

PROOFS

Prepared by Ner LeElef

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

- i- What are we looking to prove?**
- ii- What constitutes a proof?**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

i-What are we looking to prove?

If G-d has a purpose for man then it should be available to anyone who looks for it, during any time, including the present¹. He must have also had a mechanism for revealing His will originally, in a way that is accurate and that is above suspicion. This mechanism was the prophecy that the whole people had at Sinai.

The Jewish claim is that:

- i - There is one G-d who created the world for a purpose;
- ii - This purpose is the תורה;
- iii - G-d chose the Jewish people to receive and observe that תורה;
- iv - The תורה was given in a such a manner that it is verifiable by virtue of what is being claimed by the Sinai experience and its surrounding history;
- v - The authentic interpretation of that תורה is still available and can be shown to be the only possible, intended interpretation;
- vi - The claims of other religions are spurious.

There are several sub-claims to this, such as the Torah is comprised of the Written and the Oral Laws.

ii-What Constitutes a Proof?

There are reasonable proofs for each one of these points. However, the word proof itself must be defined as there is no such thing as an absolute proof in the sense that a particular explanation would be the only possible explanation for a group of phenomena. Rather, the standard that we will use is the standard of science, i.e. that this particular explanation is **the best possible explanation amongst all the alternatives**. The criteria that science uses is that **the theory must be the simplest amongst the alternatives and that it unifies the most amount of information**². In theory, it must also be falsifiable in principle and stand up to experimentation in practice.

Proofs in History

¹ (See Permission to Receive, Lawrence Kelemen, pg. 24-25)

² There is a third criteria, that the theory should be beautiful, but this is not easy for the layman to understand nor to apply as it refers to mathematical beauty.

In order to know what standard to use in assessing the Torah claim to truth, we must understand what standards are used in general in assessing historical and other truths. We must also understand how reliable these standards are and whether the Torah provides us with a higher, more acceptable standard.

In practice, it is very hard to establish anything as being absolutely authentic when talking about the past. It is in fact very rare that historians disagree on whether a famous historical figure existed at all or not. But even this is not unprecedented¹. However, there are many disputes about whether a particular event happened², when it happened³, who made it happen⁴ and how it happened⁵: all have been shown to be subject to different opinions that are very far apart. It will be clear from the examples below⁶ that almost no historical “fact” is safe from some challenge to aspects of its authenticity. We are not witnesses to the past and we can only decide, on balance, what the truth really is. Given these insights, it will become clear that the Jewish legacy of a G-d-given Torah at Sinai is exceptional in the standards of verification which it meets. This we will show in the course of this book.

There are many instances of historical myths that might easily have gone on as historical fact⁷. For example, history books record that on learning that *Boston widow Lydia Bixby had lost all five of her sons in the war*, Lincoln ostensibly sent her a brief but exquisite letter of consolation. It extolled, among other virtues, “the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid

¹One such famous case is the story of the female pope. The story of a pope named Joan, writes historian J.N.D. Kelly in his *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, “was accepted without question in Catholic circles for centuries.” Only after the Reformation, when Protestants used the story to poke fun at Roman Catholics, did the Vatican begin to deny that one of its Holy Fathers had become an unholy mother.

The chief weakness of the Pope Joan story is the absence of any contemporary evidence of a female pope during the dates suggested for her reign. In each instance, clerical records show someone else holding the papacy and doing deeds that are transcribed in church history.

Another problem is the gap between the alleged event and the news of it. Not until the 13th century—400 years after Joan, by the most accepted accounts, ruled—does any mention of a female pope appear in any documents. That’s akin to work breaking out just now that England in 1600 had a queen named Elizabeth.

²See the case of Marco Polo below where we discuss whether he actually did visit China

³See the story of the Sphinx below

⁴See the dispute on Shakespeare and Homer below.

⁵See the case of Davie Crocket below.

⁶The information for the following is based on several articles in U.S. News & World Report, July 24-31, 2000. (Articles by H.J. Morris; James M. Pethokoukis, Jay Tolson, Andrew Curry, Lewis Lord, Michael Satchell):

⁷Probably one of the most enduring myths is the island of Atlantis. The destruction of the island is based solely on a Platonic account of a utopia gone bad. Most scholars think it’s a fable. Yet the search for Atlantis is *the* historical mystery cottage industry. There are hundreds of books on the subject, and it’s been “found” in dozens of locations and a recent study showed that about 1 in 3 college students believes in Atlantis.

so costly a sacrifice on the altar of Freedom.” The 1864 letter, considered by Lincoln scholars to be a masterpiece on par with the Gettysburg Address, attained even greater fame when it was read at the start of the 1998 film *Saving Private Ryan*.

But Lincoln probably didn’t write the letter—his secretary, John Hay, did¹. And Bixby was a liar (only two of her five sons died in the war), a Southern sympathizer, and the mistress of a whorehouse².

Or take the famous story of *Davie Crockett*. Mexican Army officer Jose Enrique de la Pena says that Crockett did not die fighting on the ramparts of the Alamo but was executed on the order of Mexican Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

Dating an event or an object is also a real challenge. Mainstream Egyptology says the Sphinx was carved from bedrock the reign of Khafre (2520-2494 B.C.) as a self-tribute to the pharaoh. Then, in the 1979 book *Serpent in the Sky*, John Anthony West proposed that *the Sphinx was far older than the pyramids*—and that its severe weathering and erosion were caused not by winds and blowing sand, but by rain. *Ipsa facto*, the Sphinx must have been built thousands of years earlier, back *when arid Egypt was all wet*.

Support for Anthony came in 1990 when Robert Schoch found rock fissures in the Sphinx that suggested creation by running water or rainfall. He concluded that the front and side dated from 5000 to 7000 B.C. (although no one disputes that it was later re-carved as a royal totem). But if Schoch is right, a cruder yet still impressive “proto-Sphinx” was carved in the even more distant past.

Egyptologists attribute the Sphinx’s weathering to wet sand from Nile floods, or morning dew that condensed and expanded natural salt in the rock, causing layers to flake off. “But none of us can prove our point,” admits James Harrell, a geology professor at the University of Toledo and a “wet sand” proponent. Both sides spin out analytical articles.

Or take *Homer’s epic poems*. The great scholar-librarians of Alexandria never doubted Homer’s standing as sole creator, nor did the Renaissance humanists. Then, in the early 1700s, Giambattista Vico suggested that the Homeric epics were products of the collective folk genius of the Greeks and not a single mind. Out of the swirl of disagreement came new arguments, including the proposal an ur-Homer wrote shorter versions of both poems; generations of oral performers reworked the poems before they were recorded again.

Another famous disputed authorship is that of *Shakespeare*. Over the years, many have expressed doubt in Shakespeare’s authorship. Despite more than two centuries of research, there isn’t a scrap of documentation that Shakespeare, the Warwickshire merchant, ever wrote anything in his life.

Shakespeare at best had only a grammar school education, and he is not known to have traveled beyond Stratford and London...How, say skeptics, could he have accumulated the vast knowledge of royalty, court life, politics, and foreign lands—particularly of Italy, where several plays are set—woven through such a sophisticated body of work? Whoever wrote the plays and sonnets had a rare breadth of knowledge in numerous disciplines, including physical sciences, medicine, the law, astronomy, and the Bible.

¹The historian Burlingame compared each word in the letter with the words in a database of Lincoln’s writings. Then he did the same for Hay, but without a computer: He “read everything John Hay ever wrote.” Words used often in Hay’s writings like “beguile” (at least 30 times), but nowhere in Lincoln’s, were clues. And he found a copy of the letter pasted in a scrapbook Hay kept of his media mentions.

²Tradition says she loathed Lincoln and tore up the letter.

Shakespeare died in obscurity and was buried anonymously. Six years after his death in 1616, the first edition of Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* was published, listing the Elizabethan era's greatest poets. Heading the list was *Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford*. In this and three succeeding editions, there is no mention of Shakespeare by any spelling. Eighteen years after Shakespeare's death an engraved monument in a Stratford church shows him holding what appears to be a sack of grain. A century later, the sack became pen and paper.

The 17th Earl of Oxford died in 1604 before a third of the plays were published, but his supporters argue that they could have been written and kept under wraps or that the publication dates are inaccurate. He earned two master's degrees, studied law for three years, traveled extensively throughout Italy, and had an intimate view of court life and politics. A playwright and author of sonnets, he ceased publishing under his own name in 1593- the same year that the name William Shakespeare appeared on a manuscript. It's probably a pseudonym, because hyphenation was rarely used then. And the name points to de Vere. His family crest contains a lion shaking a spear, and, at court, says Lord Burford, he was known as a "spear shaker."

The pen name was almost certainly for protection.

Mounting evidence appears to strengthen de Vere's candidacy. None is more persuasive than an eight-year study, completed in 1999, of the heavily marked and annotated Geneva Bible owned by de Vere. More than one fourth of the 1,066 highlighted passages appear in Shakespeare's writings—phrases like "weaver's beam" and "I am that I am" and unusual names like "Achitopel." In addition, 29 of the playwright's 66 most prominent biblical allusions are also marked.

If this is the case when talking of dates or people, it is ever more so when trying to interpret events.

The Legend of "*Custer's Last Stand*" blazing away till the very end with his pistols was an icon of the American West. But, by analyzing the distribution of cartridges unearthed on the battlefield, Richard Fox is claiming that the outcome was a function of panic and fear.

Fox dismisses Indian descriptions of the soldiers' bravery recorded just after the battle, noting that tribal leaders were likely trying to salve white pride during sensitive treaty negotiations. "Later on, when the fate of the Indians was sealed, they opened up more," he says. Subsequent accounts describe Custer's men running like "a stampede of buffalo," [shooting] like drunken men, firing into the ground, and into the air, wildly in every way."

Expecting an easy victory, Custer was thrown on the defensive, Fox argues, and his command collapsed.

Other scholars disagree, calling the concentration of bodies found on Custer Hill evidence enough for the idea of a "last stand."

While Custer's is a case of how to interpret events, more serious are cases where the reality of the entire event is brought into question.

One such case is that of the most famous early European explorer to Asia, *Marco Polo*, who wrote up his travels in his 1298 book *The Travels of Marco Polo*. According to critics, he never even set foot in China. Had he been there, they argue, he would have reported the important aspects of 13th-century Chinese life that went unmentioned. Among his omissions: tea drinking, calligraphy, the binding of women's feet to keep them small, and, most glaring, the Great Wall of China.

Using arguments of omission are good for sowing doubt but do not stand up to much of the evidence in favor of Polo being the real thing.

Polo's main point—that a rich urban civilization existed in the East—was precisely on target. And Polo reported some unusual sites that were remarkably accurate. He writes of a giant sand dune that made rumbling sounds. Today, in a Chinese desert, guides point to what Polo apparently saw—the Mingsha Dune. At another Silk Road site, locals still cross a river on rafts of inflated pigskins, just like he writes.

While Polo said nothing about calligraphy, he did tell the West about paper money, which China had used for centuries. From Polo, the West learned of China's "large black stones which...burn away like charcoal."

Polo's supporters say that in his day, the Great Wall wasn't all that great. First built 300 years before the birth of Christ, much of it had crumbled by the 13th century. Almost everything the tourist is normally shown today was built in the 16th century, they say. Tea drinking had yet to catch on in the north and central regions where Polo resided. Foot binding was limited "to upper-class ladies...confined to their houses." And so the debate continues.

What we will show below is that not only does Judaism reach the highest standards of verification for historical proofs, but that it meets an even higher standard – scientific proof. We now turn to this.

Scientific Proof

Even in science, there are no absolute proofs for anything. The most rigorous of disciplines, physics, never claims that this or that particular theory is ever proven beyond a doubt. Rather, as Sir Karl Popper states it, the most we can say about a scientific theory is that it has not yet been disproved. For every accepted theory, there are always competing theories that are 'possible' alternative explanations. A scientific theory is accepted not because it is absolutely proven but because it is the best, most probable theory to explain a given set of phenomena (whether it is a best explanation by criteria of internal logic, empirical verification, scope simplicity, etc.). When judging the authenticity of the תורה we need to be as rigorous as scientists; anything less is not acceptable, anything more is not possible.

"The goal is not to remove every conceivable alternative; it is to present Judaism as the most probable alternative." Therefore, merely citing a conceivable alternative is not relevant.¹

Secondly, we are not judging each "proof" on its own. The fact that there are so many separate proofs for the תורה is very important. It is all the proofs together which make the תורה claim so powerful.² "No one piece of evidence is enough. It is all the evidence together – [the accumulative effect] which is enough."³

¹ Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb, Living Up pg. 53

²When Hubble first proposed the Big Bang theory in the late twenties, based on the expansion rate of the universe, many scientists did not accept the theory. It was only after other proofs were added, such as the background radiation discovered in the sixties, that all scientists accepted the theory as true.

³Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb, Living Up pg. 53

See **Appendix A: Truth** for what comprises "proofs".
See **Science Booklet** for full discussion on what comprises a scientific theory.

CHAPTER TWO: PROOFS FOR G-D

i- Science

a - The Big Bang

b - Matter is Energy/Fields

c - Probability

d - Punctuated theory of evolution

e - Supersymmetry

f - Anthropic Principle: The Principle of Design

ii- Philosophy

iii- Morality

iv- Spirituality

v- Overlap with other proofs

CHAPTER TWO: PROOFS FOR G-D

Proofs for God come from many different sources:

- i- Science**
- ii-Philosophy**
- iii-Morality**
- iv-Spirituality**
- v-Overlap with other proofs**

i-Science¹

- a - Big Bang
- b - Matter is Energy/Fields
- c - Probability
- d - Punctuated theory of evolution
- e - Supersymmetry
- f - Anthropic Principle: The Principle of Design

a-The Big Bang:

This showed that the world had a beginning.

The Creation story was, for most of history, unique to Judaism and its daughter religions. For nearly 3000 years it was regarded as being out of step with science and with philosophy. It was only in the 1960's that the entire scientific community finally accepted the Big Bang, when background radiation, representing the afterglow or echo of the Big Bang, was discovered. (One of the co-discoverers of this, both of who won Nobel Prizes, is an Orthodox Jew named Arnold Penzias.)

Scientists today believe that prior to the Big Bang the world was condensed into an infinitely small point. This is indeed how the רמב"ן understands מעשה בראשית :

רמב"ן בראשית א א :

¹ Reggie White's Search for Truth, by Ben Rabizadeh, from Aish Hatorah Resources, www.aish.com: Just a few weeks ago, a story hit the newspapers of an announcement by a man named Anthony Flew that "God" is the only rational explanation for the origin of life. ... for the past six decades, Flew was internationally known as a leading atheist -- spreading his philosophy in widely-circulated books and in lectures at Oxford and other prestigious universities. Now, Flew counts among his influences Dr. Gerald Schroeder, a scientist and observant Jew. Says Flew: "[Science] has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved." It is said as well that Albert Einstein arrived at belief in God by seeing more and more the unity of the physical universe. There is a power to one who sincerely asks the question "why?" over and over again. It seems that no matter what the starting point -- as a philosopher, sociologist, physicist or homemaker -- one will eventually reach the same conclusion. Life, for many, is spent looking for the truth. Some scientists spend their whole lives focused on this goal. ...

בתחלה ברא אלקים את השמים ... ואת הארץ שהוציא החומר שלהם מאין... והנה בריאה הזו, שהיא כנקודה קטנה דקה ואין בו ממש

For a detailed explanation of the Big Bang, and the resistance of the scientific community to accepting it, including Einstein, see **Science Booklet, Appendices**.

(Note: Although there exists one explanation as to how something could have come from nothing (out of the negative vacuum during the inflationary period according to the inflationary model of the Big Bang), nevertheless this is pure conjecture and is not adhered to by most scientists. It is, in any case, much less likely than the explanation that G-d created the world. If He created the world, then He must exist.)

What happened before the Big Bang?

The Big Bang presumes that there was an explosion from an infinitely dense particle. Where, however, did that first particle come from?

Robert Jastrow writes as follows (G-d and the Astronomers pg. 121-5):

“A few scientists bit the bullet and dared to ask, “What came before the beginning?” Edmund Whittaker, a British physicist, wrote a book on religion and the new astronomy called *The Beginning and End of the World*, in which he said, “There is no ground for supposing that matter and energy existed before and was suddenly galvanized into action. For what could distinguish that moment from all other moments in eternity?” Whittaker concluded, “It is simpler to postulate creation ex nihilo - Divine will constituting Nature from nothingness.” Some scientists were even bolder, and asked, “Who was the Prime Mover?” The British theorist, Edward Milne, wrote a mathematical treatise on relativity which concluded by saying, “As to the first cause of the Universe, in the context of expansion, that is left for the reader to insert, but our picture is incomplete without Him.”

“But the views of most physicists and astronomers were closer to that of St. Augustine, who, asking himself what G-d was doing before He made Heaven and Earth, gave the reply, “He was creating Hell for people who asked questions like that.” In fact, some prominent scientists began to feel the same irritation over the expanding Universe that Einstein had expressed earlier. Eddington wrote in 1931, “I have no ax to grind in this discussion,” but “the notion of a beginning is repugnant to me ... I simply do not believe that the present order of things started off with a bang ...the expanding Universe, is preposterous ... incredible ... it leaves me cold.” The German chemist, Walter Nernst, wrote, “to deny the infinite duration of time would be to betray the very foundations of science.” More recently, Phillip Morrison of MIT said in a BBC film on cosmology, “I find it hard to accept the Big Bang theory; I would like to reject it.” And Allan Sandage of Palomar Observatory, who established the uniformity of the expansion of the Universe out to nearly ten billion light years, said, “It is such a strange conclusion ... it cannot really be true.”

“There is a strange ring of feeling and emotion in these reactions. They come from the heart, whereas you would expect the judgments to come from the brain. Why?”

“I think part of the answer is that scientists cannot bear the thought of a natural phenomenon which cannot be explained, even with unlimited time and money. There is a kind of religion in science; it is the religion of someone who believes there is order and harmony in the Universe. Every event can be explained in a rational way as the product of some previous event: every event must have its cause: there is no First Cause. Einstein wrote, “The scientist is

possessed by the sense of universal causation.” This religious faith of the scientist is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning under conditions in which the known laws of physics are not valid, and as a product of forces or circumstance we cannot discover. When that happens, the scientist has lost control. If he really examined the implications, he would be traumatized. As usual when faced with trauma, the mind reacts by ignoring the implications - in science this is known as “refusing to speculate” - or trivializing the origin of the world by calling it the Big Bang, as if the Universe were a firecracker.

“Consider the enormity of the problem. Science has proven that the Universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks: What cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the Universe? Was the Universe created out of nothing or was it gathered together out of pre-existing material? And science cannot answer these questions, because, according to the astronomers, in the first moments of its existence, the Universe was compressed to an extraordinary degree and consumed by the heat of a fire beyond human imagination. The shock of that moment must have destroyed every particle of evidence that could have yielded a clue to the cause of the great explosion. An entire world, rich in structure and history, may have existed before our Universe appeared; but if it did, science cannot tell what kind of a world it was. A sound explanation maybe exists for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, science cannot find out what the explanation is. The scientist's past ends at the moment of creation.”

“... For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak, as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

Since the time when Robert Jastrow wrote these words, the Big Bang has become a part of scientific orthodoxy and scientists have begun to ask themselves what happened before the Big Bang. The more fundamental question of why there is something at all rather than nothing evokes wild theorizing (and a lot of poor philosophizing) on the part of physicists who are clearly not trained to think rigorously on these issues and as Jastrow points out, poorly equipped emotionally. But even the simpler issue of just how things came about originally is highly problematic for the scientific community.

Some scientists have stated that since that first particle was a singularity¹, when all the laws of physics break down, it is therefore beyond the parameters of science. Yet others claim that the Big Bang detonation itself destroyed all possible information about the prior state of the universe, and therefore the question of what came before was moot. Hence Astronomer Royal, Martin Rees of Cambridge University, “I am relatively confident science can understand what happened after the first millisecond of creation, because we see the fossils, such as the amount of helium in the universe, and these fossils are roughly what theories predict. But before one millisecond there is a barrier to understanding, where we understand little about what the relevant physics might have been.” (In *U.S. News and World Report*, July 20, 1998)

Cosmologist Allan Sandage (whom Jastrow, above, quotes): “The most amazing thing to me is existence itself. Why is there something instead of nothing?” This impenetrable mystery, he said, drove him to be a believer. “How is it that inanimate matter can organize itself to contemplate itself? That's outside of any science I know.”

¹A type of primordial black hole

To this Stephen Hawking responds: “Some people feel that ... the question of the initial situation (is) a matter for metaphysics or religion. They would say that G-d, being Omnipotent, could have started the universe off any way He wanted. That may be so, but in that case He also could have made it develop in a completely arbitrary way. Yet it appears that He chose to make it evolve in a very regular way according to certain laws. It therefore seems equally reasonable to suppose that there are also laws governing the initial state.” (A Brief History of Time, pg. 11)

Many scientists have made elaborate theories which would show how the universe could have produced something out of nothing. None of these theories have shreds of evidence; the scientists themselves admit that what they are engaged in is pure speculation.

Just look at what contortions Stephen Hawking has to go through to come up with a theory which excludes G-d. Hawking proposes a “no-boundary universe”, i.e. a universe which is closed in the shape of a sphere only in four dimensions. Such a sphere would be finite (being a sphere it meets up with itself instead of just spreading out, further and further). However, to get over current evidence which seems to point to an open universe, Hawking had to say that the universe is both a sphere and a horn shape simultaneously depending on one's point of view (i.e. at what point you took a slice of the universe). But all Hawking gains with this complicated model is to be able to explain how the laws of physics as we know them today could have applied to the universe from the very beginning. It still does not explain how the first matter got there.

Some theorists let their imagination go further, claiming that there is a concept called a “Mother Universe”, a timeless dimension that has always existed and always will, bearing daughter universes down an endless corridor of time. One attempt to do this invokes the inflationary model of the Big Bang. According to this the inflationary period of the Big Bang came as a result of a (negative) vacuum, and the pressure of this vacuum produced the enormous energy which led to the Big Bang. These theorists use the fact that particles (called virtual particles) often appear to pop out of nowhere in empty space as well as the idea of quantum fluctuations (also not understood). But, because we do not have a clear understanding of why these things work, this is explaining one thing we do not understand (what happened before the Big Bang) with another thing we do not understand. Anything to avoid invoking G-d! Besides which, sudden virtual particles are always tiny and fleeting, hardly the stuff of which Big Bangs are made.

b - Matter is Energy/Fields

Although not a proof for G-d per se, it does point towards the fact that matter translates into a more non-material realm of pure energy. This suggests the world of the spiritual.

c – Probability

This allows us to believe that not everything is determined. Therefore, there is room for G-d's Divine Providence

d - Punctuated theory of evolution

No mechanism is suggested for this theory –why evolution should move in sudden spurts of very rapid growth with long periods of relative no growth in-between.

e – Supersymmetry

The desire to unify all four forces into one theory of everything shows that scientists believe that everything came from one source.

f- Anthropic Principle: The Principle of Design

All scientists agree that nature appears to have purpose – i.e. that the laws and properties of nature appear to be set up in such a way that they would move towards life in general and (according to Denton) towards man in particular. Each substance, e.g. water, would appear to have 10 or more properties, each perfectly suited for the role that it must play. If any of these properties would be slightly different, life would not be able to sustain itself. Each property also interacts with the other properties and with other substances in multiple ways, all to seeming perfection. In fact, scientists cannot even imagine a theoretical set of substances that could do a better job.

The anthropic principle means that the world shows signs of design, implying that there was a Designer. It was only in the last few decades that it became apparent that the universe is very exactly set up to accommodate life as we know it. Any slight change in any number of conditions would have rendered this life untenable. It is not only this or that variable that makes this argument so impressive. It is the accumulation of all the variables, all being there in exactly the proportion that they need to be, the lack of any one of them rendering life impossible.

This has led most scientists to claim that the world was "designed" for life even if they are careful not to say that G-d was behind that design.

This includes energy levels of the carbon atom; the rate at which the universe is expanding; the four dimensions of space-time, the nature of water, carbon, DNA, proteins, even the exact distance between stars in our galaxy.

These arguments are not, of course absolute proof that G-d made the world. We could always say that all of this is only by chance.

Nevertheless, as more and more exact conditions emerge, this argument does become increasingly more powerful. Even hardcore evolutionists are increasingly subscribing to the anthropic principle. One such person is Conway Morris, professor of evolutionary paleobiology at the University of Cambridge and one of the leading evolutionists in his field. In his book The Crucible of Creation: The Burgess Shale and the Rise of Animals (Oxford University Press, 1998), he argues that if the tape of life were re-run from the Cambrian time we would get almost exactly the same outcome as we have today. “I believe it is necessary to argue that within certain limits the outcome of evolutionary processes might be rather predictable.” And this for a theory which started out saying that everything is a function of random, chance events!

Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld:

This argument should not be stated as saying that the world is perfect, for one could always ask questions like, “Why did not G-d create us with an I.Q. of 180 instead of 120?” etc. In fact Judaism does not believe that this world is perfect. It was designed imperfect to challenge us to engage it, through ourselves, achieving thereby **תקון הפרט** (our own **שלימות**) and through that the **תקון הכללי** (**דעת תבונות**). In other words, it is the perfect world for **עבודה**, but it was not intended to be objectively perfect.

The argument is rather one of saying that the world comprises separate, interacting parts which work together to fulfill a function whose reality is greater than simply the sum of the parts and hence shows design. This argument is used by the **חובות הלבבות** and others, as well as by non-Jewish sources. The classic Jewish **משל** is the waterwheel, while the non-Jewish argument most frequently uses the image of the watchmaker and the eye.

William Paley:

Suppose I see a watch lying on the ground. I would not imagine that it had just happened. Rather, I realize that someone must have put it together. The reason is because the parts of the watch are i-framed; ii-they interact; iii-they serve a purpose. (iv-We can add that this purpose is greater than that which can be achieved by all of the individual part on their own.) This we also see through all creation: parts in one framework working together to serve a purpose. In the case of the watch we see that the parts are rustproof, that it has a glass case to see the time through it, there are coils and springs, etc.

The counter-argument:

We see things that do not seem to show these elements of design, like suffering. Therefore it must be that there is no design. However, this is not true, because we see lots of things that do not show signs of design, but were nevertheless made by a designer. If you see coats thrown over a rack in a random manner, with all-different sizes and kinds – we do not see signs of design here, yet a designer made it. The trash and tin cans on the edge of a highway may have been made by an artist, as an obscure environmental statement. An apparently chance meeting between people may have been a result of design. Showing that there is no design does not prove that there is no designer. However, the contrary, showing that there is design, does prove that there is a designer.

Darwin stated that the hardest thing to imagine happening by chance selection, gradually over a long period of time, is the eye. This is because the great complexity of the eye is huge and one needs all the parts together for the eye to work, what Behe calls “irreducible complexity”. Darwin states that many small changes over a period of time will produce the final result. But why would all of the multiple changes of the eye take place when none of them are functional until all of them are in place? There would be no selective advantage to any of these parts until right at the end.

Or, take poisonous snakes who have a selective advantage over non-poisonous ones. A poisonous snake has 52 separate components designed to make the poison, protect itself from it and deliver it to others. None of these on their own show any selective advantage. For if they did, we would expect to find some snakes with just a poison sack, or with just fangs or with just an antidote. In fact, for every fully developed snake there should be many with just some of the parts, because these parts are not negative. Darwin did not try to discover what the steps were to forming the eye. Rather, he pointed to all the different kinds of eyes that we find in modern species as proof that they all developed separately.

If there were a full deck of cards in exact order, everyone would agree that that is a sign of design. Certainly, this would be the case if there were two decks. Imagine that there were 52 such decks. This is what we have today with the eye, most of its information not available to Darwin at the time (See Eye and Brain by Gregory). Behe shows that each one of the organisms and mechanisms that Darwin thought to be relatively simple are, in fact, staggeringly complex biological processes with a myriad of elements involved.

So much for design in the development of species once life exists. But what of the development of life itself? See Robert Shapiro in Origins: A Skeptic's guide to Creation on Earth. Hoyle, a Nobel prize winner, calculated the odds of the first amino acids to have been formed. We know two items, the length of time we need for each trial and the number of trials that can take place simultaneously. Hoyle takes everything that is most favorable to Darwinism – the best environment producing the most conceivable rapid results. An e-coli bacteria (the fastest reproducing bacteria) takes at least twenty minutes to reproduce. Let us assume that we are talking about a much simpler bacteria and that for this we need only one minute per trial, a highly unlikely but possible scenario. If we take the longest time available for the origin of life on earth we get about a billion years.

What about the substance available? Let us imagine that the earth was covered 6 kilometers deep with the perfect substances needed to make the right materials. It is almost absurd to imagine it that way, but it is possible. It is so unlikely that more than one of these hugely unusual factors came together with any other, but it is remotely possible.

One variation of the anthropic principle is the fact that the world is comprehensible at all. The fact that there are laws at all, that the laws are as they are, that they coincide so exactly with abstract mathematics - all of these things cannot be explained by science itself. They precede science and allow science to take place; they demand an independent explanation.

But in the end, the issue is not whether we can come up with a scientific explanation for what took place. The fact that all these factors are so precise and perfect for the world we need support the fact that this was a planned and guided event; the fact that this plan followed principles, intelligible to us up to a point, is only to be expected from what we know of how the Almighty made His world.

There are other related ideas to the anthropic principle. In The Cosmic Blueprint, Paul Davies writes:

"The universe has never ceased to be creative. Cosmologists now believe that immediately following the Big Bang the universe was in an essentially featureless state, and that all structure and complexity which we see today somehow emerged afterwards. Evidently physical processes exist that can turn a void - or something close to it - into stars, planets, crystals, clouds and people.

“What is the source of this astonishing power? ...

“There exist self-organizing principles in every branch of science. ...

“Many scientists would reject the idea of a cosmic blueprint as too mystical, because it implies that the universe has a purpose and is the product of a metaphysical designer. Such beliefs have been taboo for a long time among scientists. Perhaps the apparent unity of the universe is merely an anthropocentric projection. Or maybe the universe behaves as if it is implementing the design of a blueprint, but nevertheless is still evolving in blind conformity with purposeless laws?” (pp. 1-8)

Besides, there are yet other things fine-tuned to exactitude which cannot be accounted for by any one model. For example, "had gravity been only slightly stronger, stars would burn through their nuclear fuel in less than a year, life would never evolve, much less settle in. Had the strong force that holds the nucleus together been only slightly weaker, stars could never have formed. So far no theory is even close to explaining why physical laws exist, much less why they take the form they do. Standard Big-Bang theory essentially explains the propitious universe this way: "Well, we got lucky." (*U.S. News & World Report*, July 20, 1998)

Of course, it is never possible to prove that G-d created the world beyond any doubt. It is always possible to come up with some theory, however weird, which seemingly accounts for the phenomena being presented. The issue is not whether it is possible to explain the phenomena in a way which excludes G-d; rather the issue is what, on balance, is the most probable explanation. In the above article the following scenario was presented:

"There is, however, a way in which purely chance-based physical processes might have resulted in the present user-friendly firmament. If universes are created all the time, this would greatly improve the statistical outlook of a firmament such as ours being born. This is the idea of the "multiverse" and it is rapidly gaining backing within the scientific community."

"The multiverse notion rises like this: Suppose it's true that, say, black holes are what came before the Big Bang. Since our universe has black holes, couldn't some of them be spawning new firmaments in other dimensions? The result might be an overarching cosmic structure far larger than anything we can see - a multiverse."

Deep in the past "... chance reigned, and many heavens were born with physical laws adverse to life: they collapsed back on themselves or diffused into vapor and were never heard from again. But those universes that were born with physical laws familiar to us were also the ones able to make black holes: that allowed them to trigger "daughter" universes. Over time, a fantastically large and complex multiverse resulted, with most parts of the cosmos having physical laws that allow life-natural selection functioning on a cosmic scale."

"... so far there is no evidence other universes or dimensions exist."

The article provides several alternative explanations, all of them equally speculative. (See above **i a - What happened before the Big Bang?** for further discussion on this issue)

For a more in-depth discussion on these ideas, see the **Evolution Booklet**.

ii-Philosophy

Most great philosophers who dealt with the issue of whether or not G-d exists (metaphysics) concluded that He did. (In fact, most great philosophers, period, believe in G-d.) Most of those who did not believe in G-d were not metaphysicists.

It is not possible to arrive at any definitive philosophical argument for or against G-d. Only at a level of pure deductive reasoning, such as strict application of mathematical formula, is it possible to reach a definitive conclusion. However, all other issues, where the type of logic is inductive, do not lend themselves to watertight solutions. Therefore, 2000 years of philosophical argument have resolved nothing. Western philosophy has not managed to come any closer than

the Greeks did eons ago. The value of these arguments is that today they can be combined with the scientific evidence quoted above.

Nevertheless, we will briefly present (and with great over-simplification) some of the arguments for the existence of G-d. (For more detailed but still easy to understand forms of these and other arguments, see John H. Hick's Philosophy of Religion, Prentice-Hall Foundations of Philosophy Series.) We will deal with is known as the *ontological*, the *cosmological* and the *teleological* arguments.

Ontological Argument

This argument starts by defining G-d as that which nothing more perfect than can be conceived of. Such a being must exist, for if it did not, we would then become involved in a contradiction. Since it is better to exist than not to exist, existence is therefore a kind of perfection or at least a tendency towards perfection. This being so, unless we understand G-d as existing, we would be conceiving of him as imperfect (since we can imagine something more perfect, i.e. an existing G-d), and we cannot attribute imperfection to that than which nothing more perfect can be conceived. The ontological argument starts with an idea inside our thoughts and leads us outwards to seeing that which we understand to be must exist outside of ourselves in objective reality (John E. Smith, Philosophy of Religion, pg. 4, quoting Anselm).

Since G-d in His infinite perfection is not limited in or by time, the twin possibilities of His having ever come to exist or His ever ceasing to exist are excluded, and his non-existence is rendered impossible. (John Hick, Philosophy of Religion, pg. 17)

Cosmological Argument

The Cosmological argument starts with observing that everything in the world outside of us exists as a result of something which caused it. It must have a reason, ground or cause why it does so and otherwise. Now no finite feature in the world is its own ground or sufficient reason. Therefore there has to be at least one reality that is its own ground or sufficient reason within itself. Unless there is a G-d or a self-existent being, nothing could become existent at all (Smith, *ibid*).

Some combine the two arguments, claiming that the cosmological argument really rests on the basic principle that is behind the ontological argument.

Thomas Aquinas offered five different ways of proving G-d's existence, all of them variations of the cosmological argument (Hick pg.20). Aquinas looked at motion, cause, contingent beings, degrees of value and evidences of purpose in nature and traced each of these back in turn to Prime Motion, First Cause, Necessary Being, Absolute Value and Divine Designer. This last proof we have called the teleological proof and have given it separate treatment below.

Teleological Argument – The Argument From Design

Today this became a scientific rather than philosophical argument. We have therefore included this in Chapter Two under Scientific Proofs (**i f**) above.

iii-Morality

Without G-d as a source of morality there can be no absolute standards of right or wrong. Very few people believe in relative morality. Almost everyone believes that it is not merely a matter of opinion or culture whether murder or theft is right or wrong, that there are basic (absolute) human rights which even criminals have (citizens are not free to go and beat up even someone convicted of multiple murders sitting on death row); and equality of opportunity is regarded by many as a principle to which everyone has a right. There is no way in which we can make these claims unless we state that there is a source of morality higher than our own opinions.

On his own, man is not capable of reaching consensus on something as basic as murder. Cannibals felt that the other humans made good food; Nazis felt that whole categories of people did not deserve to live; Serbs felt that ethnic-cleansing justified the killing of Albanians in

Kosovo and Dutch doctors increasingly feel that it is up to them to decide which old people deserve to die. Who is human and who is human enough to live is not something that can be left in the hand of man.

Belief in צלם אלוקים is only legitimate source of universal rights.

All other attempts at justifying universal human rights have failed.

If we are to say that all men are absolutely equal with respect to basic rights, we must then say that they are equal in some basic respect that is of extreme moral importance. Some try to explain that man is uniquely rational and that is why all people are deserving of special rights. But clearly some men are more rational than others, and some are only minimally rational. Some try to correct this by saying that all men are potentially rational. But what about a congenital idiot with an IQ of 20 who is clearly not even potentially rational?

Others point to man's unique sensitivity to pain and suffering as the source of the universal and unique worth of man. But clearly some people are more sensitive to pain than others. Does this make them more worthy of human rights? If we could murder someone suddenly and painlessly who has no one left to mourn for him, would that then be permitted?

Some philosophers have talked about the fact that men are ends in and of themselves, that they are sacred or of infinite value. But this is criticized as only renaming that which has to be explained. The question by what reason are men ends in and of themselves, are sacred or are of infinite value is the same as saying by what value do they merit basic rights. The same can be said of the argument that we have universal worth by our common human ancestry. Again we must ask what it is about our common human ancestry that makes it so worthy of respect.

Because of all of these problems, some philosophers have simply thrown up their hands in despair and stated that universal respect for human beings is in fact groundless, but that it is worthwhile nevertheless. (Based on Social Philosophy by Joel Feinberg, Foundations of Philosophy Series, Prentice Hall, pg. 88-94)

The only source that anyone has found as a source for universal human rights is the fact that G-d put something very spiritual, the soul, into man.

אבות ג: יח
הוא היה אומר : חביב אדם שנברא בצלם...
ובמהר"ל שם : ואם אחר שבחר השי"ת בישראל נתמעט הצלם הזה אצל האומות מ"מ הצלם האלקי הוא שייך
לאדם במה שהוא אדם...
(וכן למד התוספות יום טוב והתפארת ישראל כפשוטו שאפילו להגויים יש צלם.)

רמב"ן שמות כ: יב
לא תרצח - אמר הנה צויתך להודות שאני בורא את הכל ... אי"כ השמר פן תחבל מעשה ידי

Including the Declaration of Independence of USA:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and inalienable rights."

ל state that only כלל ישראל are called אדם. However, non-Jews are included in the name האדם. Just as the First Man was created by G-d, so too, in receiving the כלל ישראל, תורה, was created by G-d; hence they share the name אדם. However, the nations who had to work on

creating their own moral and spiritual identity are more self-made and are therefore not called אדם. They are included in the general name for mankind, האדם.

(מהר"ל על אבות פי"ג משי יד)

See Rabbi Kelemen, Permission to Believe, chapter entitled The Moral Approach to G-d's Existence, pg. 21.

iv-Spirituality

Man is a spiritual being. People are in continuous search for meaning in their lives. When they do not find it they tend to suffer crises of meaning (existential crises). Victor Frankel developed a whole school of psychology, logotherapy, based on this great human need. Most humans feel the urge to grow spiritually. The vast majority of people in the world belong to a formal religion. Many more, despite their lack of formal practice, believe in G-d nevertheless. One study showed that 90% of Americans say they believe in G-d.

One of the most remarkable facts of the twentieth century is the fact that not only did belief in G-d not die out but in many ways it grew stronger. This is despite the ascendancy of secular science, the secular bias in evolution, Freud and debunking of religion and powerful attacks on traditional, religious approaches to the family, abortion, homosexuality and others.

There is no “scientific” explanation for mankind's universal needs for both meaning and spirituality.

v-Overlap with other proofs

Proofs that G-d chose the Jewish people and that he gave them the תורה are of course proofs that He exists¹.

CHAPTER THREE: PROOFS FOR THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

- i- Our survival despite anti-Semitism, size and dispersion**
- ii- Anti-Semitism**
- iii- Fulfillment of prophecies**
- iv- Proofs of Sinai**

¹ ספורנו דברים ד ט



CHAPTER THREE: PROOFS FOR THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

i - Our survival despite anti-Semitism, size and dispersion

The fact is that we have always survived against all sociological predictions. We have most often been a small nation, dispersed over many other nations and subject to all the powerful enculturation of the host country. We have been persecuted, killed, expelled but also subject to times of relative acceptance when the forces of intermarriage and assimilation have been extremely powerful.

Rabbenu Bachya, in his *Chovot HaLevavot* (Sha'ar HaBechinah, chapter 5) writes: If somebody nowadays were to seek something comparable to the revelation of Godly mercies in the Exodus from Egypt, he should critically study the phenomenon of our survival among the nations. For we deny all their beliefs, both publicly and covertly, as they well know. He would then see that, so far as our daily bread is concerned, our standard of living is similar to theirs. It is just as God promised us: "And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly..." (Vayikra 26:44). Or as Ezra put it, "For we are slaves, yet in our bondage God has not forsaken us" (Ezra 9:9).

Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (pp. 586-7):

"The historian should take into account all forms of evidence, including those which are or appear to be metaphysical. If the earliest Jews were able to survey, with us, the history of their progeny, they would find nothing surprising in it. They always knew that Jewish society was appointed to be a pilot-project for the entire human race. That Jewish dilemmas, dramas and catastrophes should be exemplary, larger than life, would seem only natural to them. That Jews should over the millennia attract such unparalleled, indeed inexplicable, hatred would be regrettable but only to be expected. Above all, that the Jews should still survive, when all those other ancient peoples were transmuted or vanished or vanished into the oubliettes of history, was wholly predictable. How could it be otherwise? Providence decreed it and the Jews obeyed."

See **Chosen People Booklet** for further details.

ii - Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism has been unlike any other hatred; the Jews have been hated because they were too rich, and because they were too poor, because they controlled too much and because they did not make enough of a contribution to society, because they refused to become Christians and because they had poisoned Christianity. No one sociological explanation can take account of all its different forms. Nor can it account for the fact that so many different nations have expressed this hate over so long a time and with such intensity.

See **Chosen People Booklet** for further details.

iii - Fulfillment of prophecies

The fulfillment of prophecies – of what would happen to us if we observed the תורה and what would happen if not; of how history would unfold, of what our relationship to the land and to the temple would be – all in great detail.

See Secondary Proofs a i for a detailed description of the prophecies.

iv – Proofs of Sinai

Proofs of the Sinai experience given below also confirm that we are the Chosen Nation. After all, that תורה was given to us.

Carlyle B Heynes:

This one book (the Bible) ... has attracted to it, and had concentrated on it, vastly more thought and has called forth more works, explanatory, illustrative, apologetic, upon its text, its meaning, its geography, its theology, its chronology, its evidences, its inspiration, its origin, than all the rest of the literature of the world put together. An immense bulk of the world's literature owes its origin to this book (in The Bible, Is it a True Book).

CHAPTER FOUR: PROOFS FOR SINAI: **RATIONAL HISTORICAL PROOFS A:**

- i- Skepticism
- ii- Unprecedented Claim
- iii- National Revelation
- iv- Complete Objectivity
- v- Therefore empirical rather than a rational basis to the תורה
- vi- משה רבינו

in a separate Ner LeElef book on the Oral Law, that the Oral Torah had to have been given together with the Written Torah and that we possess that Oral Torah intact.

i-Skepticism

דברים א:יב

איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם

רש"י ד"ה ומשאכם:

מלמד שהיו (ישראל) אפיקורסין הקדים משה לצאת אמרו מה ראה בן עמרם לצאת שמא אינו שפוי בתוך ביתו, איחר לצאת אמרו מה ראה בן עמרם שלא לצאת מה אתם סבורים יושב ויועץ עליכם עצות רעות וחושב עליכם מחשבות

שו"ת הרשב"א ח"א תקמח (בסוף)

וישראל נוחלי דת האמת בני יעקב איש אמת כולו זרע אמת - נוח להם לסבול עול גלות ומה שיגיעם מהאמין בדבר עד שיחקרו חקירה רבה, חקירה אחר חקירה, להסיר כל סיג (dross) מהדברים הנאמרים להם ואפילו

מה שיראה להם שהוא אות ומופת ... אף המסופק ענין משה (they even doubted the authenticity of Moshe) ...
שהיו פרוכי עבודה קשה ונצטוה משה לבשרם ועם כל זה אמר "הן לא יאמינו ליי" (שמות ד) והוצרך לכמה
אותות. וזה אות אמת על עמנו עם ה' שלא להפתות בדבר עד עמדם על האמת בחקירה רבה חקירה גמורה
(until they preside over a massive, complete investigation)

רמב"ם הלי' יסודי התורה:
שומעים ותמונה אינכם רואים זולתי קול... וזה כדי שישתלק מלבם הספק שהיו מסופקים באפשרות הגעת
הנבואה אל האדם שע"ז היו תמהין אחר מתן תורה ואומרים כי מי כל בשר אשר שמע קול א-לקים חיים וגוי'
(שם כו) שיראה שישראל היום סופקים באפשרות הגעת הנבואה אל האדם עד היום ההוא ... ואחר המעמד
ההוא הודו באפשרות הגעתה אמר הכתוב היום הזה ראינו כי ידבר אלוקים אל האדם וחי (שם ה)

שמות יד: יא

[כשרדפו המצריים אחריהם] ויאמרו אל משה המבלי אין קברים במצרים לקחתנו למות במדבר מה זאת עשית לנו להוציאנו ממצרים

דברים א: כז (חטא המרגלים):

ותרגנו באהליכם ותאמרו בשנאת ד' אתנו הוציאנו מארץ מצרים לתת אתנו ביד האמרי להשמידנו

R. S. R. Hirsch:

... How could they, how dared they just quietly assume that G-d would help them in such an extraordinarily miraculous manner, for which there was absolutely no precedent, and which

was so completely against natural expectation. These continuous doubts form an important proof for the truth of Moses' mission, as ר' יהודה הלוי remarks in the כוזרי. Moses had to deal with a clear-minded people whose minds were not befogged by fantastic ideas, and who were not easily taken in or convinced by the first man who comes along.

כוזרי א מט :

... ובא משה ... וחכמי בני ישראל חוקרים עליו על אשר לא האמינו לו כי הבורא מדבר עם אדם, עד שהשמיעם דבריו בעשרת הדברים, וכן היו עמו עמו, ולא מסכלותם אבל מחכמתם, מיראתם תחבולות החכמות השמימיות בעבור הכוכבים וזולתם, מאשר לא יעמדו למחקר ...
עיין קול יהודה ד"ה מיראתם

ii- Unprecedented Claim

No other nation even attempted to make such a claim:

דברים ד: לב
כי שאל נא לימים ראשנים אשר היו לפניך, למן היום אשר ברא אלקים אדם על הארץ, ולמקצה השמים ועד קצה השמים, הנהיה כדבר הגדול הזה או הנשמע כמהו (ע"ש המשך הפסוקים)

All other religions: One man claiming prophecies; a few people seeing miracles; usually from less educated parts of population; miracles often at a distance; done suddenly over short periods of time; recorded much later; etc.¹

¹"Buddhist writings tell us that Prince Siddhartha Guatama launched Buddhism after his solitary ascendance through the eight stages of Transic insight; Islamic texts tells us that Muhammed founded Islam following the first of many personal, prophetic experiences; Christian writings reveal that Paul first met Jesus, converted to Christianity and spread the faith more than three decades after Jesus' death; Joseph Smith, Jr. and his partner, Oliver Cowdery, launched the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints (the Mormon Church) after the two men were visited by angels and long-dead disciples of Jesus; and Sun Myung Moon launched the Unification Church after privately receiving direct orders to do so from Jesus himself. The beginnings of the Children of God, Christian Science, Eckankar, Elan Vital, I AM, and Theosophy – in fact the beginnings of all world religions – are equally unverifiable. Never does a large identifiable group of people experience a prophecy and live to tell others about it. Moreover, in a handful of cases where large groups of people supposedly witnessed miracles, rarely are these witnesses named and identified in any way that would allow for verification; and in the very exceptional cases involving clearly identifiable groups of witnesses, never more than one or two of the religion's current adherents claim to have met or descended directly from the names witnesses." (Rabbi Leib Kelemen, in *Jewish Matters*, pg. 137)

Moreover, the claims of the great Monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, are predicated on the Sinai experience as well.

