



MARVELOUS, MIGHTY, MIRACULOUS & MERCIFUL

THE NATURE OF
GOD REVEALED



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Written by
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Introduction

Throughout the Scriptures, we see our God as a God of wonders—performing marvelous, mighty, and miraculous deeds, all while extending His mercy towards His people. This sermon booklet explores these themes in both the Old and New Testaments, delving into the Hebrew meanings of these terms and their significance in biblical narratives. We will also draw upon the insights of ancient rabbis and sages, enriching our understanding of God’s nature and His interactions with humanity.

1. Marvelous, Mighty, and Miraculous Deeds

A. Marvelous Things in the Old Testament

Hebrew Word for Marvelous:

- Pele (פֶּלֶא) - meaning “wonder,” “miracle,” or “marvelous deed.”

Examples of Marvelous Deeds:

1. The Parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-22)

The parting of the Red Sea is one of the most iconic examples of God’s marvelous power. The Midrash teaches that the sea did not part until Moses stepped into the water, illustrating the need for faith and

action before divine intervention occurs. This act was not just a demonstration of power; it symbolized salvation and deliverance for the Israelites.

2. Manna from Heaven (Exodus 16:14-15) Manna, described as “bread from heaven,” served not only as sustenance but as a daily reminder of God’s provision. The sages comment on the significance of the manna being given daily, teaching the Israelites reliance on God for their needs and the importance of gratitude.

3. The Walls of Jericho Falling (Joshua 6:20) The fall of Jericho’s walls after the Israelites marched around them for seven days exemplifies God’s ability to deliver victory through seemingly foolish means. The Talmud emphasizes that the act of faith and obedience, rather than military might, led to this miraculous victory.

4. The Sun Standing Still (Joshua 10:12-14) The request for the sun to stand still during battle illustrates God’s authority over creation. This event is often discussed in rabbinic literature as a demonstration of God’s willingness to intervene in human affairs when His people are faithful.

B. Mighty Things He Did

Hebrew Word for Mighty:

- Gibbor (גִּבּוֹר) - meaning “mighty one,” “warrior,” or “strong.”

Examples of Mighty Deeds:

1. David Defeating Goliath (1 Samuel 17) This story highlights not just David’s physical might but his faith in God. The sages point out that David’s victory was not solely due to his skill but his trust in God, showcasing that true might comes from reliance on the Almighty.

2. The Conquest of Canaan (Joshua 10) The conquest illustrates the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel. The rabbinic commentary often reflects on how God fought for Israel, emphasizing that their victories were signs of His might and faithfulness to His covenant.

3. God’s Deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 3:19-20) God’s mighty hand in delivering Israel from slavery is a central theme in Jewish thought. The sages often reflect on the significance of the plagues as both judgment against Egypt and a demonstration of God’s power, culminating in the liberation of His people.

C. Miraculous Things

Hebrew Word for Miraculous:

- Niphla'ot (נִפְלְאוֹת) - meaning “wonders” or “miracles.”

Examples of Miraculous Deeds:

1. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-39) Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal is a powerful testament to God's sovereignty. The sages note that God's miraculous fire consuming the sacrifice was a call for Israel to return to true worship, emphasizing that miracles often serve a greater purpose in calling people back to God.

2. Elisha Healing Naaman (2 Kings 5) Naaman's healing through the simple act of washing in the Jordan River illustrates the miraculous nature of God's healing power. Rabbinic commentary often highlights the humility required to accept God's methods, showing that miracles can come through unexpected channels.

3. The Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3:19-30) The deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is a profound example of God's miraculous protection. The sages teach that their faith in God amidst persecution is a lesson in unwavering trust, demonstrating that God's presence can turn the flames of trial into a testimony of His power.

D. Merciful

Hebrew Word for Mercy:

- Chesed (חֶסֶד) - meaning “loving-kindness,” “mercy,” or “faithfulness.”

Examples of God’s Mercy:

1. The Forgiveness of David (2 Samuel 12) After David’s sin with Bathsheba, God’s merciful response through the prophet Nathan illustrates the depth of God’s grace. The sages discuss this story as a reminder that true repentance leads to restoration, emphasizing the importance of God’s mercy in the process of reconciliation.
2. God’s Compassion on Israel (Lamentations 3:22-23) This passage emphasizes God’s steadfast love and mercy, which are renewed every morning. Rabbinic commentary highlights that even amidst judgment, God’s mercy prevails, offering hope to His people.
3. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) This parable encapsulates the essence of divine mercy. The father’s unconditional love for his wayward son illustrates God’s readiness to forgive and embrace those who return to Him. The rabbinic interpretation often focuses on the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, showcasing the depth of God’s mercy.

