractate *Avot* 4:1):

“Who is a hero? — Him, who overcomes his desire”.

(Tractate *Avot*, or *Pirkei Avot*, “Ethics of the Fathers”, is a tractate of the *Mishna*, part of Talmud, which details Torah's views on ethics and interpersonal relationships; A modern day PC translation would probably read: “Who is a hero? — Him/her, who overcomes her/his desire”.)

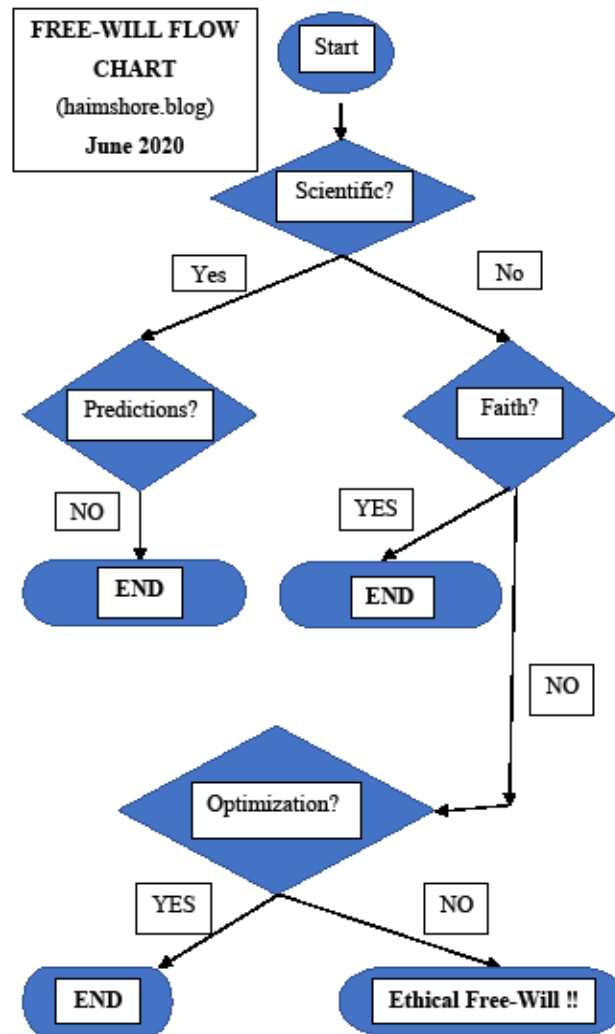
This end-point in our journey teaches us a powerful lesson:

We are not born natural free-will individuals.

We have to work on it, nourish it, grow it throughout our lives, in order to free ourselves of the suffocating grip of the ego, to subdue it to ethical moral principles.

Only then — may we exercise ethical principles and ethical judgement in our conduct, in our negotiations with fellow human beings, capable of converting optimization decisions (ego-centred decisions) into free-will decisions.

Then, and only then, do we become liberated free individuals, capable of exercising free-will out of free-will decisions.



The True Significance of the New Mass-Media Model

Posted April 16, 2019

In the good olden days, the cost for bringing “Reality” into our living room via mass-media news outlets fell mostly on government and partially on the consumer. Not anymore. The model for delivering news to the customer has fundamentally changed; And a new mass-media model has emerged that has devastating effect on individuals and society, such that most of us most probably are not aware of.

News communication has technologically progressed through time — from radio (and newspapers) to television, to cable and satellite and finally to Internet. As news communication changed its face technologically, another fundamental change has taken place — the consumer ceased to be the main source of revenue for the operation of mass-media news providers. A new model was born — news channels provide content free-of-charge, and advertisement fills the void created by the removal of the traditional major sources supporting operation of mass-media news outlets.

This change, conveying “Reality” to the consumer mixed with ads, has since its inception been exercising devastating effect on how we perceive reality. Suddenly **Reality**, as reflected to us from the screen (or from the newspaper), is no longer “pure reality”. Instead, it is delivered to us in a mixed form — **Reality** combined with **Temptation**, facts of life coloured by constant seduction to consume products and services.

What does this unholy marriage of reality and temptation do to our psyche?

Reality and **Temptation** are addressed by two different parts of our psyche: **I** and **Ego** (respectively). Once the **formers** are mixed on the screen, blurred beyond distinction (where reality becomes temptation and temptation reality), the **latter** become confused — “I” and “Ego” are inter-mixed, subconsciously no longer able to discern clearly which is which. This causes **I** to lose its grip on reality, and its control over **Ego** to be weakened, resulting in devastating consequences to us both as individuals and as members of a civilized society.

I discuss “Ego” and “I”, their inter-relationship and how that affects our ability to exercise free-will, elsewhere on this blog. Let me summarize here succinctly: The “I” mediate between us and reality. It is the ultimate decision-maker within us that allows free-will choices, some of moral and ethical nature, at times going even against our own self-interest, as embodied by the “Ego”. Conversely, the latter is that part of our psyche striving for self-preservation. It does so via various egocentric feelings (like hate, pride, anger, aggression, envy and desire), leading to egocentric actions (like chasing money), ultimately resulting in egocentric outcomes that satisfy ego’s needs (physical needs, like hunger or sex, psychological needs, like the need for security via accumulating property, or social needs, like needs of social benefits or positions of power and control).

What happens to us when **reality** and **temptation**, as reflected from the screen, are mixed together so that psychologically distinguishing between them, as we “consume” content delivered by news outlets, becomes ever harder and harder?

A major outcome is that no longer are we able to observe reality clearly and objectively, discerning where reality ends and temptation begins. We start to experience a distorted reality — “Reality” becomes a gigantic seduction. The ultimate decision-maker, “I”, loses its ability to make decisions out of free-will, based on humanistic principles that may be at odds with the “Ego”. “I” no longer control “Ego”, to the contrary, it becomes subjugated to “Ego”. A distorted artificial reality forms — “Taking” and “Consuming” become the dominant motivating forces in how we conduct our life and in how we perceive reality and our life within it. Free-will is extinguished and becomes irrelevant. “Optimization” becomes our sole *modus operandi*.

But mistaking **Reality** for **Seduction** and **Temptation** has a greater, more devastating outcome. Weakening of control of “I” over “Ego” increases rates of crime and severity of crime (like mass shooting). When reality is no longer perceived as ruled by ethical principles and humanistic or religious believes (when

“I” dominates) and only experienced as temptation and seduction — egocentric sentiments become sole players in our psyche. Thus, when we are angry all else vanish from the conscious mind. Anger then becomes a dominant presence in our conscious world, unchallenged by other emotions or considerations. Mass-shooting then becomes a highly likely occurrence.

To avoid this confusion, caused by ads bombarding our psyche as-nauseum, certain “arrangements” are sometimes being installed and practiced. In my home country (Israel), advertisement is barred on certain days of the year, either by state law or by free choice. On Memorial Day, dedicated to remembering the Fallen of Israel (in wars or in terrorist actions), mass-media channels do not deliver ads. The people of Israel then gain the opportunity to solely focus on the reality in which Israel exists, remembering the painful price we had to pay for its survival and for our liberty. On Shabbat (the Jewish holy day of the week), at least one channel in Israel has minimized ads, letting non-religious listeners enjoy Shabbat free of seduction and consumerism.

In Western democracies, current state law and regulation do not acknowledge the correlation between excessive advertisement and increased crime. Therefore, no restrictions are placed on advertisement agencies and on mass-media news outlets to limit the damage they cause to the conscious world of individuals and to society at large.

Perhaps it is high time this had changed.

Comment: This post is also on [The Times of Israel](#).

Free will?? — Only when the “Ego” is subjugated to “I”

Posted March 22, 2019

“Free will” is an essential component of our lives as humans. It refers to common decision scenarios, when we confront multiple choices and one has to be selected. A philosophical question then often arises:

Are we, human beings, free to make our own choices, out of free will? Or are we always just “optimizing”, selecting that which is, or seems to be, best for us?

What is the difference between free-will choice and “optimization”?? And how are these related to two major components of our psyche — “Ego” and “I”?

Observing and studying the centuries-old debate for and against “free will”, one realizes that participants to this debate often do not grasp the true nature of free-will. Once this is cleared and clarified (by answering the above questions), the debate of whether free will exists largely becomes irrelevant and redundant.

What is “optimizing”?

An “Optimization decision” scenario occurs when all factors that may affect our decision are external to our **free** will and independent of it (or optimization, which always aims to benefit the ego and its needs, could not have taken place). Our behaviour in such decision scenarios is therefore purely deterministic, devoid of free will; In fact, a robot, fed with the correct data, could have made the decision for us, possibly even better than we do (since a robot expectedly does not commit errors).

What, then, is the essential ingredient that renders a choice situation from one of optimizing to an exercise of free-will?

The answer is simple:

A “free-will” scenario is one where our ego is made irrelevant to the choice we make.

In other words, in a “free will” scenario, created out of our own free will, all factors affecting our decision are within us, under our control, subject to the ultimate decision-maker within our psyche, the “I” (not the ego).

What differentiate the “I” from the “Ego”?

The “I”, exercising free will, may decide on giving; The ego, by its very nature, decides only on “taking” (**NEVER** on giving).

This is perhaps why Jewish prophets so often refer to the Divine as the ultimate embodiment of “I”. Here is prophet Isaiah:

“**I am I am** Jehovah and besides me there is no deliverer” (Isaiah 43:11); “**..I am** the first, and **I am** the last, and besides me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6); “**..I am** He, **I am** the first, **I am** also the last... (Isaiah 48:12); “**I I** have spoken, Indeed **I** have called him, **I** have brought him, and he shall succeed in his way” (Isaiah 48:15).

And this is the ingredient by which to judge whether a choice scenario is a “free will” one:

A free-will scenario always contains a moral and ethical element — Will we act against our own interest, against our own ego, to benefit others? Will we decide to give instead of take? Will we decide to love (give) instead of hate?

Or, in the *original* language of Chazal (tractate *Avot* 4:1):

“Who is a hero? — Him, who overcomes his desire”.

(Tractate *Avot*, or *Pirkei Avot*, “Ethics of the Fathers”, is a tractate of the *Mishnah* that details Torah’s views on ethics and interpersonal relationships; A modern day PC translation would probably read: “Who is a hero? — Him/her, who overcomes her/his desire”.)

Given these perspectives regarding “free will” and its relationship to the two main ingredients of our soul, the “Ego” and the “I”, a powerful lesson may be learned:

Qualifying a decision scenario as free-will (“I”-related), and acquiring the necessary sensitivity to distinguish it from an “optimization” decision (ego-cantered one) — these are first essential steps towards genuine personal growth, moral development and personal maturing.

Personal Rebellion — The Act of Rebalancing “Judge” and “King”

Posted July 29, 2018

Personal rebellion is an attempt of the ego to destabilize current balance between “Judge” and “King”, or to restore a former balance that has been violated. The two basic concepts, “Judge” and “King”, essential for explaining and understanding personal rebellion, have been discussed earlier (“[Judge and King](#)”). We succinctly summarize them here:

- An “Ego-Judge” submits to “Law” and ensures that all that the ego desires conforms to that law. The source of the law may differ: It might be an authority to which the ego submits— **internal** (like the super-ego, a Freudian concept); **internalized** authorities (like parents) or **close-external** ones (like teachers); Or the “Law” might emanate from external sources altogether, **distant-external**, like an adopted ideology (Communism, Fascism), a cherished conception embodied by a public movement (Feminism, Liberalism) or religion;
- An “Ego-King” does whatever the heart desires, free from any restrictive “Law”.