התוכלו להראות לי כמו "מחולת המחנים" (=שמחת מחנה ישראל בהר סיני) (שיר השירים ז: א) כלומר האומה
תטעון כנגד (אלי שמפתים אותם לדתיים אחרים) ואומרת להם: הראוני כמו מעמד הר סיני ... אז אשוב
לעצתכם (אגרת תימן)

Other religions would have loved to have made such a claim, especially Islam and Christianity, who were claiming to replace the national revelation at Sinai. But as the Kuzari explains, such a claim cannot be invented. The Kuzari explains why it is impossible to lie about such a claim.¹

¹ Listen to Rabbi Gottlieb's five part tape series, "The Historical Verification of the Torah", which deals at length with this point. In V below, we bring the words of the Kuzari.

iii-National Revelation

Had the nation relied on Moshe's prophecy for the revelation, this might have been challenged at some future time by another "prophet"¹. Therefore, it was essential that the whole nation witness the Sinai events:

שמות כ: יד

וכל העם ראים את הקולת ואת הלפידים ואת קול השפר ואת ההר עשן וירא העם וינעו ויעמדו מרחק

Not only did they witness these events, but they participated in them:

דברים ה: ד

¹ רמב"ן דברים ד ט: אם היו דברי התורה באים אלינו מפי משה בלבד אע"פ שנבואתו נתאמתה באותות ובמופתים, אם יקום בקרבנו נביא או חולם חלום ויצוינו בהפך מן התורה ונתן אלינו אות או מופת יכנס ספק בלב האנשים, אבל כשמגיע אלינו התורה מפי הגבורה לאזנינו ועינינו הרואות אין שם אמצעי, נכחיש כל חולק וגו'.

פנים בפנים דבר ד' עמכם בהר מתוך האש
ספורנו:
בלתי חלום ומראות הלילה אבל בעודכם משתמשים בחושים

No philosophical or scientific argument, however powerful, can stand up to this empirical proof¹.

While it is true that the Jewish Nation did not receive the whole Torah at the Sinai revelation but received some of it through Moshe, the revelation was a proof for them that Moshe's prophecy was also authentic² (see vi below on Moshe Rabbeinu's Prophecy).

We stated above that the Kuzari tells us that a claim of this sort, that the whole nation witnessed the events, cannot be fabricated. Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb points out that it is for this

¹ספורנו דברים ד ט: השמר לך מדעות אותם הטועים ומכחישים ... וחושבו הם להביא על כל זה ראיות שכליות ... שראו עיניך הגשמיים בסיני וגו'

²אברבנל דברים ה א (דף סא ד"ה והנה): אם היתה זאת התורה אלוקית, למה מקצתה שמעו ישראל מפי השם יתברך והוא החלק המעטי ממנה עשרת הדברות וקצתה שהוא החלק יותר גדול לא שמעו כי אם מפי משה. ... ולהשיב ... אמר [הכתוב] פנים בפנים דבר ג' עמכם בהר מתוך האש. וגם אנוכי עומד בין ד' וביניכם בעת ההיא להגיד לכם את דבר ד' שהם שאר מצוות כלם. היה זה לפי שאתם יראתם מפני האש ... ומפני זה ראוי לכם שתשמרו את הדברים האלוקיים אשר שמעתם מפי ד' יתברך, כן תשמרו שאר המצוות אשר אנכי מלמד אתכם עיון שאתם בקשתם לשמעם מפי ולא מפיו יתברך. וגו'

reason that UFOs, monsters and the like are always claimed to be seen in isolated farm areas and not in, say, Times Square. Imagine, he says, that someone would call you up and say that he has just seen a spacecraft land in the middle of Times Square. You phone up your friend who works there who says that he sees nothing. You switch on the radio, the TV, look on the Internet – but you see no such report. You call the psychiatric services and have the claimant locked up in intensive psychiatric care. Now imagine that someone claims that such an event took place 100 years ago, and that the entire American Nation was there to witness the events. You find it strange that you never heard such a thing. You ask your 80-year old grandfather who says that he never heard of it and that certainly his parents, who were alive at the time, would have told him

of such an event. You ask around and no one has heard of such an event. Off we go to the psychiatric ward again.

Witnessing of these events by the whole nation required that they all have prophecy. Prophecy is the only reliable way to accurately reveal G-d's wisdom to man.¹ National prophecy is the only reliable way of knowing that the prophecy indeed happened as claimed.

¹ כחרי ג נג: ואיין מבוא לידיעת מצות האלוק כי אם בדרך הנבואה, לא על ידי הקש ולא על ידי סברה, כי בינינו ובין המצוות ההן אין קשר כי אם על ידי הקבלה האמיתית.

For a full discussion on the limitations of reason see the Ner LeElef booklet, *American Society*, Chapter One – xii.

The תורה makes an exact accounting of how many Jews witnessed these events, and then introduces mechanisms to ensure that all of them (i.e. the whole nation) would pass on their testimony to future generations:

דברים ד: ט
רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך
ספורנו ד"ה פן תשכח:
והטעם שהזהרתיך מאד להשמר מזה הוא שיש לחוש פן תשכח מה שראו עיניך הגשמיים בסיני ועיניך השכליים גם כן בפירוש התורה אשר בה הראית לדעת היפך דעותיהם במופתים שכליים

To facilitate remembering, the תורה introduces many מצוות which are זכר ליציאת מצרים or which include mention of that experience (e.g. Tefilin, Mezuzah, Kiddush). In addition, the תורה introduces Chagim which remind us of specific aspects of that entire period of history. Most dramatically, the דברות שניות in פרשת ואתחנן mention יציאת מצרים as the reason for keeping even the Shabbat. Through this, it is the whole nation, and not just one group, who is charged with keeping this historical reality alive and accurate². In this way, parents are charged with communicating this information for the people for whom they care the most, their children, further ensuring that distortions do not enter³.

Archeology has shown that the תורה was written and disseminated to the Jewish people at the time of these events⁴. The fact that this highly skeptical nation accepted this account is their testimony that these events indeed occurred⁵.

iv – Complete Objectivity

The accuracy of the text is confirmed by the honesty with which the תורה criticizes the Jewish nation whenever they engage in negative behavior.⁶ History is most often changed by the

¹ובדברים ד:כג
השמרו לכם פן תשכחו את ברית ד' אלקיכם אשר כרת עמכם

²Rav SR Hirsch, דברים ד ט: The universal tradition by a whole nation from parents to children is the equally unparalleled unique preservation of the fact. ...

קידושין דף ל ע"א: כל המלמד את בן בנו תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו קיבלה מהר סיני שנאמר והדעתם לבניך

Rav Hirsch (ibid) points out that חז"ל say this about teaching a grandson and not a son. For it is only when a son sees that what his father is teaching him is the same as he, the father, received from his father, that he can know that this is the same information that was received at Sinai.

³רמב"ן ד ט: כי לא נעיד שקר לבנינו ולא ננחיל אותם דבר הבל ואין בם מועיל, והם לא יסתפקו כלל בעדותנו שנעיד להם

⁴See Chapter 8, below

⁵Rabbis Shaya Cohen and Yehuda Silver based on the Arachim source book.
Not could they have made it up, as we explained above.

⁶Certainly, it is not good enough only to show that the Torah was G-d given. We have to also show that what we have today is that same Torah, i.e. that our Mesorah is accurate. This we do under the Oral Law.

desire of the national scribes to present the best face of their country, even if this means massive re-writes of history.⁷ Even in our own time, we have witnessed Communist, African, Arab, Nazi and other countries manipulate and distort history to place themselves in the best light. Not so the תורה. Later we will show the archeological evidence, which confirmed the essential accuracy of all the historical details. The willingness of the תורה to show the Jewish people in a bad light, whenever this was truly so, is a further guarantee of its historical accuracy.

Time and again the Jews are showed sinning, doubting Moses and even G-d and being punished for it.

E.g.:

חטא העגל ושבירת הלוחות
המתאווננים והמגפה
קרח
מי מריבה
כזבי
המקושש

Moreover, not only is this true of the nation as a whole, but also of the “heroes” of the nation and the leaders of the people:

- Miriam and Aharon when they speak לשון הרע about משה רבינו
- אהרון – יען לא האמנתם בי להקדישני and משה
- ראוּבֵן with his father’s bed
- תמר re: יהודה

No other nation has been as willing to portray its negative side in the name of historical truth.

⁷Politics and Curriculum: How History Is Taught, By RICHARD ROTHSTEIN: IN 1954, my eighth-grade history teacher in Queens said we could not use the term "Civil War" but must adopt a textbook phrase, "War Between the States." Her instruction was not really about history, but about the controversies of her own day. By saying that the war a century earlier had mostly concerned states' rights, teachers and textbooks minimized the role of slavery and dampened support for a nascent civil rights struggle. Today's texts again call it the Civil War. ... The interplay of politics and curriculum is the subject of Censoring History (M. E. Sharpe, 2000), edited by Laura Hein and Mark Selden. The book recalls a slogan from Orwell's "1984": "Who controls the past controls the future." That is true not only of totalitarians; every nation tries to shape the future when it teaches history. In Germany, war crimes in World War II are acknowledged more forthrightly than in Japan, partly because German policy now favors European unity. Remorse for aggression and genocide was needed to win the confidence of former victims. But German texts give little attention to how the country's big businesses participated in forced labor and extermination policies. Many of those companies are still important, and so it is not surprising that the curriculum papers over their wartime roles. In contrast, corporate collaboration with the Nazis was emphasized in East German texts before reunification. ... Korean texts gloss over collaboration by the nation's elite with Japanese colonial authorities in the first half of the 20th century. Telling that story could tarnish some leaders' present legitimacy. For similar reasons, historians in France also argue about what children should learn of their country's collaboration with the Nazis. American texts once described slaves as content with their lot, and slave masters as benevolent. Books today describe both the inhumanity of American slavery and the genocide practiced against Indians. But many textbooks still tiptoe around causes and conduct of the Vietnam War, to avoid stirring up political divisions dating from that era. For example, many historians say President Lyndon B. Johnson escalated the war for fear of domestic political accusations that he had lost a nation to communism, not only for national security reasons. Most texts don't discuss that.

v-Therefore there is empirical rather than a rational basis to the תורה

דרך ה' - ג-ה-ז :
...הנה שני הדברים השיגו באמת, השיגו תחלה שאמתת מציאותו יתברך אין בו שום ציור כלל ועיקר ...
נתגלית להם גם כן תמונה מן התמונות הנבואיות.

ספר העיקרים ג-ח (בסוף) :
וזה כי למה שרצה השיי לתת תורה עיי משה מנוקה מבלי ספק רצה שתתעלה מדרגתו (של משה ר') באופן
שלא יהיה לכח המדמה מבוא בה כדי שלא יכנס בה.

The כוזרי א:יא, after saying that our belief was based on G-d's bringing us out of מצרים, etc. is challenged:

א:יב

אמר הכוזרי ... וכי לא היה לך לאמר ... כי מאמין אתה בבורא העולם ...

שם יד:

אמר החבר אבל פתיחת דברי היא המופת ...

שם כה:

וכן פתח משה לדבר עם פרעה כשאמר לו אלוקי העברים שלחני אליך ר"ל אלוקי אברהם יצחק ויעקב מפני שהיה דברם מפורסם אצל האומות כי התחבר אליהם דבר האלוקים והנהיג אותם ועשה להם נפלאות, ולא

אמר אלוקי השמים והארץ שלחני אליך ולא בוראי ובוראך וכן פתח דבריו אל המון ישראל אנוכי ה' אלוקיך
אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים ולא אמר אני בורא העולם ובוראך...

See there משל יז-כד - of an unknown Indian king

If rumor: (i) would surely be denied by certain elements of population;
(ii) would have many different forms

After the original revelation, validation through an accurate מסורה:

ר' יחזקאל לאנדא (בעל הנודע ביהודה):
באמת אני תמה איך ישלוט שכל האנושי שיש לו קץ וחלוש מאד, להשיג דבר עמוק שאין לו קץ? ואם אברהם
אבינו השיג מעצמו, זה היה עזר אלוקי והוא התחיל להתלהב והקב"ה האיר שכלו חוץ לטבע האנושי, ודי שאנו
מקובלים דור אחרי דור מששים רבוא שראו בעיניהם וקבלו התורה פה אל פה... (הובא ע"י בנו רב ישראל
לאנדא בהג"ה על אגרת התימן להרמב"ם ואמר שהוא מחיבורו דורש ציון)

משה רבינו - vi

See **Chapter Six v** below, for differences between the level of משה's and other prophets' prophecy.

Although normal validation of prophecy comprises an objective level of behavior and wisdom plus predictions of the future¹, this was not good enough in the case of משה רבינו:

רמב"ם הלי יסודי התורה פ"ח הלי א':
משה רבינו לא האמינו בו מפני האותות שעשה שהמאמין ע"פ האותות יש בלבו דופי שאפשר שיעשה האות בלט וכשוף אלא כל האותות שעשה משה במדבר לפי הצורך עשאו לא להביא ראיה על הנבואה ...

Once the תורה has been brought into the world and the role of the נביא is limited to operating within its context, such criteria are acceptable - but not for the actual bringing of the תורה into the world. On that occasion, the proof had to be provided by the whole Jewish nation sharing in the prophetic experience.

שם:
...ובמה האמינו בו במעמד הר סיני שעיינו ראו ולא זר ואזנינו שמעו ולא אחר האש והקולות והלפידים ...
i.e. the whole nation had a prophetic experience great enough to check out the prophetic experience of עמכם ה' דבר ה' עמכם, משה רבינו, פנים בפנים דבר ה' עמכם, in order to be able to confirm the veracity of his prophecy².

שם:
... והוא נגש אל הערפל והקול מדבר אליו ואנו שומעים משה משה לך אמור להן כך וכך

Prior to this, משה רבינו was not fully accepted by the nation. (The most skeptical nation in history **See above-i**):

שם:
... ומנין שמעמד הר סיני לבדו היא הראיה לנבואתו שהיא אמת שאין בו דופי שנאמר הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב הענן בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם כך יאמינו לעולם מכלל שקודם דבר זה לא האמינו בו נאמנות שהיא עומדת לעולם אלא נאמנות שיש אחריה הרהור ומחשבה. (הלי ב) נמצאו ... כל ישראל עדים לו ... ואינו צריך לעשות להם אות

The אותות given to משה at the burning bush were only temporary validations.

שם הלי ב:

¹(see **Chapter Six iii** below, **Criteria and Evaluation**)

² The prophetic experience of Klal Yisroel is described in the same terms as that of Moshe Rabbeinu, i.e. פנים בפנים. Whether this meant that they were actually at the level of Moshe Rabbeinu is not clear. According to the Kuzari (מאמר ד: יא) at least the prophecy of the 70 זקנים was at this level:
לימים אסף עוד שבעים זקנים ונאצל עליהם מאור הנבואה עד הגיעם למדרגתו.

The Seforno's words on this are:

שמות יט ט': וגם כך יאמינו לעולם: יאמינו אפשרות נבואתך שתיהיה פנים אל פנים עי טמנס אדבר עמנס פנים בפנים בלתי שום חלום כאמרו סנים בסנים דבר ד' עמכם והוא היות האדם מתנבא בעודו משתמש בחושו וזה חשבו לנמנע יאמינו גם כך שתהיה נבואתך באופן זה כאמרו ודבר דק אל משה פנים אל פנים לכן אמרו היום הזה ראינו כי ידבר אלוקים את האדם וחי כי אמנס לא היה ספק אצלם על אפשרות הנבואה והיו יודעים שהאבות ומשה ואהרון ומרים כבר התנבאו אבל לא היתה נבואת שום נביא עד הנה כי אם במראה ובחלום וגו'

וזה שאמר לו הקב"ה בתחילת נבואתו בעת שנותן לו האותות לעשותן במצרים ואמר לו ושמעו לקולך ידע משה רבינו שהמאמין על פי האותות יש בלבבו דופי ומהרהר ומחשב והיה נשמת מליך ואמר והן לא יאמינו לי עד שהודיעו הקב"ה שאלו האותות אינן אלא עד שיצאו ממצרים ...

At פחד יצחק פסח מאמר לו implying that there was some intermediate stage of verification at there. See פסוק the קריעת ים סוף At

See משך חכמה, beginning of פרשת שמות first 4 paragraphs, who asks that although משה's prophecy was authenticated by ישראל, כלל, how did that verify that at some stage after Sinai he did not add to the תורה? He answers: ועל כרכיך שהש"ת שלל ממנו הבחירה לגמרי ונשאר מוכרח: He adds that since יהושע also contributed to the תורה, the same has to be said of him. כהמלאכים

The process of verification of סיני הר מעמד is not only essential to know that the תורה was given by G-d at Sinai but also to know that it won't be changed.

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שזאת התורה לא תהא מוחלפת ולא תהא תורה אחרת מאת הבורא יתברך שמו (נוסח הסדורים)

רמב"ן השמטות לספר המצוות ל"ת ב:
המצוה השניה שלנמענו שלא נשכח את הר סיני ולא נסיר אותו מדעתנו ... והוא אמרו יתעלה (ואתחנן ד:י) השמר לך ושמור נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך ופן יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חיך והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלוך בחרב וגוי'
והכונה בזה גדולה מאד שאם היו דברי תורה באים אלינו מפי הנביא עליו השלום בלבד אע"פ שנתאמת אצלנו ענין נבואתו באותות ומופתים אם יקום בקרבנו נביא או חולם חלום בזמן מן הזמנים ויצונו בשום הפך מן התורה ונתן אלינו אות ומופת תהיה התורה נסוחה על יד השני או יכנס בלבנו ספק על זה, אבל כשהגיענו ביאור התורה מפי הגבורה לאזנינו ועינינו רואות אין שום אמצעי נכחיש כל חולק וכל מספק ונשקר אותו ולא יועילהו אות ולא יצילהו מידינו מופת. שאנחנו היודעים ועדים בשקרותו ובחפזותו שהוא מה שנאמר במעמד ההוא (יתרו יט) וגם בך יאמינו לעולם ... ועם כל הדורות ידבר שלא ישכחו ענין המעמד ...

For this reason, even the Moshiach will not be as great a prophet as Moshe Rabbeinu was¹.

See Chapter Seven for Claims of Other Religions

¹אגרת תימן: שהמשיח נביא גדול מאד וגדול מכל הנביאים מלבד משה רבינו עליו השלום

CHAPTER FIVE: PROOFS FOR SINAI:
RATIONAL HISTORICAL PROOFS B: MIRACLES

i- As verification, only a secondary source

ii- Nature & Verification

-a שמהפך בו טבע הדברים

-b שיהיה הענין הזה לפני המונים

-c יראוהו בעיניהם ולא יגיעם בספור ובקבלה

-d שיחקרו על הדבר ויבחנוהו בחינה אחר בחינה שלא יפול בלב אדם ספק כי יש בו צד

דמיון או צד ספק

iii- Ongoing Miracle in the Land of Israel

a- Miraculous return and survival in modern times

iv- משיח and miracles

CHAPTER FIVE: PROOFS FOR SINAI: RATIONAL HISTORICAL PROOFS B: MIRACLES

נס הוא לשון הרמה פי' שהיא הנהגה מתרוממות מהנהגת הטבע ומיוחד לבניי (שפת אמת בהר תרל"ז ד"ה בפסוק כי תאמרו)

i-As verification, only a secondary source

The purpose of נסים is not primarily to prove that G-d gave the תורה (although miracles do support this); rather, the purpose of נס is to reveal השגחה's השגחה.

מכתב מאליהו ח"א דף 203 :

גדר הניסים הוא, שהקב"ה מראה בגילוי את השגחתו, באופן שכל בעל לב יכיר כי אין זה מקרה טבעי, אלא יד ה' נגלית כאן. ע"כ כשיש נס הבא לטובתנו בעה"ז, כך יש נס המתגלה ביסורינו, כאשר השם ית' מראה השגחתו בגלוי בסייעו לשונאינו...¹

Had Israel been on the level where they were capable, in their entirety, of believing the Sinai events without נסים, the miracles may not have occurred:

כוזרי מאמר ב' ס' ב (יהודה אבן תיבון): ועשה עם משה וישראל (מה שלא עשה עם האבות) ... לא מפני שהם גדולים מאברהם יצחק ויעקב אך מפני שהם רבים והיה הספק בלבבם [משא"כ] האבות [ש]היו בתכלית האמונה.²

נס leads to understanding פרטית :

S. R. Hirsch (תהלים עח: כג-כד)

and that substance which He sent down to them and to them alone was rationed out to them in ... strict accordance with the needs of each individual household. It was quite evident therefore, that

¹רמב"ן, דרוש תורה תמימה

"ונחזור לעניננו שהינו בו לבאר, כי הניסים מורים על החידוש ועל ההשגחה ועל הידיעה, ר"ל ידיעת הפרטים, כי הידיעה קודמת להשגחה, ומפני שהניסים אינם נעשים בכל דור, מפני שאין הדורות ראויין לכך או מפני שאין צורך להעשות, על כן ציוה הקב"ה לעשות זכר לניסים תמיד, והחמיר בהם, כי חייב כרת על מה שלא אכל פסח וכרת על החמץ, וצוה לכתוב הענין במזוזות הבתים, ולהניח הענין כתוב בזרועו כנגד הלב, ועל ראשו כנגד המח, מרכבת הנשמה, ולהזכיר בו בכל יום בפה, וכן תקנו או נהגו לומר השירה בכל יום בציבור, מפני שיש בו זכר ליציאת מצרים ושבת והודאה עליו." "והנה בדברות השניות מפורש, ... ויוציאך ה' אלוהיך על כן צוך לעשות את יום השבת" "וזהו מה שכתוב בדברות, אנכי ה' אלוהיך אשר הוציאך מארץ מצרים"

² אוצר נחמד: ר"ל האבות הם עצמם היו נביאים ... אמנם א"א שיהיו כל עם ד' נביאים ולולא שראו בעיניהם לא האמינו It is for this reason that the Meforshim explain how each one of the מכות, came to show a different aspect of HaSh-m's control over nature. (see Malbim and R. SR Hirsch on the Makos). The Maharal explains that even then, it was clear to everyone that HaSh-m's control extended beyond Mitzrayim. This is why the Yisro's Shmua which caused him to come to join the Jewish people was on Krias Yam Suf and Milchemes Amalek, and not on the Makos:

גור אריה יח א: מה שמועה שמע ... כי כל שאר הנסים פרטים כמו שאמר החרטומים אצבע אלוקים הוא בכל מכות שהיו במצרים לפי שהם מכות פרטים לא נלקה רק מצרים בלבד, והאצבע הוא חלק מן היד, ואין זה הודאה כי הוא יתעלה גדול מעל האלוהים ... עד שראה מלחמת עמלק וקריאת ים סוף שמלחמת עמלק היה בשמים להעמיד החמה לבטל מערכת השמים ... וכן קריעת ים סוף ... כל המים [בכל מקום בעולם] נבקעו ... וראיה לזה שאלו ב נסים לא היו פרטים שהרי לא תמצא יותר משמש אחד בעולם ולא תמצא יותר ממים אחד בעולם ... אבל תמצא שתי ארצות כמו מצרים בעולם ... ולפיכך ... [רק] על הים נאמר היד הגדולה להורות שהמכה כללית

these were acts of Divine Providence, which lavishes loving care upon every single member of ...each and every family in Israel, from the oldest to the very youngest

נס נס leads to understanding נס גלוי

רמב"ן שמות יג: טז :

ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים אדם מודה בנסים הנסתרים, שהם יסוד התורה כלה, שאין לאדם חלק בתורת משה ר' עד שנאמין בכל דברינו ומקרינו שכלם נסים אין בהם טבע ומנהגו של עולם...

נס & טבע come from the same source:

והסביר הפחד יצחק (חנוכה, רשימה, ה, בסוף הספר) :

...כל חוקי הטבע אינם אלא הגבלות. ההגבלות האלו במהותן עומדות הן בסתירה לאותו אור הראשוני שהיה התחלה לבריאת העולם. שכן על האור הראשוני הזה נאמר שבו היה האדם צופה מסוף העולם עד סופו... (בלי הגבלה) ... לחוקים של טבע ... אלא שהאור הראשוני הזה נגנז לצדיקים לעתיד לבא. ... (ו) בכל מקום שחז"ל אומרים על איזה דבר שהוא נגנז ... הכונה היא ... שקודם הגניזה היתה פעולתו בגילוי ולהדיא; ואילו אחר גניזתו אינו פועל אלא ... בהסתר ובכיסוי. מה שאנחנו קוראים נס ומה שאנחנו קוראים טבע אינם אלא שני אופנים בפעולת האור הראשוני הזה. האופן הראשון הוא בזמן שנעשה נקב כחודו של מחט באותה גניזה, ואז ממילא בטל חוק הטבע המשתייך לזה... (= נס). ולעומת זאת בשעה שהגניזה סתומה מכל צד, ואז האור הראשוני הזה אינו פועל אלא בכיסוי ובהעלם הרי אנחנו קוראים לזה טבע. וזה שכתב הרמב"ן כי כל הטבע אינו אלא נסים נסתרים. כלומר, אותו האור עצמו שהוא שרש הנס הוא הוא עצמו שרש הטבע. אלא שפתיחת הגניזה היא נס, ואילו עצם הגניזה היא טבע.

נס leads to understanding טבע

שפת אמת (בהר תרל"ז) :

הנסים והטבעים הכל אחד ובאמת אין נס גדול כמו הטבע שהוא הגדול שבנפלאות המושגים לנו ... ובאמת הדורות שנעשה להם הנסים היה קבוע בהם האמונה והיה שוה להם הטבע והנסים

טבע is essential for day-to-day living:

רב סעדיה גאון אמונות ודעות ד :

... אין הבורא ... משנה דבר... בלי סבה ... לפי שאם נאמין בכך יסתרו לנו מושגי האמת.

וביאר הרב יוסף קאפאח :

כלומר לא ישאר לנו שום דבר ברור, כי אם כל דבר עשוי להשתנות בכל עת וללא צורך לא נוכל להחליט בשום דבר שהוא כך...

רמב"ן בראשית ו יט (נח) :

ועוד עשו אותה (את התיבה) גדולה (אע"פ ש"ס מ"מ היה צריך לנס) למעט בנס כי כן הדרך בכל הנסים שבתורה או בנביאים לעשות מה שביד אדם לעשות והשאר יהיה בידי שמים

This is specifically true when a prophet is using a sign for verification.

נס vs. טבע

Whereas טבע represents HaSh-m's ongoing Hashgacha in the world¹, נס represents a less frequent Hashgacha².

The מהר"ל (גבורות) asks: Is טבע not a better praise of השם - that He is able to use the original, created order in order to achieve His ends rather than having to create something new? The מהר"ל (גבורות) answers that נסים are part of מעשה בראשית and have their own order.

Rav Chaim Friedlander (מועדים ב דף רטו) states that מהר"ל nevertheless agrees that it is a greater revelation of השם's כבוד to be revealed through nature than through miracles.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that טבע & נס are two different מערכות, HaSh-m uses the נסים of טבע in order to effect:

חינוך מצוה קל"ב (מצות אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח):
ידוע הדבר... כי נסים גדולים אשר יעשה הקל אל ב"א בטובו הגדול לעולם יעשה דרך סתר ונראים הענינים נעשים קצת כאלו הם בדרכי הטבע ממשמעו בקרוב לטבע כי גם בנס קריעת ים סוף שהיה נס מפורש כתוב שם ויולך ד' את הים ברוח קדים עזה כל הלילה וישם את הים לחרבה ויבקעו המים והמשכילים יבינו כי ענין סתר זה למעלת האדון ושפלות המקבל ומזה הענין ציונו להבעיר אש על המזבח אע"פ ששם יורד אש מן השמים כדי להסתיר הנס ולפי הדומה שהאש היורדת לא היתה נראית בירידתה מהטעם שאמרנו חוץ מיום ח של מלואים ושל גדעון ומנוח שהיתה נראית³

ברכות לג. מתני':
מזכירין גבורות גשמים (שהיא ענין של טבע) בתחיית המתים מאי טעמא אמר רב יוסף מתוך ששקולה כתחיית המתים
פירוש: ותחיית המתים הוי דבר של העתיד ומ"מ הטבע של השמים של עוה"ז כבר שוב לתחיית המתים

Maharal, Derech Chaim Al Avos:

At the beginning of creation G-d set in nature that specific miracles would happen at precise moments in time (i.e. the sea would split for the Jews, the fire would not burn Chanania, Mishael and Azaria, etc.⁴). These pre-ordained miracles therefore do not result from a changing of G-d's will at these moments; rather, they were set into the very fabric of creation from the

¹ענין בתשובת חכם צבי ס' יח ושם מביא מחכם אחד שהשם טבע לא מוזכר בדברי חז"ל

²מכתב מאליהו

³A deeper explanation of this would appear to be as follows: In his תבונות, the רמח"ל explains that there is a מערכת מערכת, מערכת הנהגת הבורא which is revealed to us; then there is another מערכת הנהגת העולם which really operates the world but which is hidden below the surface. Since מערכת הנהגת העולם is the real הנהגה operating the world but it is hidden, as long as מערכת הנהגת הבורא operates, which is until משיח, there is a basic state of הסתר פנים. (This is similar to the hiding of the לעתיד אור הראשון in the words of the יצחק.) However, at times, there is a גילוי יחודי in this world. (The peeping through of the אור הראשון in the words of the יצחק.) However, even in such a case, the רמח"ל says, HaSh-m still uses the מערכת הנהגת העולם to deliver the הנהגה of גילוי יחודי.

⁴אמר רבי יוחנן תנאי התנה הקדוש ברוך הוא עם מעשה בראשית על הים שיקרע ועל האש שלא ישרוף חנניא מישראל וכו'.

beginning of the world's existence.¹ G-d put these occurrences in nature itself.² He created the world in a complete form; there is nothing new that will ever come into being.³

Chazal say that G-d made a condition with creation which allows Him to sometimes run the world against the rules of nature. G-d did not completely give the world over to nature, as miracles would then require a change. G-d rather connected this world with the Olam HaNivdal in order that if He desired to cause a miracle it would not be a change in creation but instead a part of the original plans of G-d.⁴

ii-Nature & Verification

Three types of נסים:

ספורנו (במדבר כ ג ד"ה וירב העם עם משה):
א – נס נסתר:

¹מהר"ל דרך חיים על אבות פרק ה משנה ו (בשם הרמב"ם): שהקב"ה שם בטבע מתחלת הבריאה שיתחדש הנס באותה שעה שהיה ועשה הנס ולא היה כאן שנוי רצון כלל

²מהר"ל שם: ...וכן דברי המדרש אין לפרש כך כלל שלכך התנה הקדוש ברוך הוא עם הים שיקרע, מפני שקשה על חכמינו ז"ל שנוי הטבע או שנוי הרצון, דבר זה אינו כי אם כך שהיה קשה עליהם שנוי רצון לא היו אומרים כך בנסים בלבד, אבל היה אומר כך אף בלא נסים כאשר פעל השי"ת דבר מה שכן סדר הקב"ה מבראשית כדי שלא יהיה כאן שנוי רק שכן היה רוצה השי"ת לעשות מששת ימי בראשית, ויהיה בטל לפי זה מה שכתב (שמות ל"ב) וינחם ה' על הרעה אשר דבר לעשות לעמו שהשי"ת נשתנה רצונו.

³מהר"ל שם: השי"ת השלים העולם ואין חדש תחת השמש שיהיה השי"ת עושה בריאה חדשה בעולם

⁴מהר"ל: ולפיכך אמרו תנאי התנה הקב"ה עם מעשה בראשית כי לא עם אלו שזכר בלבד התנה, דהיינו מפני שידע השי"ת כי בסוף יהיו צריכים ישראל לזה הנס שאין הדבר כך, רק שהתנה עם העולם הטבעי שלפעמים כשירצה השי"ת יהיה נוהג שלא על פי הטבע... ולפיכך אמר תנאי וכו'. כלומר שלא מסר העולם אל הטבע לגמרי רק היה מקשר העולם הטבעי בעולם הנבדל שיהיה כח עליו לשנותו ואין כאן שנוי בריאה

אבל אנחנו אומרים כי הם עמסו עליהם דבר שלא יתן דעת האמת ולא בדברי חכמים נמצא דבר זה, וכבר הארכנו בזה בספר גבורת השם בהקדמה באריכות, כי אין לומר דבר זה שהידיעה עצמותו והבאנו ראייה מדברי תורה ומדברי חכמים, שהידיעה היא מפעולת השי"ת שהוא מלשון וידע אלקים (שמות ב') אם כן הידיעה היא פעולה מפעולותיו ולא עצמותו, ולמה לנו להכחיש הכתוב בכל מקום:

The Maharal brings this down in connection with the Mishna in Avos:

אבות פ"ה מ' ו: עשרה דברים נבראו בערב שבת בין השמשות, ואלו הן, פי הארץ, ופי הבאר, ופי האתון, והקשת, והמון, והמטה, והשמיר, והכתב, והמכתב, והלוחות. ויש אומרים, אף המזיקין, וקבורתו של משה, ואילו של אברהם אבינו. ויש אומרים, אף צבת בצבת עשויה.

The Mishna tells us that these things were created during Bein Hashmashos on Erev Shabbos. This time was one of Kedusha more than any other days of creation, as it was closest to Shabbos. As this time was most הטבע מן המעלה of all other days of creation, it was fitting for the not-so-natural things to be created then. This is also why 10 things were created at this time (just as the world was created with 10 Sayings), as 10 reflects the higher world:

ופירוש המשנה הזאת מה שהוצרכו חכמים לומר כי יש דברים נבראו בערב שבת בין השמשות, דבר זה הזמן של ערב שבת בין השמשות הוא הגורם. וזה מפני כי שאר בין השמשות שהוא לא יום ולא לילה, ממה נפשך אם הוא יום הרי הוא זמן של ששת ימי בראשית ואם הוא לילה גם כן הוא זמן של ששת ימי המעשה ואין כאן חדוש, אבל בערב שבת בין השמשות מצד שהוא בין השמשות של קדושה הוא יותר במדרגה משאר ימי הטבע שאינם כל כך במדרגה. ואי אפשר לומר שלא יהיה נברא בו דבר שהרי אינו שבת גמור הוא, ואי אפשר שיהיה נברא בו כמו שנברא בששת ימי בראשית שהרי אינו ימי חול גם כן, ולפיכך נבראו בערב שבת בין השמשות דברים שהם למעלה מן הטבע ואינם טבעיים כמו שנבראו בששת ימי המעשה שכל אלו דברים אינם טבעיים. וכל זה כי בין השמשות של ערב שבת הוא למעלה מששת ימי הטבע כמו שהשבת מצד קדושתו הוא למעלה מן ששת ימי בראשית... ולפיכך נבראו בו אלו דברים שאינם טבעיים לגמרי והם קרובים אל הטבע. ...ולכך נבראו בזמן זה עשרה דברים, כמו שנברא העולם בכל ששת ימי בראשית בעשרה מאמדות מצד שהעולם דבק במדרגה העליונה שמורה על זה מספר עשרה ...

כמו ירידת המטר וההמלט מן החלאים ומן הצרות... ישיגוהו הצדיקים בתפלתם כענין ויתפלל אברהם אל האלקים וירפא אלקים את אבימלך וכן ויתפלל משה בעד העם. עיין רמב"ן שמות י"ג: ט"ז

ב – נס נגלה:

לא יוכל הטבע לעשותו באותו האופן אבל יעשהו אחר תנועות רבות במשך זמן... יעשהו הקל ית' על ידי עבדיו עם הקדמת איזו תנועה מסודרת מאתו כענין השליכהו ארצה, הרם את מטך והכית בצור ... תתבאר מעלת השליח ... [שהנס] הנעשה בתנועת השליח הראוי לזה

ג – נס שלא יוכל להעשות על ידי הטבע בכלל

והג' הוא מין מן הנסים שלא יוכל הטבע לעשותו בשום אופן... יעשהו הקל יתעלה על ידי עבדיו בדבור בלבד שהיא פעולה שכלית ויותר נכבדת משאר תנועותיו הגשמיות כמו שהיה הענין בפתחת פי הארץ כאמרו ויהי ככלותו לדבר וגו' ותבקע האדמה וכן בענין עמידת השמש ליהושע נאמר אז ידבר יהושע... ותתבאר מעלת המשלח ... [בנס] אשר לא יוכל הטבע כלל עליו בשום אופן

The ¹כוזרי appears to be talking about this latter criteria. He gives

Four criteria for verification:

- א - שמהפך בו טבע הדברים
- ב - שיהיה הענין הזה לפני המונים
- ג - יראוהו בעיניהם ולא יגיעם בספור ובקבלה
- ד - שיחקרו על הדבר ויבחנוהו בחינה אחר בחינה שלא יפול בלב אדם ספק כי יש בו צד דמיון או צד ספק

א- שמהפך בו טבע הדברים

Change in the Order of Nature - מערכת הטבע, whereas the נסים to the אבות were merely limitations of nature - e.g. the fire could not burn אבינו; the נסים of מוצרים did not lend themselves to natural explanations.

שעורי דעת (א: ח"א, שעור ד' נסים וטבע)

יש שני עניני הנהגה נסית, (א) ההנהגה העומדת תחת השם "ש-ד-י", (והב) העומדת תחת השם "הו"י" ב"ה, והיא ההנהגה שנתחדשה ביציאת מצרים... כי כל הנסים שנעשו לאבות הקדושים היו רק בבחינת הגבלת המציאות..., וזה הי' ענין הנס שלאברהם אבינו שלא נשרף כשהפילו נמרוד לתוך כבשן האש, אבל הנסים שנעשו ביציאת מצרים לא הי' כפי ערך כחם ומעלתם של בני ישראל, כי היו הללו עובדי עבודה זרה והללו עובדי ע"ז..., אבל מכיון שהתראה ה' ברוב גאונו, בשם "הו"י" ב"ה, הרי פעל כאן בכח רצונו העקרי ולתכלית בריאתו

¹מאמר ראשון אות ח

רמב"ן שמות טז ו :

ערב וידעתם כי ה' הוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים ובוקר וראיתם את כבוד ה': והנכון בעיני כי היה הפלא במן גדול מאד כי השלו הגיו אותו מן הים ברוח נסע מאתו כדרך העולם, אבל המן נוצר להם עתה יצירה חדשה בשמים כענין מעשה בראשית, והוא מה שאמרו בו שנברא בין השמשות.

אוצר נחמד (על הכוזרי א פו) :

ד"ה אין בהם מדחה : א"א להתריס בזה כענין שזכר הרא"ע בפי' המן כלפי צפופי המן אשר אמר שהיה כדמות מן היורד בטבע בארצות אלו והוא ז"ל השיב שזה א"א מכמה טענות, האחד שאין יורד היום במדבר הזה שום מן ושקר ענה המן הזה כי ההר הזה ידוע, ר"ל הר סיני עוד ידוע היום, ועוד אף במקום שיורד אינו יורד רק בניסן ובאייר, גם הנותר הבאיש בבוקר ולא ירד בשבת ...

This is the fundamental difference between נסים from the time of the הטבע until Israel went into other times.¹ The תלמוד is full of נסים that the אמוראים did. (e.g. Rav Chanina Ben Dosa who, lacking שמן for נרות שבת, said: מי נרות שבת and תנאים). But these other נסים followed strict rules that basically stretched the laws of nature into new situations or represented the suspension of nature in a very specific time and place. In יציאת מצרים, the very laws of nature were changed (but continued to operate normally for the Jews):

For example:

חרטומי H₂O combined to create not water but blood (According to Rav Hirsch, the חרטומי merely made the water look like blood).

מכת החושך: Darkness changed so that it was no longer merely the absence of light but had active (photon) properties.²

קריעת ים סוף: Water changed so that it no longer acted as a normal liquid, spreading over a surface.

גבורות ה' - הקדמה שניה: Because נסים and טבע do not operate on the same plane, someone at the level of נס can experience the נס at the same time that someone at the level of nature will experience the natural order of that very same thing (e.g. מצרים, water to the Jews).

Change in the מערכת הטבע was necessary to prove that השם is the בורא עולם. It is only מכות, etc. which essentially represented new creations (even if they were created long before) that would prove this. Anything less may have proven that השם provides ongoing השגחה but not necessarily that He is the Creator.

¹The one time that I am aware of that the Maharal refers to a miracle at this later stage as being even greater than the קריעת ים סוף, he says that the miracle only happened at a higher level, but not down in this world:

חידושי אגדות מהר"ל (פרק במה בהמה שבת נ"ג) תנו רבנן מעשה באחד שמתה אשתו והניחה בן ליינק ולא היה לו שכר מניקה ליתן ונעשה לו נס ונפתחו לו דדין כב' דדי אשה והניק את בנו א"ר יוסף בוא וראה כמה גדול אדם זה שנעשה לו נס כזה אמר ליה אביי אדרבה כמה גרוע אדם זה שנשתנו לו סדרי סדרי בראשית. מה שלא הזכיר בשמו מי שנעשה לו הנס הזה, נר' לומר שלא היה הס זה גשמי רק היה מופשט מן הגשמי... לפעמים אעפ"י שימצא הנס בסדר המושכל לא נמצא הנס במורגש, וזה לחסרון הגשמי שאי אפשר שימצא הנס לגמרי בפעל ובמורגש הכל מקום הנס הוא מועיל שנחשב לו שיש פת בסלו...אע"ג שאינו בפעל דבר זה הוא כחו לכל הפחות מה שיש לו מזון מסודר אליו במושכל.

²See עיין פירושו קול אליהו של הגר"א, בראשית א:ב על בריאת בחשך

Nevertheless, even the נסים of מצרים יציאת מצרים are a part of the order of the creation:

מהר"ל גבורות ה' הקדמה שניה :
יש לנסים סדר ג"כ

שעורי דעת (א:ח"א, שעור ד' נסים וטבע)
...כשברא הקב"ה את עולמו...ומצא לנכון להתנות מתחלה גם את אופן ההנהגה היוצאת מכלל החקים
הקבועים...ומעתה לא יקשה כ"כ מדוע ירד פרעה אל הים בראותו כי נקרע לפני בני ישראל, כי הם ידעו כי גם
מה שלמעלה מן הטבע מתנהל ע"פ מערכה ידועה וחקים קבועים.

שעורי דעת (א: ח"א, שיעור ה' נסים וטבע)

אפי' במכת בכורות ... "אני ולא מלאך" ... אעפ"כ ... "והי' הדם לכם לאות על הבתיםהלא לא חפץ ה' להמיתם והיאך ינגפו בני ישראל בנגף ה' את מצרים?...ראינו ברור כי גם הנהגת שם "הוי" מתלבשת בעניני הטבע ... כפי סדר מערכות הבריאה וחקותיהן ... המכות ... ובבריות כאלו הנמצאות תדיר בבריאתנו, ..., ולכן הי' מקום לפרעה וחכמיו לטעות ... שנעשו ע"י פעולה טבעית ע"י משה או אהרון ...

ואלו תתהוינה בריות חדשות לגמרי, שאין להם מציאות בחק הטבע שבראשית היצירה, א"א ששגיגם כלל לפי טבע ענינו, ועל כל פנים לא יהי' בכחם לעשות רושם עלינו, אם לא שאנחנו בעצמנו נשתנה בטבע מציאותנו ונהי' לבריות חדשות מתאימות לענינים החדשים שנוצרו בעדנו...הלא רצונו הי' להביא אותנו ואת כל העולם לתכלית הנרצה לפי מציאות זה ולא אחרת...וכל הנצרך להביא את באי עולם להכרת האמת...הכל כבר מוכן ומתוקן בתוך הבריאה...אולם גם הטבע ... ישנם כחות נסתרים...אשר בהגלותם נכנסים אל רכוש הצבור כחלק מן הטבע התמידית כמו כח החשמל, שרק בדורנו זה נגלה לנו ... שחלק מהם ידוע לחכמים ונביאים וחלק מהם לבא לפומא לא גליא, וידועים רק לבורא ב"ה, והוא מודיע לעבדיו הנביאים בעת הצורך מה שעליהם לעשות כדי להביאם לידי גלוי ... ועוד ישנם דברים שלא נמסרו לשליח, אלא כביכול הקב"ה בכבודו ובעצמו עושה ע"פ המשפט הידוע לו לבדו ... מה שנאמר בדברה הראשונה "אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים"; והראשונים מפרשי התורה הקשו למה לא נאמר בורא שמים וארץ, שזה עקר האמונה ... אבל לפי"מ שבארנו יש לומר בזה טעם נכון בע"ה, כי הלא באמירת אנכי ה' אלקיך באה לידי בטוי ההכרה המלאה במציאות ה' כפי המדה האפשרית שיש בכח האדם להשיג, ולכן א"א הי' לתת מושג נאמן רק באלקות הנמצאת בבריאה לאחר היצירה וכפי מדת התקרבותו והתגלותו של הבורא ב"ה הפעולותיו והנהגותיו הנכרות לנו, שמכלל זה הם שמותיו הקדושים, ורק בזה אפשר לנו להשיגו וחייבים אנחנו להכירו ולהעריכו כפי טבע יצירתנו בבריאה זו ולא זולת ... הנהגת שם הוי' מתלבשת בלבושים של שאר השמות וע"י היא פועלת בהנהגה הבריאה, ולכן גם אחרי התגלות הנהגה זו ביציאת מצרים א"א לנו להשיג את הנהגת שם הוי' ב"ה בהנהגה מופשטת משאר השמות ...

do not undermine the essential order of nature; nor do they permanently change the reality of things. נסים - הקדמה שניה: נסים

טבע created an order of נסים at the beginning together with the order of השם

The order of טבע represents the hiddenness of the אור הראשון; the order of נסים represents the revelation of that אור. If we go high enough we see that both נס and טבע are just expressions of the same thing. ¹פחד יצחק

מהר"ל: אין סדר הטבע מוחלט:

This allows for סדר הטבע to sometimes operate and for סדר הנסים to sometimes operate (and sometimes both simultaneously, e.g. the sun stops at גלגל for ישראל, but not for the rest of the world).

b- שיהיה הענין הזה לפני המונים

Like itself, the מעמד הר סיני took place in the presence of the whole Jewish nation. In fact, they were well-known to other nations as well.

ספר העיקרים ג-י:

¹רשימה ה בסוף חנוכה

...האותות והמופתים שעשה משה ר'...היו מפורסמים

כוזרי א פז :

אמר הכוזרי גם אלה אין בהם מדחה מה שמתמיד ארבעים שנה לשש מאות אלף איש והנלוים אליהם ...

יראוהו בעיניהם ולא יגיעם בספור ובקבלה - C

דברים ד: ט

רק השמר לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן תשכח את הדברים אשר ראו עיניך

ספורנו :
והטעם שהזהרתיך מאד להשמר מזה הוא שיש לחוש פן תשכח מה שראו עיניך הגשמיים בסיני ועיניך השכליים גם כן בפירוש התורה אשר בה הראית לדעת היפך דעותיהם במופתים שכליים

d- שיחקרו על הדבר ויבחנוהו בחינה אחר בחינה שלא יפול בלב אדם ספק כי יש בו צד דמיון או צד ספק

Clarity

דברים ה: ד
פנים בפנים דבר ד' עמכם בהר מתוך האש
ספורנו :
בלתי חלום ומראות הלילה אבל בעודכם משתמשים בחושים

Duration

ספר העיקרים ג י :
אותות והמופתים שעשה משה ר' ... היו ... מתמידים זמן גדול

שמות טז : לה
ובני ישראל אכלו את המן ארבעים שנה ...
אבן עזרא :
זה הנס היה גדול מכל הנסים שנעשו על יד משה כי נסים רבים היו במן ועמדו ארבעים שנה ולא כל הנסים האחרים.

כוזרי א: פז
אמר הכוזרי גם אלה אין בהם מדחה מה שמתמיד ארבעים שנה לשש מאות אלף איש והנלוים אליהם ...
עייך בהקדמה להאמונות ודעות עוד בענין המן
Imagine! Someone who was 19 years old when the מן began to fall was 59 years old when it ended. He did not believe in the נס because he was taken by surprise. He had a chance to take out all his scientific instruments and conduct any scientific verification he chose.

Multiple

e.g. The מן:
i-5 days a week
ii-ערב שבת double
iii-didn't fall שבת
iv-kept from שבת ערב didn't rot מן-
v-עמר לגלגלת-
vi-Each according to his מדרגה
vii-Any Taste
viii-Covered above and below

iii- Ongoing miracle of the Land

Rav S. R. Hirsch (א: בראשית יד):

... The land where he [אברהם אבינו] was now had been promised to him for the future of his people, and the first experience he had there was: famine, and the second was: war. Neither material abundance nor political independence was inherent in the land itself. In both it stood in the most complete contrast to Egypt. Just as its fertility was entirely dependent on rain, it had to look above to the heavens for its harvests, so was its political position such that it could offer no natural resistance to invaders. Left to itself the land of Israel lay open to famine and political dependence. Situated in the cockpit of the world, where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet, hardly any world-war has occurred into the bitter suffering of which it has not been drawn. And just because of this was it chosen. If, in spite of this, in this land a national life would blossom against which no national conqueror would dare attack, even if three times each year its borders were left open and all military defense withdrawn - if all the מלכיות of the world would clash together there and make war on each other, but no sword would dare enter this blooming and yet defenseless land וחרב לא תעבר בארצכם - then the eternal fact would have been brought to the eyes of the nations "here G-d lives"! ...

a- Miraculous return and survival in modern times.

