

DRUSH-
MYTHS AND
REALITY OF
THE BIBLE

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BOOK 158

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Judaism explained for non Jews

God is quite happy and wants all religions as long as they respect the rights of others to differ. Otherwise, God would reveal Himself continuously and proclaim His absolute truth. Since God does not do that, it means that He does not really care. There exists more than one path to God.

Judaism similar to other faiths believes that it possesses absolute truth.

Judaism differs from other faiths that man women who do not accept our absolute truth -and from our vantage point are wrong -can, nevertheless, achieve salvation following their truth. When humans follow their own truth and tradition that differ from Judaism they are all the chosen by God and will achieve salvation

you. If they do not possess such common sense then they are not your equals .They are worse than animals . You do not get hurt from animals cockroaches and grasshoppers.

One must likewise appreciate the mandated need for

every living being certainly all humans man woman even animals to feel important. People kill -legally - in duels - when someone dares insinuate that they are not important. Every statement that you address to an other person has two components or elements: [1] the subject matter [2] his her ego . When a person makes a statement and demands or or refuses anything his/ her ego and reputation is on the line .

The Biblical Purim story in the Book of Esther is the perfect example.

Achiasvarus emperor of Persia usurped the throne of Persia. In order to gain legitimacy he married the deposed emperor's daughter Vashti who was one of the most beautiful women in the world. A few years later Achasvarus threw a banquet to exhibit his new found power by becoming legitimate and casting aside the stigma of usurper. He invited all the royalty of the ancient world and the most powerful depots and military leaders all sexist males who considered all women as tools to gratify males weaknesses. Achasvarus wanted to show that he could outdo all of them To prove his point he ordered Vahsti ther deposed emperors daughter who granted him legitimacy to appear for all his guests in the nude

Vashti refused. Again Achasvarus ordered her to appear immidiately. Again Vashti refused . The third time he ordered his soldiers to fetch her remove her cloths and present her for everyone to see. Vashti was dragged screaming and presented in front of Achasvarus. Vashti filled her mouth some very strong wine . Instead of swallowing the wine she walked over to Achasvarus turned and spit the wine in his face. The rest is history. Obviously Vashti did not survive very long afterwards. I confess that I edited

this tale somewhat about Vashti spitting the wine in the face of Ahasuerus. But the rest of the story does appear in the Book of Esther.

The moral of this story was that there were two interwoven elements . [1] the subject matter to have Vashti appear in the nude to have her beauty displayed in front of all his guests. [2] and the ego pride and reputation of power of Ahasuerus.

Vashti failed to grasp the psychological element or elected to stand fast as one of the first feminists the protector and fighter for women's rights. She was the fore runner of Joan of Arc the protector and defender against male sadism . Perhaps she thought herself as a martyr defending the right of all women in the empire to revolt against the abuse of men against the weaker sex. Her sisters through out the ages achieved the same mission by using their cunning and greater wisdom than men possess and not defying their husbands.

Vashti as the legitimate Princess had little patience with the drunken brute- Ahasuerus . She was

forced to marry him. Now all her anger erupted. She paid with her life for the expression of her true feelings.

The moral of this tale is that in all our dealings with our spouses we remember that when we argue it is not only [1] the subject matter ; but [2] the pride of our spouse that is involved. The prudent course most of the time even when your spouse is one trillion per cent

wrong is to agree with what your spouse wants. That is the secret of a lasting marriage.

When you feel that you are the most important person in the world , what does it really mean or matter to you to agree to the wrong course if that will make your spouse happy. A little common sense is the difference between a lasting marriage and a broken home.

Now who should agree the husband or the wife?

The Torah says the husband should agree. Abraham was ordered by his main wife Sarah to throw out of Abraham's home Hagar his second wife and

Yismuel Abraham's son with Hagar . The reason was because Sarah feared that Yismuel would bodily harm if not kill Isaac- Sarah's and Abraham's son. God agreed with Sarah. God told Abraham. "everything that Sarah tells you you are to listen"
" The Jewish way is to listen to your wife even if she is wrong. Doing that will build up her pride.

If you listen to her she will listen to you. If you crown her as a Queen she will crown you as Emperor. . You will then have peace at home a good marriage and have a stable home for your children free from the worry of divorce.

That has been my secret for having a good marriage for the last almost 50 years.

This same attitude one must adopt when one experiences trials , tribulations , adverse circumstances

and tragedy.

One must believe in himself herself. One can and will overcome all adversity no matter what it takes.

For longevity one must also walk a mile or two or three every day , in addition , to exercise. One must watch their intake of food. Food is to be eaten like medicine -ordered by physicians and dieticians.