The struggle between “Ego-Judge” and “Ego-King” is an ongoing struggle that is waged within each of us from cradle to deathbed. At times, this struggle finds expression in an open personal rebellion (like addiction or suicide); At other times, it assumes the form of a public movement that its sole purpose, whether publicly confessed or otherwise, is the breakdown of an existing social order. Typical examples from the past are the Russian revolution of 1917, various youth movements of the sixties and the seventies of the previous century (like the bitniks, the hippies) up to current ongoing popular trends striving for breakdown of the traditional social order in modern-day freedom-saturated Western democracies. Some of these movements for breakdown of current social order were fully justified (judged from human-rights perspective), and they aimed at restoring freedom and equality where these were in scarce supply (like the Russian Revolution).

But not all fall under this category. Some of current day social movements have been initiated in the name of noble and socially desirable ideals, like “Freedom” and “Equality”, while masquerading the real struggle, namely, the desire of “Ego-King” to get loose of the suffocating grip of “Ego-Judge”, grip embodied by time-honoured human-nature compatible social norms.

The Bible is not ignorant to this constant struggle of human life, waged between Judge and King. And it delivers multiple stories of personal rebellion that ultimately resulted in a public rebellion, having as its sole objective indeed rebellion against the ultimate source of morality, the ultimate Judge (“Would not the Judge of all the earth do justice?”, Gen. 18:25).

The first personal rebellion in the Bible is obviously the story of Adam and Eve and eating of the forbidden fruit. The Bible does not spare words to convince the reader that the “forbidden fruit” (“The apple”) is a highly desirable object for “Ego-King” to satisfy its senses and its desires:

“And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating, and that it was a desire for the eye and the tree was desirable to wise up...” (Genesis 3:6).

So why is the “forbidden fruit” forbidden by the Creator?

The Torah teaches us two powerful lessons:

- First, that not all that is desired is allowed — Some physically desirable may harm you spiritually, and ultimately also physically;
- Secondly, as consuming gas is not the purpose of driving a car, fulfilling desires (of “Ego-King”) is not the purpose of driving your life. There is a more sublime purpose to why we have “descended” unto

Earth and why we live. And each of us needs to work out that purpose and fulfil it throughout our own individual life.

The second personal rebellion is the story of the corrupt people living in “the land of Shinar” (Genesis 11:2), ruled by king *Nimrod* (in Hebrew, literally, “Let us rebel”):

“And they said, Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven” (Genesis 11:4). In other words, let us build the Tower of Babel so that we may wage war against the Creator at his own place (“heaven”).

A third example of personal rebellion, perhaps the most bizarre that has wide-range implications to our times, is the unfolding story of a bizarre idolatry, where instead of honouring and respecting the object of worship (the idol), the most despicable and derogatory acts (to the subject of worship) are being committed. This is breaking social order at the extreme, where not adhering to traditional widely acceptable social norms becomes the norm. And that norm becomes cornerstone to a new type of worship: The worshipper commits insulting derogatory offenses against the subject of worship (the idol).

That story, not so well known as the former two, is the story of *Baal-Peor*. The latter was one of the Idols of Moab and historic sources about this idol can easily be traced by a simple Internet search. The story of the encounter of the ancient Israelites with *Baal-Peor*, on their way to the Promised Land, and how they were “punished” for their serious aberration from worshipping Jehovah God, is unfolding in Numbers (25).

We concentrate here on the special extraordinary attributes of the worship of this idol and how they are relevant to today’s “modern” idols. The biblical Hebrew root of *Peor* is P.A.R, meaning to open (the mouth; for example, Isaiah 5:14, Job 29:23). This implies that *Baal-Peor* may be translated “The Lord of the Opening”. Talmudic sources extend “opening” to any opening in the body, namely, also exposure and excrement. Jewish tradition has it that the worship of *Baal-Peor* consisted mainly in getting near to the idol and then exposing the behind and excreting bodily faeces (feces in US spelling). Those extremely devout made the point clearer by spreading the waste matter over the idol’s body. One wonders:

- What kind of worship is this (even for idol worshiping), when you do your utmost to so extremely offend the object of worship?
- What kind of worship is this when you do your utmost to break down the most basic widely acceptable social norms, those that enabled the very existence of civilized societies for generations?

Obviously, there is some fundamental psychological need to revoke another, different, balance between “Judge” and “King”. If “Ego-Judge”, imprinted on us during upbringing, mandates that exposing your behind (or worse) in public is socially non-permissible, then me, “Ego-King”, would do the opposite, thereby tearing apart the irritating and suffocating shackles society puts on my hands, me, “Ego-King”. Worshipping *Baal-Peor* thus become worshipping of “Ego-King”, worshipping rebellion against society and its time-proven norms.

An extreme attempt to revoke a different balance between “Judge” and “King” has never been clearer!

Alas, this is not merely a biblical story. In front of our very eyes, we witness today the same cultural process of worshipping *Baal-Peor*, the tearing down of social norms that allowed society its very existence, acceptable to society since eternity, all in the name of a single modern “Ego-King Idol” — “Equality”, originally a noble ideal, now distorted beyond recognition.

Me, born and brought up in this country that I love (Israel), look with horror and great sorrow at what transpires in this country; At how the Jewish State slowly descends into a universalist state, devoid of Jewish norms, deprived of Jewish tradition, all with the incredible push of minority “elites”, who supposedly are speaking in the name of “modernity” and “progress” and “human rights”, but really advancing imported ideas and ideals alien to Judaism since its very roots were seeded, over three thousand years ago; Minority “elites” who live in the Jewish State but, in their heart of hearts, wished they were born elsewhere and lived elsewhere.

“Anger”— Best Opportunity for Transition from “Ego-Other” to “Non-Ego Other”; from “I-It” to “I-Thou”

Posted March 9, 2017

Introspection of what is taking place within us, as we become angry with someone we care about, delivers best possible opportunity to move from perceiving others as “Ego-Other” to a corrected perception as “Non-Ego Other”.

Some terms in the opening paragraph needs explanation and for that I relate to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965), whose philosophy revolves around two fundamental concepts describing how one may relate to all that surround him/her: “You” (*Ata/At*) and “That One” (*Ha-Laz*); Or, in Buber’s terminology, two types of relationships between “I” and the external world:

“I-Thou” and “I-It”.

Since my twin concepts, “Ego-Other” and “Non-Ego Other”, somewhat overlap with those of Buber, I would first explain the two pairs of concepts and then relate to how extremely instrumental they are regarding *Tikun* (“Correction”), achievable when we become angry with someone we care about; And then, by extension, the *Tikun* that may prevail in all of our relations with other human beings, including perhaps even those that we “do not so much care about”, namely, total strangers.

Buber distinguishes between two modes of relating to the world around us — “You” and “That One” (in Buber’s parlance, “Thou” and “It”), and he had repeated this distinction on numerous occasions. To understand it more deeply perhaps it is best to quote from [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resource\)](#):

Martin Buber “is best known for his 1923 book, *Ich und Du* (I and Thou), which distinguishes between “I-Thou” and “I-It” modes of existence...In his later essays, he defines man as the being who faces an “other” and constructs a world from the dual acts of distancing and relating.” Buber’s philosophy “is based on a distinction between two word-pairs that designate two basic modes of existence: “I-Thou” (*Ich-Du*) and “I-It” (*Ich-Es*). The “I-Thou” relation is the pure encounter of one’s whole unique entity with another in such a way that the other is known without being subsumed under a universal. Not yet subject to classification or limitation, the “Thou” is not reducible to spatial or temporal characteristics. In contrast to this, the “I-It” relation is driven by categories of “same” and “different” and focuses on universal definition. An “I-It” relation experiences a detached thing, fixed in space and time, while an “I-Thou” relation participates in the dynamic, living process of an “other”... Buber characterizes “I-Thou” relations as “dialogical” and “I-It” relations as “monological.” In his 1929 essay “Dialogue,” Buber explains that monologue is not just a turning away from the other but also a turning back on oneself (*Rückbiegung*). To perceive the other as an “It” is to take others as classified and hence predictable and manipulable, objects that exist only as part of one’s own experiences. In contrast, in an “I-Thou” relation both participants exist as polarities of relation, whose center lies in the between (*Zwischen*).”

The concept of the dual relations, “I-Thou” versus “I-It”, is not much different from the dual concept introduced by me in explaining the underlying [Five Principles of the Ten Commandments](#): A “Non-Ego Other” and an “Ego-Other”. Therein I wrote, explaining the meaning of these complementary terms (as used throughout the post):

“To understand the concept of “Non-Ego Other”, it is perhaps best to define the opposite. An “Ego other” is a human being whom one considers an extension of his/her own ego. The epitome for an “Ego other” is a

slave. However, “Ego other” may appear in more obscure forms, where the potential exists, like a personal assistant, a subordinate (at work), one’s own child or a spouse. All forms of “Ego other” are morally wrong.”

To merge together the above two definitions of the dual-relation that exists in all forms of our relating to the outside world (human beings included), we summarize it as follows:

- One may relate to another human being as equal to one’s own self. In that case, you perceive the other as whole human being, “Thou” or “Non-Ego Other”, who is deserving of all privileges deemed as inalienable rights to your own self. Two chief consequences of that relationship are “Love thy neighbor as yourself” and “Do not do unto others that which is hateful to you”;
- Or one may alternatively relate to another human being as extension of the ego in the sense that, as we use our hands and legs and voice and other parts of the body to achieve various goals that satisfy the ego, we likewise use other human beings for same purpose. The “Ego-Other” then becomes part of the inventory of means and ways available to the ego to achieve its goals. In that relationship, the “I” is detached from “You”, who then becomes “It”; And the “Non-Ego Other” becomes an “Ego-Other”.

The best time to witness the two relations co-exist, co-habituate though in the process of replacing one by the other, is when we become angry with one we care about. This is the best time, indeed an opportunity, to realize the difference between “You” and “It”, “Non-Ego Other” vs. “Ego-Other”, so that we may practice, from within ourselves, to eliminate, in each pair, the latter for the former.

What happens to us when we become angry with someone we care about?

First: Detachment. We emotionally detach ourselves from our partner to an “I-You” dialogue so that a replacement, an “I-It” monologue, takes its place. Once detachment is achieved, a process characteristic to “I-It” relation starts: We label, we classify, we become alienated from the “It” while comparing it to other “It”s, and we start considering means and ways to achieve the ego’s objectives against the one who, just a moment prior, has served as “You” in an “I-You” dialogue. The partner to that dialogue, the former “Non-Ego Other”, suddenly becomes an “Ego-Other”, a subject to the ego’s desires through which to achieve its goals (probably of an aggressive nature).

Needless to assert, once again, that a *Tikun* starts to take place when we eliminate from our inventory of modes of relating to others the “You-It” relationship, the “Ego-Other” perception of our partner to communication and the subject to our responses; And the *Tikun* is completed once we revoke “I-You” relations with all living entities surrounding us so that only “I-You” relation exists; and only a “Non-Ego Other” is experienced by us in relating to others, and in determining our responses to all forms of communication received by us.

Experiencing the transformation that takes place within ourselves as we transition from a state of “I-You” to a state of “I-It”, from feeling equal to **the*** “Non-Ego Other” to experiencing the other as **an*** “Ego Other” (a legitimate target for the ego’s goals), this experience constitutes best opportunity for a personal transformation.

And that transformation may be achieved when, and if, we witness with wide-open eyes the two sorts of relations, the “I-Thou” and the “I-It”, as within ourselves the latter suddenly start taking over, replacing the former, when we suddenly become angry.

* I once witnessed, on TV, a British officer, on duty, talking about **the** wife at home and **my** car...

“Desert” as Epitome for a Potential Culture of Hatred

Posted February 3, 2017

The ego operates in two modes:

- **Expressing** free will (with all its varieties);
- **Realizing** (implementing) free will.

Among others, emotions are an expression of free will. Having the potential to control our emotions by struggling with them and possibly modify them, emotions are part and parcel of the repository of modes by which free will expresses itself.