Paul Johnson calls the opportunity to establish a state in 1948 "A Window of Providence" (A History of the Jews)

The land, desolate and unyielding for all other nations, suddenly blossomed.

In the 90's, half million Russians - the per percentage equivalent of 25 million immigrants to the USA. Yet except for brief moments, unemployment below 10%. Many great European countries have permanent unemployment of over 10%.

Each war: - '48, '56, '67, '73, '90 (Gulf War, Scuds) - full of miracles:

One pilot reports how, in the 6-Day War, he was being chased by 3 Migs. He entered a cloud and when he exited the other side, the Migs were gone.

A tank commander in the Sinai Desert reports that a shell dropped, unexploded on the top of his tank. The crew was suffocating, too scared to try and move the unexploded shell, when another shell hit the first one and knocked it off the tank.

The commander of the force that led the (secondary) attack up Mt. Zion into the Old City stated, "The Jordanians were in well-reinforced bunkers. We were hiding behind blades of grass. Every time we shot up at them, almost futilely, a Jordanian would fall dead out of his bunker."

A Jewish cadet at West Point was taking a course on modern warfare: Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq the Falklands, and even the invasion of Grenada. Each was carefully analyzed for lessons that might be applied to future conflicts involving U.S. troops.

Well into the curriculum this cadet had a question. Why was it, he asked a commander, that not one battle involving Israel was ever studied? Not the Israeli War of Independence fought by a tankless, planeless "army" of hastily trained soldiers and Holocaust survivors against a well-armed invasion force; not the Six Day War, which Arab leaders promised would be the Jews'

final dying breath; not the Yom Kippur War, which snatched near disaster from the jaws of one of history's largest sneak attacks; not a single one?

Could these glaring omissions be reflective of an anti-Semitic blind spot? Could Americans not stoop to learn how to fight from Jews? No, the cadet was assured, this was no ethnically derisive oversight - those wars just weren't normal. Those types of events, that type of fighting, the things that took place in all the battles that birthed and sheltered the Jews of Israel - just doesn't happen anywhere else. It doesn't pay to study them because there is nothing for other countries to learn. (The Passover Survival Kit, by Shimon Apisdorf, Leviathan Press)

iv- משיח and miracles

Apparent contradiction in the רמב"ם:

משנה תורה פ"א בהל מלכים הל ג :
ואל יעלה על דעתך שהמלך המשיח צריך לעשות אותות ומופתים ומחדש דברים בעולם או מחיה מתים וכיוצא בדברים אלו

אגרת תימן :
... יעמוד איש שלא נודע קודם הראותי, והאותות והמופתים שיראו על ידו הן הן הראיות על אמתת יחוסו
שם :
(אומות העולם) יבהלו מן המופתים שיראו על ידו וישימו ידם על פיהם.

פירוש המשניות הקדמה לפרק חלק :
...ויעבדוהו כל הארצות לצדק והגדול ולנפלאות שהיו על ידו

Miracles are not necessary for the authentication of משיח, but will still be done by him. (Own)

If we are זוכה, he will do miracles, otherwise he will not. (*When Moshiach Comes* - Yehudah Chayoun / *אוצרות אחרית הימים*)

CHAPTER SIX: PROOFS FOR SINAI: **RATIONAL HISTORICAL PROOFS C: PROPHECY**

i- Definition and nature

ii- Necessity

a - השם would not have a תורה without a way of revealing it

b - Self-fulfillment

c - After Sinai the re-clarification of the תורה; Tochacha to strengthen the תורה

d - Prophesize the future

iii- Criteria/Verification

iv- Accuracy

v- משה רבינו's prophecy

vi- Limitations

vii- Why prophecy stopped

viii- משיח

CHAPTER SIX: PROOFS FOR SINAI: RATIONAL HISTORICAL PROOFS C: PROPHECY

2. Prophecy:

G-d would not want us to obey His Will without providing a way of revealing that Will. This mechanism is prophecy¹. It is therefore one of the 13 fundamental principles of our faith to believe in prophecy², for without it mankind would lack the means of achieving spiritual completion³. The ultimate expression to be able to achieve this was the giving of the Torah, through prophecy, at Sinai⁴.

¹רמב"ם הל יסודי התורה פ"ז הל א: מיסודי הדת לידע שהקל מנבא את בני האדם

²רמב"ם הקדמה לפרק חלק (יג עיקרים): היסוד ה' הנבואה
עיין ספר העיקרים ג:יב-שכתב שהנבואה היא סעיף מתורה מהשמים כי כל תכליתו הוא לגלות ולחזק תורה מהשמים (ודלא כהרמב"ם שמונה אותם כעיקרים נפרדים)

³ספר העיקרים ג:יב:
... הנבואה... (היא) כדי להגיע האומה בכללה או המין אל השלמות האנושי

⁴ספר העיקרים שם:
... נבואת האבות (וכן) כל הנבואות שהיו קודם מתן תורה כולן היו לתכלית נתינת התורה וכן כל הנבואות שנמצאו לנביאים אחר שנתנה התורה היו לתכלית קיום התורה

Of the seven *Mitzvos* dealing directly with prophecy, all of them are in *Sefer Devarim*. Four of them appear in *Shoftim*:

- To listen to an authentic prophet¹;
- Not to overly test an authentic prophet² (included in this is the prohibition against testing G-d³.)
- A prohibition for a prophet not to say what he has not heard, including an authentic prophecy heard by another prophet⁴.
- A prohibition against a prophet not revealing what he has heard.⁵
- Not to prophesize in the name of an idol, even if he says the truth.⁶
- Not to listen to such a prophet⁷
- Not to fear to kill a false prophet⁸

All other mechanisms to understand G-d's will proved to be unreliable⁹. Even אברהם was not able to intuit all that he needed to. Avraham Avinu was able to understand that some Higher Being had to have created this world, but he could not grasp what G-d was all about until HaSh-m appeared to him in a prophecy¹⁰. From this time on, Jews knew of and believed in prophecy. Ramban states that at the time of יציאת מצרים the nations of the world doubted the

¹לשמוע לנביא אמת: דברים יח טו: (שפטים): נביא מקרבך מאחריך כמני יקים לך ד' אלוקיך אליו תשמעון
חינוך מצוה תקי"ז, רמב"ם עשה קעב, הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז – פ"י

²לא לנסות נביא אמת יותר מדאי ונאמין בו אחר שנודע לנו שהוא נביא אמת שנאמר (דברים ו טז ואתחנן) לא תנסו את ד' אלוקיכם כאשר ניסיתם במסה.
חינוך מצוה תכ"ד, וזה לפי הרמב"ם אבל הסמ"ק והשערי תשובה (שער ג ל) פירשוה כלאו לא לנסות ד' יותר מדי.
וז"ל רבינו יונה שם: הזהרנו בזה שלא יאמר אדם אנסה נא בעבודת הצדקה היצליח השם דרכי ... ואמרו ז"ל (תענית ט א) כי במצות המעשרות בלבד הותרה הבחינה וגו'

³כגון שיעשה מצוה לנסות אם ד' יתברך יתן לו שכרו

⁴לא להתנבא בשקר היינו א - מה שלא שמע; ב- המתנבא מה שלא נאמר לו אלא לחבירו: דברים יח כ (שופטים): אך הנביא אשר יזיד לדבר בשמי אשר לא צויתיו לדבר
סנהדרין פט ע"א: אמר רב יהודה אמר רב דאמר קרא אך הנביא אשר יזיד לדבר דבר בשמי זה המתנבא מה שלא שמע ואשר לא צויתיו הא לחבירו צויתיו זה המתנבא מה שלא נאמר לו ואשר ידבר בשם אלהים אחרים זה המתנבא בשם עבודת כוכבים
חינוך מצוה תקי"ז

⁵איסור לנביא לעבור על דברי עצמו והכובש נבואתו: דברים יח יז (שפטים): והיה האיש אשר לא ישמע אל דברי אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי אדרש מעמו:
כגון יונה (סנהדרין פט ע"א)

⁶לא להתנבא בשם עבודה זרה אפילו יגיד את האמת: דברים יח כ (שופטים): ואשר ידבר בשם אלהים אחרים ומת הנביא ההוא
חינוך מצוה תקי"ח

⁷לא לשמוע על המתנבא בשם ע"ז: דברים יג ד (ראה): לא תשמע אל דברי הנביא ההוא
חינוך מצוה תנ"ו

⁸לא לפחד מלהרג נביא שקר: דברים יח כב (שופטים): בזדון דברו הנביא לא תגור ממנו חינוך מצוה תקי"ט

⁹עיין ספר העיקרים מאמר ג ו & ז

idea of prophecy. However, all Jews knew of and accepted prophecy. Their doubts were only whether Moshe Rabbeinu's prophecy was authentic. Thus it was necessary for Moshe to do Nisim in order to authenticate his prophecy¹.

We have stated that the original reason for prophecy was to reveal G-d's Will in the form of the Torah. However, G-d desired that there would still be a long period of prophecy and that we should listen to these prophets even after the original prophecy by Moshe and the Jewish people². The revelation of the Torah was forever, and no subsequent prophet could ever contradict or even add to the contents of the original prophecy (i.e. the Torah)³. There are, however, a number of secondary purposes for prophecy:

¹⁰ שם משמואל לך לך (דף ק) אמר (אברהם) בודאי א"א שהיה עולם בלי מנהיג ... אך בלתי אפשר היה לו להשיג בשכל האנושי מהות האלוקות עד הציץ עליו הש"י ואמר לו אני הוא בעל העולם, היינו שהראה לו במראה הנבואה עיין בדרך ה': ג-ג-א

¹ רמב"ן, דרוש תורה תמימה:
ומכל מקום באותו זמן של משה רבינו ע"ה לא היה שום רשע ואפיקורוס כופר באלו, רק הנבואה היתה בספק אצל האומות, שהרי מקצתם חושבים שהשמש הוא הבורא העולם, אבל לא אצל זרע אברהם אבינו ע"ה, והן לא יאמינו לי ולא ישמעו לקולי ולמה, כי יאמרו לא נראה אליך ה', לא הכחישו רק כי אליו לא נראה, ואחר שבאו הניסים הגדולים הקימים על ידיו, נתאמתה גם הנבואה שלו, כמו שכתוב, ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו, אעפ"י שכתוב אחרי כן, וגם בך יאמינו לעולם, ואומר ר' אברהם שמה שאמר הכתוב ויאמן העם, ולא כל העם, וכן וירא ישראל, ולא כל ישראל, ובמעמד הר סיני יצא הספק מלב הכל לגמרי, ואיני מודה לו, שאף כאן, בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך, ולא אמר כל העם, ולדעתו ראוי היה לפרש כן, ועוד שהיה קורע ים סוף לעיני הכל, ולמה לא יאמינו כולם כמו שהיו מאמינים מקצתם...
כי אולי השיג ידיעת הניסים בחלום או בידיעה אחרת, או על ידי מלאך, אבל דבור האל עמו פנים פנים היה אצלם בספק... אבל יותר נכון לזרע אברהם שיוורה מלת לעולם, לומר שיאמינו בך לדורות, שאם יבוא נביא ויכחיש דבר מדברי משה ע"ה לא יאמינו לו.

² חינוך תקצז: כי בהגיע איש אחד בדור אל המעלה הזאת ויהיה ידוע אצלנו בענינו ובכושר מעשהו כי נאמן לנביא, שנשמע אליו ... כי המחלוקת עליו בשום דבר הוא טעות גמור וחסרון ידיעת האמת:

³ רמב"ם פירוש המשניות:
... ואילו יעשה (מן האותות והמופתים לקיים לו הנבואה מה שלא שמענו מופלאים ממנו יחנק ... (שהרי) אין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה

בפיך ובלבבך לעשותו וענין בפיך המצוה הידוע על פה וענין בלבבך הסברות

רמב"ם הקדמה למשניות:
יאסור איסורים בדבר שאינו מן התורה כגון שאמר הלחמו בעיר פלונית ... כמו שצוה שמואל לשאול להלחם בעמלק (שמואל א טו) או ימנע מלהרוג ... וכמו שמנע ירמיהו את ישראל מללכת לארץ ישראל... וכל העובר על צויו חייב מיתה בידי שמים... שנאמר (אנכי אדרוש מעמו) (דברים יח) ... וכן עוד אמרו (יבמות קב.) אם יבא אליהו ויאמרו חולצין במנעל שומעין לו אין חולצין בסנדל אין שומעין לו ירצו לומר שאין להוסיף ולא לגרוע במצוה על דרך נבואה בשום פנים וכן אם יעיד הנביא שהקב"ה אמר אילו שהדין במצות פלוני כך וכי סברת פלוני אמת יהרג

רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ט הל' א: דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה שהיא מצוה עומדת לעולם ולעולמי עולמים אין לה לא שינוי ולא גרעון ולא תוספת שנאמר את כל הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אותו תשמרון לעשות לא תוסף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו ונאמר והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת הא למדת שכל דברי תורה מצווין אנו לעשותן עד עולם וכן הוא אומר חוקת עולם לדורותיכם ונאמר לא בשמים היא הא למדת שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה לפיכך אם יעמוד איש בין מן האומות בין מישראל ויעשה אות ומופת ויאמר שה' שלחו להוסיף מצוה או לגרוע מצוה או לפרש במצוה מן המצות פירוש שלא שמענו משה או שאמר שאותן המצות שנצטוו בהן ישראל אינן לעולם ולדורי דורות אלא מצות לפי זמן היו הרי זה נביא שקר שהרי בא להכחיש נבואתו של משה ומיתתו בחנק על שהזיד לדבר בשם ה' אשר לא צוהו שהוא ברוך שמו צוה למשה שהמצוה הזאת לנו ולבנינו עד עולם ולא איש אל ויכזב:

Self-fulfillment: Prophecy may be a purely personal experience, coming to “broaden his heart and add to his knowledge¹.” It is the highest and purest form of knowledge imaginable².

To Clarify the Torah and Strengthen its Observance: After Sinai, prophecy serves to clarify the תורה and to strengthen its observance through Tochacha to the Jewish nation³.

- i- *Prophesize the future:* Although this was not a central purpose of prophecy, it was necessary as a way of verifying the authenticity of a prophecy⁴ as well as a result of rebuking the nation by predicting what would happen if they did not do Teshuva.
- ii- *Horaas Shaah:* As we will see below, all Neviim were also Talmidei Chachamim. When it came to interpreting the Torah, a Navi had no more status than another חכם⁵. However, a Navi could implement a Horaas Shaah, a temporary suspension of a Mitzvah, as Eliyahu HaNavi did on Mt. Carmel when he built a Bamah as a one time exception to the

¹רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל"ז:
הנביא אפשר שתהיה נבואתו לעצמו בלבד להרחיב לבו ולהוסיף דעתו ...
עיין במלבים ירמיהו פ"א פ"ו
דרך ה': ד-ג-ו

Self-fulfillment is not mentioned in the 3) פרק ח ספר העקרים (מאמר, פרק ח ספר העקרים 3)
In the self-fulfillment is divided into two, one as the next level after transcending his five senses; and one as a new level of understanding.
See also רמב"ן: בראשית יח: א ד"ה באלוני ממרא

²חינוך תקטז: משרשי המצוה, לפי שתכלית מעלת האדם היא השגת הנבואה, ואין לו לבן אדם בעולמו אמתת ידיעה בדברים כאמתת ידיעתו בנבואה שהיא הידיעה שאין אחריה פקפוק כי היא תבא ממעין האמת

³רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ז: לכונן אותם ולהודיעם מה יעשו או למונעם ממעשים הרעים שבידיהם
ספר העיקרים ג ח: להזהיר על קיום התורה
רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ט הל' ב:

א"כ למה נאמר בתורה נביא אקים להם מקרב אחיהם כמוך לא לעשות דת הוא בא אלא לצוות על דברי התורה ולהזהיר העם שלא יעברו עליה כמו שאמר האחרון שבהן זכרו תורת משה עבדי וכן אם צונו בדברי הרשות כגון לכו למקום פלוני או אל תלכו עשו מלחמה היום או אל תעשו בנו חומה זו או אל תבנוה מצוה לשמוע לו והעובר על דבריו חייב מיתה בידי שמים שנאמר והיה האיש אשר לא ישמע אל דברי הנביא אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי אדרוש מעמו:

⁴ספר העיקרים ג:ח:
... הנבואה ... לא להגדות העתידות ... אלא שגם זה היה נמצא בנביאים ... להורות על אמתת נבואתם כדי שיאמינו דבריהם
(ומה שכתב הרמב"ם סוף הל' ב מהל' יסודי התורה פ"י אינו להגיד שזהו תכלית הנבואה אלא להוציא מי שיבא לעשות דת אחרת וכו')

(see chap 19 for yet another type of prophecy)

⁵רמב"ם הקדמה למשניות: ודע שהנבואה אינה מועילה בפירושי התורה ובהוצאת ענפי המצוות בשלש עשרה מדות (פירוש בשם נבואה) אבל מה שיעשה יהושע ופנחס (שהם נביאים) בענין העיון והסברא הוא שיעשה רבינא ורב אשי

prohibition¹. The exception to this was the prohibition of idolatry, which can never be exempted².

At Sinai, all the Jews received prophecy together with Moshe. There were myriads, perhaps millions, of prophets after that. The Tanach records 48 male prophets³ and seven prophetesses⁴. These were the prophets with a lasting message to the Jewish nation. Each of the 48 prophets took one of the 48 drops of Gan Eden which were combined in Adam HaRishon before the sin⁵.

¹אליהו בהר הכרמל (מלכים א יח) שהקריב עולה בחוף וירושלים עומדת ובה בהמ"ק בניי... וכמו שעשה אלישע בצוותו להלחם עם מואב להכרית עץ עושה פרי ... (וכמו כן אם) ... יאמר לנו ... (לצאת למלחמה) ביום שבת ... ובא הקבלה (סנהדרין ז) בכל אם יאמר לך הנביא עבור על דברי תורה שמע לו חוץ מעכו"ם (רמב"ם הקדמה למשניות)

²חינוך תקוטז: ... ואפילו יצוה אותנו לעשות בהיפך מצוה אחת מן המצוות או אפילו הרבה מהם לפי שעה, חוץ מעבודת ה', שומעין לו ... וכן אמרו בספרי [כאן], אליו תשמעו, אפילו יאמר לך לעבור על אחת מן המצוות לפי שעה שמע לו:

³According to the (גר"א) (מגילה יד. וסדר עולם כ), these do not include the Avos or Moshe or Aaron. The 48 are:

- 1-3. Three sons of Korach, Assir, Elkanah and Aviasaph (authors of Tehilim 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88)
4. Yehoshua ben Nun (Moreh Nuvuchim 2: 45 says he reached the 10th level of prophecy, the highest next to Moshe Rabbeinu)
5. Pinchas (He received the Mesorah from Yehoshua. Those who consider Pinchus and Eliyahu as one substitute his father, Elazar)
6. Elkanah (The Husband of Channah, a descendent of Korach's sons)
7. Nasan (Nathan. He lived during the time of Dovid and Shlomo HaMelech and finished with Gad Sefer Shmuel.)
8. Gad (A contemporary of Dovid HaMelech. He helped Nasan complete Sefer Shmuel. He was killed by a Malach)
9. Asaph (He wrote Tehilim 50, 73-83)
10. Heman ben Yoel (A grandson of Shmuel)
11. Yedusun (Yeduthun) (Possible author of Tehilim 39, 62, 71)
12. Eitan ben Kishi (Possible author of Tehilim 89. Some say he is Etan ben Zerach, grandson of Yehuda. According to the Targum, all five sons of Yehudah's son Zerach were prophets.)
13. Dovid HaMelech (There is an opinion, however, that no one was ever a prophet and a king at the same time: Zohar 2:154a, Moreh Nevuchim 2:45)
14. Achiyah HaShiloni (the Shilonite)
15. Shmuel (Samuel)
16. Shemaya (he lived in the time of Rechavam)
17. Ido (The son of the Sunnamit woman visited by Elisha or possibly her husband, making Chavakuk her son. Ido was the grandfather of Zechariah)
18. Azariah ben Oded (Lived during the time of King Asa)
19. Chanani HaChozeh (the Seer – He too lived during the time of King Asa)
20. Yehu (Chanani's son) (It is apparent from Divrei Hayamim 20: 34 that he wrote a book that was apparently included in Kings)
21. Eliyahu (Elijah. Some identify him with Pinchus)
22. Michaiah ben Yimlah (He lived during the time of Kings Achav and Yehoshaphat and was a contemporary of Yehu)
23. Ovadiyah (Obadiah) (He was the overseer of King Ahab's house and was a contemporary and student of Elijah)
24. Elisha (He was annointed for prophecy by Eliyahu)

The Ramchal defines prophecy as a special type of knowledge which emanates from HaSh-m's Kavod¹. The knowledge emerges as a result of the prophet's *Dveykus* to HaSh-m. As a result of understanding and appreciating what he is cleaving to, he is bestowed with a higher level of understanding². This higher understanding allows the prophet to get closer to the origin of the various mechanisms through which HaSh-m delivers His Hashgacha. By understanding these higher realms the prophet can perceive some of the underlying principles which govern this world³, allowing him to accurately see what human actions will lead to what kind of consequences⁴. Sometimes the Navi is able to see something which has already happened in a higher realm but which has not yet come down into our realm⁵.

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25. Eliezer ben Dadavahu
 26. Yonah (Jonah) (He lived at the time of King Yehu)
 27. Zechariah (He, like his father, Yehoayada, was head of the Sanhedrin. After rendering his prophecy, he was stoned by the people at the instigation of the King)
 28. Amotz (The father of Yeshayahu)
 29. Chavakuk (The son of the Shunami women who was resurrected by Elisha. However, see Ido, 17 above)
 30. Tzephaniah
 31. Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) (Author of the book of Kings and Lamentations, ie Eicha)
 32. Yeshayahu (Isiah) (He prophesized during the reign of 4 kings and, according to the Rambam, he reached the 7th level of prophecy. He was a student of Amos and the leader of the Sanhedrin at the time.)
 33. Yechezkiel ben Buzi (Ezekiel) (He lived during Galus Bavel. Some say that Buzi was Yirmiyahu, and hence Ezekiel was Yirmiyahu's son)
 34. Daniel
 35. Baruch ben Neriah (He was a descendant of Yehoshua. Ezra was a talmid of his)
 36. Uriah ben Shemaiah
 37. Seriah ben Neriah
 38. Mordechai
 39. Chaziel ben Zechariah
 40. Oded
 41. Hoshea (Hosea. Author of Sefer Hoshea. A talmid of Zechariah)
 42. Amos (Author of Sefer Amos. A talmid of Hoshea)
 43. Micha (Micah. Author of Sefer Micha. Head of the Sanhedrin and a talmid of Yeshayahu)
 44. Yoel ben Petuel (Joel. Author of Sefer Yoel. Head of the Sanhedrin and a talmid of Micha)
 45. Nachum (Author of Sefer Nachum. Head of the Sanhedrin and a talmid of Yoel)
 46. Chagai (Haggai. Author of Sefer Chagai. Prophesized during the Persian exile.)
 47. Zechariah (Author of Sefer Zechariah. Possibly the grandson of Iddo)
 48. Malachi (Wrote Sefer Malachi. There is a machlokes whether he is the same person as Ezra or not.)

For detailed notes on each prophet see Rav Aryeh Kaplan, The Handbook of Jewish Thought, pg. 113 – 120 (Table 6:1), whose notes we used in compiling these details. In his note 1 there he points out that Rashi, Rabbeinu Chananel and Hilchos Gedolos list Moshe and Aaron among the 48. However they are omitted by Seder Olam because, as the Talmud states, the 48 are all those who did not add to the Torah in any way. Rashi also counts the Avos and Shlomo HaMelech (whom the Gra did not consider a prophet), Neriah and Machsiah, the latter two since they were fathers of prophets, but Seder Olam omits them because they were not full prophets. Rabbeinu Chananel likewise includes Bilshan, but the Gra omits him since he is identified with Mordechai. Rashi, in turn, leaves out the three sons of Korach, Asaph, Heman ben Yoel, Yedusun and Eitan ben Kishi (nos 9 - 12 above). Rashi also omits Chanani Hachozeh (19) and Zechariah (27).

Prophecy is, in fact, the highest form of intellectual clarity which is possible⁶. The prophet cannot understand this pure knowledge until he has processed it through his כח הדמיון (his power of imagination) and from there to his normal intellectual and conceptual tools⁷. Prophecy is a totally absorbing process. It requires that the person's physical control be completely released so that he can enter the realm of the pure intellect. The result is for the prophet's body to shake⁸. Prophecy usually takes place at night, in a dream or a vision⁹.

A prophet has to be at a certain overall level of spirituality in order to merit prophecy. However, being at the right level does not guarantee that he will have the prophecy¹⁰. Especially

⁴Sarah, Miriam, Devorah, Channa, Avigail, Chulda, Esther

⁵אמר ר' אבהו מ"ח נביאים עמדו לישראל וכל אחד נטל בחלקו תמצית טיפה אח' מאותן טיפות של ג"ע שהם מ"ח. ומה אם נביא אחת נוטל טיפה א' מהם נהיה מעלתו ברוח הקודש, אד' הראשון שווה מקבל מ"ח, עאכ"ו. מכאן את' למד כמה היה חכמתו. רבי בא אמר רבי כהנא, וכי מאין היו לנביאים מאותם הטיפות, אלא הכי תנינן בכל טיפה וטיפה היוצאות מעדן רוח חכמה יוצא עמו כו' ומאותו רוח שיצא מגן עדן המציא כל נביא ונביא כו' והוא בכח הנהר (היוצא) מגן עדן וזהו הנהר שראה יחזקאל בנבואתו כו'. (זוהר וירא ע' ש"א בשם המדרש)

¹דעת תבונות (קעח דף רא הוצאת הרב פרידלנדר):
הנבואה היא ידיעה והשגה שהקב"ה נותן לנביא מכבודו יתברך.

²דרך ה' ג-ג-ד:
ענינה שיגיע האדם ויתקשר בבורא ית"ש ויתדבק בו דביקות ממש, באופן שירגיש ההתדבקות וישיג מה שמתדבק בו דהיינו כבודו ית'... והנה עיקר הנבואה הוא השיג הדביקות... (ה) אך דרך ההשגה הזאת הוא, שתהיה ע"י אמצעיים

³דעת תבונות (קעח דף רא הוצאת הרב פרידלנדר):
ויראו מהם כל השפעותיו בכל דרכיהם, ויראו כל עניניהם שבהם תלויים כל חוקות השמים והארץ וכל צבאם וכל פרטיהם. ועל כן ידעו העבר והעתיד מה שהקב"ה עושה בעולם ועיינו בגור אריה פרשת וישלח דף קעו ד"ה ושמה (בראשית לב ח) בדף קעו בא"ד אמנם יבחן הנביא

⁴The דעת תבונות (in Rav Chaim Friedlander's edition קעח) explains that the reason that the prophet can see in the future (and the past) is because he is able to see one or more of the מדות of השם and to perceive all the likely consequences that will arise from that.

⁵דעת תבונות

⁶דרך ד' ג-ג-ו:
... הרי הוא משכיל בהשכלה עליונה מכל השכלה שאפשר לאדם והיא השכלה בבחינת היותו קשור בבוראו.

⁷דרך ד' ג-ג-ו:
והנה גלוי כבודו ית' הוא יהיה הפועל בכל מה שימשך לנביא בנבואתו: והנה ממנו ימשך בכח הדמיון שבנפש הנביא ... ומתוך הדמיונות ההם תמשך בו מחשבה והשכלה ...

⁸רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ב:
וכולן כשמתנבאין אבריהן מזדעזעין וכח הגוף כשל ועשתונותיהם מתטרפות ותשאר הדעת פנויה להבין מה שתראה

⁹רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ב:
וכולן אין רואין מראה הנבואה אלא בחלום בחזיון לילה או ביום אחר שתיפול עליהם תרדמה ... וגו' ואע"פ שמהרמב"ם משמע שתמיד הנבואה בחלום או תרדמה אבל הרמב"ן בפירוש על החומש חולק איתו

¹⁰רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ה:

in the case of prophecies for the sake of כלל ישראל, a person can be at the level of prophecy and not receive it if the situation does not warrant it.

Prophecies must first take place in ארץ ישראל (thus יונה tried to flee his prophetic mission by fleeing ארץ ישראל) because there is no intermediary (שר) in ארץ ישראל¹ and because the ארון facilitated prophecy².

A Navi will always know for certain whether he is having a prophetic experience or not³. Even though the prophet has to filter his prophecy through the lenses of his Koach HaDimyon, i.e. through mashal, the meaning of the prophecy will nevertheless always be clear⁴.

... ואע"פ שמכוונים דעתם אפשר שתשרה שכינה עליהן ואפשר שלא תשרה

¹ בית אלוקים

² ספר העיקרים

³ דעת תבונות קפ (דף רב בהוצאת פרידלנדר):
[הנבואה] היא השגה נשפעה בהם שלא יפול בה הספק וצורך העיון והרגל המופתים אלא יתברר להם בלי שום ספק שהמתגלה עליהם ומדבר עמהם יהיה כבודו יתברך, והוא המחדש בלבם הדמיונות הנבואיים ההם.
(ועיין בדרך ד' ג: ד: א-ב)

⁴ רמב"ם פ"ז מהל' יסודי התורה הל' ג:
הדברים שמודיעים לנביאים במראה הנבואה – דרך משל מודיעין לו, ומיד יחקק בלבו פתרון המשל במראה הנבואה, וידע מה הוא
דעת תבונות (שם):
ונחקק בלבם [של הנביאים] ידיעה (כמו כן) ששיגו פתרון המראה והחידה, וישיגו מה שהאדון ב"ה רוצה לגלות להם ובהגות רב חיים פרידלנדר: כי גם הפתרון הוא חלק מהנבואה.

How did we verify whether someone was a true prophet or not?

It is one of the 13 Principles of Faith to believe that all the prophecies of the prophets are true¹. Clearly, then, there has to be a mechanism for determining what is and is not true prophecy. The fact that the Torah commands us not to listen to a false prophet² is testimony to the fact that we may be faced with just the challenge.

The fact that we believe in prophecy at all goes back to the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu and the Torah which he brought down, Toras Moshe³. The prophecy which all Jews had at Maamad Har Sinai was in turn the mechanism for proving that Moshe's prophecy was true. As the Rambam puts it, it is this, and not the display of any sign or wonder, which is behind our belief in Moshe Rabbeinu. We do not believe in signs as much as we believe in Moshe Rabbeinu⁴.

That same Moshe was the one who put in the Torah he gave us what the tests are for authenticating the claims to prophecy by anyone else. It is not the prophet's sign or proof alone which provides us with the basis of accepting him. Rather, it is because Moshe Rabbeinu tells us in his Torah that such proof is sufficient. Could the prophet be lying to us? Possibly. Absolute proof is impossible. But at the same time the prophet cannot contradict anything that is written in the Torah. And that same Torah says that we can act as if the prophecy is true. A similar case is that of two witnesses, sufficient to give someone the death penalty. The two witnesses may be lying, but the Torah tells us that we can proceed as if what they are telling us is true⁵.

The sign which a prophet has to bring is not a miracle or change in nature⁶. Rather, he has to make a detailed prediction of certain things that will happen in the future. If the slightest detail of the positive aspects of his prediction does not come true, we reject him⁷. A prophet has to do

¹אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שכל דברי הנביאים אמת (נוסח הסדורים)

²שלא לשמוע על המתנבא בשם ע"ז: דברים יג ד (ראה): לא תשמע אל דברי הנביא ההוא
חינוך מצוה תנ"ך

³אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שנבואת משה רע"ה היתה אמתית, ושהוא היה אב לנביאים לקודמים לפניו ולבאים אחריו (שם)

⁴אגרת תימן: אנחנו עדת ישראל ידענו אמתת משה רבינו לפי שראינוהו במעמד הר סיני בשעת הדבור לא מפני המופת ... אין
אנו מאמינים במופתים כמו שאנו מאמינים במשה רבינו

⁵רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה ח ב: נמצאת אומר שכל נביא שיעמוד אחרי משה רבינו אין אנו מאמינים בו מפני האות לבדו ...
אלא מפני המצוה שצוה משה בתורה ואמר אם נתן אות אליו תשמעון כמו שצונו לחתוך הדבר על פי שנים עדים
רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ז: ... ואפשר שיעשה אות ומופת ואינו נביא ... ואעפ"כ מצוה לשמוע לו ... כמו
שנצטוינו לחתוך את הדין ע"פ שני עדים כשרים ואע"פ שאפשר שהעידו בשקר ... ובדברים האלו וכיוצא בהן נאמר הנסתרות
לה' אלקינו...

⁶רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פרק י"ה א: כל נביא ... אינו צריך לעשות אות ... שיש בהם שינוי מנהגו של עולם אלא האות
שלו שיאמר דברים העתידיים להיות בעולם

Note, the נסים are required or at least are an acceptable alternative to verification. states that miracles are a verification where we have previously known the individual incapable of such acts. Moreover, the miracles must be predicted by the prophet. In ח, he writes that the claims of the נביא must be credible in that they are consistent with what we know either through our שכל or through our מסורת.

⁷רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פרק י"ה א: ... ואפילו נפל דבר קטן בידוע שהוא נביא שקר

this many times¹, though not an unreasonable amount². After a Navi has been accepted he no longer needs to bring signs to support his prophecy³.

An alternative route is for an established prophet to testify that this person is a prophet⁴.

Even after a prophet is established and no longer has to back his claims up with signs, we have ways of identifying false prophecy. If there is more than one prophet alive at the time, all the prophets will often get the same prophetic message in some form or another⁵. On the other hand, if he simply repeats the prophecy that his co-prophet is saying, this too will be a counter-indication⁶.

Personal qualities:

Although we stated above that many people may have had prophecy, the requirements are so stringent that this number amounts to only a tiny fraction of the population⁷.

In order to receive prophecy a person had to be a גבור, totally healthy of mind and body, for “only in a healthy, unweakened body does the mind attain that clarity that can draw from the well of the תורה⁸. Therefore, ובלב כל חכם לב נתתי חכמה, G-d only uses as an instrument for Divine wisdom one who already has ... developed ... the ordinary human gift of wisdom. Judaic

(הל' ד) דברי הפורענות ... אם לא עמדו דבריו אין בזה הכחשה לנבואתו... ואפשר שעשו תשובה ונסלח להם כאנשי נינוה או שתלה להם כחזקיה אבל ... ולא מצינו שחזר (הקב"ה) בדבר טובה... הא למדת שבדברי הטובה בלבד יבחן הנביא... (ובפירוש משניות מסביר שלנביא עצמו אפשר שיגרום החטא משא"כ כשהנביא מנבא בהבטחה להזולת) רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פרק י' הל' ג:

והלא המעוננים והקוסמים אומרים מה שעתידי להיות ומה הפרש יש בין הנביא ובינם אלא שהמעוננים והקוסמים וכיוצא בהן מקצת דבריהם מתקיימין ומקצתן אין מתקיימין (בפירוש המשניות): אומרים שזאת השנה יהיה בצורת ושלל ירד גשם כלל ונמצא שיהיה בה גשם מעט או יאמר שמחר ירד גשם מעט ונמצא שירד ליום שלישי

¹רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פרק י' הל' ב: ובודקים אותו פעמים הרבה ... רמב"ם הקדמה למשניות: ... וכשיצדק בהבטחה אחד או שתיים אין לנו להאמין בו ולומר שנבואתו אמת אבל יהיה ענינו תלוי עד ירבו מופתיו האמיתיים בכל אשר ידבר בשם ה' פעם אחר פעם

²רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פרק י' הל' ה: ואסור לנסותו יותר מדאי ... אלא מאחר שנודע שזה נביא יאמינו ...

³רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ח: כל מה שעשו אליהו ואלישע וזולתם מהנביאים מהאבות לא עשאו כד לקיים נבואתם שהנבואה כבר נתקיים להם קודם לכן אבל עשו האותות ההם לצרכיהם ולרוב קרבתם אל הקב"ה השלים חפצם ...

⁴רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פרק י' הל' ה: נביא שהעיד לו נביא אחר שהוא נביא הרי הוא בחזקת נביא ואין זה השני צריך חקירה

⁵סנהדרין פט ע"ב ע"פ הפסוק בעמוס ג: כי לא יעשה ד' אלוקים דבר כי אם גלה סודו אמנם ממה שכתב הגמ' שם ע"א סיגנון אחד עולה לכמה נביאים משמע לכמה נביאים אבל לאו דוקא לכל הנביאים וג"כ לא ראיתי שהמפרשים הביאו את זה

⁶סנהדרין פט ע"א אין שני נביאים מתנבאים בסיגנון אחד

⁷חינוך תקטז: ומעטים מבני העולם זוכים בה ועולים אליה כי הסולם גדול מאד רגלו בארץ וראשו מגיע השמימה, ומי זה האיש ירא השם יזכה ויעלה בהר ה' ויקום במקום קדשו אחד מאלפי רבבות אנשים הוא המשיג למעלה זו ובדור שראוי לכן

⁸Rav S.R. Hirsch (שמות ב: יא-יב). He states there: Visions, hallucinations... clairvoyance ... only occur in conditions of sickness, debility and morbidity.

Truth knows nothing of that miracle of G-d, which suddenly makes the simpleton of yesterday into the wise and inspired genius, the man of G-d of today¹.”

The prophet had to be an exceptionally wise and intelligent person (חכם)² because “only a mind which has developed to its full human capacity can have the understanding to grasp the meaning of the word of G-d, and hand it on³.”

He had to be socially and financially self-contained (עשיר) “because only an independent person, who requires nothing for himself and seeks nothing for himself, can look on and understand things in that complete objectivity without any, even subconscious, reference to himself, which is necessary for a messenger of G-d⁴.”

Further, he had to be a righteous person, totally in control of his desires⁵.

He was required to be humble⁶ and completely focused on spiritual issues⁷.

Any claim by someone who had less than these qualities was simply ignored⁸.

¹Rav S.R. Hirsch (שם לא: ו)

²רמב"ם הל יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' א: ואין הנבואה חלה אלא על חכם גדול בחכמה

³Rav S.R. Hirsch, Shemos ו: יד

⁴Rav S.R. Hirsch, *ibid.*

⁵רמב"ם הל יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' א: ואין הנבואה חלה אלא על ... גבור במדותיו ולא יהא יצרו מתגבר עליו בדבר בעולם
נבואה to receive מדות do not have to have perfect to receive - chap. 7, אבות, שמונה פרקים intro. to רמב"ם See

⁶שמות ג: (יא) ויאמר משה אל האלקים מי אנכי כי אלך אל פרעה וכי אוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים... (יב) ויאמר כי אהיה עמך...

R.S.R. Hirsch: Just that in which you see your complete unsuitability for the work makes you most suitable for it.... Your insufficiency is the guarantee that you are sent by G-d. Without it, that salvation in Egypt would fall into the category of world-historical events, which glorify human greatness. ...

⁷רמב"ם הל יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' א: שלא תהיה לו מחשבה כלל באחד מדברים בטלים... אלא דעתו ... קשורה תחת הכסא

of עבודת ה' (usually printed after 1 chap.) for a description of the unique נביא a See (שערים מבוא השערים)

⁸רמב"ם הל יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ז: ולא כל העושה אות ומופת מאמינים לו שהוא נביא אלא אדם שהיינו יודעים בו מתחלתו שהוא ראוי לנבואה בחכמתו ובמעשיו שנתעלה בהן על כל בני גילו והיה מהלך בדרכי הנבואה בקדושתה ובפרישותה

Accuracy

Not all prophets had the same levels of prophetic understanding¹. The level of prophecy would determine the level and type of allegory or filters through which the prophet would have his vision². Therefore, G-d might be seen in the image of a sage or a warrior³. The highest level of prophecy would be purely auditory, without any visual images. Therefore, the exact same prophecy would be seen by different prophets in the form of different images⁴. According to their level, prophets may see more or less of a particular matter⁵. They would also repeat the prophecy in their own words⁶. All of this could be confusing for the novice prophet⁷. Yet, the prophet was never confused as to whether a prophecy had actually taken place⁸ or what the essential message of the prophecy was,⁹ for the solution to the allegory or image was a part of the prophetic experience¹⁰.

¹רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ז הל' ב: הנביאים מעלות מעלות הן ...

²דרך ה' ג-ד-ה: ... אלא שתשתנה ההשגה כפי שנוי האמצעיים

³ספר העיקרים ג:ט: ...נביא אחד יאמר דראה את השם יושב על כסא רם ונשא ואחד יאמר שראהו כזקן ... ואחד רואהו כאיש מלחמה ואחד מעוטף כשליח צבור ... וכל זה יתחלף ... אם מצד המקבל ואם מצד האמצעי וכבר בארו רז"ל זה הענין בב"ר (פרשה ד) אמרו שם שאל כותי אחד את רבי מאיר אפשר מי שכתוב עליו הלא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא היה מדבר עם משה מבין שני בדי הארון. אמר לו הבא לי מראות גדולות והביא לו אמר ליה ראה בבואה שלך הסתכל וראה אותן גדולות א"ל הבא לי מראות קטנות והביא לו א"ל ראה בבואה שלך הסתכל וראה אותן קטנות א"ל ומה אתה שאתה בשך ודם משנה עצמך לכמה גוונים בכל שעה שאתה רוצה מי שאמר והיה העולם על אחת כמה וכמה ... כי כמו שהאדם או הדבר הנראה במראה נבדל מן המראה שהוא נראה בה ... כן הש"י

⁴סנהדרין פט ע"א: סיגנון אחד עולה לכמה נביאים ואין שני נביאים מתנבאים בסיגנון אחד

⁵שם ז: והנה עוד אפשר לנביא מן הנביאים שישיג ענין אמיתי בנבואתו אך לא ישיג כל הענינים האמיתיים שנכללו בה. ... ע"ש

⁶דרך ה' ג-ד-ח: יש שישיג הנביא ענין מהענינים ולא יוגבל לו במלות אלא יגידה הנביא במלים כרצונו ... וגם בזה תשתנה המליצה כפי הכנתה נביא עצמו ודרכיו וגם ישתנה לטבע לשונו ודרך דבורו

⁷דרך ה' ג-ד-ט: ...גם מי שיתחיל בהשגות הנבואיות ... אפשר לו שיכשל ...אמנם היודעים דרכי הנבואה ... יודעים המכשולות ... ומכירים סימניהם והדרך להנצל מהם ... שאפשר שיקרה לו מקרה זה והוא לא השתדל עליו או השתדל על הפכו והגיע לו זה מפני שלא נשלם במעשיו והשתדלותו...ואפשר שיגיע למי שרצה בו ברשעו...ע"ש עד סוף הפרק

⁸דרך ה' ה-ב-ג: בכלן תהיה ההשפעה בדרך שירגיש בה המושפע בבירור
שם ה-ד-א: ולא ישאר לו שום ספק לא בנבואתו ...

⁹רמב"ם שם הל' ג: הדברים שמודיעים לנביא במראה הנבואה דרך משל מודיעין לו ומיד יחקק בלבו פתרון המשל במראה הנבואה וידע מה הוא (ע"ש)
דרך ה' ג-ה: ואפשר שיקרו טעויות לנביאים לא במה שיתנבאו אלא במה שהם יעשו מדעתם ... ע"ש

¹⁰רמב"ם פ"ז מהל' יסודי התורה הל' ג: הדברים שמודיעים לנביאים במראה הנבואה - דרך משל מודיעים לו ומיד יחקק בלבו פתרון המשל במראה הנבואה וידע מה הוא
הדעת תבונות מסביר (ס' קפ במהדורת הרב חיים פרידלנדר) שמה שהנביא רואה בחזיון בצורת חידה או משל רואה ג"כ את הפתרון דרך נבואית

Why Prophecy Stopped

The Sages tell us that from the day that the First Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the Sages¹. What this means, says the Ramban, is that what we normally associate as prophecy ceased (the prophecy of the prophets). But, there is another type of prophecy, the prophecy of the Sages, i.e the clarity of insight which the Sages achieve with the help of Ruach HaKodesh, which remained². Amazingly, Ameimar tells us that this latter type of insight is better than actual prophecy³. Prophecy has the advantage of being a clear message from heaven⁴, a Torah from above downwards. Wisdom, on the other hand, lends itself to error⁵, for it is Torah that comes from man and works its way up. Its advantage is that it can go much higher and further than prophecy⁶. (The letter ל which means learn is the only letter that can go above the line (Sirtut) of a Sefer Torah, and has no defined height.)

In the generations of prophecy there was a tremendous Yetzer Hara for עבודה זרה. The latter was the mistaken application of bringing earthwards forces from above, and therefore paralleled the prophetic process⁷. But the Sages prayed that this Yezer Hara should be annulled, in part because of the plague of false prophecy⁸, and when it was, prophecy also stopped. (Prophecy had already become more difficult to attain because of the hiding of the Aron HaKodesh⁹.) The Sages knew and anticipated this result, and in fact saw this as an opportunity to

¹ בבא בתרא יב. מיום שחרב בית המקדש ניטלה נבואה מן הנביאים וניתנה לחכמים אטו חכם לאו נביא הוא הכי קאמר אע"פ שניטלה מן הנביאים מן החכמים לא ניטלה

² רמב"ן (שם): הכי קאמר אע"פ שניטלה נבואת הנביאים שהוא המראה והחזון נבואת החכמים שהיא בדרך החכמה לא ניטלה אלא יודעים האמת ברוח הקודש שבקרבתם ...

³ בבא בתרא שם: אמר אמימר וחכם עדיף מנביא (ע"ש בהמשך)

⁴ ר' צדוק הכהן, מחשבות חרוץ (ס' יז): נבואה - השגה ברורה מן השמים

⁵ ר' צדוק שם: חכמה - נעלמת שאפשר שאינו אלא דמיונות כזבות של עצמו ולא תורת אמת

⁶ רב צדוק שם: ברוה"ק ... (אבל מאידך ע"י חכמה אפשר) להתגלות חידושין דאורייתא שלמעלה מעלה מהשגת הנביאים

⁷ גר"א

⁸Rabbi Avigdor Miller, [Torah Nation](#)

⁹ספר העיקרים:

For somebody to begin to have prophecy it required that the ארון הקדש be in its place; that the majority of people be on the land; and that the prophecy take place in Israel. After the presence of the ארון הקדש was never again in its place. Hence prophecy stopped.

now develop the Oral Law to its full glory¹⁰. This now meant that the Yetzer Hara would also be similar, Greek wisdom flourished, and the era of Hellenism descended upon the Jews.

משיח and Prophecy

Both Moshe and Bilam prophesized that prophecy will return to the Jewish people in the Messianic era¹. The Mashiach will be a great prophet, second only to Moshe, and he will have certain prophecies that even Moshe Rabbeinu did not have².

CHAPTER SEVEN: CLAIMS OF OTHER RELIGIONS

i- Claims that the Jewish people are no longer chosen

ii- Claims that the תורה changed

a-This is in principle impossible

b-The Claim: The תורה did in fact change:

The New Testament/Koran Represents that Change

iii- Individual religions/beliefs

¹⁰ ר' צדוק הכהן - מחשבות חרוץ ס' יז קטע המתחיל ומצוה האחרונה בסוף (דף 142):
אלא שבדור הנביאים היה עיקר החשק וההשתוקקות של ראשי ישראל וצדיקי הדורות לנבואה שהוא השגה ברורה שהוא מהשמים, משא"כ השגת חכמה שהוא נעלמת שאפשר שאינן אלא דמיונות כוזבות של עצמו ולא תורת אמת ברוה"ק והם חשקו לדבר ברור וידיעה ברורה ולכך לא היה אז התפשטות החכמה דתשבע"פ כ"כ בישראל דעיקר זיוה והדרה של תורה היה בבית שני אע"פ שלא שרתה בו שכינה... והם חשקו בכך להשיג השגות יתירות... ועי"ז היה הסתלקות הנבואה והיינו ע"י תוקף החשק שהיה להם להתגלות חידושין דאורייתא שלמעלה מעלה מהשגת הנביאים, ומסטורין דתורה שבע"פ בלבם בדרך העלם שהוא מדת לילה נסתלקה הנבואה שנמשכה מנבואת משה רע"ה דע"כ באו דבריהם (של הנביאים) ג"כ בכתב דוגמת התורה שבכתב שהוא מדת היום, דהיינו התגלות ברור שלא במחשכים והעלם.

