



Meru Foundation eTORUS Newsletter

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From The Editor

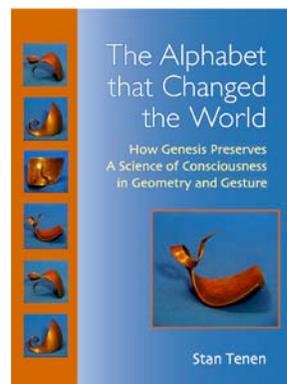


Spring 2011

East Coast: Levanah and Stan Tenen
West Coast: Bill Haber

Update on *The Alphabet That Changed the World*

Our forthcoming book, *The Alphabet That Changed the World: How Genesis Preserves a Science of Consciousness in Geometry and Gesture*, is now in the final stages of production. Due to a scheduling backup at our publisher, the release date is now July 5, 2011. We apologize for the delay, particularly to those who have already pre-ordered; but this date is firm, as our book is now at the printer. You can still pre-order the book via amazon.com; please pre-order through Meru Foundation's amazon portal at www.tatctw.com, which sends a small percentage of your purchase price to Meru Foundation. (If you enter amazon.com through this portal, amazon will send a percentage of any item you purchase on that visit, including electronics; for instructions on making sure your purchase will count, scroll to the bottom of www.tatctw.com, or **click here**.)



Meru Foundation Needs Your Support

For the past two years, Stan and I have been focused almost exclusively on producing *The Alphabet That Changed the World*. During this time our long-term contributors have kept Meru going while we researched, organized, and wrote. I believe, and hope, that those of you who have supported us while we produced *The Alphabet That Changed the World* will take pride in your contribution to this book, particularly once it is released and you have the opportunity to read it for yourself.

Now that our book is finished, we are reaching out to new communities of supporters, including our eTORUS readers. Meru Foundation's work is ground-breaking, potentially world-changing—and unique. There is no other organization or institution researching traditional Jewish material in the way you have seen in these pages, and no other organization or institution funds this work. Our ability to continue to research, to write, and be productive depends on others who recognize the value in what we do. Your contributions to Meru Foundation (tax-deductible in the US) and your purchases and gifts of our DVDs and books are this work's only support system, and now – when our book is finished, but outreach has not yet begun to bear fruit – our need for support from our readers is vital, and your gifts greatly appreciated. To contribute to Meru Foundation by PayPal, **click here**. To use your credit card, **click here**. Thank you very much for your belief in the value of this work, and for your support.

Be assured that even during long intervals when our newsletters have been scarce—such as the past two years, while writing our book—our work is ongoing, and our results will be made public when they're ready. And we welcome your questions and your comments at any time; please email them to us at meru@meru.org, and mention that you're an eTORUS reader.

—Levanah Tenen, ed.



Essay by Stan Tenen: Excerpt from *The Alphabet that Changed the World*

In our last issue, we previewed an excerpt from the Introduction to *The Alphabet that Changed the World*. This issue, we are sharing the complete *Author's Preface*, which explains our purpose and hopes for bringing this book to the public.

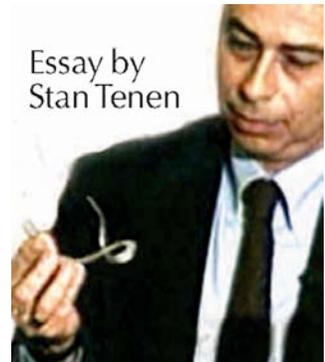
The Alphabet That Changed the World: Author's Preface

As recently as a hundred years ago, the idea that the human race belonged to a single world was but a fantasy in the minds of a few dreamers. Powerful empires competed with each other across vast terrestrial and maritime regions, but still vaster territories remained inhabited by tribal peoples, still to be integrated into a global system. By the end of the Second World War, however, in the United Nations we began to realize the dream that all of humanity might ultimately be united in a single world.

