

Mount Sinai's Astonishing Miracles

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This Monday is the 3333rd anniversary of the world's greatest event: God's revelation of Himself and His Bible to 2.5 million Jews at Mount Sinai. This event renders Judaism the only religion based on mass witnesses, and thereby the only proven religion.

This event contained a few unique elements: God created a voice emanating from fire, He gave two tablets of sapphire bearing miraculous text of the 10 Commandments, He caused earthquakes and the sound of a *Shofar*. Can we understand why God orchestrated Revelation in this precise form?

1. Why must Revelation include fire? This question is strengthened due to the fact that in Deuteronomy Moses reminds Israel that "God's voice emanated from inside the fire" *eight* times.

2. Why are tablets needed? Why can't those 10 Commands be written in Torah like all other 603 commands, and do away with the tablets? The need for these tablets is further seen, as after Moses breaks the tablets, God instructs him to hew a replacement set.

Exodus 32:15,16 reads as follows:

And Moses turned and went down from the mountain and the two Tablets of Testimony were in his hand, tablets written on both sides, from this side and that side they were written. The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing, embedded (Charuss) on the tablets.

3. What is the plain meaning of the tablets' script written "from both sides"? What purpose does this serve? Moses broke the tablets, as Rabbi Israel Chait said, lest the Jews worship them as they worshipped the Gold Calf. The tablets were significantly superior than other stones. How so?

4. What is meant by "God's tablets" and "God's writing"? The term "*Charuss*" (Ibid. 32:16) can be understood as Maimonides states, naturally formed letters, not subsequent engraving upon the tablets:

"The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing" (Exod. xxxii. 1:6), that is to say, they were the product of nature, not of art, for all natural things are called "the work of the Lord." The writing may also have been produced by His direct will, not by means of an instrument (Guide, book I, chap. lxvi).

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra offers no conclusive translation as he says Torah contains no other instance of "*Charuss*." Therefore, *Charuss* need not be translated as carved or incised, but merely as somehow "embedded." What is Maimonides' message that the writing was "natural"?

5. Earlier (Exod. 31:18) Torah says, *“When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the pact, stone tablets inscribed with the finger of God.”* Why does God divide the tablets’ description into two Torah sections?

Appreciating the details and hints about Sinai’s astonishing miracles, God’s precise Torah formulations direct us to the answers.

Fire: The Source of Torah is not Biological

In front of 2.5 million Jews, God created a voice to emanate from the fiery mountain. Maimonides says the Jews heard no distinct words, only the “sound” of words, following the verse, *“The Lord spoke to you out of the fire; you heard the sound of words but perceived no form—nothing but a voice”* (Deut. 4:12).

Life exists in all substances and regions, in ice, under sand, and in water. But all biological life perishes in fire. A voice emanating from fire teaches that this intelligence is not earthbound. But as Maimonides says the Jews heard no distinct words, only the “sound” of words, validation was yet required that Torah’s content was of a Divine source. The voice emanating from fire taught that God is not physical. But how was God’s communication verified?

Astonishing Tablets

Torah’s divine source is validated through miraculously formed Commands. “From both sides” doesn’t mean “etched” writing, for the Jews could have mistakenly believed that it was not God, but Moses who fabricated that writing, thereby stripping the tablets of their divine nature. And proof that this was possible for Moses, was that Moses hewed a second set of stones (Exod. 34:4). Certainly he could have scratched their surfaces.

Rather, “From both sides” means this: as sapphire is translucent, the internal sapphire grain is viewable from both sides, all angles. God selected a translucent object for this purpose. When these two bricks of sapphire formed during Creation (Avos 5:6), sentences also formed naturally inside the sapphire.

This is a feat impossible for Moses to have fabricated; there is no manner in which Moses could have written inside the stones. Only the one Who formed sapphire, also authored Torah text within the sapphire. These stone tablets must have been an amazing sight. It is akin to cutting a tree open to find the rings inside are composed of Torah text. The creator of trees is Torah’s author.

This means that the sapphire—Creation—is subordinated to Torah. That is, nature is harnessed to share Torah i.e. the physical world is subservient to Torah.

The message at Sinai is that Earth was designed for a goal: for man to find God through studying Torah and nature. The Rabbis teach, “God viewed Torah and created Earth.” Meaning, Torah is Earth’s

blueprint. Rashi on Avos 2:8 says that if the Jews don't follow Torah, God will reverse Creation back to non-existence.

Shofar

This sound cannot be produced naturally, but only by intelligent life. More certainly so, as the *Shofar* sound grew in strength: "The blare of the horn grew louder and louder" (Exod. 19:19) which man simply cannot do. When man blows a *Shofar*, his breath weakens until he must stop and inhale once again. Thus, this Shofar blare conveyed the presence of an Intelligence. This was further necessary as the Jews heard no distinct words. Therefore, it was necessary to convey the presence of intelligent life as the source of this event.

Similarly, "When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay My hand upon Egypt" (Exod. 7:4), Rashi comments: "A literal hand to smite them." God tells Moses that He will create a physical hand to smite the Egyptians, in addition to the 10 Plagues. Why? For Egypt might attribute the plagues to natural catastrophe. But seeing a hand smite them indicated intelligence behind the plagues: a hand does not function without a mind directing it.

Thereby they learned, that a "Will" disapproves of them, whereas natural catastrophe does not make Egypt feel victimized for their corrupt lifestyle. Again we read: "Just then, the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace opposite the lamp stand, so that the king (Belshatzar) could see the hand as it wrote" (Daniel 5:5). Belshatzar saw the fingers of the hand writing on the wall. He too required this lesson.

Alternatively, if we posit that the Jews did in fact recognize an Intelligence, explaining why they feared hearing the voice lest they die (Exod. 20:16), the *Shofar* also functions as an alert, generating awe of this great event. And as sound cannot be totally blocked out as vision can be (by closing one's eyes), sound was the appropriate stimuli to cause the people's attentiveness for the event's duration.

Earthquakes

This displays God's control over Earth as a whole.

Two Accounts of the Tablets

"When He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the pact, stone tablets..."

Here, the operative word is "finished." Yes, God finished speaking to Moses, but He did not wish this lesson to be finished. This explains why only here God mentioned the tablets "stone" nature. God selected stone as a means to encapsulate His commands in an eternal substance. His delivery to Moses was finished, but not His eternal lessons for man.

But the second account of the tablets does not mention stone at all. Rather, it highlights the tablets' miraculous nature. Why? As Moses was now descending Mt. Sinai to the idolatrous Jews, God highlights miracles, in contrast to the imagined deity of the Gold Calf. The tablets' miraculous nature was now relevant to contrast the inanimate Gold Calf and teaches a lesson about what to deify: God alone.

Sinai's lesson was now complete: Fire taught that God is not physical and that He is the Source of Torah. The miraculous stones and writing taught what exactly are His commands, and that they were not Moses own inscriptions, but were miraculous writing which only God could have created inside the translucent stones for all to see. And due to the lack of clear words, the *Shofar* sound eliminated any doubt of an intelligence; nature was thereby discounted as the cause of this event. Earthquakes showed God's complete control of the world.

God proved His supernatural existence, Torah's commands were validated as divine and the tablets "testified" as such, earning their title "Tablets of Testimony." Judaism was formed based on witnessing God and His commands. No other people or religion make this claim.

This Shavuot celebrates 3333 years since God gifted all mankind a system to direct our lives towards the most happiness and fulfillment, in pursuit of God via His wisdom shared in His Torah. God orchestrated Revelation on Mt. Sinai to serve as everlasting validation of His Existence and as the Source for Torah, the Bible.