¹ אגרת תימן: בנבואת בלעם רמז שתחזור הנבואה לישראל אחר שתפסוק בהם... וכן מאמר משה רבינו עליו השלום שאמר (דברים ד כה): כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים ונושנתם בארץ...

² אגרת תימן: ואין ספק שחזרת הנבואה היא הקדמת משיח... שהמשיח נביא גדול מאד וגדול מכל הנביאים מלבד משה רבינו עליו השלום... ויחד אותו הבורא יתברך בדברים שלא יחד משה רבינו...

CHAPTER SEVEN: CLAIMS OF OTHER RELIGIONS

Both the other two major Monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, agree that G-d gave the Torah to the Jews. As the Ramban explains, they only developed as far as they did by borrowing their major ideas from the Jews. Nations which lived further away from the Jews had less advanced ideas of Monotheism and the rights of human beings that went with this¹.

What these nations claim, however, is that we are no longer the Chosen Nation. We messed up, they claim, and G-d chose them instead.² Daniel prophesized that other monotheistic religions would claim to be the successors to Judaism:

¹דרוש תורה תמימה: "ומה היא החכמה הגדולה הזאת שבתורה, והלא נראית פשוטה, ואפילו התלמידים קוראין אותה ויודעין אותה, ואפילו האומות העתיקו אותה ולמדוה..."
התשובה: "תחילת כל דבר יש לך לדעת, שכל מה שהנבראים יודעים ומבינים כלם פירות התורה או פירי הפירות שלה, וכן תראה היום באומות הרחוקות מארץ התורה והנבואה, יושבי הקצבות שאינם מכירים את הבורא וסבורים שהעולם קדמון..."
"כי האדם בתולדותו בלא מלמד כבהמה שני ועיר פרא אדם יולד"
"אם כן מי שגילה לך סודו ואמר לך ביום פלוני תבוא פלוני בדבר תחנה והשתחוויה ותרצה לבוראך, וביום עשירי ממנו תתענה ויכפר לך, וכן על כל דבר ודבר אמר לך מעשה פלוני נבחר ומקרב אותך לבוראך, ומעשה פלוני נמאס ומרחיק אותו מלפניו, אין לך חכמה אלא זו, ואין לך דעת ותבונה כזו..."
"ואל תשתבשו באומות שאף הם נוחלי התורה, הם הקרובים לאמצע הישוב כגון הנוצרים והישמעאלים, לפי שהעתיקו התורה ולמדוה, וכשגברה רומי על קצת הקצוות, למדו ממנה תורה ועשו חקים ומשפטים דוגמא של תורה..."
"שני גוי גדול אשר לו חקים ומשפטים צדיקים ככל התורה הזאת, למדנו שלא היה באותו זמן אומה ולשון בעולם שיהא להם נימוסים טובים וישרים ישובי המדינות כישראל, ופי' משפטים כך הוא, וכל שכן החקים שהם המצות החקוקות בעולם. ולפיכך אמר הרב ר' משה ז"ל: כל אלו הדברים של...ושל זה הישמעאלי הבא אחריו, כלם לתקן דרך למלך המשיח, כיצד שכבר נתמלא העולם כולו מדברי המשיח ומדברי התורה"

² Rabbi Ken Spiro, Crash Course in Jewish History Sept. 2001: When Moses encounters God at the burning bush, God identifies Himself repeatedly (Exodus 3:6, 3:13, 3:15, 3:16, 4:5) as the God of his forefathers -- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with whom He had made an eternal covenant.

This is an extremely important passage because later on in Jewish history a lot of different people are going to come -- the Christians, for example -- claiming that God changed His mind, abandoned the Jews and made a new covenant (new "testament" to use the Greek term) with them.

But God made an "eternal" covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and He renews the deal at several intervals. We learn that God has a master plan for humanity and the Jews have an absolutely essential part in that plan.

אגרת תימן:
ובכל זה כבר נבא דניאל ואמר בסוף שסופו להכשל שנאמר: (דניאל יא יד) "ובני פריצי עמך ינשאו להעמיד חזון
ונכשלו".

עיינ שם קטע המתחיל "וידוע" לעוד פסוקים וביאורם

The Rambam (ה' מלכים in the uncensored versions) even saw the Christian and Moslem messianic claims¹ as a positive thing. These claims would, he stated, familiarize these nations to the messianic concept. When משיח will come it will be much easier for them to accept him as a result.

¹Unlike the Christians concerning Jesus, the Moslem claim is not that Mohammed was the Messiah per se. Rather they claim that he was the last and the greatest of the prophets. However, the result of this claim is the same as with the Christians – Moslems now claim that they are the Chosen People and that their Koran supercedes the Torah.

The Only Common Denominator Between All the Religions is that the תורה was Given to the Jews:

Arthur Hertzberg in Jews (pg. 85-6):

In 960, Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, who was chief commercial affairs minister and physician to the caliphs of Cordoba, wrote a famous letter to Joseph, king of the Khazars, to inquire whether it was true that Jews exist somewhere in their own independent kingdom. ... A reply in Hebrew arrived about five years later. The king ... recalled the story of how his predecessor, King Bulan, had chosen Judaism over Christianity and Islam:

The King said to the Christian priest, "Of the religions of the Israelites and Mohammedans, which is to be preferred?" The Christian priest answered, "The religion of the

Israelites.” He then asked the Mohammedan Kadi, “Is the religion of the Israelites or the Christians better?” The Kadi answered, “The religion of the Israelites is preferable.”

Rabbi Kelemen, Permission to Receive, pg. 30:

"Notably, the theologies of Bahai Faith, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity do intersect: They all affirm Judaism's claim that G-d, through Moses, gave Israel the Torah. ... Does the test of the one prophecy that all monotheists acknowledge -the Torah - indicate how many times, if at all, G-d would update mankind's assignment? On the contrary, 23 times the Torah states, "This is an eternal law for all generations," ...

כוזרי א מג :
אמר החבר אלה קצות (קצת) תארי הנביא שלנו אשר אין עליו חולק, אשר נראה על ידו להמון התחברות הדבר
האלוקי בהם ...
קול יהודה די"ה אשר אין עליו חולק :
כי האומות המחלקות ביניהם כל הישוב קיימוהו וקבלוהו (כדומה באוצר נחמד)

The claims of both Christians and Moslems are that:

- i - The Jewish People are no longer chosen; they (the Christians or the Moslems) are now chosen in their stead.**
- ii - The תורה changed.¹**

¹Christians call the Torah the Old Testament. The Christian Bible comprises the Old Testament and the New Testament which is comprised of the Gospels of Jesus' disciples. (The Mormons have their own Bible, detested by other Christians.) Although the Christian claim is that the New Testament was added to the Old Testament and not that it superceded it, Paul told the Christians that they no longer needed to keep the Mitzvos of the Torah. This, amongst other things, really makes the claim of two "Testaments" spurious. Hence I wrote as I did in the text.

i - Claims that the Jewish People are no Longer Chosen

Not only is the claim spurious, as we show below, but it is not even in principle possible:

אבן עזרא - וזאת הברכה דברים לג: ב בא"ד :
וחסרי אמונה אמרו כי טעם שעיר על דת אדום ופארן על דת ישמעאל ואלה טועים הלא ראו כי לא החל
בתחלה כי אם לברך ישראל לבדם.

אגרת תימן :

וכמו שא"א שתבטל מציאותו של הקב"ה, כן א"א שנאבד ונתבטל מן העולם שכן אמר (מלאכי ג ו) אני ה' לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם

Christians in particular distort the reading of the text, made easier because in the main they use translated texts. The רד"ק in his פירוש points out many such distortions:

עיין עוד בשל"ה על בראשית מט י
גור אריה בראשית ב כג; מט י; דברים יח טו

The Moslem claim is that they were chosen from ישמעאל onward:

עיין אגרת תימן קטע המתחיל "ומה שזכרת מדבר הפושע ... " ועוד שלושת הקטעים אחרי זה.

The ongoing history of the Jew, their survival against all odds, the ongoing fulfillment of the prophecies through them, including anti-Semitism, the barrenness of Israel in foreign hands and its recent flourishing in Jewish hands, all continue to prove the Chosenness of the Jews. The Christians and the Moslems have no counter proofs to these. There were times in history when they were desperate to establish facts on the ground. This included the attempted destruction of the Jews, the conquering of Jerusalem by both the Crusaders and the Moslems, the denial by the Moslems that the Temples were ever on the Temple Mount, and others. None of these, however, have been taken seriously by any objective outsider.

Christian and Moslem claims both depend on the authenticity of their founders:

ציצת נובל צבי:

Have you seen in any book that one must believe a person who says, "I am משיח" ... or of whom they say, "This is the glorious king" before his performing an act if he is performing an act of משיח according to רמב"ם's words in הלכות מלכים? And even if he provides several other signs and wonders, are they considering him משיח? ... [Surely not.] Because otherwise, anyone who wants to take the title משיח will come and take it if his piety is proven upon him, and there will be as many messiahs as there are pious people ... And I swear that I would say thus before the real משיח, and he would reward me for my upholding the words of the rabbis, z'l, and their true tradition. (When Mashiach Comes by Yehudah Chayoun pg. 117, 118)

אגרת תימן:

(הודיע לנו הפסוק) שכל נביא שישלח לנו ... יהיה מכם כמו כן, כלומר מישראל ... ואמר "כמוני" שמא יעלה על דעתך הואיל וכתוב "מאחיד" יתכן להיות מעשו ומשמעאל לפי שמצאנו כתוב בעשו (במדבר כ יד): "כה אמר אחיד ישראל", לפיכך הוצרך לאמר "כמוני" כלומר מבני יעקב. ואין "כמוני" בכאן להיות כמוהו במעלת הנבואה, שכבר אמר (דברים לד י): "ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה".

רמב"ם פי י (uncensored versions):

וכל הדברים האלה של ישוע הנוצרי ושל זה הישמעאלי שעמד אחריו אינן אלא ליישר דרך למלך המשיח...

שמות ו:

(יד) אלה ראשי בית אבותם בני ראובן... (טז) ואלה שמות בני לוי לתולדותם... (כה) ואלעזר בן אהרן לקח לו מבנות פוטיאל לו לאשה ותלד לו את פינחס אלה ראשי אבות הלויים למשפחתם: (כו) הוא אהרן ומשה אשר אמר ד' להם הוציאו את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים על צבאתם:

R.S.R. Hirsch (שם יד):

... In a most striking manner, we see the story immediately interrupted ... as if they (משה and אהרן) were up until now entirely strange men whom we get to know here for the first time...

... But from this point on begins their triumphal mission, a mission which has never before been accomplished or after them so then it became a real necessity to first of all establish their parentage and relationships so that for all time their absolutely human origin and the absolutely ordinary nature of their beings should be firmly established.

Therefore משיח too will die:

רמב"ם, מאמר תחיית המתים:

... אם בימי המשיח או לפניו או לאחר מותו

שמות ז:

(א) ויאמר ה' אל משה ראה נתתיך אלוקים לפרעה ואהרון אחיד יהיה נביאך (ב) אתה תדבר את כל אשר אצוך ואהרון אחיד ידבר אל פרעה ...

R.S.R. Hirsch:

... We should not have been surprised if, after all the wonders Moses performed, Pharaoh laid himself at his feet and worshipped him as a god. ... As sure as Moses and Aaron here are two personalities, Moses who arranges and gives commands, Aaron who carries them on, so sure it is

that that idea of prophecy is false, which declares that G-d does not speak to the prophet but in him. This denial of actual revelations of God to the prophet negates the true idea that God reveals himself to the prophet and then the prophet reveals what God has revealed to the people, but reduces the prophet to an inspired poet or lawgiver, out of whom, while in a state of ecstasy, or elevation of spirit, God speaks. Actually the prophet stands before God, as here Aaron before Moses. נביא is accordingly a passive idea, ... a source, a fountainhead to cause His word to be known through the prophet...

The רמב"ן in his ויכוח makes the following points about יש"י:

- a) He lived and died during בית שני; therefore it is clear that all of the sages of the תלמוד (all of whom came during or after him) rejected him; (ח)
- b) He was not appointed by אלהי הנביא; (כד)
- c) משיח will rule over all the nations. יש"י never ruled; on the contrary, he was persecuted and killed. He was not able to save himself, let alone the Jewish nation; (מט, עח)
- d) יש"י did not build the בית המקדש; (עח)
- e) משיח will be completely human (פח).

ואומר עד כי יבא שילה והוא בנו מלשון שליה, כי נולד כשאר בני אדם בשליה.

The Churches Move Towards Recognizing that the Jews are Still the Chosen Nation:

The Vatican has now called on all Catholics to “respect the continuing validity of G-d’s covenant with the Jewish people and their responsive faithfulness, despite centuries of suffering, to the Divine call that is theirs.” Protestant denominations have begun to do the same thing. Stated one: “G-d’s covenants are not broken ... The church has not ‘replaced’ the Jewish people.” In 1993, the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ stated that “the covenant established by G-d’s grace with the Jewish people has not been abrogated but remains valid.

The question of how these churches can now claim that G-d has still chosen the Jews and simultaneously claim that He has also chosen the Christians is not fully answered. Some flatly call it a mystery that cannot be answered: “We must acknowledge that the continued existence of Jewish people who do not confess the lordship of Jesus Christ and who see their Jewishness as incompatible with this confession is, as Paul the apostle declares, a mystery” (The Christian Church/Disciples of Christ), or as another group put it, “In light of Scripture which testifies to G-d’s repeated claim of forgiveness to Israel, we do not presume to judge in G-d’s place.” Others talk of a dual covenant, which is tantamount to saying the same thing.

If, according to these Christian groups, the Jews can achieve redemption through their own religion, then it should not be necessary to proselytize them to Christianity. Such a position has indeed been taken by the Protestant Evangelical Synod (1980 – then still West Germany).

ii - Claims that the תורה changed

a-This is, in principle, impossible

The תורה is unchangeable. This is one of the 13 principles of Faith

ויקרא כו: לד

אלה המצוות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל בני ישראל בהר סיני (פסוק אחרון ויקרא)
מגילה ב:

(בסוף ובכמה מקומות) - אלה המצוות שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה
והרמב"ם פ"ט מהל' יסודי התורה מביא מהפסוק לא בשמים היא - עיין בלחם משנה שם וביד המלך

רמב"ם פ"ט מהל' יסודי התורה הל' א:

דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה שהיא מצוה העומדת לעולם ולעולמי עולמים אין לה לא שינוי ולא גרעון ולא תוספת
שנאמר את כל הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם אותו תשמרון לעשות לא תוסיף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו ונאמר
והנגלות לנו ובנינו עד עולם; ... חוקת עולם לדורותיכם; לא בשמים היא הא למדת שאין נביא רשאי לחדש
דבר מעתה לפיכך אם יעמוד איש בין מן האומות בין מישראל ויעשה אות ומופת ויאמר שה' שלחו להוסיף
מצוה או לגרוע מצוה או לפרש במצוה מן המצוות פירוש שלא שמענו ממשה או שאמר שאותן מצוות שנצטוו

בהן ישראל אינן לעולם ולדורי דורות אלא מצוות לפי זמן היו הרי זה נביא שקר שהרי בא להכחיש נבואתו של משה ...

שם פ"ח הל' ג:

לפיכך אם עמד הנביא ועשה אותות ומופתים ובקש להכחיש נבואתו של משה רבינו אין שומעין לו ... לפי שנבואת משה אינה על פי האותות כדי שנערוך אותות זה לאותות זה אלא בעינינו ראינו ובאוזנינו שמענוה כמו ששמע הוא הא למה הדבר דומה לעדים שהעידו לאדם על דבר שראה בעיניו שאינו כמו שראה שאינו שומע להן אלא יודע בודאי שעדי שקר לפיכך אמרה תורה שאם באה האות והמופת לא תשמע אל דברי הנביא ההוא שהרי זה בא באות ומופת להכחיש מה שראית בעיניך והואיל ואין אנו מאמינים במופת אלא מפני המצוות שצונו משה האיך נקבל מאות זה שבא להכחיש נבואתו של משה שראינו וששמענו.

אגרת תימן :

משה רבינו ... אמר לנו שלא נשארה מצוה בשמים לתת ואין שם אמונה אחרת ולא תורה בלתי זאת שתבא שנאמר (דברים ל:יב): "לא בשמים היא לאמור מי יעלה לנו השמימה ויקחה לנו וישמיענו אותה ונעשנה" והזהירנו שלא נוסף ולא נגרע בתורה זאת שנאמר (דברים יג א): לא תוסיף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו". ... וכל נביא שיעמוד ... ויאמר שאחת מכל המצוות הנכללות בספר התורה שבטל חיובה, שקר והכחיש נבואתו של משה רבינו שהוא אמר "לנו ולבנינו עד עולם".

Talmudic sources that in the future certain or all מצוות will be abolished do not refer to the messianic era. This is despite the fact that (according to most) there will be no בחירה during that time - see רמב"ן - דברים ל - ו

משנה תורה פ"ב מהל מלכים ה' ב: אמרו חכמים אין בין העולם הזה וימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכות בלבד ... ולא בא לא לטמא הטהור ולא לטהר הטמא ... אלא לשום שלום בעולם.

And yet:

פ"י מהל' כלאים ה' כה :
מותר לעשות מן הכלאים תכריכין למת שאין על המתים מצוה

This is according to the opinion in עב (end): ניידה לבא מצוות בטלות לעתיד לבא

This is answered by saying that either:

i - It is referring to the עולם הנשמות immediately after death. (מהר"ל, brought in רשב"א) (תפארת ישראל פני"ב)

ii - It is referring to there; תחיית המתים. (מהר"ל) (אחרונים plus numerous ראש, ריטב"א there; תוספות הראש, תוספות הראש, אור זרוע חלק ב' סי' תכ"א there,

See קובץ שיעורים חלק ב' סימן כ"ט for a third explanation.

This is not contradicted by the following statement of the רמב"ם:

פ"ב מהל' מגילה הלי יח :
כל ספרי הנביאים וכל הכתובים עתידין ליבטל לימות המשיח חוץ ממגילת אסתר ...
(וכתב הראב"ד שם : דבר הדיוטות הוא זה כי לא יבטל ספר מכל הספרים שאין ספר שאין בו למוד אבל כך
אמרו אפילו יבטלו שאר ספרים מלקרות בהם מגילה לא תבטל מלקרות אותה בצבור)

**b – The Claim: The תורה did in fact change: The New Testament/Koran
Represents that Change**

אגרת תימן :

(כלל ישראל אומרים ל)אלו שהם משיאים אותנו ומפתים להחזירנו לדתותיהם ... "התוכלו להראות לי כמו "מחולת המחנים" (שיר השירים ז א)? כלומר שהאומה תטעון כנגדם ואומרת להם : הראוני כמו מעמד הר סיני שהיה בו מחנה אלוקים ומחנה ישראל זה לעומת זה אז אשוב לעצתכם! וזה המאמר הוא על דרך משל : "שובי שובי השולמית שובי שובי ונחזה בך מה תחזו בשולמית כמחולת המחנים, " ...ופירש "מחולת המחנים" שמחת מעמד הר סיני שהיה בו מחנה ישראל ... ראה חכמת המשל וסודו, שהוא החזיר מלת "שובי" ארבע פעמים לרמז שאנו נרדפים ארבע פעמים לצאת מן הדת בכל אחת מן המלכויות האלה...

מגילה יד.

ת"ר ארבעים ושמונה נביאים ושבע נביאות שנתנבאו להם לישראל ולא פחתו ולא הותירו על מה שכתוב בתורה אפילו אות אחת חוץ ממקרא מגילה. מאי דרש א"ר חייא בר אבין א"ר יהושע בן קרחה ק"ו ומה מעבדות לחרות אומרים שירה ממות לחיים לא כ"ש (עיין עוד במגילה יט : מאי דכתיב ועליהם ככל הדברים ; ובשבועות לט. מה שהשיב משה את בני ישראל)¹

The Claim: The New Testament/Koran represents that new wisdom

Since we have shown that in principle the תורה cannot change, the issue of what best represents the "new, authentic, revelation" is mute.

¹(Note, according to the ספר העקרים מאמר ג פ"ג - טו, the תורה can in one respect change. Although it cannot change from the perspective of the Giver, nor from its own intrinsic worth, it can in fact change from the perspective of the recipient. Just as the doctor would prescribe to a sick patient first a very strict, medicinal diet, and then change that diet, possibly more than once as the patient improved, so too, would the תורה translate itself in different forms to the differing historical realities of the world. An example of this would be food prohibitions which changed from אדם to נח and then again for ישראל when only בשר was allowed and then when בשר התאווה was permitted. However, -this position has been rejected by all other mainstream commentators. It contradicts one of the 13 Principles of the רמב"ם. The מהר"ל, in his תפארת ישראל, although he definitely disagrees with the ספר העיקרים, he does, however give a similar explanation for the time of תחיית המתים when ostensibly the מצוות would change. He writes:

ומ"מ אין לומר בזה כלל שהתורה ח"ו תהיה בטלה שאם כן היה לו לומר זאת אומרת התורה בטלה (והלשון בנדה סא: הוא זאת אומרת מצוות בטלות לעתיד לבא) אבל אמר מצוות בטלות לעתיד שלא יהיה בסגנון זה שהם עתה כי התורה היא סדר עולם הזה כמו שבארנו אבל בזמן התחייה הוא עולם הבא ואין לו סדר עולם הזה ולכך מצוות התורה יהיו בטלים כפי מה שהוא סדר התחייה, ומ"מ לא נקרא זה בטול התורה כי התורה כוללת כל המציאות וגם בתורה נרמז המציאות שהוא לזמן התחייה מה שתהיה והרי התורה קיימת כבראשונה) ...

Several additional problems remain:

- 1- Neither religion claims a national revelation. (Permission to Receive, pg. 54 - 59, see there) (According to the כוזרי this is because it is impossible to fabricate such a claim.)
- 2- Christian claims of miracles before a limited crowd fail to mention any of the individuals involved in these mass marvels (ibid. pg. 60).
- 3- The claims about the miracles done by Jesus are paralleled in Bible stories, without laying claim to any special status for those doing the miracles: אלישע poured vast amounts of oil from a small jug (parallel to Jesus' multiplication of the loaves); אלישע revived the dead (like Jesus); אליהו (like Jesus) ascended to heaven alive; "Yet the Torah and its adherents never entertained the possibility that Elisha or Elijah was the messiah or G-d." (ibid. pg. 60) (See above where we showed that the ability to perform miracles is irrelevant to the verification of a prophet and at best a secondary backup to the Sinai claim.)
- 4- The Church itself claims that most of the New Testament was written well after the events were supposed to have taken place. Paul, who wrote more than half of the New Testament, only "met" Jesus in a vision three decades after his demise, and not one of the four evangelists was himself an eyewitness to any of the life of Jesus (ibid. pg. 61).
- 5- Because of Christian acceptance of the "Old Testament", it became necessary for them to re-interpret many of the פסוקים to support their claims. These re-interpretations have been dealt with extensively by the מפרשים, e.g. מהר"ל on אברבנאל; דניאל in three places on רמב"ן; חומש; and others.

iii- Individual religions/beliefs

1-G-d would not have a purpose for the world without making it readily available to everyone;

2-The chances of each person discovering this purpose completely on his own are remote. אברהם אבינו did so, but people of his greatness probably do not come along at a rate of more than one per every thousand years if that - G-d surely would not rely on such a poor mechanism. Such a person, if he did exist, would have to have a perfect mastery of all areas of knowledge; he would have to be a moral, spiritual and intellectual genius the like of which we haven't seen in many centuries; he would have to have a perfect mastery of himself in order not to be influenced by his whims and fancies.¹ Presumably, even then he would not be able to come up with a "perfect"

¹To show how unlikely reason is to be the arbiter of our moral living, consider the following excerpt from *Within Reason Rationality and Human Behavior* by Donald b. Calne, Knopf:

Reason ... has improved *how* we do things; it has not changed *why* we do things. Reason has generated knowledge enabling us to fly around the world in less than two days. Yet we still travel for the same purposes that drove our ancient ancestors — commerce, conquest, religion, romance, curiosity, or escape from overcrowding, poverty, and persecution.

To deny that reason has a role in setting our goals seems, at first, rather odd. A personal decision to go on a diet or take more exercise appears to be based upon reason. The same might be said for a government decision to raise taxes or sign a trade treaty. But reason is only contributing to the "how" portion of these decisions; the more fundamental "why" element, for all of these examples, is driven by instinctive self-preservation, emotional needs, and cultural attitudes. ...

Curiously, we have often found it easy to use reason in a harmful way. Chekhov's prophetic words, written a century ago, have a contemporary ring: "Man has been endowed with reason, with the

system of ethical and spiritual living until after many decades of searching, thinking, trial and error. At most he could expect to enjoy the fruits of his labors only at the end of his life. Even then, the chance that he would anticipate the rapid changes going on in the world and include the principles that would address them is very small. Certainly his children, leading different lives under different circumstances, would have to start all over again. Indeed they would want to – for that would be the message he gave them – “figure things out for yourselves.” Since they are unlikely to share his genius, civilization will go backwards, not forwards. At best, civilization will remain static, never learning how to avoid war, never learning how to build one generation on the next. Indeed, although we see great scientific progress in the world, the picture described is just what we see. 2000 years after Christianity came on the scene we witnessed, in the 20C, the

power to create, so that he can add to what he's been given. But up to now he hasn't been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wildlife has become extinct, the climate's ruined, and the land grows poorer and uglier every day."

We proclaim that the disastrous events of the two world wars will not be repeated, but the same forces that led to those tragedies persist today, barely beneath the surface. Contemporary examples are, unfortunately, abundant: the death of 30 million Chinese as a result of political mismanagement committed under the ironic slogan of "The Great Leap Forward," the killing fields in Cambodia, the slaughter of Kurds in Iraq, the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia, and the tribal massacres in Rwanda. The list is long and continues to grow.

The evidence compels the conclusion that in spite of our capacity for reason, we remain tied to the motivation provided by our biological drives and cultural attitudes. In these circumstances I argue a humanist position informed, even guided, by recognition of the limits of reason. To place reason in perspective, we should take it down from the pedestal upon which expectations of supremacy have placed it. When we do this, we find that in many ways reason is like language, for both are highly complex instruments developed for biological purposes. They help us to achieve what we want, without having any real impact on why we decide what we want. Both operate unobtrusively; we take both for granted.

... In the past, reason has been given the status of an independent, external and ultimate authority, with the ability to confer wisdom and goodness. Like a deity, reason was conceived as all-powerful. The ascent of reason began when the ancient Greeks surveyed the universe and attempted to sort out the confusion of ideas that had accumulated over previously known history. The Greeks were not the first to pay attention to reason, but they used it more extensively than anyone had before, raising rational discourse to an exalted status. Sophocles caught the spirit of his times in a single line: "Reason is god's crowning gift to man". Aristotle echoed this view a century later: "For man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and most pleasant, since reason more than anything else is man". In Rome, Cicero proclaimed that "reason is the ruler and queen of all things". Similar views were forming in India, and in China Confucius was on the same track.

This early optimism proved to be transient. After a few centuries of achievement, the first age of reason went into a prolonged decline in Europe. Knowledge became a product generated from *a priori* principles; it was divorced from observation, but it carried the authority of unquestionable certainty. Intellectual innovation in the West slowed down for over fifteen hundred years, although in the East reason was burgeoning. The Islamic world made notable advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and architecture. Akbar the Great, Moghul emperor of India from 1560 to 1605, declared, "The superiority of man rests on the jewel of reason".

Commerce and the Reformation weakened the traditional power of the church and the monarchies in Europe, and the great minds of the Renaissance broke through the mental barriers imposed over the Middle Ages.

Once released in Europe, reason leapt forward. It drove science, art, and literature; during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the surge of intellectual innovation and critical inquiry gave a distinctive name to the epoch, the Enlightenment. The tone was set by the "stern pursuit of accurate knowledge based on evidence, logic, and probability in preference to the colorful confusion of myth and legend that had satisfied a less critical age". In science, reason *demande*d linkage between observation and theory, and this gave a new order to the world. In the words of Isaac Newton: "Science consists in discovering the frame and operations of Nature, and reducing them, as far as may be, to general rules

greatest number of people of any century being killed in war. In fact, there were more people killed in wars after the 2nd World War than in either of the two World Wars. But by the end of the century suicide rates were even higher, reaching an average of 2 million people per year.

3-The proofs for the תורה being G-d-given make this approach totally redundant. More than that, it would be the height of arrogance for someone to claim that he had reached a higher truth (more relevant, meaningful, etc.) than the Truth which G-d Himself gave.

and laws — establishing these rules by observations and experiments, and thence deducing the causes and effects of things." Experiments were designed to test hypotheses; if the hypotheses could not be disproved, they were incorporated into the growing body of knowledge and applied — to engineering, architecture, medicine, and back into science. Émile Borel depicted the excitement of a people testing a tool of immense power: "The real inspiration of this splendid epic, the conquest of the world by man, is the faith in human reason, the conviction that the world is not ruled by blind gods or laws of chance, but by rational laws."

Startling advances in understanding how the physical world worked were accompanied by social upheavals. In political philosophy, Baruch Spinoza asserted that the purpose of the state was "to lead men to live by, and to exercise, a free reason; that they may not waste their strength in hatred, anger and guile, nor act unfairly toward one another". New political ideas erupted to produce reforms that rocked the foundations of traditional dynasties. Monarchies were replaced by democracies and the Industrial Revolution fueled the turmoil. The face of European society was transformed. As a result of these changes, faith in reason reached its zenith toward the end of the nineteenth century. For the Victorians, anything was possible. Time and again reason "worked," so for many it became a new god, possessed of great powers and intrinsic virtue. The most direct expression of reason was science, which seemed invincible. Science and reason together would rid the world of poverty, disease, and ignorance; they would vanquish prejudice and superstition; they would lead to a coherent explanation for everything under — and beyond — the sun.

The hopes were not fulfilled. In the twentieth century, two devastating world wars, numerous small wars, and recurrent economic instability sapped confidence and optimism. The pendulum began to swing against reason and now the opposition is coalescing. The recoil from reason takes on the aspect of a surreal motion picture. The growing strength of cults, religious fundamentalism, and political extremism reflects this disenchantment. Unreason flourishes with the rise and increasing popular authority of clairvoyants, spiritualists, astrologers, faith healers, devotees of alternative medicine, and new age extraterrestrial communicators. These exponents of unreason are irrational because they reject, deny, or misinterpret relevant information that is available through observation. Widespread anti-intellectual forces denounce science as a regressive influence driving imperialism and militarism — even sexism and racism. A new and fashionable view holds that science is a subjective, culturally determined ideology with nothing "real" behind it. The letter of invitation to the Nobel Conference XXV, held in 1989, warns: "As we study our world today, there is an uneasy feeling that we have come to the end of science, that science, as a unified, universal, objective endeavor, is over." The problem is not confined to science; there is a fragmentation of public support for all academic activity. Governments have lost interest in the university and its potential. The Chinese Cultural Revolution showed how easily political forces can exploit anti-intellectual sentiments into a massive popular movement capable of destroying art, science, and medicine. The onslaught against reason in China was all the more alarming because it achieved such sweeping success in a nation whose historical roots are steeped in art, science, and medicine — whose people were pioneers of reason.

Why have so many turned against reason? There are several explanations, but among the foremost must be failure of the quixotic hopes vested in it. Reason was misrepresented as an all-powerful, divine force, with its own supreme mission. In fact, it has no aim and no inherent goodness. Reason is simply and solely a tool, without any legitimate claim to moral content. It is a biological product fashioned for us by the process of evolution, to help us survive in an inhospitable and unpredictable physical environment. It

**CHAPTER EIGHT: PROOF OF THE HISTORICAL
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is also a tool to enable us to compete with other animals that are larger, faster, and stronger, with longer claws and more powerful jaws.

i- Why archeology disproves the higher critical theories

ii- Specific archeological proofs

- a - אבות till the אדם**
- b - מגדל בבל**
- c - The Flood**
- d - The Ark**
- e - אברהם אבינו**
- f - Sedom ve'Amorah**
- g - Jacob's Sons**
- h - Egypt**
- i - The Exodus**
- j - יהושע**
- k - King David**
- l - The Period of Melachim**

CHAPTER EIGHT: PROOF OF THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY - ARCHEOLOGY & THE HIGHER CRITICAL THEORY

Introduction

A professional archeologist is likely to say that archeology today has corroborated the authenticity of the Bible from the time of King David on. Before then there is still no hard archeological evidence that the events described took place¹. Most archeologists however, will admit that the evidence produced so far, some of which we bring below, is entirely consistent with the Bible story². There are some difficult questions which still need to be answered, but the overall direction has been towards proving the Bible. However, in the last few decades, a small group of archaeologists, known as the Copenhagen school, have challenged the authenticity of the Bible. The best known person in this group, Professor Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, has appeared repeatedly in the press, has written popular books and has produced some serious archeology to seemingly challenge the traditional view.

Like any science, archaeology produces evidence that then is open to many different interpretations³. Archeology, it must be stressed, is a very inexact science⁴, and caution must be exercised both when using it to support the Torah and when it appears to challenge Judaism. One

¹Rabbi Ken Spero, Aish HaTorah: The archeological process is tedious and expensive. To date, only a tiny fraction of archeological sites related to the Bible have been excavated. This thin archeological record means that any conclusions are based on speculation and projection. Archeology can only prove the existence of artifacts unearthed, not disprove that which hasn't been found. Lack of evidence... is no evidence of lack.

Yet that has not stopped some archeologists from making bold assertions.

In the 1950s, world-renowned archeologist Kathleen Kenyon dug in one small section of Jericho, looking for remnants of inhabitation at the time of Joshua's conquest of the land in 1272 BCE. She found no evidence, and concluded on that basis that the Bible was false.

The problem is that Kenyon dug only one small section of Jericho, and based her conclusion on that limited information. Today, though the controversy lingers, many archeologists claim there is indeed clear evidence of inhabitation in Jericho from the time of Joshua.

Archeology is a new science, and the record is far from complete. We have only begun to scratch the surface.

²The leading Israeli archeologist, Benjamin Mazar, is considered a leader of this school.

³Rabbi Dovid Lichtman, on Aish HaTorah's Website (Archeology and the Bible – Part 2 put it like this (slightly modified):

"Good scholars, honest scholars, will continue to differ about the interpretations of archaeological remains simply because archaeology is not a science, it is an art. And sometimes it is not even a very good art." - William Dever, Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Arizona (and one of the most highly respected voices in his field)

Dever is not referring to the manner in which archaeological remains are retrieved, but rather to the manner in which one interprets the significance of those remains.

When it comes to interpretation of remains from the time and place of the Bible, the radical "differences" in interpretive style seem more like the art of war than the art of culture. For example, here are the infamous words that launched the most recent battle concerning archaeology and the Bible:

indication of this is how susceptible this area is to hoaxes. There have been dozens of these over the years, and who knows how many undiscovered ones there are right now. We bring here two examples:

Runestone Fakery, *Archaeology*, January/February 2002: Runic inscriptions found on a boulder in Minnesota last May were not carved by Horsemen in 1363 as their discoverers believed, but by graduate students blowing off steam after the 1985 spring semester.

When Minneapolis artist Janey Westin first came across the runes near the town of Kensington, she assumed they were left behind by the same Norse explorers who created the so-called Kensington Runestone, found nearby in 1898. The infamous 200-pound rock is covered

"This is what archaeologists have learned from their excavations in the Land of Israel: The Israelites were never in Egypt, did not conquer the land in a military campaign and did not pass it on to the 12 tribes of Israel."

- Ze'ev Herzog, Professor of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Tel Aviv University

Herzog, along with other archaeologists, are considered biblical minimalists (or revisionists as Dever calls them) who see very little historical value in the Bible. Revisionists, like Herzog and Prof. Israel Finkelstein have attempted to speak in a bombastic fashion on behalf of the entire school of biblical archaeology. They are so convinced of their position that they ignore any other approach that does not concur with their own.

If anything gets Dever's blood boiling it is when revisionists distort archaeology, thus cheapening and mocking the integrity of his entire academic field.

Marit Skjeggstad, a Scandinavian revisionist, said that on biblical history, "the archaeological record is silent."

"In fact," asserts Dever, "the archaeological record is not at all silent. It's only that some historians are deaf."

⁴Crash Course in Jewish History Part 2 The Bible as History by Rabbi Ken Spiro: The definition of archeology is "the discovery and interpretation of the physical remains of previous civilizations and peoples." Note that within the definition of archeology is the word "interpretation". How one archeologist interprets the meaning of a particular find can be very different from how another archeologist interprets the meaning of the same find. ... Archeology is not a hard science. When an archeologist finds a piece of rock, a vessel, or a piece of a building, he tries to decide what it means. The find has no label on it, unless it's a written document, and even written documents are open to interpretation. So when people make definitive statements about what archeology does or doesn't say, you have to be very careful, because the bias of the archeologist affects how he interprets the information.

The Pseudo Science of Orthodox Bashing By: Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, MOMENT / December 2003 *Last Call for Bananas*: Commitment to a religious way of life cannot be reduced to a mathematical formula. Man must struggle with competing claims to the truth; faith is a factor in the equation. But I reject the notion that we must choose between faith and reason. The traditional faith of Israel is a haven of reasonableness. Reason is an ally, not an antagonist, of traditional Judaism.... [T]he historical sciences must be much more conservative. They can only deal with whatever shards of evidence have been uncovered. Often without any expectation that more will be found. What is uncovered, more often than not, supports different conclusion, that are then fiercely debated by competing scholars. Many historical researchers are studies in humility, freely admitting the frailty of their findings. ... It is not uncommon... for archaeologists, for example, to reverse themselves as new material is uncovered. For a long time, many archaeologists mocked the very possibility of the historicity of the Patriarchs. The Bible described them riding camels, and everyone "knew" that camels had not been domesticated in the time they were reputed to had lived. This was "known" because no evidence had been found that they existed in the region at the time. The first evidence turned up only later.... with the passage of time, evidence did turn up for the earlier domestication of the camel, including the reference in the Ma'alach Stel (1700 B.C.E), excavated in North Syria, to "one portion of food for the camel." In addition, Rudolph Cohen and William G. Dever, digging in Be'er Resisim in the Negev, found camel boned mixed with goat bones from 3000

with runes that describe the travails of a party of Scandinavians beset by Indians in 1362. Though most scholars doubt the stone's authenticity, it continues to fuel debate about a Norse presence in the Midwest.

Excited by the new find, the Kensington Runestone Museum paid for archaeological testing at the site, which yielded only a few Native American artifacts, and removed the stone to a laboratory for further examination. But hopes for the stone's authenticity were dashed when professors Kari Ellen Gade of Indiana University and Jana Schulman of Southeastern Louisiana University came forward with an affidavit stating that as graduate students they and three

B.C.E. Documents from this early period also now confirm that the transaction by which Abraham purchased for his wife's burial neatly comports with contemporary practices. The Patriarchs were resurrected – at least as a possibility. Until fairly recently, many Biblical scholars doubted that a King David ever existed. Then an inscription was found that directly mentioned the House of David, and the historical of David is now something you can talk about in decent company...These reversals in the historical sciences are no ones fault, but they do come with the territory. So do the inevitable squabbles about interpreting what has been found, often building clever and insightful results upon very small amounts of evidence. Because if this, the historical sciences never came up with findings that we are as confident in as in other scientific disciplines.

classmates in the Germanic philology department at the University of Minnesota carved the runes.

Hoax Update, *Archaeology*, January-February 2002: After Japanese archaeologist Shimchi Fujimura was caught on camera planting artifacts at a Palaeolithic site in 2000, he insisted he was guilty of perpetrating only one other hoax during a remarkably successful career in which he pushed back the date for the earliest occupation of Japan to 600,000 years ago (“Hand of God Does the Devil’s Work,” January/February 2001). Now the disgraced archaeologist has come clean and admitted to faking discoveries on at least 42 Middle and Lower Palaeolithic sites in Japan. Charles Keally, an archaeologist at Sophia University, Tokyo, notes that these sites account for virtually the entire archaeological record in Japan before the Upper

Palaeolithic. "This leaves us with our oldest evidence for human occupation of Japan at 35,000 years ago," he says. Japanese textbooks are already being revised.

i- Why Archeology Disproves the Higher Critical Theories¹

Proofs such as archeology show what Arachim/Discovery call outside corroboration. Archeologists resist saying outright that archeology is a proof for the authenticity of the Bible.² Yet most agree that it has verified the basic historical accuracy of the תורה narrative. A few archeologists, called minimalists or the Copenhagen school, disagree, claiming that there is no proof that the Bible is true. Minimalists, says James K. Hoffmeier, a professor of Old Testament, ancient Near Eastern history, and archaeology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, hold the Bible to an unreasonable standard, insisting that it "has to be substantiated by archaeological evidence" in order to be considered true. "They hold the Bible as guilty until proven innocent," he says. Hoffmeier, Dever, and others assail the minimalists as being ideologically driven-aiming, says Dever, not "merely to rewrite the history" of biblical Israel, but "to abolish (the history) altogether³."

¹The claim of the Higher Critical Theories is as follows: There are at least four distinct threads in the Pentateuch, each of which came to be attributed to different authorship. (A similarity was seen with the New Testament, which rested on four separate gospels offering parallel accounts.) The strands of the Pentateuch, however, did not constitute separate books but were closely interwoven into a single text - different strands often sharing the same page - by subsequent editors who deftly cut and pasted.

In one set of doublets, the Supreme Being is called Jehovah (Yahweh) while in the other he is called Elohim. Scholars came to call the author of the first "J" and the other "E". A third strand dealt mainly with priestly matters and its author was designated "P". The name "D" was given to the author of the last of the five books, Deuteronomy, who had access to historical documents apparently not available to the other authors. "D" was also seen responsible for some of the largely historical works that followed the Pentateuch, the early prophets. A fifth and decisive hand in the shaping of the Bible was that of the final editor, who artfully wove these separate, sometimes conflicting, texts into one document. Some scholars saw these separate strands reflecting the development of the religion from one that was nature/fertility oriented ("J" and "E") to a spiritual/ethical religion ("D") to one based on priests and law ("P").

²Typical is the attitude of Israeli archeologist Biran: "Archeology is not here to prove or disprove the Bible," he says. The Bible and archeology, however, shed light on each other. The wall of a sanctuary uncovered at Dan, for instance, was bowed because a layer of stone appeared unaccountably missing from its middle. Biran found an explanation in I Kings 7:12 which described the construction method employed by Solomon's artisans in the courtyard of the Jerusalem Temple built a century before the Dan sanctuary - "three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams." In the sanctuary restored by Biran at Dan, cedar beams have been installed in the gap between the stone courses evidently left by disintegration of the original wood.

³U.S. News and World Report, December 24, 2001

Hershel Shanks, Digging for Zion: Moment Magazine, December 2004: Reasoning from the absence of evidence can be very dangerous. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, as the old adage has it. Not a stone from any of the three Jewish Temples that supposedly graced the Temple Mount in Jerusalem can be positively identified. Palestinian spokesmen use this as evidence that the Jewish Temple never existed.

The so-called "biblical minimalists," however, are scholars, and sometimes they too make use of the same absence of evidence. Kind David, for example, is no more real than King Arthur, some of them

The mainstream of archeology has long felt that even absent specific proof of particular events, the Bible remains a historically authentic document. This is because the customs, towns, etc. which are described in the Bible fit exactly those which existed at the time when the Bible claims that they happened.¹ But those towns and customs did not exist at the time when the higher critical theories claim that various parts of the Bible were written. Nor could the so-called authors of the Bible, completely without the aid of modern archeology, have known about those customs in such detail. Similarly, they could not have even known where many of the towns were, they having long since disappeared. Sometimes new towns of the same name arose in a different place entirely. Yet the Bible has been shown to be topographically accurate on every point. The great American archeologist, William Albright, stated: "Wellhausen and his followers did not even recognize the difficulty, because of their ignorance of modern Palestine and adjoining lands." (*The Archeology of Palestine and the Bible*) "The picture of the Patriarchs as presented in Genesis fits the frame of life in the Middle Bronze Age, the momentous role they play in the religious story of mankind dovetails into the larger drama of secular history." (Leah Bronner, *Biblical Personalities and Archeology*)²

The historical accuracy of the Torah is doubly impressive in that it does not only include the self-contained history of the Jews but also describes their interaction with other nations. This allows us to check with the histories of these nations to confirm the authenticity of these events. We can search Egypt for records of the entire slavery, confirm whether the Joseph story fits into the customs of Egypt at that time, etc. Had the Torah been a forged document, the author would not have taken these unnecessary risks of exposure.

say. That wasn't a bad argument in the 1980s when the name David- any David – had never been found in an ancient inscription. Then an inscription was found at Tel Dan referring to the dynasty of David, barely a century or so after he lived. The reaction of some minimalists was that this was a forgery.

Biblical minimalists contend that Israel never existed before the Israelite monarchy. One obstacle to their argument is that **a hieroglyphic inscription – found in Egypt long ago – actually refers to Israel. There is no disputing this. The location of this Israel is in just the area that the Bible says the early Israelites inhabited. And they are referred to as a people, not a state.** But the minimalists have an answer: This inscription refers to another Israel, not biblical Israel.

¹Moreover, the Bible goes into considerable detail about the exact lineage of the Jewish people and of other peoples (all the way back to Adam HaRishon), which is very unusual. (The New Testament made a smaller attempt (to explain the lineage of Jesus from King David) and landed out contradicting itself as to how many generations there were and which generation each person came from.) There are no comparable examples of anything to what the Bible did. "Hebrew national tradition excels all others in its clear picture of tribal and family origins. In Egypt and Babylonia, in Assyria and Phoenicia, in Greece and Rome, we look in vain for anything comparable. There is nothing like it in the Germanic peoples. Neither India nor China can produce anything similar."

"... Numerous recent excavations in sites in this period in Palestine, supplemented by finds made in Egypt and Syria, give us a remarkably precise idea of patriarchal Palestine, fitting well into the picture handed down in Genesis." (William Albright, *Archeology and the Religion of Israel*)

²Higher Critical Theory was undermined for another reason. At the time of the theory, i.e. in the 19C, it was believed that phonetic script only dated back to about 1000 BCE (i.e. about 3000 years ago). There were few ancient scrolls or other examples of writings available at the time. Therefore, it was presumed that Biblical writings must have been written later (and were mere mythologies). The fact that this was common in other societies reinforced this idea. However, later on manuscripts such as the Tel El Amarna letters, dating back to the Bible period (about 3500 years ago), were found, and this line of argument collapsed.

Today, not only are the places, customs and topography of the Bible confirmed, but most of the events themselves are as well. There are many individual proofs from the local events (we will show these below on a case by case basis). In addition "parallel documents have been found which describe the same events, told in Biblical narratives, from the perspective of the Egyptians, the Assyrians, or ancient Canaanites. ... No serious Bible scholar remains who can argue with the fact that these historical events were transmitted with incredible historical accuracy from generation to generation until our time". (Yochanan Aharoni in his Canaanite Israel During the Period of Israel Occupation)¹

¹Brought in G Alswang, The Final Resolution, pg. 13. Alswang's chapter, Is the Bible Objectively Valid? is recommended reading as an overview of proofs, and is particularly strong on debunking Biblical Criticism. Alswang shows that many of the Biblical Critics, including those who were Jewish, were virulently anti-Semitic. Abraham Geiger, for example, not only denied the Divine origin of the Chumash, but scoffed at Jewish dietary laws and called for the abolition of circumcision. He claimed that Jews who continue to cling to Yiddishkeit are not worthy of emancipation. He suggested that Jewish history be broken into four epochs, of which the highest was the Bible criticism of his time. (Alswang, pg. 24)

Some scholars are using archeological research to challenge the historical truth of central elements of the biblical story.