2. The Mighty Things He Did

Throughout the Old Testament, God displayed His might through acts of creation, deliverance, and judgment. The stories of the plagues in Egypt, the strength of Samson, and the victories of King David all illustrate God's might in action.

Key Biblical Stories:

1. Creation (Genesis 1) The very act of creation demonstrates God's ultimate power over nothingness. The sages reflect on how God created the world with intention, establishing order from chaos, which serves as a foundation for understanding His might in our lives.

2. The Flood (Genesis 6-9) The flood narrative highlights God's judgment and mercy. The Talmud discusses the balance between divine justice and mercy, showing that God's might is also expressed in His desire for repentance and restoration.

3. The Ten Plagues (Exodus 7-12) Each plague is a demonstration of God's might against the gods of Egypt, emphasizing His supremacy. Rabbinic commentary often notes the progressive nature of the plagues, illustrating how God patiently called Pharaoh to repentance.

4. The Conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6) The miraculous fall of Jericho's walls teaches us about the power of faith and obedience. The sages emphasize that God's

might is often revealed through the faithful actions of His people.

3. The Miraculous

Miraculous acts are often signs of God's presence and power. They serve to confirm His word and demonstrate His authority over the natural world.

Key Biblical Stories:

1. Jesus Turns Water into Wine (John 2:1-11) This first miracle of Jesus at the wedding in Cana reveals the transformative power of Christ. The rabbinic perspective highlights that Jesus' miracles were signs pointing to His identity as the Messiah, fulfilling the prophetic hopes of Israel.

2. Healing of the Blind Man (John 9) The healing of the blind man not only restores physical sight but also symbolizes spiritual enlightenment. The sages teach that Jesus' miracles often carried deeper meanings, inviting people to see beyond the physical.

3. The Resurrection of Lazarus (John 11) Lazarus' resurrection is a profound demonstration of Jesus' authority over death. Rabbinic commentary often explores the themes of hope and resurrection, emphasizing that this miracle foreshadows Christ's own resurrection and the promise of eternal life.

4. Merciful

The theme of mercy runs throughout the Bible, showcasing God's compassion and willingness to forgive. The stories of redemption and restoration highlight His loving-kindness.

Key Biblical Stories:

1. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) This parable teaches the importance of mercy and compassion, transcending cultural boundaries. Rabbinic teachings emphasize that true love for one's neighbor is a reflection of God's mercy towards us.
2. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11) Jesus' response to the woman caught in sin illustrates the balance of justice and mercy. The sages note that mercy does not ignore sin but offers redemption, inviting transformation rather than condemnation.
3. God's Promise to Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-34) God's covenant promise of a new heart and a new spirit reflects His merciful nature. The rabbinic interpretation often highlights the transformative power of God's mercy, which enables His people to live in accordance with His will.

Metaphorical and Poetic Meanings

A. Metaphorical Meanings

- **Marvelous:** Represents God's ability to transcend human understanding; it's the divine fingerprint on creation and history.
- **Mighty:** Symbolizes strength that overcomes obstacles; it's the assurance that God's power is greater than any challenge we face.
- **Miraculous:** Indicates divine intervention in human affairs; it's the reminder that God can change our circumstances in ways we cannot foresee.
- **Merciful:** Reflects the depth of God's love and grace; it's the invitation to experience His compassion and forgiveness.

B. Poetic Meanings

- **Marvelous:** "A tapestry of divine wonders woven into the fabric of history, where each thread tells a story of grace."
- **Mighty:** "A fortress of strength that shields the weary soul, standing firm against the storms of life."
- **Miraculous:** "The breath of God that transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary, revealing His glory in our midst."
- **Merciful:** "A river of grace that flows endlessly to the broken-hearted, washing away shame and restoring hope."

Fables and Tales

In addition to biblical narratives, many fables and tales throughout history illustrate these themes:

- The Tale of the Good Samaritan teaches the importance of mercy and compassion, transcending societal barriers.
- The Story of Hercules reflects the struggle against overwhelming odds, symbolizing might and the human spirit's resilience.
- The Legend of King Solomon embodies wisdom and the miraculous judgment of God, illustrating the importance of discernment and mercy in leadership.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the marvelous, mighty, miraculous, and merciful acts of God, let us remember that these stories are not just historical accounts but living testimonies of His character. They invite us into a deeper relationship with Him, encouraging us to trust in His power and mercy in our lives today. May we, like the faithful of old, be transformed by the understanding of His nature, living out His marvelous deeds in our own lives.