



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem



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Sarah Ross < sross2@gl.umbc.edu > wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
What is the Torah view on the possibility of life on other planets?

Dear Sarah,

Rabbi Chasdai Crescas (14th century) writes that nothing in the Torah outlook precludes the existence of life on other worlds. The verse "Your Kingdom is one which encompasses **all worlds**..." (Psalms 145:13)" implies the existence of more than one world. According to the Talmud there are 18,000 (at least!). The existence of these other worlds and the fact that they rely on Divine Providence make it reasonable to assume that life does exist there!



The *Sefer Habrit* states that extraterrestrial creatures exist but that they have no free will. He adds that we shouldn't expect creatures from another world to resemble earthly life, any more than sea creatures resemble land animals.

Now you might ask, what possible purpose could there be for the existence of 'Martians' who possess no free will? This problem prompted Rabbi Yosef Albo (author of *Sefer Ikkarim*) to view their existence as illogical.

However, a possible purpose for their existence can be found in the work *Tikunei Zohar*, which states that in the future each *tzaddik* (righteous person) will rule over a star and have an entire world to himself. This world with its entire population would serve to enhance the *tzaddik's* spiritual growth.

Sources:

- *The Aryeh Kaplan Reader*

Josh Zana < ai181@lafn.org > wrote:

I am a 9th grade student at Yeshiva University of L.A. High School. We were learning *Shulchan Aruch 108* and had the following question: If someone forgot to daven *Shachrit* [pray the morning services] and was not able to make it up at *Mincha* [afternoon service], is it advisable to daven as a *nedava* [voluntary prayer of the '18 blessings' of the 'shmone esrei'] during *Maariv* [evening services]? One reason to do this is so that you make up your davening; a reason against is that since we don't have such good *Kavanah* [concentration], it's like we're giving a bad present to Hashem. My Rabbi asked me to ask you this.

Thank you,
Josh Zana, North Hollywood CA

Dear Josh,

I asked Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, *shlita*, and he said that in such a situation you may pray a '*nedava*' provided you are '*mechadesh*' -- meaning that you introduce some fresh idea into the prayer. However, Rabbi Scheinberg's advice is to wait till the next morning, ask the person leading the service to 'have you in mind', and listen carefully during the repetition of the '*shmone esrei*' with intention to make up the missed prayer.

Sources:

- See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 108:5*

Yiddle Riddle:

There is a day in the Jewish Calendar when some years we say Hallel and other years we say *Tachanun*. Which day is it?

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