Two potentially devastating expressions of free will are **hatred** and **anger**.

Where do they originate?

Anger has been the subject of much discourse in Jewish and non-Jewish scholarship (within science or otherwise), and it seems to be generally accepted that anger is the ego’s major response to blocking/ignoring free will in its two modes of operandi:

When the ego is obstructed in **expressing** its free will, either by threat of severe penalty or by rejection by fellow human beings. Typical examples are when the ego believes certain knowledge about reality to be true and significant others reject it as false; or when one’s ego, with all varieties of its expressions, is ignored (by display of indifference);

When the ego is obstructed in **accomplishing** its free will, for example, when a certain repair is required (within ourselves or outwardly) and the ego is incapable of accomplishing this repair (*Tikun* in Hebrew).

Controlling pride is conducive to controlling anger.

Where does **hatred** originate?

While hatred obviously may be associated with anger, or follow anger, it is a distinct and separate emotion that may express itself detached from any feeling of anger. To understand hatred, I believe that one needs go no farther than understanding the fundamental meaning of “Desert” as epitome for separation (lack of communication) and the resultant hatred.

Why is “Desert” the epitome for a **potential culture of hatred**?

Living in “Desert” implies living in separate communities, extremely isolated from one another due to harsh nature conditions. In such circumstances, daily communication between communities is rare and hard to come by. This generates a separation between “Us” and “Them”, between “Us” and “Not us” fellow human beings affiliated to “Not us” communities. In an environment of extreme isolation between communities, a sense of suspicion towards the “others”, the “Not us”, is rampant. Lack of daily communication between isolated communities tends to form a natural sense of suspicion and distrust between “Us” and “Them”, a remnant of which we may still see nowadays in the common gesture of hugging each other upon meeting. This gesture, already referred to in Genesis (29:13), originally expressed a fundamental sense of distrust where the hug aimed at finding out whether the seemingly amiable person, who has just arrived to the “Us community”, carried a hidden sword at his back. The hug thus became a sort of ancient extreme vetting, to borrow a modern-day term.

In such an environment of isolation and hostile nature conditions, where lack of daily communication between isolated communities tends to create a culture of suspicion and distrust towards the “Not us”, the path is short to a potential culture of hatred. The ego’s path to acknowledging, being aware of, respecting and

accommodating free-wills of “Not us”, this path is blocked. Lack of daily communication may ultimately lead to unrestrained hatred towards the “Other”, embedded in a potential culture of hatred.

The Hebrew language fully support this interpretation for the source of hatred:

Mount Sinai, where Torah was given to the ancient Israelites, has in Hebrew a connotation of hatred (*Sinab* in Hebrew). This triggered the following assertion by a Jewish rabbi:

“Why Mount Sinai? that this is where hatred descended (unto the world)” (Babylonian *Talmud, Masechet Shabbat*, Ch. 9).

Probably not coincidentally, Hebrew for “Other” (*Acher*) and “Back” (*Achor*), share the same root in Hebrew. Since *Achor* is that part of the body that one can see **only** when the face cannot be seen, the Hebrew language links “back” to “other” and denotes the latter— *Acher*, namely, the one whose “face” (*Panim*, written like *Pnim*, “inside”) cannot be accessed (probably due to lack of communication).

In recent years, communication between human beings, unhindered by “Desert” conditions, has become a major platform for reducing hatred worldwide. One can now more fully appreciate the major shift taking place in human history with the advent of modern day easily accessible personal communication. This development has served to attain a major objective in the evolution of the human species on Earth: Reducing hatred originating in “Desert” due to lack of communication, and allowing fellow human beings accessing each other and consequently acknowledging each other’s own free wills.

Does living in “Desert”, in separation between “we” and “them”, necessarily lead to cultures of hatred, such as currently witnessed in various parts of the world where communities do actually dwell in desert?

Not necessarily. Observe what Rabbi Akiva (50-132) considered as the departure point for studying the whole of Torah: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”, this is the essence of Torah; all else is interpretation”. This culture of love combined with justice and righteousness had originally formed, contrary to human nature, in “Desert” conditions, literally in the desert, in the Sinai desert.

A major and important lesson may be learned:

Communities separated by “Desert” are not doomed to live in a culture of hatred. With today’s available communication, overcoming a culture of hatred and modifying it in a fundamental way is a relatively easily accessible option. Carriers of cultures of hatred, leaders of cultures of hatred, only need to summon up their free will to apply the much-needed transformation so that “Desert”, as a way of living, may once and for all be eradicated from the face of the earth.

“Opening Hours” — In Israel and Abroad

Posted January 1, 2017

“Opening Hours”, when we, Israelis, are getting service, is a phenomenon unique to the Start-up Nation, not to be seen or heard-of anywhere else in the world.

To realize the existence of this unique phenomenon, we have assembled in this post examples of opening-hours in the USA and in England and then display, for comparison purposes, some examples from Israel. All data appearing in this post are net-based.

Accordingly, the post is divided into three parts: Examples from outside Israel (“The World”), examples from Israel and conclusions.

We emphasize that this post does not intend to slander Israel but rather shed light on an issue that needs drawing attention to and correcting (as I describe at the concluding paragraphs).

1. “The World” (Mon-Fri, always uniform):

USA (Generally): Monday through Friday — 9.00-17.00

Examples:

- **Bank of America** (<https://locators.bankofamerica.com/ca/losangeles/>):
Mon-Fri: 9:00am-6:00pm; Saturday: 10:00am-2:00pm; Sunday: Closed.
* **Florida Government** (Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles;
<https://www.flhsmv.gov/locations/gadsden/>); **Mon-Fri: 8:00am-5:00pm**
- **US Post Office** (<https://www.hoursinfo.com/us-post-office/brooklyn/4844522/>): **Mon-Fri: 9:00am-5:00pm.**

ENGLAND (Generally): Monday through Friday — 9.00-17.00

Examples:

- **U.K. Post Office**
(http://www.londontown.com/LondonInformation/Useful_Numbers/Post_Office/3dae/opening-times): **Mon-Fri: 9am-5.30pm**; Sat: 9am-1pm;
- **HSBC** (Bank <http://www.thewatergardensharlow.com/stores/hsbc.aspx>): **Mon-Fri: 9:00am-5:00pm**;
Sat: 9.00am-2.00pm; Sun: Closed. (Tues, starts at 9.30 am).
* **National Insurance** (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>): **Mon-Fri: 8.00am-6.00pm.**

2. ISRAEL

- **Post Office:**
 - * **Beer-Sheva (branch 271):** Sun, Mon, Wed, Thu: 8.30-14.00, 16.00-18.00; Tue: 8.30-14.00; Fri: 8.30-12.30
 - * **Haifa (713):** Sun, Thu: 8.00-12.30, 15.30-18.00; Mon, Wed: 8.00-12.30, 15.30-20.00; Tue, Fri: 8.00-12.00
 - * **Raanana (695):** Sun, Tue, Thu: 8.00-20.00; Mon, Wed: 8.00-13.30; Fri: 8.00-12.00.
- **Israel Electric Corporation:** Sun-Thu: 7.30-14.30; Fri-Sat: Closed.
- **National Insurance (*Bituach Leumi*; “All” relates to service dealing with all subjects; “Some” relates to a partial list of some subjects):**
 - * **Ashdod:** Sun, Tue, Thu: 8.00-12.30 (All); Mon, Wed: 15.00-17.00 (some)
 - * **Jerusalem:** Sun, Tue, Thu: 8.00-12.30 (Some1); Mon: 15.00-17.00 (Some2)
 - * **Karmiel:** Sun: 8.00-12.30 (Some1); Sun, Tue, Thu: 8.00-12.30 (Some2); Mon, Wed: 15.00-17.00 (Some3)

- **Discount (Bank):**

- * **Netanya (branch 156):** Mon, Thu: 8.30-13.00, 16.00-18.30; Tue, Wed: 8.30-14.00; Fri: 8.30-12.30, Sun: Closed

- * **Jerusalem (321):** Sun: 8.30-13.00; Mon, Thu: 8.30-13.00, 16.00-18.30; Tue, Wed: 8.30-14.00; Fri: Closed

- * **Leumi (Bank):**

- * **Eilat (999):** Sun: 8.30-13.45; Mon, Thu: 8.30-13.00, 16.00-18.15; Tue, Wed: 8.30-13.45; Fri: Closed

- * **Tiberias (970):** Sun: 8.30-14.00; Mon, Thu: 8.30-13.00, 16.00-18.15; Tue, Wed: 8.30-14.00; Fri: Closed

The list of this insane mish-mash of public-serving opening hours **across** institutions, but unbelievably also **within**, can go on and on...

Hello Israeli parliamentarians, hello senior managers: Are you listening?

To the pain and irritation, waste of time and energy that this mish-mash is causing the Israeli public, in general, but, more importantly, to numerous individuals not savvy in surfing the net, who reach public-serving offices, hoping to get service only to find closed doors;

Are you at all listening??

Fog Over Israel — World Disconnected (?)

Posted December 24, 2016

Comment: This post had been **written** some time before the recent UN Security Council resolution that renders “Israeli settlements” in Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem illegal. The resolution makes this post more relevant than ever. In this post, I deliver a broader biblical perspective on why the Jewish State is (still) being continuously monitored by “the world”, notwithstanding the mayhem all around.

The post had been **published** in The Times of Israel prior to recent UN resolution. It is linked here: [Fog Over Israel- World Disconnected \(?\)](#).

The British phrase “Fog in Channel — Continent Cut Off” is well known though its true source, whether in WWII or earlier or later, is obscure (as I have learned from a simple search on the net). This decades-old phrase had been source for much ridicule in the British Isles, more so since some local residents in the then decaying British Empire failed to understand what was so extremely disproportional about this statement, perhaps some not understanding to this day (Brexit...).

I am occasionally reminded of this joke when I consider how the world is continuously monitoring, with a magnifying glass, the Jewish state even in these harsh times in the Middle East.

Why does the world decline to **disengage** from Israel even now, when **fog** engulfs us all around?

Why does the world not allow itself even a short moment of pause from that annoying constant monitoring of the micro-management of the Jewish state?

How is it that even now the world does not turn **all** of its attention to where it is crucially needed, where people are daily massacred, and instead continues to continuously look for minor departures from acceptable standards supposedly taking place in Israel, deviations that pale by comparison?

Before addressing these questions, let us be clear: Claims leveled at Israel worldwide are basically claims for immorality, namely, for not abiding by the Ten Commandments (and derivatives). The claims may outwardly and superficially appear to be of different varieties, like breaking international law, violating human rights or not pursuing decisions rendered by the assembly of nations (supposedly represented by the UN and its various branches). Yet in essence, at their roots, all claims are of same ilk, boiling down to a single reproach:

Why you, the Jews, do not meticulously abide by the Ten Commandments, as you have been preaching to the world for millennia?

The world’s “zero tolerance” to any deviation of the Jewish State from the Ten Commandments (and its moral-related derivatives, as expounded in the Torah and later expanded by Jewish prophets and in Jewish scholarship), has always been for me personally both a source of annoyance and irritation and at the same time also source for hope and optimism.

Let us first address the former. The harsh and constant criticism of Israel is for me, a local inhabitant who has been living in this country since birth, mostly baseless. Not that all that Israel does is right; but the truth is that most of what Israel does is right. And the sense one gets living here is that of constant striving to be a moral nation, striving that is more alive and kicking here than in most other nations of the world. This is particularly extraordinary given that Israel is required to face a disproportional share (relative to other nations) of moral issues, forced on it by its unique circumstance as a state established to absorb people returning to their ancestral homeland after being absent from it for two millennia. This unique circumstance poses non-routine moral issues to political and military decision-makers, pertaining to Jews and non-Jews alike (like the uprooting of Jewish families from the Gaza Strip in August of 2005). And these moral issues have to be struggled with on the backdrop of a hateful environment, consisting of non-sympathetic neighbors that for over a century now daily challenge Israel’s very existence and very right to exist. A direct consequence of the

hateful environment in which Israel exists occasionally causes security needs and human rights to be incompatible with one another, something that a non-resident of this country, monitoring Israel from afar, often fails to understand.

