

## Rabbi's Article II

### A Jew's Shabbat

G-d made a covenant with Noah (-[Link](#)) that (-Genesis 8:22), "So long as the earth exists, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease," upon which Rashi (-[Link](#)) comments, "All these shall not cease to perform." And as such, Rashi understands the Talmudic extrapolation of this verse, ruling (-Sanhedrin 58b), "Reish Lokish (-[Link](#)) says, A gentile who observed Shabbat is liable (to receive the) death (penalty), as it is stated, 'And day and night shall not cease.' ...Ravina (-[Link](#)) says, 'even (one not set aside for religious worship, e.g.,) on a Monday, (he is liable).'" And Rashi explains Reish Lokish's ruling as, "And they addressed the 'not cease,' also concerning the work of human beings." and Ravina's as, "not only concerning an obligatory day set aside by religion, but rather, a day of rest of work is forbidden to him."

Maimonides (-Laws of Kings, Chapter 10, Law 9) defines this prohibition as, "If a gentile... makes a Sabbath, or creates a religious practice," meaning that the prohibition of a gentile keeping Shabbat is concerning a gentile not creating religious practices, and hence not of, "a day of rest of work is forbidden to him." While the Midrash (-Shemot Rabba 25:11), which extrapolates this law upon the verse (-Exodus 16:29), "See that G-d has given you (Israel) the Shabbat:" "From here we say, if a gentile heeds the Shabbat, not only that he does not receive a reward, but is punishable by death, for it is stated, 'day and night shall not cease,' and so too (concerning the Sabbath) it states (-Exodus 31:17), 'Between me and the children of Israel.'" So, on the one hand, the Midrash doesn't agree with Rashi concerning, "a day of rest of work is forbidden to him," while on the other hand, it also differs from Maimonides' opinion that the prohibition is only about, "not creating religious practices," but is rather speaking specifically of Shabbat being, "Between me and the children of Israel."

Now, according to Maimonides, what is the connection between the prohibition of, "not creating religious practices," and the verse, "shall not cease"? And according to the Midrash, why would a gentile be punishable by death for observing the Shabbat, when Shabbat is all about (-Chinuch Mitzvah Asei 31), "in order to instill within our souls faith in the creation of the world"?! Is this not good, or even obligatory, for a gentile as well?!

Our sages teach us (-Rashi & Nachmanides, Genesis 1:1), "(G-d created the world) for the sake of the Torah," and G-d's giving us the Torah is all about, "a unification between the 'upper' and the 'lower.'" At first there was G-d's decree that the, "'upper' not descend to the 'lower,' and that the 'lower' not ascend to the upper," However, G-d then wanted us through the observance of physical mitzvot, to unify the 'upper' with the 'lower.' Therefore, G-d created the universe with there being an 'upper' and a 'lower.' However, within the existence of the 'lower,' there is a difference in how it existed pre-Flood and post-Flood. And to understand this, let us explore the NEW natural phenomenon that began after the Flood (-[Link](#)): the Rainbow. Seemingly, the rainbow is a simple phenomena of nature, in which sunlight reflects off the clouds in a specific way, splitting all the colors within the seemingly colorless sunlight. Hence, how can it be (-Genesis 9:13), "My rainbow I have placed in the cloud (now after the Flood), and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Myself and the earth?!" The explanation is, that while there were clouds and sunlight before the Flood, nevertheless, the physicality ('lower') of the world was too coarse to have absorbed and reflected the sunlight. Rather, it was only through the purging and the refinement of the world that came about through the Flood that now allowed for this phenomenon, hence, created the new phenomena of a rainbow. And this is precisely why the rainbow serves as the covenant to G-d's, "and there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth," being the sign of the world's refinement.

In clearer words: Originally, the world was created and existed only in the state of G-d's creating the world as, "in its fullness was created." However, the world ('lower') of its own was not capable of attaining a state of refinement and elevation. It was only through the Flood's --which serves as a mikva (-[Link](#)) into which the world was immersed-- purifying the world, that the world ('lower') now had a new nature, in which it can refine itself. And this is the 'sign' of the rainbow, in which the colorless Light shining from Above ('upper') can now be absorbed, and even reflected as a higher and more beautiful rainbow of Light! Therefore, originally, --when the world was only of G-d's creating the world, "in its fullness was created,"-- once the world was corrupted and, "became full of robbery," there was nothing the world could do to avert the decree of, "I will blot out man." However, after the Flood, when the world now has the power to refine itself, G-d made with it the covenant of, "shall not cease."

And with this we can understand the dichotomy of the Flood's impact on the world. On the one hand, before the Flood, mankind was stronger, with great longevity, for the world existed solely on the Great Kindness of G-d's, "in its fullness was created." While, on the other hand, only through the Flood's refinement of the world, was the world now able to absorb G-d's Light of (-Malachi 3:6), "For I, G-d, have not changed," and enter into the covenant of, "shall not cease," while simultaneously --with the world's now existing in a state of, "of its own" (attaining a state of refinement and elevation),-- the world's ("of its own") limitations upon longevity, caused mankind to live shorter lives.

The ultimate, "unification between the 'upper' and the 'lower,'" happens through Shabbat. Meaning, that the verse states (-Genesis 2:1), "And G-d completed on the seventh day His work," which means (-Rashi), "What was the world lacking? Rest. The Shabbat came, and so came rest. The work was (now) completed and finished." However, the world, "of its own," --defined as a "something," within the realm of "being-ness"-- is not a vessel for the state of rest, cease and the non-being-ness of Shabbat. It is specifically the Jew, to who the Torah --and its mission of unification of 'upper (not-being-ness)' and 'lower (being-ness)'-- was given, who can physically internalize this Shabbat dimension of non-being-ness. However, a gentile who observes Shabbat's non-being-ness is denying his very existence of being-ness, of his, "shall not cease."