



RABBI NECHEMIA COOPERSMITH

MEDIA GIANT, AUTHOR, TRUTH SEEKER

As a teenager in Toronto, Nechemia Coopersmith was a truth-seeker. His search led him to Jerusalem, Israel, where he met Rabbi Noah Weinberg, dean and founder of Aish HaTorah, and submerged himself in the world of Torah learning and activism.

Nechemia became an educator in formal and informal education and outreach. When the Internet era dawned, he realized its immense potential to reach masses of Jews worldwide on a scale never before possible.

After assembling a small team and securing seed money from a Los Angeles philanthropist, Nechemia spearheaded the creation of Aish.com, which has become one of the most popular Jewish-content websites. Today Aish.com services over one million visitors each month, and Nechemia has plans to bring this "lean and efficient" media staple to the next level.

In addition to being the chief editor of Aish.com, Rabbi Coopersmith is the author of *Shmooze: A Guide to Thought-Provoking Discussion on Essential Jewish Issues* – a must-have little book for anyone who loves a good question, and the co-author of Rabbi Noah Weinberg's *48 Ways to Wisdom* and *Wisdom for Living: Rabbi Noah Weinberg on the Parsha*. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife and children.

Morality and God

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Imagine a food that could taste like whatever you want. It could be chocolate one minute, lasagna the next. Taste is relative to the eater.

Manna had this quality. Want daiquiri ice? Voila. Steak with portobello mushrooms? You're good to go.

One evening, you overhear a ferocious argument.

"What are you arguing about?" you ask.

Jake says, "Sarah thinks the manna tastes like strawberries. She's wrong! It tastes like a hamburger!"

"Both of you are wrong!" Zach yells. "It tastes like a Budweiser."

You can't believe what you're hearing.

"Guys, manna can simultaneously taste like all of those flavors since it has no objective taste. None of you is right – or wrong. It's a matter of personal preference."

Many profess to believe that there is no single objective standard of right and wrong. After all, societies have different views about what is right and wrong. People have divergent views on abortion, gender issues, religion, and politics.

Let's define moral relativity. Like manna that has no objective taste, good and evil are subjective; each individual creates his or her own standard based on his or her personal tastes. The Aztecs performed child sacrifice; the Hindu widow was burned alive on her dead husband's pyre; the Papuan enjoyed feasting on human flesh. These might not be your cup of tea, but different strokes for different folks. If no objective standard of morality exists, you can't label someone's preference as *wrong*; the most you could say is that you don't like it. I think olives are disgusting, but evil? Immoral?

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ven though many say they believe morality is relative, the vast majority don't truly believe it, nor do they live their lives in concert with that belief.

How can we see that?

By the fact that most people vociferously and passionately argue over moral issues. If morality is relative, what are they arguing about? There is no right or wrong! It's whatever each person desires it to be.

Heated exchanges or moral outrage do not stem from mere distaste; their proponents believe that their position is *right* and that the other person is absolutely wrong.

Moral relativism posits the *creation* of morality based on one's preferences. Objective morality posits that the standard exists independently from us; we are responsible for *discerning* it. Those are two very different things. It's rare to find a consistent moral relativist.

What makes something true, as opposed to merely in vogue, is its permanence. Murdering an innocent child isn't just wrong for now, with the possibility of it becoming "right" in the future. It's *absolutely* immoral, meaning unchangeable, *cannot* change.

But everything undergoes change.

Since everything finite is bounded by time, everything is constantly changing, getting older, eroding. Only an Infinite Being who exists beyond time is absolute and unchangeable. Thus the vast majority of people believe that there is some objective standard of morality. They might not realize it, but they believe that an Infinite Being, who is beyond time and impervious to change, exists.