To begin with the bottom line, as Prof. Israel Finkelstein, head of the Archeology Institute at Tel Aviv University, reads it, the main elements of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) were written in the seventh century BCE by different hands, each giving a contemporary, political-religious spin to ancient folk memories. These strands would be woven together into a single text by a master editor two centuries later.

There are few challenges to the Bible story from the ninth century BCE forward because from this period - from 853 BCE, to be exact - we have corroboration of the main outlines of the biblical story from extra-biblical sources, most notably, the royal Assyrian annals. These describe contacts with the kings of Israel and Judah in the course of the frequent Assyrian military campaigns. The kings named in these annals, carved in stone in the Assyrian palaces, are ones we know from the Bible.

However, the new bibliohistorians claim that there is little corroboration for anything previous to the ninth century BCE, including the major events of the national saga from Abraham to Solomon. These revisionists are challenging the historicity of central elements of the biblical story, like the epic of the Patriarchs, the sojourn in Egypt, the Exodus, the divine encounter at Mount Sinai, and the conquest of the land under Joshua. In recent years, even the existence of David and Solomon has been challenged by some of the minimalists (as these "Bible bashers" are sometimes called).

Finkelstein admits that his claim that the Bible was written in the seventh century is odd, since the seventh century BCE was not a sharp historical turning point like the 10th century BCE (David and Solomon, the establishment and dismemberment of the united monarchy of Judah and Israel) or the sixth century BCE (destruction of First Temple Jerusalem, exile to Babylon, and return).

What differentiates Finkelstein from most minimalists is that he comes to his scenario not through textual analysis but on the basis of archeological surveys and excavations in which he was personally involved. These have produced far-reaching - some would say revolutionary - data that had not been available to earlier scholars. But Finkelstein is definitely out of tune with the mainstream of archeologists. Even a militant secularist like Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, who never misses a chance to attack the religious establishment, rallied to the defense of the Bible, accusing the minimalists of "cheap pursuit of sensationalism." "Secular people are often the most upset," says archeologist Herzog, "because they have rejected Halacha and adopted the Bible as an expression of national identity."

But many of the proofs used by these revisionists are the same ones used by other archeologists to prove the opposite. For example, the revisionists claim that the fact the central features of the Bible story have clear parallels in earlier Mesopotamian cultures brings the authenticity of Divine authorship into question. But it is more likely that these were true stories, later mythologized by other cultures.

This background helps understand the readiness of scholars in recent years to look afresh at the biblical text. If it is broadly accepted that the Bible was compiled by diverse individuals at some point or

A final nail in the coffin of the Bible Critics was placed by a computer analysis of the Bible and various other texts, assessing the probability that each text was written by only one author. Taking 54 variables into account, the computer concluded that the probability of two parts of the Chumash being from a single author (which the Bible Critics considered were written by two separate authors) was 82%. The computer concluded that the probability that Kant has written Kant and that Goethe has written Goethe (based on literary and other consistencies) was only 8 and 22 percent respectively.¹

ii-Specific Archeological Proofs

points in history - even if it is maintained that they were Divinely inspired - then the text could legitimately be examined by other men at a later point in history, particularly if the latter had new information that was not available to the original authors. And, if it comes to it, who is to say they were not Divinely inspired as well?

In the immediate aftermath of the Six Day War, teams of archeologists and archeology students from Tel Aviv University - among the latter, Finkelstein - and elsewhere were sent into the hills of the West Bank to undertake a survey. The surveyors in the end had two decades - until the outbreak of the Intifada - to comb the hills of Judea and Samaria.

Moving on foot, they examined pottery shards that had worked their way to the surface. Despite the fact that there were no major archeological digs, the archeologists nevertheless claimed that these findings were sufficient to establish the age and size of settlements that had dotted the landscape in antiquity, and sometimes also to make assumptions about the ethnic identity of those associated with specific styles of pottery. For the first time, they claimed, a comprehensive picture emerged of settlement in the biblical heartland in antiquity. Never mind that the towns described in the Bible were found to be exactly where the Bible claimed they were (this information could not have been known at a later time when many of these cities were covered up), that the Bible's historical record is accurate according to the customs of the time (later the customs were different), that the Bible is regarded as so accurate a historical document by most archeologist that it is actually used to locate archeological sights (like Sodom and Amora). Finkelstein and his pottery-collecting bands felt that they had the right to ignore all that and go back to the long discredited Higher Critical Theory. In fact Finkelstein's radical approach originally won him nothing but notoriety in academic circles, although today there is growing attention to his claims in the scholarly community.

Finkelstein's erroneous scientific approach is one that even undergraduate physics scientists would not make: making conclusions based on what you don't find. Judah, he said, contained only half a dozen inhabited locations, all tiny, from the 10th century BCE to the eighth century BCE. Its major site, Jerusalem, was distinctly unimpressive. What the potsherds say to Finkelstein is that the Bible got it wrong - that Judah was not a kingdom or a center of empire during this period, but a modest chiefdom. This, of course, does not preclude the likelihood that the chiefs were David and Solomon. "A small elite ruled from a small mountain stronghold [Jerusalem] with a limited number of inhabitants over a population made up of a few sedentary communities in the midst of a large number of pastoral camps," he would write. Never mind that Biblical archeologists are continuously having to revise, upwards, the size of David's Jerusalem. Never mind that Kathleen Kenyon got it all wrong in Jericho because she didn't notice half the city still under ground. Never mind the fact that earlier archeologists challenged Josephus on all sorts of details and as premier Hebrew University Archeologists Benjamin Mazar shows, they were forced to retract on every one of them. Finkelstein can wallow in the glory of what he and his colleagues did not find.

Recently, I spoke with an archeologist who was involved in the digs at Sodom and Amora. The archeologist confirmed that the digs were exactly consistent with the Biblical account. When I asked her if that means that the Bible is true, she responded by saying that archeology was too new a science to make such a claim - too new to say that the Bible is true, but old enough to say that it was made up!

Finkelstein himself admits that claiming that Jerusalem was "a small, poor, unassuming highland stronghold, not very different from other hill country [settlements], as my colleague David Usishkin has shown," is strange for the capital of a united kingdom whose northern half, Israel, boasted a palatial

a-אבות till the אדם-a

lived approx. 4400 years ago. (תורה : תובל-קין (שמות ד : כב
Coincides with earliest bronze tools - beginning of Bronze Age.
This is exactly what the Torah says happened then: תובל קין לוטש כל חורש נחושת וברזל

b-מגדל בבל-b

The description of מגדל בבל coincides with the type of ziggurat, temple-towers, which were built in that area at that time. It is possible that מגדל בבל was just a more dramatic example of the ones found in אור and other places. אור itself has been extensively excavated² and is shown to have been cosmopolitan and sophisticated, a center of culture and scientific development at the same time when the Bible states that אברהם אבינו was ordered by G-d to leave it.

c-The Flood

At present there is no direct proof of the flood. It appears that flood waters were localized to the Babylonian area.

d-אברהם אבינו-d

Modern archeology has found nothing from the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 B.C.) directly associated with Avraham or his offspring, leading even such Bible defenders as Dever to conclude that "all respectable archaeologists have given up hope" of proving the patriarchs existence. This has led many scholars to deny the historicity of the patriarchs. In addition, they claim that the stories of their lives are full of chronological errors, and that they were first written

government center in Samaria, sizable fortified sites, and a well-developed hierarchy of small, medium, and large settlements that indicated a politically and economically mature entity. It was stranger still considering that Jerusalem was supposed to be the political and administrative center of what the Bible describes as an empire stretching from the Euphrates in today's Iraq to the border of Egypt.

¹Ibid, pgs. 21-22

² Unearthing The Bible, By Melinda Liu And Christopher Dickey: Newsweek 2004: What there was in the beginning, in the world of the Bible, is what there was in the land now called Iraq. There is nothing left of the Garden of Eden, no artifact at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where myth has placed the Temptation and the Fall. But the great cities and empires from the Books of Genesis and Kings and Chronicles have left their traces: Ur, where Abraham was born; rapacious Assyria with its capital, Nineveh, and Babylon, where the ancient Israelites were carried into captivity and where, as the psalm tells us, they wept when they remembered Zion.... has emerged slowly, painstakingly, over the past century from some 10,000 scientific excavations in Iraq and innumerable ones in Israel.... In Israel, much care is taken to preserve the slightest trace that might reveal literal truths about the mystical teachings of scripture. The tragedy of Iraq is that contexts are disappearing as fast as the objects themselves. Archeologists are like crime-scene investigators trying to discover how whole societies lived and died. And to do that they need to know when, how—and especially where—each clue is found. The looting of the museum itself last year created an international sensation as American troops were accused of standing by while more than 100,000 artifacts were stolen. Those numbers were inflated. But more than 8,000 pieces are still missing, of which almost 30 are considered of unique historical and artistic importance. ...

under the reign of King Josiah (seventh century B.C.E.) or King Hezekiah (eighth century B.C.E.). But, this is simply a made-up presumption without evidence and untestable. In addition, we know that the entire Jewish people have a tradition that these cataclysmic events happened to their ancestors, which has been and is still being transmitted by tens of millions of people without any competing narrative.

In addition, most scholars agree that archaeology provides "circumstantial evidence" of the historical backdrop of the patriarchal stories.¹ Treaties and contracts, the price of slaves, and other details of law and commerce written into the narratives, for example, "match remarkably well" what scholars have found in documents from ancient Mesopotamia, says Kenneth Kitchen, a retired Egyptologist from the University of Liverpool. Similarities between Middle Bronze culture and the biblical text, adds Amihai Mazar of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, are "too close to be ignored" and suggest that the patriarchal narratives are "very old traditions...passed on from generation to generation" rather than later inventions².

The Bible describes אברהם walking around ארץ ישראל between ירושלים and southwards. Archeology shows that it was in just this area where people were living at this time whereas in later times the focus of activity is set in different parts of the land.³

Clay tablets found in Mari, Syria talk of a whole series of familiar sounding names from Biblical history-names like Peleg and Sarug, Nachor and Terach and most importantly, Charan. In בראשית 14 these are given as the תולדות of Shem. It seems that a city was named after each one of them. Nachor and Charan are reported in these tablets as flourishing cities, 3900 years ago, just at the time of אברהם אבינו.⁴

In the twenties, shards found along the Nile and dating back to Biblical times refer to many of the cities contained in Tanach, including Jerusalem, Ashkelon, Tyre (Josh 19:29); Chatzor (Josh 11:1); Beit Shemesh (Josh. 15:10); Aphek (Josh 12:18); Achshaph (Josh 11:1) and Shem. Many of these cities, like Chatzor, Shchem, Yericho, Eglon, Megiddo, Gath and Gezer have been discovered and excavated.⁵

Elonei Mamre, where אברהם אבינו appeared to השם, is thought to have been identified about two miles north of Hebron. Stones of an altar with recognizable traces of burning were discovered here as well as ancient roots of a tree, easily discernible in the ground.⁶

¹Devorah Klein, Moreshet 2000-2001: The impact of archaeological discovery upon the Torah narrative is mostly of an indirect kind (Winton Thomas, Archaeology and Old Testament Study). For example, in Samaritan civilization, there were two types of relations with women: wife and sister-wife. A sister-wife was specifically something that nobility had. Commoners had regular wives. The Gur Aryeh explains that when Avraham went down to Egypt he wasn't worried about the king taking his wife; he was wary of the commonfolk. By saying that Sarah was a sister-wife (Beraishis 12:13) he showed he was nobility and therefore the commonfolk wouldn't dare start with him. But the king was more corrupt than Avraham suspected and Pharaoh actually did stoop to steal Sarah.(Rabbi Becher)

²U.S. News and World Report, December 24, 2001

³ Bronner

⁴ Keller 53-54

⁵ Keller pg. 69

⁶ Keller, pg. 86

The Book of Genesis reports that camels were mainstay beasts of burden and transportation already at the time of Avraham, in the 18th century BCE. Yet it was originally thought that camels were first domesticated in the Middle East no earlier than the 12th century BCE. This anachronism was a clear indication of the later writing of the Bible. Or so it was thought.

All this changed with the turn of a shovel. Recent archaeological finds have clearly demonstrated that the camel was domesticated by the 18th century BCE. What was previously thought to be a knockout punch against the Bible is now evidence supporting it.¹

Ur

Archeologists cannot agree as to which chronological system should be used for this era². According to the Chumash, Abraham was born in the year 1976 B.C.E. (1948 A.M.). This was during the third dynasty of Ur³, the most prominent city in the Sumerian empire. Some secular scholars claim that people simply made up Abraham's place of origin, with no basis in fact, at a later date. They make this claim because the name of the city of Ur is combined with the word *Kasdim* (*Ur Kasdim*). The *Kasdim* (i.e., the Chaldean people) did not appear on the world's historical stage until the tenth century B.C.E.

However, the Chumash often identifies a location using the name that was given to it much later in history, (even after the time of Moses). So here, the Torah is saying that Ur lay in the region that would, later on in history, be ruled by the Chaldeans.

Abraham was born during the reign of Nimrod,⁴ a powerful tyrant who had himself deified.⁵ Renowned for his physical strength and his prowess as a hunter,⁶ his reign unified the people.⁷

It is possible that Nimrod was the Sumerian king Shulgi (formerly pronounced also as *Dungi*) of Ur, who was the second king of the "Sumerian Renaissance," since what we know about him is consistent with our description of Nimrod. He reigned for forty-eight years, dated to circa 2029 B.C.E.-1982 B.C.E., according to the short chronology. He is known for having built the Great Ziggurat of Ur.

Shulgi is best known for his extensive revision of the scribal school's curriculum. Although we don't know how much he actually wrote, there are numerous poems of praise written by and about this ruler. In the twentieth year of his reign he proclaimed himself a god.⁸ Shulgi was quite boastful; he once bragged about his ability to maintain high speeds while running long distances. For example, he claimed he once ran from Nippur to Ur, a distance of at least 100 miles.⁹

¹Rabbi Dovid Lichtman on Aish HaTorah's Website

² *Middle chronology* can still be found in older publications dedicated to this period in history; *short chronology* is espoused by the majority of scholars in our times. The difference between the two systems is about ninety years.

³ also known as the Sumerian Renaissance

⁴ *Midrash Hagadol* 11:28; *Beit Hamidrash* unit 1; *Sefer Hayashar*

⁵ *Midrash Hagadol* 11:28

⁶ *Genesis* 10:8-9

⁷ *Ibid.*, *Rashi*

⁸ Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000-323 BC*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.p. 76

⁹ William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC*. New York: Routledge, 2006

e-Sodom ve'Amorah

An archeological dig conducted in the late 1990's in a place thought to be Amorah revealed the following:

The buildings were burned at the bottom. This could not have come from regular fire-damage. Fire damage leaves its marks higher up on the wall. In addition, the walls had fallen inward. Walls normally collapse outward (e.g. in case of earthquakes) unless there is some sort of explosion. (It is possible that the city had been dynamited. Dynamite had been invented and was known to be available in the Middle East. But there is no record of a whole city having been dynamited.)

Sodom is supposed to be currently under the southern, most desolate part of the Dead Sea. In fact, when the sun is shining in the right direction, one can clearly see the outlines of forests preserved by the salt under the water.

The Dead Sea area lies on a mighty fissure which goes all the way up to the Galilee and down into Africa. Black basalt and lava, the remains of volcanic activity in the area, can be found all over. In 1951, Jack Finegan, an American scholar investigating the area, concluded: the destruction of the corrupt cities of the plain came about through a great earthquake which was probably accompanied by explosions, lightning, issue of natural gas and general conflagration.¹

Sanchuniathon, the Phoenician priest, writes as follows in his Ancient History: the Valley of Sodom sank and became a lake, always evaporating and with no fish, a symbol of vengeance and of death for the transgressor.²

In this southern area of the Dead Sea are many salt pillars. Even to this day, everything in the area is quickly covered by a crust of salt.³

f-Jacob's Sons

Joseph is sold as a slave for 20 silver shekels. Egyptologist Kenneth A. Kitchen of the University of Liverpool notes that that matches precisely the going price of slaves in the region during the 19th and 18th centuries B.C.E., as affirmed by documents recovered from the region that is now modern Syria. By the eighth century B.C.E. the price of slaves, as attested in ancient Assyrian records, had risen steadily to 50 or 60 shekels, and to 90 to 120 shekels during the Persian Empire in the fifth and the fourth centuries B.C.E. If the story of Joseph had been dreamed up by someone in a later era, they are unlikely to have gotten the slave prices right.

Furthermore, we find that the detailed descriptions of the court of the Pharaoh and its protocols, as reported in Genesis, are extremely accurate to that time period. Joseph's Egyptian

¹Keller, pg. 84

²Keller, pg. 85

³Keller, pg. 86

name, clothing, and court orders are all very much in line with what we now understand to have been the norm for that time and place.¹

g-Egypt

As with the patriarch stories, there is no direct archaeological data to corroborate the biblical account of Hebrew slaves in Egypt, their release by a pharaoh after a series of plagues, or the existence of Moses. Despite more than a century of intensive study of Pharaonic Egypt, only the barest wisps of support for the Exodus, a central event in Jewish theology, exists. There are accounts of Egyptian raids into Palestine that brought back captives, presumably as slaves, and a dispatch from a border guard in the early 12th century B.C., reporting that two people had escaped from Egypt into the Sinai. But that has not prompted the Bible's defenders to cede the field to the minimalists, who argue that the Exodus never happened. "Absence of evidence" says Ketchen, "is not evidence of absence."

Indeed, some scholars find striking circumstantial evidence in ancient Egyptian inscriptions that something like the Exodus could have occurred in the Late Bronze Age (1400-

¹Rabbi Dovid Lichtman on Aish HaTorah's Website

1200 B.C.) One inscription at the tomb of Rekhmire, an official under Pharaoh Thutmose III in the 15th century B.C., for example, depicts prisoners from Canaan and Syria making mud bricks, with stick-wielding taskmasters overseeing them, during construction of the temple at Karnak. The scene closely parallels the Israelites' plight described in the book of Exodus. And Hoffmeier of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School notes that the use of forced labor in Egypt "is documented only for the period 1450-1200, the very time most biblical historians place the Israelites in Egypt."

More intriguing is a line in an ancient Egyptian document dating from the reign of Ramses II, considered by many to be the pharaoh of the Exodus, ordering that food be distributed

to "the Apiru who are dragging stone to the great pylon." Although the meaning of the term "Apiru" is hotly debated, some scholars believe it may refer to the Hebrews, or more generally to Asian Semitic People.

Perhaps the most dramatic indirect evidence of a 13th-century B.C. Exodus, some scholars say, is a line of hieroglyphics in a temple monument commemorating the military conquests of Pharaoh Merneptah, a son of Ramses II, during a campaign in Canaan in 1207 B.C. Included in the boastful listing of vanquished enemies is a line declaring: "Israel is laid waste." The inscription clearly establishes Israel's presence in Canaan by the end of the 13th century B.C., prompting some scholars to speculate that the Exodus would have taken place about 50 years earlier¹.

Recent excavations in the Nile delta revealed traces of a large Semitic presence between 1650 and 1525 BCE.²

Joseph's elevation to viceroy of Egypt was reproduced in the Bible exactly according to protocol. He is invested with the insignia of his high office, he receives the ring, Pharaoh's seal, a

¹U.S. News and World Report, December 24, 2001

²In 1999, James K. Hoffmeier, professor of Bible studies and archeology at Wheaton College, Illinois and an Egyptologist, wrote a book called *Israel in Egypt – The Evidence of the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*, New York, Oxford University Press. The author examines more than 1,000 documents, sagas and references. He brings much evidence to show that foreign Semitic princes were educated in Egypt and that Semites from the north sought refuge in Egypt in times of drought and famine. Temples and tombs show non-Egyptian slaves in brick-making and other tasks overseen by stick-wielding task masters.

costly linen vestment and a golden chain (Gen. 41: 42). This is exactly how Egyptian artists depict this solemn ceremony on murals and reliefs.

As viceroy, Joseph rode in Pharaoh's second chariot (Gen. 41: 43). This implies that this occurred during the time of the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, which exactly coincides with the time that the Bible gives for the Joseph story. The Hyksos were the first to use both war and ceremonial chariots in Egypt. (Keller, pg. 94-97)

Eighty miles south of Cairo there lies an oasis town (Medinat-el-Faiyum) which is watered by a 200 mile-long artificial canal called "Bahr Yosef", Joseph's Canal. People say that the canal was planned by Joseph, Pharaoh's Grand Vizier.

A rock inscription of Ptolemies records a seven year famine of about that time, and a frontier official reported the entry of a Semitic tribe, due to the famine which was sent to

Goshen. (Documents were exceptionally well preserved in Egypt's very dry climate.) (Keller 98-99) Both Pithom and Ramses have been found, and in each there are remnants of ancient granaries as well as inscriptions that refer to storehouses. (Keller 114-115)

Keller (pg. 117) says the following: Professor William Foxwell Albright of the United States ... is one of the few scholars with almost universal qualifications. As theologian, historian, philosopher, orientalist, archaeologist, and comparative philologist, he may well be cited as conclusive. "According to our present knowledge of topography of the eastern delta, the account of the start of the Exodus, which is given in Ex. 12:37 and Ex. 13:20, is topographically absolutely correct. Further proof for the essentially historical nature of the Exodus story and the journey in the area of Sinai, Midian and Kadesh can be supplied without great difficulty thanks to our growing knowledge of topography and archaeology."

Some people still demand more direct evidence, such as written Egyptian records saying that the Jews were enslaved. But this is an unreasonable expectation, notes University of Arizona archeologist William Dever. "Slaves, serfs, and nomads leave few traces of the archeological record."¹

There is corroboration of the occurrence of the Ten Plagues from outside sources. The Layden Papyrus #344 was found in the 19th century. It includes a description of calamities echoing the Biblical account of the Ten Plagues": "Plague is throughout the land. Blood is everywhere. The river is blood. Men shrink from tasting it... That is our water, that is our happiness. What should we do in respect thereof? All is ruined...Gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire. Egypt weeps, the entire palace is without revenues...Grain has perished on every side...All animals their hearts weep. Cattle moan, cattle went astray, there's none to gather them together...The land is without light...The children of princes are dashed against the wall. The children of princes are cast out into the streets...He who places his brother in the ground is everywhere. There is groaning throughout the land mingled with lamentations."

Through archeology we know symbols that were significant in Egypt. For example, frogs were symbols of fertility. During the plague of frogs, they became so fertile that they drove the Egyptians insane! The sun was worshipped as a god- and proved powerless in the plague of darkness! The Nile was believed to be a reincarnation of an Egyptian god. But when the river turned to blood, that ideology was destroyed. Every plague had a relation to a certain religious symbol or idea of Egypt.²

Adapted from an article by Hershel Shanks in *Moment* magazine, October, 2001:

The Biblical account of the Exodus includes three different kinds of factual assertions:

1. Miracles like the ten plagues and the splitting of the sea.
2. Details like the escape of 600,000 men (plus wives and children) into the desert for 40 years.
3. The broad sweep like the slavery in Egypt, and the slaves' escape and ultimate entry into the Promised Land.

Rabbi Wolpe's basic error lies in a failure to distinguish these different kinds of factual assertions, and of, in fact, appearing to conflate them.

Miracles, by definition, are divine intrusions into the natural order. Whether they happened is a matter of faith, not proven or disproven by ordinary factual evidence. Therefore,

¹In *U.S. News & World Report*, Oct. 25, 1999, pg. 54

² R' Becher, quoted by Devorah Klein, *Moreshet* 2000-2001

neither the historian nor the archaeologist has anything whatsoever to say about them. Take the plague of darkness, which lasted three days and was so intense that people could not see one another; yet it was light in all the Israelite houses (Exodus 10:22-23). This is hard to imagine. But not for God. Yet there is no kind of factual evidence that the archaeologist could dig up that has any relevance to whether this happened. Nor could the historian *qua* historian opine on whether this happened. It's all a matter of faith. Yet just as these things can be proven by archeology, nor can they be disproven.

The second kind of factual assertion in the Biblical account of the Exodus is the details—the number of people, the places they stopped, the amount of time they spent at each stop and the number of Israelites on the Exodus—2 or 3 million including women and children.

The last and historically most important kind of factual assertion in the Exodus account is the third kind—whether Israelites sojourned in Egypt at all and were enslaved there and finally

escaped into the desert and went to Canaan where they established their own country. Avraham Malamat, a distinguished senior Biblical historian at Hebrew University, refers to these kinds of facts, adopting a phrase from Goethe, as “*die Grossen Züge*, the grand sweep of matters.”

In a historical context, the story is quite plausible. It is not demonstrated by direct evidence, however. From Egyptian records, we know that there were Asiatic slaves in Egypt; the Israelites would have been considered Asiatic slaves. The Israelites, according to the Bible, settle in the area known as Goshen in the eastern Nile delta, just where another Egyptian text tells us Asiatics roamed in search of food, presumably during a time of famine in their homeland. The Bible tells us that Canaan did indeed experience famines over the centuries and its inhabitants sometimes went to Egypt in search of food. According to the Biblical text, the Israelites were

forced to build the store cities of Pithom and Ra'amses with mud bricks mixed with straw (at one point they even had to collect their own straw—Exodus 5:7). In Jerusalem, they build with stone; yet for Egypt the writer properly designates mud brick with straw. Moreover, archaeologists have identified a city named Pi-Ra'amses (the House of Ra'amses), the great delta residence of the pharaohs of the 19th and 20th Egyptian dynasties; there, archaeologists have found the city that the Bible says Israelite slaves built. A prominent Austrian archaeologist has identified a house excavated in Egypt as having the architecture, known as a “four-room house,” typical of Israelite houses. An Egyptian text recounts how slaves escaped from the eastern frontier and a posse was sent to re-capture them.

While there is no direct physical evidence of Israel in Egypt, the story is certainly plausible. Add to this a certain common-sense consideration: what society would make up a

history of itself as slaves if it weren't true? I quote the words of the great Brandeis University Biblical scholar, Nahum Sarna (from a chapter on the Exodus in the book Ancient Israel that I had the honor to revise and update for a 2000 edition):

“No nation would be likely to invent for itself, and faithfully transmit century after century and millennium after millennium, such an inglorious and inconvenient tradition unless it had an authentic historical core. Many peoples have fashioned foundational narratives recounting how they came to be, some with more, some with less historical value. But none, so far as we are aware, has ever suggested that its origins were as slaves.”

Moreover, there is the famous Merneptah Stele, an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription that all agree dates from the late 13th century B.C.E. (shortly after the Exodus) and all experts agree

mentions Israel as a people in Canaan at this time. Indeed, except for the Merneptah Stele, there is no direct evidence of Israel's existence for another 450 years or so.

There are some problems in fitting the text into the archaeological picture. For example, at Kadesh Barnea, where, according to the Bible, the Israelites spent 38 of their 40 years of wandering, archaeologists have been unable to discover anything there relating to the Exodus period. They found only a settlement from a later period. Another problem: The book of Joshua claims Israelites conquered many cities, and according to the archaeological evidence, that is not true. The book of Judges, on the other hand, appears to give a different, much more accurate picture.

One final item: It may in fact be true that the Israelites were joined by many other groups of Canaanites who ultimately became Israelites. I prefer to explain it this way: In my home,

Thanksgiving is a very big holiday. We do it up brown—turkey, pumpkin pie and all, with some talk about how thankful we are for our blessings, just like the Pilgrims. But my ancestors came from Kiev at the turn of the century, not with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. Yet the Pilgrims' story is my story. That, essentially, was what happened in the case of Israel. Probably only a comparatively few Israelites came from Egypt. Most accreted later in Canaan. If you read the Bible carefully you will see that the Biblical author recognized this (the 12 tribes even included fishermen on the Mediterranean coast; they hardly came from Egypt). But the foundational story of the nation became the story of the Exodus from Egypt—even of those Israelites who were not themselves in Egypt. And so it was told from generation to generation. And so today it is my story. And it is true.

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, OCTOBER 20, 2003

Digging out the truth of Exodus

By: Helen Fields

Egyptologist Manfred Bietak was reading a 60 a year old report of a dig near Luxor in Egypt when a surprising find caught his eye. Near a mortuary temple from the 12th century B.C, archaeologists had uncovered a grid of shallow trenches, which they guessed was the base of a workers' hut. Bietak, head of the Institute of Egyptology at Vienna University, recognized the floor plan as that of the four room houses used by almost all Israelites from the 12th to the sixth

century B.C. What was it doing in Egypt? If Bietak is right, the trenches could be the first physical evidence for the Bible story of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt.

House proud

The structure has three long parallel rooms with a wide room across on end. The Israelites weren't the only people to build such houses – a few have also been found in what is now Jordan, where Israelites generally did not live. But the distinctive houses dominated Canaan's hill country, now the West Bank. Families lived on a second floor and kept animals in the rooms below. With strong stone foundations and thick walls, the houses lasted for decades. The house in Egypt was of flimsier construction. It "would have been considered a bit of a shack

compared to how they were built in ancient Israel," Stager says. The narrow trenches of the foundation probably supported only thin reed and mud walls. Yet the light construction makes sense if it were a worker's or slave's hut. The hut was built in the courtyard of the temple of Ay and Horemheb, probably by laborers who were taking that older temple apart to erect a 12th century B.C. Pharaoh's mortuary temple, Bietak writes in the latest *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

But one house doesn't prove the Exodus. When droughts hit on Canaan, people often wandered southwest into well-irrigated Egypt. Some could have stayed and become laborers, says Stager, who adds that he's still "agnostic" on whether the Exodus actually happened. Archaeologist Larry Herr of Canadian University College speculates that someone with no

connection to the Israelites could have, by coincidence, built a hut with the familiar floor plan. "Give me a slave city where all of the houses are like this," he says. "Then I'll see some sort of connection."

h-The Exodus

Professor Albright: "The long-disputed date of the Exodus can now be fixed within reasonable limits. ... about 1290 BCE ... the first years of the reign of Ramesses II (1301-1234) were to a large extent occupied with the building activities in the city to which he has given his

name: the Ramses of Israelite tradition. The striking correspondence between this date and the length of their stay given by Ex. 12:40 as 430 years, ‘Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was 430 years’ (Ex. 12:40), may be purely coincidental but it is very remarkable.”

The Ipuwer Papyrus, discovered in Memphis, Egypt in 1828, was a text of about 17 pages, most of it in good condition. Originally, it was thought to be written at about 1500 B.C.E., about 200 years before the Hebrew exodus, and therefore was ignored for a long time as a confirmation of the Bible. However, Professor Immanuel Velikovsky once pointed out that the papyrus parallels, in detail, that of all the plagues as well as the Exodus itself. There is also a description on the shrine from el-Arish which describes a cataclysm, accompanied by nine days of hurricane and darkness. Pharaoh is described as marching, together with his army, to the eastern part of the kingdom, where he was engulfed by a whirlpool.¹

The Los Angeles Times reported that a sophisticated computer calculation indicates that the Biblical parting of the Red Sea, which allowed Moses and the Israelites to escape from bondage in Egypt, may have occurred precisely as the bible describes it.

Because of the peculiar geography of the northern end of the Red Sea, researchers report in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society that a moderated wind blowing constantly for about 10 hours would have caused the sea to recede about a mile and the water level to drop 10 feet-leaving dry land in the area where the crossing is thought to have occurred.

An abrupt change in the wind would have then allowed the waters to come crashing back into the area in a few brief moments, a phenomenon that the Bible says inundated the Israelites Egyptian pursuers.

Critics have pointed out that no records of the Jews’ sojourn in the desert have been found. But the archeologists have rejected this, asking what type of material evidence one would expect to find for a group of nomads wandering in the desert. This is especially so since the Torah says that the Manna was totally absorbed by the body and that their clothes did not wear out.

יהושע-i

According to the Bible, the conquest of ארץ ישראל took place in 13th C BCE. This was originally vigorously contested by John Gerstang, director of the British School of Archeology in Jerusalem (1919-1926), who claimed that the conquest had to have taken place much earlier. However, excavations at Chatzor (1955-1968) confirmed the Biblical dates. The Bible states that יהושע burned Chatzor (יהושע יא:יא-יג) and that שלמה rebuilt it (מלכים 9 : 15), building stables there.

Archeological digs of the Tel revealed the older Chatzor below and שלמה's Chatzor, showing the outlines of the stables and its gate, the same as the stables found at Megiddo and Gezer, also mentioned in the פסוק, plus שלמה's characteristic city-gate entrance (Recorded in Genesis and the Big Bang).

Archeological digs have been taking place in Jericho for some time. The archeologists have confirmed that the walls were not destroyed in the normal way, there being none of the tell-tale signs of such destruction (though the position of the wall has been identified. In 1998, for example, an international team in co-ordination with the Palestinian authority uncovered what they believe to be one of the original gates of Jericho.) Bushels of grain were found in the city,

¹See The Final Resolution, by Gershon Alswang, pgs 14-20

indicating that it had been conquered quickly. If there had been a long siege, the bushels would have been used up. Radioactive carbon 14 dating of a thick layer of soot showed that the town had also been burned, not just conquered.

Kathleen Kenyon, who did the original digs in Jericho in the 50's, agreed to the above facts but disputed the Biblical dates, claiming that Jericho was destroyed 150 years earlier than the Bible claimed. She based this primarily on the fact that she failed to find the kind of decorative pottery imported from Cyprus, which was popular at the time Joshua's conquest was supposed to take place. Its absence, she reasoned, indicated that the city had long since become abandoned.

However, in 1990, archeologist Bryant Wood, writing in *Biblical Archeological Review*, reversed Kenyon's findings. Wood, an ancient pottery expert, claimed that Kenyon's excavations were made in the poorer part of Jericho, where such pottery would not have been found anyhow. Other pottery, dug up in Jericho in the 1930's, was common in Joshua's time. Moreover, carbon dating of the soot covering the town supports the Joshua date. Finally, Egyptian amulets found in Jericho are also similarly dated. Today, Wood is the accepted wisdom on Jericho.¹

Joshua 8:30-35 tells of the fulfillment of Moses' command to build an altar on Mount Ebal (Deut. 27). Zartal reports that his excavation team found this very altar. The place is right, the time is right, and the animal bones are consistent with the biblical offerings. Even the style of the altar is right, in such detail, says Zartal, that it looks nearly identical to the description of the Temple's altar as described in the Talmud -- a uniquely Israelite design that no Canaanite temples used then or later.²

¹Dr. Adam Zartal, (head of the Archeology Department at Haifa University) did an archeological dig in the 1980s on Mount Ebal, overlooking Nablus - biblical Shechem. He excavated a cultic complex centered on a stone structure, which he identified as the very sacrificial altar which the Bible describes Joshua raising on Mount Ebal. "One can assume that if a central event such as that of Mount Ebal has been proved to have occurred," he wrote, "it follows that considerable sections of the biblical course [sic] must also be based on historical events, which underwent editing." The scholarly world, however, has been disinclined to accept Zartal's identification.

² Rabbi D. Lichtman, Aish HaTorah's Website

The following article *Archeology Corroborates Jewish Tradition* (The Conclusions of the Article, "Go to Mount Eival," by Professor Adam Zartal, University of Haifa, Kibbutz Ein Shemer) appeared in *To Our Origins - El Hamekorot*:

My friends, what should we do? A child proclaims that everything his father says is a lie. What should we do with him? This is not a fiction. There are those who "know" that everything that is written in the Torah is incorrect. The Torah tells of the Exodus from Egypt. They respond: It never happened! The Tanach tells of the settlement of the Land of Israel in the days of Yehoshua bin Nun. They declare: Incorrect! These are just legends! But, now a problem has been created for these deniers: More and more, archeological findings are verifying the stories of the Tanach. The great archeologist, Professor Albright, writes, "There is no historian who has not been impressed by the abundance of evidence that supports the historical accuracy of the stories of the Biblical Period." Dr. Yochanan Aharoni, as well, one of the great researchers of Israel, writes, "New discoveries have completely changed the approach of researchers to the texts. They now see them as an excellent primary source, including the early eras of the beginning of the nation." (The Later Canaanite Period, p. 2-5).

Recently, once again, people have been criticizing the accuracy of Tanach. The crushing answer to these claims has come from the expert scientist, Professor Adam Zartal, of the University of Haifa. He researched, over the course of 21 years, 3,000 square kilometers in the Shomron. His survey uncovered ruins of settlements from the 12th and 13th centuries B.C.E., the majority of which were unknown until now. Two large volumes present the findings of the survey; another three volumes will complete the series. In his article, "Go to Mount Eival," published in Ha'aretz (Nov.12,'99), Professor Zartal compares the text of the books of Devarim and Yehoshua to the discoveries of the archeologists in the field.

j- King David

In 1993, a stone inscription, a part of a shattered monument, was found in the Galilean town of Dan. The stone was identified as dating to the 9th C B.C.E., commemorating a military victory by the king of Damascus over two ancient enemies. The fragment identified them as the “king of Israel” and “the House of David” respectively. The fact that the inscription was written not by the Jews but by their enemies provided particularly strong corroboration of the existence of the Davidic dynasty.

Before this discovery, it had become fashionable in some academic circles to dismiss the David stories as an invention of priestly propagandists who were trying to dignify Israel's past after the Babylonian exile. But as Tel Aviv University archeologist, Israel Finkelstein observes, Biblical Nihilism collapsed overnight with the discovery of the Davidic inscription.”¹

Etgar Lefkovits, Jerusalem Post August 2005: *Shards of Evidence*

In what could turn out to be the archeological find of the century, a prominent Israeli archeologist claims to have uncovered the ancient palace of King David near the Old City of Jerusalem. The 10th Century BC building discovered by Dr. Eilat Mazar in Jerusalem's ancient City of David, following a six-month dig at the site, has stirred international interest, igniting a debate in the archeological world whether the building is indeed the Biblical palace built for the victorious King David by King Hiram of Tyre as recounted in Samuel II: 5. Just outside the Old City's Dung Gate, a five-minute walk from the Temple Mount, lies the ancient-history-rich City of David. It is here that Mazar...began excavating in February, in a dig sponsored by the conservative Jerusalem think tank, the Shalem Center, where she is a senior fellow, together with the academic support of the Hebrew University. The first thing Mazar found, surprisingly intact a mere two meters below ground level, were Byzantine-era artifacts, including a fully-preserved room with mosaic floorings, dating back to the 4th-6th century CE. Beneath this room, water cisterns, pools and a purification bath from the Second Temple period were next uncovered. But

In the book of Devarim (Ch. 27), Moshe instructed the Children of Israel to cross the Jordan and to organize a ceremony at Mount Eival, next to a special altar that would be erected there. They were told to bring offerings on the altar and celebrate before Hashem; they would write the words of the Torah on stones there, and, afterwards, gather together to pronounce “The Blessings and the Curses” between Mount Grizim and Mount Eival.

Discoveries of Archeologists Support the Jewish Tradition....

What happened after these scientific facts were publicized? Nothing much. The skeptics have not come out and admitted the truth. They have remained silent. Only a few men of truth are making their voices heard. Prof. Larry Steiger of Harvard University said, “If there was an altar on Mount Eival this will have a revolutionary effect; we (archeologists of Biblical times) will all have to go back to kindergarten.” Now that these things are revealed and well-established, there needs to be a revolution of thinking; Tanach must be accepted as a historical source. So says Prof. Zartal in conclusion. Over the many years of studying the Shomron, much additional data has been gathered that supports the Tanach's version of history; these details will appear in his forthcoming book.

¹ In *U.S. News & World Report*, Oct. 25, 1999, pg. 56

it was what was under these pools of water that would prove to be the most startling find of all, what Mazar calls "monumental" foundation walls on which the Second Temple remains had been built. These suddenly came into view, protruding out in all directions, even beyond the length and width of her 30x10-meter excavation site, located within the compound of the present-day visitor center at the City of David. But now, with the help of a \$500,000 grant provided by American Jewish investment banker and Shalem board chairman Roger Hertog, Mazar and her team peeled away the fallen stones, one by one, revealing that what lay immediately underneath the boulders were not ruined city walls, as had previously been thought, but rather the ruins of an immense 3,000-year-old stone building which was surprisingly well-preserved...Inside the building, Mazar subsequently found a variety of pottery shards dating back to the time of King David and his son, Solomon, as well as a government seal impression, or bulla, of an official, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, son of Shevi, who is named twice in the book of Jeremiah (37:3 and 38:1), which was hidden in between stones on the northeast side of the construction...But it is the piles of pottery found in and around the building that is of the most critical importance to archeologists, since it is through the pottery that the building can be dated. The pottery found under the building dated back to the last phase of the Iron Age I, 12th-11th century BC, just before David conquered Jerusalem, and predates the construction of the building.

In one of the rooms, Mazar's team also found pottery from Iron Age II of the 10th-9th century BC, leading her to conclude that the building was in use at the time, roughly the period of David's reign in Jerusalem.¹

Critics have asked why we have not seen more from the Davidic era. But Carol Meyers, professor of Biblical studies and archeology at Duke University, shows that the archeological record is consistent with the political climate of the time (i.e. all over it is very poor vis-a-vis other nations). Such conditions also existed during the time of King David, she asserts (U.S. News, *ibid*). Besides, archeology has uncovered a wealth of information about the Philistine "sea people" thoroughly consistent with their portrayal in the Bible. For example, sources, including numerous Egyptian inscriptions, indicate that the Philistines most likely originated in the Aegean area, probably on the island of Crete. That fits with the biblical passages (Jeremiah 47:4 and Deuteronomy 2:23, for example), linking them with Caphtor, a location which most scholars identify with Crete.

In addition, the Bible depicts the Palestinians as expert metallurgists, and archeologists have confirmed this.

In April 2003, a new, laboratory-based affirmation of the existence of a united Israelite monarchy headed by kings David and Solomon in the 10th century BCE was revealed. The result emerged out of excavations carried out by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute of Archeology.

The findings have particular significance in view of the debate existing among archaeologists as to the authenticity of the Biblical account of the two kings and the period and extent of their reign.²

¹Meanwhile, in a separate major archaeological development in Jerusalem, a Jewish ritual bath, or *mikva*, dating back to the Second Temple period, and a First Temple Wall have been found in an underground chamber adjacent to the Western Wall tunnels....

²Etgar Lefkovits, Jerusalem Post Sept. 2005: A First-Temple period seal has been discovered amidst piles of rubble from Jerusalem's Temple Mount, an Israeli archaeologist said Tuesday, in what could

More than 40 years ago, the late famed Hebrew University archaeologist Prof. Yigal Yadin argued that a series of monumental structures – and particularly the city gates of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer as well as certain palaces at Megiddo – were founded by Solomon, corroborating the text in I Kings 9:15. However, during the last decade various scholars criticized this view and claimed that the United Monarchy of David and Solomon should be dismissed as a real historical period of any value in the history of Israel. Indeed, it has even been argued by these Bible critics that the findings described by Yadin were only from the 9th century BCE, the period of the Israelite kings Omri and Ahab.

Writing in the April 11 issue of Science magazine, Prof. Amihai Mazar of the Hebrew University, Dr. Hendrik Bruins of Ben-Gurion University, and Prof. Hans Van der Plicht of Groningen University, Holland, tell of their findings from excavations at Tel Rehov, located some 5 kilometers south of the town of Beit She'an in the Beit She'an Valley.

In the article in Science, Mazar, Bruins, and Van der Plicht write of radiometric carbon 14 tests that were carried out at Groningen University on charred grain and olive pits found in various strata at Tel Rehov. The dates achieved in this research were particularly precise, with

prove to be an historic find. The small - less than 1 cm - seal impression, or bulla, discovered Tuesday by Bar-Ilan University archaeologist Dr. Gabriel Barkay amidst piles of rubble from the Temple Mount would mark the first time that an written artifact was found from the Temple Mount dating back to the First Temple period. The 2,600 year old artifact, with three lines in ancient Hebrew, was discovered amidst piles of rubble discarded by the Islamic Wakf that Barkay and a team of young archaeologists and volunteers are sifting through on the grounds of a Jerusalem national park.... Barkay said that the find was the first of its kind from the time of King David. He has not yet determined what the writing is on the seal, although three Hebrew letters -- thought to be the name of its owner -- are visible on one of its line.

The seal was found amidst thousands of tons of rubble discarded by Wakf officials at city garbage dumps six years ago, following the Islamic Trust's unilateral construction of an mosque at an underground compound of the Temple Mount known as the Solomon's Stables. After the Antiquities Authority voiced disinterest in thoroughly sifting through the rubble discarded by the Wakf, Barkay applied -- and eventually received -- a license from the Antiquities Authority to sort through the piles of earth thrown into the garbage dump in search of antiquities, and has since found scores of history-rich artifacts, from the First Temple Period until today amidst the rubble, including a large amount of pottery dating from the Bronze Ages through modern times, a large segment of a marble pillar's shaft, and over 100 ancient coins, among them several from the Hasmonean Dynasty.

minimal range. The authors further state that this is one of the best sets of radiometric dates based on stratigraphic sequence from any site related to the Biblical period.

The results show that two strata at Tel Rehov are safely dated to the 10th century BCE. One stratum was destroyed in heavy fire. The date of this destruction fits very well with the reign of Shishak, the Egyptian Pharaoh who invaded the Land of Israel around 925 BCE and whose invasion is mentioned both in the Bible (I Kings 14:25) and in his monumental inscription at the temple of Amun at Karnak, Egypt, where Rehov is mentioned among many other places conquered at that time.

Since the Shishak conquest occurred a few years after the death of Solomon, the identification of a city destroyed by him at Tel Rehov provides an anchor for dating other sites

with similar material culture. This similar culture was found at Hazor and Megiddo in occupation levels which were identified as “Solomonic” in the past.

k-The Period of Melachim

In 2002, an inscription attributed to Jehoash, the king of Judea who ruled in Jerusalem at the end of the ninth century B.C.E., was found. The 10-line fragment, which was apparently found near Jerusalem’s Muslim cemetery, outside the eastern wall of the Temple Mount, is

written in the first person on a black stone tablet in ancient Phoenician script. The inscription's description of Temple "house repairs" ordered by King Jehoash strongly resembles passages in the Second Book of Kings, chapter 12. It would be a piece of physical evidence describing events in a manner that adheres to the narrative in the Bible.

The inscription includes the king's request that priests collect public money to be used for the repair of the First Temple and there are references to the purchase of timber and quarried stones for repairs on the Temple. The inscription contains fragments from II Kings 12:15: "And they did not ask an accounting from the men into whose hands they delivered the money to pay out the workmen; for they dealt honestly."

Archeology has in particular provided stunning proof of the historical veracity of later parts of the Bible. The excavated Assyrian annals, for instance, not only confirm the outlines of two centuries of biblical history; they considerably expand them by telling us about critical doings of the Israelites not related in the Bible.

Cuneiform texts (The Nimrod Prism) confirm the Bible story in מלכים ב' יז of the capture of Samaria. As for the plague which the Bible שם פייט describes as having saved Jerusalem, Sancherib's own account states that he did attack Jerusalem, that he locked up Hezekiah the Jew "as a caged bird in his royal city of Jerusalem," but nowhere does he claim to have conquered Jerusalem (Bronner, pg. 9). We would not expect Sancheriv to actually admit to having been defeated since it was not the custom of rulers in those times to record their own defeats.

The Israelites' first mention in the Assyrian annals is one of the most dramatic images we have of them - a tale not without relevance to today's Middle East. In 853 BCE, the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III, encountered them when he led his army the furthest west it had yet ventured. He had ascended the throne a mere six years earlier and begun a tradition of annual military campaigns aimed at expanding his state, based on the Tigris River, into the world's first superpower.

The kingdoms to the west, alarmed at his ambitions, dropped their own squabblings and formed a grand alliance to stop the tyrant of the Tigris. Of the 12 kings of "Hatti [Syria] and the seashore," mentioned in the annals, King Ahab of Israel was listed third, a ranking that reflected his force's importance in this alliance. Some historians suggest that this surprisingly high ranking

was due to the reinforcement of Israel's contingent by soldiers from Judah, its sister state.

Prof. Haim Tadmor of the Hebrew University, a biblical scholar and Assyriologist who has published a major work on the Assyrian annals, notes that the king of Judah in this period, Jehoshaphat, had told Ahab (I Kings 22:4) "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." This was said in the context of a different war, notes Tadmor, but the sense of shared destiny may have carried over to the confrontation with Assyria.