So why is Israel so exceptionally singled out of all nations, even today, and why does the world fail to “disconnect” even when fog is all around us?

Here comes my sense of hope and optimism, particularly for us in Israel, who are at present witnessing firsthand, with a growing degree of apprehension, the growing fog assembling on all of our borders.

Singling out Israel as an object for continuous monitoring and criticism by the world is nothing new. In fact, it had been prophesized long ago by prophet Zechariah (believed to have been prophesizing at the end of the sixth century BCE, at the time of building of the second temple):

“Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of poison for all nations around it...and on that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome rock for all the nations; all that burden themselves with it will surely be injured...” (Zechariah 12:2-3).

If this vision of the prophet is unfolding in front of our very eyes, when Israel, with Jerusalem under Jewish rule, has become a “burdensome rock” to incessantly engage the world, perhaps some other prophecies, predicting a more hopeful and tranquil future, may also come to pass in front of our very eyes:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of Jehovah’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all the peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go, saying; “Let us go and come up to Jehovah’s Mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths...; they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they train for war anymore” (Isaiah 2: 2-4).

Given the dark clouds assembling in the Middle East, with “the world” still unwilling to let go of constant monitoring and harsh criticism of Israel, perhaps this prophecy may serve as some source for comfort, hope and optimism.

Let it be.

* A widely-known joke about British males is that when British husbands relate to their wives they would utter “The wife”, but otherwise it is “My car”. An excellent opportunity for *Tikun*...

I do not take responsibility for the authenticity and truth of that joke. However, I can personally bear witness for some grain of truth in it as I once realized, watching on TV an interview with a Royal Navy officer, serving far away from home, asked what he missed most...

* Link to this post on The Times of Israel:

[Fog Over Israel — World Disconnected \(?\) |The Blogs \(timesofisrael.com\)](https://www.timesofisrael.com/fog-over-israel-world-disconnected-2/)

“Judge” and “King” — “Submission” vs. “Liberty”; “Nature” vs. “Randomness”; “Law” vs. “Free-will”

Posted September 18, 2016

Judge and **King** are two precepts that define in a fundamental way two extreme states of the human condition:

- **Judge** has no free-will of its own. All it does is comparing its experience (internal and external) to a pre-specified set of standards and according to the observed degree-of-compliance determines appropriate punishment;
- **King** is free-will bounded by no law and nobody.

Judge, devoid of free will, believes that source of morality is exclusively external, originating in the Divine (or any recognized/adopted historic authority). Individual human intelligence, wisdom and experience have no part in formulating precepts of morality. **King**, devoid of faith in any external authority that would limit its liberty, believes that the sole source of morality is humankind, more specifically, human beings exercising their free-will, their wisdom and good judgment.

Judge imposes structure, defines “identity”; **King** strives to express its will within the confines of that identity.

Human history is permeated by constant struggle between the two extreme states.

Examples for “Judge” are “ideologies” that have attempted, throughout history, to repress free-will of individuals and nations and subjugate them to the “ideology”.

Examples:

- Religions’ regimes, imposed by ruling establishments like the inquisition in Spain of the Middle-Ages;
- Twentieth-century political ideologies that sought no compromise with individual freedoms, like Communism and Nazism;
- Present-day extreme forms of Islam (“Submission” in Arabic).
- Example for “King” is present-day Liberal Democracies of Western Civilization, holding dear that one is free to do whatever one’s heart desires (“King”) so long as it harms none (a little taste of “Judge”).

The struggle between “Judge” and “King” permeates every aspect of our lives:

- We experience the restrictive “Law-of-Nature” (“Judge”), which punishes for violations; But we also experience randomness (source for “King”), where we may exercise unhindered our free-will;
- We experience the restrictive state’s regulations and laws (“Judge”); But we also experience (in democracies) areas where state law does not apply so that “King” can reign supreme;

From within we are both a “Judge”, judging ourselves and others according to a set of standards that we pursue (partly unconsciously); But we are also “King”, expressing our own free-will and desires, occasionally allowing others exercise the same...

The Torah is well aware that “Judge” and “King” need to co-exist so that they accommodate one another to bring about a blessed compromise. Being well aware that leaving any out would result in catastrophic extremism, the Torah specifies in painstaking detail the system-of-law, judges and officers, that the Children of Israel should have but hurriedly specifies, in a balancing act, that a king is also needed:

“Judges and officers shall thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God gives thee throughout thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment...” (Deuteronomy 16:18);

Immediately thereafter (Deuteronomy 17:15):

“...thou may appoint a king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose...”.

An excellent talk (in Hebrew) about the distinction between “Judge” and “King” and its implications and ramifications is Rabbi Haim Dynovisz: [“Judge” and “King” by Rabbi Haim Dynovisz .](#)

The struggle between “Judge” and “King” has reached mammoth proportions in recent decades, resulting in ISIS (the “Judge”), on the one hand, and projection of the rainbow colors onto the White House (the “King”), on the other hand.

Will 3rd World War be waged between the ultimate “Judge” and the ultimate “King”??

“Equality”— the Sacred Cow that Distorts Observed Reality

Posted August 16, 2015

“Equality”, an ancient Jewish value that has of late been “imported” back to the Jewish state in a distorted, largely reformed and deformed form, has since wreaked havoc on our ability to view reality as it is and to arrive at balanced and educated decisions.

In this post, originally posted on The Times of Israel, I deliver three examples and address their implications. A link to the post is:

[Haim Shore “Equality – the Sacred Cow” The Times of Israel August 14 2015](#)

On a single summer morning, as I was watching various channels on television, I realized, once again, the dictatorial power of persuasion of “Equality” and how it has caused us to lose common sense, to distort our view of reality and to ignore other important values.

First, there was a discussion on Fox News of a decision by a governor (I believe it was California) to delete from future state laws and regulations all reference to illegal infiltrators (immigrants) as “aliens”. Of course, this politically-correct decision is on the tail of a long succession of “cleansed” words that used to deliver accurate description of certain categories of people, but in the name of equality had been discarded, thereby preventing us from calling them for what they really are (whether we wish them to be so or not). Thus, a blind person is not really blind but “Sight challenged”; Muslim terrorism in the USA is “Home grown violence” and a disabled person is what? Walk challenged? There is good reason why we call certain categories of people by certain names. These convey to us that which sets these groups of people apart and allow us to deliver unto them custom-made morally-adequate treatment (whether positive or negative).

Furthermore, reality-based names allow us to make decisions compatible with reality, which benefit us all. Profiling at airports, allowed in Israel but not in the USA, generates better security, even though it may offend certain categories of people. If a blind man is not really blind but merely “Sight challenged”, we are psychologically relieved of any moral duty to extend him (or her) a helping hand. After all, we are all challenged in life, are we not?

A second example, the same summer morning, was a discussion in a TV studio regarding a recent supreme-court decision that the detention period of infiltrators (“illegal immigrants”) to this country (Israel) be shortened. The result of this decision was immediate release from custody of hundreds of African illegals into south Tel-Aviv neighbourhood, where local residents (Israeli citizens!!) already suffer unbearable conditions of living, including a high rate of criminal offense.

At the studio were a representative of the local population of the southern suburbs of Tel-Aviv, and opposite her sat an illegal immigrant. Same scenario as described earlier was unfolding: the anchor of the discussion, obviously with good intentions in mind, had suggested that the two sides should respectfully negotiate with one another. Good advice, if it was not again detached from reality, based on a distorted virtual reality that ignored facts and values, except for the omnipotent dictatorial “Equality.”

The truth of the actual reality is that on one side of the table was a woman, whose basic right for security as an Israeli citizen was violated by the supreme-court decision, all in the name of “Equality”; On the other side of the table, an illegal immigrant who had broken the country’s law and instead of being prosecuted and perhaps serving a prison term, was sitting in a respectable Israeli TV studio as “equal”, negotiating and discussing with the local rightful tenant possible justification for the supreme-court decision. “Equality”, once again, caused discarding of basic tenets of fairness and morality and a distorted perception of reality.

A third example of “Equality” reigning supreme is an incident I personally experienced just recently at my home university (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev). A student at an interim examination of a large course (about 120 students), which I delivered last semester (which also happened to be my last), received during the

exam a package of formulae pages, with some pages missing due to an error in assembling the exam's hard copies. Since the first part of the examination consisted of "forced-choice" questions, when formulae were not needed, I made the decision that the student was not harmed by the half-hour delay (in receiving all pages) and, accordingly, refused his request for a certain concession regarding the exam. In response to my decision, the student launched a complaint process, which he was entitled to, and this process passed through various levels in the university hierarchy until it reached the highest level possible, where a certain concession was granted to the student. Complying with this decision, I raised the student's final grade by 2% (!!).

I later thought at length about this incident, and of course immediately it dawned on me how incredible this incident was, considering the numerous man-hours spend by various people at various levels of the university on processing the complaint until a decision was made that resulted in adding two points to the student's grade. It took me a while to realize that again the dictatorial "Equality" played a major role in this incident: Preserving equality between students (the student supposedly had less time to solve questions relative to his friends); Supposed equality between the student and myself, the professor who had delivered the course; and absent equality between me and my colleague, who had decided, against my best judgment, to grant the student a concession (minor as it was).

While equality between students reigned supreme, other "equalities" were distorted or ignored: A virtual equality was formed between me and the student (ignoring my nearly forty years of teaching in academia with hardly any incidents of complaints from students); and the generated inequality between me and the decision-making level of the university (where the final decision was made). Let me emphasize: the student was not harmed by the delay in receiving the missing pages. Yet a remote level at the university, who was not privy to the exam and to the true effect of the delay in providing the missing pages, has decided to change my decision, based on the managerial post that he occupies.

In other words, while I was treated as "equal" with the student I was not equal with the person who finally decided against my best judgment. As with numerous past decisions of the supreme-court, where matters of personal judgment, and at times even matters of taste, are treated and presented as fact-based "scientific" decisions, while in reality they merely reflect the power of the capacity filled by the decision-maker, with "Equality" as the over-riding concern, so here other no less important values had been ignored in the process, like my integrity as a tenured full professor with the specified background. In the name of "Political correctness", equality between students reigned supreme, other values were ignored. (For the record, the colleague who had made the decision is a good friend of mine and continues to be so).

These are only three examples. For those of us, who have not yet completely lost the pragmatism and common-sense characteristic to the founders of Israel, I am sure that numerous other instances, some extremely not politically-correct, may be provided. However, they are not since merely voicing them publicly may generate a good deal of personal unhappiness, given the political correctness of the media.

In conclusion, let me state that the concept of "Equality", though pronounced by a single word, in reality reflects three fundamentally different concepts: The European "Equality", the American "Equality of Opportunity" and the Jewish "Equality". The first two have the following sub-text (assuming moral conduct): "You may pursue whatever you heart desires so long as it does not violate someone else's rights or someone else's opportunity."

This is not the Jewish "Equality". It never was. Jewish "Equality" draws from the Jewish faith that we are all created in the image of God. And the associated sub-text is:

"We are all created equal, in the image of God; Therefore, we cannot do all that our heart desires. Period."

Of late, the Americans have substituted their concept of equality with that of the Europeans. And the Israeli media followed suit, inadvertently risking losing the Jewish character of this country and of some of its rightful owners.

