

Book 1 – The Book of Knowledge; Laws of Foreign/Strange Worship, Chapter 1

Halacha 1

During the times of Enosh, mankind made a great mistake, and the wise men of that generation gave thoughtless counsel. Enosh himself was one of those who erred.

Their mistake was as follows: They said God created stars and spheres with which to control the world. He placed them on high and treated them with honor, making them servants who minister before Him. Accordingly, it is fitting to praise and glorify them and to treat them with honor. [They perceived] this to be the will of God, blessed be He, that they magnify and honor those whom He magnified and honored, just as a king desires that the servants who stand before him be honored. Indeed, doing so is an expression of honor to the king.

After conceiving of this notion, they began to construct temples to the stars and offer sacrifices to them. They would praise and glorify them with words, and prostrate themselves before them, because by doing so, they would - according to their false conception - be fulfilling the will of God.

This was the essence of the worship of false gods, and this was the rationale of those who worshiped them. They would not say that there is no other god except for this star.

This message was conveyed by Jeremiah, who declared (10:7-8): "Who will not fear You, King of the nations, for to You it is fitting. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You. They have one foolish and senseless [notion. They conceive of their] empty teachings as wood;" i.e., all know that You alone are God. Their foolish error consists of conceiving of this emptiness as Your will.

Halacha 2

After many years passed, there arose people - false prophets - who told [their nations] that God had commanded them to say: Serve this star - or all the stars - sacrifice to it, offer libations to it, build a temple for it and make an image of it so that all people - including the women, the children, and the common people - could bow to it.

He would inform them of a form that he had conceived, and tell them that this is the image of the particular star, claiming that this was revealed to him in a prophetic vision. In this manner, the people began to make images in temples, under trees, and on the tops of mountains and hills. People would gather together and bow down to them and the [false prophets] would say: This image is the source of benefit or harm. It is appropriate to serve it and fear it. Their priests would tell them: This service will enable you to multiply and be successful. Do this and this, or do not do this or this.

Subsequently, other deceivers arose and declared that a specific star, sphere, or angel had spoken to them and commanded them: Serve me in this manner. He would then relate a mode of service [telling them:] Do this, do not do this.

1] taken from www.Chabad.org (with slight modification); text © Moznayim Publications

Thus, these practices spread throughout the world. People would serve images with strange practices - one more distorted than the other - offer sacrifices to them, and bow down to them. As the years passed, [God's] glorious and awesome name was forgotten by the entire population. [It was no longer part of] their speech or thought, and they no longer knew Him. Thus, all the common people, the women, and the children would know only the image of wood or stone and the temples of stone to which they were trained from their childhood to bow down and serve, and in whose name they swore.

The wise men among them would think that there is no God other than the stars and spheres for whose sake, and in resemblance of which, they had made these images. The Eternal Rock was not recognized or known by anyone in the world, with the exception of a [few] individuals: for example, Chanoch, Metushelach, Noach, Shem, and Ever. The world continued in this fashion until the pillar of the world - the Patriarch Abraham - was born.

Halacha 3

After this mighty man was weaned, he began to explore and think. Though he was a child, he began to think [incessantly] throughout the day and night, wondering: How is it possible for the sphere to constantly be in a state of conduct without anyone conducting it? Who is causing it to revolve? For surely it does not cause itself to revolve.

He had no teacher, nor was there anyone to inform him. Rather, he was mired in Ur Kasdim among the foolish idolaters. His father, mother, and all the people [around him] were idol worshipers, and he would worship with them. [However,] his heart was exploring and [gaining] understanding.

Ultimately, he appreciated the way of truth and understood the path of righteousness through his accurate comprehension. He realized that there was one God who controlled the sphere, that He created everything, and that there is no other God among all the other entities. He knew that the entire world was making a mistake. What caused them to err was their service of the stars and images, which made them lose awareness of the truth.

Abraham was forty years old when he became aware of his Creator. When he recognized and knew Him, he began to formulate replies to the inhabitants of Ur Kasdim and debate with them, telling them that they were not following a proper path.