The numerical strength of the Israelite force is not given, but it included chariots, the ancient equivalent of tanks. Riding into battle alongside them in the Assyrian account was an Arab force on 1,000 camels. This was the first-ever mention of Arabs in ancient texts. Also participating alongside the Israelites was an Egyptian force of 1,000 men, contingents from

Phoenician cities on the coast of today's Lebanon, and the army of King Hadad of Damascus-Aram, a traditional enemy of Israel.

The Alliance forces met the Assyrians at Qarqar on the Orontes River in today's Syria. Assyrian annals claim a rousing victory, but historians tend to doubt this because Shalmaneser would not venture west again for several years while Israel and Damascus felt free to resume their own war.

If Ahab's existence is confirmed the very first time that history makes a biblical bed-check, as it were, then Solomon's existence is less likely to be a fanciful invention, since his reign would have been only some 60 years earlier.

The fall of Israel to Shalmaneser V and the exile of inhabitants are described in both the

Bible (II Kings 17:1-6) and the annals, with small but telling differences. "Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, marched against [Hoshea] and Hoshea became his vassal...." recounts the Bible. On the other hand, "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. He exiled Israel to Assyria." The 10 northern tribes now disappear from history, although Israelite names would subsequently appear in Assyrian records referring to officials in Assyria itself.

The Assyrian annals attribute the conquest of Samaria not to Shalmaneser but to his successor, Sargon. "With the strength of my gods," says Sargon's account, "I fought with and defeated the Samaritans.... I took captive 27,290 inhabitants. From among them, I organized 50 chariots as a royal unit, and the rest of them I resettled within Assyria. The city of Samaria I rebuilt and repopulated more than before; I brought people there from the lands, which I had conquered. I placed my courtier over them as governor and imposed tax and tribute upon them, just as if they were Assyrian. I also had them trained in proper conduct." An explanation for the different versions is offered by Tadmor: Samaria fell to Shalmaneser in 722, but his death a few months later left the fate of the city in limbo. The Assyrian army apparently withdrew until Sargon's succession was established. The Assyrian account confirms a population transfer but, unlike the biblical version, one limited in numbers.

See Permission to Receive, Lawrence Kelemen, pg. 84-115 for a complete overview of current evidence from יהושע and חוה through אדם.

**CHAPTER NINE: HIGHER CRITICAL THEORIES AND
OTHER BIBLICAL CRITICISMS**

i-

(Significant parts of this section were adapted from Rabbi Natan Lopes-Cordoza.)

Biblical scholars assume as a methodological first principle that the Tanach is a human document just like any other. Furthermore, they believe that the Bible had multiple authors. Sometimes these run parallel to each other, sometimes they are intertwined, in some instances they are complementary, in others contradictory. As some point this quilt was shaped into a semblance of order by a fictitious character usually designated as R (Redactor) representing the final editorial effort on the Hebrew Bible. Unfortunately, R did a rather inadequate job, since he left so many contradictions. This whole process is supposed to have lasted from the 9th Century BCE (because written records were presumed not to have existed before that date), to the time of Ezra in the 5th Century, when all these documents were supposedly put together¹.

Next to this higher criticism exists the lower criticism, dealing with textual role. Words which are difficult to explain are traced to errors in transmission and are corrected accordingly. Expressions, sometime whole verses, which are difficult to fit into an existing or still-to-be-constructed context, are omitted and others substituted².

A variation of this is the attitude of Reform Judaism, which sees the text as some kind of human record of the Jews' encounter with God, and as such, "inspired."³

To show multiple authorship, biblical critics try to show variations in the text, in language and in ideas. One way of countering biblical criticism is to show that in the text itself that there is a unity. This requires also identifying leading or key words, acrostics, refrains, and other literary structures inherent in the text. Scholars recognize that these patterns exist, and they agree that these tools lend a sense of cohesiveness to the final form of the Bible. At the same time, they say that the redactor added these in. This is unfair because it makes the premise of Biblical Criticism unfalsifiable, to a certain degree.

The bottom line is that Biblical Criticism starts out with a premise – the Torah is man-made – and build its methodology on that premise. It is not coming to prove that premise, but rather regards the premise as axiomatic⁴.

Biblical criticism began with Benedictus de Spinoza (1632-1677).⁵ Spinoza's claimed that the Bible should be seen as the product of human spiritual development, mostly of a primitive nature. While accepting the possibility that some parts of the Torah could have originated with Moshe, he contended that it was only many centuries after Moshe died that the

¹ Max Kapustin, *Biblical Criticism: A Traditionalist View*, in *Challeng*, pg. 424.

² Max Kapustin, *Biblical Criticism: A Traditionalist View*, in *Challeng*, pg. 425.

³ There are even earlier observations of this kind. In Numbers, (chap. 16) we read of Korach, the first critic of Moses' authority, who claimed that "the Torah was not from heaven" (Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 10, *halachah* 1). Another earlier critic was Menashe the son of Hizkiah (698-543 B.C.E) "who examined biblical narratives to prove them worthless." Thus, he jeered: had Moses not anything else to write besides, "and Lothan's sister was Timnah"? (Genesis 36:12) (T. B. *Sanhedrin* 99).

⁴ Rabbi Simeon said: Alas for the man who regards the Torah as a book of mere tales and everyday matters! If that were so, even we could compose a Torah dealing with everyday affairs and of even greater excellence. Nay, even the princes of the world possess books of greater worth which we could use as a model for composing some such Torah. The Torah, however, contains it all, its words are supernal truth. (Zohar III:152a)

⁵ Spinoza, who was a descendant of the Marranos, stated in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (and in some letters) that he doubted the Mosaic and the divine authorship of the Torah. Spinoza talked of a God who lacks all "personality" and henceforth is incapable of *ever* conversing with man.

Torah, as we know it today, appeared. Ezra the Scribe (fourth century B.C.E.) should be considered the major author and editor of the Torah¹. Because Ezra died prematurely, these works were never revised and are therefore full of contradictions and repetitions².

But it was only through Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), a German Semitic scholar and professor of theology and oriental studies that the approach took off³. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and his colleagues wrote in the context of 19th Century Protestant theological scholarship. There was more than a hint of suggestion that the Hebrew Bible was somehow less "whole" than the Christian gospel texts, and, indeed, Biblical Criticism has had more than its fair share of open anti-Semites, including Nazis⁴. . (It may be a pleasant irony that Biblical Criticism methods were eventually turned on the Christian texts too, with similar challenges to their textual unity.)

Wellhausen wanted to prove that the Torah. and the Book of Joshua were, in large measure, "doctored" by priestly canonizers under Ezra in the time of the Second Temple. Their purpose was to perpetuate a single falsehood: Moshe's authorship of the Torah and the central worship, first in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. According to Wellhausen, there never was a Tabernacle and no revelation at Sinai ever took place. Moshe, if he ever existed, considered the Deity a local thunder god or mountain god. The Torah had, therefore, to be seen as a complete forgery and not as a verbal account of God's words to Moshe and the People Israel.

There is no one system of Bible criticism. The critical approach to Bible study includes a number of different disciplines, which are interrelated but are not necessarily identical or complementary.

Among these systems we can discern the following:

1. The Textual Approach: This method proposes that there were a number of master texts which existed in ancient times, some of them surviving until today. Out of these texts, the

¹ as well as of the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings

² Spinoza's claimed that some texts of the Torah, such as the ones in Genesis 12:6; 22:14, and Deuteronomy 1:2, must have been written many years after Moshe's death, since they reveal information that refers to latter days. Spinoza relies here on the famous Jewish commentator Ibn Ezra (1088-1167), who wrote that these verses were "mysteries" about "which the wise should be silent" (on Deuteronomy 1:2). But Ibn Ezra intended to say that these passages must be understood as prophetic and anticipating the future. The critics were obviously not prepared to accept prophecy as an explanation. In other words, it was not the problems themselves that caused these differences of opinion but the very approach to the text that created these controversies.

³ Wellhausen's teacher was K.H. Graf and many call the hypothesis the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis.

⁴ See Cyril Abelson, *Bias and the Bible*, in *Challenge*, pg. 412 – 419.

traditional version became accepted by the Jewish people and in a relatively later era it became the sole and compelling version of God's word.

2. The Literary Approach which takes apart the Bible according to literary criteria and examines its various parts according to defined systems. Out of this approach was born the Sources System which identifies a number of documents in the Bible which were written at different stages and were combined together by editors at a later stage. On this approach] Herman Wouk remarks in his book *This is My God*¹: "Literary analysis has been used for generations by obsessive men to prove that everybody but Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare. I believe literary analysis could be used to prove that I wrote both *David Copperfield* and *Farewell to Arms*. I wish it were sound!"
3. The Historical Approach which tries to identify characteristics in the Biblical texts with specific periods in history and indicates the period in which the texts were written and edited according to historical landmarks.
4. The Linguistic Approach which examines the Bible according to linguistic criteria connected with the laws of the development of linguistic systems and the identification of certain sections of the Bible with different linguistic periods and identities.
5. The Archeological Approach which searches for the affirmation or the denial of the Bible stories and laws, using archeological and epigraphic discoveries of that era.

Our Tradition was never blind to the textual issues and questions raised by the modern Biblical Criticism.

The Documentary Hypothesis (DH), in its classic form of JEPHD, is quite out of date. Today, scholars may be divided into three major groups as to the origins of the Torah: First, those who hold by some version of the DH, meaning that they posit some fundamental difference between "Priestly" material (including P and H strands) and "non-Priestly" material (J and E) in the first four books, with Devarim being a separate entity. Scholars vary, however, on how each of these groups (including Devarim) were produced, but generally claim that they were produced over many generations.

The second group of scholars (including D.N. Freedman and E.L. Greenstein) call the Torah, along with Nevi'im Rishonim, the "Primary History" (PH), assuming a basic unity for these books. However, they do not see the entire PH as the work of a single author working from scratch, but as a line of tradition which developed over time, and the final form, with all its unity, is based on earlier (oral or written) versions of this tradition. Although they recognize the basic unity. However, their hypothesis posits a very late date for the final form of the text (i.e., the Torah was written only after the latest events in Melachim had taken place).

The final group deems the entire enterprise of source criticism worthless, as it is so speculative.

Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo, *On Bible Criticism and Its Counterarguments*

¹ Glasgow: Williams Collins Sons and Co., 1973 p. 291

Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (1875), has almost five thousand textual references. He maintained that four major documents could be identified in the Torah. Each had an individual character, both in content and in general outlook. Though they had been skillfully interwoven, their special characteristics made it possible to trace each source throughout the books of the Torah. The earliest was the -J- Document (J being the first letter of the Divine Name, which was used throughout this source). This was followed by the Elohist Document -E-, in which God is designated as Elohim¹. The Book of Deuteronomy -D-, which gave a narrative framework to the "Book of the Law," was supposedly promulgated by King Yoshia in the seventh century B.C.E. Finally, there was the Priestly Code (P), which proscribed the correct ritual for each ceremonial occasion².

Wellhausen's method is clear and straightforward. Every passage that fits his theory is authentic; all others are forgeries. Whenever possible, he points out poor grammar, corrupt vocabulary, and alleged internal inconsistencies. In cases where he felt some "need" to change the plain meaning of a Hebrew word to fit into this theory, he offered what he called "conjectural emendation." The fact that thousands of verses contradicted his theory never disturbed Wellhausen. He contended that there was a master forger or interpolator at work who anticipated Wellhausen's theory and consequently inserted passages and changed verses so as to refute it. Wellhausen assumed that the forger had worked, as it were, with scissors and paste, taking all kinds of liberties: carving up (the original texts; moving half a sentence here, a few sentences down, and three and a half sentences there, and a few sentences up, while altogether suppressing and omitting large portions of each source that could not be fitted into this patchwork. He claimed to be more clever than the interpolator could have ever imagined and therefore to have divulged the real truth. This obviously was a wonderful theory, for arguments against Wellhausen's theory thereby became his strongest defenders!

Wellhausen's students discovered within their teacher's *J*, *E*, *P*, and *D* documents at least thirty additional documents³. The additional materials were so extensive that they could not have been the products of only a handful of authors, but rather belonged to a complete religious school.

The materials were cut even finer. Slowly, more and more forgeries were "discovered," until finally half a dozen documents were found for each single verse, and others even went as far as tracing them through some of the other books of *Tanach* as well. The theory was no more than incredible guesswork and fantasies⁴.

In 1925, Professor Rudolf Kittel, originally an admirer of Wellhausen's theories, stated that "the assumption of forgery may be one of those hypotheses which, once set up, is so often repeated that finally everyone believes it. Who nowadays would take upon himself the odium of being 'behind the times'?"

¹ These documents were thought to have been composed in the early monarchical period, probably in the ninth or eighth century B.C.E.

² K. H. Graf had already assigned it to the post-exilic age and connected it with the Law of Ezra in the fifth century B.C.E.

³ Each document (especially *J* and *E*) contained a number of older elements; each had undergone a certain amount of "editorial" revision in an effort to coordinate and harmonize the various elements within the style of the original.

⁴ The chancellor of England, the earl of Halsbury, referred to it in 1915 as "great rubbish." [12] The famous historian Lecky sharply criticized it on the basis that it totally lacked evidence. [13]

But, the criticism was growing ¹ until, after World War I, the demand for criteria had grown very loud².

Scholars began ascribing the books of the Torah and the rest of *Nach* to much earlier periods and stated that the legal principles of the Torah were already well established in the time of the prophet Samuel.

The dating of Deuteronomy has always been the central point from which the critics had worked forward and backward to determine the age of the other law codes and documents. With the dating of Deuteronomy, the whole critical edifice stood or fell.

Adam C. Welsh's earlier dating was, therefore, a major blow to the whole critical school and consequently not easily accepted by his contemporaries, but it was gradually strengthened by others³.

With all the different dates suggested Bible Criticism was developing into a chaos of conflicting conjectures producing contradictory results.

In Germany, the Reform movement embraced this theory and it was therefore refuted in the strongest terms by the great Orthodox rabbis of the time⁴.

The great Hebrew University historian, Yechezkel Kaufman (1889- 1963)[27] showed that monotheism was not, as Wellhausen and others had stated, a gradual departure from paganism, but an entirely new and radical development. This contradiction Wellhausen's thesis that was bent on showing how the Bible had developed progressively and slowly into being a more sophisticated document⁵.

There were other attacks on the Higher Criticism. Archeology, for one, seemed to contradict the High Criticism⁶.

¹ Benno Jacob (1862-1945) in his book on Genesis, *Das Erste Buch der Torah*, concludes (p. 1048) with the words, "The theory that the Book of Genesis is composed of various sources that can be singled out and separated has been rejected." Umberto Cassuto (1883-1951)[26] and Yechezkel Kaufman (1889- 1963)[27] further demolished the theory, showing that Wellhausen's observations contradicted his conclusions.

² Hugo Gressmann declared that, "The Higher Criticism has generally exhausted the problems which it could and had to solve."

³ A decade later, Otto Eissfeldt supported him by analyzing the nature and history of the Pentateuchal law.[19] Eventually, most scholars were of the opinion that earlier dates were more plausible.[20]

⁴ Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), in his Torah Commentary,[22] Dr. David Hoffmann (1843-1921),[23] an Orthodox Jewish scholar of great erudition, and Professor Jacob Barth (1851-1914),[24] another outstanding philologist of his time, destroyed much of Wellhausen's theory. Also, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Halevi (1847-1914), in his historical works, showed the position of Wellhausen and his admirers to be untenable.[25]

⁵ In Wellhausen's day, Darwin and his theory of evolution had won the day, and any discipline, including literature, that accepted the theory of evolution was welcomed with open arms. Furthermore, the philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) had left a deep impression in German and European culture by contending that all of history is a development from lower to progressively higher stages. It was therefore assumed that the Jewish religion developed from idolatry, and having passed through many intermediate stages, the earlier one of which was the Torah, reached the ultimate pure monotheism of latter days.

⁶ Archaeologist William F. Albright[28] He convincingly demonstrated that archaeological research did not support, and in fact often contradicted, this view of history.

In his classic work *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978) p. 377, Walter Kaufmann discusses Wellhausen's as well as other forms of Higher Criticism and shows one of the major failures of these schools in the following observation:

Imagine a Higher Critic analyzing Goethe's Faust, which was written by a single human being in the course of sixty years. The scenes in which the heroine of Part One is called Gretchen would be relegated to one author; the conflicting conceptions of the role of Mephistopheles would be taken to call for further divisions, and the Prologue in Heaven would be ascribed to a later editor, while the prelude on the stage would be referred to yet a different

author. Our critic would have no doubt whatsoever that Part Two belongs to a different age and must be assigned to a great many writers with widely different ideas. The end of Act IV, for example, points to an anti-Catholic author who lampoons the church, while the end of Act V was written by a man, we should be told, who, though probably no orthodox Catholic, was deeply sympathetic to Catholicism. Where do we find more inconsistencies in style and thought and plan: in Goethe's Faust or in the Five Books of Moses?

In short, inconsistencies of style and text cannot be taken as proof that a work was written by more than one author.

Kaufmann (p. 383) put it thus: Any suggestion of the close affinity of religion and poetry is generally met with the retort that a religious scripture is not mere poetry, which is true enough. But at the very least one might accord a religious scripture the same courtesy which one

extends to poetry and recall Goethe's dictum: "What issues from a poetic mind wants to lie received by a poetic mind. Any cold analyzing destroys the poetry and does not generate any reality. All that remains are potsheds which are good for nothing and only incommode us."

In retrospect, it is rather surprising that Wellhausen's theories were accepted for so long. Anti-Semitism has something to do with this. When anti-Semitic tendencies became stronger in the immediate pre-Hitler days, many scholars felt the need to use the Wellhausen and other theories to give a final blow to the Jewish People, religion, and Bible. When Friedrich Delitzsch (1850-1922) delivered a lecture called "Babel und Bibel," in which *Tanach* was considered devoid of any religious or moral value, Kaiser Wilhelm congratulated him for helping "to dissipate the nimbus of the Chosen People."

Solomon Schechter, who headed the Jewish Theological Seminary in its earlier and more Orthodox days, exclaimed that Higher Criticism was no more than higher anti-Semitism.

Albright asked the question, how was it possible that the "scientific community" accepted many of these theories without critical assessment, knowing that many of the scholars had shown that their personal anti-Semitism completely overshadowed their intellectual honesty.

While Wellhausen and other schools of Higher Criticism slowly lost their credibility, a new school developed, the anthropological approach. It tried to show how Judaism evolved from primitive religions¹. But, they never answered the proofs of Kaufman and others that Monotheism was a radical break from idolatry.

By this time, the field of "Comparative Religion,"²- the application of the historical method to the study of religion³ - had emerged. No longer were broad generalizations about religion to be permitted. Rather, careful study showed that the ancient Orient represented a high cultural maturity—something denied by Wellhausen and others—and that Torah (and *Nach*) had been the outcome of this maturity.

Some scholars rejected the evolutionary view of Israel's religious history and described the religion of *Tanach* as having already reached the full development of its most important features in the age of Moshe. Paul Volz argued that the high ethical principles of the Decalogue, which were usually attributed to prophetic inspiration, were known to the Israelites in Moshe's time. On the basis of the evidence, Volz declared that the Mosaic authorship of the Decalogue could easily be established and that it was as advanced as the later teachings of the Prophets.

The most significant attempt to restore the traditional view of the Mosaic religion was made by Bruno Baentsch, who claimed that traces of monotheism can be found in other religions of the ancient Orient. Moreover, the discovery of the Hammurabi Code in 1902—a code of ethics of a remarkably high standard—completely changed the picture of the ancient Far East⁴.

The idea that the Torah and the other books of *Tanach* could best be understood on their own merits, without extra-biblical evidence grew. Israel's religious history had characteristic features of its own that could not be understood without primary attention being given to evidence derived from the Bible itself.

Cell this the theological approach to Old Testament. The real value of Torah and the other books of *Tanach* is essentially religious in content and outlook and, as such, the critical schools missed the point the Torah was making. Consequently, they used the wrong tools of investigation. Only an approach to the world of Torah and *Nach* that did justice to what it said about God, man, and the meaning of life could offer a means of arriving at the permanent significance of the Torah⁵.

It is only in the last twenty to thirty years, especially in America and England, that full

¹ William Robertson Smith , and Sir James G. Frazer in his 12-volume *The Golden Bough* (1890).

² This is also known as the Religio-Historical School of Interpretation (*Religionsgeschichte*, in German)

³ The approach reflected positivist principles of investigation, a method developed by . Auguste Comte. Comte made the point that one had to take the concrete and actual into consideration in philosophy; thus, this positive approach became influential in religious studies as well.[35]

⁴ Some suggested that this code was the forerunner of the Torah law, a view that was later rejected.[38] The difficulty of this approach is that Hammurabi's monotheistic ideas do not seem to agree with the monotheistic idea of the one Invisible God described in the Old Testament

⁵ This point, for ages emphasized by traditional Jewish scholars, had been made by Otto Eissfeldt[40] and later by Walter Eihrodt,[41] albeit these studies were also heavily influenced by New Testament sentiments.

emphasis was given to this approach¹.

In 1946, the secular German literary critic and theorist Erich Auerbach published an essay called "Odysseus Scar", comparing the biblical narrative with the Greek epic, Homer. Unlike Homer, the former is "fraught with background," unspoken words, and silence. It can only be understood on its own terms. It is in need of constant interpretation, claims absolute truth, and draws its reader into the world of religious experience. But above all, it is not art but *command* that strikes the student as the most important characteristic of the biblical story.

Auerbach maintained that the text of the Torah clearly shows that it wants to be "heard" as an encounter in which God speaks to man. It was not the later Rabbis or theologians who invented such a claim, but the very intent of the text itself.² While these developments fall short in the eyes of traditional Judaism, they indicate a more objective, honest approach toward the Torah. The authors, dissociating themselves from the old schools of Bible Criticism, tried hard to hear the genuine "voice" of the Torah, and therefore moved closer to the traditional Jewish approach than any of their predecessors.

What has become increasingly clear is that the problems raised by Spinoza, Wellhausen, and others were well known to the traditional Jewish commentaries throughout the ages. What is different is the *method* by which these problems were solved. The Bible critics took it for granted that the biblical texts were texts like any other and therefore to be explored by the normal criteria of literary research. Axiomatically, without sincerely considering other possibilities, they rejected the idea of a "personal" God, the possibility of verbal revelation, and the authority of tradition in interpreting these texts.

Mordechai Breuer, an Orthodox Jewish scholar, asks why the word of God came down to man in such a way that it seems to support some of the critic's findings. He answers that this was necessary to show all the different religious perspectives of the Torah. For example, when discussing the different Pentateuchal names for God (one of the most important foundations of the Wellhausen theory for the existence of "documents"), he explains that this is connected with the different attributes of God as understood by the Jewish tradition. Sometimes God appears to us as a merciful God (the Tetragrammaton), at another time as Judge (*Elohim*). These, however, are the ways in which God *appears* to us (phenomenon). But behind all this is the mystical meaning of the Torah, which unites all these names (noumenon).

The greatest problem with Bible Criticism must, however, be seen in its failure to understand the crucial role the Oral Torah plays in the proper understanding of the Pentateuchal text. As stated before, the text can be understood only when read in its own spirit. Looking a little deeper, this means that it can be understood only when one "hears" its words in "the doing," and is part of its Weltanschauung. [54]

More and more Bible scholars in the latter years admit that this is possible only when one studies the Pentateuchal text from within a certain tradition on which the text heavily relies. This

¹ One of the most important books accepting the true significance of Torah and Nach was written by H. H. Rowley and is entitled, *The Relevance of the Bible*. [42] Norman H. Snaith's important work *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London, 1944) also drew attention to the uniqueness of the Hebrew tradition.

² Auerbach's essay gave impetus to much novel research in the field of Bible studies. Most important are the works of Robert Alter, [44] Roland Barthes [45] and Harold Fisch. [46] All of them show a remarkable sensitivity for the authentic meaning of the text, reflecting a more "Jewish" approach when discussing some of the most difficult biblical narratives. Meir Weiss, [47] Meir Sternberg, [48] and Shimon bar Efrat, [49] using literary analysis, have dealt with the intricate subtleties of the biblical texts, uncovering more traditional interpretations.

is indeed one of the most important claims made by the Jewish tradition. Many Jewish commentators have convincingly argued that it is wholly impossible to understand the text without such a tradition. The intended meaning is the very one suggested by the Oral Tradition. While some modern commentaries may not go as far as arguing for a talmudic Oral Tradition, they do agree that the Pentateuchal text alludes to a comprehensive Oral Tradition that preceded it.[55]

In his famous commentary on the Torah, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch argues that the Written Torah is the "synopsis" of the Oral Tradition. First God instructed Moshe concerning the Oral Torah, and only afterward did He give him a dictation of the written text. In much the same way that lecture notes can help us to reproduce the original lecture only *after* we have heard it in full, so the Written Torah can only be understood after one has studied the Oral Torah in all its aspects: "It is not the Oral Law (Torah) which has to seek the guarantee of its authenticity in the Written Law (Torah); on the contrary, it is the Written Law (Law) which has to look for its warrant in the Oral Tradition." [56]

Yeshayahu Leibowitz, states that *as* literature, the Written Torah is inferior to Shakespeare; *as* philosophy, it cannot compete with Plato or Kant, and *as* "moral education," Sophocles' *Antigone* is superior! [58] To read the Torah as an autonomous text is therefore an unforgivable mistake: "This kind of bibliolatry is Lutheran," says Leibowitz.

Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik shows that apparent contradictions in the text are not the result of having been written by a different hand but are rather evidence for different and paradoxical dimensions in the human condition with which the religious personality has to struggle. [59]

What can be said with certainty is that honest Bible scholars no longer maintain that the Torah is the result of different fragments edited and reedited. The Torah is now taken to be Mosaic in origin and content, and it has been acknowledged that much of this tradition was already well established in pro-Mosaic times. Although this position has moved considerably in the direction of the Jewish traditional view, it has definitely not thrown in the towel to the tradition concerning the verbal infallibility of the Torah.

A sister school of "Higher Criticism," known as "Lower Criticism," has come to the fore within the last centuries. This school has taken upon itself to question the reliability of the text based on outside sources such as the Septuagint. The proponents of this school have developed recensions based on variant readings that they regard as more reliable than the traditional text. As later scholars have pointed out, these recensions have been accomplished by offering baseless emendations and conjectures that are without rational foundation.

Nijberg mentions a scholar who used this approach to analyze *Paradise Lost* and came to the conclusion that this work was full of later interpolations. He also speaks of a scholar who made seven hundred revisions in Horace and finally published a volume that contained, in effect, a revised version of the poems which, while hardly being improved upon, turned out to be rather amusing.

Regarding "Lower Criticism," Nijberg observes:

The most insane arbitrariness in this field is slowly beginning to recede.... In the end we should remember a good old philological rule: When one does not understand something, one should first mistrust oneself and not the text."

As has been clearly demonstrated, the Jewish Sages and later scribes were extraordinarily careful to guarantee that no changes were made in the text of the Torah and *Nach*. Their precision was such that today, despite the fact that the Jews were dispersed to almost every corner of the globe and their communities often had little contact with each other, there are no

essential differences in the text of the Torah scrolls. The Torah text that Jews brought from Cochin, India, is identical to the text used by the community in Cracow, Poland.

Still, there are differences in *some* ancient versions. This is not surprising: from the earliest times many individuals wrote scrolls for *private* study. These private scrolls often contained emendations that reflected the Oral Torah connected with a specific phrase or verse. This was done so as to remind oneself of the correct interpretation of the text. These scrolls were not intended for public use and were, in fact, ritually unfit for use because of these changes. Jewish tradition informs us that one of the great earlier Sages, Rabbi Meir, used to mark his allegorical explanations in his own private scroll as a means of remembering them. There is no evidence of these private scrolls ever becoming mixed up with the traditional written Torah, for Jewish law is extremely precise and exacting in its demands of the scrolls used for the Torah reading in the synagogues. Scribes who prepared Torah scrolls were and are required to use a copy of the traditional Torah text as a source and are prohibited from writing a scroll from memory.

It is possible that non-Jewish editions of the Bible, such as the Septuagint or Vulgate, may have used private scrolls as a source, and this would account for the deviations found there.

But perhaps the most devastating blow to these critical theories was delivered by the great Talmid Chacham Rabbi Chaim Heller (1878-1960). R Heller knew every extant ancient Bible translation in its original target language, whether Aramaic, Greek, Latin, or Syriac. Every translation is a commentary, and the variations result from the translator preferring one explanation in the Oral Torah to another. Thus, the differences were exegetical rather than textual. He further showed that all the apparent differences stemmed from the thirty-two exegetical rules of biblical interpretation enumerated by Rabbi Elazar ben Rabbi Shimon¹.

Dr. David Hoffmann points out that even to accept the contention that the text in certain places of the Torah has been altered would still leave no choice but to accept the traditional version as the one closest to the original, for "every conjecture, no matter how many exegetical and historical and critical arguments it may be supported, does not offer us even the probability that the Prophet or the writer of Scripture wrote in this form and not in the text before us."

On many occasions, seemingly "unintelligible" words of *Tanach* have suddenly become understandable in light of research and comparison with other oriental languages. It is due to this late research that the traditional text has grown in stature and respectability in the eyes of critical scientists and is increasingly preferred in many cases over other versions that were once considered accurate.

The Torah is a covenantal document and is to be studied as such. It does not inform us of "facts," "history," or "anthropology." It reveals a continuous encounter between God and man, which was set in motion with the revelation at Sinai.

The struggle over the origin of the text of the Torah was foremost a battle between "divine authority" and "human autonomy." Modernity, starting with Spinoza, was looking for ways through which it could liberate itself from the biblical worldview and its far-reaching divine demands. Since it was this biblical text that made man submissive to divine authority, it was necessary to start an assault on the biblical text itself and strip it of its divine nature. *What* man will find and conclude is greatly dependent on the question of why he is looking.

¹ In his *Untersuchungen ueber die Peschitta* (1911) he gives examples showing how the translator employed each rule in his version.

The Torah was historicized, secularized, and fragmentized.

CHAPTER TEN: SECONDARY PROOFS A:
CLAIMS TO SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE

ii- Prophecies

- a - Overview
- b - A detailed description of the destruction of both temples
- c - Prophecies concerning the Holy Land
 - 1 - Miraculous השגחה
 - 2 - Given Conditionally
 - 3 - Relatively small
 - 4 - Warned not to enter other lands
 - 5 - Will remain barren in non-Jewish hands
 - 6 - Miraculous return in modern times
 - a - The wars
 - b - The Arab-Israeli conflict

iii- Perfect knowledge of biology

- a - The 4 exceptional animals
- b - Fins and Scales

iv- מצוות that show control

- a - שמיטה
- b - עליה לרגל

v- Age of mankind, the week and the decimal system

- a - Age of Mankind
- b - The week
- c - The decimal system

vi- תורה שבעל פה

CHAPTER NINE: SECONDARY PROOFS A: CLAIMS TO SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE

i - Prophecies¹

a – Overview

The תורה contains laws and predictions that a human being could not have conceivably known or predicted.²

For example: The דור המדבר will die out over 40 years; the next generation will inherit Eretz Yisroel by conquering the mighty Canaanites; it will then be divided in a very specific way amongst the tribes. There are a tremendous number of very precise variables here that could have happened in a different way: the fate of the entire first and second generations, the outcomes of the wars with the Canaanites, etc.³

Other prophecies include:

1-Anti-Semitism

2-כלל ישראל will remain few in number⁴

3-כלל ישראל will be scattered over the earth

4-Despite great anti-Semitism they will always survive⁵

¹Many of the prophecies concerning the destiny of the Jewish people were given as Oral Tradition, just as was the entire Kabbalistic literature. Therefore, even the מדרשים are based on the מסורה which חז"ל received about these things or based on their deeper understanding of the פסוקים based on מעשה אבות מי איכא מידי דלא רמיזא באורייתא (עיין רמב"ן בראשית יב: וי-מי איכא מידי דלא רמיזא באורייתא)

² Let us take one example from the words of R. Simcha Zissel of Kelm. In his Chochmah U'Mussar he quotes the warning which Moshe Rabbenu addressed to the entire Jewish nation:

"Take heed that your heart be not deceived, and you turn aside . . . lest you be lost quickly from off the good land" (Devarim 11:1617). How did Moshe Rabbenu know this? That is, how could he declare so unequivocally that the inevitable consequence of "your heart be not deceived, and you turn aside" would be exile? For it says "lest you be lost quickly from off the good land." How did Moshe Rabbenu know this? Were not the Jews at that time an extraordinarily powerful nation? Who informed Moshe Rabbenu that it would be so, if not the holy Torah, given from Heaven? (Chochmah Umussar, essay 21)

The same is true of other prophecies in the Torah. At the time that the Torah was written there were no factors, economic, historical, or political, which would have enabled mortal man to foretell the distant future of the Jewish People. Let us stop to consider how matters appeared to the generation to whom the secrets of the future were disclosed so long before they actually took place. It must have seemed that the "natural" course of events should have taken a completely different direction from the one which it actually followed later. In fact, in some cases, human logic dictated a completely opposite turn of events. But the Torah truly predicted what did, in fact, come to pass. God manipulates the events of history as "clay in the hand of the potter." He alone is able to determine the course of world history in such a way as to ensure that every word uttered to Moshe Rabbenu at Sinai is irrefutably fulfilled.

³In his book נבואה והשגחה Rabbi Simcha Sokolovsky analyzes 52 פסוקים, each with their individual prophecies.

⁴ונשאתם מתי מעט תחת אשר הייתם ככוכבי השמים (דברים כח)

⁵דברים לב כו-בז: אמרתי אפאיהם אשביתה מאנוש זכרם, לולא כעס אויב אגור פן ינכרו צרימו (were it not that I dreaded the enemy's provocation, lest their adversaries should falsely deem)

- 5-That they will always remember the תורה.¹
 6- The Western Wall will never be destroyed.²

Not only does the תורה make these general predictions, but it also makes detailed predictions about very specific events:

E.g.:

- 1-A detailed description of the destruction of both Temples
 2-A description of the nation who will destroy the second המקדש
 3-The Jews will be taken to Egypt by ships and sold as slaves

פן יאמרו ידינו רמה ולא ד' פעל כל זאת רמב"ן: [השם] פרסם דרך [העם הזה] האותות והמופתים ... ונודע לכל העמים. והנה אם יאבד זכרם, ישכחו העמים את אותותיו ואת מעשיו ... ותהיה כונת הבריאה באדם בטלה לגמרי ... ולכן ראוי שיהיה רצון מלפניו להקים לו לעם כל הימים. ...
 עיין ירושלמי תענית פ"ב הל' ט
 ויקרא כו לח: ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אויביהם לא מאסתים ולא גאלתים לכלותם להפך בריתי אתם כי אני ד' אלוהיכם מגילה יא: לא מאסתים- בימי יונים
 ולא געלתים- בימי נבוכדנצר
 לכלותם- בימי המן
 להפך בריתי אתם- בימי פרסיים
 כי אני ד' אלוהיכם- בימי גוג ומגוג
 עיין ירמיהו ה טו
 רמב"ם אגרת תימן: והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ. (בראשית כח יד) כלומר אף על פי שהם נתונים למרמס כעפר הזה שהכל דורסים אותו, סוף שיגברו וינצחו. וכן על דרך המשל, כמו שהעפר באחריתו יעלה על הדורסים
 (Just as the dust rises and covers up those who raise it)
 וישאר הוא והדורסים לא יעמוד
 (and remains long after the trampers have long fallen)

עיין ירמיהו ג
 מלאכי ג

¹דברים לא כא: כי לא תשכח מפני זרעו רש"י: הרי זו הבטחה שאין התורה משתכחת מזרעם לגמרי ישעיהו נט: ואני זאת בריתי אותם, אמר ד' רוחי אשר עליך ודברי אשר שמתי בפיו לא ימושו מפיו זרעך ומפני זרע זרעך מעתה ועד עולם.

Not only will the Torah not be forgotten from our midst, but it will remain a living Torah; it will be constantly studied and observed by Israel and will not depart from their lips until the end of time:

אגרת תימן: והבטיחנו הקב"ה בתורתו, ואמר כי בהיותם מכריחים אותנו לאחוז בסברתם (their faith) שנאמר (דברים ז) ועבדתם שם אלוהים אחרים מעשה ידי אדם, אבל בכל זה לא יהיה זה בכל הארץ (the whole Diaspora) ולא תכרת התורה ממנו לעולם ...

When centers of learning hundreds of years old were cruelly razed, it seemed impossible that they would ever be replaced. But Divine Providence ensured that before the sun of one Torah center set, the sun of another center would rise elsewhere; and the transmission of Torah has, indeed, been continuous to this very day.

²ילקוט שמעוני מלכים א ט: אמר רבי אלעזר בן פדת בין חרב (המקדש) בין לא חרב, אינו זו (ד') ממקומו, שנאמר "נהקדשתי את הבית הזה אשר בנית לשם שמי שם לעולם והיו עיני ולבי שם כל הימים." וכן הוא אומר קולי אל ד' אקרא ויענני מהר קדשו סלה (תהלים ג) שאפילו הוא הר הר הוא בקדושתו. אמר ר' אחא לעולם אין השכינה זו מכותל מערבי שנאמר הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו.

ובשה"ש רבה פרשה ב סדרא תנינא: הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו אחר כותל מערבי של בית המקדש, למה שנשבע לו הקב"ה שאינו חרב לעולם.

דברים לא: יט

והיה כי תמצאנה אותו רעות רבות וצרות, וענתה השירה הזאת לפניו לעד¹
קובץ מאמרים של הרב אלחנן וואסרמן (לג):
ואף דבר אחד מדבריה לא נפל ארצה והכל נתקיים לעינינו

ר שמחה זיסל זצ"ל מקלם (חכמה ומוסר מאמר כא):
מצינו בקריאת שמע "השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם ... ואבדתם מהרה מעל הארץ" וגו'. מנין ידע משה רבנו ע"ה
זאת? הלא מצרים קודם הבית היתה ועדיין על מקומם עומדים. והרי רואים כי כבר התקיים שתי פעמים בית
ראשון ובית שני, ומי הגיד למשה רבנו ע"ה זאת? אלא תורה מן השמים הגידה לו

¹How shall this song serve as a witness for the children of Israel? Rashi explains that this means: "...in that song I warned them of all the future events that would overtake them." The prophecies of the testimony in this song have come to pass and continue to do so before our very eyes in this period of disfavor. One can see that despite the darkness of the covert Providence, God has not abandoned His people but continues to guide them in a manner specific to the Chosen People. Rashi (Gittin 83): "Every expression of anah (literally, 'answering') found in the Torah indicates a loud voice." Thus, this song not only bears witness against Israel, but also cries out its testimony at the top of its voice: "Take note: Everything that has happened to you was foretold over three thousand years ago, and not one of the song's words has remained unfulfilled. Everything has come to pass before your eyes!"

The Ramban cites the Sages that the full prophetic blessings will only be realized at the time of the ultimate redemption, an era of perfection. Not only have we failed to merit the perfect realization of those blessings, but our sins and those of our fathers caused us to be exiled from our homeland, our city (Jerusalem) to be destroyed, and our Holy Temple to be razed. Ever since the Destruction we have been beset with persecution and suffering. We have endured this bitter exile for nearly two thousand years, an exile unparalleled in the history of other nations, while all the curses mentioned in the Torah have ultimately come true.

רמב"ן ויקרא כו יא:
כי הברכות כולן נסים

עיין ג"כ בישעיהו מח ו

b-A detailed description of the destruction of both Temples¹:

The Ramban shows that the first תוכחה in בחוקתי is talking about the destruction of the First Temple while the destruction of the Second Temple is talked about in the תוכחה of פרשת כי. For example, ויקרא predicts a partial exile³ whereas דברים talks about a total one; consistent with what actually happened. Only in ויקרא is the cessation of the ריח ניחח of the תבואה mentioned, since in שני בית there was no השמים. The manner of the redemption in either case is different. Both פרשיות make the Jewish nation's stay in the land conditional on their keeping the מצוות⁴, showing that the author of the תורה was able to direct history (see below **c-Prophecies concerning the Holy Land**). The experiences of anti-Semitism in exile are also anticipated,⁵ as well as the spread of Jews to many countries,⁶ and the significance of this for Jewish survival.⁷ Remarkably, even the exact number of years of the first exile is predicted.⁸ All of this was meant to make it easy for us to recognize השגחת השם:

וידעו כי אני ד' אלוהיכם בהגלותי אותם אל הגויים (יחזקאל לט)

¹In Yoma 9b, The Sages summarize the reasons for the destruction of the first and second Beit HaMikdash. In Ya'arot Devash (4 and 10), R. Yonatan Eibeshitz explains these reasons (see also the commentary to the Torah Beit HaLevi, Parashat Bo).

In Tractate Shabbat 119b, the Sages enumerate a further list of sins which brought about the destruction of Jerusalem, while in Talmud Yerushalmi, Yoma I,I, an additional reason for the churban is mentioned.¹

Bina L'itim (lecture 47) by R. Azaryah of Fijoy (author of Gedulei Terumah) enumerates a list of sins which caused the Diaspora to be prolonged and the Redemption to be delayed.

See also Beit Yaakov Siddur by of R. Ya'akov Emden in the laws of Tisha B'Av, and in Shemirat Halashon (part 2, chapter 7) by the Chafetz Chaim.

²רמב"ן ויקרא כו טז (בחוקתי): ... בבית ראשון היו כל דברי הברית הזאת ... אבל הברית שבמשנה תורה ירמז לגלותנו זה ולגאולה שנגאל ממנו עיין שם שמביא בפרטות את ראייתו ובדברים כט ז מדבר על בית שני והאברבנאל חולק על הרמב"ן (ויקרא שם) וסובר ששני הפרשיות מדבקות על כלל הענין של גלות.

³רמב"ן ויקרא שם

⁴בפרשת כי תבא פ' כח כתוב: היה אם שמע תשמע בקול ד' אלוהיך לשמור לעשות את כל מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום ונתנך ד' עליון על כל גויי הארץ. ... והיה אם לא תשמע בקול ד' אלוהיך לשמור לעשות את כל מצותיו וחוקותיו אשר אנכי מצוך היום ובאו כל הקללות האלה והשיגוך.

⁵דברים כח: לו, טג-סז, ויקרא כו: לג-לט

⁶דברים כח: והפיצך ד' בכל העמים

⁷רמב"ן בראשית ל: ט, בראשית רבה וישלח פרשה עה

⁸כי כה אמר ד' כי לפי מלאת לבבל שבעים שנה אפקד אתכם והקימתי עליכם את דברי הטוב להשיב אתכם אל המקום הזה (ירמיהו כט: י)
וכן בדניאל ט ב (עיין באוצר האגרת לר' יוסף אפשטיין דף 149)

We will deal here with only one of the פרשיות, פרשת כי תבא. However, what we have done here, showing that only השם could have predicted these events, has been shown for בחוקתי as well.

The proofs of the רמב"ן that כי תבא is talking about בית שני is taken from the fact that the פרשה talks about a nation coming from afar.¹ בבל was right next to Israel, whereas the Romans were from afar.² The פרשה describes the Jews being taken back to Egypt in ships.³ With גלות בבל Jews did go to Egypt, but of their own volition. Only under the Romans were they transported forcibly, as captives, in ships.⁴ כי תבא also talks about the fact that it was a Jewish leader, vying for the crown, who went to the Romans to intercede in Israel to begin with.⁵ The conditions of the siege are described⁶, as are the conditions of the original generation after they go into exile.⁷ The תורה predicts that unlike the first exile, when the Jews were exiled primarily to בבל, in the case of גלות רומי the Jews were spread around all of the nations.⁸ This prediction is all the more remarkable because the Romans did not exile any other people they conquered. It is also

¹שם לו: יולך ד' אותך ואת מלכך אשר תקים אליך אל גוי אשר לא ידעת וג"כ פסוק מט: ישא ד' עליך גוי מרחוק מקצה הארץ כאשר יראה הנשר גוי אשר לא תשמע לשונו.

The Torah refers/comparates to the Romans to an eagle; this was in fact the symbol which each Roman league carried in front of it. The Torah states that the Jews would not know their language. In fact, Latin was completely unknown in the Middle East at that time.

²In fact, at that time of history, Rome and its empire, represented the very outer edge of the civilized world. The Jews might just as well have been attacked by Antiochus, the Assyrian Greek, who was right on their border.

³שם פסוק סח: והשבך ד' מצרים באניות

⁴Josephus reports: He picked out the tallest and most handsome of the lot ... he put [them] in chains and sent [them] to hard labor in Egypt. (*The Jewish Wars*, Book VI 9: 2 Penguin Edition pg. 371) This was repeated after the Bar Kochba revolt. (132-135 C.E.)

⁵פסוק לו המובא בהארה 2. עיין ברמב"ן שזה קאי או על אגריפוס או על אריסטובלוס

⁶דברים כח נב: והצר לך בכל שעריך עד רדת חמתך הגבהות והבצרות אשר אתה בטח בהן בכל ארצך והצר לך בכל שעריך בכל ארצך אשר נתן ד' אלקיך לך.

The Torah is predicting here two things: 1-That the Jewish cities and fortresses would be particularly impenetrable; 2-That the Romans would nevertheless destroy these. This latter point is well known. On the former, Josephus reports: i-On Gamle: The summit, rocky and inaccessible, rising to an immense height, and surrounded by precipices, overlooked everywhere the yawning depths below. There the Jews inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing enemy, rolling rocks upon them and hurling missiles of all kinds, while they themselves remained almost out of reach of their lofty perch. (*The Jewish Wars* Book iv I, Penguin Edition pg. 299); ii-On Yodfat he writes: "Nature having the walls almost impregnable" it was further extensively fortified, making its defenders so "confident in their defenses that they would not admit more men." iii- Of Jerusalem he states that "the strength of its defenses, both natural and artificial, caused [Vespasian] no small anxiety. (*The Jewish Wars* Book IV 2: 10, Penguin Edition pg. 241)

⁷This is the preferred interpretation by the Ramban of the פסוקים dealing with the great outpouring of anti-Semitism described in the פסוקים (e.g. אשר ינהגך אשר שמה). The alternative is to interpret these פסוקים as describing the anti-Semitism during the ages.

⁸פסוק סד: והפיצך ד' בכל העמים

predicted that Jews will afterwards adapt remarkably well to their new environments.¹ On the other hand, despite these adjustments, they will not be allowed to stay, becoming the proverbial wandering Jew.² Anti-Semitism will cause a great depletion of our numbers.³

Each one of these prophecies is quite specific and shows a high degree of falsifiability. To predict that the Jews would be carried off to Mitzrayim specifically in ships, for example, is not the same as saying that the Jews would be carried off to a strange land (in and of itself falsifiable, but not to the same degree). It was actually highly unusual for the Romans, who at that stage were not a great sea-going nation, to have used ships for slave transportation. Or take the prophecy that in both the first and second destructions parents ate the flesh of their children. Normally, even where people are dying en masse of hunger (Burundi, Rwanda, Biafra, Somalia – to take a few recent examples), there is not such a breakdown of civilized norms. That this should have happened, twice⁴, to the most civilized nation on earth, could hardly have been predicted except by a Divine Being. The prophecy that the Jew would be spread over the earth is another prophecy impossible to have anticipated. Jews have been found in every inhabitable continent and probably in every country of size. Similarly, it was highly unusual not to allow burial of the enemy dead. Yet this too was prophesied⁵ and came true.⁶ Similarly, the תורה predicts that there will be a huge famine⁷, and that children will be abducted.⁸

c-Prophecies concerning the Holy Land

¹והיא הבטחה מאת ד' שנאמר (ויקרא כו מד): גם זאת בהיות בארץ אויביהם לא מאסתים ולא געלתים לכלותם להפר בריתי אתם כי אני ד' אלוקיהם

²דברים כח: טה – ובגויים ההם לא תרגיע ולא יהיה מנוח לכף רגלך

³דברים ד: ונשאתם מתי מספר בגויים אשר ינהג ד' אתכם שמה
כח: ונשאתם במתי מעט תחת אשר הייתם ככוכבי השמים לרוב

⁴Josephus reports: I hope that I shall not be suspected by posterity of grotesque intentions and would have gladly passed over this calamity in silence had there not been countless contemporary witnesses to bear me out. ... [A woman from a distinguished family] killed her son, roasted him, and ate one half, concealing and saving the rest. (*The Jewish Wars*, Book VI 3: 3 Penguin Edition pg. 353 –354)

⁵דברים כח כו: והיתה נבלתך למאכל לכל עוף השמים ולבהמת הארץ ואין מחריד

⁶Josephus reports: Dead bodies along all the main roads were heaped up high, and many who were anxious to desert decided instead to perish in Jerusalem, for hope of burial made death in their own city seem the lesser evil. (*The Jewish Wars*, Book iv 6: 3; Penguin Books edition pg. 265) By night [the people] took up a little dust in their hands and sprinkled it on the bodies (ibid. pg. 261). [Cohanim] were thrown out naked to be devoured by dogs and beasts before all eyes [ibid. pg. 260].