Equality is a sublime value. It should be pursued as much as possible, but no further. Equality is not the only moral value that one needs to adhere to. There are others. "The Law of Return" generates inequality between Israeli citizens, yet it has been pursued to this day because the founding fathers and succeeding Israeli leaders judged that restoration of the Jewish people to its ancestral home land is no less important than equality. The latter should not be ignored, not ever. Yet it should always be integrated in a comprehensive set

of moral values and moral considerations that would lead to an overall morally-correct, realistic and implementable decision; Or else the distorted perception of reality, nowadays a common companion to “Equality,” would keep haunting us and harming us as a nation and as individuals.

Anti-Semitism and “Killing the Messenger”

Posted October 27, 2014

In the summer of 2014 I had experienced, for the third time in my life, a reign of terror coming from the sky as rockets were launched from Gaza onto Israeli civilian population. As in the previous times (during the Six Day war and during the first Gulf war), I was stunned to realize that my main reaction to the sirens yelling of an impending life-threatening danger was not fear. Rather, it was a sense of insult, perhaps indignation: Why would anybody wish to kill me? What did I do wrong? What is wrong with me?

Probing this strange reaction, I have reached the conclusion which forms the premise of this article:

There is no anti-Semitism in the world; there never was. There is only a burning desire to kill the messenger.

And there are peculiar adjustments of the messenger, trying to cope with this desire and escape its devastating psychological effects.

In October of 1892, Asher Tzvi Ginzberg (1856-1927), also known by his pseudonym *Achad-Haam*, published an article in the Hebrew periodical *Hamelitz*. The title of the article was: “Half a Comfort” (*Chatzji Nechamah*). The article was published half a century after the Damascus blood libel, and in it *Achad Haam* tries to extract a useful lesson from the anti-Semitic blood libel (if one can extract one at all). He denotes this lesson: *Chatzji Nechamah*. It may be instructive to re-read a paragraph from this article, where *Achad Haam* refers to the effect that the “General Agreement” (in today’s parlance, the general consensus), emanating from blatant Anti-Semitism, has on the Jewish psyche (translation mine):

“In generations past, when our ancestors believed in the simplicity of *Atah Bechartanu* (“You have chosen us”), vilification by the nations of the world would not have affected the internal purity of their soul. They knew their worth and were not affected...However, in this generation this is not so. Nowadays our “world” has expanded immensely, the European agreement has a strong effect on us in all walks of life...A certain Russian author innocently asked these days: Since the whole world hate the Jews, can we say that the whole world are guilty and the Jews innocent? – and this question makes its way now into the hearts of many of our brethren: Can we say that all those corrupt characteristics and evil deeds that the whole world attributes to the Jews are but a fabrication?”

Later on, *Achad Haam* reaches the main conclusion of his article, the lesson to be extracted from the recent blood-libel (my summary of *Achad Haam* conclusion, not a quote):

“We, as Jews, know that Jews do not use blood to make Matzos for Passover. Therefore, our reaction to the baseless “General Agreement” regarding the blood-libel should be extended to other forms of anti-Semitic vilification. And this, the lesson from the blood-libel, should serve as our *Chatzji Nechamah* while mourning the losses brought about by the blood-libel.”

Regrettably, this lesson is not common nowadays and this is not what we currently witness. A common form of current escape from the unbearable burden of anti-Semitic vilification is to put on a gown of self-righteousness and join the crowd in spitting out venomous judgmental pronouncements against the Jews and against its representative, the State of Israel. This flight-from-guilt allows some of the most blatant current denouncers of Israel and of the Zionist enterprise to come from among our midst. A recent example is a title of a blog posted by an Israeli Rabbi, equating the *Haganah* to *Chamas* (to the small credit of the Rabbi, this equation was not originally his and the title of his blog ended with a question mark). Another example are Israeli youngsters leaving Israel, as if in a state of protestation: “Listen world, we are not part to this country!”

In this article, I offer another *Chatzji Nechamah* (“Half a Comfort”), to complement that of *Achad Haam*: “There is no anti-Semitism; just a burning desire to kill the messenger.” I assume that given the voluminous

literature about anti-Semitism and its roots, probably someone has already come up with this explanation for anti-Semitism. Yet given the growing wave of current anti-Semitism in the world, it might be worth repeating the other half of the “Half a Comfort” in order to introduce to us a clear mirror of the true reality of anti-Semitism and its roots.

Killing a messenger of bad news is not a new practice. It was common among kings and rulers of ancient times. In fact, it already appears in the Bible. When an Amalekite boy breaks the news to David that King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in war, David kills the messenger, obviously offering some rationalization (2 Samuel 1:13-16).

The Jewish people has a message to the world: The Ten Commandments, delivered by the Almighty, and all that this message implies.

By sharp contrast, the politically-correct basic tenet of the modern world, as represented by the West, is: Total Freedom. Freedom to do as the heart desires, so long as it does not hurt your neighbor; And at times – even if it hurts thy neighbor, conditioned on the hurt being consistent with the *supposed* word of God or with some other home-made creeds. The message of the Jewish people is different: there are boundaries to total freedom. And these boundaries are rooted in a message conveyed to the Jewish people by the Creator, commanding them to be His witnesses (Isaiah 43:10,12 ; 44:8), and to pass the message on to the entire assembly of the nations of the world.

This message of the witnesses is unbearable and hard to accept by the recipients. It is inconsistent with today's message of total freedom to such a degree that one feels compelled to react aversely to the messenger in order to be liberated from its *supposedly devastating* implications. Thus, the only remedy to the suffocating feeling brought about by the message is to vilify the messenger, in the best of scenarios, or kill him, in the worst; Or, alternatively, attack the deeds and assassinate the character of the messenger's declared representative among the nations, the State of Israel.

In other words, the other “Half a Comfort”, to complement that of *Achad Haam*, may be paraphrased in the words of the Godfather:

“Do not take it personally; It is not you we are after but the message that you have stubbornly insisted on carrying on and witness over the centuries; The desire to kill you, in short, is strictly business!”

Understanding this lesson is essential. It is essential to the way we perceive ourselves, it is essential to how we define our national identity and it is essential to how we cope with “righteous” demands constantly targeted at the Jewish state. It is particularly essential for minimizing the devastating effects of the bizarre modern-time Jewish anti-Semitism, disguised by home-made self-righteousness, which inflicts so much pain and damage on Jews, in general, and on those of us living here in Israel, in particular.

Morality and the Speed of Light

Posted April 20, 2014

Comment: In this blog entry I explain why I believe that a fundamental property of the fabric of the cosmos, the constancy of the speed of light, is a prerequisite not only for the scientific study of nature but also for the existence of absolute (non-relative) morality. A PDF file is linked below.

[Haim Shore Morality and the Speed of Light April 2014](#)

Cause and effect relationships are cornerstone to the existence of morality. One cannot conceive of morality without a feature common to all philosophies of morality: that moral decisions and subsequent actions have consequences.

In physical terms, we denote these: cause and effect relationships.

This article addresses the following question: If cause-effect relationships are so fundamental to the existence of morality, can one conceive of a scenario, where a cause-effect relationship is viewed differently by two observers? In other words: Can two observers view a certain cause-effect relationship in reverse orders due to their different positions, relative to the two events comprising this relationship?

As an example, suppose that in a planned experiment, two cars are driven into each other (the cause), and the result is two destroyed cars (the effect). Can we conceive of a scenario where an observer sees the destroyed cars prior to seeing the impact that caused the cars' destruction?

If the answer to this question is affirmative, then morality cannot be universal and justice cannot be absolute. And science cannot exist.

In this article we show that due to a fundamental property inherent in the very fabric of the universe, as revealed by science, a scenario where cause-effect relationships are relative (viewed differently by two observers) cannot exist; and therefore we have to conclude that the universe is to be construed as allowing morality to exist and justice to be viewed equally to all.

To understand the argument, let us engage in a thought exercise. An observer stands on the platform in a railway station and is told that two balls will be thrown at her from two moving trains and that the ball that would have arrived first would trigger the throw of the ball, which would have arrived last. Since the observer does not see the actual throwing of the balls we denote measurements of the "arrival times" of the two balls "secondary evidence" (indirect evidence for existence of cause-effect relationship between the throws of the two balls).

Assume that the two trains are moving at a speed of 50 miles per hour (m/h), one approaching the observer on her left and another receding on the right. While both trains are at equal distances from the station, a ball is thrown towards the observer, simultaneously from both trains, at a speed of 100 m/h (relative to the thrower of the ball). The ball thrown from the approaching train travels towards the observer at speed of 150 m/h (the speed of the throw is added to the speed of the train), while the ball thrown from the receding train travels at speed of 50 m/h (speed of the receding train is subtracted from the speed of the throw). The two trains being at equal distances from the station, the ball from the approaching train will arrive first at the observer's location and she will deduce (erroneously, but in compliance with what she had been told in advance) that this ball is the cause for the throw of the ball that has arrived last.

Suppose now that the two balls are thrown again, only this time we take a photograph of the throws of the two balls and record in our camera the exact times of the two events. The recorded times constitutes direct evidence of when the two events have happened and therefore we relate to them as "primary evidence".

If propagation of light obeyed the same law of nature as govern the motion of the two balls (namely, the law of the additivity of speeds), then obviously the throw from the approaching train will be recorded at an earlier time (then the second) and we will deduce that there is a cause-effect relationship between the two events (the two ball throws).

However, this is not what modern physics teaches us. An experiment conducted near the end of the nineteenth century (the Michelson-Morley experiment, 1887) has shown that the speed of light is constant, irrespective of the relative speeds of the measuring device and of the light source. The constancy of the speed of light had provided basic impetus to the later development of Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity and his famous: $E=MC^2$ equation.

Given the constancy of the speed of light, our observer at the railway station will observe the two balls being thrown simultaneously and therefore will conclude (rightly) that no cause-effect relationship exists between the two.

We have thus learned that the constancy of the speed of light, a necessary requirement for the possibility of an objective study of nature, is also cornerstone for the possibility of morality. This fundamental property of nature alone enables verification of a cause-effect relationship which is absolute, namely: It is not dependent on the relative positions (speeds) of the observer and the light source that provides evidence to the existence of a cause-effect relationship.

Let us be clear: We are aware of special relativity effects exercised on measurements of time and physical dimensions. We are also aware that synchronicity in one coordinate system may not be so observed in another. These effects are well known and may be anticipated by special relativity theory. But one cannot conceive, within this theory, a scenario where the roles of cause and effect are interchanged. Special relativity effects cannot predict circumstances where cause-effect relationship is reversed; A cause-effect relationship remains the same for all measurement coordinate systems.

Conclusion:

Existence of morality is intertwined with the possibility of science; and both are consequence of a most basic property of nature, interwoven into the very fabric of the cosmos: The constancy of the speed of light.

One may realize, on deeper thought, that "it ain't necessarily be so". And the constancy of the speed of light, like the existence of all laws of nature, remains an inexplicable mystery.

PART III. VIEWS ON STATISTICS

The Effects of the Box-Cox Transformation

Posted October 2023

Comment: This article has appeared on [Wiley StatsRef: Statistics Reference Online](#)

1. Introduction

The data power transformation was originally introduced by Box and Cox ^[1] (BC), and named after them. In a later paper ^[2], BC "revisited and rebutted" some of the arguments concerning the "transformations". As articulated by BC ^[1], the objective of the transformation is fourfold, with emphasis on the first three:

"The usual techniques for the analysis of linear models as exemplified by the analysis of variance and by multiple regression analysis are usually justified by assuming **(i)** simplicity of structure for $E(y)$; **(ii)** constancy of error variance; **(iii)** normality of distributions; **(iv)** independence of observations... If the assumptions (i)-(iii) are not satisfied in terms of the original observations, y , a non-linear transformation of y may improve matters".