Last but not least- NEVER RETIRE. Remaining in your profession trade or business endows you with your sense of importance and accomplishment.

God helps those who help themselves. The miracle of creation is that God enables man woman to think they are God. Man woman is granted the power -free will - to act like God. If they abuse this power they self destruct , if others whom they abuse do not do it first- legally or not.

These are the general principles in all my books. The rest - the thousands of pages in my writings that appear or will appear in the future on my web site- are the details and illustrations codified as laws.

The Torah given by God consists of many stratus . It has the literal meaning Pshat. -The Written law . Then there exists the Oral Law that today is the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud that is summarized by the Shulchan Aruch . Then there exists the mystical torah -Nistor the Kabbalah that is recorded in the Zohar and Commentaries. Then there is Drush. -insights that individuals throuh out the generations question the contents of the Written Torah and offer their own insights. This iS what Aruch Hashulchon describes in laws of blessing in the morning. Jews make a blessing that God gave the Torah pat tense . They also make a blessing that God gives the torah present tense. In every generation man is given an opportunity to

add on to God's Torah by offering his own observations. These observations are called Drush.

It is Drush that I have offered above about the story of Purim.

I will now elaborate on some difficult passages on the Chumosh Tanach the Hebrew Bible in Beraishis Genesis .

In the first chapter of the book of Beraishis - Genesis "God worked and created the world in six days and rested on the Seventh day." Question God is all powerful-Omnipotent. God does not get tired . Why did God have to rest?

Possibly an explanation could be the following. In the first Six Days God exercised only Divine Providence the first Six Days of Creation. The Six Days are Periods - a measurement employed by God. In human terms they could

be the equivalent of zillion of years.

On God's Seventh day another period of God's years God did not use only Divine Providence , but mandated that man/woman participate in the continuous creations and maintenance of the universes that are being constantly created and destroyed by God as well as man/woman . That is the meaning of God rested. That God made man/woman a partner in the creation of the universes. That is the meaning of the Talmudic statement that everyone must say because of me God created the universe. God makes man/woman a partner in creation . It is not only Divine Providence; but also the input of man/woman.

In the same sense , man/woman can create Torah -Drush by recording their observations and difficult passages or passages that beg for an explanation and present problems for the student of the Bible. As a matter of fact not only believing Orthodox Jews study the Bible ; but also non observant Jews , non Jews , Christian theologians , Muslim theologians Budhists and men /women of all faiths ,as well as, skeptics and atheists. We have Bible critics employing modern scientific technics and experts in ancient languages comparing the texts of the

Bible to other ancient religious manuscripts and books who claim that the ideas of the Bible are present in other religious and ancient legal manuscripts dating back 4000-5000 years ago. There could have been borrowing one religion and culture from another. There exist many schools of Bible study among Jews, Christians, and Muslims that fall into two main categories: traditional and reform. The traditionalists consider the words of the Bible God-given and sacred, while the Reform and Bible critics consider the Bible an anthology of many human authors over hundreds or thousands of years that patched together what today is the Bible.

Each of the schools begins with the premise that mirrors their basic beliefs or disbeliefs. Thus their questions certainly merit understanding and attention. Their conclusions, however, are shaped differently by the believer as opposed to the skeptic and atheist. The Bible then becomes another manifestation of the ideas and theology of the individual who studies the Bible. Each of the queries of the skeptic and non-believer and Bible critic have been examined carefully and answered. However, the believer is satisfied while the non-believer will remain unconvinced.

However Bible scholarship becomes richer from the wealth of questions and the attention that the Bible study elicits from a broad spectrum of the world population. My own website

god life jewish israel by moshe siselsender received 4 billion hits at another time I got 5 billion hits. Now it is receiving between 500,000.000 and 900.000.000 hits.

Now back to Drush and let us examine an other problematic area of the Bible . Again we will turn to Beraishis Genesis. Immediately after the Bible related that God creates the universe and creates Adam and Eve we are treated to the adventure of Eve and snake . The snake has a conversation with Eve and tempts her to partake of the fruit of the tree of wisdom. Eve hesitates at first informing the snake that God forbade man/woman to eat such fruit. The snakes logic prevails. Eve tastes the fruit and finds it delicious. Then she convinces her husband to eat. God then appears punishes both of them by driving them out of the Garden of Eden and both must now die. Would they have listened to God they could have lived for eternity.

This story is extremely problematic if taken literally. How can a snake talk?