עיין ג"כ תענית לא.

⁷דברים כח נד-נה

Josephus reports the famine in detail, exactly paralleling the Torah's prophecy thereof.

⁸דברים כח לב: בנין ובנותיך נתנים לעם אחר ועיניך ראות וכלות עליהם כל היום ואין לאל ידך
Indeed this came to be: Josephus reports that those under seventeen years old were sold. (*The Jewish Wars*, Book vi 9: 2, Penguin edition pg., 371); The Talmud in Gitin נז: reports that on one occasion 400 boys and girls were carried off for immoral purposes. First the girls and then the boys jumped ship, committing suicide.

- 1-Miraculous השגחה
- 2-Given conditionally
- 3-Relatively small
- 4-Warned not to enter other lands
- 5-Will remain barren in non-Jewish hands
- 6-Miraculous Return in Modern Times
 - a-The Wars
 - b-The Arab-Israeli Conflict

1-Miraculous השגחה

רמב"ן כו יא :

כל הברכות (של הארץ) כולן נסים ... מתפרסמים מצד היותם תמיד לעולם בכל הארץ. ... שתהיה ארץ אחת כולה ועם אחד תמיד ברדת הגשם בעיתו, ושובע ושלוה ושלוה ובריאות וגבורה בענין שאין כמוהו בכל העולם, יודע לכל כי מאת ד' היתה זאת. ועל כן אמר וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ד' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך. הפך מזה יהיה בקללות בכל עונשי הארץ ... רק בארץ ההיא יתמהו וישאלו כל הגויים על מה עשה ד' ככה לארץ הזאת כי כולם יראו וידעו כי יד ד' עשתה זאת.

דברים יא :

כי הארץ אשר אתה בא שמה לרישתה ... ארץ אשר ד' אלוקיך דורש אותה, תמיד עיני ד' אלוקיך בה, מראשית השנה ועד אחרית השנה

Rav S. R. Hirsch (בראשית יד : א):

... The land where he [אברהם אבינו] was now had been promised to him for the future of his people, and the first experience he had there was: famine, and the second was: war. Neither material abundance nor political independence was inherent in the land itself. In both it stood in the most complete contrast to Egypt. Just as its fertility was entirely dependent on rain, it had to look above to the heavens for its harvests, so was its political position such that it could offer no natural resistance to invaders. Left to itself the land of Israel lay open to famine and political dependence. Situated in the cockpit of the world, where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet, hardly any world war has occurred into the bitter suffering of which it has not been drawn. And just because of this was it chosen. If, in spite of this, in this land a national life would blossom against which no national conqueror would dare attack, even if three times each year its borders were left open and all military defense withdrawn - if all the מלכיות of the world would clash together there and make war on each other, but no sword would dare enter this blooming and yet defenseless land - חרב לא תעבר בארצכם - then the eternal fact would have been brought to the eyes of the nations "here G-d lives"! ...

2-Given conditionally

דברים ד: כה-כז

(כה) כי תוליד בנים ובני בנים ונושנתם בארץ והשחתם ועשיתם פסל תמונת כל ועשיתם הרע בעיני ד' אלקיך להכעיסו. (כו) העידתי בכס היום את השמים ואת הארץ כי אבד תאבדון מהר מעל הארץ אשר אתם עברים את הירדן שמה לרשתה לא תאריכין ימים עליה כי השמד תשמדון. (כז) והפיץ ד' אתכם בעמים ונשאתם מתי מספר בגוים אשר ינהג אתכם שמה.

דברים ד: לו-לח
 (לז) ותחת כי אהב את אבתוך ויבחר בזרעו אחריו ויוציאך בפניו בכחו הגדל ממצרים. (לח) להוריש גוים גדולים ועצומים ממך מפניך להביאך לתת לך את ארצם נחלה כיום הזה.

דברים יא: ח-ט
 (ח) ושמרתם את כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוך היום למען תחזקו ובאתם וירשתם את הארץ אשר אתם עברים שמה לרשתה. (ט) ולמען תאריכו ימים על האדמה אשר נשבע ד' לאבותיכם לתת להם ולזרעם ארץ זבת חלב ודבש.

עין עוד
 ויקרא כ: כב
 כו: יד; לב; לג
 דברים יא: יב-יז (פרשה שנייה של שמע); כב-כג; כה
 י-יב עין שם ש"ח ס' נ, מלבים
 כח: טו-סג
 כט: כא-כב
 יחזקאל לג: כח-כט
 לו: לג לו (הפטרת פרשת פרה)

וכן בויקרא כ וכו' ובדברים ו וכו'

רש"י דברים א ח ד"ה באו ורשו:
 אלו לא שלחו מרגלים לא היו צריכים לכלי זין

רמב"ן writes that so obvious is the conditional nature of the land to the Jewish people that משה רבינו has to assure the nation that, by entering the land, they will not be destroyed by their sins (הקדמה לספר דברים).

All the nations shall say: "Why did God do thus to this land? Why this great wrath?" And then men shall say: "Because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers... therefore the Lord put His wrath upon this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, and God expelled them from their land." (דברים כט: כג). On this verse from Devarim, the classic commentator Ovadyah Seforno writes: "They will recognize that it is not mere chance but the finger of G-d, who wrought upon them that which He did to Sodom, which is commonly acknowledged as being an act of G-d."

Indeed, whoever studies the destruction of Eretz Yisrael readily perceives that it was not a "natural" occurrence. For many other countries throughout the world have suffered the ruin and devastation of war, but none of them ever became a total, permanent wasteland. All of them eventually recovered; all of them were rebuilt. Most of the wars and destruction which afflicted Eretz Yisrael were fought on the terrain of neighboring countries as well, yet in this case these remained populated while Eretz Yisrael was essentially barren.

Eretz Yisrael was virtually the only example in the entire world of a flourishing, densely populated country which became a wasteland, a land which defied all attempts at resettlement for century after century. The only explanation for this unique history is supernatural; there are no natural factors to account for it. For Eretz Yisrael is the only land which Heaven decreed would remain desolate due to the sins of its inhabitants, as the Torah foretold and forewarned.

3-Relatively small

By today's standards it is within the smallest 10% of countries.

It's מעלה is that even in the time of אברהם אבינו :

היתה מפורסמת אצלם לארץ מוכנת להתבוננות ולעבודת הקל ית' (ספורנו - בראשית יב: ה)

4- Warned not to enter other lands

דברים א

(ב) ויאמר ד' אלי לאמר (ג) רב לכם שבת בהר הזה (הר שעיר) פנו לכם צפנה. ... (ה) אל תתגרו בם (לבני עשו) כי לא אתן לכם מארצם עד מדרך כף רגל כי ירושה לעשו נתתי את הר שעיר (ט) ויאמר ד' אלי אל תצר את מואב ואל תתגר בם מלחמה כי לא אתן לך מארצו ירושה כי לבני לוט נתתי את ער ירושה (יט) וקרבת מול בני עמון אל תצרם ואל תתגר בם כי לא אתן מארץ בני עמון לך ירושה כי לבני לוט נתתי ירושה

5- Will remain barren in non-Jewish hands

ויקרא כו לב :

והשמותי אני את הארץ ושממו עליה איביכם הישבים בה ... והיתה ארצכם שממה ועריכם חורבה
רש"י :

זו מדה טובה לישראל שלא ימצאו האויבים נחת רוח בארצם שתהא שוממה מיושביה

ובדברים כט :

לא תזרע ולא תצמיח ולא יעלה בה כל עשב

This is the same land about which the תורה testifies:

ארץ טובה, ארץ נחלי מים, עינות ותהומות יוצאים בבקעה ובהר. ארץ חטה ושעורה ותאנה ורימון, ארץ זית שמן ודבש, ארץ אשר ... לא תחסר כל בו. (דברים ח)

Indeed, Josephus wrote that all this came to be:

ואף כי ארצות הגליל קטנות במידה ... כולה ארץ דשנה ואדמת מרעה, ... וכל הארץ נזרעה ביד יושביה, ולא נמצאה בה אף חבל ארץ שומם אחד ... ערי הגליל רבות (Wars of the Jews 3: 3)

Contrast this to after the Jews were exiled:

In 1249 al Kamil handed the city of Jerusalem to Frederick II stating:

"I have ceded nothing but ... wrecked buildings."

Six hundred years later, in 1860, Mark Twain, upon visiting Israel, has this to say:

"The soil is rich enough but is given wholly to weeds ... A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We never saw a human being on the whole route. ... There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere.... Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes."

"And they shall see the afflictions of that land and its ills, which God inflicted upon it...like the overthrow of Sedom and Amorah...which God overthrew." (דברים כט:כא)

ספורנו: "They will recognize that it is not mere chance but the finger of God, who wrought upon them that which He did to Sedom, which is commonly acknowledged as being an act of God."

Many other countries throughout the world have suffered the ruin and devastation of war, but none of them ever became a total, permanent wasteland with the near total destruction of the population.¹ All of them eventually recovered; all of them were rebuilt. In addition, most of the wars and destruction which afflicted Eretz Yisrael were fought on the terrain of neighboring countries as well, yet in this case these remained populated while Eretz Yisrael was essentially barren.

¹Some twenty years passed and the revolt of Bar Kochba erupted. Its failure brought further destruction and massacre in its wake. Roman historians of this period describe the spectacle of that destruction at length:

Few Jews in Eretz Yisrael remained alive. Fifty-five of the strongest fortresses and 985 of the best cities and villages were entirely laid waste. Five hundred and eighty thousand lost their lives, whether on the battlefield or in Roman forays against them. And in addition, an unknown number perished from hunger and disease, or were burned alive. Almost the entire land of Judea was transformed into a desert wasteland... The captives were sold into slavery in numbers that cannot even be estimated. (Dorot Harishonim. See also Gittin 57; Talmud Yerushalmi, Ta'anit, chapter 4; Avot d'R. Natan, chapter 38, for details of the massacre and the destruction of Beitar.)

To complete this devastation, Hadrian issued decrees aimed at eradicating Torah from the remnant of Israel. Many Jewish Sages and leaders of those times, notably the Ten Martyrs (Asarah Harugei Malchut)--R. Akiva and his colleagues--were slain in the sanctification of God's Name. Our Sages said of them (Mechilta 20:6):

"To those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Shemot 20:6) -- R. Natan the Babylonian says: This refers to the remnants of the Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael who risked their lives for the mitzvot. "Why are you being crucified?" "Because I studied Torah." "And why are you being clubbed?" "Because I used the lulav." This is what the verse says: "Because for Your sake we are killed all the day; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Tehillim 44:23).

Who could possibly have known that the Jewish People would survive the inhuman pressures of the period, even when the Beit Hamikdash, the central, unifying spiritual force in their lives, lay in ruins; even when the cream of their national leadership were cruelly martyred and the bulk of their national body butchered or led away to the slave markets? Despite it all, the remaining segment held steadfastly to the Torah at the risk of their lives. Only the God of Israel who had promised His people that they would endure throughout all time, under all conditions, could have made and fulfilled such a promise, and granted Israel the fortitude to outlast all the adversaries of both its spirit and its body.

The death of Hadrian brought only a brief respite from Roman oppression. Apart from repeated wars that had ravaged the land, leaving desolation and ruin in their wake, there now began a fresh series of decrees designed to sever the remnant of Jews from their faith. The campaign peaked in 351 C.E. under Gallus Caesar and his military commander Ursicinus. Many Jews were brutally slaughtered, including numerous scholars. Also decimated was the Galilee, then the center of the Jewish settlement and a major site of yeshivot. This final blow completed the devastation of the entire Land of Israel.

After centuries of battle, persecution and harsh decrees, the Romans finally achieved their goal of destroying and shattering the Jewish People in their homeland. Of a Jewish population that, at the time of the second Beit Hamikdash, numbered in the millions, there remained only a destitute handful. Of the prestigious yeshivot which had constituted the spiritual center of world Jewry, there survived but a negligible fragment.

Finally, in the times of Heraclius (610-641 C.E.), the last Roman emperor to rule in Eretz Yisrael, even this last remnant was attacked and those who were not slain were sent into exile. By the end of Heraclius's reign, hardly a single Jew was left in all of Eretz Yisrael.

The following article *A Long Term Promise* appeared in *To Our Origins - El Hamekorot*:

In the “rebuke portion” (parshat hatocheicha) in Leviticus 26 the Jewish Nation is warned about the punishment of exile and destruction which will be meted out against it if it doesn’t observe the commandments of the Torah: “I shall scatter you among the nations, and your land shall be desolate, and I shall destroy the land, and I shall make desolate your enemies which dwell within it.”

The final words of this verse also contain a promise and a consolation for the future to the effect that no conquering nations will succeed in settling the land and laying stakes there while the Jewish Nation is the Diaspora. The land of Israel will remain loyal to the Jewish Nation. It will wait for it, and will not impart its vigor nor its fruits to strangers.

It is important to note that this promise was given 1300 years before the destruction of the Second Sanctuary and the Exile. Until that time, the land of Israel was unusually populated and fruitful. Josephus Flavius, a historian of that time, left behind a written description on the situation of the land prior to the Destruction: “The Galilee was a fertile land, with verdant meadows, and various types of trees growing on it. The entire land was sown by its inhabitants, and there was not even one desolate patch of land. The Shomron and Judea areas are good for farming, yield abundant produce, and contain many fruit trees.”

During the 200 years of our exile, many peoples desire the land: Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Seljuks, Egyptians, Moslems, Mamaluks and Turks. They wanted to lay stakes in the land and to settle thereon. However, only a few ten thousand non-Jews managed to inhabit this fruitful land, where millions of Jews had resided prior to the Destruction. During the period of our exile, the fertile farming lands were non-existent, nor were there green pastures or thick forests. Even during the Crusade era, when hundreds of thousands of Christians tried to possess the land, no one succeeded at rejuvenating it.

When the students of the Ba'al Shem Tov arrived in the land 200 years ago, they found it desolate, swampy and malaria-ridden, with a sparse population which barely eked out its living. This is also the description of the land as borne out in the writings of some famous non-Jewish authors. Mark Twain, one of its most famous non-Jewish visitors, who toured the land during 1867, reinforces this point. “Israel with its two lakes, is a repelling wasteland, unsightly and without any hope and chance.” Only now that the Jews have returned to it, is it fruitful, plentiful and flourishing.

History confirms this Biblical prophecy.

6-Miraculous Return in Modern Times

a-The Wars

b-The Arab-Israeli Conflict

ר' מאיר שמחה סוקולובסקי, נבואה והשגחה (דף יט) :
על תופעה חריגה זו של היסטוריה ישראלית כבר עמדו ותמהו חוקרים והיסטוריונים רבים. הם ניסו למצוא הסבר הגיוני וטבעי למסלולה הבלתי שגרתי, אך לשוא. ... על היסטוריונים וחוקרים אלה נאמר בתורה: כי גוי אובד עצות המה ואין בהם תבונה. לו חכמו ישכילו זאת, יבינו לאחריהם. איכה ירדוף אחד אלף, ושנים יניסו רבבה, אם לא כי צורם מכרם, ודי הסגירם (דברים לב).

The land desolate and unyielding for all other nations suddenly blossomed.

In the 90's, half million Russians immigrated to Israel (the per percentage equivalent of 25 million immigrants to the USA). Yet except for brief moments, unemployment was below 10%. Many great European countries have permanent unemployment over 10%.

Each war: - '48, '56, '67, '73, '90 (Gulf War, Scuds) - full of miracles:

One pilot reports how, in the 6 Day War, he was being chased by 3 Migs. He entered a cloud and when he exited the other side, the Migs were gone.

A tank commander in the Sinai Desert reports that a shell dropped, unexploded on the top of his tank. The crew was suffocating, too scared to try a move the unexploded shell, when another shell hit the first one and knocked it off the tank.

The commander of the force, which led the (secondary) attack up Mt. Zion into the Old City stated, "The Jordanians were in well reinforced bunkers. We were hiding behind blades of grass. Every time we shot up at them, almost futilely, a Jordanian would fall dead out of his bunker."

A Jewish cadet at West Point was taking a course on modern warfare, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq the Falklands, and even the invasion of Grenada. Each was carefully analyzed for lessons that might be applied to future conflicts involving U.S. troops.

Well into the curriculum this cadet had a question. Why was it, he asked a commander, that not one battle involving Israel was ever studied? Not the Israeli War of Independence fought by a tankless, planeless "army" of hastily trained soldiers and Holocaust survivors against a well-armed invasion force; not the Six Day War, which Arab leaders promised would be the Jews' final dying breath; not the Yom Kippur War, which snatched near disaster from the jaws of one of histories largest sneak attacks; not a single one?

Could these glaring omissions be reflective of an anti-Semitic blind spot? Could Americans not stoop to learn how to fight from Jews? No, the cadet was assured, this was no ethnically derisive oversight - those wars just weren't normal. Those types of events, that type of fighting - the things that took place in all the battles that birthed and sheltered the Jews of Israel - just doesn't happen anywhere else. It doesn't pay to study them, because there is nothing for other countries to learn. (*The Passover Survival Kit*, by Shimon Apisdorf, Leviathan Press)

The following was culled from Rabbi Nisan Aryeh Novick, Fascinating Torah Prophecies Currently Unfolding:

The codes spell out in בתשי"ח ו' פסוק ה' & יצחק, who השם has promised to Avraham would be his true יורש. This comes to 5708 = 1947/48.

ישמעאל: Written in the future:

פרקי דרבי אליעזר סוף פ', לא :
שעתיד לשמוע הקב"ה באנקת העם ממה שעתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים

These Arabs call themselves פלשתים – Palestinians, as predicted by the זוהר in י ט במדבר.

The nations of the world will first recognize the Jewish State:

ילקוט שמעוני עקב תתנב :

לעתיד לבא יתנו רשיון לבני ישראל להתישב בארץ ויעזרו להם לרשת אותה
שיר השירים רבה ח: ד
ובכולן השביע הקב"ה את האומות שיעזרו לבנותו

Having recognized the Jewish State, the nation will then consistently favor the
Palestinians over the Israelis:

מכילתא בשלח ט:
כיון ששמעו האומות שהקב"ה מגביה קרנן של ישראל ומכניסן לארץ התחילו מתרגזין ... שלא אחד או שתי
ממלכות באים עליו אלא מאה ועשרים מלכויות ויזדווגון כלהון עממיא על ברתיא דיעקב לאדחייא לה מעלמא
ועל ההוא זמנא כתיב ועת צרה היא ליעקב וממנה יושע (מובא בכמה מקומות גם בילקוט שמעוני ירמיהו לא)

The Israelis will have to give up territory. This is similar to the case of Avraham and Avimelech. After the two had made a treaty, Avraham nevertheless complains that the wells which he had dug had been occupied by the followers of Avimelech (בראשית כא : כב-לד). In פסוק כג, Avimelech says to Avraham that he dwelt amongst them, using the word גרת, which means as an immigrant and a foreigner. Again a ברית is made, and this time it looks solid, but again, during the time of יצחק, it is broken (בראשית כו : טו-כב). Again and again the Pelishtim break their covenant when they destroy most of Ephraim just before the Exodus (דברי הימים ז : כ-כא ע"פ (סנהדרין צב:)), in the days of Shamgar, Yiftach and Avdon, and during the time of Shimshon.

The central role of the United Nations in sustaining the Palestinian refugees and their right to the land is indicated by the 7 references to the אר"ם revealed by the codes in the passage

dealing with Yishmael's lying, without food and water, in the desert, expelled by Avraham at Sarah's behest (which the Ramban says was a mistake; the Jews in '48?) and abandoned by his mother Hagar (the other Arab nations?)

Here are very specific prophecies relating to Arab actions:

פרקי דרבי אליעזר פי"ל:
רבי ישמעאל אומר חמשה עשר דברים עתידין בני ישמעאל לעשות בארץ באחרית הימים. ואלו הן, ימדדו את הארץ בחבלים, ויעשו בית הקברות למרבץ צאן אשפתות, וימדדו בהם ומהם על ראשי ההרים, וירבה השקר, ותגש האמת, וירחק חק מישראל, וירבו עונות בישראל, שני תולעת כצמר, ויקמל הניר והקולמוס, ויפסל סלע

מלכות, ויבנו את הערים החרבות, ויפנו הדרכים, ויטעו גנות ופרדסים, ויגדרו פרצות חומות בית המקדש, ויבנו בנין בהיכל.

- I) [During their negotiations with Jews] they will measure the Land exactly - where the parties are literally fighting over inches, the amount that can be **measured with ropes** [as was done: in the *UN Partition Plan*, in the various so-called treaties beginning in 1979 with Egypt, in the ongoing 'negotiations' with the PLO and Jordan-as is also described in TANACH. (Amos 7:17 and Yoel 4:2)].
- II) They will convert the cemetery into a dunghill. (This the Jordanians did to Har Hazeisim)
- III) They will profane the tombstones by using them on the hills [for sidewalks, roads and urinals]. (The Jordanians did this as well.)
- IV) They will close up the walls around the Temple Mount.
- V) They will build a building on top of the Heichal (i.e. the Dome of the Rock).

ii- Perfect knowledge of biology

a-The 4 exceptional animals:

ויקרא יא:ב-ח
אך את זה לא תאכלו ממעלי הגרה וממפרסי הפרסה את הגמל כי מעלה גרה הוא ופרסה איננו מפריס טמא הוא לכם: (הוא ולא אחר-חולין נט.) ואת השפן כי מעלה גרה הוא ופרסה לא יפריס טמא הוא לכם: ואת הארנבת כי מעלת גרה הוא ופרסה לא הפריסה טמאה היא לכם: ואת החזיר כי מפריס פרסה הוא ושסע שסע פרסה והוא גרה לא יגר טמא הוא לכם:

עיינ ברמב"ם הלכות מאכלות אסורות א: ב-ג שמוסיף שכל בהמה שהיא מעלת גרה אין לה שניים בלתי העליון
Now there is an argument for stating that the תורה clearly intends this as an exhaustive list, implying that no other exceptions will ever be found. (See below, Rabbi Noson Slifkin's counter to this approach.) No human could ever have had such foreknowledge, the argument goes. Nor could anyone have known more than a fraction of the over 5000 species currently known. Since this is information open to falsification, no human would risk making this claim falsely.

חולין ס:
וכי משה רבינו קניגי היה (hunter) או בליסטרי היה (archer) מכאן תשובה לאומר אין תורה מן השמים

Today we are unlikely to find any new large, mammal species;
Only 7 have been found since 1900 - the three most recent, the Vu Quang ox, the Vietnamese warty pig and the giant muntjak deer, were all found in the border region of Laos and Vietnam.

Yet, the תורה's claim is known to be factually correct. (Discovery Booklet, pg. 24 & 25)

Note: Some translate the שפן and the ארנבת as the rabbit and the hare. However, these do not chew their cud. It appears that another animal is intended:

הרב דוד קפאח (הארותיו על תרגומו של פירושו של רבינו סעדיה גאון על החומש, פרשת שמיני דף קכ אות ב): השפן (תרגם הרב סעדיה גאון): בעל חי קטן מעלה גרה ממשפחת המכרסמים בעל שער אפרפר רגיש מאד לקור ולחום. ויש מין אחר הדומה לו שאינו מעלה גרה ונוהג לנענע לחיו התחתון ונראה כאלו הוא מעלה גרה ורבים טועים לקרוא לו שפן ותועים לדבר סרה על תורתנו הקדושה, ואלה לא ידעו ולא יבינו בחשכה יתהלכו ע"כ.

Rav S.R. Hirsch, Shmini:

We are used to identifying the shafan and arnevet mentioned with today's animals of the same name. But this identification cannot be unless these two are maaleh gerah, and it is difficult to suppose that they are.

This is supported by the fact that the Sages showed an extraordinary knowledge of the internal workings of a vast range of species. Yet, nowhere do they ever express confusion over the internal workings of the שפן and the ארנבת.

Rav Aryeh Kaplan translates “hyrax” and “hare” (Leviticus 15:5 and 15:6) and has this to say: Hyrax: The hyrax is a small mammal ... living in the Negev mountains. ... Since it has a maw like a ruminant, it is considered to “bring up its cud”. Hare: or rabbit. ... This is the Angora rabbit. ... It could be considered to “bring up its cud” since it regurgitates its food in the early morning hours and then eats it again.

Artsroll gives the same translation and states:

“... These animals excrete moist pellets from their stomachs to their mouths, which they eat again, and then excrete dry pellets. Thus they *appear* to chew their cud, but what they do is no way similar to cows and sheep. Perhaps the term “*bringing up its cud*” simply refers to any animal that brings food back to its mouth from its stomach, whether or not it is like a cow. Or perhaps, as in the case of most of the animal and the fowl in this chapter, we simply do not know their identity.”

There are certainly indications that the ארנבת is not the rabbit. The commentators note that it alone was written in the female. The אב"ע says that this was because there was no male version of this animal and the תשב"י in שרש הגלגול says that this is because it is רבע ונרבע. All this suggests that we do not know of this species today.

Still, the תורה's definitive claim that there are only four species with one sign of purity remains for some a powerful tool in the Divinity of the תורה. Such a claim stands to be contradicted by the findings of more than five such species who definitively and clearly either chew their cud or have split hooves. Presumably at the time of Moses only a small number of existing species were known.

If Moses had made the תורה up he would never have laid himself open to this kind of easy falsification.

However, Rabbi Noson Slifkin argues vociferously against the possibility of bringing this as a proof. We bring his argument, in his own words, below:

In recent years, much fuss has been made of the topic of animals that the Torah states possess only one of the two signs required to be kosher. The Torah states that for a mammal to be kosher it must chew the cud and possess split hooves. It further states that only three animals possess the former alone and only one possesses the latter alone.

Some have used this topic to disprove the divine origins of the Torah, whereas others have used it to prove the divine origins of the Torah. On this page is a brief summary of both arguments and the rejoinders. A thorough 40,000 word analysis of the topic is also available.

An Argument Against Torah's Divinity

“The Torah states that the *shafan*, which is the hyrax, and *arneves*, which is the hare, chew the cud. This was formerly a widespread belief, but it is now known to be mistaken. This proves that the Torah contains mistakes, and was written by human hand.”

Rejoinder:

It is true that the *shafan* is the hyrax and the *arneves* is the hare (there are strong historical proofs for both). However, it is often the case that terms in the Torah are to be understood loosely. The phrase “chewing the cud” may include other meanings, such as the hare's practice of re-ingesting certain fecal pellets produced for this purpose, the hyrax's ruminant-like gut, or the ruminant-like chewing manner of these animals.

An Argument For Torah's Divinity

Part One

“Why would Moses have put his reputation at risk by stating that there are only four animals that possess only one kosher sign? It must be that the Torah is a divine document.”

Rejoinder:

The Torah does *not* state that these are the only animals. The Talmud derives this from subtleties in the Torah’s wording, although even here there may be other views (e.g. *Sichas Chullin*, who deduces that the Gemara is specifically talking about the camel being the only true ruminant, while other animals may fit into a looser definition of *maale gerah*). But Moses would certainly not have been putting his reputation at risk with his statement.

Part Two

“How can we account for the fact that no other such animals have been found in the 3300 years since the Torah was given? Such extraordinary accurate zoological knowledge can only have come from God.”

Rejoinder:

1. Other animals have indeed been found that only possess one sign, such as the llama, alpaca, guanaco, vicuna, and all the peccaries; this is resolved by classifying them as part of the camel and pig families respectively, but once animal classification is made so broad, this zoological statement is not particularly impressive.
2. More significantly, since the simplest understanding of these verses indicates that the Torah mistakenly states that the *shafan*, which is the hyrax, and the *arneves*, which is the hare, chew the cud, which is not the case, this topic cannot be advanced as demonstrating extraordinary accurate zoological knowledge; the resolutions of these statements are viable, but not overly reasonable. (Most authorities have preferred to make a loose definition of *maale gerah* than to claim that the *shafan* and *arneves* are not the hare and hyrax.)
3. A further problem is that most Torah authorities resolve this problem by explaining that “chewing the cud” can encompass a range of biological features, such as the hare’s practice of refection – re-ingesting certain fecal pellets produced for this purpose, the hyrax’s ruminant-like gut, or the ruminant-like chewing manner of these animals. But the list should then include a host of other animals that also practice refection (such as rats and other rodents), possess a ruminant-like gut (such as the hippopotamus and babirusa), or chew like a ruminant (such as the kangaroo). It is mistaken, therefore, to claim that the exclusivity of the list has been proven true.
4. Most devastatingly, it has recently become known that there are animals that are *maale gerah* in the truest sense of the term and simply cannot be subsumed within existing categories, such as the kangaroo, bandicoots, mulgaras and other marsupials. These bring up food from their stomachs to their mouths and then re-swallow it. Thus, there are many more than three animals that are only *maale gerah*.

Part Three

“This proof for the Torah’s divinity is advance by the Talmud itself, and therefore carries religious authority.”

Rejoinder:

This is based on a misunderstanding of two statements in the Talmud. One states that the camel is the only animal that chews the cud but lacks split hooves; as stated above, this has different interpretations. Another statement says that this topic is a rejoinder to atheists, but as Rashi explains, it is referring to the Torah making biological statements at all, not to the supposed exclusivity of the list. Some Acharonim did use the supposed exclusivity as a proof, but with the current state of zoological knowledge, we cannot use it that way nowadays.

Conclusion

According to current zoological knowledge, the topic is neither a proof of Torah's divinity nor a disproof. The Torah states that hares and hyraxes chew the cud, which can be

explained, albeit with difficulty. The Talmud seems to state that these are the only animals that chew the cud but lack split hooves. This does not appear to be true, but there may be other ways of understanding the Talmud. The most balanced and reasonable statement is that the topic contains difficult problems for which the solutions are not at all straightforward.

The Ten Kosher Animals

A second issue often brought as a proof is the fact that **יד : ד-ה** gives a list of 10 kosher animals. This too is problematic as a proof, as we shall show.

The תורה in ד-ה where it lists ten kosher species:

(ד) זאת הבהמה אשר תאכלו שור שה כשבים ושה עזים : (ה) איל וצבי ויחמור ואקו ודישן ותאו וזמר

ועל זה כתב הרמב"ם פ"א מהל' מאכלות אסורות פ"ה (ע"פ חולין פא.): אין לך בכל בהמה וחיה שבעולם שמותר באכילה חוץ מעשרה מינים המנויים בתורה ... וכל העשרה מינים ומיניהם מעלה גרה ומפריס פרסה.

According to פ חולין. these ten species are the only ones that have both kosher requirements.¹

Those who bring this as a proof argue that had Moses (or someone else) made up the תורה, he surely would not have committed himself to identifying that there are only ten species

¹However this is not as good a proof as the previous category of animals with one kosher sign, because there, specific animals are being referred to, whereas here whole categories of species including sub-species are being referred to. The New York Times, November 30, 1999 quotes Dr. Niles Eldridge curator of the paleontology division of the American Museum of Natural History as estimating that there are between ten million to thirteen million living species. Only about 1.5 million species have scientific names.

who have both split hooves and who chew the cud. There may have been many more in the world and then Moses would have been caught out. It would have been much more intelligent simply to state the principle that any animal which both chews its cud and has split hooves is kosher and leave it at that. Only an omniscient G-d could afford the risk of being more specific.

However, this too is problematic as a proof, for there are at least 250 species of kosher animals. However, the Torah is not listing species but minim, which is a much broader category.

b-Fins and scales:

ויקרא יא:ט-י
את זה תאכלו מכל אשר במים כל אשר לו סנפיר (fins) וקשקשת... (scales)
(וכן בדברים יד:ט-י)

משנה נדה ו-ט:
כל שיש לו קשקשת יש לו סנפיר ויש שיש לו סנפיר ואין לו קשקשת

i.e. there is no fish that has scales but no fins

נדה נא: ולכתוב רחמנא קשקשת ולא בעי סנפיר א"ר אבהו וכן תנא דבי ישמעאל יגדיל תורה
(Discovery Booklet, pg. 26 & 27)

However, the statement that all fish that possess scales have fins is explained by Kraisi U'Plaisi and numerous others as being a general rule-of-thumb and not an absolute fact. Thus, we cannot say for sure that there are no exceptions to this rule and it cannot, according to this, be brought as a proof.

iii- מצוות That Show Control

The מצוות of שמיטה and עליה לרגל could only have been given by a being who could control nature (שמיטה) and history (עליה לרגל). Had Moses invented the תורה, חייו, he would have

been foolish to include these laws, for after the first שמיטה the whole nation would have starved and Moses would have been revealed to be a trickster. Similarly with לרגל עליה. After the nations surrounding ארץ ישראל realized that three times a year the entire nation abandons the whole country and leaves it undefended to go to ירושלים, they would have invaded on the next רגל, occupied unimpeded into the whole country, and besieged ירושלים. As with שמיטה, total national disaster would have probably ensued.

שמיטה-a

ויקרא כה:ג-ד
שש שנים תזרע שדך ... ובשנה השביעית שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ ...

שם כ:

וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעת הן לא נזרע ולא נאסף תבואתינו [כא] וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשה את תבואתה לשלש השנים [כב] וזרעתם את השנה השמנית ואכלתם מן התבואה ישן עד השנה התשיעת עד בא תבואתה תאכלו ישן

No human would have dared to suggest such a system. He would surely know that after the first שמיטה, the gig would be up. All human systems would suggest some system of rotation.

כלי יקר ד"ה ושביתה:

... הוציאם ה' מן המנהג הטבעי לגמרי כי בשש שנים דרך האומות לעשות שני שנים זרע ושנה אחת בור ... ועוד נס בתוך נס שאחר שזרעתה שש שנים אם בשנה הששית לא יכחיש חילה לכל הפחות לא יוסיף לה זה כח ואמר ד' אדרבה שבשנה הששית יוסיף לה כח...

עליה לרגל-b

שמות לד כג-כד (כי תשא) :
שלוש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך את פני האדון ה' אלוקי ישראל: כי אוריש גוים מפניך והרחבתי את גבולך ולא יחמוד איש את ארצך בעלותך לראות את פני ה' אלוקיך שלוש פעמים בשנה

No human would dare suggest such suicide - to completely remove all able-bodied men from the entire countryside 3 times a year.

R.S.R. Hirsch:

...Every soldier will be gathered at the center point in Jerusalem ... and no covetous enemy will dare cross the border ... Israel's land will not be protected by an army at its frontiers, but from its central point by its devotion to, and acknowledgment of, G-d.

iv-Age of Mankind; the week and the decimal system

a-Age of Mankind

כוזרי א :

(מד) אמר הכוזרי אף זה תמוה האמנם יש אצלכם מנין ברור מבריאת העולם
(מה) אמר החבר אכן רק למנין זה אנו מונים ואין מחלקת בזה בין היהודים למן ארץ הכוזרים ועד לארץ כוש :
אוצר נחמד : לא נחלק אדם בזה מעולם לא בשום דור ולא בשום מקום
(מח) אמר הכוזרי זה הפרט מרחיק המחשבה הרעה מן הלב מהכזב וההסכמה כי דבר כזה אי"א שיסכימו עליו
עשרה מבלי שיתבלבלו ויגלו סוד הסכמתם או ידחו דברי מי שירצה לברר אצלם דבר כזה, כל שכן המונים
רבים...

קול יהודה ד"ה זה הפרט :

הפרט המבואר בספר החומש שלכם, כמה מאדם ועד נח וממנו ולהלן הכל בפרט כאשר דברת מרחיק מלבנות בני האדם מחשבת הפגול מהיות בו כזב והסכמה. אם לענין ההסכמה, א"א שיסכימו על דבר כזה עם כל דקדוקיו ופרטיו עשרה מבני אדם בבלי שיתבלבלו בדקדודי הפרטים ההם ... ואם לענין הכזב ... כי ככל מי לא יקום אורו להסתכל בדברי בימים המפורסמים אשר היו בלי ספק משתרגים אליהם על איזה פרט מן הפרטים ההם המפורסמים להוכיח על פניו כזבו.

שם ד"ה ואין הכזב והשקר יכול להכנס עליו :

... כי הרוצה לשקר מרחיק הזמנת עדין ממקום הקרוב ... ואל תבהל ברוחך לחשוב ... כי היום הזה תאמרנה דתות פרס ומדי עם ועם כלשונו להיות כל איש שורר בדתו להוכיח מהסכמת בעליהן ראייה על אמתתו ... אל בני ... תדע כי ההיא לא תקרא הסכמה רק אמונה ... ולא) כמו שאמרנו בענין הפרט הנזכר שאפשרות סתירתו

היה תלוי בפרסום ספרי הקדמוניות הרוים להמצא גם מתמול גם משלשום גם מאז דברו על כלל המנין ההוא מעת היצירה, כי המנין ההוא מעת היצירה, כי המנין קרוב כמדובר וכ"ש בפרטים.

b-The Week

כוזרי א: נו
אמר החבר: השמעת על אומה שחולקת בשבוע ... היתכן שישוו בזה אנשי סין עם אנשי איי המערב מבלי התחלה והקהל והסכמה
נח: ה

אמר הכוזרי לא יתכן זה אלא בהסכמה מן הכל, וזה רחוק, או שיהיו כולם בני אדם (הראשון) או בני נח או זולתם ויהיה השבוע אצלם מקובל מאביהם.

c-The Decimal System

כוזרי א נח : אמר החבר ... וכן מנין העשרה הסכים כל אדם עליו במזרח ובמערב

תורה שבעל פה – פ

That there is a תורה שבעל פה will be proven in a separate booklet. It is important to note here, however, that it is extremely unlikely that a human being could have produced a written document that so fundamentally depended on a very precise oral tradition for its understanding, especially one built so accurately and precisely into the text. All texts are open to interpretation. However, this leads to multiple interpretations, never to a consensus, as we have with the תושבע"פ.

As a part of the תושבע"פ there are a system of Gematrios and other hints which further reinforce the series of predictions and prophecies which corroborate the תורה.

A more obvious verification of the תורה's Divinity emerging from the תושבע"פ is the unusual knowledge which חז"ל had as a part of their Oral Tradition. Many things they knew were not known by the broader world sometimes until well into the 20C.

For example:

a-Perfect Knowledge of Astronomy

קידוש החדש

ראש השנה כה :

אמר להם ר"ג כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא אין חדושה של לבנה פחותה מעשרים ותשעה יום ומחצה ושני שלישי שעה ועייג חלקים

According to the (רמב"ם) הלכות קידוש החדש ו:ב-ג, the hour is divided into 1080 parts. Accordingly, the new moon takes place after 29 and a half days & 793 parts of 1080 parts = 29.53059 days. NASA has determined that the new moon takes place after 29.530588 days. In contrast to this Jewish tradition the Gregorian calendar was in a state of constant inaccuracy. In 1582 a full 10 days was simply dropped from the calendar. (Discovery Booklet pg. 28 - 31)

CHAPTER ELEVEN: SECONDARY PROOFS B: THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

- i- The בנינים and the משקלים**
- ii- The relationship between words in the same letter categories**
- iii- The relationship between the word and other words that share the
 core root of two letters**
- iv- Gematrias**

CHAPTER TEN: SECONDARY PROOFS B: THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

The complexity and wisdom of the Hebrew language is such that it could not have been invented by human beings. The internal logic and interconnectedness of the letters and the words are vastly superior to any other language on earth. The fact that we were given and still have the תורה in לשון הקודש is further proof of the Divine origins of the תורה.

The Hebrew language is the vehicle through which all השפעות's are filtered. Therefore it is called לשון הקודש¹.

Other languages are languages by convention, i.e. by the common decision of a group of people to agree to use certain sounds (words) to represent certain things. Hebrew, however, is intrinsic, i.e. the words actually reflect the reality of a particular object at a certain level². Since the world was created by G-d using Hebrew words³, were we to trace any object back up its spiritual trajectory (השתלשלות), we would, at some stage (עולם הבריאה), get to the word. The word, then, is the reality of the object at a higher level. This is how אדם הראשון knew what the names of the animals were. He did not name them, but rather,

וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ. בְּרֵאשִׁית ב' יט

And whatever Man understood to be each animal's name, that was indeed its name.

(The שם of something is its thereness - שם ness - Rav SR Hirsch).

The word, therefore, actually sustains the physical reality it produced (ר' צדוק הכהן) (מחשבות חרוץ ריש סי' יא דף 83 שם). Man, who is an עולם קטן, is made up of all 22 letters (שם).

The Kabbalistic work which deals with how words are the building blocks of the world is ספר היצירה, which, according to the ספר היצירה (מאמר ד' סי' נה), was written by אברהם אבינו. The letters are considered the bricks; the words the rows of bricks which comprise the buildings.

Letters and words are precise in all their dimensions: They can therefore be analyzed by their shape, their numerical value, their sound, and their relationship to other letters and words. Because they represent complete realities, they translate not only into the physical reality of matter but also of time (each month reflects a letter), and of the Jewish nation itself (each tribe) (ע"פ ספר היצירה).

There are many layers of understanding of לשון הקודש:

Level One: משקלים and בנינים

¹רמב"ן, פ' כי תשא - שמות ל': יג ודלא כהרמב"ם

²כתב השל"ה הקודש (ח"א תולדות אדם, בית המקדש): דע כי האתיות הקדושות התיבות הקדושות הם כולם בשרשם רוחניים ... להבים הענין אעתיק מס' "הפרדס" (פרק ראשון משער האותיות) וז"ל: רבים חשבו היות האותיות האלו הסכמיות, רצוני לומר הסכימו החכמים לעשות סמיניות יוצאת הדבור ... אמנם הם רוחניות מתייחסות בצורותיהן אל פנימיות נשמתם, ... וכל אות ואות יש לה צורה רוחני, ומאור נכבד אצול מעצם הספירות ... עכ"ל [של ספר הפרדס]. ... וכל תיבות הם למעלה ... נשתלשל ממדרגה למדרגה אלפי אלפים עד שנתגשם בעולם הזה הגשמי וגו'

³עשרה מאמרות של מעשה בראשית בדבר ד' שמים נעשו

- Level Two: The relationship between words in the same letter categories
- Level Three: The relationship between the word and other words that share the core root of two letters
- Level Four: Gematrias

i - The משקלים and בנינים

In Hebrew, the same 3 root letters translate into different בנינים, giving the word a different but related meaning in that form.

For example,

- אכל in the Pa'al (Achal) = He ate
- in the Pi'el (Ichael) = He devoured
- in the Hif'il (He'echil) = He fed (lit he caused someone else to eat)
- in the Hitpael (Hitachel) = He fed himself

In English, there is no etymological connection between ate, devoured and fed. Despite their associated meaning, they are each comprised of completely different letters.

The connections spread further, into nouns:

אוכל – The English food is related to fed but not to eat.

There is yet a deeper level to this, based on a closer look at the composition of the 3 letters. אכל is made up of כל – everything and the letter א, implying that the physical sustenance of food is the beginning of all sustenance.

ii - The relationship between words in the same letter categories

The ספר היצירה, written by אברהם אבינו, tells us that the letters get divided into categories by sound:

- A - Gutturals – א ה ח ע
- B – Labials (letters made by closing and opening your lips) – ב ו מ פ
- C – Letters made by blowing air – ש צ ז
- D – Letters made by putting your tongue at the top of your pallet where it meets your teeth – ד ט ל נ ת
- E – Letters made by placing your tongue in the middle of your mouth – ג י ק ר

Words that interchange one of these letters maintain the same primary meaning with a specific meaning change.

For example:

ברא = to break out into reality

פרא = broken out of normal boundaries; wild. פרא אדם = a savage

פרח = to fly or to flower (in modern Hebrew only the latter) – to break out of previous limitations or situations

פרע = to let your hair loose; to loosen it from its bounds

This system is used extensively by Rav S.R. Hirsch in his commentary on חומש.

iii - The relationship between the word and other words that share the core root of two letters

Here one would identify two core letters and provide it with a general meaning. The third letter gives the word its specific meaning.

For example:

פר = breaking from a unity

פרא = wild

פרד = a part of a unity

פרה = to multiply, increase manifold

פרו = an open city

פרח = to bloom

פרט = to detail, divide

פרע = to undo, let loose

פרכ = to break

פרמ = to take apart a seam

פרס = to slice bread

פרצ = to break apart, scatter

פרק = to dismantle, break

פרר = to make crumbs

פרש = to separate, leave

Rabbi Wolf Heideneim (רש"י of דקדוק on the חוקת המקרא) and Rav Elie Munk (In the Beginning) use this approach. (Rabbi Munk has a mini-dictionary of these at the back of his book.) It is not clear whether Rabbi Hirsch and these Rabbis argue or agree with each other.

iv - Gematrias

Gematrias also express a relationship between different words, albeit at a lower level of connection.

For example:

בהמה (and כלב) אליהו, all have the same gematria. Eliyahu is the holy Jew who comes to sanctify the more sensual aspects of ourselves such as at a Bris, which is made on the most sensual of organs.

Thus words are connected to others more closely or more distantly through sharing the same letters, the same letter categories, the same core letter group or the same numerical value. In this way one word can be connected with many others, adding to the richness and precision of its meaning and the meaning of all the other words with which it interacts.

See **ORAL BOOKLET** Chapter on the Kabbala for more details of the Hebrew Language.

CHAPTER TWELVE: SECONDARY PROOFS C: THE CODES

i – Description

a - Statistical Significance

1 - The degree of statistical improbability

2 - The intervals themselves have significance

3 - The context in which any code appears is relevant to the code

4 - Many codes on the same theme often appear within the verses speaking on that theme

b - Do the codes have predictive power?

ii- Critique and Defense

a - Testing other texts

b - Spelling and authenticity of words

c - Falsifiability

d - No מסורה nor used in this way

e - Abuse

f - Methodology

g - Level of Truth

iii- Qualifications for Use

iv- The Famous Rabbis Codes _____

In relating to codes, one has to relate to two types of significance. One is their statistical significance: how likely or unlikely such codes are to happen. The second is their intrinsic significance – if G-d used codes, why did He do so? What is their function?

a - Statistical Significance

Every text has codes, even a telephone book. That is to say that if one looks hard enough, one can find words made up of letters at certain equal letter sequences.¹ Therefore on its own,

Moses, equal spacing of 50 letters; concerning Joseph's last words to his brothers (that God would eventually redeem the Israelites from Egypt).

¹ Daniel Mechanic (Aish HaTorah web sight) writes the following: There are two types of word patterns that are formed through sequences of letters equidistantly spaced in a document: 1) Accidentally occurring word patterns, i.e. "ELS" (Equidistant Letter Sequence) 2) Encoded word patterns deliberately inserted into a document, i.e. "Codes."

The first type (ELS) - words accidentally formed through equidistant letter skip intervals - can obviously be extracted out of the letters found in every document written throughout the history of the world: The Bible, Shakespeare, any newspaper, the instructions on any medicine bottle, this article, etc. Their "existence" is purely coincidental and, therefore, a cryptologist would never refer to them as "Codes." For example, in the sentence written above, the phrase "the history of the world" appears. Starting with the "T" in the word "the," count every seven letters until you have spelled "toe" (the history of the world). Did we deliberately arrange the letters and words of that sentence in a way that would generate the ELS of the word "toe"? Obviously not. We never try to encode words in the letters we write to friends and family, yet every one of them can yield hundreds of such extractions. They are all there by accident. Their "existence" is unintentional. In fact, it can be clearly demonstrated that they are statistically and mathematically meaningless (i.e. the accidental appearance of these patterns is completely expected).

The second type - encoded words *deliberately* inserted into a document - is categorically different. These types of word patterns are Codes that were purposely placed in a document by the document's author. They are not random, coincidentally constructed words extracted from a text. In fact, there are Codes whose intentional placement in a document can be statistically and mathematically verified.

A unique type of Codes has been found in the Torah (Five Books of Moses). Its uniqueness lies in the fact that: 1) it can be statistically verified that these Codes were deliberately placed in the Torah by its author; 2) the information that was encoded could not have been known to mankind at the time it was encoded.