Since publication of the original paper, a vast body of literature assembled about theoretical aspects of Box-Cox Transformation (BCT), and reports about the efficiency of its application. Also, various methods to estimate BCT parameter(s) have been suggested, or alternatives, like the exponential transformation ^[3]. A good reference is Atkinson ^[4] (and references therein) and else (<see stats00517, stats0052, stats05937>).

While there is a general sense, among theoreticians and practitioners alike, that BCT, implemented correctly, is a good platform for analysis of data, the question of why a power transformation is capable of achieving concurrently the first three above assumptions ("may improve matters"), has rarely been raised, if at all. Questions not about "What" and "How" but about "Why" have been largely left unanswered. As reported in my book ^[5] (subsection 4.3 therein), I had opportunity to talk to both Box and Cox, on two separate occasions, and asked them what brought them to the realization that a power transformation could concurrently achieve the three objectives of BCT. Their answers were consistent: "Empirical observation".

The objective of this article is to address the different effects, expected from applying BCT, and elaborate on "Why" these effects are in practice achieved. Once explanations are expounded, separately for each of the three objectives, a generalization and extension of the inverse BCT, Response Modeling Methodology (RMM) ^[6,7], is summarily introduced.

The structure of the paper pursues, in reverse order, the three assumptions mentioned in BC paper ^[1]. In Section 2 we offer, via an example, an explanation for the normalizing effect of a power transformation (assumption **iii**). In Section 3 we use a power transformation to obtain stabilized variance (assumption **ii**), and show how it is related to estimates of the BCT estimate, λ . Section 4 suggests a new insight into why BCT is effective in obtaining "simplicity of structure" (while modeling systematic variation, resulting from co-variate variation; assumption **i**). Section 5 delivers a brief introduction to RMM. Conclusions are described in Section 6.

2. Effects of BCT: Normalizing random variation (assumption iii)

In this section we address a basic question that may puzzle many: Why should data power transformation tend to normalize data? What is the connection?

As alluded to earlier, posing this question personally to both Box and Cox, I received same consistent response: "Empirical observation". In this section, we attempt a better answer, based on observing what a power transformation in practice causes the transformed data. To do that, we are aided by a simple power transformation of a normal random variable ($r.v$) that delivers *near* exponential $r.v$. We then apply an inverse transformation to an exponential variable to realize why in practice it has been transformed to *near* normality.

Consider a normal $r.v$, X , with arbitrary mean of ten and standard deviation (STD) of one (coefficient of variation, CV_x , is 0.1). Define:

$$Y = X^\gamma \quad (1)$$

Without specifying the resulting distribution, this nonlinear transformation produces for Y :

$$CV_Y = 0.7183; Sk_Y = 1.968; Ku_Y = 9.963,$$

where Sk and Ku are values of skewness and kurtosis, respectively (standardized third and fourth central moments, namely, moments about the mean). Corresponding values for an exponential variate are, $\{1, 2, 9\}$. We realize that due to noise increasing more rapidly than the signal (CV increases from the original 0.1 to over 0.7), "identity" is destabilized (refer for discussion of "identity", in relation to modelling random variation, to Shore [8]). Therefore, the nonlinear transformation converts an identity-full variable (normal random variable, with mean and STD that are mutually unrelated) into near identity-less exponential variable (where STD is a parameter-free linear transformation of the mean).

Consider next an exponential variable, X , with parameter $\lambda = 1$. Applying a power transformation to X to restore near normality:

$$Y = X^\gamma = X^{(1/3.6)}, \quad (2)$$

we obtain a Weibull distribution with parameters $\alpha = 3.6, \beta = 1$. The first four moments and CV of Y are:

$$\mu_Y = 0.9011; \sigma_Y = 0.2780; CV_Y = 0.3085;$$

$$Sk_Y = 0.00056; Ku_Y = 2.7167.$$

We realize that the shape moments, $\{Sk_Y, Ku_Y\}$, are close to the normal ($\{0, 3\}$, respectively).

[Figure 1](#) is a plot of X^γ for various values of γ (including no transformation: $\gamma = 1$).

It is realized that the normalizing transformation, $X^{(1/3.6)}$, replaces the original exponential, X , with a $r.v.$, Y , with distribution that essentially comprises, due to non-linearity, two-components, namely, a mixture distribution. Let L be a cutting point of the support of X , which defines the support of the two components. Denote by Component 1 the distribution of Y for $X \leq L$ and Component 2 otherwise.

[Figures 2](#) and [3](#) deliver the means and relative STDs (coefficients of variation) of the two components as function of L (the cutting point of the support of X). M_i denotes the mean of Component i ($= 1, 2$), and similarly for CV_i .

We realize the effects of the power transformation (applied to an exponential $r.v.$). Let L equal, say, 0.5. We find out that Component 2 ($M2$ in [Figure 2](#)) nearly solely determines μ_Y (mean of Y). The contribution of Component 1 to the mean ($M1$ in [Figure 2](#)) is negligible. Similarly, observing [Figure 3](#), we realize that Component 1 nearly solely determines variation ($CV1$ in [Figure 3](#)). The contribution to variation of Component 2 ($CV2$ in [Figure 3](#)) is negligible.

These observations imply that de-facto the power transformation of the exponential variable has produced decoupling of the signal (mean) from noise (CV). The first produced mainly by Component 2, the latter by Component 1. Decoupling of the mean from STD is unique to the normal distribution. Hence the consequential normalizing effect of the BC power transformation.

A similar analysis with similar conclusions, for data normalizing *exponential* transformation, is described in Shore [9].

3. Effects of BCT: Variance stabilizing (assumption ii)

Stabilizing variance, in reference to a BCT, means that STD becomes invariant to changes in the mean. In this section, we show how to find a power transformation that achieves this goal. We realize that it is tightly connected to estimating λ , the parameter of BCT.

Let $T(X)$ be the required transformation of a random variable ($r.v.$), X , that would stabilize STD.

Developing $T(X)$ into a Taylor series around the point $[\mu, T(\mu)]$, where μ is the mean of X , and relating to the first two terms, we obtain for the variance of $T(X)$, denote it σ_T^2 :

$$\sigma_T^2 = [T'(\mu)]^2 \sigma^2, \quad (3)$$

where σ is STD of X , and $T'(\mu)$ is the first derivative of T , with respect to μ , at $X=\mu$. Assuming that σ_T is constant (as desired), and also that the relationship between σ and μ is given by the two-parameter expression:

$$\sigma = \alpha\mu^\beta, \quad (4)$$

we obtain for $T(\mu)$, letting $\sigma_T = C$ (constant):

$$T(\mu) = \int (\sigma_T / \sigma) d\mu = \int (C / \alpha\mu^\beta) d\mu = [(C / \alpha) / (1 - \beta)] \mu^{1-\beta}. \quad (5)$$

This implies that the required transformation is proportional to $x^{1-\beta}$ (for $\beta \neq 1$), and $\log(x)$, otherwise.

Assume now that $T(X)$ is a power transformation, namely, BCT, with parameter λ :

$$T(X) = X^\lambda. \quad (6)$$

Therefore:

$$T'(\mu) = \lambda\mu^{\lambda-1}, \quad (7)$$

and we have from (4):

$$\sigma_T = [T'(\mu)]\sigma = (\lambda\mu^{\lambda-1})(\alpha\mu^\beta) = (\alpha\lambda)\mu^{\beta+\lambda-1}. \quad (8)$$

We realize that to ensure that σ_T does not depend on μ (data transformation stabilizes the variance) requires:

$$\beta = 1 - \lambda. \quad (9)$$

An estimate for β may be obtained as the slope of a simple linear regression equation:

$$\log(S_i) = \log(\alpha) + (\beta)\log(Y_i), \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, n. \quad (10)$$

where $\{Y_i, S_i\}$ are n pairs of sample estimates of the mean and STD, respectively, derived from n populations with mean and STD $\{\mu_i, \sigma_i\}$, respectively.

4. Effects of BCT: "Simplicity of Structure" (models of systematic variation; assumption i)

It is commonly accepted that the "secret" to the efficacy of BCT in linear modeling (associated with modeling systematic variation, generated by co-variates) is that it transforms response data (dependent-variable data) to be expressed in the "correct", or natural, scale. Teaching graduate students at my university, I used to deliver, as an example, modeling of car gas-consumption as function of weight. One may find out that expressing car consumption in g/m units (gallons per mile) returns an unsatisfactory model (in terms of assumption (i), for example, a quadratic model associated perhaps with poor fit); however, using the reciprocal unit, m/g (that is, applying BCT with parameter $\lambda = -1$), may put data in their "correct" scale, submitting a simpler model (linear, with better fit, complying with assumption (i)). Be aware that the author of this article does not suggest here which is the correct answer.

The "secret" to the efficacy of BCT in modeling systematic variation with "simplicity of structure", we believe, is not due to re-scaling of the response variable to the "correct" scale. It lies elsewhere.

To realize that, let us address BCT:

$$\eta + \varepsilon = (Y^\lambda - 1) / \lambda, \quad (11)$$

and its inverse:

$$Y = [1 + \lambda(\eta + \varepsilon)]^{(1/\lambda)}, \quad (12)$$

where η is the linear predictor (LP, namely, a linear combination of effects produced by co-variates), and ε is a normal error. It is easy to realize that the inverse BCT represents three different models: linear ($\lambda = 1$), power ($\lambda \neq \{1,0\}$) and exponential ($\lambda \rightarrow 0$). The trio of models represent, progressively, increasing convexity. However, applying BCT we do not have to select a-priori (prior to data analysis) the "correct" model — BCT is doing that by rendering the three distinct models into mere points on a *continuous* spectrum, spanned by λ , the parameter of BCT. The point on this spectrum, selected by BCT, depends solely on available data. This ensures that BCT delivers best-fit model, among the three just expounded. "Simplicity of Structure" can be expected.

The three models of the inverse BCT delivers a partial picture. The complete picture is provided by the "Ladder of Monotone Convex Functions", a key ingredient and cornerstone for a new methodology to model non-linear relationships, denoted Response Modeling Methodology (RMM). The latter is an extension and generalization of the inverse BCT. It is described in the next Section 5.

5. Response Modeling Methodology (RMM)

Response Modeling Methodology is a general platform for non-linear modelling of systematic variation (delivered via LP, η , as previously defined). Random variation is added to the model via two possibly-correlated normal error terms, one added to the LP, and another as a general multiplicative error term of the general model. A key ingredient of RMM is the "Ladder of monotone Convex Function", the first three steps of which are represented by the inverse BCT, alluded to in the previous section. The Ladder is graphically presented in [Figure 4](#). We realize that the Ladder comprises the trio of models, {linear, power, exponential}, which are repeated as we "climb up" the Ladder. Some well-known scientific models, special cases of RMM general model (with errors removed) are displayed in [Figure 5](#).

[Figure 6](#) shows the general structure of the RMM model, with errors added. [Figure 7](#) displays the final model, with three sets of parameters — the coefficients of the effects included in LP, three structural parameters that determine the form of the final model (analogously with the inverse BCT parameter, λ), and parameters associated with the error terms.

[Figure 8](#) shows how various special "steps" on the Ladder may be extracted from the component of the general model representing systematic variation (function denoted f_1). [Figure 9](#) further details how, at the price of two parameters added to f_1 , one can move up the discrete steps of the Ladder in a continuous manner, allowing empirical modelling of non-linear data with ever increasing intensity of convexity.

A major source to learn RMM is Shore ^[6,7] and Wikipedia: ref. 10, where RMM is addressed (with related references) either in discussion of its theoretical respects, or reporting RMM application. For the convenience of the reader, we add in Supplementary Material a comprehensive list of over thirty peer-reviewed references that appear in the latter reference.