In 2011, for better or worse (and it is easy to make a case for “worse”) the idea that the earth comprises a single system is no longer a dream. Whether one considers global commerce, the international grid of telephone and internet communication, world-wide air transport, or our increasing understanding of the earth as a single ecosystem, the interconnectedness of all the peoples and places of the earth is now an unexceptionable fact. But obvious too are the momentous inner conflicts that trouble this One World. Some of this strife is due to the very economic systems that unite us, causing tremors of instability to propagate from anywhere but affecting us everywhere. The exploitation of the earth by industrial and now developing nations of course threatens the entire ecosystem and exacerbates political and social unrest; but conflicting fundamental ideas among different traditions about history and the nature of reality continue to foster and sustain conflicts of the most ferocious and tragic kind. Now what if each of these traditions harbored principles and truths that had become distorted, suppressed, or simply lost over the hundreds of generations since their initial discoveries or revelations? What if it were possible to recover these truths and that, far from their being in conflict with one another, they were all, if not identical in form, at least in harmonious resonance around essential principles? If that were the case, the recognition of those principles by the various traditions might have the consequence that the resolution of at least this aspect of world disharmony would be at hand.

The Alphabet That Changed The World has, as its ambition, the disclosure of just such a recovery. We believe that we have found, through the persistent search for the origins of the letter-text of the Hebrew Bible, a series of truths that potentially unite the divided traditions of the world. We think that our results to date suggest lines of research that will potentially rewrite the histories of those traditions themselves in ways that not only bring them into harmony with each other, but verify, enrich, and further empower those traditions themselves.

The origins of writing and, in particular, the origins of the Western alphabets, are shrouded in obscurity. The scholars within the various religious traditions, working with their own principles of research and exegesis, have their own (and often conflicting) versions of these origins. Secular historians working from entirely different principles see things, of course, in an entirely different way, but, by and large, they do not have a satisfactory theory of alphabetical origins at all. This confusion may largely be because the histories themselves have been written through the filter of the very literacy that the alphabets indeed made possible. It is generally assumed that writing developed as a means of transcribing vocal speech:



Essay by
Stan Tenen



that letters are first and foremost symbols for spoken sounds and that they were derived from more primitive attempts to represent speech by means of pictures, ideograms, and the like. But what we will explore is the possibility that written language—in particular the written text of the Torah,¹ but by implication other early texts as well—did not originate in the desire to record spoken language at all, but as the recording of a dance of manual/somatic gestures, which constituted a language in its own right. This dance of gestures embodied fundamental principles of the nature of Being and expressed them in graphic symbols whose naturalness preceded by perhaps hundreds of thousands of years the historical traditions that eventually wrote them down. Gesture itself may have preceded human speech, and the ethical principles recorded in the great traditions may have preceded those traditions because they are in fact internal to the very nature of Being itself. This view is not only unconventional, it has barely been recognized or discussed at all; so we ask the reader to suspend judgment until she has had a chance to examine our presentation. Our idea is that the first alphabet encoded the gestures themselves in a set of symbols to represent them. The alphabet was a system of representation based on fundamental quasi-geometrical metaphors (actually available in the ancient world) devised to signify universal ethical, social, and physical ideas. We think that these ideas and the principles and practices with which they are correlated contain the promise and possibility for the development of human consciousness and an integral social world to come.

This book is the story of the discovery and investigation of these matters. It begins with my own experience at the Western Wall in Jerusalem in August 1967, just after the Israelis regained access to the Temple Mount, as originally provided for by the UN Partition Plan. (The Temple Mount was lost in the War of Independence in 1948.²) I was so moved by the potentiality for endless conflict that I witnessed in those early days of the re-united “City of Peace,” that I resolved in a kind of prayer to devote myself to finding a way to contribute to bringing that conflict to an end. This purpose forms a background motivation for my research. This purpose is supported by the fact that the ethical and spiritual principles with which the alphabet was imbued are found everywhere and at all times. They surely have the power to “change the world” when implemented. They can be stated at the outset as what we shall refer to as the “Golden Rules” (*sic*). A capacity to transcend our personal concerns flows into us when we choose to orient our will toward values that are greater than ourselves but are rooted nevertheless in our own being and nature. It follows that groups of people have the power to lift themselves beyond *their* local interests when animated by individuals elevated beyond themselves in this way.

We titled this book *The Alphabet That Changed the World* as if it were primarily an event in the past that concerns us. And indeed, we do focus largely on the discovery of the structure and role of an alphabet from the past. But we note that in the Hebrew language, the past tense can have an iterative and future sense, so that a subtext of our title really is that in the Meruba-Ashurit script (the particular Hebrew script that possesses the properties we have discovered) we possess a “Once And Future” alphabet!—a vision of the reiteration of perennial values that, though discovered from the past, can indeed constitute values yet to come.