One of the "Torah Codes" claims is as follows:

Names of famous Rabbis, together with their birth dates and death dates, were deliberately encoded in the Torah by its author thousands of years *before* these Rabbis ever lived. This claim has been statistically verified, (i.e., the probability that this phenomenon is due to chance is exceedingly small).

The other hundreds, thousands, and sometimes millions of ELS's that appear in every document in the world are mere coincidences (until *proven* otherwise).

Furthermore, the first and foremost issue that must be addressed when dealing with this phenomenon is whether or not it can be shown that the ELS's were deliberately inserted into a document. If it is clearly demonstrated that a particular ELS is merely a coincidence because: 1) no objective evidence exists that proves it was deliberately inserted into the document; 2) The ELS is statistically meaningless (you expect it to appear by accident); 3) the methodology used to find these ELS's is inherently invalid - then it is absurd and deceptive to use it as proof or confirmation of anything.

Some of those that have replicated the research of Witztum and Rips are Dr. Brendan McKay, a probabilist at Australia National University and a major critic of the Codes, and Dr. Alexander Pruss, a mathematician and probabilist at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Robert Haralick, Boeing Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington, and Harold Gans, a former senior cryptologic mathematician for the United States' National Security Agency, have likewise replicated the original results and extended it further as discussed below.

this fact is not significant. What makes the Torah codes significant are the following factors whose cumulative statistical improbabilities are highly significant:

- 1 - The intervals themselves have significance.
- 2 - The context in which any code appears is relevant to the code.
- 3 - Many codes on the same theme often appear within the verses speaking on that theme.

It is the cumulative persuasiveness of each one of these which makes the codes seem compelling. In many critiques, the focus has been on the statistical probability of the codes alone. Although this probability is in and of itself often quite impressive, any critique must address itself to the four additional points mentioned above.¹

Among those who have gone on record attesting to the seriousness and quality of the research, besides the four world-class mathematicians mentioned before, are: the renowned Israeli mathematician, Dr. Robert Auman, Dr. Andrew Goldfinger, a senior physicist at Johns Hopkins University and a senior member of the Space Computer and Technology Group, and Dr. Daniel Michaelson, a mathematician at the Weizmann Institute. Dr. Jeffrey Satinover, previously adjunct faculty at Yale University and a former William James Lecturer at Harvard, has written a book called Cracking The Bible Code that substantiates the seriousness and value of the research (and explains many of the misunderstandings that have recently arisen).

Because of the extraordinary implications of Mr. Gans' successful codes experiment, Mr. Gans, as well as additional independent experts, are scrutinizing the data and findings rigorously. If the successful results of this experiment survive this rigorous second-level review, then it should silence all claims that the data was fraudulently manipulated or biased to create successful results. The results of that scrutiny will be released shortly.

¹ Neither Dr. McKay nor Dr. Pruss subscribes to the methodology or conclusions of Mr. Witztum and Dr. Rips.

Dr. Haralick has published over 400 scientific papers. He is the developer of the Unix image processing system and is a Fellow of the International Association for Pattern Recognition.

The National Security Agency employs more mathematicians than any other institution in the world. It devotes its resources almost exclusively to the making and breaking of codes.

Cryptologic mathematics is without question the domain of expertise most pertinent to assessing the Codes, and Mr. Gans is the recipient of the United States Department of Defense's second highest honor, the Meritorious Civilian Service Award. He received this honor for having led a team of mathematical cryptologists in cracking a problem that had been considered all but unsolvable. Almost all of his 180 published papers - as well as the work for which he received the above-mentioned award - remain classified by the government.

Gans and Haralick are two of the world's experts in the application of statistics to decoding and pattern recognition.

Dr. Auman is one of the world's experts in game theory, and a member of both the Israeli and U.S. National Academy of Science.

Dr. Satinover holds degrees from M.I.T., Harvard, and the University of Texas. Currently, he is studying physics at Yale University.

This book should not be confused with The Bible Code by Michael Drosnin. Unfortunately, Mr. Drosnin's book is a gross misrepresentation of the legitimate scientific research, and has caused a great deal of confusion as to the validity and proper use of the Codes phenomenon. Almost all of the examples in Drosnin's book were not generated using any legitimate scientific methodology and bear, at best, only superficial resemblance to the research of Mr. Witztum and Dr. Rips. Furthermore, Mr. Drosnin irresponsibly uses his so-called "codes" to attempt to predict future events, a premise rejected outright by

1-The degree of statistical improbability

The improbability needs to be calculated not only according to the single instance of a word appearing, but very often of its repetition as well.

2-The intervals themselves have significance

In the example of the word תורה we brought above, the interval between the letters, 49, is the same interval as the counting of the Omer towards the receiving of the תורה. The letters spelling תורה appear at the 50th interval, the highest level of Binah – of understanding the תורה possible.

3-The context in which any code appears is relevant to the code

The example we are using is relevant in its context in the sense that it begins in code a statement that each one of the books of the תורה is in fact ויקרא. תורה is missing. But a spacing of 8 at the beginning of ויקרא does spell out השם's four lettered Name. Therefore, there is a pattern of השם's name in the middle book, surrounded by the name תורה repeated twice on either side. The spacing of 8 reflects the fact that G-d is above nature.

(One would have to explain why the word תורה is spelled backwards in the equivalent codes of במדבר and דברים. One might say that since they are coming after השם's Name, they are approaching the Name from the opposite end.)

4-Many codes on the same theme often appear within the verses speaking on that theme

For example, in ת, השם in, begin a prophecy to Avraham Avinu about the future travails of גלות which will befall the Jewish nation. In that section, there are fourteen codes referring to נצים, התלר, and שאה.

b-Do the codes have predictive power?

Since the codes were written into the תורה at the outset and most relate to events which took place later on in time, one would have to say that the codes have predictive power. In fact, it was the claim that Yitzchak Rabin's assassination was predicted as a Torah code that caused so much controversy and excitement about the codes.¹ Aish HaTorah and others like them dispute

all the serious codes researchers.

¹Here is an example of why this kind of claim has led to trivialization of the codes. The following was taken off the internet: Thanks entirely to the power of computing, we now know that the Bible is not a spiritual or moral guide but actually a tool for fortune-telling, a kind of divine deck of tarot cards. That's what the best-selling book The Bible Code tells us.

The book recounts the discoveries of a team of researchers who used a supercomputer to convert the 304,805 Hebrew letters of the Old Testament into a humongous Word Search puzzle and found all kinds of hidden messages in there. For example, the book claims the Bible foretold the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, because his name intersected with the phrase "will assassinate" after the computer geniuses rearranged the letters.

that the codes can be used to make predictions. Since the codes talk about events that took place after the תורה was written, the codes are in fact predictive. But this is only theoretical. In practice, however, it is impossible to use the codes in this way. This is because it is impossible to come up with a clear interpretation of the context in which a word appears. Thus the Rabin code appears in the context of the word רצח, murder. This can mean that Rabin is going to murder, that Rabin is a murderer, that Rabin has, is or will be killed, etc.¹

ii-Critique and Defense²

So it turns out that the billions of people who have looked to the Bible for spiritual instruction or inspiration have been missing the point: the Bible is merely a series of contrived strings of words with the real purpose of passing along clues about future events. First, we loaded the sample (Microsoft's software license agreement) into Word 97 and used the program's sophisticated processing capabilities to remove all spaces and hyphens, convert the text to all caps, and change the font to the non-proportionally spaced Courier typeface. Then our analysis began.

We were shocked to see--almost immediately--the word "Rabin" staring us in the face. Chillingly, almost as if a massive cover-up were responsible, it was intersected by these phrases: "U.S. Government restricted," "information," "inability to use," "even if Microsoft has been advised of the possibility" and "damages for loss."

What was going on here?! Could someone in Microsoft's legal department be trying to tell us something about the assassination--something that could have been done, something the authorities would rather not have us know? We moved on. Further computer analysis and advanced text searching gave us another shocking example. Recently, we'd been angered by the pay-per-view TV performance of former heavyweight boxing champ Mike Tyson in his fight against Evander Holyfield, in which Tyson bit Holyfield's ear and was disqualified in the fourth round. As a result of Tyson's action, thousands of fans demanded refunds for the ridiculous sums of money they had paid to watch the event.

Imagine our amazement when we saw--hidden within the very same software license agreement--the word "Tyson" running plainly down the page, intersecting with..."refund!"

And that's not all. Right next to Tyson, there it was: the word "ear!" Understand, this license agreement was last updated in May--*a full month before* the Tyson ear-biting incident!

At this point we were--to say the least--stunned. But we felt a bit more searching was necessary in order to demonstrate either that computers are very powerful or that amazing messages are hidden within the software license agreement for Microsoft Access Developer's Toolkit version 2.0.

¹Rabbi Daniel Mechanic, on the Aish Web sight, puts it this way: In looking at a past event, the context of words associated with that event are known. However, for a future event, the context is not known: one is trying to deduce the context from the words. This is, of course, subjective and has absolutely nothing to do with mathematically verifiable codes. Let us take a simple example. We find "Yeshua" (the currently popular name for Jesus) encoded in close proximity to "Moshiach" (Messiah). Some would like to conclude that the context is "Yeshua is the Moshiach". However there are a number of other contexts that could be valid, even if this proximity were statistically significant (which it absolutely is NOT [see the excellent paper by Rabbi D. Mechanic on this]): The code could mean "Yeshua will think that he is Moshiach", or "Many people will believe that Yeshua is Moshiach", or "Someone has yet to be born with the name 'Yeshua' who will dream he is the moshiach", and on and on.

Jesus Codes: Uses and Abuses: A Response to Yacov Rambsel and Grant Jeffrey by Rabbi Daniel Mechanic in consultation with Doron Witztum and Harold Gans: A recent book being used to proselytize Jews to Christianity claims that hidden messages - "codes" - have been found in the Bible proving that Jesus is the Messiah. The book, by Yacov Rambsel, a Hebrew Christian pastor, is entitled Yeshua (second edition). It consists of a list of instances where the four-letter Hebrew word "Yeshua" - Jesus - and short phrases including it, may be "extracted" from the original Hebrew text of the Bible by seeking places where the letters forming the word are found with an equal number of skipped letters between

The codes, used by Arachim and Discovery, have come under much discussion not only in the Jewish world but in the broader American media. Some, such as Gateways, have subsequently dropped the codes from their seminars although over the long term, the codes have been an extremely powerful part of these types of seminars. To some degree, the popularization of the codes has been its undoing, lending itself to a certain trivialization. In addition, missionaries have attempted to use the ideas of the codes to their advantage, though their codes are all spurious when subjected to the rigorous criteria of the Torah codes.

a-Testing other texts

It would seem that the jury may yet be out on the codes: some, though not enough, controlled verifications may have been done. Extensive tests need to be done on other texts using the same degree of verification. This has been done to some degree¹, confirming that the codes

them.

Grant Jeffrey's The Signature of God is another book that has achieved a wide readership. These books reveal, unfortunately, a complete misunderstanding of the "codes methodology,"

It is true that the Hebrew word 'Yeshua'⁵ (Jesus) can be extracted from passages in the Hebrew Bible. Pastor Rambsel writes in his book how 'Yeshua' can be extracted from passages in Isaiah, Daniel and Psalms. On pages 50 and 65 of Yeshua, we are shown how in the Book of Genesis, 'Yeshua' can be found in passages that he insists refer to the Messiah. He then concludes that the author of the Torah deliberately encoded 'Yeshua' at these locations in order to reveal to us that Jesus is the Messiah.

One of the more troubling Christian responses has been that despite the fact that Rambsel and Jeffrey's methodology and examples are objectively, scientifically, and logically invalid, nevertheless, "we still have 'faith' that the 'Yeshua codes' are genuine." (Interestingly, Moslems also claim that they have faith that the "Mohammed Codes" that were found in the Torah are genuine). 1. All Of Pastor Rambsel and Grant Jeffrey's "Codes" regarding Jesus are not codes, and have absolutely nothing to do with the authentic Codes phenomenon. 2. The methodology used to find the Jesus "Codes" is categorically different than the authentic Codes methodology. 3. The methodology used to find the Jesus "Codes" is inherently invalid. ... All of the Jesus "Codes" have been proven to be statistically insignificant - i.e. the accidental appearance of these patterns is completely expected - and is therefore of no evidential value at all. The Rambsel/Jeffrey Methodology that was used to find these "patterns" is inherently invalid since it yields contradictory, illogical and absurd results. It is, therefore, incredibly deceptive to misrepresent these "patterns" as codes, and it is immoral to use them as proof or confirmation of a specific religion.

²There are numerous other critiques which have been viewed on the website torahcodes.co.il. See also the Aish Hatorah web sight under the codes.

¹Here is an example from the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, signed 1982. The quote is as it appeared on the Web:

To make the experiment somewhat Hebrew-like, we will ignore all vowels, and treat upper and lower case letters as the same.

This document (stripped down to its consonants) has some remarkable ELS's. The probabilities I will give are those of finding EVEN ONE example in a text formed by randomly shuffling the letters.

This Convention is primary source of international law relating to oceans and waterways. In fact if you read it you

HeaR aLL The LaW oF The Sea.

(start=190588, skip=-15290, prob=0.000095)

Many other ELS's of very low probability can be found, but I will content myself with exploring this question: why was this Convention signed? The cynic might say it was just that

NaTo NeEd aN aGReeMeNT oN The Sea,

(start=88311, skip=3404, prob=0.000021)

where, done rigorously, only work with the תורה in the original. Enormous efforts have been invested in the Torah codes to uncover them, and it is not yet clear whether at least some or even one other text can have similar level codes with words that are relevant to its context. So far, although there were some false claims, no other text has stood up to the rigorous standards set up for the codes. Even if the תורה in another language would have codes, this may be a challenge to the Divine origin of the codes. However, thus far the codes have withstood all such challenges to it and have therefore receive the approbation of the late Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל, and, יבדל להיים, Rav Shlomo Fisher. Both had been apprised of the criticism being made of the codes and the dangers of abuse by missionaries. From the world of science, it has received the approval of four world-leading statisticians. Previously, Rav Weissmandel had found numerous codes, which he showed and for which he gained the approval of Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky. The Chazon Ish is reputed to have said that Rav Weissmandel's discoveries stem from Ruach HaKodesh. Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzky and Rabbi Moshe Heinemann have also approved the use of Codes for Discovery seminars.¹

b-Spelling and Authenticity of Words

Some of the codes that are used are not original Hebrew words. How do we know that Hitler is spelled התלר as it appears in the codes and not הטלר as would be the normal spelling today? How do we know that שאה is the right word at all for the Holocaust? The codes would do far better if they excluded all these examples. In general, authors of the codes have tried to be rigorous about this, looking to experts to provide the right spelling for words.

c-Falsifiability

In one sense, the codes are not strictly scientific insofar as they cannot be disproven. Ordinarily a scientific theory would have to make predictions, which if they did not come about, would render the theory invalid. However, although the codes do claim to make predictions, the theory would not be considered disproven if any of them failed. We would simply say that that particular code is not in the תורה. Nevertheless, a number of leading statisticians have confirmed

but the truth is more mundane. After all, the world fishing industry benefits more than anyone. Yes, this was just a

SaFe uN oCeaN CoNVeNTioN To eNCLoSe TuNa.
(start=144491, skip=2066, prob=0.000000001)

¹"A number of contemporary Gedolim and Torah Sages have repeatedly given their strong support for the use of Codes as a Kiruv Rechokim tool. Included in this prominent group is the renowned Jerusalem Posek and Rov, Rav Shlomo Fisher. In addition to his own 1989 Psak Din stating that "it is a Mitzvah to teach Codes," Rabbi Fisher recently issued a public letter wherein he states that he met with Doron Witztum and Dr. Rips on several occasions, together with Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Zt'l. He testifies that Harav Auerbach not only gave his unequivocal approval of the Codes research but also strongly encouraged the use of this material in Kiruv Rechokim efforts.

Numerous prominent Roshei Yeshiva and Rabbonim have personally sat through Codes presentations at our Discovery seminars. Among those who have attended - and gone on record as supporting the use of Codes for Kiruv Rechokim - are Rav Yaakov Weinberg, Rav Shmuel Kaminetzky, Rav Moshe Heinemann, and Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan. In fact, Mr. Harold Gans, a former senior cryptologic mathematician with the United States' National Security Agency for twenty-eight years, has had a number of long discussions about the Codes with Rav Moshe Heinemann. Despite the recent controversy surrounding the topic, Rav Heinemann remains emphatic in characterizing the Codes as "absolutely part of our Mesorah, and a Kiddush Hashem to teach." (From the Aish Web sight - Rabbi Daniel Mechanic)

that the codes are statistically significant to quite a large degree, i.e. although some codes may not exist, some definitely do. Furthermore, in the case of the Names of Great Sages (See **iv** below), certain tests were done which do meet rigorous criteria of falsifiability.

A more subtle example is the code quote above which produces the word תורה in the first and last two books of the תורה, etc. The word תורה in דברים, however, is produced after 48 spaces and not 49 like the other books. (This is often not pointed out in code presentations.) One could make up all sorts of explanations as to why ספר דברים only reaches the 49th and not the 50th level, but whether these are authentic תורה explanations is another matter. Although there may exist some deeper, hidden symmetry, until this is shown one would have to regard this particular code with caution if not outright as a counter-example. But some of those using the codes continue to use it as one of their outstanding examples and in fact display the code as a menorah with perfect symmetry.

Defenders of the codes could still point to numerous “water-tight” examples to show that the codes do exist, even if we poke holes in any particular code.

d-No מסורה nor Used in this Way

Defenders will answer these claims by pointing to the use of codes by great Sages, including the גר"א and, in particular, Rabbi Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl, who began to investigate ELS's about 60 years ago. Some of the results of this research were collected posthumously in the book תורת חמד (ר' בחיי). With the exception of the latter, all of these are isolated cases of using a code as פרפרת בעלמא, as some isolated embellishment of a particular דרוש. Nor do they tell us what the exact rules of using the codes are and whether there is any מסורה for them as a general methodology. Nowhere do we see the codes used as a verification of the תורה, even though the ראשונים and אחרונים deal comprehensively with the verification issue. Using a code for חיזוק is one thing – turning into one of the sources of our belief in the תורה is another. The codes are certainly not the source of the faith of most תורה observant Jews, including those using the codes. Why would we expect the non-observant to base their faith on

¹The Aish HaTorah Web Sight quotes the following:

The Gra from "*Sifra Ditzniuta*" Chapter 5:

The rule is that all that was, is, and will be until the end of time is included in the Torah from "Bereishit" (the first verse of Genesis) to "L'eynei kol Yisrael" (the last verse of Deuteronomy). And not merely in a general sense, but including the details of every species and of each person individually, and the most minute details of everything that happened to him from the day of his birth until his death.

Rabbi Moshe Cordevaro in *Pardes Rimonim* (68a):

The secrets of our holy Torah are revealed through knowledge of combinations, numerology (gematria), switching letters, first-and-last letters, shapes of letters, first- and last- verses, skipping of letters (dilug otiot) and letter combinations.

These matters are powerful, hidden and enormous secrets. Because of their great hidden-ness, we don't have the ability to fully comprehend them. Further, to see different angles through these methods is infinite and without limit. On this the Torah says, "its measure is longer than the world."

The Rokeach (Hakdamah Al Hatorah) and the Ramak (Pardes Rimonim, Shaar Lamed) mention the phenomenon here under discussion, of Hashem encoding hidden information through the "skipping of letters". Furthermore, Rabbeinu Bachya in Bereishis (Chapter 1, Verse 2), Rav Avraham Abulafia in his sefer Imrei Shefer (Aseres Hadibros), and the Ramak all asserted not just the simple fact that deliberately placed ELS Codes exist, but provided explicit examples of them. It is clear from their specific comments, as well as the general context of their discussion, that their assertions were not merely poetic metaphors, but reflective of an authoritative and legitimate methodology.

something we do not use for ourselves? Defenders of the codes say they do not use them on their own - only in the context of a whole seminar.

However, Rabbi Daniel Mechanic quotes Rabbi Moshe Heinemann as characterizing the codes as “absolutely part of our מסורה, and a קדוש השם to teach.”

e - Abuse

The Codes have attracted a great deal of attention. This can be used to the advantage of Christian missionaries and the like who will come up with their own codes or interpret existing ones to their advantage. Although they have yet to come up with any codes that meet rigorous criteria, it is not so easy for the layman to tell the difference.

Defenders of the codes may claim that since there are no authentic Christian codes, abuse and manipulation of תורה and facts in general is something which some missionaries do on a broad basis anyhow. But that is no excuse to stop teaching תורה and its proofs. On the contrary, it is reason to be more committed to spreading the real Truth.¹

f-Methodology

Rabbi Reuven Leuchter holds that the primary critique on the codes is that they are at bottom based on a statistical result, the consequence of a search. But the תורה is not dependent on results – אינה תלויה בתוצאות. Science, which does not start out with a given reality, is forced to operate on this plain. But the תורה was not given to us to discover through probabilities or statistical approximations. It should be remembered that the proponents of the codes are saying that the Codes are תורה – that G-d gave the תורה with the Codes.

To my knowledge, this critique has not been presented to defenders of the codes.

g- Level of Truth

The codes have been used to reveal names of people, some of them evil. Although the תורה does talk about evil people, these are revealed as שרשים. The תורה does not talk about local events unless they are revealing, bringing down into this world (for the first time) basic fundamental relationships of cosmic significance or spiritual laws which every generation needs. One would be forced to say the same about the names, which the codes reveal, in fact significantly upgrading the level of the claim being made by the codes. (A further condition is stated by Rav Tzadok HaCohen who repeatedly shows that every statement made by everyone in

¹The Aish Web sight states it as follows: Another point Dr. Simon makes in his attack is his concern over the potential misuse of Codes by Christian missionary groups in their proselytizing of Jews. If we were to follow Dr. Simon's reasoning to its logical conclusion, it would lead all of us immediately to ban the Tanach from our homes and schools since for nearly 2,000 years missionaries have misused it as their single greatest proselytizing tool--far more successful than the Codes could ever be. Nevertheless, this concern was brought before the proper authorities. The Posek Hador, R' Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach Zt'l, explicitly said to continue the Codes research and teaching, and not to worry "Lo Lelaitzim Velo Lanotzrim" - "Pay attention to neither scoffers nor Christians."

Furthermore, Jews for Judaism, the largest counter-missionary organization in North America, reports that they are unaware of a *single* Jew who became a believer in J.C because of the Christian's misuse of the legitimate Codes research. In fact, Jews for Judaism reports that subsequent to reading the two articles I authored demonstrating the Christian's fraudulent tactics and claims regarding the Codes, several Jews for J. returned to Torah and Mitzvos.

the תורה (as well as every action they did) has to be true at some level; otherwise it could not be included in Toras Emes.)

Defenders of the codes say that ומי איבא מידי דלא רמיזא באורייתא. But this does not mean that the רמז will be in the form of actual (hinted) mention of the person's name and other details. Once we understand who Eisav and his descendents are, the תורה is not necessarily going to mention every significant Anti-Semitic descendent of Eisav – such a shopping list would run into hundreds if not thousands of names. Defenders might say that this is indeed true and that they have only claimed that exceptional personalities (Hitler) would appear, though by definition this claim is not falsifiable.

A related critique is to ask what the codes are supposed to be teaching us. The codes are being used as a way of showing that the תורה had to be G-d-given. Even if that is true, that still does not tell us why the codes were given in the first place. The four animals with one impure sign (chewing the cud or split hooves) are also used by חז"ל as a proof for the Divine Origin of the תורה. But clearly, that is not the reason why they are written in the תורה.

Defenders of the codes may say that each code has to be understood in the context of where it appears in order to learn its unique lesson. But in practice, I am not aware of any attempt to reveal a rigorous methodology that will guarantee that we learn the right lessons from each code.

Perhaps the codes would escape this type of criticism if they were presented “not as dealing with the content of wisdom, but with its harmonious structure, thereby making the content of ... תורה wisdom pleasing and convincing to the mind ... they deal with form rather than content. It can nevertheless have educational value in appreciating the Divine Harmony inherent in the תורה” (Rabbi Baruch Horovitz in *Jewish Studies* Summer 1987, produced by Yeshivat Devar Yerushalayim.¹) This approach would require presenting many of the current codes as coming to embellish a point already made and not as introducing new information.

The codes have also been used by Biblical scholar Dr. Moshe Katz to debunk the Higher Critical Biblical Theories of the 19C.

These theories claimed that the Bible was of multiple authorship. Dr. Katz claims that the fantastic statistical probability of the patterns having occurred just by chance and the fact that some of these codes occur throughout the חומש (see our initial example) means that one author must have coordinated this.²

¹Rabbi Horovitz's article is entitled *Introduction to Torah Patterns* and surveys a gamut of different numerical patterns in the Torah appearing under the heading רמז. This includes Gemmatiot, which was extended in recent times by the likes of Oskar Goldberg who showed repeated patterns, particularly of the number 7 and 26. For example, in the passage dealing with the ברית between אברהם אבינו and אבימלך (בראשית כא: כב-לד), the names אברהם and אבימלך are each mentioned seven times. Similarly, in the battle with ח-טו (שמות יז: ח-טו), the names of the two protagonists משה and עמלק are also mentioned seven times. There are many such examples. (See *Jewish Studies*, *ibid.*, *The Discovery of Hidden Numerical Structures in the Pentateuch*, by Rabbi Aryeh Carmell.)

²This is a lesser claim than saying that it proves that G-d wrote the Torah. However, I fail to see how this escapes any of the criticism. If the codes were merely a matter of stylistic consistency, then that would be one thing. But, in dealing with the codes, we are dealing with specific (and presumably conscious) insertions of mathematical patterns.

iii-Qualifications for Use

Therefore, even for those who do believe in the legitimacy of the codes should observe the following qualifications:

- a-Nobody intends them to be a primary proof and they are best used in the context of a whole seminar and not as a separate lecture.¹
- b-Correct usage of the codes requires a reasonably high level of understanding statistical significance to distinguish תורה codes from codes which can and do appear in any text in any language. Examples differ significantly in their statistical significance. Only those codes which cross a certain statistical threshold ought to be used. The statistical analysis should include an evaluation of the context in which the code occurs and of the significance of the specific interval.
- c-Distinction must be made between the appearance of a code and its interpretation.
- d-A distinction should be made between Hebrew codes and codes of words from other languages for which a Hebrew spelling is being used.

iv – The Famous Rabbis Codes

This code is possibly the most important of the codes because it was subject to the most rigorous tests. Doron Witzum, Eliyahu Rips and Yoav Rosenberg took 34 famous rabbis as defined by having three column entries or more in the *Encyclopaedia of Great Men of Israel*. They approached Professor Shlomo Zalman Havlin,² one of the worlds's leading experts in bibliography, and asked him to create a list of appellations for the rabbis. They also requested from Yaakov Auerbach, a linguist, to provide a set of spelling rules to be followed. They then searched for these names plus their dates of birth and death, and looked for them in בראשית, with a measure of closeness between the names and the dates. For comparison, they took the start of a Hebrew translation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* of the exact same length as Genesis.

The results were highly significant. When the authors used a randomization test to see how rarely the patterns they found might arise by chance alone they obtained a very highly significant result, with $p = 0.000016$. These results were then sent to Professor Kazhdan at Harvard University who in turn forwarded them to Professor Persi Diaconis, one of the world's leading statisticians. Professor Diaconis, though impressed with the results, challenged them to repeat the experiment on a second list of names. So they repeated their tests with 32 moderately

¹The Aish Hatorah Web sight puts it as follows: The Codes are presented in the context of a whole system of classes that examine various aspects of that claim - historical, philosophical, psychological, scientific, etc. If someone finds the evidence for the Torah's veracity compelling, they will then want to examine its content in depth. Discovery - and Codes - has been overwhelmingly successful in breaking through the enormous barriers that prevent secular Jews from seeing the richness and depth of Torah. It has served as a potent catalyst for secular Jews to open their eyes and take the reality of Torah seriously. The Torah is a mansion; the Codes are but one of many doorways. Discovery - like 99.9% of its participants - has never made the mistake of confusing an entrance for the home itself.

²Prof. Shlomo Havlin was then head of the Dept. of Bibliography and Librarianship at Bar Ilan University. The rules of orthography and the form of the Hebrew date were also established *a priori* by the linguist Yaakov Orbach, o.b.m.

famous rabbis as defined by having an entry in the *Encyclopedia of Great Men of Israel* of 1.5 to 3 columns of text.

For this second group, for בראשית, they measured between 4 and 453 for each one, highly significant, whereas for War and Peace they measured between 277,103 to 748,183 for each one. The latter is more or less what one would expect if there were no special correlations between the names and the dates.

The paper was then submitted for publication in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* and underwent a peer review of 6 famous statisticians. They employed a new statistical test to measure the results and were shocked to find the results still highly significant, showing a probability of 1/62,500. In the end, the paper was not published for “lack of public interest” and appeared instead in *Statistical Science*.¹

Subsequently, Harold Gans, a world expert in the application of statistics to decoding and pattern recognition, redid the experiment, replacing their dates with their cities of birth and death. Again significant results were found. There were numerous critiques of this work even so. However, it has been shown that all the critiques were based on significantly flawed control experiments or other errors. The evidence, overall, seems to have withstood all the attacks on it so far.

¹Vol. 9 ('94) No. 3. Professor Rips work has also appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, Vol. 151, Part I ('88), p 165. Prof. Rips was invited to give a guest lecture to the Israeli National Academy of Sciences on the subject (March '96).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: QUALITY OF LIFE

- i- The Secular Option**
- ii- The Jewish Option**

CHAPTER TWELVE- QUALITY OF LIFE

i – The Secular Option

The Quest for G-d, Paul Johnson:

"Atheism as a positive set of beliefs, including a code of moral behavior, has failed to flourish. ... Except for a small minority ... denial of G-d has no appeal. The vast majority is, and probably always will be, believers or agnostics. I suspect the reason why atheism has so little attraction is precisely our awareness of a desire in ourselves to do good. ... The conscience can never quite be killed. And because it exists and we know it exists, we are periodically driven to ponder – or half-ponder-the question – how did it get there? Who put it there? Darwinism may be everywhere the received wisdom and the process of natural selection may be unthinkingly accepted as scientific proof. But these scientific explanations cannot tell us why humanity became uniquely self-conscious. Nor can they explain why an ineradicable part of self-consciousness is precisely our conscience ... (pgs. 2-3)

"The most extraordinary thing about the 20C was the failure of G-d to die. The collapse of mass religious belief, especially among the educated and the prosperous, had been widely and confidently predicted. It did not take place. Somehow, G-d survived, flourished even. (pg. 6)

"(Marx, building on Hegel, stated that religion was a mere phase of history, destined to disappear with history. This was reinforced by scientific discovery.) In the 1820's and 1830's (when) the traditional chronology and historicity of the Old Testament were fatally undermined or so it seemed. (This was followed by the Darwinian revolution, and the replacement of Newtonian physics, which religious philosophers had reconciled with religion by quantum and Einsteinian physics.)

"(Yet, amazingly, it is) a notable fact of the 20C that, during it, science and religion ceased to be enemies. Looking back on them, the great rows between the clergy and scientists in the nineteenth century seem childish. ... Science, having once appeared to destroy the historicity of the Bible, now seems more likely, on the whole, to corroborate it. (pgs. 11-14)

"(Another factor leading to G-d is) the dreadful events of our century. The evil done in our times is beyond computation and almost beyond the imaginations of our forbears. There is nothing in the previous history of the world to compare with the scale and intensity of the two world wars ... More than 150 million people have been killed by state violence in our century.

"(The horrors of the 20C) were instrumental in turning men and women towards G-d rather than against Him. Most people saw the wars themselves as products of Godlessness, materialism and sin, and their perpetrators as those who had banished G-d from their hearts. And it is undeniable that the two great institutional tyrannies of the century – indeed of all time – the Nazi Reich and the Soviet Union were Godless constructs; modern paganism in the first case and openly proclaimed atheist materialism in the second. (pgs. 14-15)

"There is a third reason why belief in G-d has survived in the 20C. That is the total, and, in many cases, abject failure of the alternatives to G-d. ... (Often the humanists, those who denounced G-d and religion, did so with a fanaticism that makes one wonder.) For example, in 1764, ... Voltaire, their leader, wrote: "Theological religion is the enemy of mankind." Note: Not *an* enemy, but *the* enemy. There are many enemies of mankind today, many more than in Voltaire's time, I fear, but no one in his right senses would put "theological religion" high on his list. Or again, here is Winwood Reade, whose powerful tract *The Martyrdom of Man* was a bible to many atheists in the late nineteenth century: The destruction of Christianity is *essential* to the

interests of civilization. Note again the tone of extremism: not 'desirable' but 'essential'. Today our civilization, or what is left of it, seems far more fragile than in Reade's fortunate life-time, and were he to return to earth today I do not feel he would find a solitary soul, agnostic, atheist or anything else, who would agree that the destruction of Christianity is essential to keep civilization going. Quite the reverse. The vast majority see it as a prop, however feeble. (pg. 19)

"Other central propositions of the [humanist] faction ... seem equally ridiculous with the passage of time. ... The ones who appear the most absurd are precisely those who tried to apply the principles of contemporary science – the frontiers of knowledge – to explain the world in non-religious terms. The French lexicographer Emile Littré defined 'soul' as 'anatomically the sum of functions of the neck and spinal column, physiologically the sum of function of the perception of the brain'. ... The German follower of Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, by contrast, wrote: 'We know that ... the soul [is] a sum of plasma-movements in the ganglion cells.' In England, Professor John Tyndall thought 'all life' was 'once latent in a fiery cloud'. In France, the philosopher-historian Hippolyte Taine stated: 'Man is a spiritual automaton ... Vice and virtue are products like sugar and vitriol.' ... (pg. 20)

"It is now impossible to point to a single pronouncement of [the 20C humanist, H.G. Wells] one society in his own day, which carries the ring of truth or even mere plausibility. ... Bertrand Russell ... was perhaps the leading evangelist of anti-G-d rationalism in this century. ... The truth is, Russell could not devise a [humanist] alternative to G-d which convinced even himself for more than a few years; his secular faith was in a state of constant osmosis, like that of Auguste Comte, who occupied the same position of intellectual eminence in the mid-nineteenth century as Russell did in the twentieth and is now simply a joke, if a pathetic one. (pgs. 20-21)

"[Another leading humanist] Jean Paul Sartre ... bewildered even his intellectual followers, who were once numerous. ... The political writings of Sartre were immensely pernicious among the French-educated leaders of the Third World in Southeast Asia and North Africa. The genocidal leaders of the Pol Pot regime were in a sense Sartre's children. In general, however, the humanist impact was ephemeral and in many respects superficial. Millions read Wells and saw the plays of George Bernard Shaw, found them clever, were impressed for a time, then laughed, as the absurdities and misjudgments – and essential frivolity – of both became manifest, and went their ordinary humble ways as before. (22-23)

"Far more serious than all of this are the great movements of the 20C, Nazism and Communism. Both were clearly virulently anti-G-d initiatives and both heaped unprecedented destruction on the face of the earth. They remind us that alternative secular systems can and do kill:] whether the six million Jews slaughtered by Hitler, of the twenty million Russians done to death by Stalin, or Pol Pot's massacre of a third of the population of Kampuchea, or Mao's prodigious mass-slaughter on a scale we do not yet know [estimated figures of up to 40 million!] ... (pg. 31)

"Other 'secular religions' include race and sexual politics. Both] begin with a legitimate demand, and then proceed rapidly to request, indeed insist on, unwarranted privilege. (pg. 30)

There is, then, no alternative to G-d, so far as I can see- so far as our twentieth-century experience teaches us. (pg. 33)"

ii-The Jewish Option

"When this people is faithful to its God and its tradition, it produces an astonishingly high proportion of men and communities whose sense of inter-human responsibility is as great as anything mankind has ever known." (Eugene Borowitz)

"Judaism is relevant because it contributes to our goals - specifically to successful marriage, reduction in addictions and crime, universal literacy and meaningful life. (Dovid Gottlieb, summary)

Emanuel Feldman: For one thing, the Charedim have produced something which secular Israelis and their vaunted secular kibbutz movements have failed to produce: a committed, younger generation ready to carry on. Rabbi Schach's disciples are proud of their ability to replicate the ways of their fathers and grandfathers. In the teachings of their forbears they find truth, reality, meaning, ideals by which to live and for which to die.

See in detail, [Permission to Receive](#), Lawrence Kelemen

APPENDIX A: TRUTH

- i- i-Philosophy is incapable of deciding these issues**
- ii- What comprises scientific validation**
- iii- Different Types of Truth**
 - a- Empirical**
 - b- Rational**
- iv- Truth, Faith and Doubt**
- v- Judaism Encourages Questions**

Not every questions is legitimate, e.g.:

 - a- Questions presuming a certain answer and are really being made as a statement**
 - b- Post-graduate questions - i.e. require extensive background to provide context**
 - c- Unanswerable questions**
 - d- Questions inappropriate to a person's situation/level**
- vi- In Practice we Know Very Little**
 - a- Hoaxes prove our vulnerability to falsification**

APPENDIX A: TRUTH

The Right Question

There is a mistake which people commonly make about belief. They think that ‘a believing person’ is one that believes in G-d; whereas a non-believing person does not. The “atheist” defines himself as a “non-believer”, but this is an error.

As we shall see, the issue is not whether we are going to believe or not, but rather what any one of us is going to believe in. ¹ All of us, whether we claim to believe in G-d or not, have a complete series of unproven assumptions, principles, insights and the like without which we would not be able to function for a single day. For example, someone knocks on our door. Prior to even identifying the person at the other end of the door, prior to even having seen him/her we already have developed a huge amount of assumptions about the person. In a Charedi neighborhood in Jerusalem, for example, we are likely to open the door prior to identifying the person. Many simply ask the person to come in or send a kid to the door. This presumes that the person at the end of the door is “safe”, probably friendly, and that the situation does not require further precautions at this stage. A huge set of assumptions, beliefs if you will, have been made here.

Now consider someone who may have knocked on a door in the middle of Harlem. To exaggerate, your response is to pull out a submachine gun and shoot two rounds of bullets through the door and then open the door and see who was there.

In both cases the identity of the person on the other side of the door is not known. The response is based on a belief or on an assumption of who is on the other side. Such beliefs and assumptions about people in all societies, their motives and their attitudes are essential to human minimal functioning in the world. So too, we operate according to the thousands of other assumptions, beliefs and ideologies on a daily basis.

Issues of Religious Truth Cannot be Known With Certainty

i-Philosophy is incapable of deciding these issues

ספר הכוזרי מאמר א יב :
ואם תשאל הפילוסופים עליה אינך מוצא אותם מסכימים על מעשה אחד ועל דעת אחד

בין ששת לעשור (הרב שלמה וולבא) :
אפשר להוכיח כי $2+2=4$ בצורה מוכרחת. ... ראייה כזאת על מציאות הבורא – אין לנו. כל אלפי הראיות ... משאירות בידי האדם את הבחירה, להאמין או לא להאמין. אמונה נבנית בלב. (דף רצא)

There have been many attempts at proving religion by philosophy or by logic alone².

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However, this does not mean that it is open to everyone to believe what he pleases. All the “proofs” we brought above show that there are compelling rational, empirical and even sociological reasons for believing in the תורה. Although we can never exclude any other possibility with certainty, our faith ought to be a natural and rational extension of what we know. This is indeed the valid claim of the תורה. Otherwise, G-d would have put us in an impossible situation. He requires us to serve Him, yet he does not give us the mechanism of knowing what it is that He wants from us, or rather, the mechanism of choosing between the competing claims of what it is He wants from us.

ii-What comprises scientific validation

Asked to be scientific in our approach to acceptance - not asked to give more than given for completely accepted scientific claims.

One can never prove that this is the only possible explanation - one who demands this standard will know nothing, e.g. cannot know for sure who your parents are. Two hundred witnesses can all be lying

What is feasible: The best explanation for the facts at hand:

Doctor decides to operate;

How warmly one dresses

Similarly, cannot absolutely prove G-d (for example). Other explanations possible.

But, to be scientific, enough to show that G-d, the תורה = best explanation of world as we know it.

Always a leap of faith - must be a natural and rational extension of what we know.

Once we make our decision - total commitment: e.g. a decision to fight according to a certain plan.

אמונה - faithfulness to that belief.

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה: I have a perfect commitment/faithfulness to my belief. (If perfect faith, most of us would be transgressing one of the 13 principles.) אמונה שלמה therefore cannot mean perfect belief but rather belief with perfect commitment.

iii-Different Types of Truth

a-Empirical

Philosophy/logic alone can never decide what is true and what is not. Western philosophy is a history of contradictory ideas.

² Logical proof that there must be truth: You cannot deny the possibility of truth without contradiction: to say "There is no truth" means (if it means anything at all) that the statement in quotes is false, which means that there is truth. Likewise I cannot deny the existence of my ego, for that would be denying the existence of the denier - a subjective contradiction. (Descartes)(Hainz Pagels, the Dreams of Reason, pg. 28)

Where an empirical proof is claimed from the past, or, based on the past, is a claim for the future, then accuracy of the transmission becomes decisive – see in detail **Oral booklet** chapter on **Accuracy of מסורה**.

בית אלוקים שער ג פ"א :
הצד האחד שיספיק לנו האמונה בהם מצד הקבלה ... שא"א לנו לעמוד על החקירה בהם (i.e. rational analysis) אם היו או לא ... כמו תורה מן השמים, וביאת המשיח, ותחיית המתים (...ותשבע"פ)

Empiricism has its limits: "Research on problems of hearing is more advanced than research on the sense of smell, because it has proved difficult to fit odors into a mathematically controllable system. Yet no one suggests that perfumes are less "real" than melodies." (B. J. Bamberger)

b-Rational

בית אלוקים שער ג פ"א :
הצד השני... אותם שאפשר לעמוד על החקירה בהם, כמציאות הש"י ואחדותו והדומה להם... עד שיתאמת לו בחקירה מה שנתאמת לו במקובל... ואמר דוד לשלמה בנו דע את אלוקי אביך ועבדהו

Like empiricism, reason has its limits: "Reason will never lead us to revelation and therefore, the appearance of rational insignificance is no argument against revelation.... I do not engage in the futile task of re-interpreting revelation in order to rationalize it." (Eliezer Berkovits)

Somewhere at the core of his being, each man must make up his mind whether there is meaning and hope for life or not. Intellectuality alone cannot resolve so existential an issue. (Eugene Borovits in The Condition of Jewish Belief, pg. 34)

iv-Truth, Faith and Doubt

Some things cannot be fully verified neither rationally, philosophically nor empirically.

בית אלוקים שער ג פ"א :
הצד השלישי... שא"א לשכל האנושי לעמוד על אמיתתם ולהשיגם

This is where faith begins.

Faith - a rational extension of truth; otherwise can believe anything.

v-Judaism Encourages Questions

Not every questions is legitimate, e.g.:

a-Questions presuming a certain answer and are really being made as a statement.

There are usually legitimate reformulations of such questions:
e.g. Where was G-d during the holocaust/Where was G-d hiding during the holocaust.

b-Post-graduate questions - i.e. require extensive background to provide context.

e.g. "Where was G-d hiding during holocaust?" requires balancing question: "Where was man hiding during holocaust?"

e.g. "Why can't women be שליחי צבור?" requires context of women's role.

c-Unanswerable questions

בית אלוקים: The essence of G-d, His knowledge, why He created the world when He did.

d-Questions inappropriate to a person's situation/level

e.g. Could spend entire life-time researching different religions - still wouldn't complete the undertaking. Somebody who has already worked through basic questions should be moving on - otherwise no growth. Does not mean should not ever discuss fundamentals - but not as fundamental challenge to faith. Difference between you having question, and question having (gripping) you. (Rabbi Norman Lamm, Faith and Doubt)

vi-In Practice we Know Very Little

a-Hoaxes prove our vulnerability to falsification

*For centuries, the Vatican laid claim to much of Europe because of a preposterously forged papal document known as the Donation of Constantine.

*In 1015 renowned scientists declared the so-called Piltdown Man irrefutable evidence of the missing link between man and ape, even though it turned out to be a clumsy concoction made from the skull of an Australian aborigine and the jawbone of an orangutan.

*Hitler never wrote his diaries

*Howard Hughes never wrote his autobiography

*Half of the Dali prints on earth are fakes

(as reported in Los Angeles Times, Dec. 13 '96, pg. E3 - the article quoted many other examples)

APPENDIX B: READING LIST

APPENDIX B: READING LIST

PHILOSOPHICAL PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF G-D

John H. Hick, Philosophy of Religion (Foundations of Philosophy Series).

Paul Johnson, The Quest for God (Harper Perennial, 1996) – Sociological, personal, historical and philosophical insights into G-d and religion.

SINAI & -MIRACLES

Lawrence Kelemen, Permission to Receive

Yitzchak Coopersmith, The Eye of a Needle (Feldheim) pg. 43 63

Zechariah Fendel, Anvil of Sinai (Hashkafah Publications) chap iv.

PROPHECY

רמב"ם - Intro. to פירוש המשניות, first part

רמב"ם - משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי התורה, last 3 chaps.

Aryeh Kaplan, Handbook of Jewish Thought (Moznaim), chaps. 6& 8

PROPHECIES COME TRUE

Fascinating Torah Prophecies, Currently Unfolding by Rabbi Nissan Aryeh Novick – although this book has valuable information it is full of inaccuracies and fanciful translations. Therefore check all sources from this book.

CLAIMS OF OTHER RELIGIONS

רמב"ם - ספר הויכוח (in כתבי הרמב"ם, vol. 1)

רמב"ם - אגרת תימן

הלכה פסוק, רמב"ם, הלכות מלכים, last 1

Aryeh Kaplan, The Jewish Messiah

תשובות רד"ק לנוצרים (ליקוט מתוך פירושו על כמה מזמורים) מודפס בסוף ספר חסרונות הש"ס
אברבנאל - פרוש על ספר דניאל (אילת השחר) בכמה מקומות
שו"ת הרשב"א חלק ד תשובה קפז ביאור כמה פסוקים

For further info. contact Jews for Judaism

PROOFS

Discovery Booklet (Aish HaTorah)

Rabbi Gottlieb, Booklet on Historical Verification of the Torah (Also series of 5 tapes)

Rabbi Kelemen, Permission to Receive

PROPHECIES

ספר נבואה והשגחה ע-י ר' מאיר שמחה סוקולובסקי (Also appears in English)

ARCHEOLOGY

The Bible as History, Werner Keller, Bantam
Biblical Personalities and Archeology, Leah Bronner

CODES

One of the best debates on the validity of the codes appears in *Jewish Action* magazine, Spring 1998. Dr. Barry Simon critiques the codes and Doron Witztum, who together with professor Eliyahu Rips has worked most extensively on the codes, defends them as does Daniel Mechanic.

The additional Dimension (Hamemad Hanosaf), 1988, by Doron Witztum.

Also very good is torahcodes.co.il on the Web as well as Aish HaTorah's websight.

Codes appear in many books, including the Arachim and Discovery Books, and Rabbi Nisan Aryeh Novick's book, Fascinating Torah Prophecies. There is also a lively debate in two editions of Chabad's science journal, Be'or HaTorah. Some of the discussion has taken to the Web, see <http://cs.anu.edu.au/~bdm/dilugim/WNP>

<http://cs.anu.edu.au/~bdm/dilugim/torah.html>

For links to many sights talking on this subject see www.math.gatech.edu/~jkatz/Religions/Numerics which gives a full listing of sights including the claims and counter-claims being made by Christians, Moslems and others.

The best-selling book on the codes is the book by that name by Michael Drosnin. However, Orthodox proponents of the codes reject his book as being overly speculative and unscientific.

As of writing Doron Witztum is about to publish a book on the subject.

ORAL LAW, ACCURACY OF THE **מסורה & חכמים**

2, הקדמה לפירוש המשניות, הרמב"ם

Nathan T. Lopes Cardozo - The Infinite Chain, especially pg. 91 - 125 but also pg. 131 - 175 (Targum)

A. Kaplan - The Handbook of Jewish Thought, chap. 9, The Tradition (see also chap 10 - 13) (Moznaim)

Other:

Harry Schimmel - The Oral Law

Zechariah Fendel, Anvil of Sinai (Hashkafah Publications) -chaps. vii & viii

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