6. Concluding comments

In an originally non-linear environment, BCT is a major platform to implement analysis and estimating of linear models. The underlying reasons for why BCT is so effective are not at all clear. In this article, we have attempted to bring up some insights that might clarify the "WHY", concerning the various effects of applying BCT. It is hoped that these may be helpful for practitioners to avoid major statistical errors in applying BCT. Furthermore, the new RMM has been considered as a good alternative to current power or exponential transformations.

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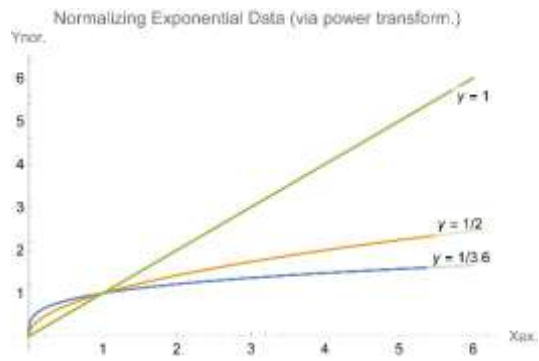
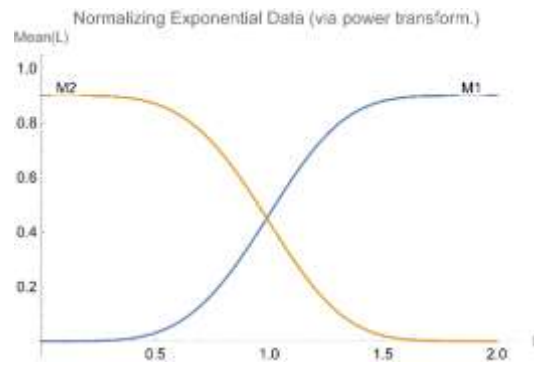
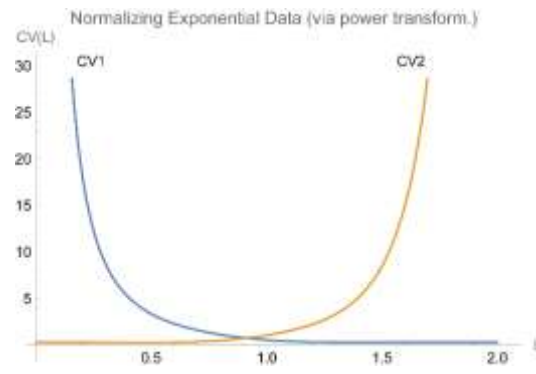


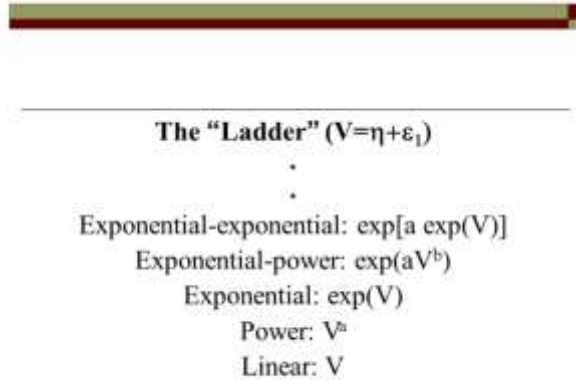
Figure 1. Plot of X^γ for various values of γ (including no transformation: $\gamma=1$)



Figures 2. Plots of means of the two components of the mixture distribution of Y , as function of L (the cutting point of the support of X). M_i denotes the mean of Component i ($=1,2$)



Figures 3. Plots of relative STDs (coefficients of variation). CV_i denotes CV of Component i ($=1,2$)



Figures 4. The "Ladder" of monotone convex functions

Scientific Relational Models

- **Kinetic Energy:** $E_k(V) = M (V^2/2)$
- **Radioactive Decay:** $R(t) = R_0 \exp(-kt)$
- **Antoine Equation:** $\log(P) = A + B / (T+C),$
- **Arrhenius Formula:** $R_c(T) = A \exp[-E_a/(k_B T)]$
- **Gompertz Growth-Model:** $Y = \beta_1 \exp[-\beta_2 \exp(-\beta_3 x)]$
- **Einstein's:** $E = MC^2 / [1-(v/C)^2]^{1/2}$

Figures 5. Scientific and engineering models, represented on the "Ladder" (special cases of RMM model, with errors removed)

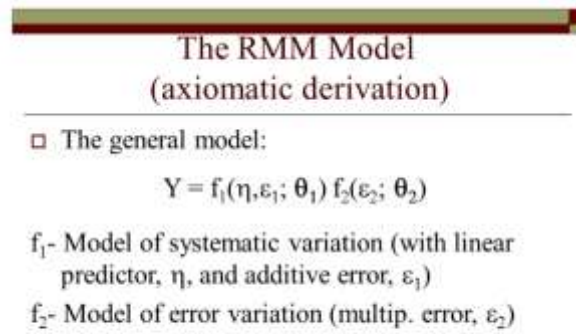


Figure 6. The general structure of RMM model (with two errors, ε_1 and ε_2)

The RMM Model
(axiomatic derivation)

The complete model:

$$f_1(\eta, \varepsilon_1; \theta_1) f_2(\varepsilon_2; \theta_2) = \exp\{(\alpha/\lambda)[(\eta + \varepsilon_1)^\lambda - 1] + \mu_2 + \varepsilon_2\}$$

$\varepsilon_1 \sim \sigma_{\varepsilon_1} \mathcal{N}(\cdot), \varepsilon_2 \sim \sigma_{\varepsilon_2} \mathcal{N}(\cdot), (Z_1, Z_2)$ from a bi-variate standard normal distribution with correlation ρ

Three sets of parameters:

- The linear predictor: $\eta = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$
- "Structural parameters": $\{\alpha, \lambda, \mu_2\}$
- "Error parameters": $\{\rho, \sigma_{\varepsilon_1}, \sigma_{\varepsilon_2}\}$

"Not all parameters were created equal"

Figure 7. RMM final model (with three sets of parameters)

The RMM Model
(axiomatic derivation)

$$f_1(\eta, \varepsilon_1; \theta_1) = \exp\{(\alpha/\lambda)[(\eta + \varepsilon_1)^\lambda - 1]\}$$

Special Cases:

- Linear: $\lambda=0, \alpha=1$
- Power: $\lambda=0, \alpha \neq 1$
- Exponential: $\lambda=1$
- Exponential-power: $\lambda \neq 0, \lambda \neq 1$
- Exponential-exponential: ??

Figure 8. "Steps" on the Ladder, extracted from RMM general model (the component representing systematic variation, f_1)

The RMM Model
(axiomatic derivation)

$$f_1(\eta, \varepsilon_1; \theta_1) = \exp\{(\alpha/\lambda)[(\eta + \varepsilon_1)^\lambda - 1]\}$$

Insert: $\exp\{(\beta/\kappa)[(\eta + \varepsilon_1)^\kappa - 1]\}$

For $\kappa=0, \beta=1$:

$$\exp\{(\beta/\kappa)[(\eta + \varepsilon_1)^\kappa - 1]\} = \eta + \varepsilon_1$$

Adding two parameters allows a repeat of the cycle "Linear-power-exponential"

Figure 9. At the price of two additional parameters to f_1 , moving up on the Ladder to ever more convex models

Where Statistics Went Wrong Modeling Random Variation

Posted August 19, 2022

A model of random variation, generated by a "random variable", is presented in Statistics in the form of a statistical distribution (like the normal or the exponential).

For example, the weight of people at a certain age is a random variable, and its observed variation may be modeled by the normal distribution; Surgery duration is a random variable, and its observed variation may, at a specified circumstance, be modeled by the exponential distribution.

In the Statistics literature, one may find statistical distributions modeling random variation directly observed in nature (as the above two examples), or random variation associated with a function of random variables (like a sample average calculated from a sample of n observations).

To-date, within the Statistics literature, one may literally find thousands of statistical distributions.

Is this acceptable?

Or perhaps we are wrong in how we model random variation?

Pursuant to a large-scale project, where I have modeled surgery times (a research effort reported in three recent publications, Shore 2020ab, 2021), I have reached certain conclusions of how random variation should be modeled as to be more truthful to reality. The new approach seems to reduce the problem of the insanely gigantic number of distributions, as currently appearing in the Statistics literature.

I have summarized these new insights in a new paper, carrying the title of the post.

The **Introduction** section of this paper is posted below. Underneath it, a link to the entire article.

Where Statistics Went Wrong Modeling Random Variation

1. Introduction

The development of thousands of statistical distributions to-date is puzzling, if not bizarre. An innocent observer may wonder, how in most other branches of science the historical development shows a clear trend towards unifying the "objects of enquiry" (forces in physics; properties of materials in chemistry; human characteristics in biology), this has not taken place within the mathematical modelling of random variation? Why in Statistics, as the branch of science engaged in modeling random variation observed in nature, the number of "objects of enquiry" (statistical distributions) keeps growing?

In other words: Where has Statistics gone wrong modeling observed random variation?

Based on new insights, gained from a recent personal experience with data-based modeling of surgery time (resulting in a trilogy of published papers, Shore 2020ab, 2021), we present in this paper a new paradigm to modeling observed random variation. A fundamental insight is a new perception of how observed random variation is generated, and how it affects the form of the observed distribution. The latter is perceived to be generated not by a single source of variation (as the common concept of "random variable", r.v., implies), but by two interacting sources of variation. One source is "Identity", formed by "identity factors". This source is represented in the distribution by the mode (if one exists), and it may generate identity-variation. A detailed example for this source, regarding modeling of surgery times, is presented in Shore (2020a). Another source is an interacting error, formed by "non-identity/error factors". This source generates error variation (separate from identity variation). Combined, the two interacting sources generate the observed random variation. The random phenomenon, generating the latter, may be in two extreme states: An identity-full state (there is only error variation), and an identity-less state (identity factors become so unstable as to be indistinguishable from

error factors; identity vanishes; no error can be defined). Scenarios, residing in between these two extreme states, reflect a source of variation with partial lack of identity (LoI).

The new "Random Identity Paradigm", attributing two contributing sources to observed random variation (rather than a single one, as to date assumed), has far reaching implications to the true relationships between location, scale and shape moments. These are probed and demonstrated extensively in this paper, with numerous examples from current Statistics literature (relate, in particular, to Section 3).

In this paper, we first introduce, in Section 2, basic terms and definitions that form the skeleton for the new random-identity paradigm. Section 3 addresses implications of the new paradigm in the form of six propositions (subsection 3.1) and five predictions (presented as conjectures, subsection 3.2). The latter are empirically supported, in Section 4, with examples from the published Statistics literature. A general model for observed random variation (Shore, 2020a), bridging the gap between current models for the two extreme states (normal, for identity-full state; exponential, for the other), is reviewed in Section 5, and its properties and implications probed. Section 6 delivers some concluding comments.

A link to the complete article:

[Haim Shore ResearchGate Where statistics went wrong Aug. 2022.pdf](#)

Are Pi Digits Random?

Posted August 23, 2019

Pi digits are generally considered to be random (as judged by statistical testing). Are they??

First ten Pi digits are: $\rho=3.141592654\dots$ (**Last digit rounded**).

In the last few weeks, my good friend, Oren Evron, producer of most videos about my research on the Bible and on biblical Hebrew, has been engaged finding links between Pi and the first verse of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 1:1):

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ.

Likelihood values for his results (their probability to occur randomly) have been generated via extensive computer-simulation studies (conducted by him). His findings are astounding. A video detailing these were also published by Oren Evron on YouTube.

You may read about Pi in Wikipedia, entry: [Pi](#).

See also an earlier post on this blog:

[Fibonacci series, Pi, Golden Ratio — Simple Relationships](#)

To-date, the digits of Pi (a transcendental number) have been considered random. Are they?

In this post, I display my own, and only, contribution to Oren Evron's research.

