

I BELIEVE

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Our Patriarch Abraham Abinu a'h is known throughout the world as the father of monotheism, i.e. the one who went against the grain of accepted belief in his time and spread the word that there is only one creator. This is true but it is not the essential teaching of our great forefather. The fact of the matter is that in Abraham's time people knew that Hashem had created the world. Noah was born when Adam was 750 years old in 1948 from creation. People who lived in Adam's time knew about Hashem and creation.

Abraham was born when Noah was still alive and the Midrash reveals that they actually met and discussed creation. Everyone today knows that there was a World War 2 and many of us have heard first hand from a veteran or a participant's son or daughter about the worldwide conflict that took place in the last generation. That's the way things are - people who overlap lives know of the experiences and events of their predecessors.

If this is true- then how did people worship idols so soon after creation? Rambam explains that people felt that although Hashem did bring everything into being He then used ministers to run the day-to-day events of the world.

Some even believed that He left it to chance. They felt that an officer of the King deserved respect and started to pay homage to the Sun the Moon and all the other messengers of the Lord. Eventually they were misled into serving the servant and then even the image of that tool.

Abraham Abinu did not accept. He saw a palace called the Universe and saw the minute detail and complex interrelationship of all of its components. He knew that this system was being micromanaged by one power - Hashem. This was the message he started to spread throughout the inhabited areas of our planet. He taught that there is one creator who is in charge of everything and is the ONE BOSS - i.e. the one power.

How is it then that so many intelligent people and great thinkers throughout history deny these truths? Our sages explain that a person is controlled by his or her desires. These motivate a person to act and to think a certain way. Although one may think the truth is so clear in reality one is prejudiced by personal gain and personality flaws.

A great Rabbi had a student. The student left Yeshivah to earn a living and raise a family. Years later they met and the student revealed to his mentor that although he had succeeded to build a solid

financial base he had in the interim ceased to observe the commandments of the Torah. He no longer kept Shabbat or the laws of kosher food or anything for that matter. The Man asked his Rabbi to help by answering the questions that he had that caused him to stray off the path.

The Rabbi asked: "Did you have questions before you violated the Sabbath or was it afterwards?"

"It was after I began too live a non-observant life that the hard questions were raised", he replied honestly.

"Then I cannot answer your inquiries," replied the Rabbi.

"Why not - you know answers to everyone else's questions?"

"True! I can answer questions but yours are not questions they are excuses. I can't "answer" excuses."

We live in a time where there are so many things one cannot explain. Suffering and tragedy for good people. Success and pleasure for those who seem wicked. Natural disasters and acts of terrorism. What does it all mean?

Can there be a Creator managing such events? YES! We believe in the principle wholeheartedly. Acceptance of things as they are and feeling that they are for the best was implanted in our spiritual psyche by Abraham Abinu. It is his strength and vision that will guide us through the perplexing prelude to the final redemption. Amen.

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