The same question of an animal talking arises in the book of Numbers when Bilaam is hired by the King of Moav to curse the Jews. He sets out on his journey to the appointed place but in the middle of his journey his donkey lies down and refuses to move even after Bilaam strikes it several times. The donkey suddenly opens her mouth and addresses Bilaam why are you striking me. “Don’t you know that an angel with a raised sword will slay me if I move?”

Since when do donkeys talk?

These are not my questions and they were not raised by Bible critics or the reform school of Bible studies. A Talmudic sage and great Jewish philosopher asks these questions. His name is Rav Saadia Gaon. He lived over 1000 years ago.

Rav Saadia Gaon replies that in both cases - Eve and Bilaam both individuals had dreams .that the snake talked and the donkey talked.

Reality was something else. The lesson of Eve Adam and the snake is that boundaries exist and must be respected. Man/woman are not free to ignore boundaries. If

they ignore the boundaries they may very well self destruct. . If a person jumps from a twenty story floor he/she will die. If a person engages in unsafe sex with no protection he/she may get sexually transmitted diseases. If a person over doses on drugs they may die. .

The Torah employs animals talking to demonstrate that such a person who ignores boundaries is dumber than an animal. Animals will escape danger and will not eat anything that is poisonous. But stupid people do.

The same moral lesson is taught in the story of Bilaam .

Rav Sadia Gaon was not afraid that his interpretation would open the door wide to impugn all the miracles mentioned in the Bible. The first miracle is the creation of the world by God Yash Meain - reality from nothing. That God exists and is the sole creator is testified every instant by the eternal cycle of birth and death. How a seed vegetable animal human once planted can develop into a plant animal or human is the greatest proof of the Providence of the Creator.

The miracles preceding the exodus from Egypt the miracles of the splitting of the Red sea the saving of the

Jews and the drowning of the Egyptians are a historical truth. The giving of the Torah both Written and Oral now in the Talmud summarized in the Shulchan Aruch is a historical truth . This truth of Revelation 3500 years ago was witnessed by millions of Jews and non Jews written down on payrus that the Jews took with them from Mount Sinai and transmitted over 3500 years to us. The survival of the Jews for 40 years in the desert fowing the Exodus from Egypt and the Revelation at mount Sinai is a historical truth.

Not all details of the stories narrated in the Bible were transmitted. Thus the details about the story of the snake tempting Eve and the donkey of Bilaam were not transmitted. . they are open to interpretation. What ever way one interprets these story it makes no practical difference. One is not obligated to draw any one truth from Medrush . The story of the Snake of Eve and the donkey of Bilaam are Drush.

Not all the details of stories written in the Torah were revealed and are open to interpretation. One is permitted to see in all the stories an eternal code of ethics

and morality. and a code of conduct for Jews and non Jews to achieve eternity and salvation to inherit spiritual ever lasting life.

Such explanation can also be applied with the story in Tanaach Samuels II when the prophet Elijah escapes capture and death by flying away from the wicked Queen Ezebel wife of King Ahav , Elijah at the end flies away in a fiery chariot straight to heaven. Such a story is difficult to comprehend unless we agree that a miracle occurred.

The same is true with the story of Joshua the successor to Moses who stopped the sun and it remained light the whole night while he was engaged at a battle. It does not make sense. If we believe in miracles ok.

The same is true with the story of whale swallowing Jonah ben Amitai and spitting him out three days later to warn Ninveh that they would be destroyed if they do not repent.

All the details of the above stories were not revealed and of course are open to interpretation.

Maimonides in his Guide to the Perplexed incorporates the Medrash that at the twilight of the Sixth day of Creation God created all the future miracles when He would change the laws of nature.. Thus Maimonides reconciles his position that God will never destroy the universes and make changes with the historical advent of miracles. Miracles are not a change; they always existed. God in His Providence determines when to apply the miracles or not.

The Talmud writes and Maimonides copies in The Guide to the Perplexed that the story of Eyav Job never occurred. It is a work of fiction. only written as a philosophical text to show how one man coped with tragedy. That at the end God compensated him for his faith in God.

I personally believe literally that all the stories in the Bible did occur historically. However I will not label one who questions them and has an explanation other than a miracle a heretic. The same as true regarding the tradition that Eljah was the Biblical Pinchos the son of Aaron.and he lived 400 years . Another opinion is that he was the

reincarnation of the soul of Pinchos. So we are presented with a difference of opinions who really was Elijah.

So we can live and remain believers if we question the detail of all the miracles. At the end we can remain believers in the miracles and accept the fact that we can not fathom all phenomena in the real world so much less the mystical and miracles in the Bible. All life is a miracle. And miracles by definition are supernatural and transcends mortal under standing. Let us be humble enough to concede this realty.

