

IT'S ALL TRUE

by Rabbi Label Lam

And HASHEM said to Noach, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen as a righteous man before Me in this generation. (Breishis 7:1)

The Kuzari presents a fascinating question that may relate more directly to The Beginning of the world. The sun and the moon were neatly placed in the sky not just to function as luminaries. They serve another importance function for mankind. A day is measured by the movement of the sun across the sky. It is our primary clock. The length of a day and the time of the day can all be discerned by the position of the sun.

Now we move to the relationship between the moon and month. At night the moon does its dance like the blink of an eye, as it opens and shuts ever so subtly over the course of a 29 and ½ day period. From a crescent to full to another squinty eyed beginning we can reliably count and figure where in the cycle of the month we find ourselves.

Then we have the big guy, the year, with its consistent 365 and ¼ days. As we hurdle through space on our elliptical orbit at break neck speeds approaching 66,000 miles per hour we complete that journey and that finishes and starts another solar year. Down here on earth the angle of the sun as the summer solstice and the winter equinox indicate along with the seasonal changes what time of the year it is!

Now we can introduce the question of the Kuzari. Where do we find in the celestial calendar and clock a measurement that signals a seven day week? Why does the world keep a week? Maybe it's easier to explain why cultures whose strength is drawn from the Torah or the Bible or a book born from our traditions do this but what about those societies and civilizations that seem disconnected and distant from Torah. Why do people in India and China keep a seven day week?

Maybe the direction to find an answer can be found in a curious phenomenon having to do with Noach and the Ark and the great flood that swallowed up the world.

It's astonishing to note how many different cultures spread out across the globe have embedded in their historical memories a story of a great flood and the survival of a protagonist and his family.

Dr. Duane Gish says that there are more than 270 stories from different cultures around the world about a devastating flood. There are great similarities that several of these "myths" have with the Torah account of the great flood. Although there are varying degrees of accuracy, these cultural

legends and national stories all contain similarities to aspects of the same historical event. I can present a list- from the Inuit- Eskimos of Alaska, to the South Australia Wiranggu, to the Chingpaw of Upper Burma, to the Bhil of central India, to the Samoa of the South Pacific. The list is way too long and the accounts range the planet but the essential story is one.

This helps pave the way for appreciating the answer the Kuzari presents. Shabbos which followed the six days of creation was blessed from the very beginning. "And G-d blessed the seventh day and He hallowed it, for thereon He abstained from all His work that God created to do." (Breishis 2:3)

The concept of the Shabbos and the notion of a seven day week was not unknown until the Commandment to Keep it Holy was proclaimed on Mt. Sinai. There is a remnant of the origin of Shabbos and a historical cultural memory that persists. The mystical dimension is not to be ignored entirely. What G-d blessed remains so. Great lessons of history are not forgotten entirely. They only need to be dusted off and studied but from a reliable and truthful account.

Checking out of Walmart just last night, all I purchased was a blank notebook, a bound sketchpad without lines. I told the cashier half cynically that I wanted to have in my possession a book that every word in it is true. This kindly elderly lady with her name, "June" on her badge, chimed in profoundly, "Well there's always the Torah, that's surely true!" I had to admit that I couldn't agree more but as I strolled out I continued to wonder how she knew **it's all true**.