It is perhaps not too shocking a notion to suggest that the history of the alphabet—the history of the improvement in the technique of writing from pictogram and ideogram to the direct representation of spoken language—is of great importance to the history of civilization. But by *The Alphabet that Changed the World* we mean to suggest something more challenging than that, for each time that there was a change in the use of the alphabet, there was a corresponding change in the nature of human existence. A change in the alphabet meant and means a change in the very character of the world we live in as a species. Furthermore, the history of the alphabet does not begin with the improvement in writing technique, but, if we are correct in our hypothesis that the Hebrew Alphabet contains a registration of archetypal hand gestures, its history is the history of meaningful gesture itself and possibly begins even



before the evolution of our species with the communicative practices of the higher primates. It is our speculation that the principles that lie behind the formation of the gestures encoded in the alphabet reflect universal principles that, as we say, underlie all of Being. It is perhaps not too outlandish to hope that with the speculative recovery of the history of the alphabet and the recovery of the practices for which the alphabet may have originally been deployed, the emergence of the next level of consciousness may be at hand.

¹The term *Torah* refers to the “Five Books of Moses” (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), traditionally the Books given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. A *Torah scroll* contains the Hebrew text of these five books, written in a strictly prescribed manner.

²This was Resolution 181, adopted November 29, 1947, which called for the partition of British-Mandate Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, with Jerusalem to be demilitarized and governed by an international authority.

The following is from UN Resolution 181, Section C, General Provision, Chapter 1 on Holy Places, Religious Buildings, and Sites, points 1 and 2:

Existing rights in respect of Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall not be denied or impaired.

In so far as Holy Places are concerned, the liberty of access, visit, and transit shall be guaranteed, in conformity with existing rights, to all residents and citizens of the other State and of the City of Jerusalem, as well as to aliens, without distinction as to nationality, subject to requirements of national security, public order and decorum.

Similarly, freedom of worship shall be guaranteed in conformity with existing rights, subject to the maintenance of public order and decorum.

Source accessed 03 February 2010:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/UN+General+Assembly+Resolution+181.htm>



Meru DVDs and Books at www.meetingtent.com

I want to remind readers that our full set of five Meru lectures on DVD, recorded over a critical ten-year period of this work, presents a rich overview of our project and how it has developed, and makes an excellent gift for those interested in this work. If you prefer both video and printed material, we offer a special package that includes both our five-DVD lecture set, and *The Alphabet in Genesis*, the three-volume written compendium of Meru essays and graphics, for \$199.95.

Meru Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and contributions are tax-deductible in the US (in the manner specified by IRS regulations). All contributions, small and large, are important to us. Meru Foundation is supported by individuals, not institutions – and your orders and contributions are what enable our work to continue. Thank you very much for your support.

—Levanah Tenen, ed.

For a description and to order our 5-DVD lecture video set, [click here.](#)

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Thank you for reading this issue of the Meru Foundation eTORUS Newsletter.
Past issues are available online at www.meru.org/Newsletter/journalindex.html.

Meru Foundation has several different websites, each with a different focus and material:

www.meru.org Meru's original website was created in 1996, and has a large selection of essays and posters on many different aspects of this work. Our recommended reading list is at www.meru.org/readlist.html; past eTORUS Newsletters are archived at www.meru.org/Newsletter/journalindex.html. This is a site for leisurely exploration; the home page also includes a PayPal button for contributions.

www.meetingtent.com Meru's secure-server website for ordering our lecture DVD's, books, and other materials, and for making contributions via credit card. This site also includes a Meru FAQ, sample videos, and contact information for the media.

www.merueline.info/common/MeruIntroPacket.a.20oct08.pdf A basic introductory packet on Meru Foundation and its research, suitable for printing. Includes a research summary, endorsements, a sample eTORUS, and bio information.

www.meruwest.org Bill Haber's web portal for Meru video clips and other media posts. You can also view and post comments on all of our video clips on Bill Haber's YouTube site, www.youtube.com/user/filmguy2121.

www.meruwest.blogspot.com Meru Foundation blog, also run by Bill Haber.

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A
POINT
OR BIT, BEING
SO SMALL, MARKS
INFINITE CONTRAST WITH THE ALL.