He broke the idols and began to teach the people that it is fitting to serve only the God of the world. To Him it is fitting to bow down, sacrifice, and offer libations, so that the people of future [generations] would recognize Him. [Conversely,] it is fitting to destroy and break all the images, lest all the people err by means of them, like those people who thought that there are no other gods besides these [images].

When he overcame them through the strength of his arguments, the king desired to kill him. He was [saved through] a miracle and left for Charan. [There,] he began to call in a loud voice to all

people and inform them that there is one God in the entire world and it is proper to serve Him. He would go out and call to the people, gathering them in city after city and kingdom after kingdom, until he came to the land of Canaan - proclaiming [God's existence the entire time] - as [[Genesis 21:33](#)] states: "And He called there in the name of the Lord, the eternal God."

When the people would gather around him and ask him about his statements, he would explain [them] to each one of them according to that individual's understanding, until that individual turned to the path of truth. Ultimately, thousands and myriads gathered around him. These are the 'men of the house of Abraham'.

He planted in their hearts this great fundamental principle, composed texts about it, and taught it to Isaac, his son. Isaac also taught others and turned [their hearts to God]. He also taught Jacob and appointed him as a teacher.

[Jacob] taught others and turned [the hearts] of all those who gathered around him [to God]. He also taught all of his children. He selected Levi and appointed him as the leader. He established him [as the head of] the academy to teach them the way of God and observe the mitzvot of Abraham.

[Jacob] commanded his sons that the leadership should not depart from the descendants of Levi, so that the teachings would not be forgotten. This concept proceeded and gathered strength among the descendants of Jacob and those who collected around them, until there became a nation within the world which knew God.

When the Jews extended their stay in Egypt, however, they learned from the [Egyptians'] deeds and began false worship, as they did, with the exception of the tribe of Levi, who clung to the commandments of the patriarchs. The tribe of Levi never engaged in false worship.

Within a short time, the fundamental principle that Abraham had planted would have been uprooted, and the descendants of Jacob would have returned to the errors of the world and their crookedness. Because of God's love for us, and to uphold the oath He made to Abraham, our patriarch, He brought forth Moses, our teacher, the master of all prophets, and sent him [to redeem the Jews]. After Moses, our teacher, prophesied, and God chose Israel as His inheritance, He crowned them with commandments and informed them of the path to serve Him, [teaching them] the judgement prescribed for false worship and all those who stray after it.

Book 3 – Book of Seasons, Laws of the Megillah & Hanukkah, Chapter 5

Halacha 1

In [the era of] the Second Temple, when the Greek kingdom issued decrees against the Jewish people, [attempting to] nullify their faith and refusing to allow them to observe the Torah and its commandments, extending their hands against their property and their daughters, and they entered the Sanctuary, wrought havoc within, and made the sacraments impure, the Jews suffered great difficulties from them – for they oppressed them greatly – until the God of our

ancestors had mercy upon them, delivered them from their hand, and saved them. The sons of the Hasmonians, the High Priests, overcame [them], slew them, and saved the Jews from their hand. They appointed a king from the priests, and sovereignty returned to Israel for more than 200 years, until the destruction of the Second Temple.

Book 14 – The Book of Judges; Laws of Kings and their Wars, & the Messianic King, Chapter 12

Halacha 4

It is not in order to have dominion over the entire world, to rule over the gentiles, to be exalted by the nations, or to eat, drink, and be merry that the Sages and the prophets yearned for the Messianic era. Rather, it is in order to be free to involve themselves in Torah and wisdom without any pressures or disturbances, so that they would merit the world to come, as explained in *the Laws on Repentance*.

Halacha 5

In that era, there will be neither famine nor war, envy or competition for good will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God.

Therefore, the People of Israel will be great sages and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator according to the potential of a human, as [Isaiah 11:9](#) states: "The world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the water covers the sea."

Access to correct knowledge: great individuals (cf. Hayy ibn Yaqzan) & the masses;

Legislating knowledge, not just actions;

Polis / Governance