Consider the first ten digits of Pi (**last digit not rounded**):

{3, 1, 4, 1, 5, 9, 2, 6, 5, 3}.

Next, observe word lengths (number of letters in a word) for the seven Hebrew-words comprising the first verse of the Bible (Genesis 1:1):

{6, 3, 5, 2, 5, 3, 4}.

We realize that the second sequence is **contained** in the first, namely, the second series is a subset of the first series (taken from Pi), comprising 70% thereof. Only three digits in the first series (marked black) are not in the second. Conversely, all digits in the second series (with their exact frequencies) appear in the first.

How probable is this result?? What is the likelihood for this finding to occur by random?

We have conducted a computer simulation, in which the computer randomly generated a million sets of ten digits (each digit with probability 0.1 (10%) to be selected). We then counted the number of sets that contained exactly the second set (by exactly we mean including frequency, for example, if "5" appears twice in the second set so it is in the simulated set).

Based on this simulation experiment, we have obtained for the probability of the second set to be exactly contained in the first to be 0.0019 (0.2%), namely, for a significance level of half a percent (0.5%), a statistically meaningful result ("significant result"). By conventional norm in scientific research studies, this is a highly significant result, indicating that the finding is probably not coincidental.

Yet, with respect to this result, further findings need to be uncovered to move away from "cherry picking".

Oren Evron's videos, displaying his own astounding findings:

- [About Pi and First verse of Genesis \(English\)](#);
- [Fibonacci and biblical Hebrew](#) (for English, activate captions!)

Fibonacci series, Pi, Golden Ratio — Simple Relationships

Posted August 15, 2019

Fibonacci numbers, the associated Golden Ratio and Pi appear abundantly in all phenomena of nature, from the very small to the very large. In this post, we deliver simple relationships between these three that allow their simple calculation, either exactly (Golden-Ratio and Fibonacci terms) or to high accuracy (Pi).

The start of the Fibonacci series (first seventeen terms) is:

{0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610, 987, ...}.

A Fibonacci number is obtained by adding the last two terms preceding it in the series, for example, 55 is the sum of 21 and 34.

As the length of the Fibonacci series increases, the ratio between two consecutive Fibonacci numbers converge to the Golden Ratio. Simple exact expressions to calculate the Golden Ratio (denoted herewith Φ , capital of ϕ) and its reciprocal (denoted herewith ϕ , small Φ) are:

$$\Phi = (1/2)(\sqrt{5} + 1),$$

$$\phi = \Phi^{-1} = 1 / \Phi = (1/2)(\sqrt{5} - 1).$$

Employing Φ and ϕ , a simple formula for the k-th term in a Fibonacci series is:

$$F(k) = (1/\sqrt{5})[\Phi^k - (-\phi)^k].$$

Note that $F(0)=0$.

A formula that combines Fibonacci numbers and the Golden-Ratio ($\Phi = 1.618\dots$) delivers a compact expression for π :

$$\pi = 4\sqrt{5} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n F(2n+1)}{(2n+1)\Phi^{2(2n+1)}}$$

For example, for $n=3$: $F(2n+1)=F(7)=13$.

Inserting in this equation the formula for a Fibonacci number in terms of the Golden-Ratio, as given earlier, we finally obtain a formula to calculate Pi in terms of the Golden-Ratio (Φ) and its reciprocal (ϕ):

$$\pi = 4 \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n [\Phi^{2n+1} - (-\phi)^{2n+1}]}{(2n+1)\Phi^{2(2n+1)}}$$

This formula delivers highly accurate values for π even for relatively small upper summation limit of n .

Below are values of π obtained for different upper summation values:

“Exact” Pi value (π): 3.141592654...

{Upper summation limit, calculated π }:

{5, 3.141148432}, {6, 3.141739012}, {7, 3.141543509}, {8, 3.141609399}, {9, 3.141586881}, {10, 3.141594663}, {11, 3.141591949}, {12, 3.141592902}, {13, 3.141592565}, {14, 3.141592685}, {15, 3.141592642}.

We realize that already for upper summation limit of 14 — exact value of Pi to seven decimal points is obtained.

Playing Pi (π) and Phi (Φ , Golden Ratio) on the piano:

- Song from $\pi!$ (reproduced 2015; with Sheet Music/HQ Download):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wM-x3pUcdeo>
 - Song from $\pi!$ (original, 2011):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMq9he-5HUU>
 - What Phi (Golden Ratio) Sounds Like (reproduced 2012):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_Ob-X6DMI4
 - What Phi (Golden Ratio) Sounds Like (original, 2011):
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK7tq7L0N8E:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK7tq7L0N8E)
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Partial Source for this post: Castellanos D. Rapidly Converging Expansions with Fibonacci Coefficients 1986; *Fibonacci Quarterly* 24: 70-82.

The Universal Distribution

Posted February 3, 2015

Since studying as an undergraduate student at the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) and learning, for the first time in my life, that randomness too has its own laws (in the form of statistical distributions, amongst others), I have become extremely appreciative of the ingenuity of the concept of statistical distribution. The sheer combining of randomness with laws, formulated in the language of mathematics, not unlike any other branch of the exact sciences, fascinated me considerably, young man that I was at the time.

That admiration has all since evaporated as I have become increasingly aware of the gigantic number of statistical distributions, defined and used within the science of statistics to describe random behavior, either of real-world phenomena or of sample-statistics embedded in statistical-analysis procedures (like hypothesis testing). I realized that unlike with modern-day physics, engaged to this day in the unification of the basic forces of nature, the science of statistics has failed to carry out similar attempts at unification. What the latter implies for me is derivation of a single universal distribution, relative to which all current distributions might be regarded as statistically insignificant random deviations (not unlike a sample average is a random deviation from the population mean). Such unification has never materialized, or even been attempted or debated, within the science of statistics.

Personally, I attribute this failure at unification to the fact that current foundations of statistics, with its basic concepts like probability function, probability density function (pdf) or distribution function (often denoted cumulative density function, or CDF), have been established back in the eighteenth century to derive various early-day distributions. These foundations have not been challenged ever since. Some well-known mathematicians of the time, like Jacob and Daniel Bernoulli, Abraham de Moivre, Carl Friedrich Gauss, Pierre-Simon Laplace and Joseph Louis Lagrange have all used those basic terms of statistics to derive specific distributions. However, the basic tenets underlying formation of those mathematical models of random variation have not been challenged to this day. Central amongst these tenets is the belief that random phenomena, with their associated properly-defined random variables, have each its own specific distribution. That tenet remained intact and unchallenged to this day. Consequently, no serious attempt at unification has ever become the core objective of the science of statistics. Furthermore, no discussion of how to proceed in the pursuit of the “universal distribution” has ever been conducted.

My sentiment about the feasibility of revolutionizing the concept of statistical distribution and deriving a **universal distribution**, relative to which all current distributions may be regarded as random deviations, has changed dramatically with the introduction of a new non-linear modeling approach, denoted Response Modeling Methodology, RMM). I have developed RMM back in the closing years of the previous century (Shore, 2005, and references therein), and only some years later I realized that the “Continuous Monotone Convexity (CMC)” property, part and parcel of RMM, may serve to derive the **universal distribution**, in the sense described in the previous paragraph. (Read about the CMC property in another post in this blog).

The results of the new realization are two articles (Shore 2015, 2017), one of which has already been published and the second currently under review (see references [here](#)).

Statistics and “Stamp Collecting”

Posted February 17, 2014

This blog entry (with the linked article and PP presentation) was originally posted, for a restricted time period, on the Community Blog of the American Statistical Association (ASA), where the linked items were visible to members only. The blog entry is now displayed, with the linked items, visible to all.

This is the fourth and last message in this series about the consequences to statistical modeling of the continuous monotone convexity (CMC) property. The new message discusses implications of the CMC property to modeling random variation.

As a departure point for this discussion, some historic perspective about the development of the principle of unification in human perception of nature can be useful.

Our ancestors believed in a multiplicity of gods. All phenomena of nature had their particular gods and various manifestations of same phenomenon were indeed different displays of wishes, desires and emotions of the relevant god. Thus, Prometheus was a deity who gave fire to the human race and for that was punished by Zeus, the king of the gods; Poseidon was the god of the seas; and Eros was the god of desire and attraction.

This convenient “explanation” for the diversity of nature phenomena had all but disappeared with the advent of monotheism. Under the “umbrella” of a single god, ancient gods were “deleted”, to be replaced by a “unified” and “unifying” almighty god, the source of all nature phenomena.

And the three major monotheistic religions had been born.

The “concept” of unification, however, did not stop there. It was migrated to science, where pioneering giants of modern scientific thinking observed diverse phenomena of nature and had attempted to unify them into an all-encompassing mathematics-based theory, from which the separate phenomena could be deduced as special cases. Some of the most well-known representatives of this mammoth shift in human thinking, in those early stages of modern science, were Copernicus (1473-1543), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727).

In particular, the science of physics had been at the forefront of these early attempts to pursue the basic concept of unity in the realm of science. Ernest Rutherford (1871–1937), known as the father of nuclear physics and the discoverer of the proton (in 1919), made the following observation at the time:

“All science is either physics or stamp collecting”.

The assertion, quoted in Kaku (1994, p. 131), intended to convey a general sentiment that the drive to converge the five fundamental forces of nature into a unifying theory, nowadays a central theme of modern physics, represented science at its best. Furthermore, this is the only correct approach to the scientific investigation of nature. By contrast, at least until recently, most other scientific disciplines have engaged in taxonomy (“bug collecting” or “stamp collecting”). With “stamp collecting” the scientific inquiry is restricted to the discovery and classification of the “objects of enquiry”, particular to that science. However, this never culminates, as in physics, in a unifying theory from which all these objects may be deductively derived as “special cases”.

Is statistics a science of “stamp collecting”?

Observing the abundance of statistical distributions, identified to-date, an unavoidable conclusion is that statistics is indeed a science engaged in “stamp collecting”. Furthermore, serious attempts at unification (partial, at least) are rarely reported in the literature.

In a recent article (Shore, 2015), I have attempted a new paradigm for modeling random variation. The new paradigm, so I believe, may constitute an initial effort to unite all distributions under a unified “umbrella distribution”. In the new paradigm, the “Continuous Monotone Convexity (CMC)” property plays a central role in deriving a general expression to the normal-based quantile function of a generic random variable (assuming a single mode and a non-mixture distribution). Employing numeric fitting to current distributions, the new model has been shown to deliver accurate representation to scores of differently-shaped distributions

(including some suggested by anonymous reviewers). Furthermore, negligible deviations from the fitted general model may be attributed to the natural imperfection of the fitting procedure or being perceived as realization of random variation around the fitted general model, not unlike a sample average is a random deviation from the population mean.

Update: In a more recent effort (Shore, 2020, 2023), a new paradigm for modeling random variation is introduced, and validated via certain predictions about known “statistical facts” (like the Central Limit Theorem), shown to be empirically true, and via distribution fitting, via 5-moment matching procedure, to a sample of known distributions.

These topics and others are addressed extensively in the afore-cited new articles. It is my judgment that at present the CMC property constitutes the only possible avenue for achieving in statistics (as in most other modern branches of science) unification of the “objects of enquiry”, as these relate to modeling random variation.

References

- [1] Kaku M (1994). *Hyperspace- A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps and the Tenth Dimension*. Book. Oxford University Press Inc., NY.
- [2] [Shore, H. \(2015\). A General Model of Random Variation](#)
- [3] Shore, H. (2020). [An explanatory bi-variate model for surgery-duration and its empirical validation](#)
- [4] Shore, H. (2023). [A novel approach to modeling steady-state process-time with smooth transition from repetitive to semi-repetitive to non-repetitive \(memoryless\) processes](#)